

Cultural politeness in international marketing

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CULTURAL POLITENESS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING



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CULTURAL POLITENESS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

Global brands encounter either resistance or acceptance from Asian markets. Resistance from local consumers has limited the benefits global brands gain from globalization, as local consumers may resist by isolating, rejecting, or crowding out foreign businesses. To enhance local consumer acceptance of foreign brands, I propose a new marketing communication strategy called “*cultural politeness*.” Cultural politeness principles are applicable when local consumers discern the intention of a foreign brand engaging the local culture (i.e., intercultural context) (Study 1). The scale of cultural politeness is developed and validated (Studies 1 and 2). Exploring this newly developed concept, I find that including a local cultural symbol in a foreign brand’s marketing communication may induce negative evaluation of the brand. However, when this practice is accompanied by a potentially respectful message, local consumers perceive cultural politeness in the communication, which in turn enhances brand evaluation (Study 3). The influence of cultural politeness on increased evaluations of foreign brands is found in both Indian and American cultures (Study 4). However, the positive influences of cultural politeness on the evaluation of marketing communication decrease when local consumers perceive the global brand to be a “local” brand (Study 5). In addition, several cultural politeness strategies in marketing communication are examined in Study 6. The present results demonstrate the importance of cultural politeness in global marketing communication.

Keywords: politeness, globalization, local perception, marketing communication

I. INTRODUCTION

As globalization increases the connectedness among societies around the world, the impacts of the Asian market on the global economy have never been more salient. It is speculated that 80% of growth in global middle class spending will be from Asia by the end of 2030 (Singapore Economic Development Board, 2012). For instance, China became Calvin Klein's largest Asian market in 2010 (Bloomberg News, 2010), and Asian consumers now constitute 50% of global luxury spending (Reuters, 2011). This makes Asia the fastest-growing and most influential consumer market for global brands today. Many global brands have entered the Asian market, particularly China and India, in a large range of product categories, such as cosmetics, food, electronic appliances, automobiles, and household goods (Agarwal, 2010; Sharma & Bureau, 2010; Zhou & Hui, 2003).

However, many Asian markets have strong local cultures, and local Asian consumers see many global brands as symbols of particular foreign cultures (e.g., Nike and Coca Cola are symbols of American culture). Therefore, it is inevitable that local consumers are simultaneously exposed to ideas, values, practices, images, and symbols from both the local culture and foreign cultures (Chiu & Cheng, 2010; Giddens, 1985; Robertson, 1992). Some examples of this are Starbucks in the Forbidden City in Beijing, China (Watts, 2007), McDonald's in the Louvre Museum in France (Lichfield, 2000), and Haagen-Dazs ice cream mooncakes in China. In a global context, co-existence of different cultures could lead to either cool reactions (i.e., integrative reactions) or hot reactions (i.e., exclusionary reactions) from local communities (Chiu & Cheng, 2007). Cool reactions are integrative, thoughtful, and goal-oriented responses to the impact of cultural mixing; people with cool reactions view foreign cultures as intellectual resources that can complement their culture, and allow them to

acquire new experiences and ideas (Chiu & Cheng, 2010). On the other hand, hot reactions are nationalistic, emotional, and hostile resistances against the inflow of foreign businesses; this is usually evoked by fear of cultural contamination/erosion. People with hot reactions see global brands as a kind of foreign invasion (Chiu & Cheng, 2007; Chiu & Cheng, 2010; Chiu, Mallorie, Keh & Law, 2009). Though hot reactions increase tension between the local community and global brands, these reactions are not necessarily “bad” reactions, as they can motivate people to preserve their cultures and lead to in-depth reflection on the cultural effects of globalization and the preservation of cultural diversity (Yang, 2011).

Research shows that global brands can manage local consumers’ perceptions of brand foreignness and even leverage those perceptions to succeed in local markets. Current research finds that several individual factors may affect local consumers’ perception of foreignness, and mitigate exclusionary reactions. For example, when people think about culture within a complex and deliberative thought process (Torelli, Chiu, Tam, Au, & Keh, 2011), or when people have the opportunity to affirm the importance and viability of personal values, such as writing an essay to justify the importance of personal values (Cheng, 2010), their exclusionary reactions are mitigated. However, beyond individual differences, marketers still need effective strategies to better manage local consumer perception of global brands in the local market. The present paper tests how marketers may use marketing communication to manage local perception toward global brands. Since global branding involves a cultural dimension, I propose that one way for global brands to be accepted by local consumers is to display *cultural politeness* in marketing communication. Cultural politeness refers to communication manners with which marketers tactfully show respect and courtesy to the local consumers’ culture.

Cultural politeness concerns interlocutors' own-culture sensitivity when the interlocutors are from different cultures. Going beyond personal politeness, cultural politeness is more about appreciating and acknowledging local cultural values, traditions, practices, and symbols. In the global marketing context, cultural politeness is most effective when: (a) the global brand is seen as a foreign brand, and (b) when the brand attempts to engage the local culture (i.e., involvement in an intercultural context). Under the above conditions, local consumers are more likely to accept a foreign brand as perceived cultural politeness increases.

Increasingly, there is a need for global brands to incorporate cultural elements into their marketing communication to increase their product receptiveness in local markets. Interestingly, some of these culture-related communications failed to attract local consumers and were even shunned by local communities (e.g., Nike's chamber of fear commercial using a Chinese dragon, see "Nike expresses apology", 2004). Yet, some messages were well received by local consumers (e.g., Coca Cola's Chinese New Year commercial). One defining factor of the success or failure of marketing communication involving a cultural element is the perceived cultural politeness of the communicated message.

However, not all global brands can leverage the benefits of cultural politeness in their marketing communication. The weight of cultural politeness will decrease when local brand perception is strong. For example, when local consumers already perceived a global brand to be a 'local' brand, e.g., KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) is perceived as Chinese in China, the brand is seen as an ingroup member of the local community, and thus the impact of a culturally polite message on the receptiveness toward the global brand would be diminished.

Taken together, this research provides a fresh perspective in understanding cultural politeness in global branding by pinpointing the specific conditions under which it occurs. It provides a new theoretical framework that allows marketers to manage local consumers' perceptions of the foreignness of a brand and ultimately enhance the local community's acceptance of foreign businesses by guiding further control over marketing communication in the global marketplace. It is beneficial for foreign brands to reduce the tension arising from exclusionary reactions, to increase the potential benefits of globalization. Moreover, this research further enriches the current literature on the psychology of globalization. Symbolic exclusionary theory (Chiu, Wan, Cheng, Kim, & Yang, 2010; Yang, 2011) demonstrates that globalization makes people more sensitive to cultural differences and leads to concern about erosion of local culture. Local consumers' exclusionary reactions have increased global companies' risks in promoting international business. Cultural politeness, as suggested in this research, is an important factor that could attenuate exclusionary reactions. In addition, this research broadens current politeness theory by shifting the focus from interpersonal contacts to intercultural contacts, and further examines the mechanism of politeness in marketing communication, which is not yet explored in the literature. Hand-in-hand with the conceptualization of cultural politeness, scales of measuring personal politeness and cultural politeness are developed and validated, which may lead to ad hoc measurements for marketing practitioners to better manage positioning strategies and marketing communication.

Dissertation Overview

I first review the pertinent literature on the theory of personal politeness, from which the notion of cultural politeness is derived, and justify the principles of cultural politeness in marketing communication. Then, I review the symbolic exclusionary

theory literature and discuss the role of perceived cultural politeness in weakening exclusionary reactions toward foreign businesses. This is followed by a discussion on how local brand perception of foreign brands decreases the importance of cultural politeness in marketing communication. Next, I propose several communication strategies that can be used to generate a high level of cultural politeness perception. As a measure of cultural politeness is not available in the current literature, I first develop a politeness scale and address the validation of cultural politeness in Studies 1 and 2. Study 1 also justifies the applicability of cultural politeness in the intercultural context. Key hypotheses on the mediating effect of cultural politeness perception on exclusionary reactions are addressed in Study 3. Study 3 shows the effect of cultural politeness on weakening exclusionary reactions toward foreign brands. Results indicate that the presence of a foreign brand together with a local cultural symbol in an advertisement elicits negative responses toward the brand, but when a message is added to interpret the cultural symbol in a polite manner, negative responses are weakened, and this relationship is mediated by cultural politeness perception. In Study 4, I examine the generalization of cultural politeness impact across Eastern and Western cultures by using Indian and American samples. The results show that culturally polite advertisements increase consumer response to foreign brands among both Indian and American participants, suggesting that cultural politeness matters in both Eastern and Western cultures. Afterwards, I examine the moderating effect of local brand perception on the relationship between cultural politeness and brand evaluations in Study 5. It shows that local brand perception mitigates the importance of cultural politeness in marketing communication. In addition, Study 6 provides some initial findings for cultural politeness strategies in marketing communication. Finally, I discuss the theoretical, practical, and future research implications of these findings.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF CULTURAL POLITENESS

Exclusionary reactions are negative and hostile responses toward foreign cultural influences. They tend to occur when foreign brands intrude into a sacred cultural space (e.g., Starbucks in the Forbidden City, see Watts, 2007). Sacred cultural space is regarded with reverence and as a symbol and sanctuary of the culture by local communities (Yang, 2011). Examples of sacred space are the Louvre Museum in France, Ground Zero in the U.S., and the Forbidden City in China. Intrusion into sacred spaces will elicit a threat to the purity and integrity of the culture and thus evoke concerns of cultural erosion (Yang, 2011). However, showing respect for local culture in marketing communication may increase the acceptance of foreign brands, because such demonstrations of respect show consideration for local consumers' cultural sensibilities and may establish the perception of the foreign brand as a polite visitor in the local community.

The positive effect of cultural politeness on the acceptance of foreign brands is influenced by consumers' perception of that brand. It is found that politeness is more important in interpersonal communication for outgroup members and less important for ingroup members (Liberman, Trope, & Stephan, 2007). Therefore, when consumers strongly perceive the foreign brand to be a "local" brand, that the foreign brand is seen as a member of the local community, the positive effect of cultural politeness on the acceptance of a foreign brand will be attenuated.

To explicate the rationale for this research, I first justify the construct of cultural politeness in marketing communication from current interpersonal politeness theory. Next, I review the basic mechanism of exclusionary reactions toward foreign brands and justify the role of cultural politeness perception in exclusionary reactions. Then, I

discuss the moderating effect of local brand perception on the positive association between cultural politeness and evaluation of foreign brands. Finally, I briefly discuss possible ways of creating culturally polite communication.

II.1 Conceptualization of Cultural Politeness

The construct of cultural politeness stems from interpersonal politeness. In the current interpersonal communication literature, interpersonal politeness is defined as the way a speaker takes into account the hearer's feelings when the speaker phrases utterances in interpersonal communication (Brown & Gilman, 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987). When we address a person, we choose a style that will not result in uncomfortable feelings for the addressee. For instance, a student who addresses a professor for the first time will use a more polite form, "Dear Professor." If the student uses "hey, buddy" to address the professor instead, the professor may feel offended.

People care about politeness during social interactions because politeness may serve a function of cooperation in social interaction, avoiding any threat to the universal need to maintain a positive self-view (Brown & Levinson, 1987). According to the Goffman face management theory (Goffman, 1967), people are motivated to protect and manage their public self-image (in other words, face maintenance¹) when there is a threat to this public self-image. Any act that threatens one's public self-image is viewed as face-threatening. Face threats, however, appear to be almost inevitable. In several acts of interpersonal interaction, for instance, when a speaker asks a hearer to do something, the speaker's face is threatened if the hearer says no (i.e., the speaker's wants are not fulfilled). The hearer's face is also threatened if he or she says yes (i.e., the hearer is obligated to act on the other's request). Therefore, the need for face maintenance and the

¹ 'Face' does not refer to people's actual image, but to the public self-image that we wish to be perceived by others. Thus, politeness may be seen as face-maintenance work (Brown & Levinson, 1987). From this definition of face, giving face or saving face actually refers to being polite.

need to perform face-threatening acts on the part of both parties place social interaction into a dilemma. To serve the function of cooperation and to avoid conflicts in interpersonal interactions, being polite is an effective way to solve the dilemma (Holtgraves, 2010). Politeness could allow both the speaker and the hearer to maintain their positive self-image by showing consideration for each other's feelings; at the same time, the hearer feels no pressure or coercion to cooperate with the speaker.

The concern for politeness is universal across different cultures, though there is cross-cultural difference in what is considered polite. Asians care more about community-related face, while Westerners care more about autonomy-related face (Friedman, Olekalns, & Oh, 2011). Both Asians and Westerners have a need for a positive self-regard, but Asians care about collective attributes of self-regard and Westerners care about individualist attributes (Sedikides, Gaerther, & Toguchi, 2003). In the present thesis, I focus on the abstract meaning of politeness and its impact on consumer response to foreign brands rather than focus on the impact of specific polite strategies in different cultures. Thus, I expect the findings below to apply in both Eastern and Western cultures.

Aside from the need to maintain a positive self-view, extant research indicates that people also have a need to maintain a positive view of their own culture (Chiu et al., 2010). Culture, which is defined as widely shared knowledge and practices transmitted across generations, can form people's self-concept and beliefs (Chiu et al., 2010). The sharedness and continuity of culture provide individuals a sense of epistemic security and protect them from the epistemic terror of uncertainty and unpredictability. This is because culture informs people in a society what values, beliefs, practices and behaviors are viewed as important, true, and appropriate (Chiu, Morris, Hong & Menon, 2000; Fu et al., 2007). Therefore, people connect the self to their culture and may

internalize certain cultural features as part of their self; that is, they use a particular culture to define their self (Chiu et al., 2010). To capture this connection between the self and culture, Hong, Wan, No, and Chiu (2007) use a construct of cultural self, which refers to the self that is defined with reference to the knowledge and traditions (e.g., values, beliefs, practices) shared in a particular culture. The need to maintain and protect their cultural self becomes much stronger in the presence of cultural mixing, particularly since cultural mixing evokes fear of threats to the integrity and continuity of the native culture (Chiu et al., 2010). Therefore, in the intercultural marketing communication context, when a foreign brand enters the local market, to facilitate local consumer cooperation with the foreign brand (e.g., purchase of the product, persuaded by marketing messages) and to manage the relationship with local communities, foreign brands can show consideration for local consumers' feelings about their culture through showing politeness to that culture. Here, I use the construct of cultural politeness to capture this communication strategy. That is, cultural politeness refers to a collection of gestures through which foreign/global brands tactfully communicate courtesy and respect² to local culture.

Such culturally polite gestures in marketing communication reflect marketers' intention to understand what the local culture really means to local consumers and the importance of the local culture to consumer self-identity. For instance, one of Coca Cola's commercials in China during the spring festival portrays a scenario where young adults happily celebrate Chinese New Year with their families and friends by drinking

² According to the definition of respect in the Collins English Dictionary, respect could refer to "an attitude of deference, admiration or esteem," or to "polite or kind regard; consideration." Politeness does not require that the speaker have a specific feeling of regard for the hearer's actual qualities, but rather, it reflects the speaker's consideration for the hearer's positive self-regard. Thus, politeness could subsume respect when respect refers to consideration of other people's needs and feelings. In this paper, I use respect and politeness interchangeably.

Coca Cola. Celebrating Chinese New Year via family gatherings is the traditional practice in Chinese culture, and in recent years, gathering with friends has also become a common activity amongst young people in this festival. This commercial reflects marketer comprehension and acknowledgement of changes in cultural traditions and values in China. Thus, this Coca Cola message is seen as a culturally polite one toward Chinese consumers.

The need for a positive view of culture is also universal across different cultures (Chiu et al., 2010). Prior research shows that American participants become motivated to reinforce their connection with American culture; they show more favoritism for American culture when they are induced to speak against the American core values (Wan et al., 2007; Wan, Torelli, & Chiu, 2010). The Chinese also display a similar pattern of reactions by affirming the importance of Chinese cultural values or protecting the continuity of Chinese culture when they experience a threat of cultural discontinuity (Cheng, 2010; Fu & Chiu, 2007). Therefore, I expect that cultural politeness concern is universal in Eastern and Western cultures.

Drawing on prior politeness theory and culture research, I conceptualize two distinguished politeness constructs: personal politeness and cultural politeness. Personal politeness concerns a positive view of the person as an individual (e.g., one's personal interests, aspirations, traits, behaviors, and experiences) and reflects a consideration for people's need to protect a positive self-image that they want to represent in front of others. Cultural politeness concerns a positive view of culture to which a person belongs and reflects a consideration for people's need to protect the purity and integrity of their own culture.

It is important to note that cultural politeness can be very subtle, and it is difficult to anticipate consumers' response toward the communication. Marketers might think

their communication culturally polite, but consumers may think otherwise. Take the same Coca Cola commercial as an example. Some older Chinese consumers may perceive the commercial as less polite because they may interpret the message as that the foreign brand is intentionally changing cultural practices, since drinking Coca Cola is not a traditional way of celebrating Chinese New Year. Therefore, marketers and consumers may have differing interpretations of what is cultural politeness. Marketing communication may involve marketer intention of being culturally polite and consumers' perceived cultural politeness. In this paper, I focus mainly on consumers' subjective perception of cultural politeness.

Given the above differences between personal politeness and cultural politeness, messages in marketing communication can address local consumers as individuals or as members of the local culture. But culture politeness is more relevant in an advertisement that demonstrates certain elements of the local culture instead of showing just consumers' personal traits and behaviors (e.g., enjoying diner as an individual). In other words, cultural politeness is most applicable in evaluating a brand in an intercultural context when two essential conditions are met: (a) the brand is seen as an outgroup-culture brand (e.g., foreign brands); (b) the brand is perceived as attempting to engage the local culture (i.e., involved in an intercultural context). Though cultural politeness is much pronounced in intercultural contexts, it does not mean that it is not relevant for local brands when they touch on local cultural elements. Violation of cultural values and traditions from local brands also leads to cultural impoliteness perception. However, the impact of cultural politeness on consumer responses is much stronger when the brand is from an outgroup-culture, e.g., foreign cultures. I will elaborate on the moderating effect of local brand association on the relationship between cultural politeness and consumer responses in the following section.

To act in a polite manner in marketing communication, a foreign brand can be either personally polite or culturally polite, but consumers may have different subjective perceptions. When a brand communicates in a culturally polite manner (i.e., being polite to the culture), local consumers tend to perceive stronger cultural politeness in the communication than when the brand communicates in a personally polite manner (i.e., being polite to consumers as individuals). In contrast, when a brand communicates in a culturally polite manner or personally polite manner, consumers will perceive the communication to be personally polite because culture is part of the self, local consumers will also feel personal politeness when the brand is polite to the local culture.

If culturally polite communication can lead to personal politeness perception, does it depend on whether the person internalizes the cultural values? Existing research shows that culturally important values may be those that most members of that cultural group actually endorse, but they may also be those that most members perceive to be important to the culture (Wan et al., 2007). Individuals also use those values that are perceived to be important in their culture to guide and adjust their thinking and behaviors. Thus, culturally polite communication leads to personal politeness perception as long as the person has the consensus of what values are important in the culture, though he/she may not actually endorse such values.

In line with the above arguments, I propose two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Consumers perceive stronger cultural politeness when a foreign brand uses culturally polite communication rather than personally polite communication.

Hypothesis 2: Consumers perceive the same level of personal politeness when a foreign brand uses culturally polite communication and personally polite communication.

Cultural politeness is also different from cultural sensitivity and localization/adaptation. First, cultural sensitivity refers to the awareness of cross-cultural differences in practices and the ability to manage these differences (Shapiro, Ozanne, & Saatcioglu, 2008), while cultural politeness is a manner of communication. Foreign marketers with strong cultural sensitivity may be good at understanding local cultural values and practices. However, they may or may not implement culturally polite communication. Second, localization or adaptation refers to marketers localizing their products and emphasizing a local brand association in marketing practices, such as product design and outlets design (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). To communicate politely, foreign brands can use certain respectful messages in advertisements without localizing products. However, the localization strategy may lead to a local brand association, which would moderate the effect of cultural politeness on brand evaluations. I will elaborate on this effect in the following section.

II.2 Cultural Politeness in Enhancing Acceptance of Foreign Brands

The inflow of foreign businesses into local markets lead to cultural mixing (i.e., elements of foreign culture and local culture are present simultaneously in the same space). It points out a key question on how to manage local consumers' perceived foreignness of a brand in a market with strong local culture. Research shows that people could have integrative or exclusionary reactions toward the inflow of foreign business (Chiu, Gries, Torelli, & Cheng, 2011). Integrative reactions are mild and cool responses, and are more likely to occur when a learning mindset is activated. People exhibit

integrative reactions when they are motivated to learn different ideas from different cultures (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky & Chiu, 2008). Typical examples in the marketing context include Starbuck's coffee mooncakes and Haagen-Dazs ice cream mooncakes. Such product innovations are appreciated by consumers in local markets because the mixing of foreignness and local culture enriches consumers' cultural experience.

In contrast, exclusionary reactions are emotional and negative responses against foreign brands. According to the symbolic exclusionism theory (Chiu, et al., 2010; Yang, 2011), exclusionary reactions elicited by culture mixing occur when several conditions are met. One condition is that culture is used as a mental category for organizing perceptions of culture mixing. Tong, Hui, Kwan, and Peng (2011) find that consumers are more likely to accept a foreign company's acquisition of a local business when they hold a transaction mindset (i.e., a focus on economic transactions such as costs or benefits) rather than a categorical mindset (i.e., the foreign brand is seen as a cultural entity). When local consumers hold a categorical mindset, they react more negatively toward the acquisition. Thus, when local consumers are culturally motivated, foreign/global brands in local markets are seen as strangers from another culture.

Another condition is that the presence of foreign brands in local markets is perceived as an intruder into local communities. For instance, in Yang (2011), when McDonald's was framed as a symbol of American culture, Chinese participants reacted more negatively when a McDonald's logo was superimposed onto the image of the Great Wall (i.e., evoking a perception of cultural intrusion) than those who saw images of a McDonald's logo and the Great Wall side by side (i.e., a non-spatial intrusion perception) on an advertisement. The intrusion perception only occurred when the local space was a symbol of the local culture and the brand was framed as a symbol of the foreign culture.

The reason why local people react negatively to the foreign intrusion into local cultural space is that such intrusion is accompanied by a threat to the vitality of their own culture. Cultural characteristics of continuity and sharedness provide existential security to individuals (Chao, Zhang, & Chiu, 2010; Chiu et al., 2000; Greenberg et al., 1990). Thus, when individuals perceive cultural threats elicited by foreign brand intrusion into local cultural space, they are motivated to protect the integrity of their own culture by exhibiting resistance to foreign brands.

Cheng (2010) generates evidence for this proposition, by first exposing American and Chinese participants to paired-up Chinese and American cultural symbols (i.e., cultural mixing). Then, the American participants read an article about a Chinese publishing company planning to open a bookstore in New York promoting Chinese folklore in America, while the Chinese participants read an article about an American publishing company planning to open a bookstore in Beijing promoting American folklore in China. All participants were then asked to report how much they support each respective plan. Results indicate that when Chinese participants have a high level of chronic concern over cultural erosion, they perceive the American publisher's intentions as an attempt to spread American cultural influence over China and had strong negative reactions and resistance to the plan. Likewise, for the American participants, when a concern for cultural erosion was experimentally induced, they showed the same increased level of negative emotional reaction toward the marketing plan. The Cheng study provides empirical evidence that cultural mixing leads to exclusionary reactions toward the foreign company when there is a threat of cultural contamination.

Taken together, the above research findings indicate that culture mixing leads to a perceptual contrast of local culture and foreign culture when the foreign brand is seen as a cultural entity, causing a threat of cultural erosion. Such a cultural threat makes

consumers perceive the foreign brand as an intruder into the local community. Thus, it is inevitable that local consumers react negatively toward the foreign brand when it is present with a symbol of local culture and expect the brand to stay away from the cultural symbol (Yang, 2011).

However, such an intruder perception can be turned into a perception of a polite visitor through culturally polite marketing communication, and thus, exclusionary reactions are weakened. The underlying rationale is that being culturally polite can signal a benign motivation and also regulate consumer psychological distance to foreign brands, which in turn reduces the fear of cultural erosion. This rationale is supported by Stephan, Liberman and Trope (2010), which shows that people behave more politely when they want to create a sense of social distance, and more polite language is associated with larger perceived psychological distance between the interlocutors. Likewise, when a foreign brand uses a culturally polite manner, local consumers feel that the brand intends to keep a distance from the local culture rather than intrude into the local community. Accordingly, fear of cultural erosion is mitigated and negative reactions are weakened. Thus, I expect that the simultaneous presence of a foreign brand and a local cultural symbol, consumers will react negatively to the brand. However, when a meaningful message is added to interpret the cultural symbol in a polite way (defined as a potentially respectful message), it will lead to cultural politeness perception, which in turn decreases negative reactions to the brand. I expect that such cultural politeness impact is generalized across Eastern and Western cultures, consistent with above arguments of the universality of politeness concerns. In line with the argument, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: Local consumers react more negatively to a foreign brand when it is presented with an icon that is perceived (vs. not perceived) as a symbol of the local culture.

Hypothesis 4: In the presence of a foreign brand and a local cultural symbol, people in the local community react less negatively to the foreign brand when meaningful, respectful (vs. disrespectful) communication is used, and this relationship is mediated by perceived cultural politeness.

II.3 Local Brand Perception in Moderating the Positive Effect of Cultural Politeness

As discussed above, cultural politeness is an effective communication strategy for local consumers to accept foreign businesses. However, such positive effect of cultural politeness is affected by local consumers' subjective perception of the brand. Research indicates that global brands can use a local consumer culture positioning strategy (LCCP) to fulfill people's need to be part of their local community (Alden et al., 1999). LCCP "associates the brand with local cultural meanings, reflects the local culture's norms and identities, is portrayed as consumed by local people in the national culture, and/or is depicted as locally produced for local people" (Alden et al., 1999). Apparently, LCCP aims to establish a perception that the brand is particularly for the local community, and it is possible that local consumers have a subjective perception that the global brand is a local brand (i.e., local brand perception). Local brand perception signifies that the brand intends to engage the local culture, and thus cultural politeness becomes applicable in consumer judgment of foreign brands.

However, according to current interpersonal politeness and psychological distance literature, it has been found that the demand of politeness increases as psychological distance increases (Brown & Gilman, 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Stephan et al.,

2010). People are expected to use more polite language when interacting with higher social distance interlocutors (e.g., addressing a stranger rather than a friend) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Stephan et al. (2010) also find that the expectation to follow politeness principles in interpersonal communication becomes stronger when interacting with people who are more temporally, physically, or socially distant from the self (i.e., psychologically distant from the self). Following the same argument, foreign brands are more likely to be expected to follow politeness principles in intercultural communication when local consumers feel that the foreign brand is psychologically distant from them. Research also finds that people feel close to ingroup members, but feel distant to outgroup members, because people are more familiar, have more information, and form lower-level construal (i.e., concrete construal level) with ingroups than with outgroups, and familiarity and concrete construal are correlated with smaller psychological distance (Lieberman et al., 2007; Spencer-Oatey, 1996). Moreover, local brand perception would decrease the foreignness of a foreign brand. Thus, consumers are less likely to evaluate the foreign brand through a cultural lens, rendering cultural politeness less relevant to brand evaluation. Therefore, when local consumers have a strong perception that the foreign brand is a local brand in the local community (i.e., an ingroup member perception), the effect of cultural politeness on the acceptance of foreign brands should decrease. However, when local consumers fail to form this local brand perception, the importance of cultural politeness should increase. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: The positive effect of cultural politeness perception on the evaluation of marketing communication is attenuated when local consumers have stronger (vs. weaker) perception that the foreign brand is a brand belonging to the local community.

II.4 Cultural Politeness Strategies in Marketing Communication

Thus far, I have elaborated on the theoretical framework of cultural politeness from three aspects: (1) the applicability of cultural politeness, (2) the function of cultural politeness in mitigating exclusionary reactions to foreign brands, and (3) the condition in which cultural politeness impact is weakened. At this point, the readers may wonder from the marketers' perspective, what kind of communication is considered culturally polite? Does culturally polite communication work more effectively than culture-neutral communication that does not contain any cultural messages? In the present thesis, I do not aim to examine all possible cultural politeness strategies. Instead, I will use the case of Coca-Cola's advertising campaigns in China to illustrate how Chinese consumers' perceptions of the level of cultural politeness conveyed in the different Coca-Cola advertisements may vary when different themes are used in the advertisements.

There are many ways to be polite to local cultures. For instance, marketers can highlight the positive elements of local culture, or appreciate local cultural traditions and practices in advertisements. I determine three possible ways of being culturally polite. One is acknowledgement of local cultural practices and values. Another is to emphasize the importance of local culture in international events. The third is to combine these two methods. Since culture is used to define the self, enhancing the connection between self and culture can lead to positive self-evaluations (Chiu et al., 2010). Culturally polite communication is an effective means to strengthen the self-culture connection and thus may lead to stronger brand evaluations than neutral communication.

In the following chapters, I discuss six research studies, and describe how the above hypotheses and propositions are addressed in these studies.

III. SCALE DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter, I report two studies, one conducted with American consumers and the other with Indian consumers, to develop a valid and reliable measure of cultural politeness in the marketing communication context. As discussed in the previous chapter, cultural politeness refers to a manner of communication in intercultural communication rather than in interpersonal communication. Although the construct of cultural politeness is developed from interpersonal politeness theory, it differs from personal politeness. Importantly, neither measures of cultural politeness nor measures of personal politeness in the marketing communication are available in the current literature. Therefore, in Study 1, I developed scales to measure cultural politeness and personal politeness, and evaluated the reliability and discriminant validity of these two scales with a sample of American consumers. Hypotheses 1 and 2, on the applicability of cultural politeness in intercultural communication, were also tested in Study 1. The cultural generalizability of the two politeness scales was examined in Study 2 using an Indian sample.

Study 1

The objective of Study 1 is to develop reliable and valid scales to measure cultural politeness and personal politeness. In addition, Hypotheses 1 and 2 would also be tested. To generate politeness items, I reviewed the current politeness literature (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Stephan et al., 2010) and the items used to measure politeness in interpersonal communication (Coulter & Coulter, 2003; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Kam & Bond, 2008; Ohbyung & Sukjae, 2009). Based on the literature review and the conceptual definition of politeness, an initial pool of 46 items for cultural politeness and 31 items for personal politeness were generated to capture various aspects of politeness. Two scholars evaluated the content validity of each item based on the definition of

cultural politeness and personal politeness in marketing communication. This procedure resulted in a modified set of 32 items for cultural politeness and 27 items for personal politeness, which was used in the main study.

Method

Participants

A sample of 269 participants in the U.S. was recruited from an online website, Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT; <https://www.mturk.com>), which provides a platform that enables researchers to post research tasks and collect high-quality, low-cost data. (For more details about AMT, please see Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011.) Participants received US\$1.00 for taking part in the study (an acceptable payment for AMT workers). Responses from participants who did not complete the survey or made random descriptions of advertisements were excluded, leaving 231 participants in the analysis (88 men, 141 women; 2 did not report their gender). Of these, 210 participants were born in the United States, and 21 were born in other countries. A total of 166 participants were Caucasian, and 65 participants belonged to other ethnic groups (e.g., African, Mexican, Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian). In terms of employment status, 147 participants were employed, 34 were students, 22 were homemakers, and the remaining 28 were in other occupational status (e.g., retired, unemployed, etc.). Participant age ranged from 18 to 68 years ($M=33.47$, $SD=11.69$).

Design and procedures

The current study adopted a 2 (Politeness: polite advertisement vs. impolite advertisement) \times 2 (Target: individual vs. culture) between-subjects design. Participants indicated their consent to participate in the study, and were then randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. I manipulated the variables of politeness and target through an advertisement recall task: Participants were instructed to recall a polite or not polite

advertisement (politeness manipulation) that targeted at individual consumers or the culture of the consumers (target manipulation).

In the condition in which participants recalled an advertisement that was polite to the individual (i.e., polite advertisement targeting at individual consumers), the following instructions were given:

“When communicating with each other, some people are perceived as more polite than others. The same could happen when companies communicate to their consumers through advertisements. For instance, some ads have been perceived as very polite and respectful among the target audience whereas others have been seen as impolite, disrespectful or even rude.

*Please try to recall such advertisements in which you feel that the company uses a **polite** and respectful way to communicate to **you (as a consumer)**. We understand that it might not be so easy to come up with polite advertisements, but we still ask you to take some time and try to recall such advertisements. Please briefly describe these polite advertisements below. (Note: We DO NOT mean advertisements that you like or feel good about in general, but such advertisements where you feel that the company communicates to its customers in a polite way.)”*

For the condition where a recalled advertisement was impolite to the individual, the term “polite” was replaced with “impolite” in the above instruction.

In the condition where participants recalled an advertisement that is polite to their culture (i.e., polite advertisement targeting at the culture), the instruction below was given:

“When communicating with each other, some people are perceived as more polite to their audience’s culture than others. The same could happen in companies’ advertisements. For instance, some ads have been perceived as very polite and respectful to the target audience’s culture whereas others have been seen as impolite, disrespectful or even rude.

*Please try to recall such advertisements in which you feel that the company is **polite** and respectful to **your culture**. We understand that it might not be so easy to come up with polite advertisements, but we still ask you to take some time and try to recall some such advertisements. Please briefly describe these polite advertisements below. (Note: We are only interested in advertisements where you feel that the company or brand is polite to your culture. We DO NOT mean advertisements where the company is polite in general or an ad that you just like or feel good about in general.)”*

For the condition where a recalled advertisement was impolite to their culture, the term “polite” was replaced with “impolite” in the above instructions.

Participants then wrote down what the advertised brand, the advertised product, and the content of the advertisement were. To control for the cognitive fluency of recalling advertisements, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt it difficult to recall the advertisement by responding on a 7-point scale (1=*very difficult*, 7=*very easy*; M=3.95, SD=1.82). Next, participants were presented with the cultural politeness and personal politeness scales, and asked to indicate the extent to which these items were descriptive of the advertisement by responding on a 5-point scale (1= *totally not descriptive*, 5=*completely descriptive*). Finally, to check whether the items were meaningful, participants were also asked to evaluate each item by indicating the extent to which the meaning of the item was clearly understood (5-point, 1=*totally not clear*, 5=*completely clear*). Finally, they answered socio-demographic questions.

Results

Item reduction

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which aims to reduce the number of scale items, was conducted. Based on the results of principal component analysis, I excluded those items with initial communalities lower than .60. Next, I excluded those items that the participants did not clearly understand (items with a mean below 3.00 on the clarity of meaning measure). An EFA analysis using the maximum likelihood extraction method performed on the remaining items revealed two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. These two factors explained 86.91% of the variance. A clean factor structure emerged following an oblique rotation. As Table 1 shows, the six cultural politeness items loaded on the first factor, and the four personal politeness items loaded on the second factor.

Table 1 *Exploratory Factor Analysis: Cultural Politeness and Personal Politeness*

(Study 1)

Items	Factors	
	Cultural politeness	Personal politeness
1. This advertisement presents a favorable view of my culture's values.	.99	.07
2. This advertisement expresses deep appreciation of my culture.	.95	.03
3. This advertisement communicates respectful attitudes towards my culture.	.90	-.05
4. This advertisement puts my culture in positive light.	.90	-.02
5. This advertisement showcases the positive aspects of my culture.	.89	-.04
6. This advertisement honors the beliefs and practices in my culture.	.86	-.04
7. This advertisement is respectful to me.	.09	-.93
8. This advertisement is polite to me.	.05	-.91
9. This advertisement is rude. (R)	.04	-.83
10. This advertisement ridicules the values that are important to me personally. (R)	-.07	-.78

Note:

(1) (R) indicates reverse scoring;

(2) Factor analysis uses oblique rotation. Bold values show the factor on which each item predominantly loads.

I also examined the internal reliability of cultural politeness and personal politeness by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient for each scale. The value of the six cultural politeness items was .97, and the value of the four personal politeness items

was .93. Further, for both scales, all item-to-total correlations exceeded .74, indicating satisfactory levels of internal consistency.

Validity of the cultural politeness scale

To evaluate the validity of the cultural politeness scale and the personal politeness scale, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the responses to the items. The following models were fitted to the data: (a) a one-factor model, in which all items were assumed to load on a single politeness construct (i.e., politeness and personal politeness were treated as one construct), and (b) a two-factor model, in which cultural politeness and personal politeness were treated as two distinct factors). LISREL 8.70 was used to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis.

In the two-factor model, I allowed the latent factors to correlate freely. Following the recommendations from Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol (2002), the two-factor model would be supported if the following criteria were met: (1) the measurement model fitted the data reasonably well, (2) the loadings on hypothesized factors were significant and large, and (3) each factor had composite reliabilities exceeding .70. The fit statistics of these two models were summarized in Table 2, showing that the two-factor model fitted the data well. The global fit indexes also suggested an acceptable fit for the two-factor model: $\chi^2(34) = 128.53, p < .001$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .98, normed fit index (NFI) = .98, non-normed fit index (NNFI) = .98, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .10, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .02. Model fit is considered acceptable when the ratio between the chi-square statistic and the number of degrees of freedom is below 5, CFI, NFI and NNFI are equal to or above .90, RMSEA is under .80, and SRMR is below .05 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000). Though the RMSEA was a bit high, the fit measures for the two-factor model were better than those for the one-factor model. In addition, the change in the chi-square

statistic was significant ($\Delta\chi^2=597.86, p<.001$), which suggested that the two-factor model fitted the data reasonably well. Moreover, for the two-factor model, the loadings on hypothesized factors were significant and substantively larger than the .70 criterion (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; see Figure 1). The composite reliability measure (cultural politeness=.97; personal politeness=.95) was above .60, and the average variance extracted (AVE) (cultural politeness=.86, personal politeness=.82) was above .50 for both constructs of cultural politeness and personal politeness. Thus, the measures satisfy the recommended reliability criteria (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, the AVEs of individual constructs of cultural politeness and personal politeness were both higher than the squared correlations (= .55) between these two constructs, again suggesting that cultural politeness and personal politeness are distinct constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2 *Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fit Comparisons (Study 1)*

Model	df	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	SRMR	NFI	CFI	NNFI
Two-factor model	34	128.53	-	.10	.02	.98	.98	.98
One-factor model	35	726.39	597.86,	.31	.09	.88	.88	.85

$p<.001$

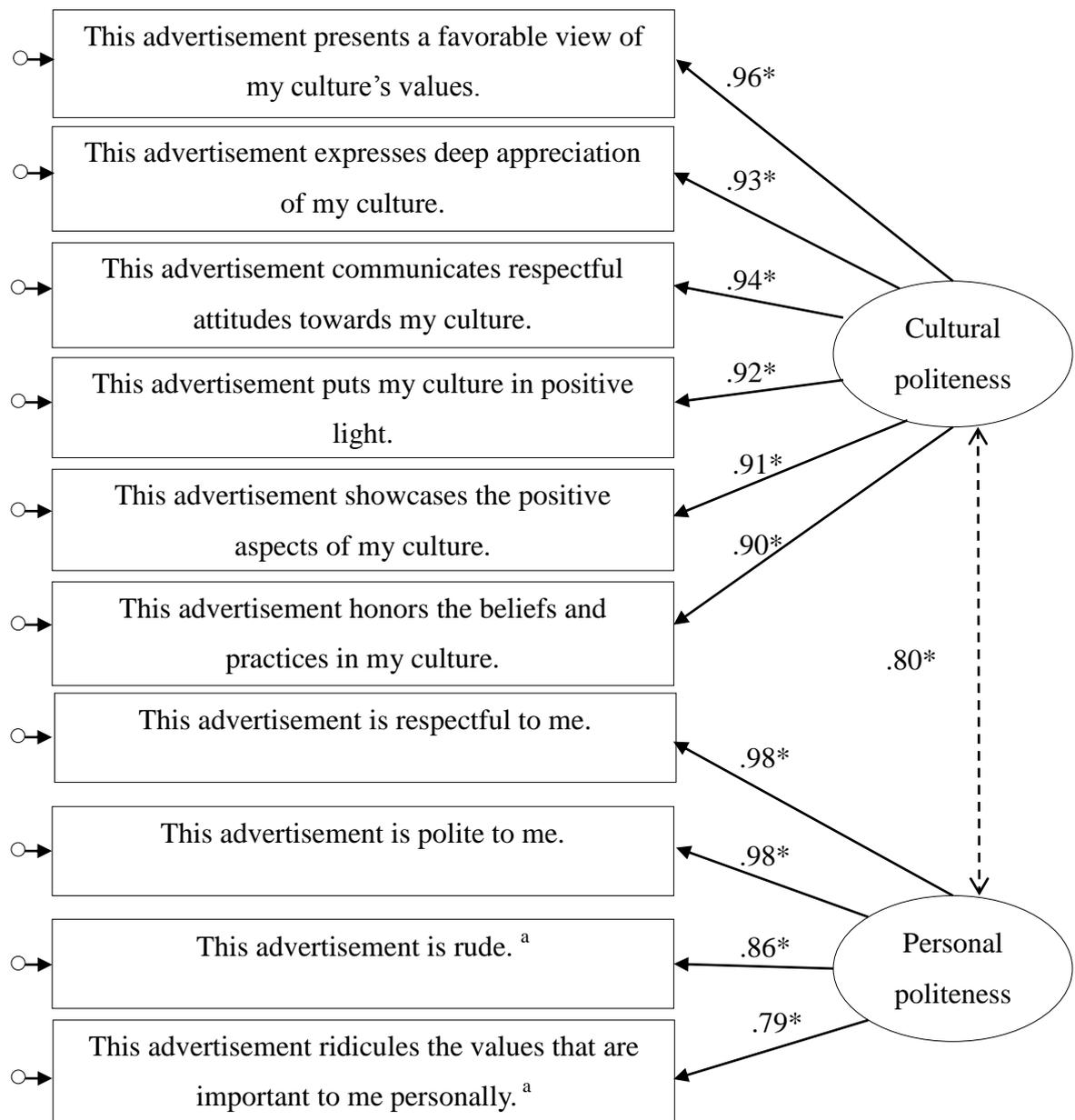


Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis: the Two-Factor Model (Study 1)

^a Reverse scoring.

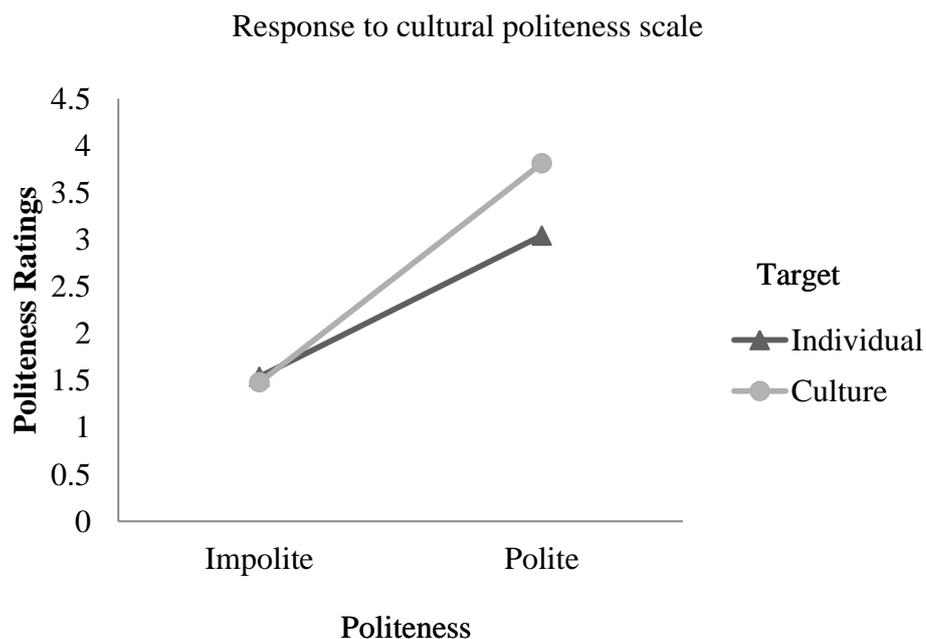
* $p < .01$.

Notes: All coefficient values are standardized and appear above the associated path. The dotted line indicates correlations.

The role of cultural politeness perception in intercultural communication

To test Hypotheses 1 and 2, which suggest that cultural politeness is more applicable in the intercultural communication context, I first computed the mean scores for cultural politeness and personal politeness, respectively, using the items validated in

the EFA and CFA. Next, I performed a Politeness \times Target analysis of variance (ANOVA) separately on perceived cultural politeness and personal politeness. The interaction of politeness and target on cultural politeness perception was significant ($F(1,227) = 15.30, p < .001$), while that on personal politeness perception was not ($F(1,227) = .02, p = .88$). As shown in Figure 2, culturally polite advertisements elicited higher politeness than personally polite advertisements on the cultural politeness scale ($F(1, 227) = 26.80, p < .001$), but not on the personal politeness scale ($F(1,227) = .05, p = .81$), thus supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2. In addition, I mean-centered the difficulty of recalling the advertisement, and then ran a Politeness \times Target \times Difficulty of Recalling Advertisements general linear modeling (GLM) analysis on the cultural politeness scale. The three-way interaction was not significant ($F(1,223) < .01, p = .95$) and the two-way interaction of politeness and target was still significant ($F(1,223) = 14.27, p < .001$), indicating that the difficulty of recalling the advertisement did not moderate the interaction of politeness and target on the cultural politeness scale.



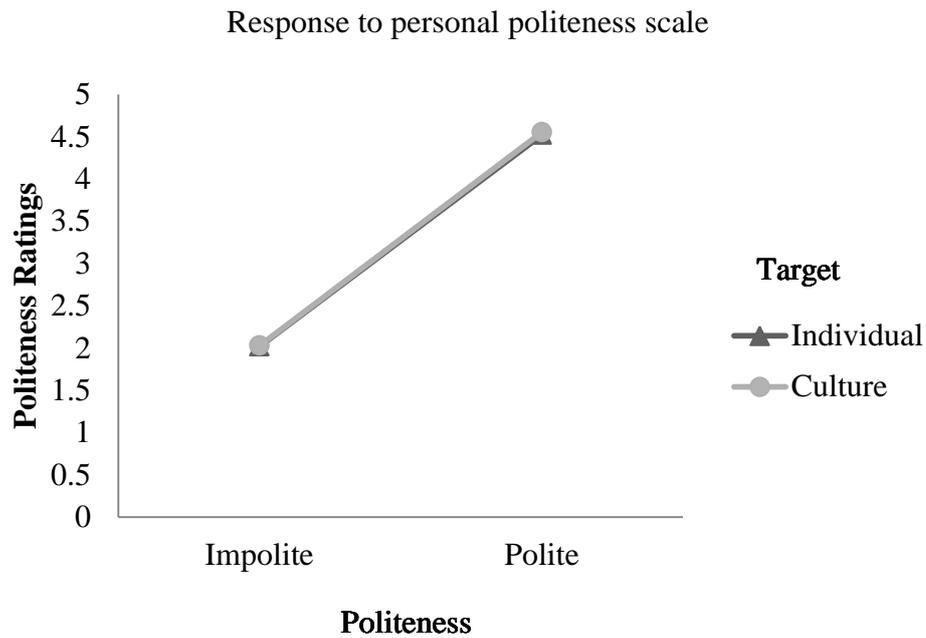


Figure 2. Cultural Politeness and Personal Politeness in Intercultural Communication

(Study 1)

Supplementary analyses

An assumption in the current study is that participants would be more likely to recall an advertisement with a cultural theme when they were asked to recall an advertisement that targeted the culture of the consumers rather than individual consumers. Given that culture is a multidimensional construct, which could be understood as national culture, social class culture, ethnic culture or gender culture in the U.S., it was not feasible to recalled advertisements on all pertinent cultural categories. Nonetheless, I tried different ways to provide some evidence for the effectiveness of the manipulation. First, I checked the percentage of foreign brands in the two target conditions and found that the percentage of non-US brands was higher when the communication target was the consumers' culture than when it was individual consumers (27% vs. 13%). The relatively low percentage of foreign brands even in the

culture target condition (27%) is consistent with my argument that national culture is not the only pertinent cultural category in the US.

To provide further evidence for the effectiveness of the manipulation, I had two research assistants who were blind to the hypotheses and experimental conditions to which the advertisements belonged to code the advertisements in terms of whether it contained a cultural message, a personal message, or both. The correlation and Cohen's kappa between the two coders' codings was .78 and .69, respectively, suggesting the codings had acceptable reliability. Differences were resolved through group discussion. In the culture target condition, 43% (29%) of the advertisements contained a cultural (personal) message. In comparison, in the individual target condition, 4.6% (87%) of the advertisements contained a cultural (personal) message. This result indicated that, the communication target manipulation was successful. I used the theme of the message in the advertisement (cultural vs. personal) as an independent variable in a 2 (cultural vs. personal theme) \times 2 (impolite vs. polite) GLM analysis performed separately on the cultural politeness scale and personal politeness scale. As expected, the interaction on cultural politeness perception ($F(1, 187) = 6.91, p < .01$) was significant, but that on personal politeness perception was not ($F(1, 187) = .96, p = .33$). The polite cultural-theme advertisements elicited higher rating on the cultural politeness scale than did polite personal-theme advertisements, $F(1, 187) = 8.95, p < .01$.

Discussion

Study 1 provided evidence for the reliability and validity of the cultural politeness and personal politeness scales. The EFA and CFA results in Study 1 reveal that cultural politeness is a construct distinct from personal politeness, although there is a positive correlation between them. As discussed above, cultural politeness is concerned with

individuals' connection with their own culture and is particularly relevant in intercultural rather than interpersonal communication. Consistent with these Hypotheses 1 and 2, culturally polite advertisements elicited higher rating than personally polite advertisements on the cultural politeness scale, but not on the personal politeness scale.

Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 is to investigate cross-cultural validity of the politeness scales. The need for a positive view of the self and one's culture is universal; thus the politeness scales should be applicable in other cultures, including India where the current study took place.

Method

Participants

A total of 276 participants in India were recruited from AMT. Participants received US\$1.00 for taking part in the study. After excluding invalid cases, 203 participants were included in the analysis (141 men, 61 women, 1 did not report gender). Among them, 199 participants were born in India, and 4 were born in other countries; 193 participants were ethnically Indian, and 10 reported other ethnicities (e.g., Mexican, Chinese, and African). In terms of employment status, 131 participants were employed, 42 were students, 17 were homemakers, and the remaining 13 were in other occupational status (e.g., retired, unemployed). Participant age ranged from 18 to 65 years ($M=28.51$, $SD=8.40$).

Design

First, participants indicated their consent to participate in the study. Then they were asked to recall an advertisement and write down the advertised brand, the advertised product, and the content of the advertisement. Afterwards, they were asked to respond to

the cultural politeness scale and personal politeness scale developed in Study 1. Finally, they answered demographic questions.

Results and Discussion

Reliability and validity of the cultural politeness scale

The cultural politeness scale and the personal politeness scale had high reliability (see Table 3). Moreover, CFA results indicated that the cultural politeness scale was distinct from the personal politeness scale, replicating the results from the U.S. sample. The change in chi-square was significant ($\Delta\chi^2=85.98, p<.001$), suggesting that the better-fitting model was a two-factor model. The global fit indexes for the two-factor model were: $\chi^2(34) = 130.95, p<.001$, CFI=.98, NFI=.98, NNFI=.98, RMSEA=.12, and SRMR=.025. Each item was loaded on the pertinent factor with significant standardized coefficients ranging from .81 to .94 (see Table 3). Again, there was evidence for the discriminant validity of the cultural politeness and personal politeness scales; the AVEs of cultural politeness and personal politeness were both higher than the squared correlations ($=.71$) between the two constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3 *Reliability Assessment of Cultural Politeness and Personal Politeness in the Indian Sample (Study 2)*

	Indian sample		
	λ (t-value)	ρ_c	ρ_v
Cultural politeness		.97	.83
This advertisement puts my culture in positive light.	.90 (-)		
This advertisement presents a favorable view of my culture's values.	.94 (22.67)		
This advertisement expresses deep appreciation of my culture.	.93 (22.60)		
This advertisement communicates respectful attitudes towards my culture.	.92 (21.69)		
This advertisement honors the beliefs and practices in my culture.	.87 (18.51)		
This advertisement showcases the positive aspects of my culture.	.89 (19.85)		
Personal politeness		.93	.76
This advertisement is polite to me.	.93 (-)		
This advertisement is respectful to me.	.89 (20.98)		
This advertisement is rude. (R)	.86 (19.04)		
This advertisement ridicules the values that are important to me personally. (R)	.81 (16.81)		

Note: (R) indicates reverse scoring;
 ρ_c : Composite reliability
 ρ_v : AVE.

Measurement invariance and mean structure of the politeness scales

The invariance of factor loadings across the U.S. sample and the India sample was estimated by constraining the item loadings to be equal and testing the change in the χ^2 goodness-of-fit index caused by the constraint. The test results showed no difference in the loadings across the two groups: $\chi^2(8) = 13.46, p > .05$ (see Table 4). Hence, the

measurement can be considered invariant and the measurement model is stable across these two groups. In addition, the analysis of mean structure estimated indicated that the factor means were not significantly different across different groups: $\chi^2(8) = 0, p > .05$. Thus, the measure of cultural politeness and personal politeness is cross-culturally stable.

In sum, in Study 2, the cultural politeness scale and personal politeness scale were shown to be reliable and stable measures across two cultural samples, providing preliminary evidence for the cross-cultural applicability of the scales.

Table 4 *Measurement Invariance and Mean Structure (Study 2)*

Model specification across groups (U.S.-India)	df	Chi-sq	Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$	CFI	GFI	NFI	RMSEA	SRMR
M1: Free factor loading, free error variance, free factor variance-covariance.	68	234.4	-	-	.99	.89	.98	.11	.025
M2: Equal factor loading, free error variance, free factor variance-covariance.	76	247.86	M1 VS. M2	13.46/8 (n.s.)	.98	.88	.98	.10	.047
M3: Equal factor loading, equal error variance, free factor variance-covariance.	86	338.97	M2 VS. M3	91.11/10(*)	.98	.86	.97	.12	.045
M4: Equal factor loading, free error variance, free factor variance-covariance, equal factor means.	84	247.86	M2 VS. M4	0/8(n.s.)	.99	.88	.98	.09	.047

Note: * $p < .05$

IV. CULTURAL POLITENESS IN ENHANCING LOCAL CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF FOREIGN BUSINESSES

This chapter examines the role of cultural politeness in weakening exclusionary reactions toward foreign businesses. The key hypotheses here (Hypotheses 3 and 4) are that the presence of a local cultural symbol in a foreign brand's marketing communication (i.e., a culturally significant context) would lead to negative reactions toward that brand. However, polite communication to the local culture could weaken these negative reactions through cultural politeness perception.

Further, I tried to show that the above hypotheses would hold even after controlling for other variables that may weaken exclusionary reactions. For instance, people in individualist societies value the independence of the individual and emphasize personal autonomy, while people in collectivist societies value interpersonal interdependence and emphasize group values and obligations (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). When a foreign business enters a cultural space, compared with people from an individualist culture, people from a collectivist culture may feel more obligated as a member of the local community to protect their culture. In contrast, individualists who focus on personal autonomy and achievement may be less sensitive to the level of politeness in intercultural communication. Thus, people from collectivist cultures may exhibit more negative reactions and are more sensitive to politeness in intercultural communication than do people from individualist cultures.

In addition, exclusionary reactions may result from nationalism or patriotism. Nationalism refers to the view that a particular nation is superior and should dominate other nations. Patriotism refers to the feelings of attachment to a particular nation (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). It is possible that exclusionary reactions to culturally

impolite marketing communication arise from nationalistic or patriotic sentiments. To rule out these possible explanations, I included measures of individualism, collectivism, nationalism, and patriotism as control variables.

After testing Hypotheses 3 and 4 in Study 3, in Study 4, I examined the cross-cultural generalizability of the findings pertinent to the effect of cultural politeness on exclusionary reactions in an Indian sample and an American sample.

Study 3

To test the hypotheses regarding the effect of perceived cultural politeness on exclusionary reactions toward the foreign brand in the Indian cultural context, I created an advertisement to manipulate the cultural context and the style of communication. I used a scene of the Ganges River as a symbol of Indian culture, and a scene of another Indian river that does not represent Indian culture as control stimulus. The former created a culturally significant context while the latter created a culture-neutral context. To manipulate the style of communication, I used an advertisement message to bias the perception of the advertisement as one that was either respectful or disrespectful to Indian culture. I predicted that when the scene of the Ganges River was presented in a foreign brand's advertisement together with a potentially respectful message, Indian participants would perceive the advertisement as more culturally polite, which would in turn weaken negative reactions toward the brand.

Method

Participants

A total of 125 Indian participants were recruited from AMT; they received US\$1 for completing the study. After excluding participants who encountered technical problems (i.e., could not see the advertisement used in the study), 105 participants were included in the analysis (72 men, 33 women). Among them, 104 participants were born in India, and

I was born in another country. All participants were Indian citizens; 64 participants were employed, 31 were students, and the remaining 10 had other occupational status (e.g., homemaker, unemployed). Participant age ranged from 18 to 58 years ($M=26.43$, $SD=7.33$).

Design and Procedures

This study adopted a 2 (Cultural context: a culturally significant context vs. not a culturally significant context) \times 2 (Message: potentially relevant to respect vs. disrespect) between-subjects design. Participants received an online consent form and were told that the study was about people's perception of advertisements. To eliminate the effect of prior knowledge of existing brands, I created advertisements for a fictitious brand.

Each participant viewed one of the four advertisements (see Appendix). Each advertisement consisted of a polluted river scene, a tag line, and a picture of a bottle of mineral water. I used a fictitious brand, "Zonet," which sounded like a foreign brand. Participants received the following instruction before they viewed the advertisement: "Zonet is a new mineral water company which plans to launch a new advertisement to introduce their product in India. Below is a version of the new advertisement."

To manipulate the cultural significance of the context, either a cultural symbol (a Ganges River scene) or matched culture-neutral scene (a scene of an Indian river that is not an icon of Indian culture) was presented in the advertisement. In the pretest, 11 participants were recruited to evaluate the two scenes. To measure the extent to which the river was perceived as a symbol of the Indian culture, I used the 4-item measure of cultural symbolism adapted from Wan et al (2010): (a) "The place shown in the picture is associated with Indian culture"; (b) "The place shown in the picture embodies Indian values"; (c) "The place shown in the picture is a symbol of Indian culture"; and (d) "The place shown in the picture is a sacred place in India". Participants indicated their

responses on a 7-point scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 7=*strongly agree*). The mean score for these four items was used to construct the cultural symbolism measure ($\alpha=.86$). The cultural symbolism score of the Ganges River scene (M=6.02, SD=.82) was higher than that of the non-iconic Indian river (M=4.77, SD=1.32), $t(10) = 2.91, p < .05$. Participants were then asked to evaluate the desirability of these two scenes on four items using a 7-point scale (*undesirable-desirable, unpleasant-pleasant, unfavorable-favorable, bad/good*, $\alpha=.95$). The desirability of the Ganges River scene (M=4.77, SD=1.41) did not differ from that of the non-iconic Indian river scene (M=4.86, SD=1.23), $t(10) = -.16, p = .88$. Lastly, participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they were familiar with the scene on a 7-point scale (1=*not familiar at all*, 7=*very familiar*). No significant differences were found in familiarity between the Ganges River (M=4.36, SD=1.63) and the non-iconic Indian river (M=3.55, SD=1.44), $t(10) = 1.04, p = .32$.

To manipulate the message respectfulness, in the potentially respectful condition, the tag line “water of life” was used. In the potentially disrespectful condition, the tag line “only from clean water” was used³. In the context of the Ganges River scene, the potentially respectful message was intended to elicit feelings of cultural politeness, whereas the potentially disrespectful message was intended to elicit feelings of cultural impoliteness. The message manipulation was expected to have no effect on the perceived cultural politeness of the advertisement depicting a non-iconic river.

After participants had viewed the advertisement, they were instructed to evaluate their perceived cultural politeness by responding to the cultural politeness items ($\alpha=.95$)

³ The respectful/disrespectful message would acquire different meaning when it is paired with different images. For instance, if the tag line “only from clean water” is presented together with a picture of the Tirupati Temple, which is also a symbol of temple culture in India, consumers may not feel that the brand is not polite to Indian culture. Likewise, the message itself is neither culturally respectful nor disrespectful if it is placed in culture-unrelated contexts. However, when the message is presented with a cultural symbol, the message can be interpreted as being either culturally respectful or culturally disrespectful. Therefore, I labeled the two levels of the message manipulation as potentially respectful and potentially disrespectful.

and the personal politeness items ($\alpha=.82$), both on a 7-point scale (1=*not at all*, 7=*very much*). The politeness items were the same as those used in Studies 1 and 2.

Next, participants responded to a measure of purchase intention ($\alpha=.92$) by indicating their responses using a 7-point scale (1=*definitely won't*, 7=*definitely will*): (a) “how likely would you buy the mineral water from Zonet?” (b) “If your friend wants to buy a bottle of mineral water, how likely would you recommend your friend to buy it from Zonet,” and (c) “how likely would you visit the Zonet’s website to view the product.” Participants also evaluated the brand with 4 bipolar items each on a 7-point scale (*bad/good*, *undesirable-desirable*, *unpleasant-pleasant*, *unattractive-attractive*, $\alpha=.95$). Participants also rated on a 7-point scale (1=*not at all*, 7=*very much*) how intensely the brand elicited each of the following three positive emotions (*liking*, *happiness*, *admiration*, $\alpha=.94$) and three negative emotions (*hatred*, *anger*, *contempt*, $\alpha=.85$). These measures were adapted from Yang (2011).

Afterwards, participants responded to standardized measures of individualism ($\alpha=.76$, $M=5.40$, $SD=.89$), collectivism ($\alpha=.78$, $M=5.16$, $SD=.97$), patriotism ($\alpha=.83$, $M=5.34$, $SD=.94$), and nationalism ($\alpha=.68$, $M=5.06$, $SD=.85$). The measures of individualism and collectivism were taken from Oyserman et al. (2002). The nationalism and patriotism scales were taken from Kosterman and Feshbach (1989). All items were measured with a 7-point scale (1=*not at all*, 7=*very much*).

Two items were used to measure the extent to which the scene in the advertisement was perceived to be a symbol of Indian culture: “To what extent do you perceive the place to be a symbol of Indian culture” and “To what extent do you perceive the place to be a sacred space in India” (1=*not at all*, 7=*very much*). The mean of the two items was used to form the cultural symbolism measure ($\alpha=.74$). The participants gave higher cultural symbolism ratings to the Ganges River ($M=5.61$, $SD=1.32$) than to the non-iconic river

($M=4.91$, $SD=1.44$), $F(1, 99) = 6.45$, $p < .05$, indicating that the Ganges River was perceived to be a symbol of Indian culture.

Two other items were also included to measure the extent to which the brand was perceived to be foreign or local brand, via a 7-point scale (1=*not at all*, 7=*very much*). Participants tended to perceive the brand to be a foreign brand ($M=4.77$, $SD=1.77$) rather than a local one ($M=3.82$, $SD=1.87$), $t(101) = 3.03$, $p < .01$.

Results

Cultural politeness perception

I performed a Cultural context \times Message ANOVA on perceived cultural politeness. As shown in Figure 3, the interaction of cultural context and the message on perceived cultural politeness was significant ($F(1,101) = 4.73$, $p < .05$), indicating that when the advertisement depicted a Ganges River scene, a symbol of Indian culture, participants perceived the advertisement to be more culturally polite when the message was respectful ($M=4.02$) than when it was not ($M=2.95$), $F(1,101) = 5.88$, $p < .05$. However, the message had no effect on the cultural politeness perception of the advertisement when it depicted a non-iconic Indian river. The interaction of cultural context and message on personal politeness perception of the advertisement was not significant ($F(1,101) = .12$, $p = .73$). This result showed that presenting an image of a culturally significant river scene together with a potentially respectful message elicited cultural politeness rather than personal politeness.

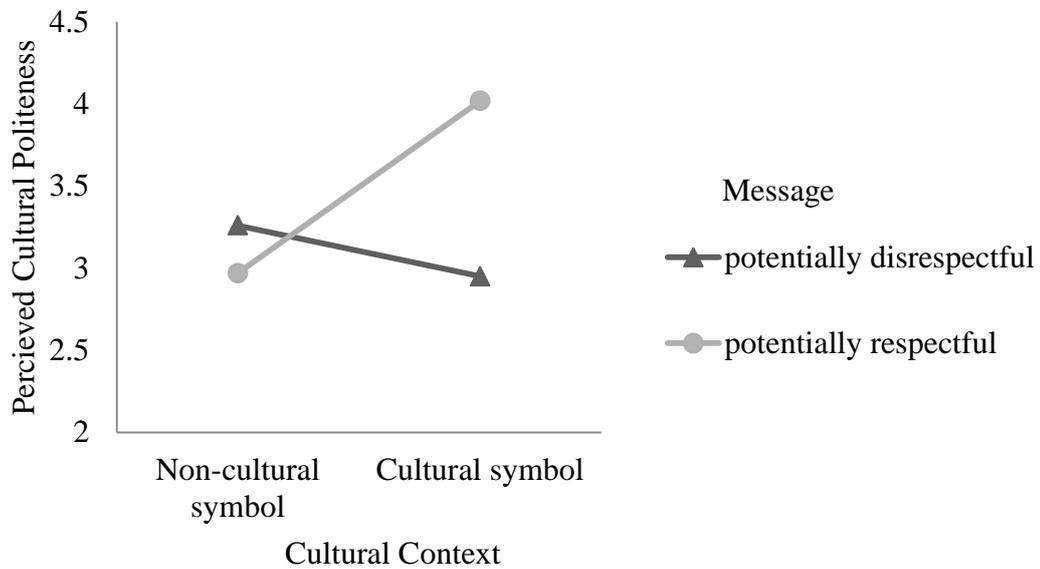


Figure 3. Perceived cultural politeness as a function of cultural context and message (Study 3)

Cultural politeness in weakening exclusionary reactions

To measure exclusionary reactions, I adapted the procedure from Yang (2011). I first subtracted the mean of negative emotions from that of positive emotion items to compute an affect balance score. Next, I standardized the mean of purchase intention items, the mean of cognitive evaluation items, and the affect balance score. Each component score had a standard deviation of 1.00. Next, I took the mean of the three standardized component scores to compute a reaction score ($\alpha=.93$). A higher score on this measure indicates more positive reactions toward the brand.

The structural equation model shown in Figure 4 illustrates the mediating role of cultural politeness in exclusionary reactions. LISREL 8.70 was used to test the model. To prepare the data for analysis, item-level responses to the cultural politeness scale were combined into three aggregate item parcels, which were used as indicators of cultural politeness perception in the structural equation modeling. The method of generating

aggregate item parcels followed the approach suggested by Landis, Beal and Tesluk (2000). The purchase intention, cognitive evaluation, and affect score, were used to form the indicators of reaction (See Figure 4). The correlations among the variables are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 *Inter-Correlations Among Measured Variables (Study 3)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Cultural Context (1=cultural symbol, 0=non-cultural symbol)	---								
2. Message (1=respect, 0=disrespect)	.03	---							
3. Cultural politeness perception	.13	.11	---						
4. Personal politeness perception	.10	.12	.82**	---					
5. Reactions toward the brand	-.20*	.15	.65**	.63**	---				
6. Nationalism	-.09	.13	.12	-.03	.27*	---			
7. Patriotism	.18	-.09	-.04	.07	-.14	.20*	---		
8. Individualism	.06	-.03	.20*	.12	.15	.38**	.35**	---	
9. Collectivism	.01	-.02	.10	.00	.27**	.57**	.21**	.41**	---
Mean	.48	.52	3.31	3.63	.00	5.06	5.34	5.40	5.16
Standard Deviation	.50	.50	1.64	1.68	.93	.85	.94	.94	.97

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

To evaluate the mediating effect of cultural politeness perception on reaction, I compared two models: a partial mediation model and a full mediation model. In the partial mediation model, cultural politeness perception partially mediated the interaction

of cultural context and message on reactions to the brand. That is, the path between the interaction of cultural context and message and the reactions was included in the model. In the full mediation model, this path was not included (see Figure 4). The change in the chi-square statistic was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df=2.23/1, p>.05$), which suggested that the full mediation model fits the data reasonably well. The global fit indexes for the full mediation model were: $\chi^2(22) = 45.36, p < .01$, CFI=.97, NFI=.95, NNFI=.95, RMSEA=.098 and SRMR=.049.

As is evident in Figure 4, cultural context was negatively correlated with reactions. That is, a culturally significant context in which the local cultural symbol (vs. a non-cultural symbol) was present elicited less positive reaction. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported. This result is also consistent with the previous research finding (Yang, 2011) that an intrusion into the sacred space by a commercial brand would evoke negative reactions toward the brand. Moreover, the interaction of cultural context and message was positively correlated with perceived cultural politeness, and perceived cultural politeness was positively correlated with reaction. That is, when a potentially respectful message was presented together with a picture of the Ganges River, participants perceived a higher level of cultural politeness, which would then induce more positive reactions, compared with the other three conditions. These results indicated that cultural politeness perception fully mediated the differences in reactions toward the brand across the four conditions, supporting Hypothesis 4.

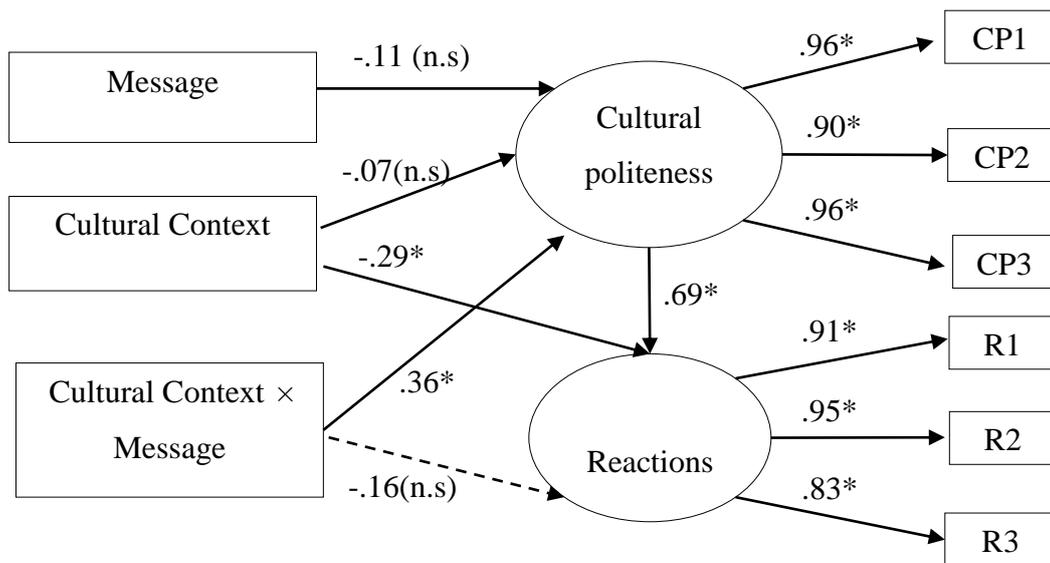


Figure 4. Proposed Model for Cultural Politeness in Mediating Responses toward Brand (Study 3)

Note:

- (1) Standardized coefficient values are shown near the associated path.
- (2) CP1, CP2, CP3 are three composite indicators of cultural politeness perception; R1, R2, R3 are the indicators of reactions, R1 is the behavioral component, R2 is the cognitive evaluation, R3 is the affect score.
- (3) The dashed line indicates a relationship not included in the full mediation model.
- (4) Variable definitions:
 Message=1 if the message is potentially respectful, and 0 if otherwise;
 Cultural context=1 if it is a culturally significant context, and 0 if otherwise.

Role of other cultural variables in reactions toward brand

To rule out the potential influence of other variables (i.e., individualism, collectivism, nationalism, and patriotism) on exclusionary reactions, I first performed a Cultural Context × Message × Individualism GLM, a Cultural Context × Message × Collectivism GLM, a Cultural Context × Message × Nationalism GLM, and a Cultural Context × Message × Patriotism GLM on cultural politeness perception. Patriotism, nationalism, individualism, and collectivism were mean-centered to minimize the threat of multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991). The three-way interaction on cultural

politeness perception was not significant for patriotism ($F(1,97)=3.00, p=.09$), nationalism ($F(1,97)=.00, p=.97$), individualism ($F(1,97)=.44, p=.51$) and collectivism ($F(1, 97)=1.77, p=.19$). In addition, nationalism, patriotism, and collectivism were not correlated with cultural politeness perception. Although there was a significant correlation between individualism and cultural politeness perception, the correlation was not strong (see Table 5).

I repeated these analyses on reactions toward the brand. The three-way interaction on reaction was not significant for patriotism ($F(1,97)=.07, p=.79$), nationalism ($F(1,97)=.55, p=.46$), individualism ($F(1,97)=.58, p=.45$) and collectivism ($F(1, 97)=.13, p=.72$). In addition, patriotism and individualism were not correlated with reactions toward the brand. Although correlations of reactions toward the brand with nationalism and collectivism were significant, the sizes of the correlations were small. Together, the results showed that individualism, collectivism, nationalism, and patriotism did not moderate the interaction of cultural context and message on cultural politeness.

Discussion

Study 3 provided support for the hypothesis that cultural politeness attenuates exclusionary reactions to entry of foreign brands into sacred cultural space, supporting Hypotheses 3 and 4. The results show that featuring (vs. not featuring) a cultural icon in the advertisement of a foreign brand could elicit stronger negative reactions among Indian participants toward the brand. However, when this ad is accompanied by a culturally respectful message, local consumers would perceive a higher level of cultural politeness in ad and evaluate the brand favorably. Moreover, this interaction is not dependent on the levels of individualism, collectivism, nationalism, and patriotism of the consumers.

Study 4

To extend the cross-cultural generality of effect of cultural politeness on brand evaluation, I conducted another study (Study 4) using an Indian and an American sample. I used two groups of advertisements, one from the U.S. market and the other from the India market. Each group contained advertisements of three levels of cultural politeness (i.e., impolite, neutral, and polite) to the corresponding market. For example, impolite advertisements in the U.S. market are advertisements that are impolite to American culture. I expect that polite advertisements would increase positive responses to brands for both Indian and American participants. Moreover, Indian (American) participants would have stronger (weaker) responses toward the advertisements from the India market than from the U.S. market, because cultural politeness occurred in outgroup markets is less relevant to the ingroup. That is, I expect to find stronger responses to advertisements from ingroup versus outgroup markets.

Method

Participants

A sample of 84 participants in India (49 men) and 77 participants in the U.S. (32 men) was recruited from AMT. Participants received US\$1.00 for completing the study. Participant age in the Indian sample ranged from 21 to 63 years ($M=28.79$, $SD=.82$) and that in the American sample ranged from 18 to 60 years ($M=33.26$, $SD=11.00$).

Design and Procedures

This study adopted a 3 (Cultural politeness level: impolite, neutral, polite) \times 2 (Target market: India market vs. the U.S. market) within-subjects design. I manipulated cultural politeness level through the advertisements in the target market where the advertisements were released. I selected 15 advertisements for each market. The 15 advertisements from the U.S. market were divided equally into three sets of

advertisements, one set was impolite to American culture, one was neither impolite nor polite (i.e., neutral) to American culture, and one was polite to American culture.

Likewise, the 15 advertisements from the India market were divided equally into three sets, including advertisements that were impolite, neutral and polite to Indian culture, respectively⁴. All the advertisements were in storyboard formats. Brand names and logos were eliminated to exclude the confounding impact of participants' prior knowledge of existing brands.

Both Indian and American participants watched two groups of advertisements, one contained six advertisements from the U.S. market, and the other contained six advertisements from the India market. The order of presenting the two groups of advertisements was randomized. For each group of advertisements, the six advertisements included two advertisements selected randomly from the impolite set, two from the neutral set, and two from the polite set. Participants were told to watch six advertisements from global brands that had entered the U.S. (India) market before they watched the group of advertisements from the U.S. (India) market (see the sample of instruction below). In total each participant watched twelve advertisements.

“You will see six storyboards of advertisements that have been released in the United States. The advertisements are from various global brands that have entered the U.S. market. For the sake of maintaining privacy, we do not indicate the brand name in the advertisements. All brand names are replaced with “XX”.”

⁴ An independent pilot test indicated the manipulation of cultural politeness level was successful. For the advertisements in the U.S. market, American participants gave the lowest cultural politeness rating (7-point scale) to the impolite advertisements ($M=2.61$, $SD=.37$), a moderate rating to the neutral advertisements ($M=4.31$, $SD=.22$), and the highest rating to the polite advertisements ($M=5.90$, $SD=.29$), $F(2, 12) = 115.25$, $p<.000$. Likewise, for the advertisements in the India market, Indian participants gave the lowest cultural politeness rating to the impolite advertisements ($M=3.47$, $SD=.28$), a moderate rating to the neutral advertisements ($M=4.66$, $SD=.27$), and the highest rating to the polite advertisements ($M=6.03$, $SD=.24$), $F(2, 12) = 148.62$, $p<.000$.

After having watched each advertisement, participants responded to measures of purchase intention, cognitive evaluation, positive affect and negative affect. The purchase intention measure was similar to the one used in Study 3 (1=*definitely won't*, 7=*definitely will*): (a) “how likely would you purchase the product/service advertised in this advertisement?”; (b) “if your friends want to purchase a similar product/service, how likely would you recommend your friends to buy it from the brand in this advertisement?”; and (c) “how likely would you visit this brand’s website to view the product/service advertised in this advertisement?”. The cognitive evaluation measure of the brand and affective response measure were the same as those used in Study 3.

Afterwards, participants indicated the extent to which being polite to local culture was important in local advertising from foreign brands (1=*not important at all*, 7=*very important*). To reduce participants’ suspicion about the study purpose, participants also evaluated the importance of other aspects in advertising, such as clarity of the message, funniness of the ad, artistic appeal, message simplicity, and effect on customer relationship.

To control for other variables that may affect the effect of cultural politeness on responses to the brand, I measured the participants’ public self-consciousness (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975), individualism, and collectivism. I also measure their cultural politeness and personal politeness perceptions of each advertisement. The cultural politeness and personal politeness measures were the same as those developed in Study 1. Afterwards participants answered several demographic questions.

Results

Cultural Politeness Importance

The mean importance of cultural politeness in foreign brand communication did not differ between the India sample and U.S. sample, $F(1, 159) = 3.17, p = .077$,

suggesting that both Indian and American consumers have a need for a positive view of their own culture and believe equally strongly that being polite to the local culture is important in local markets for foreign brands.

Cultural Politeness Effect on Responses to Brands

Next, I tested whether the effect of cultural politeness on responses to the brand was present in American culture. To address this issue, I first prepared the data by creating two dummy variables. One dummy variable, *cultural impoliteness*, was used to compare the culturally impolite advertisements with neutral advertisements, and the other dummy variable, *cultural politeness*, was used to compare the culturally polite advertisements with the neutral advertisements (See Table 6). Responses to brands included four components: purchase intention, evaluation, positive affect, and negative affect. Multilevel analyses were performed, with the effect of cultural impoliteness on brand evaluation across brands analyzed at level 1 (within-individual), and the moderation effect of individual difference variables (public self-consciousness, individualism and collectivism) analyzed at level 2 (between-individual analysis).

Since the data included cross-level variables, I used random coefficient model (RCM) to analyze the data, following the procedures in Bliese and Ployhart (2002). In each sample I examined RCM models for each type of response respectively, that is, purchase intention, evaluation, positive affect, and negative affect (i.e., dependent variables). In these models, cultural impoliteness, cultural politeness, market, the interactive term of cultural impoliteness and market, and the interactive term of cultural politeness and market were entered as predictors. I first examined an intercept-only model and ICC[1] obtained from the model indicated that 29% of total purchase intention variance (27% of total evaluation variance; 28% of total positive affect variance, 54% of total negative affect variance) resided between individuals for the

Indian sample, 28% (13% of total evaluation variance; 19% of total positive affect variance, 24% of total negative affect variance) resided between individuals for the American sample. Next, for each sample, I compared the fit of a fixed model (i.e., the purchase intention slopes, evaluation slopes, positive affect slopes and negative affect slopes were set to be equal across participants) with the fit of a random model (i.e., the intercepts and slopes of purchase intention, evaluation, positive affect and negative affect were allowed to vary across participants). When purchase intention was the dependent variable, the comparison yielded a log-likelihood ratio of 75.03 ($p < .000$) for the Indian sample, and 32.06 ($p < .05$) for the American sample, revealing that a significant level of individual differences in purchase intention slopes for both samples. Thus, the random model fitted the data better than the fixed model. The same results were obtained for the other dependent variables (i.e., evaluation, positive affect and negative affect).

As seen from Table 6, results of the random models indicated that for Indian participants, culturally impolite (vs. neutral) ads evoked more negative responses and culturally polite (vs. neutral) ads evoked more positive responses for all four component measures of consumer responses to the brands. The interaction of *cultural politeness* and market predicted purchase intention ($\beta = -.47$, $p < .001$), evaluation ($\beta = -.48$, $p < .05$), and positive affect ($\beta = -.42$, $p < .05$). The interaction of *cultural impoliteness* and market predicted none of the responses. In other words, India-made polite (vs. neutral) ads evoked stronger positive responses than did US-made polite (vs. neutral) ads among Indian consumers (see Figure 4 for the purchase intention as an example).

Table 6 *Random Coefficient Model Parameter Estimates (Study 4)*

Dependent Variable:	Purchase Intention	Evaluation	Positive Affect	Negative Affect
Predictor:				
India Sample ^a				
Intercept	5.19***	5.52***	5.18***	2.67***
Cultural Impoliteness	-.62***	-.71***	-.67***	.32*
Cultural Politeness	.40**	.42**	.37**	-.20
Market	-.09	-.15	-.18	-.28*
Cultural Impoliteness × Market	.18	.15	.11	.09
Cultural Politeness × Market	-.47**	-.48*	-.42*	.20
U.S. Sample ^b				
Intercept	3.41***	4.08***	3.47***	1.87***
Cultural Impoliteness	-.41*	.05	-.14	.05
Cultural Politeness	.40*	.94***	.84***	-.40**
Market	.48**	.58**	.48*	-.15
Cultural Impoliteness × Market	-.68**	-1.56***	-1.18***	.89***
Cultural Politeness × Market	-.28	-.24	-.16	.15

^a n = 1008 evaluation observations nested in 84 participants.

^b n = 924 evaluation observations nested in 77 participants.

*p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001; Coefficients are unstandardized.

Variable Definitions:

Cultural Impoliteness = 1 if the advertisements are impolite, and 0 if otherwise;

Cultural Politeness = 1 if the advertisements are polite, and 0 if otherwise;

Market = 1 if the advertisements are from the U.S. market, and 0 if otherwise.

For American participants (see Table 6), cultural impoliteness negatively predicted purchase intention, and cultural politeness predicted increased purchase intention, evaluation and positive affect, and decreased negative affect. The interaction of cultural impoliteness and market predicted decreased purchase intention, evaluation and positive affect, and increased negative affect. No significant interaction effects of cultural politeness and market on the responses were found. In sum, US-made impolite (vs. neutral) ads evoked stronger negative responses than did India-made impolite (vs. neutral) ads among American consumers.

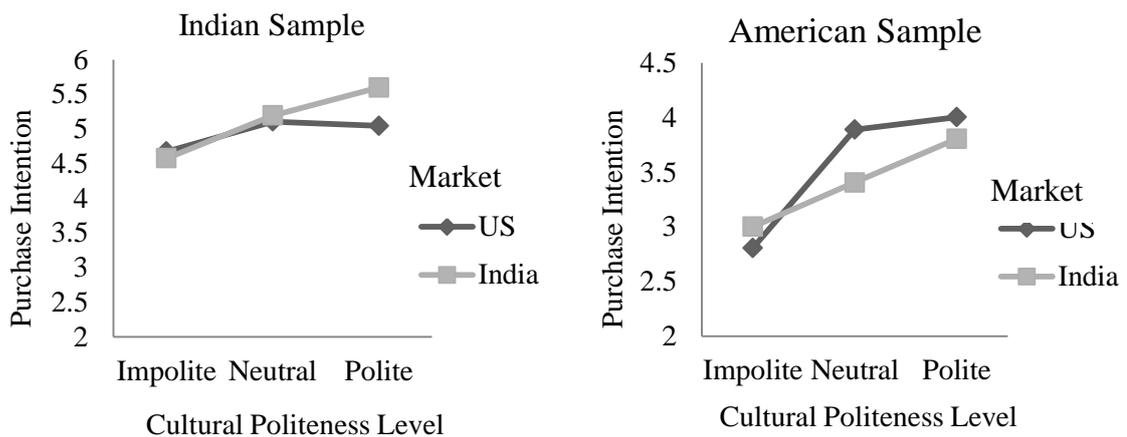


Figure 5. Purchase intention as a function of politeness and market (Study 4)

I then conducted another RCM by including variables of public self-consciousness, individualism and collectivism in both samples. The above effects were still significant and I did not find any significant effects of public self-consciousness, individualism, and collectivism on responses to brands.

Sample Comparison of Cultural Politeness Impact

To directly compare the responses in the American and Indian sample, I estimated the effect of country (1=U.S., 0=India) on the size of the coefficients of the effect of cultural politeness, cultural impoliteness, cultural politeness \times market, cultural impoliteness \times market in the random coefficient model.

As seen from Table 7, *cultural impoliteness* had stronger impacts on purchase intention, evaluation, positive affect and negative affect among Indian participants than among American participants. *Cultural Politeness* had stronger impacts on evaluation, positive affect and negative affect among American participants than among Indian participants. The effects of cultural impoliteness \times market on purchase intention and evaluation were stronger among American participants than among Indian participants. The effects of cultural politeness \times market on purchase intention, evaluation and

positive affect were stronger among Indian participants than among American Participants.

Table 7 Sample Comparison in Coefficient Differences (Study 4)

Dependent Variable: Coefficient of the Effect of Predictors on Purchase Intention	Cultural Impoliteness	Cultural Politeness	Cultural Impoliteness × Market	Cultural Politeness × Market
Sample Comparison (1=U.S., 0=India)	.21*	-.00	-.86***	.18*
Dependent Variable: Coefficient of the Effect of Predictors on Evaluation	Cultural Impoliteness	Cultural Politeness	Cultural Impoliteness × Market	Cultural Politeness × Market
Sample Comparison (1=U.S., 0=India)	.77***	.52***	.31**	.82***
Dependent Variable: Coefficient of the Effect of Predictors on Positive Affect	Cultural Impoliteness	Cultural Politeness	Cultural Impoliteness × Market	Cultural Politeness × Market
Sample Comparison (1=U.S., 0=India)	.53***	.47***	.07	.73***
Dependent Variable: Coefficient of the Effect of Predictors on Negative Affect	Cultural Impoliteness	Cultural Politeness	Cultural Impoliteness × Market	Cultural Politeness × Market
Sample Comparison (1=U.S., 0=India)	-.28*	-.21***	-.04	.17

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; Coefficients are unstandardized.

Perceived Cultural Politeness

The manipulation of cultural politeness was successful. Polite advertisements positively predicted cultural politeness perception in the Indian sample ($b=1.07$, $p < .001$) as well as in the American sample ($b=1.37$, $p < .001$). Impolite advertisements negatively predicted cultural politeness perception in the Indian sample ($b=-1.09$, $p < .001$) as well as in the American sample ($b=-.51$, $p < .01$).

Mediation Analysis

Following the approach stipulated by Baron and Kenny (1986), I examined whether cultural politeness perception mediated impact of the cultural politeness of the ads on responses to brands. Table 8 shows the results of the regressions performed on

each dependent variable⁵. Model 1 shows that polite advertisements increased perceived cultural politeness for both the Indian sample (b=1.08, p<.001) and the American sample (b=.94, p<.001). Model 2 shows that polite advertisements significantly increased purchase intention, evaluation and positive affect, and decreased negative affect in both samples. When the variable for perceived cultural politeness was entered into the regression (model 3), the effects in model 2 completely disappeared, except for the effect of polite advertisements on purchase intention in the Indian sample. Taken together, results from this study provided clear evidence that cultural politeness perception mediates the effect of culturally polite advertisements on responses to brands in both Indian and American cultures.

Table 8 *Random Coefficient Model Analysis for Mediation Analyses (Study 4)*

Dependent Variable:	Perceived Cultural Politeness		Purchase Intention			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample
Politeness (-1=impolite ads, 0=neutral ads, 1=polite ads)	1.08***	.94***	.51***	.40***	.15*	-.09
Target Market	-.06	.58***	-.18*	.16	-.18*	-.13
Politeness × Target Market	-.55***	.68***	-.33***	.20	-.14	-.15
Perceived Cultural Politeness					.34***	.52***

⁵ To reduce the number of estimated parameters in the regression models, I collapsed the two dummy variables (culturally polite vs. neutral ads; culturally impolite vs. neutral ads) into a continuous variable (impolite vs. neutral vs. polite ads). Although this is not ideal, given that monotonic increasing functions relating consumer responses to politeness levels and the relatively small number of participants in the current study, this represents an acceptable compromise.

Table 8 *Random Coefficient Model Analysis for Mediation Analyses (Study 4)*
(Continued)

Dependent Variable:	Perceived Cultural Politeness		Evaluation			
	Predictor:		Model 2		Model 3	
	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample
Politeness (-1=impolite ads, 0=neutral ads, 1=polite ads)	1.08***	.94***	.57***	.44***	.12	-.16
Target Market	-.06	.58***	-.26**	-.02	-.24**	-.33***
Politeness × Target Market	-.55***	.68***	-.31***	.66***	-.10	.27*
Perceived Cultural Politeness					.42***	.62***

Dependent Variable:	Perceived Cultural Politeness		Positive Affect			
	Predictor:		Model 2		Model 3	
	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample
Politeness (-1=impolite ads, 0=neutral ads, 1=polite ads)	1.08***	.94***	.52***	.48***	.09	-.10
Target Market	-.06	.58***	-.29***	.03	-.26***	-.30**
Politeness × Target Market	-.55***	.68***	-.26**	.51***	-.06	.13
Perceived Cultural Politeness					.41***	.60***

Dependent Variable:	Perceived Cultural Politeness		Negative Affect			
	Predictor:		Model 2		Model 3	
	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample	India Sample	U.S. Sample
Politeness (-1=impolite ads, 0=neutral ads, 1=polite ads)	1.08***	.94***	-.26**	-.23**	-.04	.08
Target Market	-.06	.58***	-.18*	.20*	-.19*	.39***
Politeness × Target Market	-.55***	.68***	.06	-.37***	-.03	-.19
Perceived Cultural Politeness					-.14**	-.30***

*p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001; Coefficients are unstandardized.

Discussion

Study 4 provided further evidence that cultural politeness in marketing communication can increase the perceived cultural politeness of a foreign brand and hence improve consumer evaluation of the brand. Furthermore, this effect is found among both Indian and American consumers. These results had two major implications. First, in general, cultural politeness generated more favorable consumer responses (e.g., purchase intention, evaluation, and positive affect) toward the foreign brand in both Indian consumers and American consumers.

Second, Indian and American consumers differ in their response to India- and US-made advertisements. Indian consumers responded more favorably to the India-made (vs. US-made) *polite* advertisements. That is, Indian consumers rated a foreign brand more favorably when its advertisement resembled an India-made advertisement and communicated in a culturally polite manner. In contrast, American consumers responded more negatively to US-made (vs. India-made) *impolite* advertisements. They disliked a foreign brand more if its advertisement resembled an US-made advertisement and communicated in a culturally impolite manner. In short, although the cultural politeness of marketing communication affected the brand evaluations of both Indian and American consumers, Indian consumers are more positively affected by polite accommodation to the Indian style of marketing communication (which is more likely to be found in India-made ads), and American consumers are more negatively affected by impolite accommodation to the American style of marketing communication (which is more likely to be found in US-made ads).

This cultural difference may arise from the relative status of the US and India. The economic strength of the U.S. in the global economy is much higher than that of India. Therefore, American consumers may attribute high status to American culture, while

Indian consumers may attribute low status to Indian culture. Past research shows that people tend to behave more (less) politely in interpersonal interactions when they are in a relatively low (high) status (Brown & Gilman, 1989). Thus, Americans tend to expect *culturally polite* communication from foreign brands and be less tolerant of culturally impolite communication, particularly when foreign brands adopt a local approach to advertising and behave in a culturally disrespectful manner. In contrast, Indian consumers do not have strong expectation for culturally polite communication from high status foreign brands, and are particularly appreciative when foreign brands adopt a local approach to advertising and behave in a culturally respectful manner. This explanation, albeit speculative, merits future investigation.

V. LOCAL BRAND PERCEPTION IN MODERATING CULTURAL POLITENESS EFFECT

In this chapter, I report a study (Study 5) that tested Hypothesis 5 regarding the moderating effect of local brand perception on the importance of cultural politeness in the acceptance of foreign brands. As discussed above, LCCP strategy leads to a perception that the brand is typically consumed by the local community and looks like a local brand. Local consumers with strong local brand perception would consider the brand an ingroup member of the local community, thus decreasing the effect of cultural politeness. However, the importance of cultural politeness increases when local consumers fail to establish a local brand perception. To test this hypothesis, in Study 5, I used KFC in China as the target brand. KFC uses LCCP strategy in China. Most of its products have been localized in China, such as providing rice and porridge that fit well with Chinese consumers' cuisine habits. Also, KFC's official website in China emphasizes that KFC is sincere in adapting for Chinese consumers.

Study 5

KFC TV commercials were used in Study 5. This study examined how local brand perception moderated the importance of cultural politeness in marketing communication.

Method

Participants

A sample of 105 Chinese students was recruited from Peking University in China (70 women, 35 men); 103 were graduate students and 2 were undergraduate students. The age range was 18 to 41 ($M=22.50$, $SD=2.89$). Each participant received 20 Chinese Yuan ($\text{\$4}$) for participating in this study.

Design and Procedure

Participants completed the study in the computer rooms on campus. They were first instructed that the purpose of the study was to investigate people's perception of advertisements. Next they watched 10 thirty-second TV commercials from China from KFC on computers. The order of the commercials presented was randomized. Further, the commercials were saved on the desktop of computers for the participants to watch at any time. This reduced the carryover effect, as participants could adjust their responses toward the respective commercials by reviewing them again.

Next, participants evaluated each commercial on a 7-point scale (*dislike very much/like very much, bad/good, undesirable-desirable, unpleasant-pleasant, unattractive-attractive*; the Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from .92 to .96 for all commercials).

The perceived cultural politeness of each commercial was measured. To shorten the time participants spent on the survey and to avoid fatigue in answering a long survey, three cultural politeness items were used. These items were adapted from the cultural politeness scale developed in Studies 1 and 2. I included these three items in Study 3, and found high correlations between these adapted items and original cultural politeness items (all r s exceeded .50, $p < .001$). In addition, the adapted items had significant correlations within the cultural politeness scale (ranging from .59 to .85). Thus, the adapted items were reliable in measuring cultural politeness perception. These adapted items were as follows: "I think that in this advertisement, KFC is trying to show respect to Chinese people and their culture," "I think that this advertisement shows Chinese culture in a very polite way," "In this advertisement, I felt that KFC is trying hard to be polite to Chinese people and their culture" (7-point scale, 1=*not at all*, 7=*very much*; for all commercials, the Cronbach's alpha ranged from .88 to .95).

Then participants responded to a measure of nationalism ($M=4.08$, $SD=.92$, $\alpha=.72$). To measure participant perception of KFC as a brand belonging to the local community, I asked participants to indicate the extent to which they perceived KFC to be a Chinese brand (1=*strongly disagree*, 7=*strongly agree*, $M=3.37$, $SD=1.71$). Participants were also asked to indicate the extent to which they perceived KFC as a typical American brand (1=*strongly disagree*, 7=*strongly agree*, $M=5.49$, $SD=1.46$). Finally, participants answered several demographic questions.

Results

Data used in this study were analyzed at two levels of analysis: within-individual and between-individual. Perceived cultural politeness of commercials and evaluations of those commercials constituted the within-individual measures (i.e., level 1, 13 cultural politeness and evaluation of the 13 commercials). The between-individual measures (i.e., level 2) included local brand perception, nationalism, and American brand perception. The relationship between cultural politeness perception and evaluation at level 1 were subjected to the potential moderation effects of variables at level 2. To test these cross-level relationships, I conducted a random coefficient model (RCM) analysis using R, following the analytical procedures set forth in Bliese and Ployhart (2002).

I first grand-mean-centered the predictors (i.e., cultural politeness perception, nationalism, American brand perception, and local brand perception), as suggested by Hofmann and Gavin (1998), because grand-mean centering can reduce multicollinearity between main-effect and interaction terms when interaction terms are included. Then, I examined an intercept-only model using RCM to estimate the amount of variance in advertisement evaluation residing between and within individuals. The intraclass correlation (ICC[1]) obtained from the model indicated that 31% of total advertisement evaluation variance resided between individuals, and 69% of total advertisement

evaluation variance resided within individuals. Next, a second model was tested, using RCM, where, for each individual, the cultural politeness perception of each commercial was set to predict the corresponding commercial evaluation scores. Basically, this model involved the regression of the advertisement evaluation on perceived cultural politeness. Results revealed that cultural politeness perception was positively correlated with advertisement evaluation (.30, $p < .001$). Then, I evaluated a third model, where intercepts and slopes of advertisement evaluations were allowed to vary across participants. A comparison of the fit of the second model (in which the evaluation slopes were set to be equal across participants) with the fit of the third model yielded a log-likelihood ratio of 30.81 ($p < .001$), revealing that a significant level of individual differences in advertisement evaluation slopes. That is, the extent of the influence of cultural politeness perception on advertisement evaluations differed across individuals.

To examine whether local brand perception moderated the importance of cultural politeness in advertisement evaluation, I conducted further RCM analyses where the advertisement evaluation was treated as the dependent variable, and nationalism, typicality of American brand, and local brand perception were treated as level 2 predictors (see Table 9). In these analyses, the direct effects of level 1 predictors on advertisement evaluation captured their relationships with advertisement evaluation. The moderation effect of local brand perception was captured by the interaction between cultural politeness perception (level 1 predictor) and local brand perception (level 2 predictor). As shown in Table 9, local brand perception positively predicted the advertisement evaluation, but nationalism and American brand perception did not. Moreover, local brand perception negatively predicted the association between cultural politeness and the advertisement evaluation, $b = -.06$, $p < .05$.

Table 9 Random Coefficient Model Parameter Estimates of Predictors of Advertisement Evaluation^a (Study 4)

Variable	Estimate	s.e.	df	t	p
Intercept	4.85	.07	941	69.82	.000
Cultural politeness perception	.33	.04	941	7.90	.000
Nationalism	.12	.08	101	1.53	.128
American brand perception	.05	.05	101	.90	.369
Local brand perception	.14	.05	101	3.13	.002
Nationalism × Cultural politeness perception	-.05	.04	941	-1.04	.300
American brand perception × Cultural politeness perception	-.04	.03	941	-1.34	.181
Local brand perception × Cultural politeness perception	-.06	.03	941	-2.20	.028

^a n=1050 evaluation observations nested in 105 participants.

Note:

- (1) The dependent variable is the advertisement evaluation;
- (2) Cultural politeness perception is the level 1 predictor; Nationalism, American brand perception, and local brand perception are the level 2 predictors. The interaction terms reflect the relationships of level 2 predictors with the effect of cultural politeness perception on advertisement evaluation.

To further clarify the interaction of local brand perception and cultural politeness perception on evaluation of advertisements, I performed simple slope analyses and plotted the effect of local brand perception on the cultural politeness slope by using the Aiken and West (1991) procedures. As shown in Figure 6, the relation between the level of cultural politeness and advertisement evaluation was more pronounced in the condition of low local brand perception [M=4.05 vs. 5.18 for low vs. high level of cultural politeness, respectively; $\beta=.42$, $t(941)=7.20$, $p<.001$] than in the condition of high local brand perception [M=4.79 vs. M=5.41 for low vs. high level of cultural politeness, respectively; $\beta=.23$, $t(941)=3.86$, $p<.001$]. These results indicate that among participants who see KFC as Chinese people's brand, the impact of cultural politeness on advertisement evaluation become weaker, supporting H5.

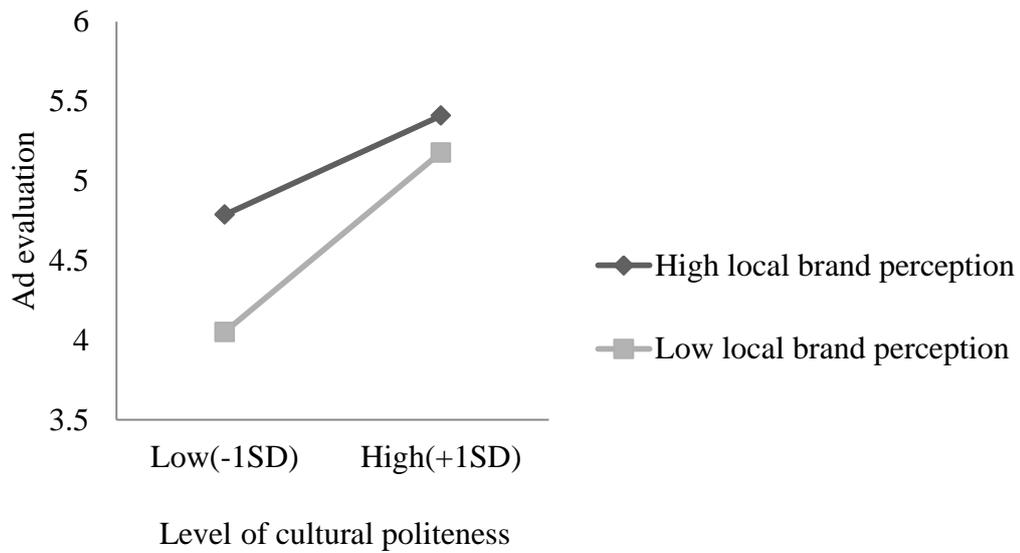


Figure 6. Interactive Effects of Cultural Politeness and Local Brand Perception on Advertisement Evaluation (Study 4).

Discussion

Hypothesis 5 is supported. Study 5 results show that the importance of cultural politeness decreases when Chinese participants strongly believe that KFC is a Chinese brand. When local consumers subjectively perceive KFC to be a local brand, they are less sensitive to cultural politeness in marketing communication. However, when local consumers have a weak local brand perception, cultural politeness becomes more important in the communication.

VI. CULTURAL POLITENESS STRATEGIES

This chapter reports on a multidimensional scaling study (Study 6) that provides initial evidence of cultural politeness strategies that marketers can use. I gathered a few Coca Cola commercials released in China and generated storyboards to use in the study.

Method

Participants

I recruited 81 Chinese students from Peking University (32 men, 49 women). They each received 15 RMB (\$2.40) for participating in the study. Age ranged from 18 to 29 years ($M=22.43$, $SD=2.52$). All were born in China.

Design and Procedure

Participants first watched 17 Coca Cola commercials that were launched in China. The commercials were presented in storyboard format. The order of presentation was randomized. Participants were then asked to categorize the advertisements based on theme similarity. That is, similar advertisements were categorized into the same group. To prepare a matrix for multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis, for each possible paired advertisement, I calculated the number of participants who grouped them in a same group (see Table 10 for the matrix used in the analysis).

Next, participants indicated perceived cultural politeness for each advertisement on 7-point scales (1=*strongly disagree*, 7=*strongly agree*; Cronbach's alpha ranged from .82 to .97 across 17 advertisements) using the scale developed in Studies 1 and 2. Then, they evaluated each advertisement on 7-point scales (*dislike/like*, *bad/good*, *unpleasant/pleasant*, *unattractive/attractive*; Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from .94 to .97 across 17 advertisements). Finally, they answered several demographic questions. Similar to Study 5, to reduce the carryover effect, all the 17 advertisements

were displayed as an appendix to the questionnaire. Participants could review any advertisement any time they wished.

Table 10 *Matrix for MDS Analysis (Study 6)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Ad 1	0																
Ad 2	39	0															
Ad 3	1	3	0														
Ad 4	11	16	2	0													
Ad 5	0	3	34	2	0												
Ad 6	46	47	1	14	0	0											
Ad 7	16	9	1	50	2	21	0										
Ad 8	2	3	67	1	43	1	0	0									
Ad 9	57	34	1	4	2	40	8	2	0								
Ad 10	2	4	25	4	60	2	1	35	2	0							
Ad 11	47	33	2	5	1	34	9	2	64	1	0						
Ad 12	2	2	3	12	10	2	17	6	1	12	0	0					
Ad 13	1	1	1	10	1	1	12	0	2	4	7	21	0				
Ad 14	23	27	16	1	39	22	5	17	32	26	30	7	1	0			
Ad 15	1	7	1	10	1	3	22	1	1	4	1	36	17	2	0		
Ad 16	1	10	1	10	0	2	20	0	3	1	4	22	20	1	59	0	
Ad 17	62	34	0	8	0	46	16	0	55	1	49	3	2	29	4	5	0

Note: The numbers indicate how many participants categorized the paired advertisements in the same group.

Results

I used SPSS 15.0 to perform a PROXSCAL multidimensional scaling procedure. I assumed an ordinal structure of the similarity ratings that could be accommodated in a two-dimensional concept space. The low measure of stress score (stress=.10), values close to 1 for Dispersion Accounted For (=.99) and Tucker's Coefficient of Congruence (=.995) indicated a good data fit. To examine whether more dimensions were needed to better fit the data, I generated an elbow plot of the normalized raw stress score against dimension number (see Figure 7). The plot shows that as the number of dimensions

increased, stress decreased. The biggest decrease was from 1 to 2 dimensions, and the sharp change in the slope at dimension 2 indicated that the two-dimensional solution fitted the data well.

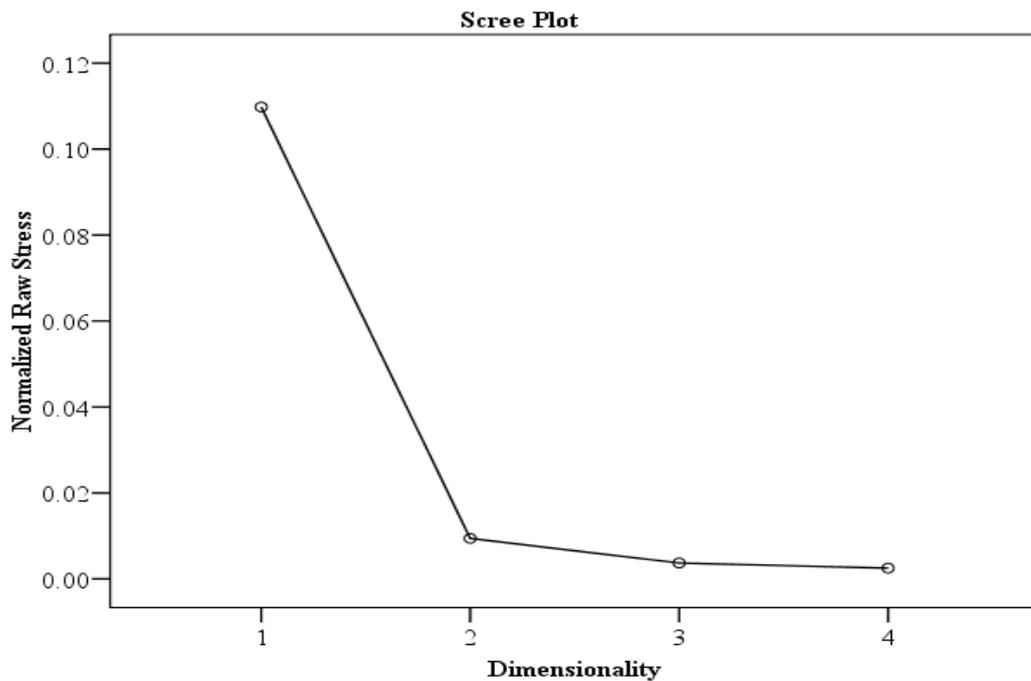
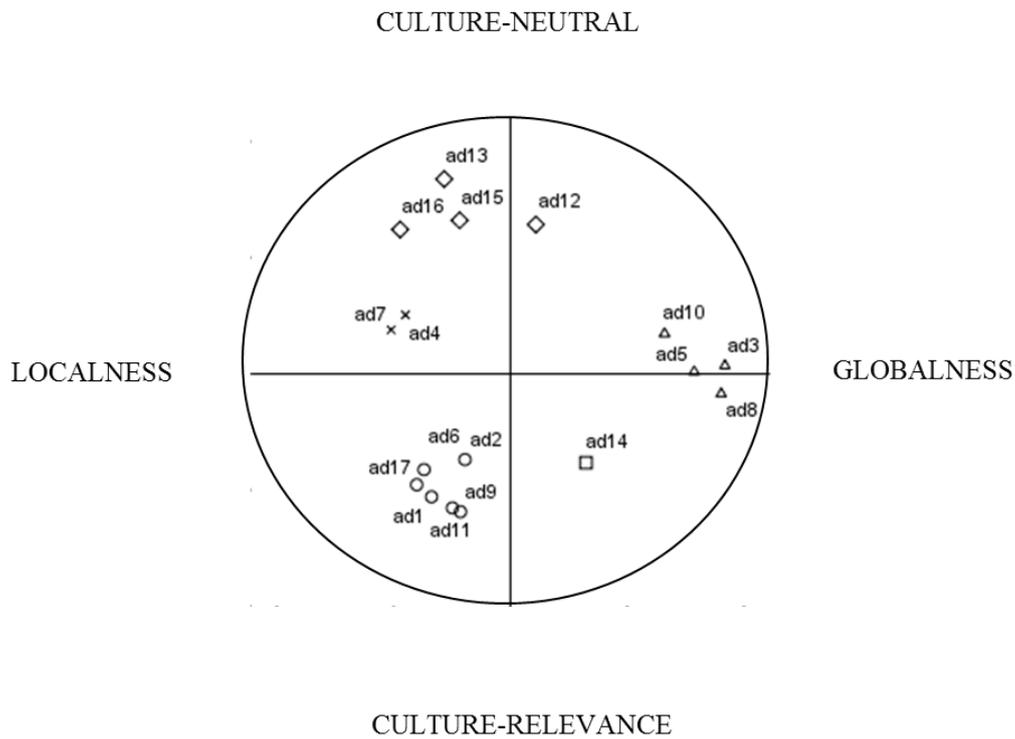


Figure 7. Stress for Solutions in One to Four Dimensions

Two meaningful dimensions emerged (see Figure 8). One dimension could be interpreted as the localness–globalness dimension. The cluster of ads on the right side of the circle map in Figure 8 comprised of advertisements highly connected to global events, while the advertisements on the left side of the circle map were related to localness (e.g., focusing on traditional Chinese cultural practices or humor). The other dimension was interpreted as culture-relevance. Toward the lower side is a group of advertisements highly relevant to local culture (e.g., strongly acknowledging Chinese practices and values), while the advertisements on the upper side are irrelevant to Chinese culture (i.e., culture-neutral). Based on these dimensions, five main clusters formed: (1) funny/interesting moments of daily life (ad12, ad13, ad15, and ad16, e.g., an

advertisement showing the protagonist grabbing the only bottle of Coke left in the refrigerator and not letting go even when they are eating, playing music, and walking on the street); (2) benefits for dinner stemming from the beverage (ad7 and ad4, e.g., the advertisement depicting a group of friends enjoying spicy Chinese hot pot with the ice-cold Coke); (3) connecting China to important international events, enhancing China's global connectedness (ad3, ad5, ad8, ad10, e.g., one advertisement showed Chinese people excited about the 2008 Olympic Games and welcoming the torch relay, with Yaoming, Coca Cola's endorser, appearing, holding the torch in his hand while bystanders cheered and drank Coke); (4) appreciating Chinese cultural traditions, and acknowledging Chinese modern values (ad1, ad2, ad6, ad9, ad11, and ad17, e.g., one advertisement showed a Chinese athlete, Liuxiang, the endorser, on the way home to celebrate the spring festival with his family and recalling how his father encouraged him when he was depressed, after which he arrives home, hugs his parents and opens a bottle of Coke for his father to share the happiness of Chinese New Year); and (5) combination of globalness and Chinese cultural practices (ad14: portraying Chinese athletes not able to go home to celebrate the Chinese New Year because they must prepare for the Olympic Games; they are really missing their families at New Year's Eve dinner, then suddenly their parents show up with big bottles of Coke to enjoy dinner with the athletes).



- Clusters
- ◇ 1 Funny moments
 - × 2 Benefits for dinner
 - △ 3 Globalness connection
 - 4 Acknowledgement of Chinese culture
 - 5 Mixes of globalness and Chinese culture

Figure 8. The 17 Advertisements Plotted in a Two-dimensional Space: Coordinates Are Based on Two-dimensional Multidimensional Scaling Solution (Study 5).

I computed the mean of cultural politeness perception of advertisements in each cluster. The results of t-test analysis indicated that the fourth and fifth clusters received the highest cultural politeness ratings. The first and second clusters received the lowest cultural politeness ratings (see Table 11). A further correlation analysis between the coordinates of dimensions and politeness perception revealed that the dimension of culture-relevance was highly correlated with cultural politeness perception ($-.84, p < .001$):

the more culture-neutral is an ad, the less culturally polite it is perceived to be. This result indicates that cultural politeness is much more relevant in the intercultural context. In contrast, the dimension of localness-globalness was not correlated with cultural politeness perception (.21, $p=.42$).

Table 11 *Mean Scores of Cultural Politeness Perception for Each Cluster and t-test Results (Study 6)*

Clusters	Mean	SD	Pairs for t-test	<i>p</i> -value
Group1: Funny moments	3.48	.89	Gp1 vs. Gp2	.000*
Group2: Benefits for dinner	3.83	1.10	Gp1 vs. Gp3	.000*
Group 3: Globalness connection	4.70	.93	Gp1 vs. Gp4	.000*
Group 4: Acknowledgment of Chinese cultural practices and values	5.14	.86	Gp1 vs. Gp5	.000*
			Gp2 vs. Gp3	.000*
Group 5: Mixes of globalness and Chinese culture	5.30	1.12	Gp2 vs. Gp4	.000*
			Gp2 vs. Gp5	.000*
			Gp3 vs. Gp4	.000*
			Gp3 vs. Gp5	.000*
			Gp4 vs. Gp5	.037

Notes:

- (1) The pairwise comparison is considered significant when the *p*-value is below .005, based on a Bonferroni adjustment with a probability of 5% (the adjusted significant p -value=.05/10, 10 is the number of comparisons).
- (2) * Significant comparisons.

To further demonstrate the relationship between the types of advertisements and cultural politeness perception, I performed a property vector fitting analysis, following the suggestions in Kruskal and Wish (1978). The variable of cultural politeness perception is seen as an external property as it was not used to generate the MDS solution itself. I used the coordinates of the two dimensions of MDS as predictors and cultural politeness perception as the dependent variable to run a regression. The obtained coefficients of the two dimensions were used to fit the property vector to the two-dimensional MDS solution plot (see Figure 9). Figure 9 shows that the advertisement

cluster of acknowledgment of Chinese culture is most likely to elicit cultural politeness perception, while the funny moments cluster is least likely to elicit cultural politeness perception.

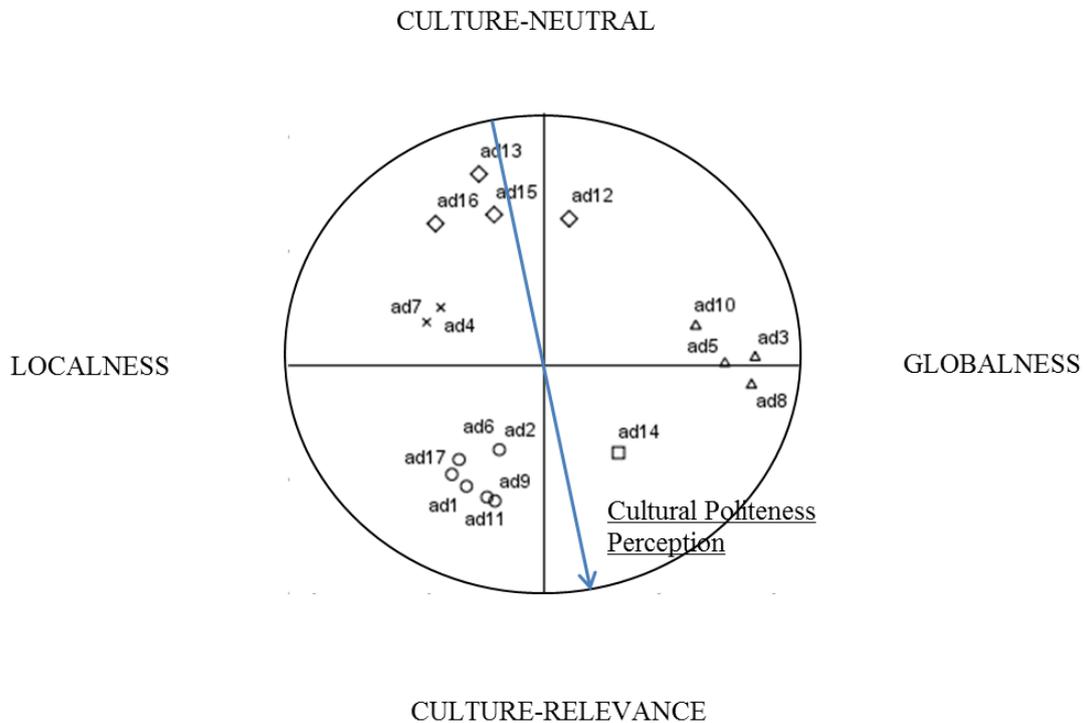


Figure 9. Cultural Politeness Perception Vector Fitted to Two-dimensional Multidimensional Scaling Coordinates (Study 6)

I further performed a t-test analysis to evaluate these five clusters. Results indicated that ads that acknowledged Chinese cultural practices (i.e., the fourth cluster) received relatively higher evaluation than did ads that emphasized consumer benefits of beverage (i.e., the second cluster) (see Table 12).

Table 12 Mean Scores of Evaluation for Each Cluster and t-test Results (Study 6)

Clusters	Mean	SD	Pairs for t-test	p-value
Group1: Funny moments	4.57	1.16	Gp1 vs. Gp2	.000*
Group2: Benefits for dinner	3.67	1.15	Gp1 vs. Gp3	.175
Group 3: Globalness connection	4.35	1.03	Gp1 vs. Gp4	.936
Group 4: Acknowledgment of Chinese culture practices and values	4.58	.92	Gp1 vs. Gp5	.932
Group 5: Mixes of globalness and Chinese culture	4.55	1.37	Gp2 vs. Gp3	.000*
			Gp2 vs. Gp4	.000*
			Gp2 vs. Gp5	.000*
			Gp3 vs. Gp4	.042
			Gp3 vs. Gp5	.198
			Gp4 vs. Gp5	.838

Notes:

- (1) The pairwise comparison is considered significant when the *p*-value is below .005, based on a Bonferroni adjustment with a probability of 5% (the adjusted significant *p*-value=.05/10; 10 is the number of comparisons).
- (2) * significant comparisons.

Discussion

Study 6 studied several possible strategies that marketers can choose to manage cultural politeness in marketing communication. Results indicate that acknowledgement of local cultural practices is accompanied by higher levels of cultural politeness perception. Marketers may remain culture-neutral in communication by emphasizing product benefits (e.g., beverage for dinner). However, this culture-neutral communication receives less positive evaluation than does culturally polite communication.

VII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

VII.1. Summary of findings

This research demonstrates the nature and importance of cultural politeness. There are several major findings in this research. First, a new construct, cultural politeness, is developed and validated. Second, cultural politeness is (and personal politeness is not) more relevant when marketers speak to consumers' culture in advertisements than when marketers communicate with consumers as individuals. Third, cultural politeness, not personal politeness, effectively weakens exclusionary reactions toward foreign brands. Indian consumers exhibit stronger exclusionary reactions toward the foreign brand when the advertisement depicts a scene of Ganges River, a symbol of Indian culture, than when it depicts a non-culturally iconic river. However, when the culturally iconic river scene is accompanied by a potentially respectful message, consumers perceive a higher level of cultural politeness, which in turn reduces exclusionary reactions toward the brand. Furthermore, the effect of cultural politeness on reactions to foreign brands is found in both Indian and American cultures. Interestingly, the same manipulations do not lead to different levels of perceived personal impoliteness, and perceived personal impoliteness does not affect exclusionary reactions toward a brand that communicates disrespectfully to the local culture.

However, the effect of cultural politeness on brand evaluation is affected by subjective local brand perception. The effect of cultural politeness perception on the evaluation of advertisements is attenuated when local consumers perceive the foreign brand as a local brand. When the foreign brand fails to be seen as a local brand, the effect of perceived cultural politeness on the evaluation of advertisements becomes stronger.

Finally, I identified several cultural politeness strategies that can be used in marketing communication. One approach is to acknowledge local cultural practices in

advertisements. For instance, the spring festival is an important tradition in China. Foreign brands could emphasize the benefits and values (e.g., family gathering, sharing happy moments with family members and friends) of the festival to communicate respect to Chinese consumers. Another way is to link the local community to the global world. For example, showing Chinese people's active participation and contribution in important international events (e.g., Olympic Games, World Cup) is seen as respectful to the values of the local community. Instead of using culturally relevant themes, marketers could also use culture-neutral advertisements when communicating to local consumers. For instance, the brand could emphasize product benefits in daily consumption (e.g., Coca Cola soft drink quenching thirst). Results show that culturally themed advertisements, compared to the neutral ones, are perceived to be more culturally polite and culturally polite communication strategies are more effective in enhancing the evaluation of advertisements than are culture-neutral ones.

VII.2. Theoretical Implications

Politeness theory has attracted considerable attention in interpersonal communication and language research (e.g., Brown & Gilman, 1989; Holtgraves, 1997; Holtgraves & Yang, 1992; Stephan et al., 2010). Drawing on current interpersonal politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), the present research offers a theoretical framework to justify the nature and importance of cultural politeness in marketing communication and globalization research. It also moves the politeness theory from the interpersonal interaction perspective toward the intercultural perspective.

First, current politeness theory is mainly investigated within cultures and in interpersonal conversations. However, current research (Chiu et al., 2010) demonstrates that individuals have a need to maintain and protect a positive view of their culture,

particularly when they perceive a threat of cultural erosion. Interpersonal politeness theory can be further extended by considering politeness in intercultural communication. The framework of cultural politeness in the present research extends current politeness theory by connecting it to new proposed developments in globalization research.

Second, as globalization results in an “experiential compression of time and space” (Giddens, 1985; Robertson, 1992), the co-presence of elements of local culture and foreign culture increases in prevalence in the global market. Therefore, current research in cultural psychology and globalization is shifting focus from the perspective of cultural similarities/differences to a new emphasis on the social psychology of culture mixing (Chiu et al., 2011). Recent symbolic exclusionism theory and research indicates that local consumers exhibit exclusionary reactions toward the inflow of foreign businesses (Cheng, 2010; Yang, 2011; Torelli et al., 2011), because the presence of culture mixing can lead to perceived cultural contamination. My results point to the possibility that foreign brands can reduce exclusionary reactions by being polite to local culture in marketing communication. Therefore, this research extends current symbolic exclusionism theory and moves the field toward the influence of culture mixing in the marketplace.

Third, previous research has suggested one positioning strategy for foreign brands aiming to enter a foreign market—LCCP (Alden et al., 1999). That is, global brands could build up local brand perception in the local community. However, it is not clear how these positioning strategies can affect consumer reactions. My findings (Study 5) provide initial theoretical insights by investigating the role of cultural politeness in managing penetration strategies in local markets. Consumers expect foreign brands to comply with the cultural politeness norms in the local community only when foreign brands are not perceived as local brands. Thus, this research extends current brand positioning research through the lens of cultural politeness.

Finally, my research also highlights the importance of cultural politeness in strengthening a positive brand image. Previous brand equity research from a customer-based perspective proposes that a positive brand image could be established through associating the brand with functional, symbolic, or experiential benefits (Keller, 1993). These benefits are culture-neutral. However, as globalization brings foreign brands into intercultural contacts with local communities, these benefits may not be able to completely fulfill local consumers' cultural expectations (i.e., need for a positive view of their own culture). As shown in the results in Study 6, compared to culture-neutral benefit orientation, showing positive sides of local culture or acknowledgement of local cultural practices can lead to a higher level of cultural politeness perception and a more positive evaluation of the foreign brand. Thus, my findings also enrich current brand equity theory through the perspective of cultural politeness.

VII.3. Managerial implications

Some global brands have encountered local consumer resistance to their local penetration strategy (Chiu & Cheng, 2007). This is a serious problem not only for Western brands that enter Asian markets (e.g., Axe's banned advertisements in India, see Admin, 2011; Nike's commercial is banned in China, see "Nike expresses apology", 2004), but also for Asian brands trying to expand globally. For example, when Lenovo acquired IBM's PC branch, American consumers considered this to be an imperialistic threat toward one of their core industries (see various postings at the company website). Cultural politeness could be an effective marketing communication strategy to weaken local communities' resistance and to manage local consumers' perception of foreign brands.

In the marketing context, politeness principles are applicable not only to the relationships between company representatives and customers (e.g., Coulter & Coulter, 2003; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Ohbyung & Sukjae, 2009); they are also applicable in the marketing communication between brands and consumers. Research indicates that brands can be associated with human personalities (Aaker, 1997). Consumers may also expect personified brands to comply with interpersonal communication norms in marketing communication, such as being polite. In particular, when the brand is from a foreign culture, consumers view the communication as a conversation from a cultural stranger and are thus more sensitive to cultural politeness. Therefore, the personal politeness and cultural politeness scales used in this research could provide the tools for marketers to monitor their marketing communication.

The present research also suggests possible ways in which marketers could achieve politeness. One way is to acknowledge local cultural practices and the other is to emphasize the values of the local community in the world. In addition, marketers could show positive elements of local culture, such as the positive aspects of cultural values, beliefs, practices, and traditions. Additionally, foreign brands can set up a common ground between local culture and foreign culture through portraying practices or values that are shared in both cultures. Showing respect to lower status groups in the local culture, emphasizing the equality of different cultures, and putting negative aspects of culture in a positive light may be strong predictors of cultural politeness, because these gestures signal that the foreign brand is working hard to understand local cultural beliefs and values as well as the true meaning of traditions and practices. Violation of these aspects could lead to the perception of cultural impoliteness and elicit negative evaluations of the brand.

Sometimes, marketers may want to communicate in a culture-neutral manner (i.e., using no culturally relevant elements) to avoid intercultural tension. However, the present research shows that such culture-neutral communication is evaluated less positively than culture-focused communication. Since some foreign brands are seen as foreign cultural symbols, they cannot avoid cultural issues in marketing communication, until an LCCP strategy successfully builds up their local brand perception. If this strategy fails, the perception of cultural politeness remains an important influence on consumer evaluation and marketers need to comply with the politeness principles in local markets. Under this circumstance, brands that use culturally polite advertisement would be more welcomed by local consumers. However, establishing a strong local brand perception through brand positioning strategies is not easy and requires heavy investment of effort and time in local markets. Moreover, some multinational companies may want to maintain their foreignness. Although it seems that it is always safe to be culturally polite, as this will not hurt consumer evaluation of the brand. However, culture-neutral commercials could significantly reduce costs, as culture-neutral messages can be used in all markets, while culture-relevant commercials require effortful customization in each market. Therefore, it is important to understand the mechanism of cultural politeness and to identify the situational factors that render the use of culturally polite marketing communication necessary. The present research provides some important insights for multinational companies to better manage global marketing by understanding the mechanism of cultural politeness.

VII.4. Limitations and further research

The present research has identified local brand perception as a possible factor moderating the effect of cultural politeness on the evaluation of foreign brands. This local

brand perception can be created via LCCP strategy. However, this strategy is not experimentally operationalized. It is difficult to examine the causal relationship between the strategy and the importance of cultural politeness. Moreover, I assume that LCCP strategy reduces the need for cultural politeness in marketing communication by creating a perception that the local community and the foreign brand belong to the same group, thus shortening local consumers' psychological distance from the foreign brand. This assumption has not been examined directly. Thus, future research should try to extend Study 5 results by manipulating the LCCP strategy and psychological distance. In addition, Alden et al. (1999) show that a few global brands (3.8% of the sample) use the foreign consumer culture positioning (FCCP) strategy, positioning their brands as symbols of a specific foreign consumer culture by associating their brand personalities, use occasion, and user groups with a particular foreign culture. Apparently, the FCCP strategy creates a perception that the brand is from a foreign community (i.e., foreign brand perception), which may increase the felt psychological distance of the brands from local consumers, rendering cultural politeness more important in brand evaluation. Further research could also examine the relationship of FCCP strategy and the importance of cultural politeness in foreign brand perception.

Future research can also extend the present research by examining cultural politeness in various contexts. First, cultural status may affect consumer expectation of cultural politeness. The level of economic development may reflect the status of different cultural groups. Research indicates that the speaker is expected to use more polite language and the addressee is expected to use less polite language as the relative power of the addressee over the speaker increases (Brown & Gilman, 1989). Relative power in the intercultural context may be reflected by relative economic status. For instance, developed countries are generally associated with a higher economic status compared

with developing countries. As shown in Study 4, when a foreign brand from a developed country enters a developing market, local consumers may not expect the brand to be very polite to the local community. Under this circumstance, a foreign brand communicating a high level of cultural politeness could strongly enhance the evaluation of the foreign brand. However, when a foreign brand from a developing country enters a developed country, being culturally polite is consistent with local consumer expectations. Under this circumstance, the impact of cultural politeness may be weak, although the negative impact of culturally impolite communication on consumer evaluations would be shown. These results suggest that intercultural status will affect the impact of cultural politeness. Future research could further investigate the role of cultural status in the importance of cultural politeness.

Second, it is interesting to examine politeness principles among luxury brands. How do local consumers respond to foreign luxury brands when the brands behave politely? I speculate that the salience of cultural identity of the brand and brand concepts would play a part. If the foreign culture identity is salient, in other words, local consumers consider the brand as a representative of a foreign culture rather than as a business entity, being culturally polite would enhance their evaluations of the brand. In contrast, if local consumers consider it as a business entity, their brand evaluations may depend on what type of brand concepts is elicited by the brand. For example, it would be easy for local consumers to process and accept its culturally polite communications if the luxury brand concept is related to self-transcendence (e.g., protect the welfare of others, prosocial), than if it is related to self-enhancement (e.g., dominance over people and resources), because consumers may expect brands with self-transcendence concept to be kind and warm in the communication.

Third, future research could examine the role of consumers' knowledge of persuasion tactics in the relevance of cultural politeness to brand evaluation. Persuasion tactics are marketers' strategic behaviors in presenting information that are designed to influence consumers' beliefs, attitudes, decisions, or actions (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Culturally polite communication is also a type of persuasion tactics. If many foreign brands use this tactic, it would lose its capability to communicate authentic respect to local consumers. Under this circumstance, increasing consumers' cognitive load may lead to the usage of culturally polite messages as a heuristic cue in processing persuasion information, causing increased evaluations.

Fourth, the influence of cultural politeness on brand evaluations may be particularly strong for consumers who have a strong collective self-esteem. Collective self-esteem refers to value placed on one's social groups and people with a high collective self-esteem strongly strive to maintain and protect the image of the social group to which they belong (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). It is plausible that consumers with higher collective self-esteem would have a stronger desire for a positive view of their culture and thus are more susceptible to the influence of culturally polite communication.

A significant focus of the present thesis is on the role of cultural politeness. Politeness maintains or promotes harmonious social interactions, and occurs when one shows concern to support someone else's need for positive self-image. As shown in Study 5, consumers expect cultural politeness from foreign brands more than they do from local brands. In contrast, impoliteness entails attacking someone else's positive self-image and could cause social conflict and disharmony (Culperper, Bousfield, & Wichmann, 2003). Therefore, when local consumers perceive a brand to be impolite or rude to the local culture, resistance will be very strong regardless of whether the brand is perceived to be

global or local. Moreover, if a local brand is impolite to the local culture, local consumers may feel that the brand is disloyal to an ingroup member and hence may exhibit even stronger negative reactions. Further research should examine the mechanism of cultural impoliteness.

The present thesis has identified several strategies for communicating cultural politeness in marketing communication (Study 6). As there is a large quantity of information contained in the advertisements used in Study 6, it is not clear which specific features contributes to the perception of cultural politeness in these ads. For instance, in advertisements communicating acknowledgement of Chinese culture, the cultural politeness perception could stem from mentioning positive elements of local culture, not from an appreciation of local culture. Thus, future research could identify the specific characteristics of marketing communication that would lead to cultural politeness perception, and experimentally manipulate these characteristics to establish their causal impact.

Finally, further research could extend the current investigation by examining different aspects of culture. Lal (2000) points out that culture contains material and cosmological beliefs. Material beliefs relate to “ways of making a living and encompass beliefs about the material world, particularly about the economy.” (p 7) Cosmological beliefs relate to “understanding mankind’s place in the world; they determine how people view the purpose and meaning of their lives and their relationships to others.” (p7) Foreign material beliefs can be easily integrated in a country’s value system as the country is integrated into the global market, while cosmological beliefs are relatively resistant to the influence of globalization (Hong et al., 2007). Therefore, local consumers could be more sensitive to cultural politeness when foreign brands are connected to the cosmological versus material beliefs of local culture.

In conclusion, the present thesis presents a pioneering effort to develop a theoretical framework of cultural politeness in marketing communication. It also uncovers some politeness principles that could enhance consumer acceptance of foreign brands. Given the importance of cultural contacts rapidly globalized economies, further research should identify new controlling stimuli for exclusionary reactions, deepen our understanding of the cognitive and motivational consequences of culture mixing, and of how situational cues and brand marketing efforts may attenuate exclusionary reactions.

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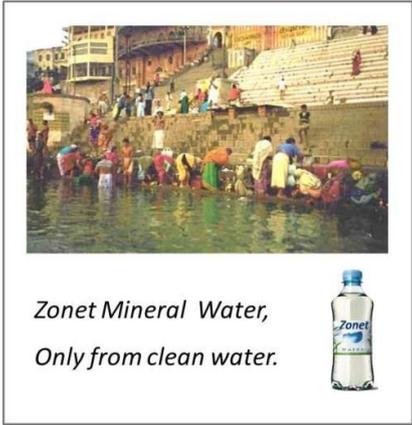
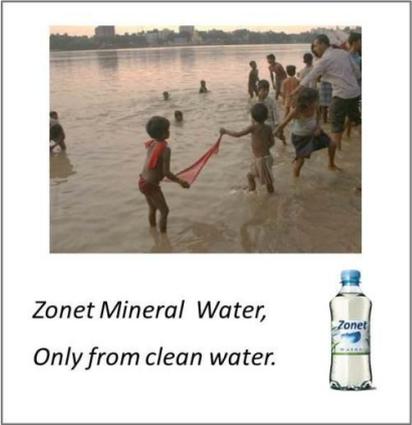
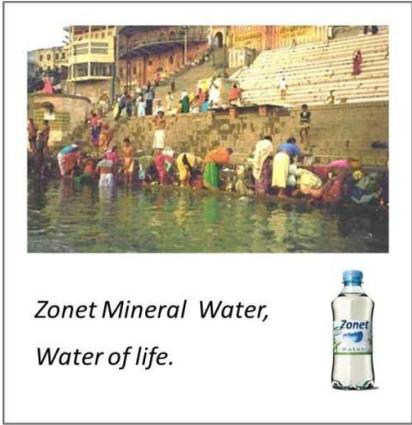
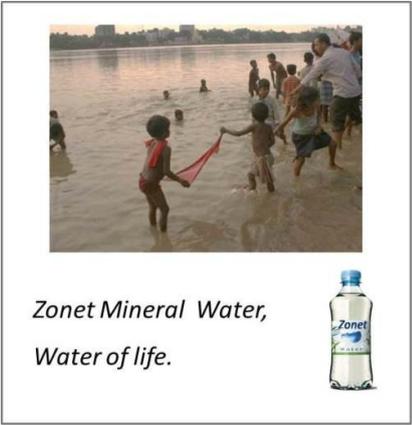
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APPENDIX

Advertisements used in Study 3

	Culturally significant context (i.e., Cultural symbol)	Non-cultural context (i.e., non-cultural symbol)
Message potentially relevant to disrespect	 <p style="text-align: center;">(n=23)</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">(n=27)</p>
Message potentially relevant to respect	 <p style="text-align: center;">(n=27)</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">(n=28)</p>