Are global brands trustworthy? The role of brand affect, brand innovativeness, and consumer ethnocentrism

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Introduction

Multinational companies essentially manage their brands globally (e.g. Red Bull, Coca-Cola, Louis Vuitton), mainly because consumers tend to have similar tastes, preferences, and expectations around the world (Hassan and Katsanis, 1994; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003). Yet, in recent years, occurred an increase of consumers' anti-globalization feelings as expressed in popular votes such as in the US ("America first") or the UK (the Brexit vote), and in a growing political support towards European nationalist parties (e.g. Italy, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Bulgaria) (Hale and Held, 2017). Specifically, in France, a growing number of voters support the nationalist party which defends anti-globalization and protectionist policies (Beard, 2017). This recent tendency is relevant to both academics and practitioners who study or manage global brands, and a revised understanding of the effects of perceived brand globalness (PBG) on consumer behavior is warranted.

PBG is consumers' understanding that brands are present in multiple countries with generally the same name, symbols, and products (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003), global brands being recognized universally in a direct or an indirect way (Dimofte *et al.*, 2010). Consumers recognize global brands directly during international travel, or indirectly through media exposure or word-of-mouth, with brand information linked to international presence. These brands also use language, aesthetic styles, and story themes as cultural symbols to position themselves as global (Akaka and Alden, 2010; Alden *et al.*, 1999). In fact, brands do not need to exist worldwide to be global, implying their "globalness" through marketing communications (Alden *et al.*, 1999; Harris, 2002; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003).

Past research demonstrates that PBG has positive consequences on multiple judgments, relationships and behaviors such as brand quality (Akram *et al.*, 2011; Mohan *et al.*, 2018; Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003; Xie *et al.*, 2015), brand prestige (Akram *et al.*, 2011; Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003; Xie *et al.*, 2015), brand attitude (Davvetas *et al.*, 2015; Halkias *et al.*, 2016; Winit *et al.*, 2014), functional-psychological value of products (Swoboda and Hirschmann, 2016), brand purchase likelihood (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003; Winit *et al.*, 2014), and willingness to pay (Davvetas *et al.*, 2015).

PBG is also positively related to brand trust as evidenced in different countries such as the US, Nepal, or China (Atilgan *et al.*, 2009; Rosenbloom and Haefner, 2009; Xie *et al.*, 2015). However, two of these studies were published a decade ago before the rise of anti-global and nationalist values and movements (Hale and Held, 2017). Therefore, questioning whether this relationship still holds, whether it holds for all consumers, and what is the process explaining the relationship between PBG and brand trust are the main research objectives pursued here. Understanding this relationship is important since recent professional studies reveal a major decline in consumer trust explained by the fact that consumers are reluctant to globalization (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2015, 2017) and because brand trust is seen as a major component of consumer-brand relationships (Albert and Thomson, 2018; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, measuring the effect of PBG on brand trust and understanding the process of such an influence is relevant to academics and practitioners.

Xie *et al.* (2015) contrast local and global brands in China and establish that brand trust is the most influential factor explaining preference formation. Global brands are perceived as more innovative and exciting than other brands (Dimofte *et al.*, 2008, 2010), and brand innovativeness and brand intimacy influence brand trust (Srivastava *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the relationship between PBG and brand trust may be explained by brand innovativeness and brand affect. However, we argue that the strength of the relationships between these concepts may depend on consumer ethnocentrism since ethnocentric consumers do not have a positive perception of global brands (Klein *et al.*, 1998; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015). We propose consumers' ethnocentrism as a moderating variable of the above relationships, particularly since ethnocentrism is revived by the recent economic downturn in Western countries (Balabanis and Siamagka, 2017), and by vivid anti-global movements and nationalism across most countries.

In the current research, we therefore study how global brands may positively influence brand trust through the mediation of brand affect and brand innovativeness, and test the moderating role of consumer ethnocentrism in the relationship between PBG and both brand affect and brand innovativeness.

Conceptual framework and hypotheses

Brand trust

Brand trust refers to the expectation that consumers have about a brand and particularly that the brand will consistently accomplish its promise and deliver value for the benefit of the consumer, and for the least, not perniciously (Doney and Cannon, 1997; Mayer *et al.*, 1995). It is a major dimension of consumers' relationships with brands since it influences brand equity (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005), brand loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Frasquet *et al.*, 2017; Huang, 2017; Menidjel *et al.*, 2017; Sung and Kim, 2010; Veloutsou, 2015), brand commitment (Ha, 2004; Morgan and Hunt, 1994), and purchase intentions (Bhandari and Rodgers, 2018; Sichtmann, 2007).

Trust is composed of three dimensions: integrity, benevolence, and ability (Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Schoorman *et al.*, 2007). Integrity refers to the favorable values that the trustor adheres to during the exchange with the trustee, and when the trustee promises benefits to the trustor, the former is evaluated through the sincerity and honesty of his or her words (Gurviez and Korchia, 2002). Benevolence involves the positive intentions of the trustee. The trustor evaluates if the trustee genuinely wants to do good to him or her, shows concern about his or her welfare (Doney and Cannon, 1997), and avoids an egocentric motivation for making profit off of the trustor (Mayer *et al.*, 1995). Finally, ability is related to the capacity or competence of the trustee in order to respond to the needs of the trustor (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Mayer *et al.*, 1995), its ability to accomplish promises, and ability to perform stated functions or services (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

The mediating role of brand affect in the relationship between PBG and brand trust

Brand affect refers to "*a brand's potential to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer as a result of its use*" (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). Thus, consumers with high

brand affect perceive that brands make them happy, joyful, and affectionate.

We propose that the relationship between PBG and brand trust is mediated by brand affect for two reasons. First, brands perceived as global elicit positive brand affect since consumers generally like to be a part of an aspiring global consumer culture and being a citizen of the world (Alden *et al.*, 1999; Holt *et al.*, 2004). In addition, consumers generally esteem global brands (Johansson and Ronkainen, 2005), considering them to be more exciting and stylish (Dimofte *et al.*, 2008, 2010) and providers of emotional value (Swoboda *et al.*, 2012; Swoboda and Hirschmann, 2016). Therefore, PBG may engender positive emotional responses.

Second, brand affect positively influences brand trust since "*affective attachments form the basis for caring and benevolent actions that build trust*" (Williams, 2001, p. 379). Trustors who perceive an emotional investment of caring for, and benevolence towards the trustee feel the deepest level of trust (Rempel *et al.*, 1985). In this sense, brands that render consumers joyful are perceived as trustable. For instance, consumers trust more fast-moving consumer goods brands when they perceive them as providing more feelings and emotions (Singh *et al.*, 2012). In addition, affective reactions positively influence the judgment of trust (Dunn and Schweitzer, 2005; Lu *et al.*, 2017; Williams, 2001), a relation based on the theory proposing that individuals who are in a positive affective state evaluate other individuals and past events more favorably (Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz and Clore, 1988). Therefore, consumers' emotional response to brands perceived as global may lead to more positive affect, and in turn, to brand trust.

Based on these arguments, we propose:

> *H1: The positive link between brand globalness and brand trust is mediated by brand affect.*

The mediating role of brand innovativeness in the relationship between PBG and brand trust

Innovativeness relates to the useful and impactful properties of new elements or products and to their ability to generate a discontinuity in the marketing process (Garcia and Calantone, 2002). It includes

both newness and usefulness. From a consumer's perspective, we define brand innovativeness as the perceived ability of a brand to provide new and useful offerings to fulfill consumer needs (Brexendorf and Keller, 2017; Eisingerich and Rubera, 2010).

Brand innovativeness may mediate the relationship between PBG and brand trust. On the one hand, since global brands must obtain sustainable competitive advantages in order to become global (Van Gelder, 2004), innovation is centrally prioritized in their brand strategy (Weerawardena *et al.*, 2007). If a brand is successful in its global reach, it must deliver innovative products (Aaker, 2004), and global brand geographical extension reinforces the perception of brand innovativeness (Van Gelder, 2004). Therefore, consumers may associate global brands with the fact of being innovative and up-to-date (Dimofte *et al.*, 2008; 2010).

On the other hand, the perceived ability of brands to generate new and useful products may influence consumers' trust. Since brand innovativeness is commonly characterized by better product performance and added valuable features (Aaker, 2007), a perception of innovativeness positively influences brand trust (Srivastava *et al.*, 2015, 2016) and credibility (Aaker, 2004). Brands perceived as having the competence to provide new and useful products are expected to offer better-performing products and are therefore trustable (Kunz *et al.*, 2011). Likewise, brands with an innovative image appear to be more expert than others, which consequently increases trust (Keller and Aaker, 1998; O'Cass and Carlson, 2012).

Therefore, we propose:

> *H2: The positive link between brand globalness and brand trust is mediated by brand innovativeness.*

The moderating role of consumer ethnocentrism

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to "*the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products*" (Shimp and Sharma, 1987, p. 280). Thus, ethnocentric consumers prefer domestic products rather than foreign products because they believe that products from

their own country are the best (Klein *et al.*, 1998), and because domestic products represent intra-cultural objects that become recipients of pride and attachment (Herche, 1994). Ethnocentric consumers develop a negative attitude toward foreign products because they consider that purchasing them represents an unpatriotic act, and that it can be dangerous for the national economy, with a loss of jobs in the local labor market (Kaynak and Kara, 2002). Given that ethnocentric individuals tend to reject symbols and values that are different from their own (Herche, 1994), they are less cosmopolitan and less open to foreign cultures. In our context, global brands may be viewed as a threat to national economic prosperity and may represent both an economic and a cultural threat.

We argue that the effect of brand globalness on both brand affect and brand innovativeness depends on the level of ethnocentrism of consumers. Since ethnocentric consumers perceive products and symbols from their own country as the best (Klein *et al.*, 1998; Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015), innovativeness of global brands might not be valued, and global brand's ability to satisfy consumer needs underestimated. By contrast, non-ethnocentric consumers perceive the worldwide reach of global brands as a competitive advantage and value their innovativeness. Also, ethnocentric consumers might not feel any positive affect for global brands because they prefer domestic products, and global brands may even generate negative affect (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). They do not share a global consumer culture, and the fact that a brand is global does not generate joy or pleasure. By contrast, non-ethnocentric consumers open to the world and to global brands may experiment positive affect because global brands are in accordance with their self-concept.

It follows:

H3a: Consumer ethnocentrism negatively moderates the positive relationship between brand globalness and brand affect.

H3b: Consumer ethnocentrism negatively moderates the positive relationship between brand globalness and brand innovativeness.

The overall theoretical framework appears in Figure 1.

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Figure 1 about here

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Research methodology

Data collection and sample

Data were collected online following a two-step process. One hundred and twenty-six individuals, mainly students, willingly participated in the first data collection conducted at a business school in southern France, through a snowball method. Then, in order to obtain a larger sample, a second data collection used several student Facebook groups at a University in southern France. One hundred and twenty-four respondents, mainly students, participated in prize drawings of €50 and €20. After removing duplicates, we ended up with a final sample of 243 respondents. In order to avoid a collection method bias, we analyzed the influence of the type of collection method (snowball versus incentive) on the different variables. Based on ANOVA analyses,[1] no differences were found (p>.05), except for brand globalness, which is explained by the fact that individuals in the first collection principally selected McDonald's as the brand to be evaluated, a brand broadly acknowledged as global. In this sense, the variation of brand globalness was expounded by brand choice and not because of an effect of collection methods.

Participants were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire based on a cross-sectional design. First, they chose one brand from a list of the four most popular fast-food restaurants in France: McDonald's, Subway, and KFC (global brands), and Quick, a leading European fast food brand. The presence of a non-global brand (Quick) ensures variance in brand globalness perceptions. We collected data concerning brand globalness, brand affect, brand innovativeness, and brand trust.

[1] The assumptions for ANOVA were verified: (1) no significant outliers were detected; (2) dependent variables were (quasi) normally distributed according to Field (2013) (skewness and kurtosis between −2 and +2); and (3) there was homogeneity of variances for all variables except for brand globalness. For the latter variable, the Welch's ANOVA test was performed.

We added service quality as a control variable because of the nature of the restaurants and of a possible effect on the independent variable (brand trust). Finally, we collected data on ethnocentrism, and demographics.

The profile of respondents is shown in Table 1. A young sample was preferred because consumers in this age range are highly familiar with fast-food restaurants (Gallup, 2013). Likewise, they are most likely to be susceptible to both positive and negative aspects of globalization (Devecchio, 2016; Jin *et al.*, 2015; Shukla, 2011).

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Table 1 about here

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Measures

For each construct, existing scales were adapted from past research. A bilingual academic expert translated the questionnaire and assessed content validity of each item. The response format and the clarity of instructions of the questionnaire were then evaluated through a face-to-face interview with four students, all frequent consumers of fast food. All items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree").

Brand globalness was measured with a scale based on Steenkamp *et al*. (2003). The dependent variable, *brand trust*, was measured through the three-dimensional scale (credibility, integrity, and benevolence) from Gurviez and Korchia (2002). Three items developed by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) were employed to measure brand affect, and brand innovativeness comprises three items from Eisingerich and Rubera (2010). Consumer ethnocentrism was measured using five items adapted from Shimp and Sharma (1987). Finally, service quality (control variable) was measured through four items adapted from Ekinci (2001).

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first performed to examine the reliability and validity of the constructs. To evaluate the measurement model fit, three types of fit indices (absolute, incremental, and parsimonious) were used, following the suggestions of Jackson *et al.* (2009). The measurement model exhibited adequate fit, with a chi-square (χ^2)/df statistic of 1.95 (p<.01); CFI = 0.96; GFI = 0.86; IFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.067. To test for convergent validity, factor loadings, along with the average variance extracted (AVE), were calculated for each latent variable (Table 2). The values of composite reliabilities for all eight constructs were higher than the recommended limit of .7, and the AVE equaled or exceeded the value of .5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which suggests that the measures used are internally consistent. Standardized factor loadings exceeded the .5 threshold as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The discriminant validity of the constructs is supported because their AVE values are greater than their squared correlations (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

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Table 2 about here

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An ordinary least squares (OLS) path analysis (Hayes, 2013) was then conducted in order to test the mediating and moderating effects. We first transformed the latent variables into factor scores by the sum scores method (DiStefano *et al.*, 2009). In addition, the scores were averaged to reflect the scale metric. This method is advantageous because of the simple calculation and interpretation of scores and is acceptable given that the items of each latent variable present similar weight and great composite reliability value (DiStefano *et al.*, 2009). Then, assumptions for using OLS path analysis were verified: (1) the dependent variable was considered as continuous because the average score of items consisted of a large number of possible values (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994); (2) the independence of observation was verified through a Durbin-Watson value of 2.01, which indicates

almost no auto-correlation in residuals according to Field (2013); (3) the absence of multicollinearity was verified by the fact that the magnitude of the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) on each variable was lower than 3 (Field, 2013); and finally (4) no significant outliers were found in the data.

Table 3 shows the coefficients validating the proposed model. First, the direct effects of the variables were analyzed. Brand globalness was positively related to brand affect (t=3.75, p<.001) and to brand innovativeness (t=2.34, p<.05), validating the direct effects of these variables. Consumers who perceive brands as more global feel more affect toward brands and perceive their greater innovativeness. The direct effects of brand affect on brand trust dimensions , i.e.; integrity (t=3.05, p<.01), benevolence (t=2.19, p<.05), and ability (t=6.73, p<.001) were also validated. Similarly, results validate the direct effects of brand innovativeness on brand trust dimensions: integrity (t=3.46, p<.001), benevolence (t=5.75, p<.001), and ability (t=4.1, p<.001). Consumers who feel more affect toward brands and perceive them as more innovative trust these brands more. Second, through a parallel mediation analysis (Hayes, 2013; Model 4), the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (BootLLCI to BootULCI]) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples were entirely above zero, thus validating the indirect effects of brand globalness on brand trust dimensions: integrity (0.009 to 0.075), benevolence (0.004 to 0.064), and ability (0.032 to 0.13) through brand affect, in support of hypothesis 1. In the same way, the indirect effects of brand globalness on integrity (0.003 to 0.067), benevolence (0.004 to 0.096), and ability (0.002 to 0.067) through brand innovativeness were validated, in support of hypothesis 2. The results demonstrate the mediating role of brand affect and brand innovativeness on consumer trust for global brands.

Third, a moderation analysis (Hayes, 2013; Model 8) demonstrates that the relationship between brand globalness and brand innovativeness was negatively moderated by ethnocentrism (t=−3.68, p<.001), supporting hypothesis 3a. Brand globalness is significantly related to brand innovativeness when consumer ethnocentrism is low (one SD below the mean) (b=0.295, t=3.99, p<.001) or medium (the mean) (b=0.125, t=2.06, p<.05), but not when consumer ethnocentrism is high (one SD above the mean) (b=−0.045, t=−0.54, p>.05) (see Figure 2).

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Table 3 about here

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Figure 2 about here

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Finally, and contrary to hypothesis 3b, ethnocentrism does not moderate the relationship between brand globalness and brand affect (t=1.49, p>.05). However, we conducted a floodlight analysis (Johnson and Neyman, 1936; Spiller *et al.*, 2013) to identify regions of consumer ethnocentrism in which brand globalness is not related to brand affect. The analysis revealed that the relationship between brand globalness and brand affect was not significant (p>.05) among consumers whose ethnocentrism level was higher than 5.94 (0.7SD above the mean) (b_{JN} = 0.168, t=1.97, p=.05; see Figure 3). Therefore, consumers with very high levels of ethnocentrism (above 5.94) do not feel positive affect toward global brands, supporting hypothesis 3b.

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Figure 3 about here

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Post Hoc Study

To ensure that differences of the independent variable effects are mainly based on brand globalness and not on the brand selected by participants, we analyzed the attitude of consumers towards the four fast-food brands submitted to study participants. The objective of this post hoc study is to demonstrate that the four brands are not statistically different in terms of attitude. In this case, the evaluation of brand affect, brand innovativeness and brand trust are indeed influenced by brand globalness.

We collected data through Foule Factory, a French crowdsourcing Internet marketplace that serves as a platform for recruiting and compensating individuals in online surveys. Seventy-two participants were asked to evaluate their attitude towards the four brands (McDonald's, KFC,

Subway, and Quick). Attitude toward the brand was measured through three items (bad/good; negative/positive; unfavorable/favorable), adapted from Grossbart *et al*. (1986). After deleting duplicate entries and individuals who did not match the required age (between 18 and 35 years old), sixty-three participants were retained (57% male, 78% of individuals with monthly household income of less than €2500, 33.3% and 30.2% of individuals were undergraduate and graduate respectively).

A proportion test allowed for a comparison between the main study population and the post hoc population. The results indicate that populations were similar in terms of age ($z=1.52$, $p>.05$) and education ($z=.67$, $p>.05$ for undergraduates and $z=.95$, $p>.05$ for graduates) but slightly different in terms of gender ($z=2.76$; $p<.05$). Thus, the profile of the post hoc study generally corresponds to that of the main study.

The attitude scale's Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.981$) is satisfactory, and an ANOVA was used to test the differences among brand attitude mean scores (63 participants x 4 brands = 252 responses), given that the assumptions for ANOVA were verified (no significant outliers, a (quasi) normal distribution, and homogeneity of variances). The ANOVA demonstrated no differences in mean scores ($\mathrm{M}_{\mathrm{McDonald's}} = 4.28, SD = 1.85$ *vs* $\mathrm{M}_{\mathrm{KFC}} = 3.84, SD = 1.61$ *vs* $\mathrm{M}_{\mathrm{Subway}} = 4.50, SD = 1.67$ *vs* $\mathrm{M}_{\mathrm{Quick}} = 3.82, SD = 1.72$; F statistic (3, 248) = 2.437; p = .065 > .05). In addition, post hoc comparisons between the highest and lowest level of brand attitude scores using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean attitude score for McDonald's did not significantly differ from KFC (sig. = .479 > .05) and from Quick (sig. = .427 > .05). Similarly, the mean attitude score for Subway did not significantly differ from KFC (sig. = .137 > .05) and from Quick (sig. = .114 > .05). Therefore, brand attitude is statistically similar for the four brands and does not influence or bias the effects of brand globalness when consumers evaluated these brands.

Discussion

All hypotheses are supported by conceptual and empirical evidence. Results demonstrate the mediating role of brand affect and brand innovativeness in the relationship between PBG and brand

trust. First, a mediation of brand affect partially explains the positive effect of PBG on brand trust: the more the brand is perceived as global, the more the brand elicits positive emotional responses, and in turn, the more the brand is trusted. These results are in line with past research establishing that global brands are perceived by American consumers as exciting, bearing a unique aura, and stylish (Dimofte *et al.*, 2008, 2010) or by Chinese consumers as providing emotional value (Swoboda *et al.*, 2012), and that brand affect influences brand trust for Spanish consumers (Singh *et al.*, 2012). Second, the effect of PBG on brand trust is also partially mediated by brand innovativeness. A brand perceived as global is associated with a higher level of innovativeness which, in turn, influences brand trust. Our results are in line with Dimofte *et al.* (2008, 2010) with American consumers perceiving global brands as more innovative and up-to-date, and with Srivastava *et al.* (2015, 2016) who establish that Indian consumers trust brands because of their innovativeness.

Complementing previous studies establishing that brand prestige, brand quality, and the identity expressiveness of consumers favor consumers' evaluation of global brands (Akram *et al.*, 2011; Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003; Xie *et al.*, 2015), this research demonstrates the mediating role of both brand affect and brand innovativeness on consumer trust towards global brands.

Results also underline that the effect of PBG on brand affect and brand innovativeness are both moderated by the consumer ethnocentrism. This is in line with Steenkamp *et al.* (2003) who demonstrate the negative moderating role of consumer's ethnocentrism in the relationship between PBG and purchase intention in American and Korean contexts, and with Akram *et al.* (2011) who show the negative interaction effect of PBG and consumer's ethnocentrism on brand quality and brand prestige in Pakistan. We extend this interaction effect to the constructs of brand affect and brand innovativeness in a developed country such as France.

Results also indicate that brand globalness explains respectively, 6.3% and 2.5% of the variance of brand affect and brand innovativeness, indicating the dominating aspect of brand affect compared to perceptions of innovativeness. This is in line with the notion that emotions play a powerful role in consumer perceptions (Morrison and Crane, 2007). Therefore, consumers more

easily associate global brands with emotional experiences. However, brand innovativeness, compared to brand affect, has a higher explanatory power on the benevolence dimension of brand trust. Providing new solutions seems therefore to be perceived as a way of caring for consumers and is appreciated by them. Likewise, compared to brand innovativeness, brand affect has a higher explanatory power on the ability dimension of brand trust. Affective responses (such as brand attachment) positively influence perceptions of the ability of brands to accomplish promises and hence fulfill consumer needs.

Regarding the relative impact of constructs, the influence of brand globalness on brand affect (r = .23) and brand innovativeness (r = .13) are comparable to the results of past research such as the relationships between brand globalness and brand identity expressiveness (r = .26, in Xie *et al.*,2015), between brand globalness and brand prestige (*r* = .30, in Akram *et al.* 2011), and between brand globalness and brand quality (*r* = .15 in Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, the influence of brand innovativeness on brand trust (*r* = .20, *r* = .34, *r* = 24) and of brand affect on brand trust (*r* = .15, *r* = .11, *r* = .32) do not differ greatly from the relationship among brand prestige, brand quality, and brand identity expressiveness on brand trust (*r* = .25, *r* = .38, *r* = .39, respectively, in Xie *et al.*,2015). Results in this research are congruent with that of related previous studies.

Conclusion

Theoretical contributions

Our contribution covers the relationship between two streams of research: global brands and consumer-brand relationships. On the one hand, this research contributes to the understanding of global brands by demonstrating that their ability to generate consumers' emotions and feelings increases brand trust. Consumers who recognize that global brands make them happy and joyful also perceive the emotional investment of caring and benevolence from these brands. Thus, brands that elicit positive emotional responses in consumers lead to a higher level of trust. Consumers tend to trust brands when they perceive them as providing more feelings and emotions. On the other hand,

this research also highlights that global brands are perceived as able to provide new and better-performing products to consumers, which is another way to increase consumer trust. Consumers tend to trust global brands more when they perceive that these brands offer innovative solutions to their needs. This perception concerns the newness of products but also the improved utility of products. Thus, consumer trust towards global brands is not only increased by providing emotional benefits but also by enhancing the company's ability to surprise consumers with solutions and products they are not aware of. Global brands' ability to provide differentiated, attractive, and surprising products to consumers leads to a higher degree of trust.

Another contribution concerns the moderating effect of consumer ethnocentrism. The marketing literature already demonstrated its effect on the relationship between global brands and concepts such as brand prestige, brand quality, and purchase likelihood. This research enriches the scope of consumer ethnocentrism's effects by demonstrating its role on consumer affect, and on perceptions of innovativeness. From a general standpoint, pronounced consumer ethnocentrism generates negative evaluations towards global brands. We demonstrate that brand globalness is significantly related to brand innovativeness and to brand affect when consumer ethnocentrism is low or medium, but that this is not the case when consumer ethnocentrism is high.

Managerial implications

Most multinational companies market global brands and the management of such brands is a major challenge for managers. This study demonstrates the need for managers to increase the emotional and affective aspects of their global brands. For that, managers should and do create emotional communications that underline the pleasure and emotions related to global brand consumption. Communications should also reflect the global brand values in order to favor an emotional connection between the brand and its consumers. Managers could also generate the desire to possess and consume their brands. For that, multiple communication channels may be used such as packaging, ads, online communication, and favoring frequent interactions between the global brand and consumers through online forums and brand communities. Finally, the implementation of sensorial

and experiential retail stores also helps global brands to generate consumers' emotions and pleasure (Helmefalk *et al.*, 2017). Specifically we recommend the use of multisensory (visual but also aesthetic/gustatory/olfactory) and congruent cues to positively influence shoppers' emotions and consequently their trust in the global brand. All these actions should increase consumer emotions and feelings with a positive impact on trust. However, brand affect towards global brands has a tendency to be positive when ethnocentrism is high or medium. Therefore, communications will be efficient for these consumers, not for consumers high on ethnocentrism. Identifying consumer groups based on ethnocentrism is not an easy task. One way is through consumer involvement (e.g. belonging to brand communities and favoring this belonging), or through the use of consumer databases enabling to identify buyers of global brands in different categories. Another way is through the use of international channels of communications (e.g. satellite channels) or local channels of communications targeting global consumers (e.g. airport ads). Finally, advertising creation (including packaging) should feature the lifestyle of global consumers whatever their country of origin may be.

Brand managers should also emphasize the innovative aspects of their global brands through the launch of innovative products, current products' improvements (features, manufacturing, benefits) or brand extensions. The more managers provide new, useful solutions to fulfill consumers' needs, the more consumers will trust global brands. This is a key strategic point of differentiation for global brands versus local brands always eager to copy developments made by global brands. Therefore, global brands will only remain perceived as innovative (favoring trust) if they innovate and differentiate from local brands. For example, the high dominance of Apple mobile phones in the US linked to its superior and constant innovation (more than 57% market share in the US in 2018) is severely challenged worldwide (where Samsung dominates with a 30.6% market share in 2018 followed by Apple, 22.0%). This is even more the case in Asia where Samsung exhibits high leadership (30.6% in 2018) followed by both Apple (12.7%) and Xiaomi (12.5%). Both the relative lack of innovation by Apple in recent years influencing the level of consumer trust, and ethnocentrism may contribute to the weaker position of Apple on the Asian market.

Limitations and future research

This study suffers from limitations that could be mitigated by further relevant research. First, we analyzed a limited number of brands, all in the fast-food category. Future studies could replicate the research using different product categories. For instance, technological brands may be perceived as more innovative when positioning themselves as being global. In the same vein, in the entertainment or travel categories, consumers may perceive global brands as more inclined to favor affective reactions. Furthermore, we considered three well-established brands as global and one brand as less global (European). Future research should consider higher variability in brand globalness or conduct a comparative analysis between global and local brands.

A second limitation concerns the participants who were principally young consumers between 18 and 35 years of age, and who are somewhat ethnocentric (Mean = 4.22). The literature in marketing suggests that older people are less susceptible to global brands given that attitudes toward domestic products generally become more favorable with age (Bannister and Saunders, 1978). However, recent evidence also shows the increase of anti-globalization feelings among the younger population. Future research should include age as a moderating variable in order to explore differences in the evaluation of global brands. Furthermore, social-psychological (i.e., openness, collectivism, conservatism) and demographic (i.e., gender, education, income) factors could also be considered as moderating variables in the relationship between brand globalness and brand trust.

A third limitation is the fact that a unique bilingual expert translated the questionnaire which may explain the low levels of standardized loading for some items. Future research should use the back-translation technique in order to improve the psychometric properties of the scales. Fourth, the slight over-representation of women (62.1%) in the main study may have enhanced the moderating effect of consumer ethnocentrism, since women tend to be more ethnocentric than men (Josiassen, 2011). Future research should analyze samples equally represented in terms of gender in order to avoid any potential bias or formally contrast results across genders. Finally, an interesting research direction is to consider an integrative model including the two variables tested here (affect and innovativeness) and other relevant variables tested in previous research (such as quality, prestige, or

consumer identification) in order to understand which one(s) exert the strongest influence on brand trust.

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Figure 1: Research Model

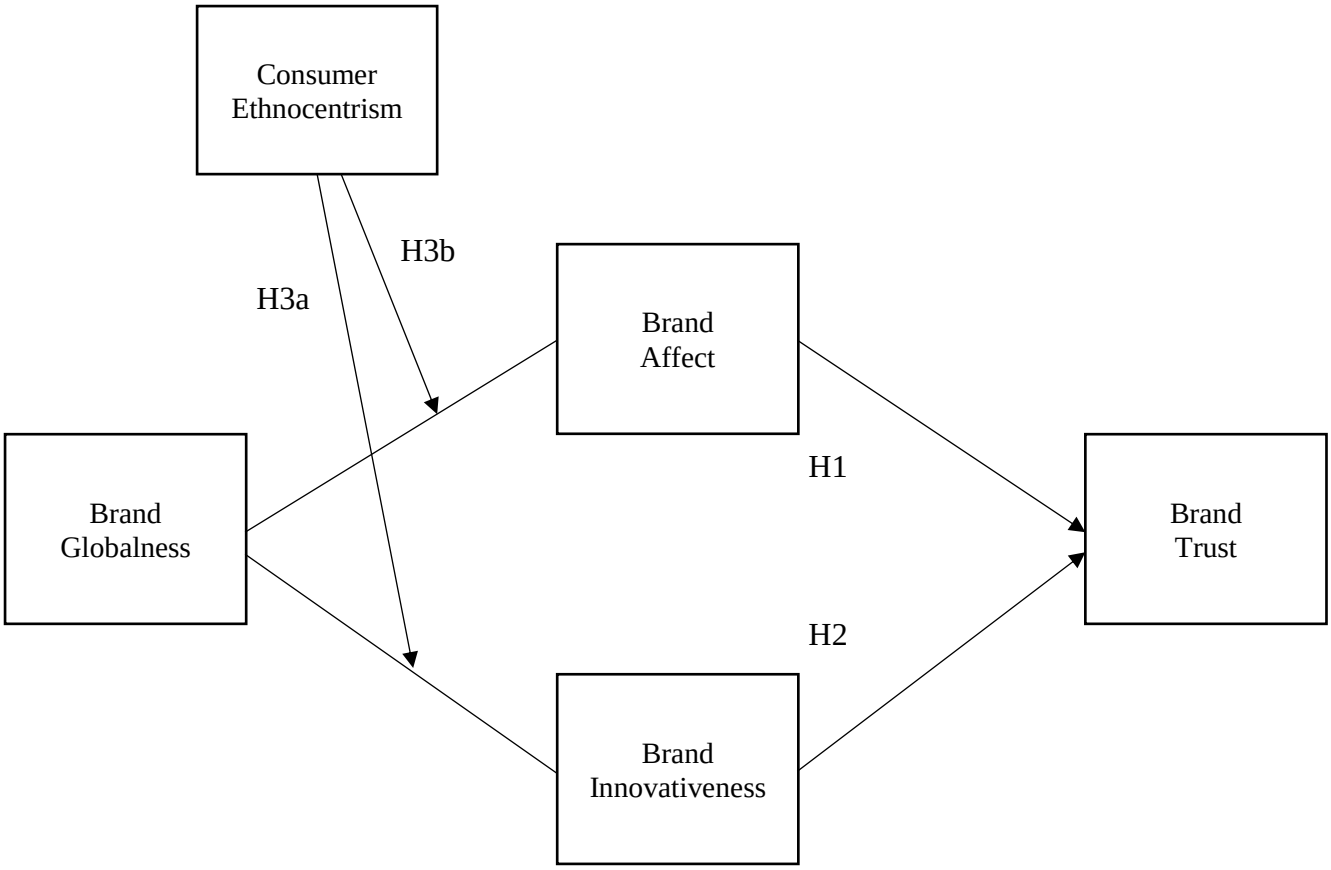


Figure 2: The moderating role of consumer ethnocentrism in the relationship between brand globalness and brand innovativeness

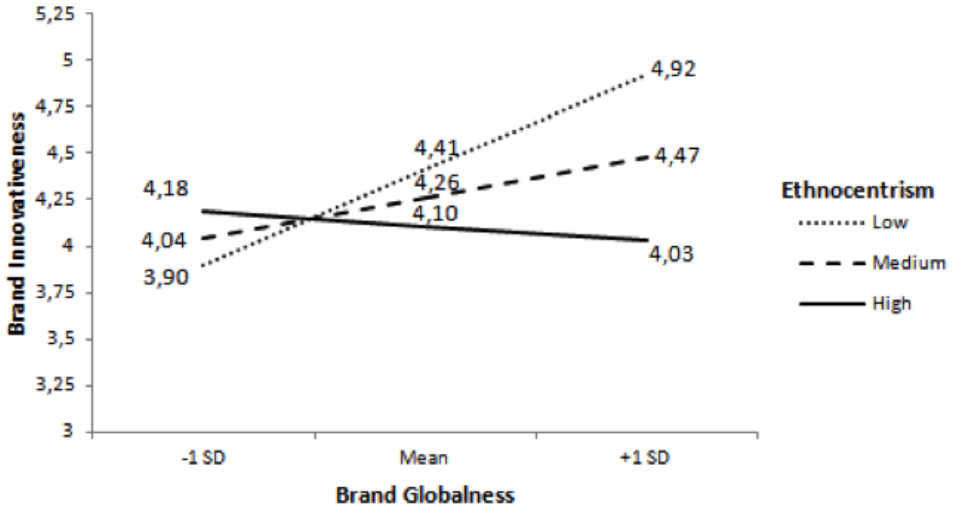


Figure 3: The moderating role of consumer ethnocentrism in the relationship between

brand globalness and brand affect

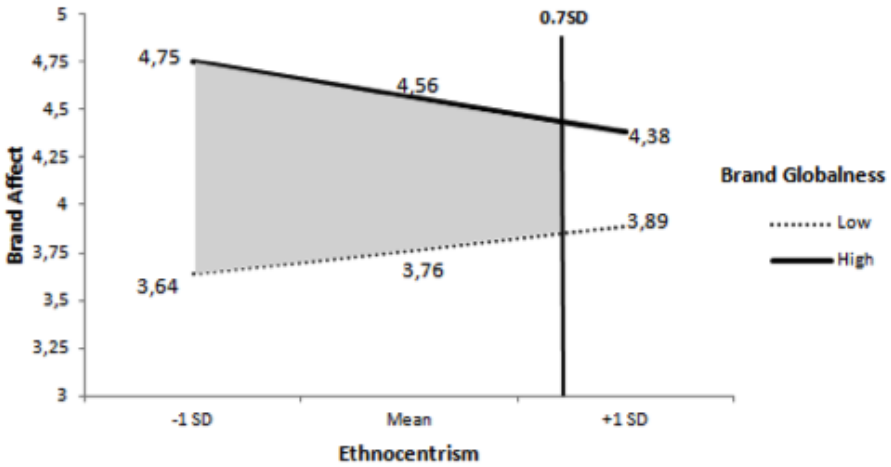


Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample (*N* = 243)

Categories	*N*	%
Age		
18–25	196	80%
26–35	36	15%
36–45	11	5%
Gender		
Female	151	62%
Male	92	38%
Monthly Household Income		
<€1000	45	18%
€1000-€2000	57	24%
€2000-€4000	84	35%
>€4000	57	23%
Education		
High school	41	17%
Undergraduate	92	37%
Graduate	89	36%
Doctorate	21	10%

Table 2: Measurements

Constructs and items	Means (SD)	Stand. Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE	r2
Brand Globalness			0.93	0.82	0.09

To me, this is a global brand.	5.68 (1.71)	0.92			
I do think consumers overseas buy this brand.	5.63 (1.72)	0.98			
This brand is sold all over the world.	5.09 (2.02)	0.81			
Brand Affect			0.89	0.74	0.56
I feel good when I dine in this restaurant brand.	4.26 (1.73)	0.82			
This brand makes me happy.	3.76 (1.80)	0.88			
This brand gives me pleasure.	4.34 (1.76)	0.88			
Brand Innovativeness			0.81	0.68	0.56
I can rely on this brand to offer novel products for my needs.	4.57 (1.61)	0.68			
This brand provides new products adapted to my needs.	3.86 (1.55)	0.95			
Brand Trust – Integrity			0.87	0.71	0.47
This brand is sincere with consumers.	3.65 (1.33)	0.93			
This brand is honest with its customers.	3.71 (1.30)	0.96			
This brand expresses an interest in its customers.	4.27 (1.26)	0.57			
Brand Trust – Benevolence			0.83	0.63	0.25
I think this brand renews its products to take into account advances in research.	4.31 (1.44)	0.84			
I think that this brand is always looking to improve its response to consumer needs.	4.24 (1.31)	0.94			
Benevolence is a value in itself for this brand.	3.65 (1.35)	0.54			
Brand Trust – Credibility			0.87	0.70	0.55
This brand's products make me feel safe.	3.22 (1.55)	0.79			
I trust the quality of this brand's products.	3.84 (1.58)	0.95			
Buying this brand's products is a guarantee.	4.30 (1.67)	0.75			
Consumer's ethnocentrism			0.81	0.52	0.01
French people should buy only French-made products.	3.91 (1.86)	0.84			
It is always best to purchase French products.	4.47 (1.76)	0.70			
Only those products that are unavailable in France should be imported.	4.28 (1.88)	0.71			

Table 3: Structural model

	Brand Affect			Brand Innovativeness			Brand Trust – Integrity			Brand Trust – Benevolence			Brand Trust – Ability		
Antecedent	Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value	Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value	Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value	Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value	Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value
Brand Globalness	0.234	0.062	**3.749*** **	0.125	0.053	**2.340***	−0.017	0.039	−0.431	0.030	0.038	0.782	0.007	0.041	0.171
Brand Affect	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.150	0.049	**3.052****	0.108	0.049	**2.194***	0.323	0.048	**6.733*** **
Brand Innovativeness	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.202	0.058	**3.465*** **	0.336	0.059	**5.748*** **	0.235	0.057	**4.104*** **
Service Quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.320	0.060	5.312***	0.134	0.060	2.222*	0.285	0.059	4.831***
Constant	2.873	0.357	8.044***	3.550	0.306	11.616***	1.061	0.332	3.199**	1.440	0.331	4.345***	0.136	0.324	0.418
R^2	6.3 %			2.55 %			34.54 %			33 %			50.26 %		
F	14.060			5.477			27.170			25.367			52.047		
Mediating Effect (Model 4)							Coeff.	Boot SE	Boot [LLCI; ULCI]	Coeff.	Boot SE	Boot [LLCI; ULCI]	Coeff.	Boot SE	Boot [LLCI; ULCI]
Brand Globalness (Indirect Effect)	Mediator	Mediator	Mediator	—	—	—	0.035	0.016	**[0.010; 0.076]**	0.025	0.015	**[0.004; 0.064]**	0.076	0.025	**[0.032; 0.130]**
Brand Globalness (Indirect Effect)	—	—	—	Mediator	Mediator	Mediator	0.025	0.016	**[0.003; 0.067]**	0.042	0.023	**[0.004; 0.096]**	0.029	0.016	**[0.003; 0.067]**
Moderating Effect (Model 8)							Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value	Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value	Coeff.	SE	*t*-Value
Brand Globalness	0.498	0.174	2.859**	0.628	0.145	4.336***	−0.145	0.110	−1.325	−0.213	0.109	−1.963	0.032	0.110	0.292
Brand Affect	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.150	0.049	3.067**	0.107	0.049	2.197*	0.323	0.048	6.698***
Brand Innovativeness	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.213	0.061	3.515***	0.366	0.060	6.096***	0.232	0.059	3.900***
Ethnocentrism	−0.343	0.230	−1.492	−0.572	0.191	**−2.999****	−0.220	0.141	−1.568	−0.339	0.139	**−2.436***	0.041	0.139	0.297
Brand Globalness × Ethnocentrism	−0.067	0.041	−1.621	−0.126	0.034	**-3.677*** **	0.033	0.026	1.291	0.061	0.025	**2.415***	−0.006	0.024	−0.255
Service Quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.324	0.061	5.310***	0.126	0.060	2.114*	0.284	0.060	4.731***
Constant	1.532	0.959	1.596	1.286	0.797	1.613	1.855	0.610	3.042**	2.682	0.605	4.437***	−0.013	0.600	−0.022
R2	7.48 %			9.21 %			35.4%			34.94%			50.29%		
F	5.579			7.003			18.633			18.258			34.392		

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001