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Go local or go global: how local brands promote buying impulsivity

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Abstract

Purpose – Using food brands as a case in point, the purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between a local vs global brand positioning strategy and buying impulsivity, as well as the mediating role of construal level. The findings add a psychological argument to the array of reasons for firms to opt for a local instead of a global brand positioning strategy: local food brands promote higher levels of buying impulsivity than global brands by lowering consumers' level of construal.

Design/methodology/approach – Five experiments use student and nonstudent samples, different construal level indices and generic and brand-specific buying impulsivity measures to test the hypotheses.

Findings – Local food brands promote higher levels of buying impulsivity than global brands by lowering consumers' level of construal. Because local brands are proximal to consumers' lifestyles, values, preferences and behaviors, they decrease the psychological distance between the brand and the consumer, compared with global brands. The smaller psychological distance lowers consumers' construal level and renders the immediate, concrete, appetitive attributes of the product more salient, thus making consumers more prone to impulsively buy a local brand than a global one.

Practical implications – For the choice between a global or local brand positioning strategy, this paper argues in favor of the latter. Local (food) branding is a concrete brand positioning mechanism that can influence and benefit from consumers' buying impulsivity.

Originality/value – The research reveals heretofore unknown but important implications of local vs global brand positioning strategies for consumers' construal level and buying impulsivity.

Keywords Consumer behaviour, Global marketing

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Whether to create a global or local brand when firms are targeting markets outside their home country remains, even after decades of research (e.g. Onkvisit and Shaw, 1989; Rao-Nicholson and Khan, 2017; Samiee and Roth, 1992), a challenging issue for marketing managers. This paper defines global brands as brands that have a wide availability, recognition and geographical reach, as well as uniformity in terms of product attributes, pricing, positioning and marketing strategy in all available markets, with no particular adaptation to local markets (Özsomer, 2012). Local brands, in contrast, are only available in a specific geographical region (a country or more narrowly defined region, such as a specific community or even a neighborhood) and are tailored to the unique needs and desires of that local market (Dimofte *et al.*, 2008; Özsomer, 2012). Local brands can be owned by local or internationally operating companies (Dimofte *et al.*, 2008; Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). Therefore, in a local (global) brand positioning strategy, a company positions a brand in such a way that it is perceived as local (global) by consumers relative to other brands in the category (e.g. Kotler and Keller, 2015). For instance, a global brand positioning strategy may involve advertising featuring the idea that consumers all over the world consume the brand, whereas a local brand positioning strategy would portray the brand as consumed by local people in a national or regional culture (Alden *et al.*, 1999). Benetton, whose slogan ("The United Colors of Benetton") emphasizes that consumers from a diverse set of

countries consume the brand (Alden *et al.*, 1999), vs local, a clothing brand in Florida, whose slogan (“Live Life the Florida Local Way”; Local Brand FL, 2018) emphasizes its close connection to local culture, are examples of, respectively, a global vs local brand positioning strategy.

Past research has shown that a global brand positioning strategy has several strategic advantages: cost savings through economies of scale, greater speed to market, universal recognition and greater perceptions of prestige, particularly in developing countries (e.g. Alashban *et al.*, 2002; Dimofte *et al.*, 2008; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003). However, an increasing number of real-life examples seem to advocate a local rather than a global brand positioning strategy. Consider the French food manufacturer Danone: when trying to expand into the Czech Republic, the company’s introduction of its global biscuit brand Lu failed. Only when it adopted the local brand name Opavia was it able to gain a substantial foothold in the new geographical market (Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). Another example of higher sales with a local rather than a global brand positioning strategy comes from the “local jewels” of Unilever, such as the Unox sausages and Andrélon shampoo, which are only available in The Netherlands and are deeply rooted in Dutch culture (Hollis, 2008; Unilever, 2018).

Despite these success stories, understanding of why local brands sometimes perform better than global brands remains insufficient (Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). Previous research has shown that local brands signal uniqueness to consumers, enjoy high awareness, can be managed more flexibly than global brands, and can convey pride by representing local resources and culture (He and Wang, 2017; Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003). Several studies suggest that food products in particular may benefit when marketed as local (Özsomer *et al.*, 1991; Schuh, 2007). For example, Gineikiene *et al.* (2016) showed that domestic food products are sometimes seen as healthier than their foreign counterparts, and Schuiling and Kapferer (2004) suggest that such products may be deemed attractive because of their identifiability and authenticity. But this may not be the whole story. In the present research we propose and test a novel mechanism that explains why local (food) products may enjoy a competitive benefit over their global counterparts – they may prompt an immediate, impulsive buying urge. Indeed, 70 percent of consumers name food as their biggest impulse purchase (O’Brien, 2018). Possibly because the global/local brand positioning research agenda has mainly focused on more cultural and strategic issues (e.g. Steenkamp, 2019), there appears to be a dearth of research on more basic, psychological drivers underlying the appeal of local vs global brands. Hence, as a possible consequence, no research has yet linked local (food) brands to consumer buying impulsivity, a void the present paper aims to fill.

The current research identifies a local brand positioning strategy as a novel and as yet untested trigger of buying impulsivity. The relevance of studying buying impulsivity is underscored by the observation that impulsive purchases represent almost 40 percent of all money spent on e-commerce (Saleh, 2017). Moreover, up to 20 percent of the average household’s grocery bill comes from items that were purchased on impulse (Gaille, 2017). Although most unplanned purchases are inexpensive, 54 percent of US adults say that they have spent \$100 or more on an impulse buy, and another 20 percent at least \$1,000 (Crouch, 2017).

This research identifies an important driver for managers faced with the choice between a global or local brand positioning strategy to consider “going local” and so to benefit strategically from the possibility that local brands in particular may induce elevated levels of consumer buying impulsivity. Especially relevant in today’s globalized markets, in which local brands increasingly compete with global brands, the present research provides pertinent insights into how local brands successfully compete with global brands. More specifically, it argues that local brands have an important and consequential psychological corollary: experiencing local brands, with their close connection to the local market, induces a consumer mindset that reflects the brand’s psychological proximity to the consumer’s self. This low level of construal makes consumers more prone to become impulsively attracted to local brands and *ceteris paribus* makes impulsive purchases more likely. Psychological proximity may signal a source of trust

and is thus especially relevant in (the current) times of (economic and political) turbulence. Moreover, the construct has not yet been investigated in the context of local (food) brands and buying impulsivity. In doing so, the current research demonstrates that local brands provide additional support to the frequently cited opinion that brand associations related to the self-constitute an important source of brand value (e.g. Chernev *et al.*, 2011).

Conceptual framework and hypotheses

Local vs global brand positioning strategy and psychological distance to the self

Extant literature argues that, in contrast with the wide availability and recognition of global brands (Özsomer, 2012), a major strength of local brands is their close connection to national or regional identity, local culture and heritage (Ger, 1999). Local brands communicate a salient proximity to consumers' lifestyles, values, preferences and behaviors (Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2017; Crane, 2002; Kapferer, 2002), and the emotional ties stemming from this proximity constitute a unique strength of these brands (Kapferer, 2002; Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). Global brands in contrast aim to satisfy the largest number of consumers across markets and thus use a positioning strategy based on the largest common denominator that has been judged to be effective across rather than within specific geographical regions (Holt *et al.*, 2004; Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). This strategy makes global brands less likely to be perceived as close to the individual consumer than local brands, in a social, spatial, cultural, or, more generally, psychological sense. Indeed, brands that are available in multiple countries have weaker overall relationships with consumers than local brands (Hollis, 2008). As Holt *et al.* (2004) highlight, local brands reflect who and what consumers are in the here and now, whereas global brands tend to show what consumers want to become in the future. This observation reflects a key psychological distinction between local and global brands: local brands represent social, spatial and/or temporal proximity to a consumer's present self, whereas global brands represent social, spatial, and/or temporal distance from the consumer's present self.

This seemingly trivial distinction has profound consequences for consumer judgments and choice. Research by Nielson (2015) shows that 41 percent of surveyed consumers agree that knowing a product comes from a company committed to the local community has a "heavy" to "very heavy" influence on their purchase decisions. Especially in times of economic or political turbulence, consumers seek sources of trust, continuity, security and familiarity, such that they are likely to identify less with foreign or global culture (Durvasula and Lysonski, 2006; Hollis, 2008). Conversely, they may attach particular value to local brands that appear trustworthy and close to the self. Several recent examples illustrate how the present climate of political, cultural, religious and economic turbulence – highlighted by the current presidency in the USA, the potential disruption of the European Union after Brexit, the unrest in the Middle East and the possible advent of a new economic recession – appear to provide fertile soil for local as opposed to global brands (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2018; IESE Publishing, 2018; Steenkamp, 2019). Even global powerhouses like Coca-Cola and Pepsi face tough local competition by Cola Turka in Turkey after admiration for and trust in the USA had waned. Cola Turka's strategy of appealing to national in-group pride, using the concept "Show off the great Turkishness inside of you," enabled the brand to gain a market share of 20 percent, surpassing Pepsi to reach the second position in the market (Hollis, 2008). Similarly, the local Indian ice cream brand Amul, marketed patriotically as "A Taste of India," reached a 36 percent market share only a few years after its introduction in a market previously dominated by global players (Hollis, 2008). Local cosmetics that explicitly target Asian consumers are quickly increasing in popularity compared with global brands in Singapore (Varma, 2017), and local smartphone producers in Indonesia are adding production capacity to meet the growing demand from "local brand enthusiasts" (Amin, 2015). In 2015, overall US beer sales decreased 0.2 percent, while U.S. sales of beer produced by small, local breweries increased 12.8 percent (Brewers Association, 2015a, b).

While political, cultural, religious and economic turbulence may provoke a shift from global to local brand preferences, the present paper proposes and tests an interesting corollary of this increased popularity of local brands. Their relative success may –in part– be self-sustaining because of an inherent psychological advantage that these brands carry: the potential to spur elevated levels of buying impulsivity. More in particular, taking food brands as a case in point, we propose and test the novel notion that local (vs global) brands lower the brand's perceived psychological distance from the consumer's self. The experiments show that this lowered psychological distance has profound downstream consequences for consumer behavior, by promoting an increased tendency for impulsive buying and consumption, thus adding a behavioral argument to the array of reasons for internationally operating firms to opt for a local instead of a global (food) brand.

Note that while the local/global brand positioning construct appears to be related to work on country-of-origin effects (see e.g. Gineikiene *et al.*, 2016), there is a critical difference that needs to be highlighted: whereas country-of-origin effects usually pertain to production location and quality perceptions (Peterson and Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999), the local/global brand positioning distinction refers to differences in scale and distance: concrete, proximate and narrow availability (local), vs more abstract, distant and wide availability (global).

Local brands induce low-level construals, promoting buying impulsivity

“Psychological distance” describes the subjective experience that some object, event or even psychological entity (e.g. goal, emotion and value) is closer to or further away from the individual's self, a construct known as construal level (Trope and Liberman, 2010). Consumers involuntarily and even unconsciously represent objects, events and/or psychological entities in terms of their relative distance to the self (Liberman *et al.*, 2007; Trope and Liberman, 2010; Trope *et al.*, 2007). The closer to (further from) the self an object is perceived in terms of psychological distance, the more concrete (abstract) the object is construed – prompting the term “construal level” (Trope and Liberman, 2010). Whether a person construes in concrete, low-level or abstract, high-level terms depends on the subjective psychological distance the person experiences between the self and the object, event or psychological entity. Construing an object on a lower, more concrete level implies a focus on its subordinate, physical features and its *ad hoc*, immediate appetitive attributes and reward value. Low-level construals involve a focus on the here and now, including temptations (Fujita *et al.*, 2006; Trope and Liberman, 2010). In contrast, construing the same object on a higher, more abstract level implies a focus on the whole rather than its parts and its relationship to long-term goals rather than its immediate reward value (Trope and Liberman, 2010). For example, in a store full of chocolates, a consumer may perceive the shop at a higher, more abstract level and view the experience in its entirety, focusing on how a visit to the shop may relate to one's long-term goal of losing weight; or the shop may be perceived at a lower, more concrete construal level, such that the consumer focuses on the individual chocolates, their physical appeal, the smells and textures and the immediate gratification that their consumption would provide (Navon, 1977).

A large body of research attests to the robustness of the relationship between psychological distance and construal level (for an overview, see Trope and Liberman, 2010). For example, Liberman and Förster (2009) asked participants to write about their lives tomorrow or one year from now to prime them with temporal proximity vs temporal distance. Relative to a control group in which participants did not write an essay, temporal distance promoted abstract, high-level construals, whereas temporal proximity produced concrete, low-level construals. Other studies show similar effects when participants are primed with other types of psychological distance, including social (Liviatan *et al.*, 2008), spatial (Fujita *et al.*, 2006) and hypothetical (Wakslak *et al.*, 2008).

Extending these research findings, the current study posits that the lower psychological distance induced by a salient local brand positioning strategy may produce lower level

construals compared with a salient global brand positioning strategy, with important consequences for consumer behavior and buying impulsivity (Fujita *et al.*, 2006). In line with Rook and Fisher (1995), impulsive buying is defined as a consumer's urge-driven tendency to buy spontaneously, immediately and unreflectively. Earlier research points to the link between low construal levels and increased (buying) impulsivity. For example, concrete, low-level construals promote a higher sensitivity to *ad hoc* temptations and indulgence, whereas resisting consumption temptations in the service of long-term goals (i.e. self-control) is generally facilitated by abstract, high-level construals (e.g. Fujita *et al.*, 2006; Schmeichel *et al.*, 2010; Wan and Agrawal, 2011). In their classic study, Mischel and Baker (1975) show that focusing on the concrete characteristics of a product (e.g. sweetness and chewiness of marshmallows) makes it significantly more difficult to resist the impulse to consume than focusing on the same product in a more abstract way (e.g. looking at marshmallows as round white clouds). Similarly, Fujita *et al.* (2006) show that low-level construals are associated with greater tendencies to engage in impulsive choice and decision making than high-level construals. These authors find that lower construal levels promote increased preference for immediate yet lower rewards, vs delayed yet larger rewards and increased attraction to various consumption temptations. In addition, Price *et al.* (2016) show that a low level of construal increases consumers' attraction to indulgent foods and actual impulsive snack consumption, whereas a high construal level, associated with a "big picture" perspective, does the opposite and inhibits impulsive consumption. According to Chiou *et al.* (2013), under low construal levels, smokers intending to reduce their habit experience more difficulty resisting the impulse to light a cigarette than they do in high construal level conditions. In summary, these findings support the notion that lower (vs higher) construal levels induce increased tendencies to engage in impulsive consumption because of the associated focus on the here and now (vs long-term goals), including its temptations (Fujita *et al.*, 2006; Trope and Liberman, 2010; Wan and Agrawal, 2011). By implication, if local brands induce lower level construals than global brands, a local brand positioning strategy should enhance the likelihood that consumers impulsively purchase products with local rather than global brands. Formally (see Figure 1):

- H1. A local brand positioning strategy induces higher levels of buying impulsivity than a global brand positioning strategy.
- H2. A local brand positioning strategy (a) induces a lower level of construal than a global brand positioning strategy, (b) because of the lower psychological distance between the brand and the consumer's self.
- H3. A lower level of construal increases consumers' likelihood to impulsively buy a local compared to a global brand.
- H4. The effect of a local (vs global) brand positioning strategy on buying impulsivity is mediated by construal level.

Figure 1.
Conceptual model

Research overview

The current research posits that local brands enjoy a strategic advantage over global brands because they induce higher levels of buying impulsivity. Across five studies, using various measures of impulsive buying and construal level, evidence converges in support of the hypotheses (see Table I). Experiment 1 begins by showing the basic effect: local brands promote a higher tendency to engage in impulsive buying than do global brands (*H1*). Experiments 2 and 3 move a level deeper to the presumed underlying psychological driver by testing the propositions that local brands induce lower level construals than global brands (*H2a*) and that these lower levels increase consumers' likelihood to impulsively purchase a local rather than a global brand (*H3*). Experiment 4 brings the findings of the first three experiments together by means of mediation analyses and explains the basic effect of a local vs global brand positioning strategy on buying impulsivity through the lens

Experiment	Hypothesis	Research design	Dependent variable(s)	Main finding
1	<i>H1</i>	<i>n</i> = 60, single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design	State buying impulsiveness scale (Rook and Fisher, 1995)	Merely considering a local (vs global) brand induces elevated levels of buying impulsivity
2	<i>H2a</i>	<i>n</i> = 100, single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design	Kimchi–Palmer task as measure of construal level (Gasper and Clore, 2002; Kimchi and Palmer, 1982)	Considering a local brand leads to a lower level of construal than considering a global brand
3	<i>H3</i>	<i>n</i> = 69, single-factor (construal level: high vs low) between participants design	Local brand choice as measure of buying impulsivity	A lower construal level increases consumers' likelihood to impulsively purchase a local rather than a global brand
4	<i>H2b</i>	<i>n</i> = 91, single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design	Closeness to self and distance from self (Aron <i>et al.</i> , 1992) as measures of psychological distance (construal level)	Local brands feel closer to and less distant from the consumer's self than global brands
	<i>H4</i>		Urge to buy as measure of buying impulsivity	Consumers are more inclined to impulsively buy local than global brands, as the low-level construals increase consumers' buying impulsivity for local brands
5	<i>H1</i>	<i>n</i> = 219, single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design	Real unplanned purchase behavior as measure of buying impulsivity	A local brand positioning strategy leads to a higher number of unplanned purchases than a global brand positioning strategy, mainly benefiting the advertised (local) brand, even in the presence of alternative purchasing options The findings confirm that effects hold in real-life purchasing situations

Table I.
Overview table
of experiments
and findings

of psychological distance (*H2b* and *H4*). Finally, Experiment 5 extends the findings to the real world and offers converging evidence of the effectiveness of a local compared with a global (food) brand in terms of buying impulsivity, by using existing brands and assessing actual, overt purchase behavior.

Experiment 1

Experiment 1 assesses whether a local brand positioning strategy spurs buying impulsivity compared with a global brand positioning strategy, using a validated measure to determine consumers' tendency to engage in impulsive buying.

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Participants and design

In total, 60 participants (51.7 percent male; mean age 37.85 years, $SD = 11.58$) participated in exchange for money in a study conducted on MTurk in the USA. The study employed a single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design and included a state measure of impulsive buying as the main dependent variable.

Procedure

Participants were invited to participate in a study about their favorite brands. After providing informed consent, they were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The study manipulated local vs global brand positioning strategy by varying the salience of a local or global brand using an essay-writing task (e.g. Wheeler *et al.*, 2001). Participants learned that local brands are only available in one's country or area, whereas global brands are available in many countries. In the local (global) brand condition, participants were asked to write about their favorite local (global) brand. Table AI contains an overview of the type of brands that participants mentioned. The following are examples of what participants wrote in the local brand condition:

Run Dan Run is a local Charleston, SC band. The band reflects the laid-back culture of low country. They are a great representative of the local scene. The band has a combination of silky smooth vocals and energetic band. (Male, 38 years)

Rington's tea, a company local to the north of England. It is a door-to-door tea selling service dating back hundreds of years. The delivery men used to cover the area on horseback but now use vans. Tea is obviously an important part of English culture, and Rington's is carrying on a great tradition, and one I enjoy. (Female, 31 years)

The following are examples of responses in the global brand condition:

My favorite global brand is Tide. No matter where I go around the world I can find this brand. The brand transcends cultures, and it is used in homes around the world. (Female, 31 years)

One of my most favorite brands in the entire world is Microsoft. Microsoft is a global phenomenon. People from all different backgrounds and cultures have used programs and/or products created by the Microsoft company. Microsoft's sales in both domestic and international markets prove that it is a company that many rely on for quality products. (Male, 26 years)

Next, participants' acute tendency to engage in impulsive buying was measured. To this end, Rook and Fisher's (1995) buying impulsiveness scale was adapted to accommodate acute, state-dependent variations in the tendency to engage in impulsive buying. Participants indicated their agreement with the following statements ("not at all" [1] to "very much" [7]): "At this moment [...] I feel like buying things spontaneously/'Just do it' describes the way I want to buy things/I want to buy things without thinking/'I see it, I buy it' describes how I want to buy things/I feel like buying things on the spur-of-the-moment/I feel like buying things according to how I feel at this moment/I feel like carefully planning my purchases (reverse coded)/I feel like

being a bit reckless.” The average score on this measure ($\alpha = 0.88$) served as the dependent variable of state impulsive buying, with higher scores indicating a higher tendency to engage in impulsive buying. Finally, as manipulation checks, using two seven-point scale Likert items, all participants indicated how local and how global they considered the brand they wrote about.

Results and discussion

Manipulation checks. In accordance with the instructions, participants in the local brand condition considered the brand they wrote about to be more local ($M_{\text{local}} = 6.07$, $SD_{\text{local}} = 1.21$) and less global ($M_{\text{global}} = 2.04$, $SD_{\text{global}} = 1.65$) than participants in the global brand condition, who showed the opposite pattern ($M_{\text{local}} = 2.52$, $SD_{\text{local}} = 1.70$; $t(58) = 9.16$, $p < 0.001$ and $M_{\text{global}} = 6.58$, $SD_{\text{global}} = 1.00$, $t(58) = -13.09$, $p < 0.001$, respectively).

Impulsive buying. An independent-samples *t*-test served to test the hypothesis that considering a local brand induces elevated levels of buying impulsivity compared with considering a global brand. Results showed that participants who considered a local brand reported a higher acute buying impulsivity ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.72$) than participants who considered a global brand ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.41$, $t(58) = 2.24$, $p < 0.05$)[1].

This finding confirmed *H1* and constituted the first empirical evidence that, *ceteris paribus*, merely considering a local brand induces elevated levels of buying impulsivity, suggesting that it increases an urge-driven tendency for immediate, unreflective, *ad hoc* product acquisition. The generic nature of the impulsivity measure left the possibility open that the impulsivity induced by local brands may also benefit other brands, beyond the focal one. Therefore, Experiments 4 and 5 revisit the construct of buying impulsivity by employing more targeted measures to assess whether a local brand positioning strategy pays off for the brand itself and whether it may spill over to other brands.

Experiment 2

Experiment 1 showed that consumers considering a local brand showed elevated levels of acute buying impulsivity compared to consumers considering a global brand. This reasoning implies that the effect may be understood as a result of local brands’ ability to induce a lower sense of psychological distance and thus a lower construal level than global brands. Experiment 2 aims to test directly whether a local vs global brand positioning strategy affects consumers’ construal level in the predicted direction.

Participants and design

In total, 100 undergraduates of a Spanish university (44.0 percent male; mean age 20.87 years, $SD = 1.31$) participated in exchange for partial course credit. The study employed a single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design and a validated measure to assess construal level as main dependent variable.

Procedure

Participants were invited to participate in an online study about a (fictitious) chocolate brand. After providing informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the local brand condition, participants imagined a local brand of chocolate, only available in their hometown. The brand was described as part of their hometown’s cultural heritage, a brand with which many people from their hometown had grown up and that had turned them into chocolate lovers. In the global brand condition, participants imagined a global chocolate brand, available in 68 countries. The brand was described as part of the world’s cultural heritage, with which many people across the globe had grown up and that had turned them into chocolate lovers. This manipulation of local vs global brand positioning strategy varies only the geographical scope of the brand and its

attributes and leaves constant the quality and strengths of the brand claims (e.g. the time the brand has been on the market) across the two conditions.

Participants then completed a prevalidated measure, the 24-trial Kimchi–Palmer task, to assess experienced construal levels (Burgoon *et al.*, 2013; Gasper and Clore, 2002; Kimchi and Palmer, 1982; Soderberg *et al.*, 2015). In this task, participants must indicate, as quickly yet as accurately as possible, which of two sample figures (A or B) looks similar to a target figure. All target figures represented a large figure comprised of a set of smaller, different figures (e.g. a large triangle consisting of small squares; see Figure A1). Thus, the large figure constituted a more global, abstract figure, while the small comprising figures constituted the more local, concrete figures. Of each pair of sample figures, one either shared local but not global features of the target figure (e.g. a square made up of squares) or else shared global but not local features (e.g. a triangle made up of triangles). For each pair, participants were free to choose either of the two sample figures they deemed to be most similar to the target figure. Thus, the more participants chose sample figures that shared local but not global features, the more these participants were focused on the constituent, concrete, local elements making up the larger, more abstract elements and vice versa. Consequently, the choice of predominantly local sample figures indicates more concrete, low-level construals, whereas the choice of global sample figures reflects more abstract, high-level construals. Each local choice was recorded as 1, and each global choice was scored as 0, such that higher scores indicate a lower level of construal. The summed scores ($\alpha = 0.90$), computed for each participant, ranged from 0 to 24.

Results and discussion

An independent-samples *t*-test showed that over the 24 trials, participants who imagined a local brand of chocolate chose more local figure options ($M = 17.65$, $SD = 6.39$) than participants who imagined a global brand of chocolate ($M = 15.35$, $SD = 4.80$, $t(98) = 2.04$, $p < 0.05$) [2]. This finding supports *H2a*: consumers who merely consider a local brand experience a more concrete, lower level of construal, compared with consumers who consider a global brand.

Experiment 3

Experiment 3 continues by testing whether a lower level of construal increases consumers' likelihood to impulsively buy a local compared with a global brand (*H3*). In this study, a prevalidated manipulation induced a high vs low construal level. A key strength of this approach, in conjunction with the other studies presented herein, is that the theory driven, established procedure to induce high vs low construal levels allows for greater confidence in the results of this experiment, as well as the other experiments reported, which rely more on ecologically valid manipulations of the construal level distinction in terms of a local vs global brand positioning strategy. Thus, to the extent that the results of Experiment 3 converge with those of the other studies in the present paper, they strongly corroborate the theoretical underpinnings of the present notions.

Participants and design

In total, 69 undergraduate students of a Spanish university (39.1 percent male; mean age 20.49 years, $SD = 1.13$) participated in exchange for partial course credit. The study employed a single-factor (construal level: high vs low) between participants design.

Procedure

After participants provided informed consent, they read computer instructions stating that they would perform several unrelated tasks. The first task involved the construal level

manipulation introduced as a basic perception task. Participants completed the Navon task (Aggarwal and Zhao, 2015; Navon, 1977; Soderberg *et al.*, 2015), in which a series of composite letters (a big letter made up of smaller letters) appeared (see Appendix 3). Participants reported either the composite (high-level construal condition) or smaller letters (low-level construal condition; Förster and Dannenberg, 2010). Liberman and Förster (2009) confirmed the accuracy of the Navon task as a construal level manipulation, by the first instructing participants to attend to either the composite or smaller letters in the Navon task and then examining the impact on all psychological distance indicators of construal level (i.e. temporal, spatial, social and hypothetical distance). Their results verified that the Navon task can successfully be used to induce a high vs low level of construal (for a review, see Soderberg *et al.*, 2015).

After completing the Navon task, participants saw four types of products: canned tuna fish, packaged sandwich meat, processed orange juice and hazelnut spread. For each product type, they saw a local brand and a global brand (Calvo and John West; Campofrio and Oscar Mayer; Don Simon and Minute Maid; Nocilla and Nutella, respectively) and indicated which brand they would buy at that specific moment (this wording captures the spontaneous, unplanned and immediate element of impulsive buying). A local choice was scored as 1 and a global choice as 0. The summed scores (range: 0–4) served as an indicator of local brand choice. Although all products are food items, they extend the earlier findings on chocolate to more mundane, non-luxurious food products. Finally, participants indicated their familiarity with each brand (“not at all familiar” [1] to “very familiar” [7]; $\alpha = 0.72$) and answered for each brand: “How local do you consider this brand to be?” (“not at all local” [1] to “very local” [7]; $\alpha = 0.70$) and “How global do you consider this brand to be?” (“not at all global” [1] to “very global” [7]; $\alpha = 0.70$).

Results and discussion

Manipulation checks and brand familiarity. Participants perceived the local brands as more local ($M = 6.84$; $SD = 1.08$) and less global ($M = 4.43$; $SD = 1.54$) than the global brands ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 1.56$; $t(67) = 15.19$, $p < 0.001$ and $M = 5.92$; $SD = 1.03$; $t(68) = -7.42$, $p < 0.001$, respectively). An independent-samples *t*-test showed no differences in brand familiarity between the low ($M = 6.23$, $SD = 0.97$) and high ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 0.83$) construal level conditions ($t(66) = 1.26$, ns). Thus, the manipulations can be considered successful.

Local brand choice. The results confirm *H3*, namely, that a lower construal level increases consumers’ likelihood of impulsively purchasing a local rather than a global brand. The regression analysis of construal level (0 = high, 1 = low) on local brand choice, controlling for brand familiarity, showed a higher number of local brand choices for participants with a low compared with a high construal level ($B = 0.44$, $t(67) = 2.08$, $p = 0.04$). These results suggest that local brands can benefit from lowering consumers’ construal level.

Experiment 4

Experiment 4 was designed to bring the findings of the first three experiments together by testing the hypothesized mediating role of construal level in the relationship between local brands and buying impulsivity (*H4*). Moreover, to corroborate the results of Experiments 1–3, Experiment 4 replicates their findings with two measures of psychological distance as indicators of construal level (*H2b*). Experiment 4 also extends the previous findings using an adapted manipulation of local vs global brand positioning strategy to rule out the possibility that perceived manufacturing location, rather than local vs global availability *per se*, may have driven any of the previous effects. Thus, by keeping manufacturing location constant, Experiment 4 addresses a potential country-of-origin effect (see Johansson and Ronkainen, 2005) as an alternative explanation of the findings reported herein. Finally, Experiment 4

provides further converging evidence by conceptually replicating the basic effect of local vs global brand positioning strategy on buying impulsivity (*HI*), using a different measure of buying impulsivity.

Participants and design

In total, 91 participants (28.6 percent male; mean age 25.8 years, $SD = 9.53$) took part in this online study conducted in Spain[3]. Undergraduate students recruited students as well as nonstudent participants as part of a course assignment. The study employed a single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design.

Procedure

Participants were invited to engage in a study about a chocolate brand. After providing informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two scenarios used in Experiment 2. The scenarios differed in the chocolate's availability (hometown vs 73 countries). Experiment 4 extended the previously used scenario by explicitly specifying the manufacturing location as local in both the local and global brand condition (see Appendix 4). Participants then completed two measures of psychological distance as indicators of construal level – experienced closeness to and distance from the self – using different measures to rule out the possibility that shared method variance inflated any correlations. First, using a seven-point scale, participants indicated how close the chocolate brand felt to them (“not at all close” [1] to “very close” [7]). Second, as a measure of psychological distance from the self, they completed a circle selection task adapted from Aron *et al.* (1992; see Appendix 5). In this task, each participant viewed five pairs of circles positioned at increasing distances from each other and indicated which pair of circles best illustrated the distance the participant perceived between his or her self and the focal brand. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, with higher values indicating greater psychological distance.

In line with the definition of impulsive buying (Rook and Fisher, 1995), participants' urge to buy served as an indicator of buying impulsivity: “I feel an urge to buy the chocolate” and “I want to buy the chocolate” (“not at all” [1] to “very much” [7]; $r = 0.89$). As manipulation checks, all participants indicated how local and how global they considered the chocolate brand. These last two items ranged from “not at all local/global” (1) to “very local/global” (7).

Results

Manipulation checks. In line with the previous studies, participants in the local brand condition perceived the chocolate brand as more local and less global ($M_{\text{local}} = 4.90$, $SD_{\text{local}} = 2.28$; $M_{\text{global}} = 2.62$, $SD_{\text{global}} = 1.45$, $t(88) = 3.18$, $p < 0.01$), and for participants in the global brand condition, the reverse pattern emerged ($M_{\text{local}} = 3.38$, $SD_{\text{local}} = 2.28$; $M_{\text{global}} = 4.27$, $SD_{\text{global}} = 2.24$, $t(88) = -4.09$, $p < 0.001$). These results attest to the success of the manipulation.

Closeness to the self and urge to buy. To assess whether any effects of local vs global brand positioning strategy on impulsive buying (urge to buy) were mediated by construal level, bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was performed using the Process macro (Model 4; Hayes, 2013). Performing this analysis separately for both measures of construal level corroborated the findings. An analysis including local vs global brand positioning strategy as the independent variable, impulsive buying as the dependent variable, and closeness to the self as a mediator indicated support for the prediction that the positive influence of a local brand positioning strategy on urge to buy was mediated by a lower level of construal level ($B = -0.33$; 95% confidence interval excludes zero: $[-0.75, -0.04]$).

Distance from the self and urge to buy. Using the circle selection task to assess psychological distance as a second indicator of construal level, the analysis was run again to confirm the support for the hypotheses. The data again supported full mediation, as evidenced by the 95% confidence interval of the indirect effect (i.e. of local vs global brand positioning strategy on buying urge via psychological distance), which did not include zero ($B = -0.23$; $[-0.55, -0.02]$).

Discussion

These results demonstrate converging evidence for the hypotheses. First, Experiment 4 replicates the findings of Experiment 1: a local brand positioning strategy promotes a greater tendency to engage in impulsive buying compared with a global brand positioning strategy. Second, Experiment 4 extends the findings of Experiment 1 by showing that the impact on buying impulsivity is not merely generic but directly benefits the focal brand, in that the findings show that a local brand induces a greater urge to buy the focal local brand. Third, Experiment 4 replicates and extends the main finding of Experiment 2: a local brand induces a lower construal level than a global brand by creating lower psychological distance, such that local brands feel closer to and less distant from the consumer's self, which is the underlying mechanism for this effect (*H2b*). Fourth, Experiment 4 shows that the impact on construal level is consequential in that it fully underlies the impact of local vs global brand positioning strategy on buying impulsivity. Thus, Experiment 4 uses two different indicators of construal level and the immediate urge to buy the focal brand as another measure of buying impulsivity to confirm evidence for *H4*: consumers are more inclined to impulsively buy local than global brands, because the low-level construals induced by local brands increase consumers' buying impulsivity. The adapted manipulation of local vs global brand positioning strategy also rules out production location or a potential country-of-origin effect as an alternate explanation.

Experiment 5

To gain converging evidence for the propositions, Experiment 5 tests the influence of a local vs global brand positioning strategy on buying impulsivity using real unplanned purchase behavior as a measure of buying impulsiveness. The study features real brands and a real webshop that we created specifically for this study. To enhance the external validity of the findings, the study design also gave participants a choice between not only the focal local or focal global brand but also an alternative local and alternative global brand.

Participants and design

In total, 219 participants from the USA (28.6 percent male; mean age 38.7 years, $SD = 11.66$) took part in an online study about soup preferences conducted on MTurk in the USA[4]. The study employed a single-factor (brand positioning strategy: local vs global brand) between participants design.

Procedure

As an experiment with a real purchase measure, a real webshop was opened to sell soup from four existing brands: two local US brands (the focal and an alternative brand) and two global US brands (focal and alternative). Because all four brands were American, they differed only in their local vs global availability. As a local vs global brand positioning strategy manipulation, participants viewed a product page of a webshop advertising the focal local or focal global tomato soup brand, dependent on condition. The focal local soup brand was advertised as follows: "Brand X is a truly local brand. It is only available in the USA. It's a real symbol of local culture." The focal global soup brand was advertised

as follows: “Brand X is a truly global brand. It is available in the USA and in 200 other countries. It’s a real symbol of global culture” (see Appendix 6).

Participants were then invited to purchase one of the four tomato soup brands sold at the webshop to measure their actual buying behavior (see Appendix 7). Specifically, participants were told: “You can use the 0.50 USD that you earned by filling out this survey to buy soup at a webshop. Take a look at the webshop and indicate whether you want to take advantage of this offer by indicating which can of soup (if any) you want to buy.” It was emphasized that purchase was voluntary, and only after participants bought the soup of their choice by clicking on a button explicitly named “PURCHASE” (or after their explicit decision not to buy anything), were participants informed that they would not receive the soup but that they would get the \$0.50 as compensation for their participation.

The behavioral measures of buying impulsivity consisted of whether participants decided to buy any brand and the advertised brand (i.e. the focal local or focal global brand, depending on condition). Because participants were unaware of the possibility of purchasing anything prior to the study, any purchase behavior would by definition be unplanned, spontaneous and thus impulsive (e.g. Vohs and Faber, 2007). After the purchase (or decision not to buy), participants indicated how much they liked both the focal local and focal global brands (“not at all” [1] to “very much” [7]), which served as a potential confound check. In addition, all participants indicated for each of the four brands how local they considered the brand (“not at all local” [1] to “very local” [7]) and how global they considered the brand (“not at all global” [1] to “very global” [7]). These last items served as manipulation checks.

Results

Checks. Paired-sample *t*-tests confirmed that participants perceived the (focal and alternative) local brands as more local than the (focal and alternative) global brands, whereas they perceived the (focal and alternative) global brands as more global than the (focal and alternative) local brands, confirming the effectiveness of the manipulation (see Table II). The focal local and focal global brands did not differ in brand liking ($M_{\text{local}} = 4.03$, $SD = 2.00$; $M_{\text{global}} = 3.82$, $SD = 1.70$; $t(218) = 1.32$, ns), which rules out brand liking as alternative explanation.

Actual unplanned purchase behavior. A binary logistic regression analysis with actual unplanned purchase behavior (i.e. whether participants bought any of the four brands offered; 0 = no, 1 = yes) as the outcome variable and local vs global brand positioning strategy (0 = global, 1 = local) as predictor revealed a significant main effect of brand positioning strategy (Wald = 0.55, $p < 0.05$), indicating a higher likelihood that participants bought any product available at the webshop after exposure to a local compared to a global brand positioning strategy. Of the participants in the local brand condition, 44.2 percent made an unplanned purchase vs 31.3 percent in the global brand condition, confirming higher buying impulsivity with a local brand.

This analysis thus reveals an effect of a local brand positioning strategy on unplanned purchasing. A multinomial logistic regression analysis builds on this finding by assessing whether this buying impulsivity is unfocused or tied to the local advertised product. Which of the four brands was purchased (if any) functioned as the outcome variable, and local vs global brand positioning strategy functioned as the predictor. The results show a significant main effect of local vs global brand positioning strategy for the focal local brand (Wald = 6.16, $p < 0.05$) but not for the alternative local brand (Wald = 1.66, ns), focal global brand (Wald = 1.73, ns) or alternative global brand (Wald = 1.11, ns). This finding indicates that, compared with a global brand positioning strategy, a local brand positioning strategy results in a greater likelihood that the advertised (i.e. focal local) product is purchased, without affecting the likelihood that alternative products will be bought.

Table II.
Experiment 5: results
of paired-sample
t-tests confirming
intended differences in
perceived localness
and globalness
between brands

Brand comparison	Perceived localness of brand				Perceived globalness of brand							
	Mean	SD	Difference score	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> -value	Mean	SD	Difference score	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> -value
Focal local vs. alternative local	3.50	2.19	0.49	3.80	218	0.000						
	3.00	1.99										
Focal local vs. focal global	3.50	2.19	1.10	7.08	218	0.000						
	2.40	1.68										
Focal local vs. alternative global	3.50	2.19	0.86	5.11	218	0.000						
	2.63	1.91										
Alternative local vs. focal global	3.00	1.99	0.60	5.06	218	0.000						
	2.40	1.68										
Alternative local vs. alternative global	3.00	1.99	0.37	2.88	218	0.004						
	2.63	1.91					5.51	1.60	-0.39	-3.77	218	0.000
Focal global vs. alternative global							5.90	1.51				
Focal global vs. alternative local							5.51	1.60	0.82	5.94	218	0.000
							4.68	1.76				
Focal global vs. focal local							5.51	1.60	2.28	15.19	218	0.000
							3.23	1.86				
Alternative global vs. alternative local							5.90	1.51	1.22	9.83	218	0.000
							4.68	1.76				
Alternative global vs. focal local							5.90	1.51	2.67	16.95	218	0.000
							3.23	1.86				

A binary logistic regression analysis further confirmed the effectiveness of a local brand positioning strategy. Using actual unplanned purchase behavior of the advertised product as the outcome variable (0 = no, 1 = yes) and local vs global brand positioning strategy as a predictor, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of local vs global brand positioning strategy (Wald = 1.25, $p < 0.01$), indicating a greater likelihood that the advertised product was purchased with a local compared with a global brand positioning strategy. Accordingly, 25.0 percent of the participants in the local brand condition decided to buy the advertised (i.e. focal local) brand, compared with 8.7 percent of participants who decided to buy the advertised (i.e. focal global) brand in the global brand condition (for an overview, see Table III).

Finally, of all participants who decided to buy the advertised brand, 72.2 percent were in the local brand condition, significantly higher than the 27.8 percent who were in the global brand condition (Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 10.57$, $p = 0.001$).

Discussion

These results provide further evidence of the effectiveness of a local compared with a global brand positioning strategy in terms of buying impulsivity. With a measure of real purchase behavior in an unanticipated buying situation (Vohs and Faber, 2007), the experiment demonstrates a higher number of unplanned purchases for participants for whom a local brand was salient, compared with those for whom a global brand was made salient. Moreover, the impulsiveness induced by a local brand positioning strategy only benefited the advertised focal (local) brand, even in the presence of alternative local and global brand purchasing options. Finally, because the study uses real brands, a real webshop and alternative local and global brands, it affirms that the effects hold in real-life purchasing situations.

General discussion

Theoretical implications

This study responds to calls for more in-depth research on local compared to global brands (e.g. Özsomer, 2012; Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004) by identifying an as yet unexplored driver of the success of local (food) brands. While previous research has pointed to the tight associations of local brands with local culture and heritage (Ger, 1999) and the strong perceptions of localness (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003), the present research is the first to show why these associations constitute important (psychological) assets. Particularly, this research adopts a new theoretical angle by predicting and demonstrating that a local brand positioning strategy induces a lower sense of psychological distance between the brand and the consumer, which is the hallmark of a low construal level mindset (Trope and Liberman, 2010; Trope *et al.*, 2007). This lower construal level in turn predisposes consumers to engage in impulsive buying and, thus, (all other factors being equal) makes them more likely to impulsively buy local brands than their global counterparts. As such, the current research is the first to examine the role of a local vs global brand positioning strategy in the context of buying impulsivity.

Brand purchase	Local brand condition		Global brand condition	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Focal local brand	26	25.0	14	12.2
Alternative local brand	9	8.7	6	5.2
Focal global brand	3	2.9	10	8.7
Alternative global brand	8	7.7	6	5.2
No purchase	58	55.8	79	68.7

Table III.
Experiment 5:
frequencies of soup
purchases at webshop
for local and global
brand conditions

The findings of a series of five experiments are in line with the hypotheses and were robust across various methodological and conceptual variations. The data show the predicted effect of a local vs global brand positioning strategy on buying impulsivity mediated by construal level among a total of 539 participants, using student and nonstudent samples, different indices of construal level and generic as well as more brand-specific buying impulsivity measures, such as the immediate urge to buy and real unplanned purchase behavior.

Thus, the current study extends prior research that demonstrates how subtle environmental cues, such as payment method (Chen *et al.*, 2017) or seeing oneself as a global citizen (Ng and Batra, 2017), can influence construal levels. The present findings add brand positioning strategy, in terms of being global or local, to this “toolkit” of construal level-inducing marketing cues. As the results show, this particular type of marketing cue has important downstream consequences for understanding and managing consumer behavior.

Moreover, while at *prima facie* the present work may appear to represent a substantial overlap with research on country-of-origin effects (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999), the fundamental role of construal level highlighted in the present studies strongly suggests that there is an important conceptual difference between the two. Indeed, while country-of-origin effects frequently pertain to production location and quality attributions (Gineikiene *et al.*, 2016; Peterson and Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999), such perceptions play a lesser role in the local/global brand positioning distinction (see Experiment 4, where we rule out production location and hence country-of-origin as alternative explanation). Rather, psychological distance from the self appears to be the underlying psychological driver of the differential impact here. Thus, our research may be viewed as additional support for the observation that both constructs warrant distinct conceptualizations, literatures and research traditions.

Managerial implications

This research is especially relevant for managers involved in international marketing and business, in that it shows how they can use a local vs global brand positioning strategy to affect consumer responses toward their (food) brands, that is, how to heighten consumers’ buying impulsivity. Although individual differences exist, almost all consumers engage in this behavior from time to time: 84 percent of US adults indicate that they have made impulse purchases at some time in the past (Crouch, 2017). An average of \$5,400 spent annually on unplanned purchases (O’Brien, 2018), further underscores the potential for businesses to mobilize and profit from such unplanned, impulsive spending. To trigger and benefit from consumers’ buying impulsivity, international marketing managers can emphasize the local character of their brand and its proximity to individual consumers through retail strategies as in-store advertising and online advertisements at webshops.

Moreover, for managers to successfully leverage consumer impulsivity, the present series of studies strongly suggest that strategies based on local/global brand positioning imply a specific set of considerations. Marketing managers may need to consider how to cater to the increased impulsiveness as a result of a local brand positioning strategy throughout the entire customer experience, i.e., by focusing on how to translate the present findings to optimize the customer journey, improve the brand’s touchpoints as well as the online and offline purchasing environments. This may imply, for example, fostering more and easily accessible buying opportunities, shortening product or service delivery times to prevent impulsiveness translating into impatience, a stronger emphasis on reward sensitivity and a sense of urgency in advertising appeals. Conversely, while speed and *ad hoc* gratification may play a larger role in local brand positioning strategies, managers considering to improve a global brand positioning strategy may focus more on assuring reliable and high-quality products and service throughout the customer experience, which would cater more to increased psychological distance, less impulsivity and more deliberation and reflection.

Limitations and further research

The study has several limitations, some of which deserve further research that might provide promising extensions of the present work.

First, given that most of the present studies focused on food brands, future research should examine the type of products or brands for which the present set of results holds. That is, although Experiment 1 did not impose any restrictions on the type of product, Experiments 2–5 focused on food brands. Hence, future research should more specifically examine the robustness and playing field of the effect for other product categories than food. Yet, the present results may well hold for other product categories as well. First, note that the essays participants wrote in Experiment 1 revealed that the local (vs global) brands that participants were spontaneously considering came from diverse product categories, ranging from consumer electronics and apparel to fast-moving consumer goods and even services. As this study showed, these varied types of local brands promoted elevated levels of buying impulsivity, compared to their global counterparts. Nevertheless, most products featured in the present series of studies were hedonic, or at least experiential in nature. In contrast to utilitarian products (e.g. insurances), which mainly provide gratification in the long run, hedonic products provide immediate, *ad hoc* gratification, derived from the consumption experience *per se* (rather than from solving a problem or providing a future benefit) and are therefore more susceptible targets for buying impulsivity. Thus, future research may well focus on the role of local vs global branding for more utilitarian products to assess the robustness of the present findings. More in particular, the impulsive buying tendencies observed when consumers actively consider a local compared with a global brand suggest that local brands – by lowering consumers’ construal level – lower consumers’ self-control and inhibition levels and appear to shift consumers’ goal priorities from a focus on longer-term goals to more *ad hoc*, immediate reward gratification (see Fujita *et al.*, 2006). To tie in with the assumed link between self-control and goal structure, further research could examine a plausible moderator by studying whether the effects of local brands on impulsive buying are more strongly observed for products that represent a typical self-control conflict between short- and long-term goals (i.e. for hedonic products that present a short-term benefit at the expense of a long-term cost, such as fatty or sugary foods) rather than relatively non-conflicting, utilitarian products (e.g. insurances).

Second, the current research only examined purchase intentions (Experiment 3) or real impulsive purchase behavior (Experiment 5) in situations with a direct link between the marketing communication emphasizing the local vs global brand positioning strategy and the purchase opportunity. Only in situations with such a direct link between marketing communication and point of purchase consumers are able to spontaneously, immediately and unreflectively act on their urges to buy in response to a local brand positioning strategy. This direct link is not present in the case of television commercials or billboards; but it is present with in-store advertising, home shopping networks, telemarketing and online ads with direct links to webshops. Therefore, an interesting avenue for research may be to examine the extent to which the effects observed herein are robust when brand positioning strategy (local vs global) is not communicated in close spatiotemporal proximity to the actual choice situation but is more distant in space and/or time – with important implications for the purchase situations to which the findings apply.

Third, factors that prevent consumers from feeling close to local brands would likely attenuate and hence moderate the effect of a local brand positioning strategy on buying impulsivity. For example, self-identification with global consumer culture, in which consumers are members of or outright identify themselves with a global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), or consumer world mindedness, in which consumers feel more closely connected to the global than local community and consider mankind rather than a particular nationality as their primary reference group (Hett, 1993; Sampson and Smith, 1957) could exert influences.

In extreme cases like xenophilia, which encompasses a love for strangers and foreigners and disrespect for or hatred of one's own sociological reference group (Perlmutter, 1954), a local brand positioning strategy may even backfire and have a detrimental effect on buying impulsivity.

Fourth and finally, the current research treats brands and specific products of those brands as the same in terms of local vs global brand positioning strategy. Future research could examine an overall global brand (e.g. McDonald's) engaging in a local brand positioning strategy for one of its products (e.g. the McKrocket, a burger only available in The Netherlands and Belgium). Although research along these lines should produce similar effects as those identified with local brands in the current research, the effects may be less pronounced given the associations of such products with global brands.

Notes

1. A regression analysis of buying impulsivity with local vs global brand positioning strategy as a predictor and gender and age as covariates showed no effect of gender ($t < 1$); a main effect of age ($B = -0.05$, $t(56) = -2.89$, $p < 0.01$), which is in line with research showing higher impulsivity with lower age (e.g. Samanez-Larkin *et al.*, 2011); and the predicted main effect for local vs global brand positioning strategy ($B = -0.86$, $t(56) = -2.25$, $p < 0.05$).
2. A regression analysis across the 24 trials with local vs global brand positioning strategy as the predictor and gender and age as covariates showed no effect of age ($t < 1$), a marginally significant effect of gender ($B = 2.01$, $t(93) = 1.73$, $p = 0.09$), and the predicted main effect for local vs global brand positioning strategy ($B = -2.33$, $t(93) = -2.02$, $p < 0.05$).
3. Although the sample of Experiment 4 appears unbalanced in terms of gender, a randomization check confirmed that the gender distribution was equal across the conditions of the design (Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 0.99$, ns), thus showing that gender was not a confound in the present study. Moreover, the gender asymmetry has not biased the results of the experiment, as the mediation analyses that were performed in this experiment remained significant when we controlled for gender by including it as a covariate ($B = -0.30$, 95% CI $[-0.68, -0.04]$; and $B = -0.21$, 95% CI $[-0.43, -0.005]$, respectively). Hence, the design, results and conclusions of this study were unaffected by the gender asymmetry.
4. Similar to Experiment 4, the gender distribution of Experiment 5 was unbalanced. Yet, similar to Experiment 4, this has not affected the design, results and conclusions of the study. Indeed, a randomization check ruled out that gender was confounded with the experimental conditions (Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 0.06$, ns), and the results and conclusions of the analyses were unaffected after controlling for gender: the binary logistic regression analyses still showed a significant impact of a local vs global brand positioning strategy when gender was included as a covariate (Wald_{brandpositioningstrategy} = 0.59, $p < 0.05$, Wald_{gender} = -0.88, $p < 0.01$; and Wald_{brandpositioningstrategy} = 1.29, $p < 0.01$, Wald_{gender} = -0.88, $p < 0.05$, respectively).

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Local/global brand condition	Category	Product	Count
Local	Medicine	Allergy medicine	1
Local	Apparel	Man clothes	1
Local	Drinks	Milk	1
		Soft drink	3
		Beer	3
		Tea	1
Local	Food	Biscuits	1
		Mayonnaise	1
		Bread	1
		Honey	1
		Pumpkins	1
		Cheese	1
		Cake	1
		Meat	1
Local	Service	Restaurant	6
		Music band	1
Local	Automobile	Car	2
Global	Laundry	Detergent	1
Global	Personal care	Soap bar	1
		Cosmetics	1
Global	Apparel	Sports clothing	4
		Shoes	1
Global	Drinks	Soft drink	7
Global	Food	Yogurt	1
		Baby food	1
Global	Service	Restaurant	1
Global	Electronics	Hardware/software	6
		Computer games	1
Global	Retailer	Online retailer	2
Global	Social media	Social media platform	1
Global	Automobile	Car	4
Global	Missing data	Missing data	1

Table AI.
Overview of type of
brands mentioned,
experiment 1

Appendix 3. Instruction with Example of Navon Task, Experiment 3

Go local or
go global

Instruction with example, low-level construal condition:

Perception Task

You will now be performing a basic perception task. Repeatedly, a big letter will be shown, which is made up of smaller letters.

For example:

```
EEEEEEEE
E
E
EEEEEEEE
      E
      E
EEEEEEEE
```

Please indicate which SMALL letter is shown.

For instance, in case of the example, you should have indicated the letter E.

Try to do this as fast as possible, without making any mistakes.

25

Instruction with example, high-level construal condition:

Perception Task

You will now be performing a basic perception task. Repeatedly, a big letter will be shown, which is made up of smaller letters.

For example:

```
EEEEEEEE
E
E
EEEEEEEE
      E
      E
EEEEEEEE
```

Please indicate which BIG letter is shown.

For instance, in case of the example, you should have indicated the letter S.

Try to do this as fast as possible, without making any mistakes.

Appendix 4. Scenarios Used in Experiment 4

Local brand condition

Marvelou Chocolate

Marvelou Chocolate is a chocolate brand that is produced in your hometown and is available only in your hometown. The brand is famous for its delicious taste, carefully selected high-quality ingredients and its heavenly blue wrapper.

Marvelou Chocolate is part of your hometown’s cultural heritage. The iconic Marvelou’s milk chocolate with its famous blue wrapper symbolizes its unique local nature. It is the chocolate that many people from your hometown have grown up with and have turned into chocolate lovers.

Global brand condition

Marvelou Chocolate

Marvelou Chocolate is a chocolate brand that is produced in your hometown and is available in 73 countries. The brand is famous for its delicious taste, carefully selected high-quality ingredients and its heavenly blue wrapper.

Marvelou Chocolate is part of the world’s cultural heritage. The iconic Marvelou’s milk chocolate with its famous blue wrapper symbolizes its unique global nature. It is the chocolate that many people across the globe have grown up with and have turned into chocolate lovers.

Appendix 5. Psychological Distance Measure, Experiment 4

Please indicate which of the following pictures illustrates best the distance you feel between yourself and the chocolate brand.

Note: *Brand names concealed for publication

Figure A2.
Brand positioning
strategy manipulation,
Experiment 5

Appendix 7

Figure A3.
Tomato soup brands
available for purchase
at webshop,
Experiment 5

Note: *Brand names concealed for publication

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