

# Through the One-Sided Mirror: Effects of Commodification on an Individual's Cultural Perception

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## Abstract

Earlier literature and research have examined cross-cultural differences in cognition and behavior across a multitude of fields, spanning sociology, business, and psychology. The scope of such research on cultures has mainly focused on describing the culture, or the individual as part of that culture; in comparison, there has been little investigation of the effects of cultural interactions. Research thus far has investigated subjects such as consumer cultural reactance, as well as responses to cultural identity threats. However, despite this literature, and research on the disparity between internal and external perceptions of self, little literature exists regarding how one views their cultures. Foreign audiences may see a culture different from the people who identify with that culture. This disparity may be further emphasized during cultural branding and marketing when only limited aspects of that culture may be emphasized for monetization. This paper aims to explore how these differences in cultural and self-perception affect one's perception of their own culture and one's behavior with respect to that change after the culture has undergone commodification and marketing to a foreign audience. We focus on the nuance within this and how the behaviors may change depending on whether the culture is individualist or collectivist, the level of identification to a culture, and the salience of monetary profit from commodification. Through this, we hope to utilize the literature on cultures, on self vs. other perceptions, and on the commodification of in-groups vs. out-groups to develop a framework for assessing identifier reactions to cultural commodification and intercultural interaction.

*Keywords: Cultural Commodification, Cultural Perception, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Self-Identification, Cultural Disparity*

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## 1. Introduction

Globalization has greatly increased the reach of originally domestic products and services, allowing the culture they represent to be transported across the world in the luggage within commercial planes and crates aboard cargo ships. The rapid growth in intercultural interaction is inspiring many countries to promote their own culture, seeking to improve their reputation to both gain profit and elevate their worldly status (Subramanian, 2017; Zax, 2013).

The Cool Japan Strategy is Japan's attempt at

country branding. Since the end of World War II, Japan has been focusing its cultural diplomacy on the softening of anti-Japanese receptions, particularly in Southeast Asia (Iwabuchi, 2015). Historically, Japanese politicians and academics have viewed their culture as being unique in comparison to the rest of Asia (Moeran, 1983). Now, Japanese cultural industries are continuing the self-perceived distinction politicians and academics have had, seeking to become the "interpreters of 'the West'" for Asia (Iwabuchi, 1998). With those ambitions in mind, Cool Japan presents three main objectives: promoting

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growth in the Japanese population's understanding of western culture, increasing the presence of Japanese perspectives around the world, and rebranding Japan as a country that "helps the world" (Cool Japan Proposal, 2014). For example, the plan proposes increasing English education and holding international festivals in Japan to respectively improve the Japanese people's understanding of western culture and attract the attention of foreign tourists, increasing Japan's global presence (Cool Japan Proposal, 2014). By improving individual communication through language education and inviting tourists to visit Japan through festivals, this strategy aims to cultivate collective change from the individual level.

It is important to acknowledge the significance authenticity has in judging cultures, given the impact that cultural marketing has on authenticity (Newman, 2014). The consumption of cultural products is motivated by people's desire to obtain an authentic cultural emblem or experience, such as people traveling abroad to try regional cuisines rather than eating a familiar dish at home (Newman, 2014). For a country that is trying to commercialize its culture to outsiders, the aspects they commercialize may depend on what is demanded by foreign consumers. As a result, the representation of that culture to the foreign audience may be different from what is represented to the home culture, questioning whether the commercialized version of a culture may be perceived as authentic by the home culture. Intentional branding of cultures also might demean their products' authenticity as people may question whether the original culture has undergone modification to increase its appeal. Altogether, authenticity is a powerful determinant of consumer preference and aversion (Suter, 2014; Silver, et al., 2020).

There is a need to study the effects that these differences in perception have on people of the home culture— including changes in the culture and their relationship with the culture—to balance cultural preservation and cultural exchange amidst commodification and globalization. This research presents a novel perspective because there exist no papers on how an outsider's perception of a culture may be different from an identifier's perception of

that same culture. There are also no studies on how that mismatch affects identifiers of the perceived culture. Yet, cultural interactions and resulting changes prove to be a common phenomenon as cultures constantly brand and reinvent themselves to outsiders for purposes of tourism and exports (Cool Japan Proposal, 2014; Theodoropoulou and Tovar, 2021). To develop an understanding of the discrepancies between a culture's self-perception and how that culture is being represented, and the resultant changes in cognition and behavior, reviews were made from several separate literatures that are distinct from but applicable to this topic, including identifiers' associative and dissociative response to cultural brands, and assimilative and reactive behavior when exposed to foreign cultures (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005; Jetten and McAuliffe, 2002; White and Argo, 2009; White, et al., 2012; Kim, et al., 2014). By bringing together this series of extended literatures, this paper is able to provide a framework for understanding the effects of cultural commodification. It is hoped that this paper spurs further research in line with the propositions made and finds balance amidst the cacophony of potential inauthenticity.

## **2. Existing Literature**

Numerous papers have been published investigating the independent effects of individualist vs collectivist cultures, high vs. low identifiers, and their interactive effects with the presence of monetary benefit. As it is impossible to present all of the existing research, this review examines a subset of those literatures relevant to their effect on cultural self-perception and behavior. In particular, papers were selected for their analysis of the behavioral characteristics of individualists and collectivists, as well as case studies examining the reactions of individuals towards the commodification of a culture, whether that be of their own or of a culture they are interested in purchasing the commodity (e.g., through tourism) for. These papers are then cross-referenced with each other to formulate conclusions regarding the various trends observed within. Rather than generally examining the effect marketing has on cultures, the review seeks to uncover the ways in

which the commodification of cultures impacts the ways identifiers and outsiders view that culture, and therefore how that changes the home culture and the people who belong to that culture. With that, the marketing choices made about cultures are merely a byproduct of cultural perception, and what is considered to be of the value of those cultures by outsiders.

This paper will illustrate the concepts and propositions primarily using Japanese culture. Japan is a country that is heavily commodified with a high number of cultural exports such as anime and video games. It also receives a lot of attention in international tourism (Uppink and Soshkin, 2022). This paper also utilizes case studies from Japanese culture and Japanese reactions to commodification as illustrations of its conclusions. These illustrations will be buttressed in places with examples from other cultures.

## 2.1 Individualist vs. Collectivist Cultures

Of the literature investigating individualist vs. collectivist cultures, the two most important subliterations for understanding the capitalistic export of culture are the means by which an individualist or collectivist understands the self and how an individualist or collectivist understands in-groups and out-groups in relation to the self.

### *Understanding the Self*

The differences in which individualists and collectivists understand themselves can be based on two dimensions: independence and self-consistency (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005; Kim, et al., 2014; Cousins, 1989). Studies indicate independence to be viewed as a desirable trait by individualists (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005). The more important a factor is in establishing or enhancing self-worth, the more people will emphasize their person around that factor (Vazire and Carlson, 2011). Such is the case of independence for individualists, who have demonstrated such a desire for independence that they will rationalize away their conformist behavior (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005). This may also be explained by the individualist's high degree of self-consistency, more specifically that they will erase their conformist

behavior to maintain a consistent individualist persona they hold for themselves (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005). Also as a result of self-consistency, those individualist cultures remain unlikely to align their self-view to what they perceive others' evaluations of them to be when they do not match (Kim, et al., 2014). The characteristic to remain true to their self-perception makes the mindsets and behaviors of individualists less affected by situational cues, demonstrating the overall cultural emphasis on self-consistency and psychological autonomy (Kim, et al., 2014). In contrast, the collectivist person's self-perception is much more fluid. When asked to describe themselves, identifiers of collectivist culture use less abstract values (i.e. generalized character traits) and instead rely on their social role, for example, a woman identifying as a mother in one situation while being a wife in another. These social role identities may change with context, reflecting lower self-consistency (Cousins, 1989). This "non-western concreteness"—the tendency to focus on situational behavior and social role—is attributed to the collectivist's cognitive inability to summarize inconsistencies in behavior and is seen as a way to keep perceiving the individual as being dependent on context and group norms (Cousins, 1989).

### *Means By Which People Understand Others and the Group in Relation to Self*

As aforementioned, individualists assign value to themselves based on their degree of independence from the group (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005). As such, they view group influence as potentially compromising individual potential and therefore will prioritize personal goals over collective goals (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005). Not only will they reject group influence, but individualists are also biased towards egocentric projection, the projection of their own emotions onto others (Cohen and Gunz, 2002). Referencing a psychological perspective on the situations, it means that individualists prefer taking a perception of the world where they use existing information to understand new information (Cohen and Gunz, 2002). Contrastingly, collectivists then opt for adjusting their known information around the new information and utilizing more relational projection where they project onto others emotions that they

stereotype the other to feel rather than assuming the other to feel the same as themselves (Cohen and Gunz, 2002). To better illustrate this phenomenon, consider a situation where an individualist or collectivist is conversing with someone they just met and wants to evaluate how the stranger feels about a certain topic. The individualist may begin with the assumption that the stranger feels the same way about the topic as they do, while the collectivist will be devoid of that assumption and instead observe the stranger's actions to make their inference on how they expect the stranger to feel. As a result, the individualist subconsciously prioritizes the self in all logical and emotional evaluations, while the collectivist prioritizes the group.

## 2.2 High vs. Low Identifiers

According to Social Identity Theory, a group is defined as “a collection of people who categorize themselves as belonging to the same social category and internalize the category's social identity-defining attributes to define and evaluate themselves—attributes that capture and accentuate intragroup similarities and intergroup differences” (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Within that group, individuals may display a range of identification—the strength of their association and similarity between their personal identity and that group's identity. Previous research has identified that those with different levels of identification react differently to group-related stimuli (ScienceDirect). Currently, research on identification has focused on mainly two categories: exhibited behavior when encountering identity threat, and level of conformity to group norms.

### *Constructs Related to Identification*

In their 2009 paper, White and Argo introduce the term “collective self-esteem” or “CSE,” defined as “the degree to which the individual sees the self as a worthy member of the social group, values the social identity, and sees the social identity as important to the self-concept.” By that definition, having a high CSE is similar to being a high identifier of a culture and vice versa. Both CSE and high vs. low identification exist as valid metrics of an individual's

connection to their group.

Another similar concept research has addressed involves the concept of independent and interdependent self-construals (White, et al., 2012). At its core, self-construal refers to “whether individuals view themselves as primarily separate from or integrally connected to others.” (Giacomin and Jordan, 2017). However, self-construals are a more general measure of a person's degree of social reliance rather than on a particular culture. For example, one can be independent or interdependent with their friends, but may not describe their friend group as individualist or collectivist. As someone with a more interdependent self-construal is more likely to subscribe and connect with a group, those with interdependent self-construals are more likely to be high identifiers of a culture and vice-versa.

### *Behavior in Response to Identity Threat*

Social identity threat occurs when an aspect of a person's social identity is devalued or in danger of disappearing (White and Argo, 2009). After examining existing literature, responses to identity threats relevant to cultural interactions can also be examined from two different angles – the associative or dissociative behavior one will demonstrate to their own culture, and the negativity of attitudes displayed towards the foreign culture causing the threat.

Both an individual's tendency to display associative vs. dissociative response and their attitude towards the invading culture relies on the strength of their attachment to a culture, whether that may be the home culture or the foreign culture. In both the studies conducted on CSE and self-construals, people with high CSE or an interdependent self-construal prefer identity-linked products even when that identity is threatened; conversely, those with low CSE or independent self-construals will avoid products related to the threatened identity (White and Argo, 2009; White, et al., 2012). These choices are explained by each group's approach to restoring self-esteem after facing identity threat: those with independent self-construals do so through dissociating from the threat while those with interdependent self-construals find a sense of belonging through connecting with the group identity (White, et al., 2012). The principle of identification

can also be applied to investigating one's attitude towards an invading culture by setting the invading culture as the identity threat in those aforementioned situations.

Another area research has examined involves reactions to identity threat through collective identity closure—the negative attitude one demonstrates towards a foreign group or perceived identity threat and the resultant closing-off of that group to out-groups (Morris, et al., 2011). The closure is usually done to narrow the definition of the in-group and exclude minorities (Morris, et al., 2011). Exposures to situations where the home culture is mixed with a foreign culture will evoke the need for closure due to identity threat being triggered through distinctiveness loss and assimilation (Morris, et al., 2011). However, this behavior is more observed in those with a low identification with the foreign/invading culture and less in those with a higher identification (Morris, et al., 2011). By extension, those with more independent self-construals or lower CSE will likely be less inclined to display closure when threatened.

#### *Conformity to Group Norms.*

When discussing conformity, the majority of existing research does so within the premise of individualism vs. collectivism. A group norm of individualism will encourage higher identifiers to act for the benefit of the self and collectivism for the benefit of the group (Jetten, et al., 2002). For collectivists, their stances will be relatively straightforward, with high identifiers adhering to the group norm and lower identifiers less so (Jetten, et al., 2002). However, a dilemma presents itself for high identifiers of individualism as their inclination to stand by their group makes them collectivist by definition, but simultaneously contradicts the individualist norm (Jetten, et al., 2002). As such, high identifiers of individualist cultures may purposely show individualism as a form of conformity (Jetten, et al., 2002).

### 2.3 Presence of Monetary Benefit

Monetary benefit is a crucial component in the discussion of cultural commodification as

commodification is primarily driven by the desire for profit, making it significant to examine the impact profit has on cultural goods and services. Existing literature mainly explores the management of cultural odor—the presence of the producer's cultures—within the goods themselves, as well as tourism's impact on the advertised culture's local communities.

#### *Cultural Odor*

Some degree of cultural odor—the presence of the producer's culture—is present in every product, and firms are able to intensify or diminish this through intentional marketing (Iwabuchi, 1998). The term *mu-kokuseki* originates from the Japanese term describing something that lacks a nationality, and in the marketing context refers to products that are relatively culturally odorless (Iwabuchi, 1998). For example, while the burger chain McDonald's began as an American brand, its cultural ownership has become insignificant in the consumer's eyes after its stores opened across the world and developed menu items based on regional dishes (Iwabuchi, 1998). However, a product designed with a lack of intentional cultural odor may still contribute towards the consumer's perception of a culture's odor—a product may carry cultural odor even if it was deliberately designed to lack odor as the medium through which the product is delivered may carry odor that the producer themselves are not aware of. This phenomenon is particularly emphasized in Japanese animation. For the most part, characters and settings in Japanese animation often deliberately do not look ethnically Japanese, the art style choosing to erase particular characteristics and cultural context (Iwabuchi, 1998). However, western audiences, after watching these animations, will associate the odorless, *mu-kokuseki* style to be from Japan and thus redefine their perception of Japanese cultural odor to be derived from the portrayal of an animated, virtual Japan devoid of bodily ethnic characteristics (Iwabuchi, 1998).

While cultural odor is not necessarily diminished through international commodification, it can be altered, partially by localizing the changes to match the demands of foreign audiences of a particular background. The changes that occur can be within the product's purpose and usage—such as McDonald's

developing region-specific menu items—to the product’s presentation, such as changing the language on the packaging or the appearance of cultural symbols (e.g., flags) to match the one of the region (Suter, 2014). Another aspect of localization that deserves special attention is the time frame in which marketing choices are made. Proactive marketing is where the company plans localization before the product’s foreign distribution to achieve an established marketing objective (Suter, 2014). On the other end is retroactive marketing, where marketing plans and localization are developed after distribution, influenced by how the foreign audiences interpreted a certain good (Suter, 2014). A prominent case that balances both of these types of marketing is the Pokémon Company and its anime distribution. When the Pokémon anime was first broadcasted, the proactive marketing choice was made assuming that the Japanese will be its only audience, which may also explain the increased Japanese cultural markers included in those seasons (Raes, 2018). Retroactive marketing appears in its later global distribution leading the company to consider a variety of audiences in both their localization of existing episodes and production of future episodes (Raes, 2018). Retroactive marketing choices echo the anime’s growing international reach, its contents demonstrating a transition from using heavy Japanese cultural imagery in the earlier seasons to diminishing the Japanese cultural odor to include more international influences in later seasons (Raes, 2018). The Company had to balance its initial Japanese audiences, those who held expectations for how anime represents Japanese culture, non-Japanese audiences who are tangentially aware of Japanese culture, and international audiences who are entirely unfamiliar with Japanese culture, (Raes, 2018). To appeal to all of these audiences, the Pokémon Company chose to maintain Pokémon’s Japanese odor through the inclusion of subtle cultural imagery (e.g., featuring Japanese foods) while names are changed to fit local languages and customs, as well as providing multilingual dubbing (Raes, 2018). As such, new audiences unfamiliar with symbols can also comprehend the episodes while the remaining aspects of Japanese odor made the show culturally unique (Raes, 2018).

### *Effect of Tourism on Local Communities*

Tourism uses intentional identity-based marketing to promote products and services. In investigating the effects of this intentional commodification, existing literature depicted a study that was conducted for its effects on both the producers and consumers. Said study presents that providing incentives, in this situation the monetary gains from tourism, undermines an identifier’s intrinsic motivation to distribute their culture and arouses reactance and suspicion within the consumer (Bhattacharjee, 2010). Reactance is defined as the “motivation to restore a threatened freedom” (Bhattacharjee, 2010). In the consumer’s situation, the threatened freedom may be their perceived agency in making purchasing choices, while for the producer of the cultural good and identifier of the commodified culture, it is the freedom to present their culture in a way that aligns with their self-perception. Consumers who identify with the marketed identity may display reactance by de-emphasizing the targeted identity from their self-construct which leads to implications for subsequent, unrelated identity-relevant decisions (Bhattacharjee, 2010).

Beyond the individual level, tourism also greatly impacts lifestyle in both the consumers’ and home culture’s communities. For tourists, traveling incites social change as it invites the consumer to experience novelty and possibly bring back such change to their hometown (Moeran, 1983). Similarly, communities frequented by tourists are evidenced to also adapt their lifestyles to accommodate the influx of foreign visitors. One 2017 study on the effects of tourism made findings by focusing on the case of Niseko, a small skiing town in Japan that has experienced rapid growth in international tourism (Nelson and Matthews, 2017). There was a generally positive response from local residents towards the influx of tourists due to the financial contributions they made to the town, with ambivalent comments towards lifestyle changes they would need to promote tourism such as the increased need to learn English and foreign property ownership (Nelson and Matthews, 2017).

### **3. Discussion**

The literatures that were consulted are put together into a framework anticipating how culture commodification changes self-perception and corresponding behavior. This framework focuses on three different aspects—individualist vs. collectivist cultures, high vs. low identifiers, and the presence of monetary benefit—and how they combine in an interactive effect.

### 3.1 Individualist vs. Collectivistic Cultures

The following sections discuss how individualist and collectivist cultures alter their self-perception by demonstrating reactance in response to cultural commodification. To reiterate, reactance is defined as “the motivation to restore a threatened freedom,” and in the context of cultural identification and commodification refers to the identifier’s perceived identity threat upon realizing the disparity between their cultural self-perception and how non-identifiers view their culture (Bhattacharjee, 2010).

Based on the research examined, this paper proposes that collectivists will demonstrate reactance towards products that represent cultural commodification if they feel that their community experiences identity threat from that particular product. Said reactance may mainly manifest as a negative attitude towards the product representing that commodification, namely an avoidance to purchase or produce it. For example, if a Japanese company produces kimonos that are rented out to tourists for photo-taking, but the design of those kimonos is historically inaccurate as they have been simplified for an easier wear, Japanese people will avoid renting this brand of kimonos even if the same brand has a separate line that is historically accurate. However, this case of the perceived threat from commodification does not stop them from engaging with other similar services. If a different company produces accurate kimonos for tourists to rent, Japanese people may be more inclined to still engage with that service as they do not find that case of commodification threatening their identity. This selectivity in the tendency to formulate reactance on a product-by-product basis is constructed from previous studies that have indicated collectivists rely on situational cues for judgment (Cousins, 1989).

Additionally, as they are also less egocentric, they will not maintain a self-consistent negative attitude towards all products if there are relevant others who favor some (Cohen and Gunz, 2002). Collectivists will respond with reactance to protect their perception of authenticity within their displays of culture, and if anyone in the collectivist’s relevant group does not sense a threat to authenticity, they will not adopt reactance.

The opposite argument applies to identifiers of individualist cultures. Due to their more egocentric, self-consistent nature, they are likely to generalize their sentiments across all cases of commodification without being influenced by what others in their community think (Cohen and Gunz, 2002; Kim, et al., 2014). While the individualist’s attitude formation may be guided by those around them, due to their inborn self-consistency, once an individualist’s opinion solidifies for commodification it will be relatively difficult to change it (Kim, et al., 2014). Thus, if an individual has a predisposed negative attitude towards commodification, they will display negative attitudes towards all cases of commodification for their culture regardless of the potential threats or benefits it might provide. Similarly, if an individual has a predisposition to favor commodification, they will also display positive attitudes toward all cases of commodification in their culture.

The discussions of individualist and collectivist cultures are summarized into two propositions:

P<sub>1</sub>: Collectivists are more likely to experience and demonstrate reactance based on singular commodities’ assessed threat to their community

P<sub>2</sub>: Individualists are likely to generalize their sentiments across all cases of commodification, holding a positive or negative attitude towards all goods that commodify their culture rather than holding varying opinions between each.

### 3.2 High vs. Low Identifiers

This portion aims to hypothesize the mindset and behaviors different identifiers will take on after experiencing the identity threat that comes as a result of commodification. While this is not a distinction clearly established within the previous literature

consulted, this paper proposes to divide identity-threat into two categories within this analysis: devaluation—the threat one feels when their culture is belittled or devalued by commercialization—as well as distinctiveness loss—the threat one feels in the face of assimilation. As respective examples, one may feel threatened if a product labeled as being from their culture is priced less compared to a similar product labeled to be from a different culture; one may also feel threatened if the local language were spoken less due to a large influx in tourism.

When cultural identities are threatened by devaluation during commodification, higher identifiers of a culture are more likely to continue affirming their connection while lower identifiers are likely to detach their connection to the identity post-commodification. This statement is supported by the associative and dissociative behavior linked with independent and interdependent self-construals as well as collective self-esteem, all of which have been mentioned while discussing high vs. low identification in the literature review (White, et al., 2012; White and Argo, 2009). While the study on CSE specifically referred to the brand-identity linkage where association and dissociation with identity are purely demonstrated through the purchasing of identity-related products, this proposal intends to include all forms of identity expression, whether it be cognitive or behavioral. For instance, if a higher identifier of Chinese culture observes that Chinese food is less preferred in their community though they enjoy it themselves, the identifier will not only still be as inclined before the observation to consume Chinese food but will also not feel or express that they are any less Chinese than before. In the same situation, a lower identifier may feel less motivated to express liking or consuming Chinese food after observing the value difference and be less willing to think of themselves as Chinese and express their Chinese identity.

While devaluation may be defended through passive associative or dissociative response, identity threat through distinctiveness loss can evoke aggressive defensive behavior titled closure, the active display of negative attitudes towards foreign influence (Morris, et al., 2011). This paper proposes

that higher identifiers will protect the perception of the culture they hold pre-commodification, and demonstrate closure towards aspects of their culture disrupted by distinctiveness loss post-commodification. To explain with application, if Singapore gains an increasing Chinese population due to an increase in tourism or immigration, what constitutes Singaporean culture will certainly change to include more Chinese influence, similar to a culture post-commodification. However, higher identifiers of the original Singaporean culture will still call themselves Singaporean in alignment with their image of that community being defined by the Singapore pre-Chinese influence. However, they will also display closure by performing traditional Singaporean activities, particularly those that would exclude Chinese immigrants (e.g., speaking in Singlish rather than standard English which Chinese immigrants tend to understand more), thereby demonstrating the higher identifier's possibility of maintaining a static self-perception of culture post-commodification and displaying closure.

The discussions of high vs. low identifiers are summarized into two propositions:

P<sub>3</sub>: In response to identity threat through the devaluation of a culture, higher identifiers will continue affirming their cultural connection across all cognitive and behavioral expressions of the culture.

P<sub>4</sub>: When threatened by distinctiveness loss through cultural commodification, higher identifiers' cultural perceptions will

a. remain static from their pre-commodification perception.

b. demonstrate closure towards content they perceive as being part of the post-commodification culture.

### 3.3 Presence of Monetary Benefit

Monetary benefit has been evidenced to undermine intrinsic motivation by overriding it with extrinsic reward (Bhattacharjee, 2010). By removing intrinsic motivation, monetary benefit then elicits reactance within the consumer as it removes their freedom of choosing something for themselves without being swayed by external factors (Bhattacharjee, 2010). In the context of identity-based marketing, a consumer will then

demonstrate reactance by de-emphasizing the identity from their self-perception (Bhattacharjee, 2010). By applying this detachment to the producer's side, one can propose that the reactance elicited by monetary benefit would then cause identifiers to separate the idea of their own culture from the idea of the aspect of their culture that they are outputting or commodifying to a foreign audience. The construction of two separate cultural perceptions targeting the in-group and out-group by an identifier may then explain situations such as the difference between what is provided to Japanese fans and foreign fans of anime. For example, the level of cultural odor produced in anime that are catered to Japanese audiences is much higher than those catered towards foreign audiences, as in the example of earlier vs. later seasons of the Pokémon anime (Raes, 2018). The later seasons of Pokémon lower in cultural odor reflect the separate brand and cultural identity the Japanese company developed to cater to a foreign audience and out-group, by extension indicating the marketing choice as a behavioral manifestation of the changed self-perception commodification has caused. Another disparity between the displays of Japanese culture towards the domestic vs. international audience is in the lack of offerings for anime-related consumption. Though the market for anime merchandise is very well-developed in Japan with entire districts such as Akihabara being dedicated to their selling, research demonstrates that anime is rarely advertised in promotional materials for Japan aimed at foreign travelers (Sabre, 2017). These two examples respectively reflect that Japanese cultural odor in anime and media-based consumption, while being included in the domestic perception and presentation of Japanese culture, is not found in the Japanese people's views of what Japanese culture towards an out-group should look like.

Not only is the aspect of a culture expressed and perceived by an identifier different from the one of a non-identifier, but the presence of monetary benefit post-commodification also causes an identifier to describe the outputted aspects of their culture with more stereotyping than they would for the internal aspects of their culture. The definition of stereotypes here is not necessarily stereotypes that are specific to a culture, but rather the identifier's stereotypes of

what aspects of their culture the foreign audience would want to engage with, and how they would want to engage with it. Hence, the Japanese, despite being a collectivist culture, will choose to emphasize individuality and *kosei* in their travel brochures under the assumption that they are appealing to tourists from individualist cultures, as well as learning English to improve communication with tourists as is the case of Niseko (Moeran, 1983; Nelson and Matthews, 2017). These stereotypes then result in the disparity between tourist demands and supply, creating situations such as in Sabre's 2017 study where French tourists to Japan demonstrated interest in anime and Japanese popular media, but failed to find such content advertised in tourist brochures (Sabre, 2017).

The discussions of monetary benefit can be summarized into two propositions:

P<sub>5</sub>: Reactance elicited by monetary benefit causes individuals to separate the idea of their own culture from the aspects of their culture that they are exporting to a foreign audience.

P<sub>6</sub>: Monetary benefit causes individuals to describe their culture's interactions with another culture with more stereotyping than they would for describing their in-group perception.

### 3.4 Interactive Effects

While the previous proposals examine each factor's individual effect on cultural perception post-commodification, this portion aims to outline claims that discuss the components' effects alongside each other.

Firstly, higher identifiers of individualist cultures are predicted to have an unchanged perception of their culture after commodification. The static nature of their cultural self-perception is credited to the individualist's egocentric and self-consistent nature (Cohen and Gunz, 2002; Kim, et al., 2014). If a high identifier of individualism already has a preconceived notion of what their culture should be, those two traits make it more likely for them to maintain those beliefs and therefore unlikely to change their cultural perceptions post-commodification. Additionally, even if they do eventually align their perceptions with the post-commodification perception they are likely to

view the change as one of their own choice rather than as a product of external force due to the individualist's tendency to rationalize away conformist behavior (Hornsey and Jetten, 2005).

High identifiers of individualism will also display closure through the rejection of all commodification if the perception of their culture is challenged, even if it is only by one product of the aftermath of commodification. This generalized reactance is explained by individualists' overall tendency to make larger inferences from singular events (Cousins, 1989).

Similar to the high identifiers of individualist cultures, low identifiers will also maintain an unchanged perception of their culture and resist challenges to that image due to their core individualism. However, the presence of monetary benefit is what sets the two apart. Individualists are likely to continue producing goods that commodify their culture as they will prioritize the monetary benefits for the self over the spread of inaccurate narratives the collective will experience. However, as stated before, the monetary benefit commodification has provided arouses reactance (Bhattacharjee, 2010). For the higher identifier, such challenges are dealt with through associative means while for the lower identifier dissociative means (White and Argo, 2009; White, et al., 2012). Applying the differing ways identifiers display reactance to the continuation of production individualists will have to gain monetary benefit for the self, high identifiers of individualism may utilize egocentric projection and association by producing more products that align with their cultural self-perception, while the lower identifiers of individualism will dissociate by continuing to produce cultural commodities but not incorporating them as part of their cultural self-perception. To illustrate the latter part with an example, if commodification made foreign audiences associate the bald eagle with the United States but a low identifier of the United States does not agree with that, they will continue producing hats labeled as being from the United States that contain imagery of the bald eagle but do not view the hats as being a cultural product themselves.

Similar to the low identifiers of individualist cultures, higher identifiers of collectivist cultures will

also maintain the same perception of their culture post-commodification. However, they will continue producing cultural products that are in alignment with the post-commodification image though they have a pre-commodification perception. As members of collectivist culture tend to have more context-dependent perceptions of self, they are likely to capitalize on that in their reactance to monetary benefit by developing the aforementioned two different views of their culture - one aspect geared towards the in-group and one towards the out-group (Cousins, 1989; Bhattacharjee, 2010). As such, the aspect of their culture they interpret to be for the in-group will be what remains unchanged after commodification, while the self-perception of their culture they developed for the out-group will follow the changes commodification ensued and thus lead to increased production of cultural goods that reflect the change done by commodification.

Lower identifiers of collectivism, being somewhat fluid in their self-perceptions due to their collectivist core but not having a strong definition of their culture due to their low identification, are likely to alter their perception of their culture according to the changes of commodification. However, as the production of cultural goods will still elicit reactance, it will cause the lower identifiers to exhibit a dissociative response which is demonstrated through the production of culturally odorless products.

The interactive effects are summarized into four propositions:

P<sub>7</sub>: Higher identifiers of individualist cultures will display closure through the aggressive rejection of commodification if their perception is challenged.

P<sub>8</sub>: Lower identifiers of individualist cultures will display passive, avoidant behavior to cultural commodities that challenge their perception.

P<sub>9</sub>: Only lower identifiers of collectivist cultures will alter their perception according to the changes commodification causes but choose to produce more culturally odorless products instead.

P<sub>10</sub>: Higher identifiers of collectivist culture will produce more products that cater to the altered image for monetary benefit.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In summary, the paper has reviewed and listed the various cognitive and behavioral responses people may have to a discrepancy between their own and others' views of their cultures post-commodification. After examining subsets of relevant literature, this paper is able to construct propositions based on the independent effects of cultural individualism, level of identification, and salience of financial gain, as well as the interactive effects between the first two factors on the latter that altogether form a framework for predicting an individual's reactions to cultural commodification.

While the literature examined here is only a subsection of all works and can nowhere represent the full variety of conclusions made across the entire field, all proposals have been made with analysis and cross-referencing between experimental studies and reviews, as well as its applicability to actual case studies.

#### 4.1 Contributions

This investigation exists as the pioneer of an intersectional field that combines the intrinsic characteristics of certain cultures and identifiers as well as extrinsic motivation and applies their grounds to multiculturalism rather than investigating a singular community. The framework developed is unique from two perspectives. Firstly, the proposals are centered around an individual's reactions to cultural commodification rather than a group or a culture, creating a connection between macro phenomena such as changes in a product's marketing with micro aspects such as one's change in perception. Secondly, the framework explores cultural marketing with respect to the identifiers or producers of the commodified culture rather than the foreign consumers. It is hoped that the framework provided in this review will direct cultural businesses towards authentic representation, without the need to compromise their originality for monetary gain.

#### 4.2 Areas for Future Research

It is of practical and theoretical significance to discuss whether this work is applicable to advance research in cultural interaction and self-perception,

particularly regarding commodification and globalization. Future research may work to verify the framework proposed. New studies can be conducted regarding the relationship between cultural odor and reactance, more concretely between cultural products and cultural schema as to whether identifiers do consider certain cultural products to be part of their culture. Additionally, one can investigate whether certain cultural media or products elicit more reactance or change odor more during commodification to foreign audiences. Returning to the exploration of self-perception, the process by which cultural products are developed in relation to cultural self-image can also be researched. Lastly, expanding on monetary benefit, future research may also address whether there exist other forms of extrinsic motivation that affect commodification.

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