

**Real Versus Assumed Emotion: The Dimensions of Consumer's Affect in the Context of Chinese Culture and Its Effects on Chinese and Foreign Brand Equity**

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## **Real Versus Assumed Emotion: The Dimensions of Consumer's Affect in the Context of Chinese Culture and Its Effects on Chinese and Foreign Brand Equity**

**Abstract**—To enrich the limited and recent work in existence on the operationalization of brand affect construct and its cross-cultural study, the authors focus on the conceptualisation of brand affect in Chinese context, and propose a bidimensional measurement model that reflects two distinct components “real emotion” and “assumed emotion”. Two studies using structural equation model firstly validate the measurement scale and further test the effect of these two components on brand loyalty and its consequences, which support the research hypotheses. The results show that compared to real emotion, assumed emotion has larger effect on local brands' loyalty and its consequences, as opposed to foreign brands. This finding has important theoretical implications for marketers to understand the major difference of formation mechanism between Chinese and foreign brand equity.

**Keywords**—brand affect; brand equity; brand loyalty; Chinese brands; foreign brands

### **1 Introduction**

In the last two decades, a growing number of scholars have researched on the emotional or affective aspects of consumer behavior, which acknowledges that their importance to the marketing have increasingly improved (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Erevelles, 1998; Agarwal and Malhotra, 2005). As for brand, affects of consumer are the very sources of forming the added value to brand, so it can be easily known that emotional branding has become as a highly influential brand management paradigm (Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel, 2006). However, the related studies have shown that the scholars have the different measures to brand affect (see Fournier, 1994, 1998; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, 2002; Thomson, MacInnis and Park, 2005), there is no complete consensus on the connotations of this construct. In fact, the marketing academic circle has been really puzzled by the two relevant aspects, the dimensions and content of affect/emotion (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999). The components and the structure of brand affect will influence the validity of this construct during the process of empirical studies, and decide whether the related results can be abundantly and properly explained.

In the field of consumer behavior, the studies on the typologies of affect / emotion (Classification and scale) and its validity seem to accompany the whole research progress (eg., Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Izard, 1977; Plutchik, 1980; Havlena and Holbrook, 1986; Holbrook and Batra, 1987; Richins, 1997), while the academic circle has gained important consensus on the measurement of affect. The existing affect / emotion scale and classification framework haven't appeared the obvious cross-cultural barriers when being used. However, although the experience and recognition of many emotions appears to be cross-culturally robust, significant differences exist as well (Aaker and Williams, 1998). These differences tends to be

attributed to systematical cultural variations in the concerns of individuals, which arise from distinct self-construal patterns (Triandis, 1993). This kind of difference always reflects in the comparisons of western and Chinese culture. Within the background of Chinese culture, the researches on affect may or should show the differences to the western one so as to provide more evidences to further understand affect and its effects.

Chinese culture attaches great importance to Ganqing (affection), i.e. Chinese people have the characteristics of “Renqing (favor) norm” in any interpersonal contacts, which reflects the social orientation of interpersonal relationship patterns and principle, it is very different with western world. Compared to “affection and love” emphasized by American people, Chinese prefer emotions of obligation hidden in the ethic relation and “Renqing (favor)” needed by common life. Thereby as for the Chinese culture background, whether does this kind of common emotion of obligation, i.e. the “assumed emotion” reflects in the relationship between consumer and brand, so as to advance and perfect the understanding and definition to brand affect construct and provide new approach to emotion/affect measurement from the cross-cultural perspective? This is the basic purpose of the study in this paper.

The paper tries to propose the construct and dimensions of brand affect with the metaphor of Chinese interpersonal affect theory. Meanwhile, in order to objectively indicate the effectiveness of the new affect classification framework and the role of the new typed affect, this paper tests the predictive validity from the approach that the new construct of brand affect how to drive brand equity. Erevelles (1998) pointed that a better understanding of how affect influences the creation of brand equity needed to further research. For example, the issue of the extent to which affect is a critical component in the building of strong brands needs to be better studied. Therefore, how does the assumed emotion effects the brand equity within the background of Chinese culture? If the new construct can provide actual helps when indicating and explaining the consumers’ different relationships between the domestic and foreign brands and gain the extra implications, we tend to clarify that it can really show the actual value of indigenous theoretical construction. This is the second purpose of this paper.

## **2. Theoretical Backgrounds, Construct Developed and Hypotheses**

### **2.1 The Researches of Affect/Emotion Measurement in the Western Countries**

The issue of affect/emotion has been widely researched in the field of consumer behavior. Affect is usually defined as a “valenced feeling state”. Mood and emotion are instances of this state (Cohen and Aerni, 1991; Erevelles, 1998). Commonly, consumption emotion refers to a subjective experience known only by direct acquaintance with phenomena and which may serve to provide wholistic, experiential information about products and services (Chaudhuri, 1997). As for brand affect, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) defined it as a brand’s potential to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer as a result of its use. From the perspective of psychological activity, the difference between these two is as follows: consumption

emotion relates more to the biological needs while brand affect concerns the social needs.

Group of scholars have given wide and continuous studies on the classification of emotion—see Laros and Steenkamp, 2005—. In the biological field, the representative opinions cover the Differential Emotions Scale (DES) issued by Izard in 1977, which included 10 kinds of the basic emotions, three of them being the positive while other seven negative; Plutchik (1980) summarized 8 kinds of basic emotions from the view of psychological evolution, among which there were 6 kinds were same with those of Izard (1977): fear, anger, joy, sadness, disgust and surprise. In addition, Mehrabian and Russell(1974) raised a theory of three basic emotional dimensions from the view of environmental psychology, including pleasure, arousal and dominance, which was abbreviated as PAD scale.

In the field of consumer behavior, researchers use these different emotion classification frameworks, discuss their suitability, and lead to explore new and more complete typology of consumption emotion. Through the content analysis and statistics to the real consumption experience materials finished by Havlena and Holbrook(1986), they compared the framework of Mehrabian and Russell(1974) and Plutchik(1980), the result showed that the former had better external convergent validity than the latter. Richins (1997) pointed out that when the researchers were interested in the measurement to the dimension of the potential emotional state rather than needs to understand the detailed types of the emotion, PAD scale is more suitable. It means that the different frameworks can be suitable to the different research situations and purposes. In summary, there are two different opinions on whether the emotional evaluation originated from the biological view is suitable in the consumption field. One is that there are differences, while its result is to develop more detailed and more types of consumption emotion. For example, Richins (1997) identified the group of the Consumption Emotion Descriptor (CED) including 20 types. The other tends to regard as similar, while the result is the denotation of concise dimensions. For example, Holbrook and Batra (1987) have identified three basic emotional dimensions from the advertisement reflection through the way of using the emotion inventory of various kinds of sources, which was same with PAD scale. In the researches of relevant consumption experiences, the dimensions of “pleasure” and “arousal” were commonly utilized (e.g., Yüksel and Yüksel, 2007).

In fact, the dimensions from concrete emotions to the superior emotions have the subordinate, relative and hierarchical relations. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) raised and tested three layers of the structure for consumption emotions. The highest and most abstract layer is still the basic classification of positive and negative affects —Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988—. Seen from the present researches, positive and negative basic dimensions are often used by the consumer behavior researchers—eg., Chaudhuri, 1997; Chebat and Slusarczyk, 2005; Lee, et al., 2008—; sometimes many kinds of the positive or negative concrete emotion types (such as pleasure, vigor, excitement and relaxation) are combined into positive or negative emotion dimensions for further research—eg., Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Lee, et al., 2008—. In addition, some scholars have studied the relationship between the specific emotion and the

attitude, for example, Aaker and Williams (1998) have compared the effects of empathy and pride in the advertisement persuasion under the cross-cultural background.

From the above mentioned, we can conclude that the western scholars on the topic of the basic type and dimension to emotion / affect were very mature; especially the definition to the basic superior dimensions have been very stable. If this is wanted to be exceeded, we have to find new emotion / affect types, and we'd better classify them into new dimension, and provide new helps for indicating and explaining the special consumption attitude. A cross-cultural perspective of may provide us with such kind of opportunities and possibilities.

## **2.2 Chinese Characteristics, Components and Modern Evolution to Affect**

Following the tradition of consumption emotion originated from the human basic emotion research (Izard, 1977; Plutchik, 1980), this paper has studied the components of brand affect of consumers under the Chinese cultural background, trying to resort on the theories of relevant Chinese affect in the indigenous social psychology. Many scholars preferring to the indigenous studies pointed out that the Chinese and western construct to affect have essential difference (Zhai, 1993; Yang, 2001a), which has laid solid foundation to the cross-cultural study on affect.

Chinese culture centralized with Confucianism keeps to focusing on the construction of harmonious social order. In the view of the interpersonal relationship and contacts, it can show that people will be affected by the characteristics of “Renqing(favor) norms” besides the true affect (Yang, 2001a). Here the word “Renqing” refers to “assumed emotion”, which is a kind of obligation feeling unable to depict with language but able to restrict the behaviors of the human being (King, 1988). Due to the emphasis on the norms of indigenous culture, we should consider the necessary and compulsive emotions besides the natural ones when defining the connotation of Chinese emotions, not like what the western scholars have done before (Yang, 2001a). An early scholar Hu(1949) who has analyzed the connotation of “emotion” of Chinese, has expressed that there were two kinds of emotions including assumed ones and real ones. The former is compulsive and normative affect which should have or be shown according to the social ethics, also called as Renqing; the latter is the affect out of minds, so it is spontaneous and true emotions, also called as affection. “Assumed emotion” separates Qing (affection) and Li (norms) when the people express their affects in the actual lives influenced by the determinants of context and relationships. Sometimes we know that we should give somebody with Qing (affection) according to the requirement of Li (norms), but we have no such kind of Qing in our mind. So we can see that “assumed emotions” and “real emotions” have the characteristics of separated state. In addition, we should see that the universalism of Renqing (favor) norms has also characteristics of freedom and initiative (King, 1988). Not all the individuals living in present society are totally affected by the traditional Confucianism, so they can't understand, appreciate or follow the Renqing (favor) norms from the same ideological level. State of “assumed emotion” can measure the very actual differences of relationships of the

corresponding degrees between the individual and social norms.

Commonly, Qing (emotion) and Li (reason) are considered as two kinds of independent and mutually supporting measures in the world of cognition. In Chinese culture, the Renqing (favor) norms is based on affect but it also exceeded the latter, containing the component of Li (reason) corresponding to emotion (Ho, et al., 2007). Hence the connotation of affect in Chinese culture is not only the affect in the western ideological system limited to the view of psychological knowledge, which considered it as the biological response out of instinct, but extends to the field of sociology (Zhai, 2005). This shows that the components of Chinese affect have assumed emotions besides real emotions. These two have tense relativities and simultaneity of operation. This is like what Liu et al. (2005) have tested that Chinese interpersonal relationships have the compulsive components of affect. Yang (1990) concluded that real emotion and assumed emotion play the different roles in interpersonal contacts, but they are equally important. We can have both kinds of affects to a same person, while the relationship between these two is not always mutually exclusive or complementary. Using two dimensional structures of real emotion and assumed emotion, Yang (2001b) has properly and perfectly explained the affect of Chinese world.

For a long time, the Renqing (favor) norms in Chinese traditional culture has implemented similarly as institutional functions, the principles of “Qing (emotion) and Li (reason) are united into one” or “taking both Qing (emotion) and Li (reason) into consideration” are popular and displaying strong social functions. However, with the economic and social development and reform, the foundation of the patriarchal clan system based on unification of Qing (emotion) and Li (reason) has gradually fallen apart. Chinese modernization progress has the trend of boosting the separation of Qing (emotion) and Li (reason) (Ho, et al., 2007). The Li (reason), as a kind of social norms, has inevitable changed, i.e. the progress that Li (reason) is gradually separated from the ethic and then strengthened. This trend can show that the concept of “assumed emotion” in present society has more clearly reflected the nature of affection corresponding to “reason” in western world.

### **2.3 Brand Affect and Brand Affect Construct in Chinese Cultural Background**

Brand affect is a key construct in research on brand attitude. As for the measurement of brand affect, Batra and Ahtola (1990) raised the double dimensions of “Hedonic” and “Utilitarian” about brand attitude, and tested the validity of its scale. This basic classification has been commonly used by the researches for setting control variables. “Hedonic” actually reflects Qing (emotion) against Li (reason). The most of relevant study on the operationlization of brand affect measurement can show that it belongs in the category of “Hedonic” and actually nears to the basic dimension of “pleasure”. For example, in Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s study (2001,2002), the measure items of brand affect consist of “I feel good when I use this brand,” “ This brand makes me happy,” and “This brand gives me pleasure.” There is still another example as Tsai’s study (2005), each item for measuring affective value of brand contains the central word such as “enjoyable”, “good mood”, “like a friend” and “happy feeling” etc.



From the view of the relationship between consumer and brand, the construct of brand affect is further classified into more new concept, actually corresponding to the concept of emotions in the concrete and different state. Previously, Fournier (1994; 1998) introduced the facet of “love and passion” from the metaphor of interpersonal relationship concepts to measure brand relationship quality, defining it as “feeling of love ranged from warmth and affection to passion, infatuation, and selfish, obsessive dependency.” She concluded that “affect” should be preferred more than brand preference when predicting the validity of durability and depth of brand relationship. After 10 years, Roberts(2004) raised a theory of “Lovemark” that this construct included strong respects and strong love, and transcended the traditional brand evaluation which was only considered with strong respects. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) propose the concept of brand love containing positive appraise, attachment and passion to brand. Thomson, MacInnis and Park (in 2005) used the concept of emotional attachments, while the developed scale included three basic dimensions: affection, passion and connection. These new concepts have expressed the high state of brand affect, also are the highest goal of brand manager.

However, according to mentioned theory of bidimensional structure relevant to Chinese affect, and the basic research on consumption emotion originating from human emotion and usually they are equivalence, and the basic precondition that the interpersonal relationship theory has been proven to be suitable in the situation as relationship between consumer-brand (He, 2006a; He and Lu, 2007), this paper suggests that affect of Chinese consumer to brand has the similar components and structure, which are different in the aspect of the western ideas focusing only on the spontaneous positive affect. We advised to adopting the construct of “real and assumed emotions” to reflect the affect relationship between consumer and brand, which contains two dimensions, i.e. “real emotions” and “assumed emotions”. The former is defined as uncontrollable positive emotional response (attraction, pleasure, joy and interest, etc.) generated for consumers’ liking to brands, while the latter is defined as the compulsory emotions generated by the influences of cultural norms, such as family & tradition, and situation & etiquette). Based in the indigenous theoretical view of affect, we have reasons to believe that it would be proper and complete to consider the “assumed emotions” out of the pure and intimate emotions when exploring brand affects of Chinese consumers.

According to the knowledge and categorization processes of individual, emotions can be classified into hierarchical structure from concrete to abstract (Shaver et al.1987; Ruth, 2001). The superior level is two kinds of emotion/affect, the positive and the negative (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988); the moderate level associate with basic emotions, such as the classification produced by Izard (1977) and Plutchik (1980). In addition, there are still many subordinate special emotions such as elation, love and ecstasy etc. The real and assumed emotions discussed in this paper belong to the basic level of emotion. They are not as abstract as being the positive and negative, so it can provide more information to relevant object (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005), while it is not as concrete as the special emotion such as love and passion etc., so they are properly general and common. According to the research finished by Ruth (2001),

if the emotional connection in this basic level can be founded with brand, it will have more congruity effects for the attitude of brand preference.

#### **2.4 Basic Relationship between Brand Affect and Brand Equity, and the Theoretical Hypotheses in Chinese Context**

Affect has been confirmed to be the basic driver to consumer behavior (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). In the prospect of the formation and holistic components of brand equity, against the more traditional benefit drivers, brand affect was considered as one of the two basic approaches (Keller, 2003a, 2003b), which was strongly supported by many empirical studies.

Many scholars proposed and demonstrated the positive effect of brand affect to brand loyalty. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001, 2002) tested that brand affect and brand trust can have simultaneous positive effects during the driving process of brand loyalty and its outcomes through the multiple staged data collection and its statistics of aggregate-level, which has proven two basic approaches to build brand loyalty. Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005) have developed that three basic dimensions of “affection”, “passion” and “connection” in brand emotional attachment scale had good predictive validity to brand loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium. This shows that some concrete measurements of emotion have better predictive abilities than the common attitude or superior level of emotion. Lee etc. (2008) have demonstrated that positive emotions would have significant impacts to loyalty in the festival marketing activities. In the structural equation model for holistically understanding brand purchase value, Tsai (2005) took affective value as one of three kinds of values paralleling with symbolic and tradeoff value, the results showed that they could produce obvious positive effects to repurchase intention. Similarly, in Chinese market, Yu etc. (2005) analyzed the driving effects of functional, symbolic and experiencing values to brand loyalty. The results identified that in the areas with higher level of modernization, the symbolic and experiencing values produced more positive effects to brand loyalty, while in the areas with lower level of modernization, the functional value played an important role. All these have basically supported the obvious positive effects of brand affect to brand loyalty in Chinese urban markets.

Brand affect is the important component of brand value chain. From the emerging process it can be seen that brand value is from marketing activities of company at first, and they influence customers’ knowledge and then brand performance in the market, at last, it is determined by the financial market (Keller and Lehmann 2003). With the main line of affects, the marketing activities will produce consumer’s affect to brand, while brand affect will influence brand knowledge of consumer and show to be the driving effects of brand equity, and then reflect the value of brand in the product market and financial market. This paper defines brand affect as real emotions and assumed emotions, while the measurement of brand equity focuses on brand loyalty, and the performance of product and financial market will take willingness to pay a price premium and brand investment willingness as the representative variables. Therefore, this paper gives following theoretical hypothesis:



H1: In Chinese market, real emotion has significant positive effect on brand loyalty, and further positive effect on willingness to pay a price premium and brand investment willingness.

H2: In Chinese market, assumed emotion has significant positive effect on brand loyalty and further positive influence on willingness to pay a price premium and brand investment willingness.

After an empirical study, we have suggested that whether the domestic brands have some potential advantages and special localized drivers when building and maintaining the long-term relationships to local consumers, which is worth of further research (He, 2006b). Another qualitative study on the time-honored brands has shown that consumers have strong “assumed emotions” to it (He, 2007). This enlightens us that assumed emotions may be the special determinants for consumer to maintain loyalty to domestic brand. So we resort to the “differential order-pattern” in interpersonal relationships in the background of Chinese culture to explain (Fei, 1985). As for the different persons intending to communicate, each person interacts with them according to the contact rules corresponding to the relationship types (Hwang, 2006). In the situation of consumer-brand relationships, links of people to domestic and foreign brands are similar to “family member” and “non-family member”. The nearer the relationship, the stronger the social norms influence, i.e. the higher evaluation of “assumed emotion” (Yang, 2001, p.139; Yang, 2001a, p.349). This is why the domestic brand has normally more assumed emotion than foreign one.

In addition, Chinese local enterprises have many misunderstandings or blind spot in the aspect of brand management, which include as follows: the growth of the market shares relies on promotion through low pricing (Doctoroff, 2004), while the competition for pricing is the very important reason for breaking the affective connection between consumer and brand; being accustomed of communicating from the “manufacturer orientation” rather than “consumer orientation”, so it can’t result into affective resonance from motivation and preference of consumer (Doctoroff, 2004); usually the ideas of brand management focus on products rather than value (Lu, 2002), not knowing how to weigh the success of brand from the abstract level of consumer’s affective response (Doctoroff, 2003), etc. These blind areas show that the Chinese local brands commonly have no effective ways to build brand loyalty with real emotion. Yu et al. (2007) indicated that the domestic brands are almost all lower evaluation than the foreign ones in the dimension “brand affect” among many product categories. So it can be concluded that compared to real emotion, assumed emotion has more important effects in the aspect of maintaining the long-term relationships between consumer and domestic brands. Thus this paper puts forward following hypothesis:

H3: In Chinese market, as for domestic brand, assumed emotion has more larger significant positive effect to brand loyalty than real emotion, and further significant

positive effect to willingness to pay a price premium and brand investment willingness.

An exploratory study has indicated that compared to domestic brands, foreign brands have built the relationship type of including higher real emotion and lower assumed emotion with consumer (He and Lu, 2007). This is due to that foreign brands have built brand relationships more frequently and expertly through the way of affective marketing in Chinese markets. The survey data of FCB Worldwide(2002) have shown that consumers of China mainland consider that international brands can better meet their needs than many local brands, the choices to these international brands owe to the affective connections rather than that they are market-dominated brands. As for Chinese consumer, foreign brand has no established foundation of maintaining brand loyalty through assumed emotion. Therefore we can conclude that as for brand loyalty of consumer to foreign brand, real emotion has more important effects than assumed emotion, and further influence to the two key outcomes about brand equity, i.e. willingness to pay a price premium and brand investment willingness. So we hypothesized that:

H4: In Chinese market, as for foreign brand, real emotion has more larger significant positive effect to brand loyalty than assumed emotion, and further positive significant effect to willingness to pay a price premium and brand investment willingness.

The mentioned theoretical hypotheses are used for demonstrating the suitability of brand affect construct and the uniqueness and validity of its application. The followings are two studies, the first is to develop the measurement to brand affect and evaluate the model fitting degree of bidimensional structure model; while the second is to verify its predictive validity to brand equity and the differences between the effects of Chinese and foreign brand attitude.

### **3. Study 1: Brand Affect Structure of Chinese Consumer**

In this study, we develop a scale with bidimensional structure and corresponding measurement items about the construct of brand affect, and through the actual tests in a category of FMCG, we evaluate the reliability and validity of this scale. The confirmatory factor analysis is especially implemented to compare the model fitting degree between unidimensional and bidimensional structure of brand affect in Chinese cultural background.

#### **3.1 Item Generation and Content Validity**

The measurement items of brand affect in this study are based on the “real and assumed emotion” facet in Chinese brand relationship quality(CBRQ) scale (He, 2006a), which has 5 items, among which “This brand has strong attraction to me”, “I always can’t help concerning about the new information of this brand” and “I feel this brand cordial when seeing it” are the measures for “real emotion”, they

correspondingly reflect attraction, passion, desire (Shaver et al., 1987; Storm and Storm, 1987) and intimacy (Sternberg, 1986, 1987) in positive emotion respectively, these affects are very similar to the components of brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006); “In order to continue to use this brand, I’m willing to sacrifice a little” and “I feel that I should use this brand” are the measures for “assumed emotion”, the former shows consumer’s attitude of being willing to sacrifice his personal benefits due to his consideration to ethical norms and motivation of obligation feeling, and the self-sacrifice is one of approach to express compulsive affection; the latter measures “assumed emotion” holistically.

In this study, in order to further improve content validity of these two kinds of emotion, we planned to add measurement item of “I feel like something’s missing when I haven’t used the brand in awhile” to “real emotion”, which reflects the main characteristics of emotional attachment that “anxiety appeared for leaving the attachment object” (Thomson, MacInnis and Park, 2005). In brand relationship quality (BRQ) scale developed early by Fournier (1994), it was a measurement item of “passionate attachment” facet. Thus, the “real emotion” of this study can more comprehensively reflect the basic emotions relevant to brand affect. In the facet of “assumed emotion”, we planned to add two items of “This brand is not only suitable to me but also according with others’ opinion to me” and “Using this brand is suitable to my identity”. The former reflects consumer’s affective connection with brand for the needs of “relational self” expression in the background of “social orientation” culture (Ho, et al., 1991). The latter reflects that in Chinese culture of high power distance (Hofstede, 2001), the consumer connects the grade of brand with his social status and tries to keep the correspondence between them so as to make the proper brand usage behavior able to express and strengthen self concept (He, 2007). In summary, four items of this study reflect the actual connotation of “assumed emotion” in Chinese culture more completely. So the Chinese Brand Affect Scale (CBAS) is comprised of two dimensions of “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” with 8 items.

### **3.2 Sample and Data Collection**

This study took the milky candy, a kind of FMCG as the measurement category. Same with the many other consumable product industries, Chinese candy industry has the competitive problems of Chinese and foreign brands. This study chose 5 famous Chinese or foreign brands including White Rabbit, ALPS, UHA, Golden Monkey and WoWo which were in the first flight in this category as the measure targets, used the method of questionnaire to survey the consumers in Shanghai, Wuhan and Chengdu, the three cities in China. The subjects should be the consumer that had bought the candy of these five brands for many times in latest 6 months, then they answered the questions on the basis of one of these brands. As for the monthly family income of the subjects, who lived in Wuhan and Chengdu should be over RMB 2500, and in Shanghai should be over RMB 3500. The data collection work started in May to June of 2007.

1300 questionnaires were sent accumulatively and received qualified ones of 1044 with total effective rate 80.3%. Among these, 300 (28.7%) were from Shanghai, 432

(41.4%) were from Wuhan and 312 (29.9%) were from Chengdu. As for the age distribution, 353 (33.8%) subjects were 18~24 years old, 231 (22.1%) were 25~29, 238 (22.8%) were 30~39 and 222 (21.3%) were 40~49. Because the adult candy consumers are mainly female, a quota of 3:7 was controlled to the male and female of subjects in advance, while the actual result was that 34% of the total samples were male and 66% female. As for the occupation distribution, 26.6% of them were students, 4.2% housewives, the rest (69.2%) were all working personnel from various kinds of industries and work positions. As for the marital state, 48.9% of total samples are unmarried/single while 51.1% married.

As for the measured brand distribution, White Rabbit had 462 (44.3%) samples, ALPS 364 (34.9%), UHA 97(9.3%), Golden Monkey 66 (6.3%) and WoWo 55 (5.3%), which was almost same with the actual market shares of these brands, while the domestic White Rabbit and foreign ALPS were the two strongest candy brands in China mainland market. As for the number of samples from country-of-origin of brand, the domestic brands (White Rabbit, Golden Monkey and WoWo) shared 583(55.8%) while the foreign brands (ALPS and UHA) 461(44.2%), so the proportion of these two is almost same.

In order to better test the stability of the relevant construct, all the statistics of this study separated the total samples into two sub-samples of approximate 50% in random to measure and compare.

### 3.3 Item Analysis and Reliability Estimation

All the measurement items adopted the Likert 7 point scale to measure. Firstly, we separated the total samples into two sub-samples in random to have item analysis. In the two sub-samples, all the corrected item-total correlations are over 0.4, and the coefficient  $\alpha$  estimate won't improve if item deleted, so all 8 items are remained. Coefficient  $\alpha$  estimates of total scale and the two sub-scales in two sub-samples are higher than the boundary of minimal reliability value of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally(1978), which shows that the scale has the acceptable reliability of internal consistency reliability.

**TABLE 1 Reliability and Relevant Statistics of CBAS in Two Sub-Samples**

Facets	Items		50% Sub-Samples in Random □n = 519□		The Rest Approximate 50% Sub-Samples □n = 525□	
			Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach $\alpha$ Estimate	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach $\alpha$ Estimate
Real Emotion	RE1	I feel like something's missing when I haven't used the brand in awhile.	0.481	0.711	0.543	0.713
	RE2	This brand has strong attraction to me.	0.500		0.506	
	RE3	I always can't help concerning about	0.536		0.511	

		the new information of this brand.				
	RE4	I feel this brand cordial when seeing it.	0.473		0.443	
Assumed Emotion	AE1	This brand is not only suitable to me but also according with others' opinion to me.	0.479	0.758	0.513	0.765
	AE2	Using this brand is suitable to my identity.	0.637		0.597	
	AE3	In order to continue to use this brand, I'm willing to sacrifice a little.	0.569		0.552	
	AE4	I feel that I should use this brand.	0.545		0.598	
CBAS Cronbach $\alpha$ Estimate				0.836		0.846

### 3.4 Factor Structure and Validity

In order to explore the factor structure of CBAS, we first analyzed the first random sub-sample using principal components analysis with varimax rotation ( $\chi^2=1257.63$ ,  $df=28$ ,  $sig=0.000$ ,  $KMO=0.878$ ), one factor occurred, with cumulative variance explained was 46.954%. This shows that the “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” belong to the same factor. In order to better validate this and compare to the bidimensional structure produced according to the theoretical hypothesis in this paper, we made two models including the unidimensional structure (congeneric model) and bidimensional structure, analysing the second sub-sample with the maximum-likelihood method, and then did confirmatory factor analysis through LISREL 8.51. Meanwhile, in order to show the structure stability of the model, we also did model comparative analysis to the first sub-sample similarly. The relevant fitting indexes are showed in Table 2.

With comparison to the bidimensional and unidimensional structure, it can be seen from each index in Table 2 that as for the second sub-sample, reduction of  $\chi^2$  ( $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)}=3.49$ ) reaches  $p<0.1$ , but not reaches the significant level of  $p<0.05$ , while the value of the absolute index  $\chi^2/df$  is a little big; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are almost completely same, while the Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) and Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) are a little bad, but fail to reach the degree of essential differences of 0.06~0.09 (Huang, 2005, p.157). As for the first sub-sample, reduction of  $\chi^2$  ( $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)}=8.5$ ) reaches the significant level of  $p<0.005$ , so the value of  $\chi^2/df$  is a little low, while other each index is almost same without important difference. In summary, under the background of Chinese culture, there are differences between the bidimensional structure and unidimensional structure of CBAS with almost same model fitting degree, but the bidimensional model is a little better than the unidimensional model. This result has shown the proper measure of brand affect that “real and assumed emotion” combined as unidimensional structure in

the former study (He, 2006a), and also the constructive significance of dividing “real and assumed emotion” into two dimensions in this study.

**TABLE 2 Fitting Indexes of CBAS Measurement Model**

	Absolute Indexes				Relative Indexes		Parsimony Indexes	
	$\chi^2/df$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	GFI	NNFI	CFI	PNFI	PGFI
<b>The First Sub-Samples (n = 519)</b>								
<b>Unidimensional</b>	113.95(20)	5.69	0.094	0.95	0.91	0.93	0.66	0.53
<b>Bidimensional</b>	105.45(19)	5.55	0.093	0.95	0.91	0.94	0.63	0.50
<b>The Second Sub-Samples (n = 525)</b>								
<b>Unidimensional</b>	83.46(20)	4.17	0.076	0.96	0.94	0.96	0.67	0.53
<b>Bidimensional</b>	79.97(19)	4.21	0.078	0.96	0.94	0.96	0.64	0.51

Construct Validity of CBAS was then tested. According to the suggestion of Bagozzi and Yi(1988), Table 3 has shown that most of measurement variables have loading near or over 0.71 in their defined latent variables, while the t value is between 12.08 and 18.82, which shows that each variable has good convergent validity. In addition, composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) of these two factors is both over 0.60, which also provide the good evidence for convergent validity. But the average variance extracted (AVE) is a little lower than the requirement of 0.50.

In the two random sub-samples, correlation of these two latent variables ( $\Phi_{21}$ ), i.e. real emotion and assumed emotion is very high, so some basic methods were used to test its discriminant validity. At first, according to the suggestions of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), under the confidence level of 95%, the confidence interval of the correlations among the latent variables won't include 1. After calculation, the first sub-sample is ( $\Phi_{21}$ ) = [0.90; 0.98], second sub-sample is ( $\Phi_{21}$ ) = [0.92; 0.99], which shows that the scale has discriminant validity. Second, according to the method proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), requirement of each latent variable's AVE is over the square of correlations among the latent variables. After calculation, in the two sub-samples, the AVE ( $\rho_v$ ) of two latent variables is both lower than ( $\Phi_{21}$ )<sup>2</sup>, which indicates that the discriminant validity is not so good. This proves evidence that unidimensional and bidimensional structure have the similar model fitting degree, i.e. “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” are in the state of “separable” and “inseparable”. This is very important for us to better understand brand affect structure under the Chinese cultural background.

**TABLE 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results (Loading, Composite Reliability and AVE)**

	The First Sub-Samples				The Second Sub-Samples			
	Standardized Loading (T Value)	Standard Error	$\rho_c$	$\rho_v$	Standardized Loading (T Value)	Standard Error	$\rho_c$	$\rho_v$
<b>Real Emotion</b>								
RE1 ( $\lambda_{1,1}$ )	0.70 (16.71)	0.08	0.73	0.41	0.71 (17.48)	0.07	0.74	0.42
RE2 ( $\lambda_{2,1}$ )	0.60 (13.81)	0.07			0.65 (15.55)	0.11		



RE3 $\lambda_{3,1}$	0.71 $\square$ 17.14 $\square$	0.08			0.66 $\square$ 15.76 $\square$	0.08		
RE4 $\lambda_{4,1}$	0.54 $\square$ 12.08 $\square$	0.09			0.55 $\square$ 12.68 $\square$	0.10		
<b>Assumed Emotion</b>								
AE1 $\lambda_{5,2}$	0.54 $\square$ 12.30 $\square$	0.08	0.77	0.45	0.62 $\square$ 14.71 $\square$	0.10	0.79	0.48
AE2 $\lambda_{6,2}$	0.76 $\square$ 18.82 $\square$	0.09			0.73 $\square$ 18.03 $\square$	0.08		
AE3 $\lambda_{7,2}$	0.74 $\square$ 18.44 $\square$	0.08			0.71 $\square$ 17.42 $\square$	0.09		
AE4 $\lambda_{8,2}$	0.69 $\square$ 16.69 $\square$	0.08			0.72 $\square$ 17.78 $\square$	0.09		
$\Phi_{21}$	0.94 $\square$ 39.43 $\square$	0.02	-	-	0.96 $\square$ 43.54 $\square$	0.02	-	-

In addition, different attitudes to domestic and foreign brand with CBAS were evaluated so as to further test the discriminant validity of CBAS when applied. The results can be seen in Table 4. In two sub-samples, two components of affects have mostly significant differences in the domestic and foreign brands. As the same category or the same brand, consumers also have mostly significant differences on the evaluation of two components of affects.

**TABLE 4 Discriminant Validity of CBAS**

Sub-Scale	The First Sub-Samples $n = 519$				T-Test	The Second Sub-Samples $n = 525$				
	Domestic Brands $n = 288$		Foreign Brands $n = 231$			Domestic Brands $n = 295$		Domestic Brands $n = 230$		T-Test
	M	S.D	M	S.D		M	S.D	M	S.D	
<b>Real Emotion</b>	4.28	1.12	3.86	1.12	4.16***	4.14	1.13	3.89	1.21	2.50*
<b>Assumed Emotioin</b>	4.02	1.18	3.65	1.22	3.49***	3.81	1.15	3.85	1.29	-0.32
<b>Paired-Samples T Test</b>	4.59***		3.15**		-	6.52***		0.69		-
	White Rabbit $n = 239$		ALPS $n = 182$		T-Test	White Rabbit $n = 223$		ALPS $n = 182$		T-Test
	M	S.D	M	S.D		M	S.D	M	S.D	
<b>Real Emotion</b>	4.36	1.12	3.74	1.20	5.42***	4.23	1.12	3.87	1.16	3.16**
<b>Assumed Emotioin</b>	4.08	1.20	3.53	1.20	4.65***	3.81	1.16	3.80	1.21	0.07
<b>Paired-Samples T Test</b>	4.38***		2.73**		-	6.78***		0.99		-

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$   $\square$  2-tailed

Finally, nomological validity of CBAS was tested, i.e. according to relationship of theoretical background identified by the former study, give an estimate to the research construct so as to determine whether the scale has corresponding result. This study demonstrated the correlation between two components of affect and types of brand relationship. The brand relationships have 4 basic types including “family member”, “good friend”, “cooperation partner” and “acquaintance”. According to the theoretical construction, “family member” is type of high “real and assumed emotion”; “good friend” is of high “real emotion” and low “assumed emotion”, while the adverse one is the “cooperatiion partner”; and the “acquaintance” is of low “real and assumed emotion” (He and Lu, 2007). This study measured the correlation of these two constructs. The result shows that the state of the correlations in the two sub-samples is

completely same with theoretical construction, which can be seen from Table 5. This also means that two components of brand affect including “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” can really predict the different brand relationships.

**TABLE 5 Correlations between CBAS and Types of Brand Relationship**

	Family Member	Good Friend	Cooperation Partner	Acquaintance
The First Sub-Samples (n = 519)				
<b>Real Emotion</b>	0.492**	0.444**	0.185**	0.048
<b>Assumed Emotion</b>	0.458**	0.376**	0.230**	-0.036
The Second Sub-Samples (n = 525)				
<b>Real Emotion</b>	0.459**	0.389**	0.259**	0.069
<b>Assumed Emotion</b>	0.467**	0.340**	0.293**	0.105*

\*p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01 2-tailed

In summary, brand affect of Chinese consumer should be comprised of “real emotion” and “assumed emotion”, while the reliability and validity of CBAS have both reached the relevant indexes basically, but the discriminant validity is a little bad, which just show the special close relationship of these two affective components under the Chinese cultural background. Through the comparison to fitting indexes, it shows the suitability and effectiveness of bidimensional structures of CBAS.

#### **4. Study 2: Role of Brand Affect to Brand Equity and Difference between Domestic and Foreign Brands**

The following study planned to further test the predictive validity of two components of brand affect to brand equity, and specially distinguish the domestic and foreign brands so as to indicate the differences of these two from the perspective of affective driving approaches, intending to argue on the important issue to the different sources of Chinese and foreign brand equity.

##### **4.1 Measurement Design and Procedures**

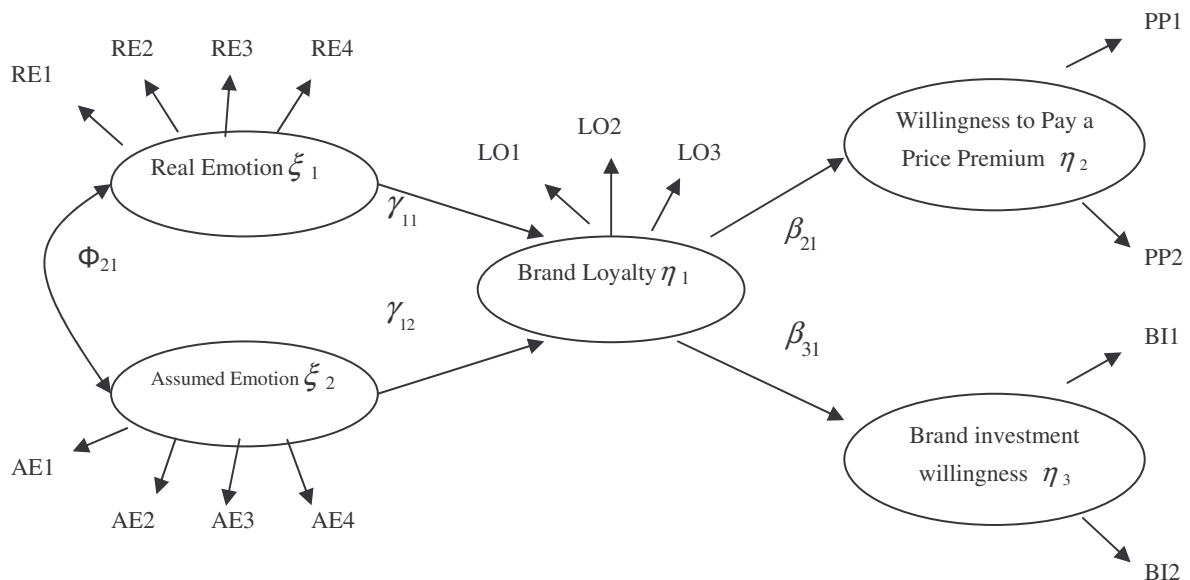
The survey samples and data source adopted by this study were same with those of study 1, here the definition and operationalization of dependent variables and structural equation model were depicted.

Because the results of study 1 had shown the stability of core construct, this study would do statistics according to the total samples and the comparison samples between Chinese and Foreign brands rather than the two random sub-samples of 50%. It handled from two approaches. Firstly, a total comparison was did, i.e. the domestic brand samples (three brands, total 583 samples ) and the foreign brand samples (two brands, total 461 samples ) in the total samples were selected; secondly, the samples of individual brand were compared, selecting White Rabbit brand (462 samples )and ALPS brand(364 samples ) from the total samples.

According to the theoretical hypothesis, this study defined the “brand loyalty ”as

the variable of measuring brand equity, selected “willingness to pay a price premium” as a variable in common use of brand equity outcomes, and developed construct of “brand investment willingness” as a new variable of brand equity outcomes. On the basis of “Brand Value Chain”(BVC) model proposed by Keller and Lehmann (2003), brand affect was defined as exogenous variable of brand equity source, and brand loyalty, willingness to pay a price premium, and brand investment willingness as endogenous variables, which form a value chain relationship structure with three layers of factors. Items of all the variables adopted Likert 7 point scale to measure.

The measurement of brand loyalty adopted the items from multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale developed by Yoo and Donthu (2001), which included “ I consider myself to be loyal to this brand”, “This brand would be my first choice” and “I will not buy other brands if this brand is available at the store”. They were totally kept after item analysis, coefficient  $\alpha$  estimate in total samples was 0.741. “Willingness to pay a price premium” adopted the 4 items from the study by Netemeyer et al.(2004), coefficient  $\alpha$  estimate in total sample was 0.596. Then, after item analysis two items were kept, they were “I’m willing to pay a higher price for this brand than for other brands”and “I am willing to pay a lot more for this brand than other brands of milky candy” respectively, coefficient  $\alpha$  estimate improved to 0.750 correspondingly. The scale of “brand investment willingness” had 4 items all together, while the coefficient  $\alpha$  estimate in total samples is 0.770, two items were kept after item analysis, i.e. “If the company of this brand is listed, I plan to hold its stocks in long run” and “If the company of this brand is listed, I plan to buy its stocks”, while the coefficient  $\alpha$  estimate improved to 0.820. Figure 1 is the structural equation model and the path relationship defined for this study.



**FIGURE 1 Driving Model of Brand Equity Based on Brand Affect**

#### 4.2 Reliability and Validity of the Measuring Variables

Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis was adopted to measure the reliability and validity of all the variables in the defined structural equation model. The maximum likelihood (ML) method with LISREL 8.51 software was used. It showed the results of completely standardized solution that most of the measurement items have loading of over 0.71 in the defined latent variables while the range of t-value is 18.62~28.18, which reflected that each variable has enough convergent validity. See Table 6. Except  $\chi^2/df$  being 5.49, which was a little higher than the range of 2.0~5.0 (Hau et al., 2004, p.156), the indexes of the measurement model fitting were all in the required “good” range. As for the absolute indexes, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) is 0.94, while the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) is 0.91; as for the relative indexes, the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.93, 0.93 and 0.94 respectively; while the Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) and Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) is 0.71 and 0.63 respectively. In the same time, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.069.

In addition, Table 6 reported the composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) of each latent variable and average variance extracted (AVE) ( $\rho_v$ ). As the reliability measurement to the internal consistency,  $\rho_c$  of 5 latent variables was between 0.74~0.84, all being over the requirement of 0.60 suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). As for the average variance extracted ( $\rho_v$ ), the latent variables of real emotion and assumed emotion were a little lower than 0.50, other three latent variables were higher than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Basically all 15 measurement items were reliable and valid for 5 constructs of the defined model.

**TABLE 6 CFA Results of Measurement Model Loading, Composite Reliability and AVE**

Latent Variable	Measurement Variable	Standardized Loading	t-Value	Measurement Error	$\rho_c$	$\rho_v$
Real Emotion	RE1	0.69	23.77	0.52	0.74	0.41
	RE2	0.64	21.61	0.59		
	RE3	0.66	22.44	0.56		
	RE4	0.58	19.00	0.67		
Assumed Emotion	AE1	0.56	18.62	0.68	0.78	0.47
	AE2	0.71	24.78	0.50		
	AE3	0.72	25.51	0.48		
	AE4	0.74	26.46	0.45		
Brand Loyalty	LO1	0.74	25.76	0.45	0.76	0.52
	LO2	0.73	24.99	0.47		
	LO3	0.69	23.54	0.52		
Willingness to Pay a Price Premium	PP1	0.77	24.91	0.41	0.78	0.64
	PP2	0.83	27.08	0.31		
Brand Investment Willingness	BI1	0.87	28.18	0.24	0.84	0.73
	BI2	0.84	27.06	0.30		

Note:  $\chi^2_{80}=439.22$  RMSEA=0.069 GFI=0.94 AGFI=0.91 NNFI=0.93 NFI=0.93 CFI=0.94 PNFI=0.71 PGFI=0.63

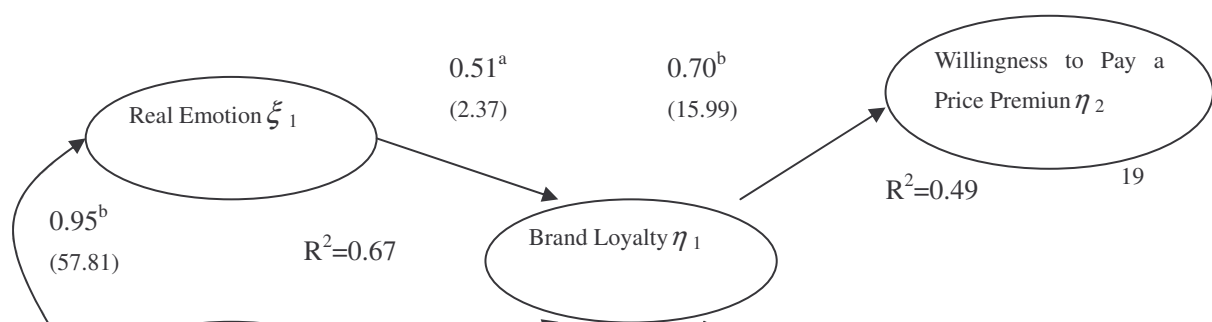
### 4.3 Fitting Degree, Invariance and Path Analysis of Structural Equation Model

Following are the key contents of this study. At first, the fitting degree of the structural equation model to total samples was estimated. Except  $\chi^2/df$  being 5.65, which was a little higher than the range of 2.0~5.0 (Hau et al., 2004), all other indexes reached the requirement of “good” model. See Table 7. In order to test the stability of the model, we estimated the fitting degree according to the city (three sub-samples), Chinese and foreign brand categories (two groups, four sub-samples) respectively. The result showed that except the RMSEA, GFI and NNFI of Wuhan samples, RMSEA and NNFI of Chengdu sample was a little smaller than the requirement of “good” model, while each other index of all sub-samples had reached the ideal requirements of “good” model. See Table 7. In summary, it could be concluded that the model based on theoretical hypothesis had the total construction validity, stability and robustness.

**TABLE 7 Fitting Degree and Invariance of Full Model**

	Absolute Indexes				Relative Indexes		Parsimony Indexes	
	$\chi^2/df$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	GFI	NNFI	CFI	PNFI	PGFI
Tota Samples(n=1044)	480.06(85)	5.65	0.071	0.94	0.92	0.94	0.75	0.66
Shanghai Market(n=300)	183.83(85)	2.16	0.069	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.73	0.65
Wuhan Market(n=432)	348.23(85)	4.10	0.092	0.89	0.87	0.90	0.70	0.63
Chengdu Market(n=312)	264.83(85)	3.12	0.082	0.90	0.88	0.90	0.70	0.64
Domestic Brands(n=583)	365.61(85)	4.30	0.080	0.92	0.90	0.92	0.73	0.65
Foreign Brands(n=461)	247.10(85)	2.91	0.067	0.93	0.93	0.94	0.74	0.66
White Rabbit (n=462)	293.97(85)	3.46	0.079	0.91	0.90	0.92	0.72	0.65
ALPS(n=364)	207.98(85)	2.45	0.066	0.93	0.93	0.94	0.73	0.66

Table 2 showed the result of the standardized path coefficients among each latent variable of the model in total samples. It indicated that except that the standardized path coefficient of assumed emotion  $\rightarrow$  brand loyalty failed to reach the significant test ( $\gamma_{12}=0.32$ ,  $t=1.52$ ), all other path coefficients passed the significant test. The real emotion had not only directly affected brand loyalty with the influence coefficient of 0.51( $t=2.37$ ), but also indirectly affected willingness to pay a price premium through brand loyalty with the influence coefficient of 0.36( $t=2.36$ ). Brand affect explained 67% of variation of brand loyalty, while brand loyalty had explained 9% and 31% of willingness to pay a price premium and brand investment willingness respectively. This result indicated that real emotion was totally the essential antecedent to drive brand loyalty and its outcomes, while assumed emotion had no significant effects. Hypothesis H1 of this paper had been demonstrated while hypothesis H2 failed to be supported.



Note: Numbers in parentheses represent t values. <sup>a</sup> p<0.05; <sup>b</sup> p<0.001

## FIGURE 2 Path Analysis Results of Brand Equity Driving Model Based on Brand Affect

### 4.4 Comparison to the Role of Brand Affect Based on of Chinese and Foreign Brand Sub-Samples

Finally, we used the data of domestic and foreign brand sub-samples to compare the path coefficients of the model respectively. The result showed that among the domestic brand samples, assumed emotion had significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{12}=0.71, t=2.11, p<0.05$ ), while real emotion had no significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{11}=0.09, t=0.25$ ). To the contrary, among the foreign brand samples, the real emotion had significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{11}=0.98, t=3.03, p<0.01$ ), while assumed emotion had no significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{12}=-0.13, t=-0.40$ ). With the comparison to the individual Chinese and foreign brand, as for the domestic brand of White Rabbit samples, the effect of assumed emotion on brand loyalty reached marginal significant ( $\gamma_{12}=0.43, t=1.64, p=0.1$ ), while real emotion had no significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{11}=0.34, t=1.27, p>0.1$ ). As for the foreign brand of ALPS samples, real emotion had significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{11}=0.73, t=2.60, p<0.01$ ), but assumed emotion had no significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{12}=0.09, t=0.33, p>0.1$ ). The relevant statistics can be seen in Table 8 in detail.

It can be seen that the driving effects of brand affect to brand equity have difference between Chinese and foreign brands. As for the domestic brands, assumed emotion has more important impacts to brand loyalty and its outcomes than real emotion. Thus hypothesis H3 was supported. In contrast as for the foreign brands, real emotion has more effects on brand loyalty and its outcomes than assumed emotion. It fully confirmed hypothesis H4. These findings indicate that the Chinese and foreign brands have essential different approaches on building brand equity.

**TABLE 8 Comparison of Path Analysis Results of Chinese and Foreign Brand Samples**

Path Relationship	Parameter	Domestic Brands (n=583)		Foreign Brands (n=461)		White Rabbit (n=462)		ALPS (n=364)	
		coefficients	t-Value	coefficients	t-Value	coefficients	t-Value	coefficients	t-Value



Real Emotion → Brand Loyalty	$\gamma_{11}$	0.09	0.25	0.98 <sup>c</sup>	3.03	0.34	1.27	0.73 <sup>c</sup>	2.60
Assumed Emotion → Brand Loyalty	$\gamma_{12}$	0.71 <sup>b</sup>	2.11	-0.13	-0.40	0.43 <sup>a</sup>	1.64	0.09	0.33
Brand Loyalty → Willingness to Pay a Price Premium	$\beta_{21}$	0.73 <sup>d</sup>	12.28	0.67 <sup>d</sup>	9.76	0.76 <sup>d</sup>	11.53	0.66 <sup>d</sup>	8.51
Brand Loyalty → Brand Investment Willingness	$\beta_{31}$	0.59 <sup>d</sup>	11.35	0.51 <sup>d</sup>	8.07	0.56 <sup>d</sup>	9.31	0.50 <sup>d</sup>	7.94

<sup>a</sup>  $p < 0.1$  <sup>b</sup>  $p < 0.05$  <sup>c</sup>  $p < 0.01$  <sup>d</sup>  $p < 0.001$

## 5. Discussion

This paper had developed Chinese Brand Affect Scale (CBAS), and given the comparison and validation to the unidimensional and bidimensional structures under the Chinese cultural background, confirmed the constructive significance of the bidimensional structure; and then studied the driving effects to brand equity. Meanwhile, it proved the differences of affective approaches for Chinese and foreign brands to build brand equity. This study expands the knowledge of the nature and typology to positive affect in consumer behavior, and provides the new perspective for marketers to understand and build the relationships between consumer and brand with the alternative differentiated marketing approach. Especially, taking the foreign brand as the competitive benchmark, it provides the key implications for local enterprises to improve brand competitiveness.

### 5.1 Components and Characteristics for Brand Affect of Chinese Consumer

The studies in this paper have shown that brand affect of Chinese consumer is comprised of two ways including “real emotion” and “assumed emotion”; they are closely connected in the intermediate state of “separable” and “inseparable”. This is corresponding to the common characteristics of interpersonal affection in Chinese, i.e. the nature of obligation contained in affection (Liu et al., 2005). The findings also provide the new evidences for the construct and theory of interpersonal affection to apply to the field of consumer-brand relationships.

“Real emotion” is consumer’s intimate feelings without distance and inseparable attachment to brand, which is attracted by the performance of brand, and the passionate affection between liking and live to brand. The generation of this kind of affection is originated from true needs out of the internal mind of consumer, and also the results of well continued brand building activities. Compared with it, “assumed emotion” is the affect formed in the aspects of obligation and compulsion when consumer is driven by the intangible external forces, which are various sources. Firstly, it is out of the consideration to needs of special occasions under the social norms such as gift-giving, wedding ceremony, etc. Generally, it is the affective state of chosen brand based on consideration to the view of evaluations from others among social relationships. Secondly, influenced by established relationships and environments such as family

usage and intergenerational transfer, the affective state is generated during habitual use to some brand. This kind of brand relationship is similar to Kinships summarized by Fournier (1994, 1998). Thirdly, following “differential order-pattern” and affinity rule(Fei, 1985; Hwang, 2006) in relationship contacts, domestic or local brand usually gains more trusts and positive evaluations. These assumed emotions mentioned above can result into positive influences to the long-term even exclusive commitment relationship between consumer and brand (esp. the domestic brand).

Commonly, “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” are highly relative rather than exclusive, which means that despite of the difference (content validity and face validity) between these two in nature, in fact, consumer usually combine them when evaluating brand. This is relevant to common affection pattern of Chinese consumer. Under the Chinese culture background, the most ideal situation of the relationship quality is combination of “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” without gap between them (He and Lu, 2007). But meanwhile, the differences between them provide the possibility for building special consumer-brand relationship. For example, strengthening real emotion while weakening assumed emotion through marketing activities, properly separating the relationship between them, all these can provide strong supports to the establishment of brand personality as excitement. Therefore, through marketing planning and investment, adjustment to the proportion of these two emotions can build the corresponding affective relationship type with consumer and fulfil the definite marketing goal.

## **5.2 Brand Affect as Important Driver to Brand Equity**

This paper indicated two kinds of emotion to brand equity. Although “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” are all objective existence, the evidences convince us that compared to assumed emotion, real emotion is the more original antecedent to drive brand equity. In study 2, assumed emotion has no significant effects ( $\gamma_{12}=0.32$ ,  $t=1.52$ ) to brand loyalty in the full model. But in the relationship between Chinese consumer and domestic brand, there are evidences show that assumed emotion is still important than real emotion and becomes dominating strengths to drive brand equity. So we can believe that real emotion is a common factor to drive brand equity, similar to the constructs of “love and passion” (Fournier, 1994, 1998) “brand love” (Roberts, 2004) (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006) or “emotional attachments to brand” (Thomson, MacInnis and Park, 2005) in western theoretical background. While assumed emotion is the concept of affective components in the aspect of Chinese indigenous culture, it has cultural specialty and conditionality whether it takes effects. From the common view of building brand equity, managers should focus on real emotion truly with consumer, understand the nature of real emotion, and master the marketing ways and tools for building real emotion. On the other hand, from the view of Chinese local marketing, the role of assumed emotion should be implemented so as to combine with real emotion, produce and strengthen brand affect together.

Brand affect is an important force of building brand equity, this paper had proved it with the new evidence. In fact, mechanism of brand affect to brand equity is on going

to explore. If we can say that high real emotion and assumed emotion have formed the states of communal relationship(He and Lu, 2007), and then according to the findings studied by Aggarwal and Law (2005), it can lead consumer to evaluate the brand attributes from the more abstract level, so it may result into the evaluation more favorable to the brand in the competitive comparison. Another study finished by Aggarwal and Zhang(2006) also showed that compared to exchange relationship, communal relationship will result into larger loss aversion so as to promote consumer to connect a more stable and enduring relationship with brand. The further research need to explore the different mechanism of these two affective ways to brand attitude and behavior, which will be more important than estimating brand based on these two kinds of emotions. If mastering its principles, we can provide the important support for decision making of emotional branding in Chinese market.

### **5.3 Difference between Chinese and Foreign Brand Affects to Drive Brand Equity and Its Implications**

Based on consumer's perspective, bidimensional construct of brand affect under the Chinese cultural background has clearly depicted the differences of Chinese and foreign brand equity. The domestic brand depends more on assumed emotion to drive brand equity and its outcomes, while foreign brand resort more to real emotion to build and keep the positive brand attitudes of consumer. Although this paper takes the candy as the example to show that both kinds of emotions estimates to domestic brands are basically higher than foreign ones (See Table 4), it is still necessary to remind the managers of paying attentions to the marketing implications brought about by the differences between the two kinds of emotions to drive brand equity.

Since the reform and open-up in China, many international corporations and foreign brands entered Chinese market. They continuously develop and advance the segments through the definite marketing strategies and the strong supports of marketing investment. These foreign brands always use the "affective connection between consumer and brand" as the foundation of branding□He and Lu, 2004, p.192□, while their marketing communication strategies always take the "life style and values" of consumer as the communication basis, which has corresponded to the trend of large numbers of western values being introduced while the traditional values being changed during the process of Chinese society transformation, so they win resonance from targeted customers extensively. In such kind of market competition environments, Chinese domestic enterprises also continuously improve and advance their marketing strategies, evolving from the simple positioning (grade of product) to precise positioning (segments), from product orientation to brand orientation, from rational appeal to affective appeal, and from surface communication (based on facts) to deep communication (based on purchase motivation) □He and Lu, 2004, p.184□. However, compared to foreign brands, the marketing level and marketing investment of domestic brands still fall behind, especially lack experiences in the aspect of emotional branding strategy. As for the international trend of brand management, emotional branding is the important strategic approach and tool. Here the word "emotional" is in correspondence

with the connotation of “real emotion” in this paper. If Chinese domestic brands want to gain advantage from the competition with foreign brands, they must find the continuous and effective approach of branding based on “real emotion”.

From the view of relationship between marketing activity and brand affect building, the marketing approach and strategy of “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” have many differences. Branding via “real emotion” is a consumer-centric, relational, and story-driven approach to forging deep and enduring affective bonds between consumers and brands. It is seldom cultivated through rational arguments about tangible benefits or even appeals to symbolic benefits. These potent consumer-brand linkages typically emerge when branding strategies use narratives and tactics that demonstrate an empathetic understanding of customers’ inspirations, aspirations, and life circumstances and that generate warm feelings of community among brand users (Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel 2006). In contrary, branding via “assumed emotion” always relies on strategy of rational propositions or symbolism, affection founded by this approach may also be enduring, but they have essential differences with consumer’s strong passion. In many cases, assumed emotion to brand generates depending on external factors that consumers are influenced by (such as family, use occasion and geographic condition), while real emotion to brand depends on consumers’ internal feelings and ideas, generating by excellent creation and marketing wisdom, so it is completely the added value out of product. Many Chinese domestic brands have been in the stage of emotional branding. For the example as beer industry, Reeb beer promoted the slogan of “Reason of Liking Shanghai” (2001), Snow beer was “Enjoy Growing up” (2004) and Tsingtao was “Passion, Dreams & Success” (2005), etc. But many brands have common problems, such as using straight slogan appeal to simplify scene and feeling, lacking creative ability for emotional story and its consistency, and being away from the core values of brand, etc. Therefore Chinese domestic brand still needs to focus more on the aspect of building and expressing “real emotion”. Theoretically, it needs to further research marketing mix and activities corresponding with these two kinds of brand affects so as to provide supports and guides to marketing practices.

## **6. Limitations and Further Research**

This paper had primarily validated the suitability of bidimensional structure of brand affect under the Chinese cultural background and the abilities to predict the driving effects to Chinese and foreign brand equity. The results indicate again that the theoretical construction based on indigenous background can help better interpret the actual problems in China, thereby provide more effective management implications to practices. Limited by many factors and conditions, this paper still has some shorts and limitations, so it need further research to strengthen, improve or modify its conclusions in future.

At first, compared to the unidimensional structure, the bidimensional structure of brand affect created by this paper has still limited advantages from the aspect of the model fitting degree, the discriminant validity is not so good. This may influence the

path coefficients of real emotion  $\rightarrow$  brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{11}$ ) and assumed emotion  $\rightarrow$  brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{12}$ ) in the full model. For example, the path coefficient of real emotion  $\rightarrow$  brand loyalty ( $\gamma_{11}$ ) in foreign brand samples is 0.98, it is too near 1. Although the high correlation and blending between “real emotion” and “assumed emotion” have theoretical basis, we can still try to modify the related items from the operationlization of measurement so as to improve the discriminant validity of these two facets. In addition, the empirical study showed that the average variance extracted (AVE) of the two dimensions is not so good, this may be due to the excessive measurement errors, which also means the necessity of adjustment to some individual items. From the requirement for generalization of conclusion, this paper had measured only one category of consumable product, and according to these data then get a conclusion about the differences of driving effects between Chinese and foreign brand equity, so it should be treated discreetly and worthy to be further demonstrated.

But the limitations and shorts mentioned above are inefficient to influence the reasonableness and constructiveness of brand affect construct developed under the Chinese cultural background besides the necessity and possibility of expected further researches on this topic. The next research direction needs to deeply focus on the corresponding relationship of marketing elements to create real and assumed emotion, and the different mechanism of two affections for more variables of brand attitude except brand loyalty. In this way, we can more clearly and comprehensively understand the role and the influence mechanism of the Chinese indigenous brand affect construct in the perspective of brand value chain(BVC). In addition, if the relevant studies would start from the view of differences among Chinese generations so as to know and indicate whether the role of “assumed emotion” is weakening with the social transformation in China, they are sure to provide richer evidence for cross cultural research of brand affect construct.

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