

BUYING LOCAL AND THE CHINA CHIC POPULAR CULTURAL MOVEMENT

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In the past, young Chinese consumers favoured foreign products for their quality, marketing and designs. However, this trend has changed as they increasingly prefer local products and brands. Key reasons include domestic brand nationalism, grassroot-led consumer nationalism and cultural pride. These trends do not appear to be transient as Chinese power grows in prestige and status and as Chinese technological capabilities improve exponentially. Both society (including consumers) as well as their elites (celebrities in China) want to make their patriotic sentiments heard. This environment has given rise to the ‘China Chic’ Movement that emphasises Chinese traditional designs, customs, value systems, aesthetics and other cultural elements. Chinese manufacturers’ success in integrating these features into the product output and marketing efforts has lured culturally nationalistic consumers through improved technologies, product safety and affordable pricing. Foreign companies struggle to compete against such developments, leading some to exit China, downsize, shift online or collaborate with local partners.

(Click on the link to read the above in [Chinese](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#))

Chinese:

多买国货和中国风时尚文化运动

过去，年轻的中国消费者迷恋外国产品，因为它们质量上乘、营销力度大、设计精美。但随着中国消费者在购买产品时越来越注重本土化，越来越多地选择本土品牌，这一趋势已经发生改变。造成这种情况的原因有很多，其中最主要的是国内品牌民族主义、草根消费者民族主义和文化自豪感。随着中国实力的增强和地位的提高，以及中国技术能力的飞速提升，这些趋势似乎并非一蹴而就。社会（包括消费者）及其精英（中国名人）都希望表达他们的爱国情怀。在这种民族主义和文化自豪感的氛围中，出现了“中国风”运动，强调中国传统设计、习俗、价值体系、美学和其他文化元素。中国制造商成功地将这些特点融入到产品输出和营销工作中，吸引了具有文化民族主义的中国消费者购买这些产品。仅靠这种文化自豪感是不够的，还需要与技术进步、产品安全性和实惠的价格相结合。由于无法应对这种发展趋势，外国公司纷纷离开中国、缩小规模、转向线上业务或与当地合作伙伴和顾问合作以弥补其在应对中国文化民族主义方面的不足。

French:

ACHETER LOCAL ET LE MOUVEMENT POPULAIRE « CHINA CHIC »

Par le passé, les jeunes consommateurs chinois préféraient les produits étrangers pour leur qualité, leur marketing et leurs designs. Cependant, cette tendance a évolué, et ils privilégient de plus en plus les produits et marques locales. Les raisons principales incluent le nationalisme de marque, le nationalisme des consommateurs et la fierté culturelle. Ces tendances ne semblent pas transitoires et semblent refléter le fait que la puissance chinoise gagne en prestige et en statut et que les capacités technologiques chinoises s'améliorent exponentiellement. Tant la société (y compris les consommateurs) que leurs élites (les célébrités en Chine) souhaitent faire entendre leurs sentiments patriotiques. Cet environnement a donné naissance au mouvement « China Chic » qui met en avant les designs traditionnels chinois, les coutumes, les systèmes de valeurs, l'esthétique et d'autres éléments culturels. Le succès des fabricants chinois à intégrer ces caractéristiques dans la production et le marketing grâce à des technologies améliorées, la sécurité des produits et des prix abordables a permis d'attirer les consommateurs culturellement nationalistes. Les entreprises étrangères ont du mal à concurrencer de tels développements, amenant certaines à quitter la Chine, à réduire leurs activités, à se tourner vers le commerce en ligne ou à collaborer avec des partenaires locaux.

Spanish:

COMPRAR LOCAL Y EL MOVIMIENTO CULTURAL POPULAR 'CHINA CHIC'

En el pasado, los jóvenes consumidores chinos preferían productos extranjeros por su calidad, marketing y diseños. Sin embargo, esta tendencia ha cambiado ya que cada vez prefieren más productos y marcas locales. Las razones clave incluyen el nacionalismo de las marcas domésticas, el nacionalismo del consumidor impulsado por las bases y el orgullo cultural. Estas tendencias no parecen ser transitorias a medida que el poder de China crece en prestigio y estatus, y sus capacidades tecnológicas mejoran exponencialmente. Tanto la sociedad (incluidos los consumidores) como sus élites (celebridades en China) quieren hacer oír sus sentimientos patrióticos. Este entorno ha dado lugar al Movimiento 'China Chic', que enfatiza los diseños tradicionales chinos, costumbres, sistemas de valores, estética y otros elementos culturales. El éxito de los fabricantes chinos en integrar estas características en la producción de productos y esfuerzos de marketing ha atraído a los consumidores culturalmente nacionalistas mediante tecnologías mejoradas, seguridad del producto y precios asequibles. Las empresas extranjeras luchan por competir contra tales desarrollos, lo que lleva a algunas a salir de China, reducir su tamaño, trasladarse en línea o colaborar con socios locales.

Executive Summary

1. There has been a strong trend among Chinese consumers to buy local products since at least 2021. State media reported in 2021 that Chinese consumers are broadly inclined to choose locally made lifestyle and popular cultural products over foreign brands.
2. There are two schools of thought about buying local. One view is based on ‘nationalistic spending pattern’ being a transient phenomenon and that fad will either pass or be cyclical based on external stimuli or domestic political currents.
3. The other school of thought believes that it is not simply a fad and nationalism consumption in China will continue not as a government-incited movement but as a broad, citizen/grassroot-led movement with strong societal support.
4. Nationalism has encouraged local consumers to align themselves with domestic brands, particularly when they perceive Chinese companies as being unfairly targeted by foreign pressure.
5. In the past, Chinese products struggled to gain strong loyalty from local consumers due to concerns over quality. However, this perception has shifted due to foreign investment, knowledge transfer from multinational corporations, technological advancement and greater focus on research and development, resulting in higher-quality products.
6. Chinese consumers are increasingly displaying greater confidence in and loyalty to domestic brands. This trend is further enhanced by Chinese companies’ higher revenues and bigger economies of scale, creating a self-reinforcing cycle where the rising quality of Chinese products coincides with rising nationalism.
7. The younger generation in particular prefers goods symbolising traditional Chinese culture (including elements of “chinoiserie” cultural movement) found in Made-in-China goods.

8. Western brands were lagging behind in their localisation strategies in China in an attempt to maintain their successful global image without fully leveraging their local Chinese teams. This has resulted in slower consumer responses in a dynamic consumer market.
9. Many foreign brands have also become sensitive to Chinese nationalism, moving very gingerly in their marketing campaigns and public relations communiqué to avoid touching on the sensitivities of patriotic Chinese consumers and prevent misunderstandings, public uproars and public relations meltdown.
10. Foreign companies would need to enhance the Chinese cultural aspects of their product designs to attract Chinese consumers.