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Relationship between nation image and export: the attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese brands and products.

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Author　Kamil Jerzy Kleczkowski　Completion Date　29.09.2019

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Training Unit　　　　　　　Business School

指导教师

Supervisor　　　　　　　　Qiang Jiang

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Relationship between nation image and export: the attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese brands and products.

Master of Business Administration

Candidate Student: Kamil Jerzy Kleczkowski   Supervisor: Qiang Jiang

Abstract

Rapid economic growth and successful development of One Belt One Road Initiative strengthen the position of China on the international stage and export of Chinese goods to the global market. However, due to many differences, including culture and political system as well as some misunderstandings, the current reputation of China, especially in western countries is not very good. Research has shown that the image of the particular country has significant impact on the perception of goods which originate from that country. The aim of this thesis is to check what is the attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese products and brands and what are the main factors shaping this attitude.

In order to achieve the goal, marketing theories and researches of Country of Origin Effect and Nation Branding were studied. Based on the Literature Review, the Author designed questionnaire to find out how most important factors are shaping the perception of China among Polish consumers and how does it influence attitude towards Chinese products and brands. Analysis of the results demonstrated that in the case of customers from Poland image of a country has a significant impact on the perception of goods. Attitude towards Chinese products is determined by the opinion of the country itself. Similar to previously done researches in terms of Polish consumers the bigger is the experience and knowledge of country, the better is perception of China. However results have shown that media does not have that negative influence on Chinese reputation as it happened in other studies.

Results indicated that China should improve the international image in order to enhance the perception of product quality and achieve better price. Nation branding activities can help in the current stage of development to achieve greater economic results through international export.

Key words: China, Poland, nation branding, reputation, country of origin effect, products, export

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the era of rapid economic development of many countries and progressive globalization, there has been a need for new strategies to compete with others. Although the main indicator of the power of the country used to be economic progress, in the last two-decade need for a new, innovative approach to promoting the country arise. For that particular reason, another branch of marketing focusing mainly on the image of countries emerged. While choosing traveling destination or buying products, consumers make a decision based on many factors however one of the most important is a perception of the country they are willing to go or buy goods from.

1.1 Research background

Importance of nation image was widely discussed by many researchers. First studies concerning the relation of perception of country and perception of its products were conducted in 1965 by Robert D. Schooler. He discovered that consumers from Guatemala judge exactly the same products differently only if they are exposed to different countries of origin on the label (Schooler, 1965). This discovery was the beginning of many other types of research on the country of origin effect as well as studies concerning country image itself. Researchers studied ways to improve it, in order to gain a competitive advantage over other countries in export and other areas like tourism or foreign investment. The clear, coherent and most important positive country image turned out to be crucial in order to successfully compete in export, do well on the international political stage and deal with negative stereotypes (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016). Those findings led to the development of nation branding which is a tool to help to shape the image of the country in the perception of international consumers and people who had little experience and knowledge about a particular place.

Nation branding and Country Of Origin literature emphasis how the image of the country influence the attitude of consumers towards products and brands from a particular country. In general, the better the reputation the country has on a particular market, the better will be the perception of its products and brands. Perception of countries has been evaluated through scientific researches and rankings prepared by independent consulting groups. According to Country Brand Index 2014-15, which examined the general perception of the country among people from different nations,

China is ranked at 28th position out of 75 countries which took part in the examination. Another indicator called "China Power Project" developed by Center For Strategic& International Studies shows the percentage of favorable views towards China from different countries – in the case of Poland at the current moment it is 42%. In 2018 Country RepTrak® ranking, which examines the reputation of the countries ranked China on 45th place among 55 nations.

Nation brands and corporate brands have an important, mutual influence. Philip Kotler says that success of a given corporation is often determined by the place of its origin, but on the other hand, a well-developed and recognizable corporate brand can also be the good element of strengthening the image of the country and marketing tool for building strong nation brand(Kotler, 2004). As China is in the process of transformation from cheap manufacturer to the high-quality products superpower, its nation brand and image will determine how global business relations will be shaped and what will be the perception of Chinese products. President Xi Jinping himself highlighted the importance of good international communication, strengthening soft power and giving a better message to the world (Hartig, 2016).

The biggest strategic challenge for China now is the development of its national image. How China and its products are perceived by other nations might determine further development and shape of the country in the future (Xie and Page, 2013).

1.2 Research idea

This research will provide a deeper understanding of the perception of Chinese products and brands among citizens of Poland. It can help develop a proper marketing strategy for the country, overcome challenges and give suggestions of approach for Chinese companies doing international business with Poland and other European countries, especially during the development of "One belt, one road" initiative.

So far there are little researches done concerning the perception of Chinese products in Europe and especially in Poland. That is why this thesis research may be very informative and useful for many purposes. It can serve as the background for the further scientific studies as well as the guide for businesses and policymakers.

Characteristics of this study required use of the primary data, therefore Author had to collect it through the questionnaire and interviews which supported the main research.

Idea of the research structure is inspired by paper based on a Model of Country Concept- "Factors Shaping U.S. College Student's Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" conducted by Olga Zatepilina- Monacell, Hongwei "Chris" Yang and Yingqi Wang.

1.3 Research purpose and significance

The objective of the thesis is to examine what is the reputation of China among Poles, how Polish citizens evaluate Chinese products, and if Country Of Origin has an impact on those evaluations. The author will also check what factors shapes opinion about China among Polish people. The research will provide useful information for companies targeting the Polish market and policymakers responsible for the image of China. Because of the lack of studies in this field, the proposed idea for the research has a unique value from the international marketing perspective.

Image of Chinese products is crucial since the beginning of the development of "One belt, one road" initiative. The closer business cooperation with many countries and enhancement of international trade requires a well-developed and consistent strategy for corporate brand and particular products. Perception of Chinese goods and brands in Poland might be very important not only because it is one of "One belt, one road" countries but also because of development of direct cargo train from Chengdu to Łódź which is going to be kind of the window to other European countries. Positive attitude towards Chinese products will be very beneficial not only for the companies but also the government as higher export might result in a better return on investment from the New Silk Road initiative.

Research is also an extension of currently available studies. Country image and export relation was examined in many markets. Unfortunately, so far there were very little studies focused specifically on the impact of the image of China on the attitude of the Polish consumer towards Chinese products and brands. Moreover, research will give detailed information about the reputation of China among Poles and factors shaping that reputation.

Last but not least results of the research can be used as the guideline for Chinese companies on how to build the proper strategy to enhance business in Poland and similar countries in Europe. It can help develop proper marketing strategies and find current problems with the perception of Chinese products and even China itself.

Moreover, results can also be used by policymakers as the perception of corporate brands is strongly related to Country Of Origin Effect which is connected with the image of the country itself. Results can show the way and possible directions into which further reforms and approaches should go.

Argumentation presented above shows the importance of the proposed topic and its application for both marketing as the field of science as well as real international business and government policies.

1.4 Research content

The next chapter of this thesis is the **Literature Review**. In this part, most relevant theories and models concerning the relation of country image and export will be presented. The author will describe in details the concept of nation branding together with explanation by Fan and important models: nation branding hexagon by Anholt and model of the country concept. Next part of this chapter will focus on the country of origin effect with several examples of previously done researches. Later literature concerning the image of China and challenges in building a strong nation brand for China will be presented. Last but not least in this chapter Author will describe results of one previously done research concerning the perception of Chinese products in Poland.

Following chapter focus on **Methodology** used for the purpose of this research. The author will describe the sampling method, respondents, detailed information about questionnaire design and procedure as well as statistic methods for analysis. Next, it will be presented how interviews which gave more insight understanding of the current situation were conducted.

Fourth chapter- **Results** will show data analysis and statistics together with information based on previously mentioned interviews. Later in chapter **Discussion**, Author will draw a conclusion and present obtained result in the broader context concerning implication for both science and business.

Last but not least in the **Conclusion** chapter, Author will summarize the work, underlying most essential aspects of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Consumption decisions made by buyers are done with limited information about the characteristics of goods. At the moment of purchase among the factors influencing the decision of the buyer the most important are previous experience and research about certain goods, word-of-mouth as well as the country of the origin of the product (Cagé and Rouzet, 2015). "Made in" label is one of the easiest to access information displayed on a product and it has a meaningful effect on the perception of the goods. For example, American customers are willing to pay significantly more for the products of the same category originating from Japan than for the ones produced in China (Schott, 2008). Image of the country plays a crucial role in entering foreign markets and can give individual companies a critical advantage over other firms coming from countries with a lower reputation. For the purpose of this research in order to understand the relation between nation image and export as well as finding the answer if country of origin has impact on Polish consumer and what is the perception of Chinese products among Poles, following theories and concepts have to be studied: Nation branding and its impact on export, relation between nation brand and corporate brand and last but not least country of origin effect. Although research is related to the export all presented terms and theories are marketing-oriented because most common of the available international trade models are based on the assumption that customer is perfectly informed and aware of specification of goods that are going to be purchased therefore these theories are not useful for explaining the research question (Cagé and Rouzet, 2015).

2.1 Nation branding

To understand how the image of the country can influence the perception of goods, first of all, it is necessary to get to know most important theories concerning building **reputation of the country**. One of the most important is nation branding. The concept of branding itself is defined as building brand awareness. The process is focused on creating or enhancing a positive brand image in the customer's minds. It is the management mechanism that answers the following questions: how to create, how to control, how to empower and how to evaluate brand (Raftowicz-Filipkiewicz, 2008)? The origin of nation branding is strictly connected with another concept started in 1990 's first by Philip Kotler and later by Simon Anholt which is Place branding. The idea has grown thanks to many scholars, governance and private companies resulting

in a new way of promoting the cities, regions and on a small scale even neighborhoods (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016). For the purpose of this research place branding on the national, country level will be studied. Nation brand as a specific concept is often related to images full of dangerous stereotypes affecting the perception of the country (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). Although those pictures may not be the truth they strongly influence products purchasing and travel destination decisions.

Nation branding encompasses all the mechanisms and actions that the country undertakes in order to strengthen the image of the country. It is a complex process that requires the simultaneous involvement of many entities. The most meaningful for shaping the project is the government. It is important that the authorities responsible for tourism, export or diplomacy act within one philosophy. The nation brand must be also created with full acceptance of all citizens and social organizations. Residents should create local initiatives and represent the country well abroad while traveling or doing business. Both government and society have to create a clear message presenting the values and benefits that travelers, investors or another country can gain while having a partnership with a particular nation. Branding allows integrating all key elements into one strong strategic formula (Anholt, 2006). Successful nation branding allows building a strong feeling of belonging within the nation and give clear message with ideas of a country to the outside world (Olins and Hildreth, 2012).

According W. Ollins to one of the most influential researcher in the field, who was responsible for the success of nation brand of Spain, the concept of nation branding is also a modern form of patriotism and manifestation of national identity(Olins, 2002). The branding process requires numerous use of national symbols and cultural elements that consolidate national identity among citizens. It is a new approach that allows promoting and cultivating the most critical national values in a positive way without discrimination of other cultures (Van Ham, 2001).

Many researchers keep working on nation brand proving its importance; however, there is still some controversy arising around the term. Increasing skepticism got to the point that one of the "fathers" of nation branding Simon Anholt himself started to doubt the concept saying that it is a myth. This situation encouraged Ying Fan from the Brunei University in London to analyze existing research in order to clarify the growing misconception about what nation branding is (Fan, 2010). He said that nation branding

exists and all the confusions have the origin in the broad and distinct way of interpreting what actually the concept is. To simplify and explain all complexities Fan summarize nation branding as it is presented on a chart below.
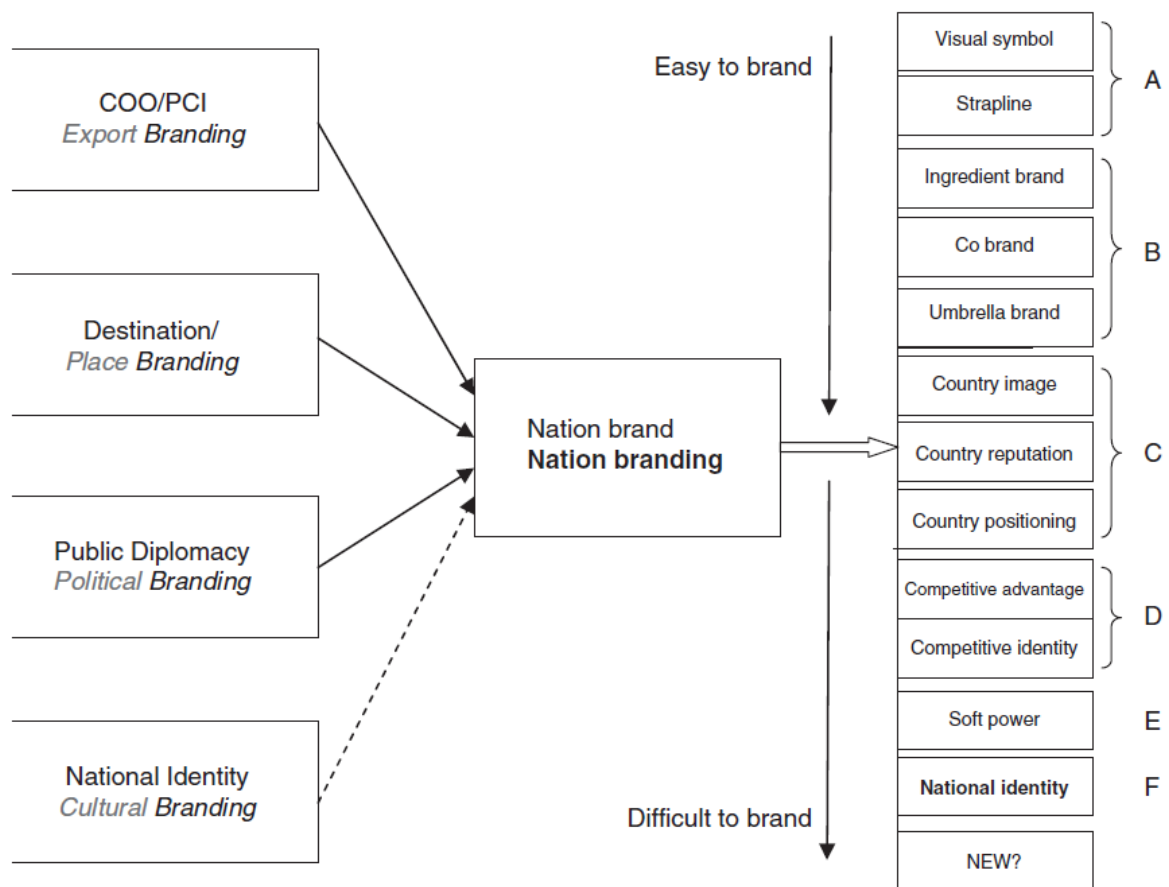
Figure 1 Nation Branding concept by Fan (Fan, 2010)

From the perspective of the research concerning the relationship between country image and export, the most important is level C which includes a country image, reputation, and its positioning. Fan explains that major definitions interchangeably use terminology image, reputation as well as a national identity, but in fact, these are all a bit different terms. The image is what is presented to others, reputation is the feedback about the country received from foreigners while identity refers to self-perception (Fan, 2010). Although all of the definitions are related to the same thing, they show the aspect from a different perspective. Ying Fan confirms that nation branding really exists and has a significant impact however he also proposes alternative term which is "nation image management" in order to more precisely define the purpose of nation branding (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016). Before also Wally Olins understood that for many researchers and scientist concept of nation brand is not really acceptable. He decided to

describe phenomena from the historical point of view and understand why even with strong pieces of evidence from the past there are still people against the idea (Olins, 2002).

Based on the presented concepts, theories and definitions concerning nation branding it can be pointed out that what matters for the export is the international image of the country. Simon Anholt figured out that brand itself- name, symbol, the message is based on the idea of products or services and is highly controlled by the company which has a constant impact on its creation. However, the brand image almost entirely depends on external factors. These are consumers who affect how the brand is perceived (Anholt, 2010). The analogous rule can be applied to the nation brand level. Internal activities like creating a promotional slogan of the place do not directly improve export or tourism according to studies. However, all the strategies and activities undertaken to change people's mind and enhance the image of the country creates the real value improving the competitiveness of the country (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016).

The importance of nation image and branding for country growth and development is underlined not only by scholars but also by newspaper journalists. For example, American internet magazine U.S.News in 2018 published an article "Why the U.S. Needs to Act-On its Brand" by marketing professor David Reibstein and Ph.D. student Suneal Bed. Their work entirely focused on the meaning of nation branding in terms of country prosperity. They realized that the United States are losing their position in terms of nation brand and it has a significant impact on the GDP of the country and current perception of the corporate brands(Reibstein and Bed, 2018).

2.2 Advantages of a strong nation brand

In practice, having a strong national brand brings enormous profits, both from an economic point of view as well as for example, soft power(Anholt, 2007). It improves competitiveness in international markets. Overall profits from having strong nation brand can be seen in many areas of the national economy. From building and the development of the nation brand country can have the following benefits(Hereźniak, 2011):

- The general increase of trust in the state as a place. It causes the inflow of many foreign investors and tourists who are beginning to **perceive better all goods**, services and culture of a given country,

- Stronger influence on the international arena, faster and more effective negotiations, achieving political and cultural goals,

- In the long term beginning of a **favorable country of origin effect.** It helps develop respect for domestic companies in the international markets. Origin is the background that affects the desire to buy goods and services, even for less-known brands,

- Increasing the visibility of the country, consolidating its values and attributes. Improving communication with the environment, increasing interest in language, literature, costumes, traditions, and everything that distinguishes a given nation from others.

- Attracting valuable human capital like talented people, scientists, students, and entrepreneurs who are more willing to choose a country with a good reputation for their activities.

- Balanced openness and resistance to adopting international trends. It helps to maintain national identity, culture, and culinary traditions while gaining the best from globalization. The country derives the best models from other, more developed countries while promoting and cultivating its own values.

- Building a sense of national pride and raising awareness of belonging to the country and the community. Citizens are becoming better, more credible ambassadors of their country abroad, and residents of other countries treat them with greater respect.

- Increasing reputation, which gives the country more time to react in the event of unforeseen harmful or offensive situations, such as cynical statements by politicians from other countries, false media reports or internal problems. It is a kind of barrier that allows you to maintain a good image until the controversial situations are resolved.

2.2.1 Soft power

Nation brand, perception of the country, its reputation as well as the position of products on the international stage is also related to the term "soft power". It was created by Professor Joseph Nye, American political scientist and member of administration staff in Bill Clinton's office. For the first time it appeared in the book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power" which was a gamechanger in the way of thinking about international relations and became crucial among scientists and specialists (Nye,

1990). Soft power is kind of opposite to the hard power like military strength. This concept means that country can achieve what it wants without any threats or payments (Nye, 2007). The reason is that through previously done actions and nation branding activities country have built so good position, that other nations simply want to build good relationship with them (Nye Jr, 2008). The country which has a very good soft power have an ability to achieve desired results without use of any pressure or offering benefits. Such a country has enough strength to accomplish challenges through persuasion and convincing others that it's goals are good for other nations as well (Nye, 2012). According to Nye soft power is based on three main pillars which are: culture, political values and the foreign policy.

In terms of soft power, current China- United States trade war can be a good example. Huawei which is leading company in case of 5G technology has a problem with contracts on development the system in many countries due to the fact that the US is able to persuade others, that blocking Huawei guarantee safety and minimize the risks of for example data leaking. Although technologies provided by Chinese companies can be as reliable as others, United States use its position to achieve goals. So far for example countries like Netherlands, Australia or Japan already have blocked Huawei from development of 5G network (BBC, 2019a).

2.3 Nation brand models

The development of the national brand model is a long-lasting and challenging process. Although each country should approach this action in an original, individual way, there are several examples of models which could be the inspiration for a particular nation. Among researchers who prepared such schemes are: W.Olins (Olins, 1999), Ph. Kotler (Kotler and Gertner, 2002), S. Rainisto and T. Moilanen (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Despite the fact, models were developed by four different authors, after the initial analysis of their work the conclusion is that all have standard features such as the main idea of the nation brand, uniform communication system, and relevant marketing strategy. Typical common elements within these models are diplomacy, tourism, export or investments. The different framework of nation branding was presented by Gilmore. His model is based on "The spirit of the people"(Gilmore, 2002). Although factors like economy, culture or environment are important, he believes that the crucial core of the nation brand is people, their purpose and values. Model focus on six dimensions:

students, retirees, visitors, opinion formers and media, investors, residents. Each of the target audiences has a mutual relation. For example student on exchange in a country can become future investor or visitor might start international trade with new partners met during the holiday. The idea is the interesting complement of other models and describes the nation brand from the different angle however it can be used for the purpose of this study only partially (role of peoples experience and media as factors improving nation brand) as it doesn't focus on the relation between the image of country and perception of its products.

2.3.1 Nation Brand Hexagon

Currently still one of the most essential models in the field of nation branding is Nation Brand Hexagon presented by an independent British advisor- Simon Anholt. His work is focused on developing the economic, political and cultural strategy of nations to improve their image on the international stage. The tool measures the power and quality of the country's brand in the six following dimensions: tourism, exports, governance, investment and immigration, people, culture and heritage (Anholt, 2005a). This section includes a brief explanation of the model.


Figure 2 Nation Brand Hexagon (http://nation-brands.gfk.com)

Tourism- in many cases, this is the only area through which countries promote themselves. This is because of the increasing demand for tourist services and relatively easy and effective touristic marketing. Success in tourism requires actions in the three main tasks: the creation of appropriate infrastructure, delivery of emotional message and development of touristic products quality. The most challenging is building of a unique offer which can distinguish one country from another and therefore create a competitive advantage.

Culture- the true essence of the country. National traditions are considered the most honest and trustworthy promotional message, as they have not been created specifically for marketing purposes. The pressing challenge faced by each country is the ability to present their cultural achievements in a modern and innovative way to interest not only older generations but also children who travel with family.

Governance- this dimension is divided into external and internal. The first concerns all international decisions and initiatives which are undertaken by the country. The nation should achieve its goals through partnerships and highly avoid all kind of threatens and hostile actions. The internal policy includes all activities in the country related for example to the president, the council of ministers, or the judiciary system.

Investment and immigration- the study says that over 50% of entrepreneurs had a positive non-business relationship with the country before investing there. J. Pantzails and C.A. Rodrigues claim that the level of investments is strictly connected to the nation brand (Pantzalis and Rodrigues, 1999). Simon Anholt notes that besides doing business investors are also consumers and that is why cultural and educational aspects are crucial while choosing a place for investment. The author also points out that through foreign investment he understands not the only the flow of capital but also immigration of well-educated, talented people who will bring skills and knowledge to the society.

People- among citizens we can distinguish celebrities and ordinary residents. Both groups have a very significant impact on the image of the nation. According to a survey conducted by Analytics and Insight (part of the MEC group), 55% of the 250,000 respondents admit that well-known people have a significant influence on the perception of the brand as well as the image of the country from which they come from. The other, no less critical group are ordinary inhabitants. Crucial is their behavior during travel as well as how hospitable they are in their homeland.

Export- a key element in this research. It is strongly related to the **effect** of the **country of origin** that is a positive or negative influence on the corporate brand image based on the place of production or the nationality of the company. More details concerning COO are going to be presented in the next parts of this section. According to Anholt, a well-developed nation brand can improve the image of the corporations, as well as a great product, can positively affect the perception of the country. At this stage, it is very important to mention that individual company is not able to guarantee a long-term change of national image, therefore it is worth to develop a specific appropriate system of cooperation with the private sector.

2.3.2 The Model of Country Concept

The models of Country Concept is a special kind which includes both "model of country reputation" as well as "model of the country image". The word concept is used to indicate that the overall idea behind the country is the result of purposely done nation branding activities and other non-intended factors. This is the model gathering together work of essential researchers in nation branding area as well as scholars working in the field of marketing, public relations, political science, mass communication, and public policy. Among them are Simon Anholt, the author of the previously explained model, and Guy Golan, whose work is focused on public diplomacy. Structure of the models is inspired by McCarthy and classic marketing theory (Hereźniak, 2018).
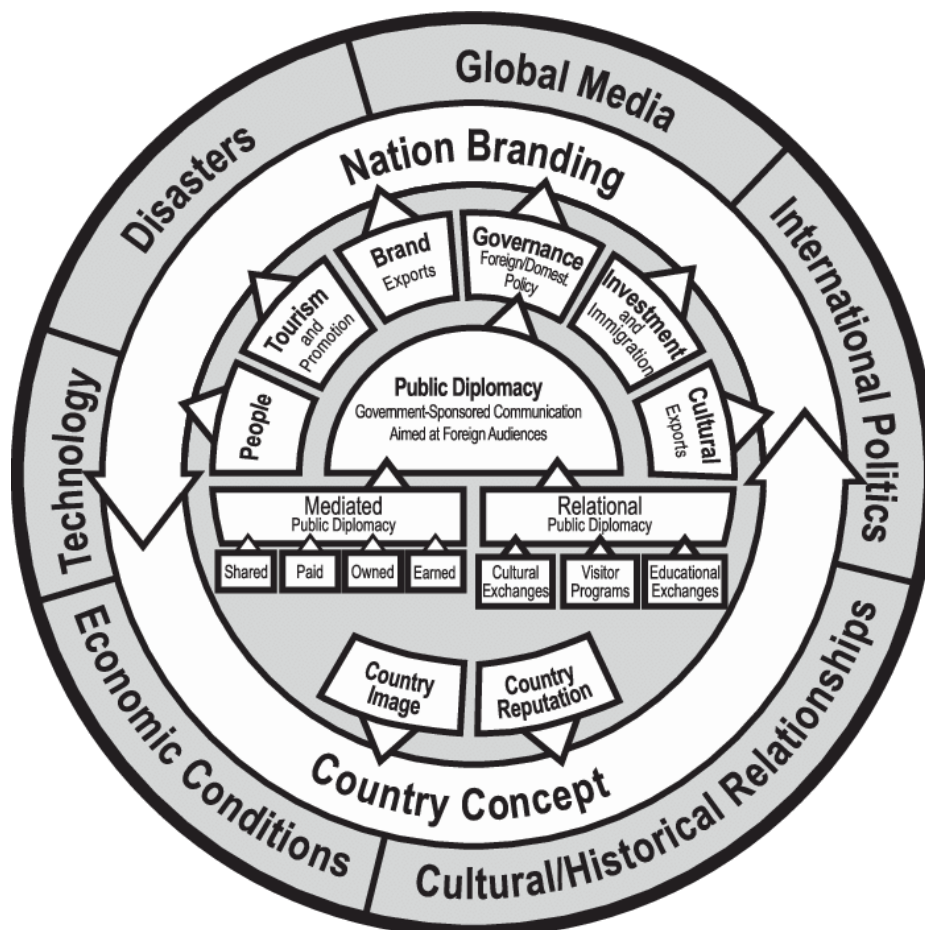
Figure 3 The Model of Country Concept (Hereźniak, 2018)

Model is illustrated by a circular structure with a few layers. In the middle, there is a micro model of public diplomacy. Next, there are six elements of nation branding model (nation brand hexagon) developed by Simon Anholt presented as components of nation branding. Arrows in the model between nation branding and country concept indicate mutual relation. Nation branding actions makes changes in the country concept and then received feedback allow to develop further nation branding strategy adjusted to the current situation (Hereźniak, 2018).

Model of Country Concept takes under consideration that the final way the country is perceived is the result not only of public diplomacy and branding activities but also the external environment. The country concept depends on six outside factors which are described below (Hereźniak, 2018).

Disasters- includes natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, and human-made like wars or terrorism. Both make branding activities very difficult but on the other hand,

during that hard time, the country can show how it helps citizens in need and how effective it is in handing hopeless situations.

Global media- nowadays, media is one of the most influential world power. What foreign journalists say can influence the concept of the country a lot. On the one hand, media can promote the nation, but on the other hand, information can be false and misleading. Different media systems and propaganda can be used in a way to weaken the position of the country and influence the certain image in the perception of media consumers.

International politics- international relations between countries have a significant impact on the country concept. Although people responsible for nation branding usually do not have much impact on politics, shaping the excellent image of the country requires the engagement of politicians.

Cultural/ historical relations- usually relation between countries is shaped by the long history. If countries used to be enemies in the past and had rather a hostile relation it might be difficult to build a good image within a short time. Similar culture, habits, and therefore mutual understanding can build a special bond between nations.

Economic conditions- strong economy, global business relations are the way to get countries closer. Rapid economic growth and better living standard can arouse admiration from other countries.

Technology- advanced technology and especially communication technology, including also restrictions on social media and internet access is an essential part of shaping opinion in other countries.

2.4 Reputation of a country and perception of products and brands

According to the previously done studies, theories, and models, strong reputation of a country is a key to achieve good results in export. This is why nation branding matters as it allows to create a particular image of the nation in the minds of potential customers. If the process of branding is well designed it improves the perception of the country and therefore encourage investors to establish business. What is the most important part in this research, well-done nation branding increase the nations reputation and helps corporate brands to create a relationship with the foreign customers as well as to sell the products easier with a better price (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016).

The validity of branding the nation and country in the field of export was proven among others by the research "The influence of country image structure on consumer evaluations of foreign products" which results directly indicates that country image has impact on the consumer behavior on the market (Laroche et al., 2005). Another research about the impact of the image of the country on purchasing decisions and opinions about products conducted by O'Shaughnessy John and O'Shaughnessy Nicholas Jackson (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2000) found out that consumers perceive the relation of the nation and the products in two main dimensions. The first one is called Reputational capital, and it represents the opinion of customers whether a particular nation is able or not to produce certain goods within specific standards and needs they expect. Second, the imagery-centric approach is the relation of positive opinions about the nation and therefore good perception of products of the country.

The relation between nation brand and products perception is strictly connected to Country of Origin Effect which is the phenomena of having a positive or negative opinion about certain goods based on the impression of the country from which products comes from (Hereźniak, 2011). Researchers even suggested some kind of merge of nation branding and COO effect by proposing a new framework called Country Of Origin Branding which is specifically focused on improving image of the country as the place of origin of certain products (Brodie and Benson-Rea, 2016). The Country of Origin Effect itself will be described in details in the further part of literature review.

2.4.1 Nation Brand and Corporate Brand

The most successful companies most often come from countries with a good image. The proof can be found in rankings such as the Country Brand Index (FutureBrand, 2015). Denmark is home of LEGO bricks and Sweden of a well-known and popular IKEA furniture store. Results of a study conducted by Yamen Koubaa shows that country of origin has a significant impact on brand perception however the effect differs for different brands and locations (Koubaa, 2008). Similar results on correlation between country image and perception of brands obtained White. According to his research this effect is mainly important for developing countries which are still working on enhancing their international position. Positive association of consumers with a company or brand can have a crucial impact on public diplomacy and reputation of

nation (White, 2012). Moreover nation brand influences particular aspects of a corporate brand. Country image has positive and significant impact on the brand distinctive, brand loyalty as well as brand awareness and association (Mohd Yasin et al., 2007). On the other hand described relation can also work in the other way. The good brands available in the international market also have a great impact on how the country of products origin is perceived and what is its reputation (Hereźniak, 2011). What is very important from the perspective of building nation brand is fact that well developed corporate brands strengthen country attributes which help to build an international position and in result makes it easier to develop next global brands, companies, and products. In the past companies from South Korea like KIA and Hyundai had to do a lot of work to overcome the bad image of the country and extend business. That led to the fact that South Korean corporations made a positive impact on the general perception of Korean products and purchasing intentions (Kang and Yang, 2010).

2.4.2 Country Of Origin Effect

Country Of Origin Effect is a psychological effect concerning how consumers evaluate certain products and make purchasing decisions based on the country of origin. Studies on that phenomena began in 1965 with the research of Robert D. Schooler (Schooler, 1965). He found out that people from Guatemala evaluate identical products differently only if items have different countries of origin displayed on the label (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016). Schooler continued the research and later discovered similar rule in consumers behavior of American citizens.

Literature concerning Country Of Origin emphasizes the importance and power of the effect on consumers evaluation of products and the success of goods in foreign markets(Loo and Davies, 2006). Studies show that the country of origin is as an indicator of quality and product performance. Erickson, Johansson, and Chao in their research found the so-called "halo effect" (Erickson et al., 1984). It means that the image of the country influences the beliefs about the tangible attributes of the product, and it has an impact on how overall the product is perceived (Kleppe et al., 2002). However, studies also show that every nation has a different attitude towards products from a particular place and that some nationalities are more influenced by Country of Origin Effect than others. It means that products from countries with lousy reputation

still can gain a big part of the market when customers are less sensitive to the information concerning the country of origin (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016).

Most of the researchers agree that the country of origin has an important role in shaping the attitude towards brands(Hereźniak, 2011). Han and Terpstra found out that consumers who do not know the product very well make their purchasing decision based on country of origin or brand name but COO has a more significant impact on the final decision(Han and Terpstra, 1988). Consumers also evaluate and perceive unknown brands better if those origins from countries with a very good reputation(Wall et al., 1991). Another study shows that the reputation of the country has a significant impact on quality perception for luxury goods (Han, 2010). Study compared attitude towards bags originated from France and China.

Image of the country might not positively influence products from all the sectors. If we continue with previously mentioned France, good image of that country can positively influence the market of luxury bags or wines but might not necessarily help with technology products, which are better from other countries (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2001).

Although in general researchers underline the importance of the effect, there are also some exceptions. Samiee, S., Shimp, T. and Sharma, S. in their research found that accuracy of brand origin recognition is rather low therefore information about the country of origin is usually not important for consumers while making purchasing decisions (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016).

Last but not least it is worth to mention a little bit different research conducted by Candace L. White, who also examined country image and product perception relation but from another perspective. Instead of checking the COO Effect impact on products, he measured how corporate brands influence the perception of the country (White, 2012). Research showed that strong corporate brands and positive attitude towards them have a positive impact on the perception of the small and undiscovered countries once the customer gets to know where the goods come from.

Country of Origin Effect is an older concept that nation branding however since the second one was introduced, countries can learn not only how the image influences the perception of goods but also how to improve reputation through proper marketing actions in order to achieve positive Country of Origin Effect (Hereźniak, 2011). Since that time COO is always mentioned in the literature concerning nation branding as an

explanation on how countries and corporate brands can have better export results through improving the nation image.

2.5 Factors shaping reputation of the country

Improving reputation is strongly related to all nation branding activities already described in the previous part of literature review. However among factors shaping reputation of a country there are ones which are easier and more difficult to control. Below, three factors which play the crucial role in this research are presented.

2.5.1 Image of the country and impact of media

The media have and important impact on the nation branding. Press, television and internet influences consumers perception of places and therefore their reputation and image. According to the research conducted by Boisen, Terlouw and Van Gorp media has a crucial role in shaping the image of the places including countries (Boisen et al., 2011). Images of countries are the result of communication through many channels from direct experience and word-of-mouth to different types of media but the mass media is the one by which information is spread the most effectively (Anholt, 2016).

Media representations are especially important for the distant places (Dinnie, 2015). For certain people it is very difficult to visit far destinations and that's why they depend on media coverage to learn about the outside world (Kotler and Gertner, 2011). This is also the reason why media is often the first source of stereotypes and false images of a places located far away from the consumers of information (Gold, 1994). News presented in media can also turn some particular locations into places of interest and concern for people living even thousands of kilometers away (Cottle, 2009). However not every country has a possibility to become popular through media as reporters have a tendency to focus only on particular regions and exclude other (Lahav and Avraham, 2008).

According to Avraham and Ketter different places also receive different amount of time as well as topics on which media like to focus (Avraham and Ketter, 2013). Researchers proposed following possibilities of media coverage of particular places:

- Much negative coverage,
- Not covered by media except negative information concerning crime, social problems or natural disasters,

- Much positive coverage including cultural events, tourism, development and investments,
- Ignored by media but once covered then presented in positive way.

Although most of the theories present how media influences the reputation of corporate brands, as it was explained before those concepts can be applied also to the brands on nation level. Some of the principles which clarify the relation between media and reputation are presented below (Carroll and McCombs, 2003):

- More coverage means greater public awareness,
- Aspects presented by media becomes aspects that consumers use to define the brand,
- The context of news coverage, either its positive or its negative is reflected in the perception of consumers about the aspects of the brand.

Last but not least researchers pointed out that controlling reputation through media is extremely difficult as the image presented in media is long-lasting and complex process. Although it might be very challenging countries should try to monitor the way media present in order to limit the amount of fake stereotypes presented (Murphy, 2010).

2.5.2 Image of the country and role of knowledge

Previous studies also underline importance of knowledge in shaping the perception of foreign countries. Increased knowledge about foreign nation should lead to the more positive attitude towards it (Perry, 1990). In previously done studies there was a significant difference in perception of a country while participants knew the country and while not. Knowledge of a place converted to the better image of the location in the mind of interviewees (White, 2012).

Image of the country itself can be seen as the result of certain knowledge and favorable or not favorable believes consumers have towards particular nation (Kleppe et al., 2002). Therefore countries with no image or unclear image should start marketing activities including nation branding in order to establish at least some knowledge among people within targeted market. People with more knowledge about the country will have more relevant information to construct certain image which can results for example in confidence while making purchasing decisions (Laroche et al., 2005).

Knowledge and familiarity with a place by enhancing image of the country can also increase probability of visiting a country as a tourist destination, increase satisfaction and likelihood of revisiting (Zhang et al., 2018). Another research which defined familiarity itself as the respondents knowledge of a country also point out positive relation between the knowledge and country image (Chen et al., 2017).

2.5.3 Image of the country and role of experience

Last but not least experience as the factor influencing image of a country will be presented. Country image can be developed as a result on different kind of experience. It can be direct travelling, word of mouth or even using products which origin from certain destination (Martin and Eroglu, 1993). Experience of people was also the main factor in the nation branding model presented by Gilmore and described in the previous part of literature review. (Gilmore, 2002)

The most popular and important is direct experience through travelling to the foreign country (De Nisco et al., 2015). If travel to another country provides good tourism experience, consumers are willing to recommend certain destination to others as well as their overall image of a country enhance and even attitude toward products become more positive (Hallberg, 2005). With a use of a good strategy, country which is promoting itself as a tourist destination can achieve great results in creating a good image among the tourists. Research conducted by Beerli and Martin discovered that travel experience has a positive impact on both cognitive and affective perception of a destination (Beerli and Martin, 2004).

In many cases travels are not possible option to experience foreign country. Therefore indirect experience also can play important role in shaping image of a certain destination. One of the example is opinion of family and friends (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). In the study conducted by D' Astous, A. and Boujbel L. it was found that family and friends are one of the main source of inferences about country characteristics (d'Astous and Boujbel, 2007).

Hosting important international sports event is also a chance to improve reputation of a country no matter if supporters visit the country or simply experience it by following competition in media. Studies conducted in South Korea shows that 2002 FIFA World Cup changed the image of a country in relatively short time (Kim and Morrsion, 2005).

Big sports events can be used as a tool to demonstrate major changes happening in the country and enhance tourist image (Preuss and Alfs, 2011).

2.6 Managing the nation brand of China

Branding China is currently a huge challenge. It has excellent potential to become a super brand but first, there has to be a good strategy implemented which will help overcome the most important objections like achieving a premium price for products, create a good image of the country or how the nation brand will promote the country and export products (Loo and Davies, 2006). John M. T. Balmer and Weifeng Cheng say that although China is on the way to become the strongest economy, the soft power of the country is still relatively weak and foreigners have a problem with both understanding China as a country and understand the way Chinese people think (Balmer and Chen, 2017). Chinese reputation in the world can also be seen in the international rankings concerning the image of the nations. One of the best results in term of reputation China obtained in the ranking created under the supervision of Simon Anholt. According to Country Brand Index 2014-15 which examined the general perception of the country among people from different nations, China is ranked at 28th position out of 75 countries which took part in the examination (FutureBrand, 2015). Another indicator which entirely focuses on the reputation of China is called "China Power Project" and it is developed by Center For Strategic& International Studies. This work shows the percentage of favorable views of China from different countries. In the case of Poland, country of which market is used to conduct the research, at the current moment the percentage of favorable views is 42% (Center_for_Strategic&International_Studies, 2017). Last and most recent ranking which considered China is Country RepTrak® ranking from 2018, which also examines the reputation of the countries among foreigners. This one ranked China in 45th place among 55 nations taking part in the study (Reputation_Insitute, 2018). Besides rankings recent studies underline that overall image of China is rather negative especially in terms of environmental quality and politics (Zhang et al., 2018) and that this image haven't changed since other studies conducted in 2008.

The government of China understands the current situation and therefore the importance of soft power and public diplomacy. The country uses similar tools as other nations including advertisements in media and international cooperation for example

via academic exchanges as well as unique ways like promoting culture and language through Confucius Institutes or even providing pandas to zoos all around the world. Unfortunately, some of those actions as mistakenly taken by the west as tools of propaganda (Hartig, 2016). Recently the fundamental movement is the development of "One Belt, One Road" initiative which has not only economic impact but also can bring China and western countries from Europe closer. The last visit of President Xi Jinping in Italy in March 2019 resulted in mutual agreements and decision of joining the new Silk Road project. Mass media in Europe besides explanation of the initiative and description of benefits pointed out also threats which can occur from the cooperation with China (BBC, 2019b).

2.6.1 Impact of media on image of China

Impact of media is a very important factor already mentioned in literature review and the previously described model of Country Concept which underlines the role of international journals and news in shaping reputation of a particular country abroad (Hereźniak, 2018). For some of the countries often presence in media might be an advantage while for others rather disadvantage. Since China engaged in the global market the image that China has in the western mass media is sometimes misleading and confusing (Loo and Davies, 2006). Its economic growth and development are presented as amazing and impressive however controversial topics like social inequalities, pollution, and intellectual property rights violence are factors which distract the audience. The negative country image is strengthen by the frequent negative news about China (Zhang et al., 2018). In 2015 China and Russia started the cooperation to reduce the misleading information about both countries in western media. That means that the Chinese government is aware of the importance of mass media influence on the perception of China and the creation of nation image (Hartig, 2016). Although some studies suggest that being often exposed to the information about China negatively influence reputation of the country (Hereźniak, 2018) others suggest that there are some exceptions.

2.6.2 Impact of knowledge on image of China

According to the nation branding research, there are two main ways to gain knowledge about the country. The most direct one is personal experience through the visit, but in many cases more popular is learning through media (Foroudi, 2016). Studies say that

better knowledge of a nation leads to better perception of it as the increase of level of interest and willingness to learn more (Hereźniak, 2018). Sharing the knowledge of country culture, traditions, and values, as well as arousing interest in language, are one of the tools within nation branding which help to build a better reputation (Anholt, 2007). Research conducted on travelers from Taiwan to mainland China directly shows that the higher level of knowledge and familiarity with mainland China the more positive perception of China as a tourist destination and place quality (Chen et al., 2017). However because China is very far destination for many citizens of Europe, media including internet plays crucial role in providing information and increasing knowledge about the country (Choi et al., 2007). Research conducted by Zhang, J., Wu, B., Morrison, A. M., Tseng, C., & Chen, Y. indicates that majority of respondents from western countries have little knowledge and familiarity with China and in their minds image of China is rather negative (Zhang et al., 2018).

2.6.3 Impact of experience on image of China

Direct experience is also a crucial part of enhancing the reputation of country. China also has to give an opportunity to experience its beauty and culture. Studies say that travels have an important impact on shaping the visitor's opinions on a country they went to. A positive experience during holiday leads to having a positive overall idea about a particular nation (Wang et al., 2008). Each year China has more and more foreign visitors and due to scholarships- international students, who can be good ambassadors of Chinese culture in their home countries. Importance of visiting China in shaping the image of the country was underlined in the research about travel blogs. It turned out that bloggers and international tourists have a positive image of China after the visit and they share their good experience with online readers (Tseng et al., 2015). Although nation branding activities should not be limited to promotion of the tourism, encouraging people to visit China might be one of the easiest and at the same time effective ways to increase reputation (Anholt, 2005b). Currently, still, most of the citizens of western countries never had a possibility to travel to China. Therefore, their opinions are mostly shaped by mass media (Wang and Shoemaker, 2011). Although it is proved that experience through big sports events which are daily reported on TV, in newspapers, and on the internet have definitely positive impact on the image of the host country (Kim et al., 2014) sometimes media still managed to criticize organizers in many aspects (Preuss and Alfs, 2011). This is what happened in case of China as a host

of 2008 Olympic Games (Berkowitz et al., 2007) and may happen again during 2020 Winter Olympic Games.

2.6.4 Perception of Chinese products

Relevant literature underlines the most critical challenges for China in building a nation brand and improving the perception of Chinese products. First of all, the country has to persuade the world about the quality of the provided goods so it can overcome low prices image and distribute premium goods to the global market. China also has to answer a question which international market is the most important. A study conducted by Jaffe and Nebenzahl (Nebenzahl, 2001) reveals that the perception of particular goods depends not only on the country of origin but also the market on which these goods are sold. People from Asia believes that the highest quality products come from Japan while Europeans prefer to choose German goods.

Perception of quality seems to be the most important issue with Chinese products. The study from Brazil shows that consumers are not even seeking good quality while buying home appliances from China (Giraldi et al., 2011). Although China managed to get to many international markets mostly because of very competitive prices, Chinese products are still considered as those of low quality even in less developed countries as for example Pakistan (Khan and Ahmed, 2016). This is also due to the fact that unfortunately the label "Made in China" is still associated with faked products. Ar and Kara mentioned that this label is full of negative stories often presented by media covering scandals and risk connected with using Chinese products (Akdeniz Ar and Kara, 2014). To overcome this problem the government started to promote the spirit of "creative quality" and punish manufacturer of fake products for reducing and in long term totally eliminating this problem. As a nation branding action, it is even considered to replace the label "Made in China" with the label "Created in China (Yang, 2015). Ying Fan also underlined another problem with perception of Chinese products. China became very successful as a manufacturer for many western companies, but the challenge is to establish well recognized, good quality global brands (Fan, 2006). Similar conclusions come from the research conducted on the Canadian market. Participants who took part in the study also mentioned more unsatisfactory performance and quality as the issue however they did not mind China as a country of assembling or

manufacture of parts for other companies from highly developed countries (Ahmed and d'Astous, 2001).

2.6.5 Summary of nation branding of China

All presented examples of challenges and examples of current actions undertaken by Chinese government leads to three main points which still requires further development. The first one is managing and building a consistent brand strategy in order to achieve a better result in all of the aspects of the nation brand, then finding new, good ways of promotion of the country and last but not least answering the question of what brand China really means both to the natives and foreigners. These are the crucial aspects from the perspective of image of country for China at the current stage. Even continuation of economic growth but with bad image can have a negative impact on future development (Hartig, 2016).

2.7 Perception of Chinese Products in Poland

There were not many studies done about the perception of Chinese products and China itself in Poland. Dynamic changes in the Chinese economy and the development of Chinese companies also make previous studies already not accurate. One of the not many researches concerning Chinese goods conducted in Poland in 2014 says that although Poles more and more often consciously buy products with "Made in China" label it is mostly because of low price and finally they are not always satisfied with their decision(Kauf and Tłuczak, 2015). When this research was conducted there was still a lack of leading Chinese brand in the perception of Polish customers which could indicate the most important values of Chinese products. According to the study, before 2014 products from China were most popular among Polish students and people with the lowest income per month (1835.17 RMB). 31% of examined people admitted that they often buy Chinese products. However, 72% of them said that the main reason for choosing those products is low price and more than 30% think Chinese products are of low quality which is consistent with studies on other markets. Among the most popular Chinese products in Poland are decor, electronics, and toys. In 2014 70% of people who took part in the research admitted that they do not trust products with "Made in China" label, but at the same time 54% declared that Chinese products are becoming innovative as China is more and more technology-oriented.

2.8 Conclusion

Image of the country and perception of goods have a strong relation. Country of origin effect proofs that exactly the same products can be perceived differently only if they come from different places in the world. To gain an advantage over other countries and to promote goods abroad countries have to improve image through complex nation branding processes. However, preparing the proper strategy is not easy especially that researchers themselves even argue how to approach nation branding. According to the literature managing the nation brand of China is a challenging issue. People still lack knowledge about China and do not understand the country and citizens. Moreover, western media are not always in favor of China and sometimes creates a somehow misleading picture of the country. Fortunately, the Chinese government is aware of the issue and importance of having experience with a country to fully understand it, therefore, encourage foreigners to visit as well as open institutes of Confucius to share culture with an international audience. At the moment there is little literature concerning the perception of Chinese goods in Poland and if such articles exist they are outdated. According to the presented theories and issues firstly, Author will focus on the impact of country of origin on the perception of Chinese goods as well as what influence the reputation of China among Polish consumers and what is the relation between this reputation and attitude towards Chinese products and brands.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The main part of the research was conducted using questionnaire method. Country Of Origin effect was checked with the use of between-subjects experiment. The relation between the reputation of China and perception of Chinese products and brands was measured with use of questionnaire and Likert scale questions.

According to previously done researches branding China is a very big challenge. There are still many stereotypes about the country and global media not always present China in a favorable way. Because researchers working in the area of nation branding and country of origin effect have proven that there is a relation between perception of the country and perception of goods from that country it is extremely important for China to improve the image on a global stage through proper communication with the world. With development and improvement of roads, railway and shipment for example because of One Belt One Road Initiative reaching new markets is getting even easier(Kantrar_Millward_Brown, 2019). To fully use the growth potential and fulfill the aspiration of being a global leader, Chinese brands need the support of the government in order to prepare a strategy which simultaneously will improve the perception of products and China itself. Due to the fact that each market is different, shaped by the economic and social factors, China can find different obstacles on a way to build strong nation brand and promote products and corporate brands in different countries.

The aim of this master thesis research is to answer the question: How the image of China impact the attitude of the Polish consumer towards Chinese products and brands. Moreover the thesis aims to answer sub-research question of what factors are shaping image of China among Poles. There was no such complex research done concerning both the reputation of China and its products and brands in Poland, therefore, results might be very interesting and useful.

This chapter will present the methodology used for research and justification of the steps undertaken in order to find the answer for the research question. Questionnaire research is divided into two parts. Aim of the first part of the research is to examine if the evaluation of Chinese products is affected by Country Of Origin Effect among Polish customers. The second part will be focused on the examination of Chinese

reputation and perception of Chinese products and most popular Chinese brands in Poland which are: Lenovo, Huawei, and Xiaomi.

Additionally in order to deeply understand the current image of China in Poland and how does it influence perception of goods, out of 342 participants of questionnaire 10 of them took part in face to face or videocall interviews.

At the beginning of this chapter, there will be characteristics of participants, followed by the experimental section, together with the description of the procedure and statistical method. Last but not least the same steps will be presented for the second part of the research concerning the reputation of China and the perception of Chinese products and brands.

3.1 Participants

There were 342 participants taking part in the research (N=342). The research sample was selected using a non-random method. Among participants 53 % were male and 47 % were female (N male=181, N female=161).

79.2 % of participants were aged from 18 to 26 years old, 12.3 % were aged from 27 to 35 years old, 3.2 % were between 36 and 42 years old and last but not least 5.3 % of the participants were over 42. There were no participants taking part in the research who were underaged in Poland which is below 18 years old. Adults were chosen on purpose because underaged often do not make purchasing decisions by themselves, therefore, their opinions about the product could be not relevant.

Most of the people who took part in the research were from cities above 500 thousand citizens (56.1 %). 23.1 % of the respondents were from cities between 151 thousand and 500 thousand citizens. According to the typology of cities in Poland, both groups were from big cities. 6.1 % of the participants were from towns between 51 thousand and 151 thousand citizens and 8.2 % from towns below 50 thousand citizens. 6.4 % of participants taking part in the research were from the village.

Majority because 75.4 % of respondents have a higher education degree. 19.6 % have a secondary education degree and 4.7 % have a technical secondary education degree. 0.3 % of the respondents have a National Vocational Qualification.

Exactly half of the research participants were people who are working. 22.2 % were students and 27.8 % people who combine studies and work.

Respondents were also asked for monthly net income per capita in their household. 68.1 % of participants live in a household with net income per capita higher than 2000 PLN (3610 RMB). 7 % lives in a household with net income per capita between 1501 PLN and 2000 PLN (2708 RMB and 3610 RMB). 6.7 % of respondents have net income per capita between 1001 PLN and 1500 PLN (1806 RMB and 2706 RMB) in their household. For 1.8 % of the respondents, it is between 500 PLN and 1000 PLN (902 RMB and 1804 RMB) and for 1.5 % it is lower than 500 PLN (902 RMB). The rest of the respondents which is 14.9 % didn't want to share information about monthly net income per capita in their household.

3.2 Country of Origin- experimental part

The hypothesis **H1** is: Country of Origin has impact on evaluation on the evaluation of products by Polish consumers. Customers often are not able to judge the true characteristic of the product before purchase so the country image is used as the indicator of evaluation (Han, 1989). In general, according to many researches positive perception of the country leads to a favorable attitude towards products from this country (e.g., Schooler, 1965, Erickson et al., 1984, Kleppe et al., 2002, Loo and Davies, 2006, Hereźniak, 2011, White, 2012, Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016), . However, studies say that Country Of Origin Effect is not universal. The effect may vary in different countries due to cultural differences and factors (Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran, 2000). This is also why the proposed research has a unique character as there were very little studies done concerning the attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese products. Lack of reliable secondary data on that matter is the reason why this quantitative research had to be done with primary data collected through the online survey conducted in the Polish language.

3.2.1 Data collection process for hypothesis H1

In this between-subjects experiment, participants received a link to the online questionnaire and had to answer questions concerning quality, design, and price of the product with covered labels of the name of the company and any additional information. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of two versions of the questionnaire. Due to limited access to Polish consumers, while writing a thesis in China, the questionnaire

had to be distributed using social media like Facebook and messenger communication app. As China is in the process of transformation from cheap manufacturer to the high-quality products superpower and leader of technology products, the smartphone was chosen as the product to evaluate. It is also one of the technology products which nowadays is used by many people in Poland- 64 % in 2017, therefore, most of the people have some knowledge about smartphones and have an opinion about certain brands (mobirank, 2018). Although recently in the global trends demand from smartphones is slowing, Chinese brands are on a way to get more and more global market share, therefore it is an important product from the perspective of export (Kantrar_Millward_Brown, 2019).

At the beginning of the experiment both groups had to evaluate price, design and quality of the smartphone only based on the presented picture and features: processor, RAM, operation system, screen, main camera, front camera, memory, memory card, available colors, battery and others like USB type and fingerprints scanner. Picture and mentioned features in Polish are presented below. To get to know the expected price of the product participants had to answer a multiple-choice question, by choosing one option out of 6 possible which were:

- 500 – 1000 PLN
- 1001 – 1500 PLN
- 1501 – 2000 PLN
- 2001 – 2500 PLN
- 2501 – 3000 PLN
- More than 3000 PLN

For evaluation of the quality and design participants had to answer a multiple-choice question, by choosing one option out of 5 possible which were:

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

Procesor	Kirin 980
RAM	8 GB
System Operacyjny	EMUI 9.1 oparty na Android Pie
Ekran	6.1 cala Full HD OLED Display
Aparat Główny	40 MP + 20 MP z 10x Hybrid Zoom
Aparat Przedni	32 MP
Pamięć Wewnętrzna	128 GB
Karta pamięci	NM Card
Inne	USB typ C, NFC, Skaner linii papilarnych wbudowany w wyświetlacz, IP68 odporność na kurz i wodę
Kolor	Czarny, Niebieski, Czerwony
Bateria	3,650 mAh, szybkie ładowanie

Figure 4 Phone description for the experimental part

Later in the next page of the questionnaire, half of the respondents were informed that product originates from Japan- 1st place in Country Brand Index (therefore the image of the country is very well perceived) and half were informed that product originates from China. Participants again had to evaluate what is the price, quality, and design of the product having additional information which is country of origin. Results of the experiment are used to help to understand if the country of origin has an impact on goods evaluation. The independent variable in the experiment is the country of origin and depending variables are price, quality, and design. First, it will be analyzed how additional information which is country of an origin impact evaluation of product and

then how this evaluation differs between-group informed that product origin form China and Japan. Similar research was conducted by Cathy Yi Chen, Pragya Mathu, and Durairaj Maheswaran. In their work Country of origin, the effect was examined on Baruch College students, who had to evaluate the quality of the digital camera. Students who were informed that camera origin from Japan perceived quality higher than those who were informed that camera origin from China (Chen et al., 2014).

3.2.2 Data analysis tools for hypothesis H1

Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used in order to analyze data. It is one of the most popular alternatives for the Student's t-test. It belongs to nonparametric test groups. This test is used when we want to compare two dependent groups, with two variables.

Wilcoxon test is used when the assumptions for Student's t-test for dependent tests are broken. The condition for the Wilcoxon test is the ability to rank differences between the first and the second variable (measurement). On the ordinal scale, we can calculate the difference in the level of two variables, which is why this test can be used for variables calculated on this scale. In the case of quantitative scales, this test is used if the distributions of these variables are not close to the normal distribution.

3.3 The reputation of China and Chinese products part

The second part of the research is focused on the examination of the perception of Chinese products and most popular Chinese brands in Poland which are: Lenovo, Huawei, and Xiaomi. The quantitative research study was conducted using the questionnaire method prepared in Polish for respondents in Poland and distributed using the most popular social media in Poland. The whole idea of this part of the research is based on the Model of Country Concept. Aim of the research is to examine the hypothesis derived by the previously conducted literature review. Structure of this part of research was inspired based on the paper "Factors Shaping U.S. College Student's Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" conducted by Olga Zatepilina-Monacell, Hongwei "Chris" Yang and Yingqi Wang (Hereźniak, 2018) and previously mentioned model, modified for the purpose of this thesis. To answer research question following hypothesis were examined:

- **H2: The exposure to media coverage of China negatively influence China's reputation** (e.g., Gold, 1994, Loo and Davies, 2006, Carroll and McCombs,

2003, Berkowitz et al., 2007, Avraham and Ketter, 2013, Boisen et al., 2011, Anholt, 2016, Dinnie, 2015, Kotler and Gertner, 2011, Zhang et al., 2018, Hartig, 2016, Hereźniak, 2018),

- **H3: Knowledge of China positively influences China's reputation** (e.g., Perry, 1990, White, 2012, Kleppe et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2005, Zhang et al., 2018, Chen et al., 2017, Foroudi, 2016, Hereźniak, 2018, Anholt, 2007, Choi et al., 2007),

- **H4: Experience of China positively influences China's reputation** (e.g., Martin and Eroglu, 1993, De Nisco et al., 2015, Hallberg, 2005, Beerli and Martin, 2004, Echtner and Ritchie, 1991, d'Astous and Boujbel, 2007, Kim and Morrsion, 2005, Preuss and Alfs, 2011, Wang et al., 2008, Tseng et al., 2015, Anholt, 2005b, Wang and Shoemaker, 2011),

- **H5: China's reputation positively predicts attitudes of Polish consumers towards Chinese products** (e.g., Anholt, 2007, Hereźniak, 2011, Anholt, 2005b, Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2016, Laroche et al., 2005, O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2000, Brodie and Benson-Rea, 2016, Erickson et al., 1984, Han and Terpstra, 1988 , Han, 2010, Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2001, Giraldi et al., 2011, Khan and Ahmed, 2016, Akdeniz Ar and Kara, 2014),

- **H6: China's reputation positively predicts attitudes of Polish consumers towards Chinese brands** (e.g., FutureBrand, 2015, Koubaa, 2008, White, 2012, Mohd Yasin et al., 2007, Hereźniak, 2011, Wall et al., 1991, Fan, 2006),

Additionally it was also checked whether general perception of good has an influence on particular brands which wasn't previously concern of other researchers:

- **H7: Attitude towards Chinese products positively predicts attitude towards Chinese brands**.
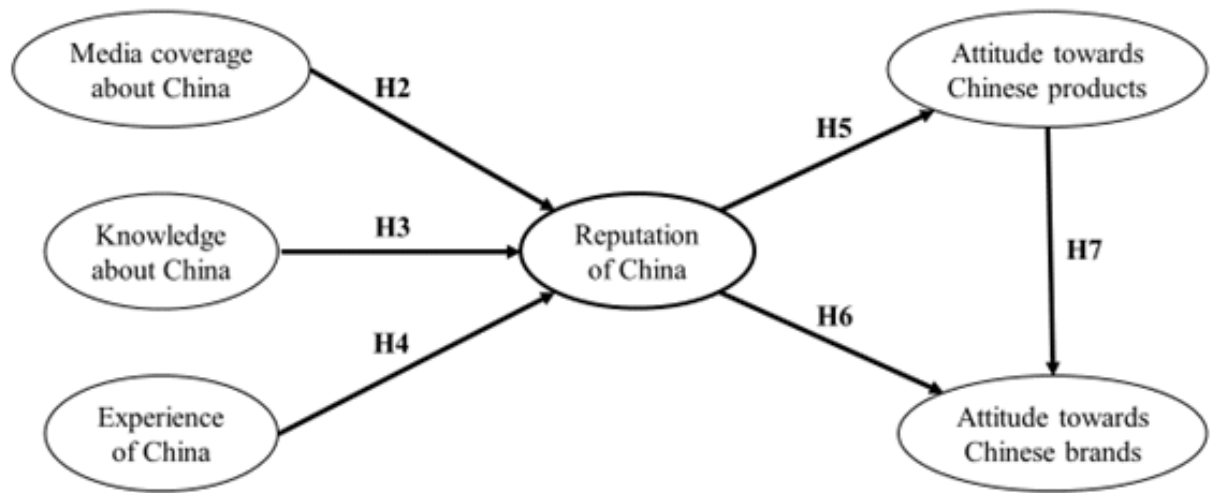
Figure 5 Research framework

3.3.1 Data collection for hypothesis H2-H7

As in the previous part data was collected through the questionnaire distributed online through social media in Poland. Data collection took place during April and May 2019.

For the purpose of this thesis reputation was defined as "set of opinions and images about a particular country that international publics form by being exposed to its identity and behavior through: (1) direct and indirect experience, (2) state and non-state agents, public diplomacy, national branding, and politics, (3) traditional and social media" (Hereźniak, 2018) which is also the way reputation was defined in the previously mentioned research. The reputation of China in this thesis research was measured using questions and scale from Reputation Institute "The world's most reputable countries", Country RepTrak® report. These were Likert scale questions with 7 possible options: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Rather Disagree, Neutral, Rather Agree, Agree, Strongly agree.

Due to the fact that most of the Polish citizens never had an opportunity to directly experience China, their knowledge is usually shaped by external factors like media (Hereźniak, 2018). In this research, Author will also checked what is a direct impact of media including TV, press, websites and social media on the reputation of China, as well as how better knowledge and more experience influence the perception and therefore the reputation of the country. Questions about media coverage about China were asked using Likert scale with 5 possible options: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often,

Very often, where Never means that respondent wasn't exposed to the information in particular media or doesn't use particular media. Questions about knowledge about China were asked using a Likert scale with 5 possible options: No, Probably not, I don't know, Rather yes, Yes. Last but not least questions about experience with China were asked using a Likert scale with the following 5 options: Never, Little, Some, Significantly, A lot.

Attitude towards Chinese products was examined using method adopted from research "Saudi consumers' attitudes towards European, US and Japanese products and marketing practices" by Shahid N. Bhuian published in European Journal of Marketing(Bhuian, 1997). Questions from the original research were slightly modified in order to be more suitable for this thesis. Most of the questions concern quality, design, products life span and technological advancement of the Chinese goods. Questions were asked using Likert scale with 7 possible options: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Rather Disagree, Neutral, Rather Agree, Agree, Strongly agree.

Last but not least, part of the questionnaire checking the attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese brands was inspired by Top 50 CHINESE Global Brand Builders 2019 in association with Google. It is a business report concerning Chinese brands, the global image of China and measuring the perception of Chinese products on the global market. Research methodology in the report is designed by Kantar and exactly the same one was applied to measure the attitude of Polish consumers towards Huawei, Xiaomi and Lenovo in this thesis research. For each brand firstly respondents were asked if they know the brand and if yes further questions were asked using Likert scale with 7 possible options: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Rather Disagree, Neutral, Rather Agree, Agree, Strongly agree.

3.3.2 Data analysis tools for hypothesis H2-H7

This part of research ask one of the most frequently asked questions which are if there is existence of a relationship between variables?

To answer that question, use statistical tests on the relationship between variables is necessary. It is important that there are many such tests, and use of them depending on the types of analyzed variables and the research situation.

Based on the conducted correlation tests information about the strength of the relationship and its significance is obtained. The value of the coefficient is in the range [-1; 1]. The result 0 means the total lack of dependence between the variables studied. A result below zero indicates a negative correlation which means that an increase in the value of one feature is associated with a decrease in the other. A result above zero indicates a positive correlation. An increase in the value of one feature is associated with an increase in the other.

For the purpose of this research due to its characteristics, nonparametric statistics had to be used. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient which is nonparametric measure of rank correlation. The rank correlation always takes values from the interval [-1, + 1]. Their interpretation is similar to the classical Pearson correlation coefficient, with one difference: in contrast to the Pearson coefficient, which measures the linear relationship between variables, and treats all other relationships as distorted linear relationships, rank correlation shows any monotonous relationship (also nonlinear).

3.4 Interviews

A qualitive approach was also applied to the study in order to deeply understand what is the relation between nation image of China and perception of products of Chinese origin among Polish consumers. Out of 342 questionnaire respondents, 10 agreed to take part in additional interviews which happened just after finish of collection data for quantitative analysis. Interviews were designed to extend the information from the questionnaire about three factors influencing reputation of China which are media, knowledge and experience as well as to get know the personal opinion about China as a country and Chinese products. Participants were also asked about their judgment of general impression of China in the Polish society. The way these face to face or videocall interviews were conducted was supposed to encourage interviewees to share their own believes, feelings and interpretations. Participants answered 5 questions concerning previously mentioned aspects of the relation between image of nation and perception of products. Questions were asked in an open way so participants could approach answering them from different, unique and personal perspectives. All of the interviews were conducted in Polish language and then translated to English in order to present the results. Although there was no time limit set most of the interviews took no loner that 25 minutes. Among interviewees there were students of business related

studies, young professionals, managers and business owners. The age of participants vary from 22 to 55 years old. 60 % of the respondents were male and 40 % female.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Quantitative research

Hypothesis 1: : Country of Origin has impact on evaluation of product by Polish consumers.

To check if information about the country from which the product comes from influences its perception, non-parametric tests were carried out using Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

First it was checked whether awareness of the origin of a product from Japan changes opinion about it.

Table 1 Ranks for hypothesis 1- Japan

Ranks

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
What price do you expect of new Japanese smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge? - What price do you expect of the new smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge?	Negative Ranks	13[a]	36,38	473,00
	Positive Ranks	64[b]	39,53	2530,00
	Ties	93[c]		
	Total	170		
What quality do you expect from the new Japanese smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge? - What quality do you expect from the new smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge?	Negative Ranks	8[d]	32,50	260,00
	Positive Ranks	63[e]	36,44	2296,00
	Ties	99[f]		
	Total	170		
How do you evaluate the design of new Japanese smartphone based on the picture presented above? - How do you evaluate the design of the new smartphone based on the picture presented above?	Negative Ranks	15[g]	13,33	200,00
	Positive Ranks	10[h]	12,50	125,00
	Ties	145[i]		
	Total	170		

Table 2 Test for hypothesis 1- Japan

Test Statistics^c

	What price do you expect of new Japanese smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge? - What price do you expect of the new smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge?	What quality do you expect from the new Japanese smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge? - What quality do you expect from the new smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge?	How do you evaluate the design of new Japanese smartphone based on the picture presented above? - How do you evaluate the design of the new smartphone based on the picture presented above?
Z	-5,680[a]	-6,439[a]	-1,134[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,257

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Based on positive ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

The conducted tests show that in the case of **Japan**, the awareness of the country of origin of the given product significantly increases its price (z = -5.68, p = 0.000 <0.001) in the opinion of the respondents and quality (z = -6.439, p = 0.000 <0.001). Awareness of the origin of the product did not affect its visual assessment, the respondents rated design of the product in the same way after the being exposed and before information about its origin (z = -1,134; p = 0.257)

Similarly, it was checked whether awareness of the origin of a product from China changes opinion about it.

Table 3 Ranks for hypothesis 1- China

Ranks

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
What price do you expect of new Chinese smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge? - What price do you expect of new a smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge?	Negative Ranks	64[a]	38,76	2480,50
	Positive Ranks	9[b]	24,50	220,50
	Ties	99[c]		
	Total	172		
What quality do you expect from the new Chinese smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge? - What quality do you expect from the new smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge?	Negative Ranks	47[d]	26,96	1267,00
	Positive Ranks	6[e]	27,33	164,00
	Ties	119[f]		
	Total	172		
How do you evaluate the design of new Chinese smartphone based on the picture presented above? - How do you evaluate the design of the new smartphone based on the picture presented above?	Negative Ranks	11[g]	9,27	102,00
	Positive Ranks	6[h]	8,50	51,00
	Ties	155[i]		
	Total	172		

Table 4 Test for hypothesis 1- China

Test Statistics[b]

	What price do you expect of new Chinese smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge? - What price do you expect of new a smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge?	What quality do you expect from the new Chinese smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge? - What quality do you expect from the new smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge?	How do you evaluate the design of new Chinese smartphone based on the picture presented above? - How do you evaluate the design of the new smartphone based on the picture presented above?
Z	-6,458[a]	-5,293[a]	-1,342[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,180

a. Based on positive ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

As in the case of Japan, the awareness of the origin of the product significantly affects the perception of its price (z = -6,458, p = 0.000 <0.001) and quality (z = -5.293, p = 0.000 <0.001), but does not affect its visual assessment (z = -1.342; p = 0.180). However, there is a fundamental difference here, because the quality and price assessment after the information on the origin of the product significantly decreased, and in the case of Japan this change was positive.

Presented results shows that country of origin has impact on evaluation of the products by Polish consumers in terms of price and quality but not design, however in general

obtained data proofs that **Hypothesis 1: :** Country of Origin has impact on evaluation of product by Polish consumers **is valid.**

Hypothesis 2: The exposure to media coverage of China negatively influences China's reputation.

In order to assess the negative impact of the media on the perception and reputation of China, the Media was set as the indicator, which is the average of the answers to questions about the frequency of encountering information about China in:

- TV programs,
- Radio programs,
- Newspaper (online and printed),
- Movies,
- Books,
- Advertisements.

Answers were given weight in the form of numbers from 1 to 5, therefore the highest value that the indicator can take is 5 and the lowest 1.

Then, to assess the type of relation, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was determined and the significance was examined. The results are shown in the table below. Results which are statistically significant have value $p < 0.05$.

Table 5 Results for Hypothesis 2

		Indicator-media
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I have a good feeling about China]	Correlation coefficient	,054
	Statistical significance	,320
	N	342

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I respect China]	Correlation coefficient	**,145**[**]
	Statistical significance	,007
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I admire China]	Correlation coefficient	,071
	Statistical significance	,192
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I trust China]	Correlation coefficient	-,028
	Statistical significance	,606
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is an important contributor to the global economy]	Correlation coefficient	**,225**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is technologically advanced]	Correlation coefficient	,029
	Statistical significance	,599
	N	342
	Correlation coefficient	,025

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a well-educated and reliable workforce]	Statistical significance	,646
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has good infrastructure (roads, buildings, telecommunication)]	Correlation coefficient	,028
	Statistical significance	,604
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China values education]	Correlation coefficient	,106
	Statistical significance	,051
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a beautiful country]	Correlation coefficient	**,188**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a rich historical past]	Correlation coefficient	**,193**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a distinct culture]	Correlation coefficient	**,175**[**]
	Statistical significance	,001

		N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Chinese people are friendly and welcoming]	Correlation coefficient	,053	
	Statistical significance	,327	
	N	342	
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China offers a favorable environment for doing business]	Correlation coefficient	**,124**[*]	
	Statistical significance	,022	
	N	342	
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is run by an effective government]	Correlation coefficient	,095	
	Statistical significance	,078	
	N	342	
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has adopted progressive social and economic policies]	Correlation coefficient	,064	
	Statistical significance	,237	
	N	342	
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a responsible participant in the global community]	Correlation coefficient	-,081	
	Statistical significance	,133	
	N	342	

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a safe place to live and travel]	Correlation coefficient	,037
	Statistical significance	,492
	N	342

To statistically significant correlations we can include:

- Indicator- media has a positive impact on respect for China (r=0,145 - means that with the increase in the frequency of being exposed to information about China in the media, respect for China is increasing),
- Indicator- media has a positive impact on the opinion that China is an important contributor to the global economy (r=0, - means that with the increase in the frequency of being exposed to information about China in the media, the conviction that China is an important contributor to the global economy is increasing),
- Indicator- media has a positive impact on the opinion that China is a beautiful country (r=0,188 - means that with the increase in the frequency of being exposed to information about China in the media, the conviction that China is a beautiful country is increasing),
- Indicator- media has a positive impact on the opinion that China has a rich historical past (r=0,193),
- Indicator- media has a positive impact on the opinion that China has a distinct culture (r=0,175),
- Indicator- media has a positive impact on the opinion that China offers a favorable environment for doing business (r=0,124).

Based on the analysis of the correlation, it can be concluded that the increase in the frequency of being exposed to information about China increases their reputation. Although the relationships are not strong, some (described above) are statistically significant. It can, therefore, be said that the media influence better perception of China in terms of culture and rich history, environment for doing business, and significant influence of the global economy. Respect for China is also increasing.

Although most of the correlations are the statistically insignificant majority of them (17 out of 18) is positive therefore **Hypothesis 2:** The exposure to media coverage of China negatively influences China's reputation **is rejected**.

Hypothesis 3: Knowledge of China positively influences China's reputation.

In order to check how knowledge about China affects its reputation, a similar indicator was set as previously, this time the correct answer was given the highest weight which is 5. Results which are statistically significant have value $p<0.05$.

Table 6 Results for Hypothesis 3

		Indicator-Knowledge
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I have a good feeling about China]	Correlation coefficient	**,203**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I respect China]	Correlation coefficient	**,189**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I admire China]	Correlation coefficient	**,246**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I trust China]	Correlation coefficient	-,018
	Statistical significance	,744
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is an important contributor to the global economy]	Correlation coefficient	**,260**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is technologically advanced]	Correlation coefficient	**,193**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a well-educated and reliable workforce]	Correlation coefficient	-,001
	Statistical significance	,988
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has good infrastructure (roads, buildings, telecommunication)]	Correlation coefficient	,074
	Statistical significance	,171
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China values education]	Correlation coefficient	**,190**[**]

	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a beautiful country]	Correlation coefficient	,088
	Statistical significance	,105
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a rich historical past]	Correlation coefficient	**,277****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a distinct culture]	Correlation coefficient	**,181****
	Statistical significance	,001
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Chinese people are friendly and welcoming]	Correlation coefficient	**,149****
	Statistical significance	,006
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China offers a favorable environment for doing business]	Correlation coefficient	-,033
	Statistical significance	,543

	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is run by an effective government]	Correlation coefficient	**,172****
	Statistical significance	,001
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has adopted progressive social and economic policies]	Correlation coefficient	,054
	Statistical significance	,316
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a responsible participant in the global community]	Correlation coefficient	-,062
	Statistical significance	,257
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a safe place to live and travel]	Correlation coefficient	**,127***
	Statistical significance	,018
	N	342

On the basis of the determined correlation coefficients, it can be stated that the increase of knowledge about China positively affects their reputation. Significant dependencies occur in the case of 11/18 checked statements:

- I have a good feeling about China (r=0,203),
- I respect China(r=0,189),

- I admire China (r=0,246),
- China is important contributor to global economy (r=0,260),
- China is technologically advanced (r=0,193),
- China values education(r=0,190),
- China is beautiful country (r=0,277),
- China has a rich historical past (r=0,181),
- Chinese people are friendly and welcoming (r=0,149),
- China is run by an effective government (r=0,172),
- China is a safe place to live and travel (r=0,127).

According to the analysis **Hypothesis 3:** Knowledge of China positively influences China's reputation **is valid.**

Hypothesis 4: Experience in China positively influence China's reputation.

This hypothesis focus on the impact of experience on the reputation of China. The indicator- Experience has been calculated as the arithmetic average of the answers to questions about the degree of experience with China through:

- Traveling and living in China,
- Participation in cultural events and lectures related to China,
- Attending or watching sports events related to China
- Information from family and friends.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient together with the examination of statistical significance is presented below.

Table 7 Results for Hypothesis 4

		Indicator-Experience
	Correlation coefficient	**,265**[**]

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I have a good feeling about China]	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I respect China]	Correlation coefficient	**,285****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I admire China]	Correlation coefficient	**,294****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I trust China]	Correlation coefficient	,103
	Statistical significance	,056
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is an important contributor to the global economy]	Correlation coefficient	**,252****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is technologically advanced]	Correlation coefficient	**,150****
	Statistical significance	,005
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a well-educated and reliable workforce]	Correlation coefficient	,038
	Statistical significance	,483
	N	342
	Correlation coefficient	**,109***

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has good infrastructure (roads, buildings, telecommunication)]	Statistical significance	,043
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China values education]	Correlation coefficient	**,167****
	Statistical significance	,002
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a beautiful country]	Correlation coefficient	**,197****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a rich historical past]	Correlation coefficient	**,289****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a distinct culture]	Correlation coefficient	**,253****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Chinese people are friendly and welcoming]	Correlation coefficient	**,239****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China offers a favorable environment for doing business]	Correlation coefficient	**,194****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
	Correlation coefficient	**,244****

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is run by an effective government]	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has adopted progressive social and economic policies]	Correlation coefficient	**,166****
	Statistical significance	,002
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a responsible participant in the global community]	Correlation coefficient	,021
	Statistical significance	,697
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a safe place to live and travel]	Correlation coefficient	**,211****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342

Statistically significant correlation occur in 15 out of 18 statements:

- I have good feeling about China (r=0,265),
- I respect China(r=0,285),
- I admire China (r=0,294),
- China is important contributor to global economy (r=0,252),
- China is technologically advanced (r=0,150),
- China has good infrastructure (roads, buildings, telecommunication) (r=0,109),
- China values education(r=0,167),
- China is beautiful country (r=0,197),
- China is beautiful country (r=0,289),
- China has a rich historical past (r=0,181),
- Chinese people are friendly and welcoming (r=0,239),
- China offers a favorable environment for doing business (r=0,194),
- China is run by an effective government (r=0,244),

- China has adopted progressive social and economic policies (r=0,166),
- China is a safe place to live and travel (r=0,211).

It can be said that increasing the experience with China has a positive effect on their reputation, therefore, **Hypothesis 4:** Experience of China positively influence China's reputation **is valid.**

Hypothesis 5: China's reputation positively predicts attitudes of Polish consumers towards Chinese products.

The improvement of China's reputation, caused by the factors already described, influence the perception and assessment of the People's Republic of China products by Polish consumers. Results which are statistically significant have value $p<0.05$

Table 8 Results for Hypothesis 5

		Indicator-Products
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I have a good feeling about China]	Correlation coefficient	**,307**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I respect China]	Correlation coefficient	**,312**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I admire China]	Correlation coefficient	**,274**[**]

	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I trust China]	Correlation coefficient	**,176****
	Statistical significance	,001
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is an important contributor to the global economy]	Correlation coefficient	**,348****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is technologically advanced]	Correlation coefficient	**,318****
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a well-educated and reliable workforce]	Correlation coefficient	**,183****
	Statistical significance	,001
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has good infrastructure (roads, buildings, telecommunication)]	Correlation coefficient	**,205****
	Statistical significance	,000

		N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China values education]	Correlation coefficient		**,206****
	Statistical significance		,000
	N		342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a beautiful country]	Correlation coefficient		**,306****
	Statistical significance		,000
	N		342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a rich historical past]	Correlation coefficient		**,329****
	Statistical significance		,000
	N		342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a distinct culture]	Correlation coefficient		**,296****
	Statistical significance		,000
	N		342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Chinese people are friendly and welcoming]	Correlation coefficient		**,170****
	Statistical significance		,002
	N		342

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China offers a favorable environment for doing business]	Correlation coefficient	**,133**[*]
	Statistical significance	,014
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is run by an effective government]	Correlation coefficient	**,194**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has adopted progressive social and economic policies]	Correlation coefficient	**,192**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a responsible participant in the global community]	Correlation coefficient	**,167**[**]
	Statistical significance	,002
	N	342
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a safe place to live and travel]	Correlation coefficient	**,275**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000
	N	342

In case of all of the Chinese reputation factors under investigation, their growth is associated with a significant increase in the assessment of products. Also, China's reputation has a positive impact on the perception of products from China.

It means that according to the analysis **Hypothesis 5**: China's reputation positively predicts attitudes of Polish consumers towards Chinese products **is valid.**

Hypothesis 6: China's reputation positively predicts attitudes of Polish consumers towards Chinese brands.

Consumers from Poland were also asked about the knowledge of the most popular Chinese electronics brands. The vast majority of consumers know the Huawei brand, it is 97.37% of respondents. The second best-known brand is Lenovo, an IT company which is a leader in the field of innovative technologies, and the knowledge of this company showed 94.15% of respondents. The least known brand turned out to be Xiaomi, which knows 84.50% of those taking part in the study.
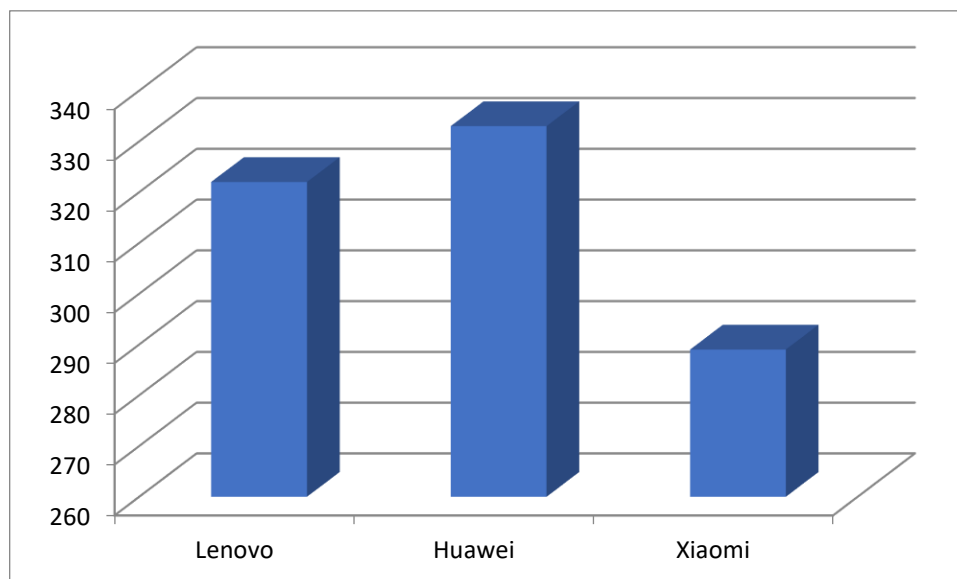

Figure 6 Number of participants knowing particular Chinese brands

For each brand, an indicator was selected which is the average of the answers to the same statements. Products of the tested brand:

- Have better features than alternatives,
- Offer superior performance,
- Use advanced technologies,

- Have a good operating system,
- Attractive design,
- Are famous,
- Is cheaper than competitors,
- Offers good value for money,
- Have great advertising,
- Is a brand I would want to be seen using.

Table 9 Results for Hypothesis 6

		Lenovo	Huawei	Xiaomi
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I have a good feeling about China]	Correlation coefficient	**,185****	**,207****	**,259****
	Statistical significance	,001	,000	,000
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I respect China]	Correlation coefficient	**,198****	**,216****	**,187****
	Statistical significance	,000	,000	,001
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I admire China]	Correlation coefficient	**,169****	**,282****	**,124***
	Statistical significance	,002	,000	,036
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [I trust China]	Correlation coefficient	,044	**,228****	**,168****
	Statistical significance	,434	,000	,004
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is an	Correlation coefficient	,081	**,149****	**,223****
	Statistical significance	,145	,006	,000
	N	322	333	289

important contributor to the global economy]				
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is technologically advanced]	Correlation coefficient	,049	**,115***	**,157****
	Statistical significance	,377	,035	,008
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a well-educated and reliable workforce]	Correlation coefficient	,068	**,149****	,080
	Statistical significance	,225	,007	,174
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has good infrastructure (roads, buildings, telecommunication)]	Correlation coefficient	,038	**,139***	,113
	Statistical significance	,499	,011	,055
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China values education]	Correlation coefficient	,060	**,160****	,099
	Statistical significance	,282	,003	,094
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is beautiful country]	Correlation coefficient	,103	**,264****	**,264****
	Statistical significance	,065	,000	,000
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a rich historical past]	Correlation coefficient	**,155****	**,170****	**,175****
	Statistical significance	,005	,002	,003
	N	322	333	289
	Correlation coefficient	,068	**,208****	**,249****

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has a distinct culture]	Statistical significance	,223	,000	,000
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Chinese people are friendly and welcoming]	Correlation coefficient	,035	**,199****	**,176****
	Statistical significance	,527	,000	,003
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China offers a favorable environment for doing business]	Correlation coefficient	-,024	,084	**,118***
	Statistical significance	,665	,127	,044
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is run by an effective government]	Correlation coefficient	,055	**,221****	,058
	Statistical significance	,327	,000	,324
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China has adopted progressive social and economic policies]	Correlation coefficient	**,135***	**,195****	**,138***
	Statistical significance	,016	,000	,019
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [China is a responsible participant in the global community]	Correlation coefficient	**,153****	**,167****	,055
	Statistical significance	,006	,002	,350
	N	322	333	289
To what extent do you agree with the following	Correlation coefficient	**,150****	**,168****	**,166****
	Statistical significance	,007	,002	,005
	N	322	333	289

statements? [China is a safe place to live and travel]					

All significant correlations have a positive sign which confirms the positive impact of China's reputation on the perception of a given brand. The most significant correlations can be seen in the case of the Huawei brand, followed by Xiaomi, therefore, **Hypothesis 6:** China's reputation positively predicts attitudes of Polish consumers towards Chinese brands **is valid.**

Hypothesis 7: Attitude towards Chinese products positively predicts attitude towards Chinese brands.

Positive perception of products originating in China translates into a positive opinion of the brand. The strongest relationship is in the case of Xiaomi, where Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is 0.459 and shows a clear correlation. The slightly weaker relationship is for Huawei (r = 0.346) and Lenovo (r = 0.215).

Table 10 Results for Hypothesis 7

		Lenovo	Huawei	Xiaomi	Indicator-production
Lenovo	Correlation coefficient	1,000	**,319**[**]	**,181**[**]	**,215**[**]
	Statistical significance	.	,000	,003	,000
	N	322	315	275	322
Huawei	Correlation coefficient	**,319**[**]	1,000	**,259**[**]	**,346**[**]
	Statistical significance	,000	.	,000	,000
	N	315	333	287	333

Xiaomi	Correlation coefficient	**,181****	**,259****	1,000	**,459****
	Statistical significance	,003	,000	.	,000
	N	275	287	289	289
Indicator-production	Correlation coefficient	**,215****	**,346****	**,459****	1,000
	Statistical significance	,000	,000	,000	.
	N	322	333	289	342

4.2 Qualitative research

In this part of the thesis results of the qualitative research conducted through the interviews will be presented. This subchapter will be divided into five sections based on the questions asked during the study.

Media in Poland about China

Most of the interview participants agreed that media in Poland present China in two totally opposite ways. On the one hand, there is information about the economic growth of the country, advanced development of new technologies and improvements in infrastructure. Sometimes there is news about recent high-tech achievements and modern solutions which present the country as very well developing. Mainly on TV, it is possible to watch the reportages about modern Chinese metropolis and big city life.

On the other hand, interviewees confirmed that definitely more often they are exposed to the negative information about China. Especially on the internet, users very often can find information and videos about bad quality products from the country and in general goods of unacceptable performance. Those mostly focuses on electronics and cheap fakes, which sometimes have some funny mistakes.

 Polish media in a similar way as in other western countries also present China negatively in terms of politics. During summer 2019 most of the news critically talked

about the country in terms of dealing with the crisis in Hong Kong and limiting freedom of citizens. Before that for a few months both online as well as TV information were focused on troubles with Huawei. Media was presenting company from the US perspective blaming Huawei for data leaking and spying on the mobile phone users.

Few of the interviewees mentioned that they are aware that media, instead of showing the actual situation in China often simply criticize the country in order to present some specific point of view.

Knowledge about China

All of the respondents agreed that learning about any country can have a positive impact on the perception of that country. They also mentioned that in general Polish society is aware of what is happening in China and that country is developing very well, but there are very little possibilities to learn more about Chinese life and traditions. Because of that most of the Poles still keeps the old belief about China and has rather not very favorable attitude towards it. Interviewees also mentioned that in their opinion if people would have more opportunities to learn about China probably their perception of the country could change positively.

Experience of China

Two of the participants of the study visited China before. Both of them agreed that their perception of the country fundamentally changed after the trip. The picture of the country which they had before was mostly shaped by media. It was much different from the actual situation in the country. Both interviewees said that definitely their perception of China now is much better than before the travel however they also underlined that traveling in China is not easy without some help of Chinese speaking friend or guide.

None of the participants experienced China through cultural events in Poland, but some of them said that they would be willing to if there would be any organized in the city where they live. Interviewees mentioned that the only events somehow related to Chinese culture and traditions were Asian cuisine festivals where they were able to find Chinese food as well.

Three of the people who took part in the study heard about China from family or friends. Two of them said that their perception of the country changed after listening to the

stories from China, and one said that his attitude towards China is neither more positive nor negative after that.

The reputation of China in Poland

Only two participants in the study said that they believe that the reputation of China in Poland is very good. Both mentioned that in their opinion as well as the people they spend time with, China is prosperous and well-developed country. They said that in their minds China is associated with new ideas, solutions, and technologies.

Most of the interviewees think that the reputation of China in Poland is bad. Although development and technological advancement in China is mentioned by Polish people from time to time, according to the respondents what comes to the mind of Poles first when thinking about the Middle Kingdom is communism, dictatorship and breaking the human rights. Polish people have especially bad feeling about communism because of strong Soviet Union domination in Poland after the second world war and tough life during that time.

What is worth to mention is that the older the participant of the study was, the worse was his or her opinion about China and opinion about the general reputation of the country in the society. Among those people, there is still believe that China is a poor country where bad quality products are produced. The younger generation has already better feelings about China as a country.

Last but not least one person mentioned that Chinese people have the reputation of tough negotiators, and it is complicated to do business with them.

Chinese goods and brands

Two respondents underlined that currently, even the most popular brands in the world have production lines in China. This means that China is capable of making good quality products. The country is also developing new technologies and reach overseas markets with new high-tech goods and machines. These two opinions were the only positive ones among the respondents.

Rest of the participants agreed that for Polish citizens, Chinese products are associated with something cheap and bad quality. If they decide to buy Chinese goods it is mainly

due to the low price. They do not have high expectations of product performance and lifespan.

Interviewees also mentioned that nowadays Chinese electronic goods are slowly getting more and more popular as people realized that not only price is very competitive but also quality in some cases is becoming comparable to other brands. However, this product category is kind of an exception for Polish consumers and other products still have a bad reputation.

People who took part in the study admitted that they are very surprised how good and at the same time not very expensive are the products of Huawei. All agreed that right now it is the only Chinese company with an outstanding reputation and consumers have a very positive attitude towards it. One of the respondents mentions that also quality of Xiaomi is not far away from other available brands in that segment. Unfortunately for Huawei, interviewees underlined that despite pretty strong position on the Polish market, recent crisis concerning cooperation with Google and possible scenario of not supporting apps like Play Store, Gmail or YouTube, made many customers afraid of future of the company and they are not willing to buy new smartphones from Huawei anymore.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter obtained results will be presented and compared with theories concerning the relationship between the image of the country and perception of products as well as previous researchers on that matter. The author will go through all of the hypothesis and discuss findings and indicate possible reasons for differences in contrast to expected results. The main emphasis will be put on the conclusions from the quantitative research however qualitative research will be used as a support to understand better some phenomena.

5.1 Impact of the country of origin effect on Polish consumers

The experimental part of the research gave the answer to the question if the country of origin has an impact on Polish consumers. It turned out that as it was stated in the hypothesis country image significantly change the perception of goods. Similar to the results of other researches for example of Loo and Davies who pointed challenges for branding China (Loo and Davies, 2006) and consistent with work of Erickson, Johansson, and Chao who found "halo effect" (Erickson et al., 1984) this time reputation of the country also has an impact on the evaluation of price and quality of products. In the beginning, both groups were exposed to the picture and description of the mobile phone without a country label. Later, the first group was informed that new brand origin from Japan. After getting additional information, the group evaluated the price of the product and its quality much higher. It means that image of Japan which is ranked 1st in Country Brand Index 2014-2015 and 8th in Country Reputation Ranking 2018 (Country RepTrak® report 2018) has a positive influence on products which originate from that country. It is also consistent with presented theories about mutual relation between nation brand and corporate brands which says that strong companies with a good reputation come from countries with a good image (Hereźniak, 2011). Because of its good reputation, Japanese products are perceived as high quality and are able to achieve a higher price.

In the second group which was informed that mobile phone originates from China, it also turned out that information about the country of origin has a significant impact on the evaluation of price and quality. However, this time results showed that the country of origin makes perception of quality and price lower. China was ranked 28th in Country

Brand Index 2014-2015 and 45th out of 55 countries in Country Reputation Ranking 2018 (Country RepTrak® report 2018). Another indicator called "China Power Project" developed by Center For Strategic& International Studies showed that 42% of Poles have favorable views towards China. Position of China in the rankings concerning nation branding and perception of product from this country are strongly connected. Polish consumers perceive Chinese products as cheaper. This issue was mentioned in the research "Branding China: The Ultimate Challenge in Reputation Management?" (Loo and Davies, 2006). According to the paper, challenge number one for China is to change its low price image in order to achieve a premium price for its products. The second problem is the perception of the quality of Chinese products. The country is still associated with cheap and fake goods. This is why it is even considered to change label "Made in China" to "Created in China" which could help to break strong association of Chinese products with low quality (Yang, 2015). Results show that Polish consumers think of Chinese products as of those lower quality than Japanese. It is also consistent with the research about the attitude of Brazilian consumer towards Chinese products (Giraldi et al., 2011) who are not even seeking good quality while buying home appliances from China. Obtained results are also coherent with the only previous study of attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese products and brands which showed that Poles perceive products from PRC as not high quality (Kauf and Tłuczak, 2015).

The experimental part of thesis research also examined if the country of origin has an impact on the evaluation of the design. According to the results, no matter where the product comes from the perception of design is the same. It might be due to the fact that nowadays most of the mobile phone brands look similar and consumers judge more critically quality and performance that external appearance of the product.

5.2 Impact of media on reputation of China

Aim of the second part of the research was to discover if the evaluation of the reputation of Chinas has an impact on the evaluation of Chinese products. In order to do that also main factors which are shaping the reputation of the People's Republic of China were studied as it was done in the paper "Factors Shaping U.S. College Student's Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" (Hereźniak, 2018) from which author got inspiration for design or research.

According to The Model of Country Concept, global media is one of the main factors which influence the image of countries (Hereźniak, 2018). It can help to promote the

nation as well as show it in a not very favorable way. Previous studies showed that media usually present China in a bad way. Often news about PRC are misleading and confusing (Loo and Davies, 2006). Government is also aware of that situation and tries to reduce the amount of wrong news and information in the global media (Hartig, 2016). However, this research showed that the media doesn't have a negative influence on the reputation of China. In terms of respect, culture, and economy it has even a slightly positive impact. This result is consistent with "Factors Shaping U.S. College Student's Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" research. In both cases, media is not an important factor for shaping the reputation of the studied country. Findings are different from most of the previously done studies which underline impact of frequent negative news about China (Zhang et al., 2018). It might be due to the fact that in this study most of the respondents were young people who consume less of traditional media and are exposed to the information about China less frequently than people who were examined in previous researches. Internet and social media which young people use the most usually show customized information and not many people in Poland are targeted by websites concerning China.

These results are even more interesting after analysis of conducted interviews. Polish consumers who took part in this part of the study confirmed that image of China presented in media is rather negative which is consistent with the studied papers of other researchers (Zhang et al., 2018). Some interviewees also mentioned exactly same problem which was pointed out in other papers that media often present bad quality products from China and risks related to that fact (Akdeniz Ar and Kara, 2014). However when we put results of both qualitative and quantitative research together it seems like Poles are not affected much by those negative information. It also might be due to the fact that Polish consumers only sometimes are exposed to the information about China in media according to the survey (A=2.62, M=3, SD=1.06, while 5 is the highest possible score and 3 means "sometimes"). Although most of the news they watch or read put the country in the negative light, frequency of consuming that information might be too little to have a real impact on shaping overall opinion.

5.3 Influence of knowledge of China on its reputation

This time as expected results were consistent with the hypothesis and previous researches. In the case of Polish consumers the better knowledge of China, the better respondents perceive the reputation of China. Most of the papers on that matter focus

on the fact that due to lack of understanding China and Chinese people, the reputation of the country is not very good (Balmer and Chen, 2017). However, the Chinese government and some other researchers underline the importance of educating people about China. Due to that fact promoting culture and language through Confucius Institutes is more and more popular in many countries including Poland (Hartig, 2016). Results of this research are proof that actions which aim is to share the knowledge about PRC are right and can improve the reputation of China among foreigners . It is also consistent with research conducted by Olga Zatepilina- Monacell, Hongwei "Chris" Yang and Yingqi Wang, who discovered the reputation of China is much better among the students who have better knowledge about the country. In general participants of this thesis research have some knowledge about China (A=3.72, M=4, SD=1.25, while 5 is the highest possible score) and therefore it had a good influence on the reputation of the country which is similar as results in other papers (Chen et al., 2017).

Results of this part of the research were also confirmed by the interviews. All of the participants agreed that they believe that better knowledge about China would improve the reputation of the country. They also underlined that in Poland there are little opportunities to learn about China and Chinese culture so media is often the only source of information (Chen et al., 2017). It means that besides opening Confucius Institutes, some other activities targeting the wider range of people could be beneficial.

5.4 The relation between the experience of China and its reputation

According to other researches, experience has a significant influence on how people perceive a country. Direct, positive experience through traveling positively impact the reputation (Wang et al., 2008). The same results were obtained in this thesis research. The better experience with China participant had, the better opinion about the country. Results were also coherent with Wang and Shoemaker who said that still most of the westerners never had a possibility to travel to China (Wang and Shoemaker, 2011). Among Polish consumers also little had experience with travelling to China, however, they had some indirect experience due to information from their family or friends who visited China in the past which also plays an important role (d'Astous and Boujbel, 2007).

Interviewees also confirmed that experience is crucial factor in shaping the reputation of China. Although among participants of that part of research, there were only two

who had travel to China before they both underlined how important and meaningful was this trip in shaping their opinion about the country. Those results are also consistent with other research based on The Model of Country Concept. In both cases experience has significant impact on the perception of the country (Hereźniak, 2018). Although other participants did not have any direct experience some of them also positively changed their opinion after speaking to their friends or family who visited China before.

5.5 The reputation of China and attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese products

According to many others studies on the country of origin effect and nation branding, Country image and reputation of its products are strongly related. Export is a part of the most important nation branding models. Simon Anholt included export in his Nation Brand Hexagon (Anholt, 2005b). As a researcher, he focuses on nation branding and according to his work, the image of the country influence the reputation of the products coming from that country. The more and better particular country work to create a strong nation brand the bigger is the chance that goods from that country will be successful in foreign markets. Export is also included in another model important from the perspective of this research which is The Model of Country Concept (Hereźniak, 2018). This model gathers together all the most important concepts in nation branding of other researchers which seemed to be most significant for the development of the good concept of the country in the minds of foreigners. According to this thesis research, the reputation of China has meaningful influence on Chinese products. Results of thesis are consistent with the theory based on which previously presented models were done. Among Polish consumers there is significant correlation between reputation of China and perception of its products. The better idea person have about the country the better is attitude towards Chinese goods which is general rule according to theory (Laroche et al., 2005).

Results of qualitative research are only the support of main analysis but those are also showing the relation consistent with theories presented in this dissertation and previous studies on that matter. According to the great majority of interviewees the general reputation of China among Poles is rather bad and the same felling Polish consumers have towards Chinese products which is similar to the result of studies conducted on the other markets (Giraldi et al., 2011, Khan and Ahmed, 2016). Image of country in

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that case is connected to the image of the products. The only one interviewee who said that in his opinion China has a good reputation in Poland was also the only one who said that he believes that attitude towards Chinese products is positive as well.

5.6 The reputation of China and Chinese brands

Most of the respondents from Poland were familiar with Chinese brands (Huawei, Lenovo, and Xiaomi) used for that study. A most popular brand among Polish consumers is Huawei. It might be due to the fact that most famous Polish football player Robert Lewandowski who is one of the best strikers not only in Europe but in the whole world is a brand ambassador for Huawei. The second most popular brand was Lenovo, followed by Xiaomi. Last company was known by 84.5 % of respondents and it might be due to the fact that it is relatively new on the Polish market as it entered Poland in 2016.

Similar as it is in case of products according to Simon Anholt (Anholt, 2005b) and Marta Hereźniak (Hereźniak, 2011) reputation of a country also has an influence on the perception of brands which originate from that country. Country Brand Index shows that countries with the best reputation usually are home for some famous and strong brands. Results of this research in a similar way as work of others show that also in the case of China, there is a relation between the reputation of the country and reputation of Chinese brands (Mohd Yasin et al., 2007). The better Polish consumers perceive China itself, the better opinion they have about Chinese brands. The relation is the strongest in the case of Huawei and then Xiaomi. Correlation is the weakest in case of Lenovo which in Poland sometimes is mistakenly taken as non-Chinese company.

A little bit different conclusion could come from the qualitative research. Although majority claimed that reputation of China in Poland is bad, they all underlined strong position of Huawei on the market. Polish consumers also have a positive attitude towards Xiaomi which according to the interviewees offer pretty good quality for a very low price. Based on the interviews it can not be said that negative image of China negatively impact perception of those two Chinese brands. From the research point of view the difference might be due to the little amount of interviewees (10) in comparison to the participants of the quantitative study (342) therefore results could be not representative. However from the business point of view it also might mean that the corporate branding of Huawei and Xiaomi is much better that branding on the level of

nation in China and those two Chinese companies did a great job to overcome negative image of country and succeed on the Polish market.

5.7 Chinese products and Chinese brands

Last but not least Author checked if the general perception of Chinese products influences the perception of Chinese brands. Although it should be obvious studies showed that general perception of a country or its products might not influence brands in all the sectors (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2001) and there are no other studies concerning this relation. As the technology sector is currently one of the most important for China, the aim of this part was to check if activities promoting Chinese good, in general, will also improve the image of three chosen technology brands. According to the results in the case of Polish consumers, the better is the general perception of Chinese goods, the better consumers perceive the reputation of Huawei, Lenovo, and Xiaomi. It means that all undertaken activities which aim to promote Chinese goods in general also can help in case of those three studied companies and others in that sector.

Results of interviews again are not consistent with the theories and the main research in this thesis. Polish consumers perceive Huawei and Xiaomi much better than they perceive Chinese goods in general. According to the interviewees, the biggest difference concerns the quality. Chinese products still have the reputation of cheap and bad quality while Huawei and Xiaomi can offer better price than competitors and keep high quality of the offered goods.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this chapter summary of the thesis will be presented. The author will answer the research question and sub-research questions and underline limitations of this study. Last but not least, some recommendations both in the managerial and as well as the academic field will be provided.

6.1 Research summary

The main aim of this research was to answer the question "How the image of China influence the attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese products and brands". Results of this study are consistent with the work of other researchers in that field and in case of customers from Poland image of a country has a significant impact on the perception of goods. First of all, attitude towards goods is affected by Country of Origin Effect. When questionnaire respondents were exposed to the information that product originated from China, perception of price and quality changed. China is associated with cheap products therefore, at the current stage, it is a challenge to achieve a premium price for certain goods. Unfortunately, also the quality is perceived worse only if customers got to know that the product is Chinese. The second part of the research revealed that there is a correlation between the perception of China and the perception of Chinese products and brands. The better opinion about China Polish consumer has, the better is the perception of Chinese products and attitude towards brands like Huawei, Lenovo, and Xiaomi. Moreover, the thesis aimed to answer the sub-research question of what factors are shaping the image of China among Poles. Based on the previously done researches and available theory, Author checked how media, knowledge and experience influence perception of China. Unlike before results of this part of the research were slightly different from others in that field. According to other studies, western media have a negative influence on the perception of China. This research showed that media doesn't negatively affect the opinion of Poles towards China. Moreover, some components of reputation, like culture, history are even improved by media. The result concerning the influence of knowledge and experience obtained in this thesis was similar to the one in previously conducted researches. The better knowledge Polish people have about China and more experience with the country, the better is their attitude towards it.

6.2 Innovations and implications

6.2.1 Theoretical

First of all this research has a valuable implication for the growing literature review in the field of nation branding. Thesis gathered together and presented the most relevant studies and theories from factors shaping nation image, through role and importance of nation branding to explanation why image of the country is important and how does it affect export in terms of perception of products and brands.

This is also the first research analyzing the relation of the image of China and perception of Chinese products on the Polish market. Research shows factors shaping image of China and their importance as well actual perception of the country together with perception of products and brands which originated from China on the specific market which wasn't studied before. For the first time it was also checked whether general perception of goods from the country has a relation with the perception of brands from that country.

Although partially results of this thesis research are consistent with the previous studies in that field on other markets, this work presents a much bigger and unique picture, therefore obtained results can be used in enhancing image of China and adjusting further nation branding process for the purpose of improving relation with Poland and similar European countries.

6.2.2 Managerial

Last but not least, the main ideas from this work could be used by the companies interested in entering Polish or other European markets or the ones which already do business there in order to tailor good marketing strategy which will overcome influence of country image on product perception.

This thesis has some interesting managerial implications. First of all, it proves that the image of China is correlated with exported goods. It is important information for the government which has to continue good international politics in order to improve soft power. The better will be a general opinion about Chinas as a country in the world, the better chance for success Chinese companies have on a global market.

Government should pay attention to the most important factors shaping image of China. Because knowledge and experience are very important, China has to continue opening

Confucius institutes in Poland and other countries as well as organize many cultural events which could improve the experience . It is also recommended to find a way to reach broader audience. It could be done through the cooperation of the Chinese embassy with local governments and organizations.

Finally China needs to find a way to improve communication through media. Western news often present country in the negative way but it is mainly due to stereotypes and misunderstanding (Balmer and Chen, 2017). China should try to explain it's political system as according to interviewees, in Poland people strongly associate it with Soviet Union and tough time during its domination in Central and Eastern European countries .

From the perspective of the companies, it is important to bear in mind that perception of the quality of products from China is still relatively low. It means that now, when China is more and more open to the world and expand international business, making good quality products is more important than ever. If at the current stage China will manage to convince customers in Poland and other countries that quality of its products is good it will help other companies to reach international markets as well as help to achieve higher prices in the future. At the same time because label "Made in China" itself has some negative connotations (Yang, 2015) strategy of building nation brand should be prepared together with government and focus on high-quality technology products. As it was mentioned by interviewees China is strongly associated with cheap, fake products of low quality. There should be higher control on production of such a goods in order to protect image of the country.

For the companies entering foreign markets it is highly recommended to do the research on consumers attitude towards Chinese products. As the results proof that relation between country image and products perception is significant in previous studies showed that in many countries both perception of China and Chinese products is bad (Kauf and Tłuczak, 2015), companies should be prepared for the different scenarios and put an effort on creating smart entering strategy based on actual situation on the market.

Although the concept of nation branding is not new and countries have been trying to improve image already for many years it is still the current issue for China. Smart nation brand management can lead to improvement of perception of China among foreigners and help to achieve better economic results through successful export. Although it is complex process which should involve foreign governments, organizations, people and

media, based on this study as well as the previous researches it is definitely worth the effort as there is still big room for improvement.

6.3 Limitations

Certainly, there were some limitations to this research. First of all results can not be generalized as the research was conducted on the single nation.

The result was also affected by the sample of participants taking part in the research which did not reflect the general structure of Polish society. Most of the respondents were young professionals, who graduated very good universities. This caused the fact, that knowledge about China of the research participant was much higher than it would be in general society. The same issue occurred in case of experience. Well educated people, with well-paid jobs, travel more and have friends who share with them traveling stories therefore at least indirect experience of China is better.

Last but not least, young people are no longer consumers of traditional media. Most of them as a source of information use the internet. Because the content of social media and many websites is tailored for a particular user based on searching history and cookies file, not many respondents were exposed to information about China. It would work differently for general society, where much more people watch TV news and read the traditional press, therefore they have less impact on the content they consume.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

In the academic field, if possible, future research should be conducted on a more representative sample which will reflect the structure of the society in a particular country.

Also because China is a fast developing country and image of the country changes, similar studies could be done periodically to check how the reputation of China changes over time and whether steps undertaken to improve it are right.

Last but not least future study should be conducted on more than one markets then the results could be more general and therefore more of universal use for both academic field as well as managerial application.

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Appendices

Questionnaire design

H1 TESTING

Both groups- no country mentioned

New company is planning to release smartphone in 2020 for the first time on a Polish market. Picture and main features of a product are presented below. Based on given information please answer following questions.

CPU	Kirin 980
RAM	8 GB
Operating System	EMUI 9.1 based on Android Pie
Display	6.1 inch Full HD OLED Display
Main Camera	40 MP + 20 MP with 10x Hybrid Zoom
Front Camera	32 MP
Internal Storage	128 GB
External Storage	Expandable via NM Card

Other	USB type C, NFC, In-display finger print scanner, IP68 dust and water resistant
Colors	Black, Blue, Red
Battery	3,650 mAh, fast charging

What price do you expect of new smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge?:

- 500 – 1000 PLN
- 1001 – 1500 PLN
- 1501 – 2000 PLN
- 2001 – 2500 PLN
- 2501 – 3000 PLN
- More than 3000 PLN

What quality do you expect from the new smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge?:

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

How do you evaluate the design of new smartphone based on the picture presented above?:

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

Experiment Group 1- Mobile phone from China

New Chinese company is planning to release smartphone in 2020 for the first time on a Polish market. Picture and main features of a product are presented below. Based on given information please answer following questions.

CPU	Kirin 980
RAM	8 GB
Operating System	EMUI 9.1 based on Android Pie
Display	6.1 inch Full HD OLED Display
Main Camera	40 MP + 20 MP with 10x Hybrid Zoom
Front Camera	32 MP
Internal Storage	128 GB
External Storage	Expandable via NM Card
Other	USB type C, NFC, In-display finger print scanner, IP68 dust and water resistant
Colors	Black, Blue, Red
Battery	3,650 mAh, fast charging

What price do you expect of new Chinese smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge?:

- 500 – 1000 PLN
- 1001 – 1500 PLN
- 1501 – 2000 PLN
- 2001 – 2500 PLN
- 2501 – 3000 PLN
- More than 3000 PLN

What quality do you expect from the new Chinese smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge?:

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

How do you evaluate the design of new Chinese smartphone based on the picture presented above?:

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

Experiment Group 2- Mobile phone from Japan

New Japanese company is planning to release smartphone in 2020 for the first time on a Polish market. Picture and main features of a product are presented below. Based on given information please answer following questions.

CPU	Kirin 980
RAM	8 GB
Operating System	EMUI 9.1 based on Android Pie
Display	6.1 inch Full HD OLED Display
Main Camera	40 MP + 20 MP with 10x Hybrid Zoom
Front Camera	32 MP
Internal Storage	128 GB
External Storage	Expandable via NM Card
Other	USB type C, NFC, In-display finger print scanner, IP68 dust and water resistant
Colors	Black, Blue, Red
Battery	3,650 mAh, fast charging

What price do you expect of new Japanese smartphone on a Polish market based on given information and your general knowledge?:

- 500 – 1000 PLN
- 1001 – 1500 PLN
- 1501 – 2000 PLN
- 2001 – 2500 PLN
- 2501 – 3000 PLN
- More than 3000 PLN

What quality do you expect from the new Japanese smartphone based on given information and your general knowledge?:

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

How do you evaluate the design of new Japanese smartphone based on the picture presented above?:

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

Measurements for hypothesis H2-H7

Media coverage of China (questions inspired by "Factors Shaping U.S. College Students' Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" Olga Zatepilina-Monacell, Hongwei "Chris" Yang, Yingqi Wang)

	Never	Rarely	Somet imes	Often	Very often
1. I have been exposed to TV programs about Chaina					
2. I have been exposed to radio programs about China					
3. I have been exposed to content about China in newspaper (printed or online)					
4. I have been exposed to content about China in social media (Facebook, YouTube etc.)					
5. I have been exposed to content about China in movies					
6. I have been exposed to content about China in books					
7. I have been exposed to ads for Chinese companies or products					

Knowledge about China (there are also false statements) (questions inspired by "Factors Shaping U.S. College Students' Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" Olga Zatepilina-Monacell, Hongwei "Chris" Yang, Yingqi Wang)

	False	I don't know	True
1. The ruling party of China is Communist Party of China			
2. China is the second largest economy by nominal GDP			
3. China was the sponsor of the 2008 Olympic Games			
4. Most Chinese people follow Confucianism			

5. Taekwondo is traditional Chinese martial art			
6. There are different types of Chinese cuisine			
7. China has the most mobile phone users in the world			
8. China is the most populous country in the world			
9. Production costs in China are the lowest in the world			
10. Currently more than 100 million people in China live for less than 1$ a day			
11. One belt one road is Chinese economic development strategy involving more than 150 countries			

Experience related to China (questions inspired by "Factors Shaping U.S. College Students' Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" Olga Zatepilina-Monacell, Hongwei "Chris" Yang, Yingqi Wang)

	No	Yes
1. I traveled to China		
2. I participated in cultural events/lectures related to China		
3. I attended/watched sports event related to China		
4. I have heard about China from my family or friends		

China's reputation (questions inspired by "Factors Shaping U.S. College Students' Concept of China and Willingness to Study in China" Olga Zatepilina-Monacell, Hongwei "Chris" Yang, Yingqi Wang)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I have good feeling about China							
2. I respect China							
3. I admire China							
4. I trust China							

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
5. China is important contributor to global economy							
6. China is technologically advanced							
7. China has well-educated and reliable workforce							
8. China has good infrastructure (roads, buildings, telecommunication)							
9. China values education							
10. China is beautiful country							
11. China has a rich historical past							
12. China has a distinct culture							
13. Chinese people are friendly and welcoming							
14. China offers a favorable environment for doing business							
15. China is run by an effective government							
16. China has adopted progressive social and economic policies							
17. China is responsible participant in the global community							
18. China is a safe place to live and travel							

Attitude towards Chinese products (questions inspired by "Saudi consumers' attitudes towards European, US and Japanese products and marketing practices" Shahid N. Bhuian)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Over past several years the quality of most products made in China seems to have improved							
2. Products made in China are carefully produced							

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
3. Products made in China seem to last desired length of time							
4. Products made in China have strong competitive position in comparison to the products of other countries							
5. Products made in China show a very high degree of technological advancement							
6. Products made in China have usually nice design							
7. Products made in China are available in wide choice of models							
8. Products made in China are generally cheaper than similar products from other countries							
9. Products made in China are generally lower quality than similar products from other countries							
10. Products made in China generally lack creativity and are imitating products made in other countries							
11. I am willing to buy and use Chinese products							

Attitude towards Chinese brands

I think <u>Huawei…</u> (questions inspired by Brandz Top 50 Chinese Global Brand Builders 2019 by Google and Kantar)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Have better features than alternatives							
2. Offer superior performance							
3. Use advanced technologies							
4. Have a good operating system							
5. Attractive design							
6. Are famous							

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
7. Is cheaper than competitors							
8. Offers good value for money							
9. Have a great advertising							
10. Is a brand I would want to be seen using							

I think Xiaomi… (questions inspired by Brandz Top 50 Chinese Global Brand Builders 2019 by Google and Kantar)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Have better features than alternatives							
2. Offer superior performance							
3. Use advanced technologies							
4. Have a good operating system							
5. Attractive design							
6. Are famous							
7. Is cheaper than competitors							
8. Offers good value for money							
9. Have a great advertising							
10. Is a brand I would want to be seen using							

I think Lenovo… (questions inspired by Brandz Top 50 Chinese Global Brand Builders 2019 by Google and Kantar)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Have better features than alternatives							
2. Offer superior performance							
3. Use advanced technologies							
4. Is compatible with the operating system							

5. Attractive design							
6. Are famous							
7. Is cheaper than competitors							
8. Offers good value for money							
9. Have a great advertising							
10. Is a brand I would want to be seen using							

Interview questions

1. How often are you exposed to the information about China in different kind of media? What kind of information it is? Is it positive, negative or neutral?

2. What is your knowledge about China? Do you think the more knowledge and possibilities to gain knowledge about China would impact reputation of the country?

3. What is your experience with China? Did you travel to the country? How your perception of China changed after visit? Have you attended Chinese culture festivals or heard about China from friends or relatives?

4. What are your thoughts and feelings if you think about China? What is the reputation of China in the Polish society and why?

5. What is the reputation of Chinese products in Poland? Do you know and use Chinese brands? What is the attitude of Polish consumers towards Chinese products and brands?