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경영학 석사 학위논문

# Only Child on Consumer Choice

-Focus on Chinese Only-Child Consumers-

외동이 소비자 선택에 미치는 영향

-중국의 외동 소비자 중심으로-

2015년 2월

서울대학교 대학원

경영학과 마케팅전공

마환

Only Child on Consumer Choice  
-Focus on Chinese Only-Child Consumers-

지도교수 김 재 일  
이 논문을 경영학석사학위논문으로 제출함

2014년 11월

서울대학교 대학원  
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경영학의 석사학위논문을 인준함

2014년 12월

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# **Abstract**

## **Only Child on Consumer Choice -Focus on Chinese Only-Child Consumers-**

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The number of one-child family in the world is increasing, and only-child consumers have already become the main purchasing power in some markets, especially in the markets in China, where there is a famous One Child Policy being implemented. This research examines how only child or not affects consumers' product preferences in Chinese market. It is hypothesized that only-child consumer has a higher consumer's need for uniqueness (CNFU), which in turn leads to a higher likelihood of choosing distinctive product than sibling-child consumers. Moreover, the effect of only child on consumer choice is supposed to be different across public and private consumption contexts, so the main effect of only child on consumer choice is supposed to be weaker when the choice is made in a public consumption context than when the choice is made in a private consumption context. As for distinctive product, in this research, two kinds of consumer choices are investigated as means to pursue distinctive product: scarce commodity choice and unpopular choice.

An experiment is designed to support the hypothesis by examining i) the effect of only child or not on the willingness to pay for scarce or limited products and ii) the effect of only child or not on the likelihood of choosing unpopular products, as well as the mediating role of CNFU. Both

publicly consumed products (products used in front of others) and privately consumed products (products used at home by oneself) are included to test the moderating role of consumption context. The results of the experiment support the main effect of only child on consumer choice, as well as the mediating role of CNFU. However, the moderating role of consumption context is not confirmed. The effect of only child on consumer choice does not differ across different consumption context.

Together, these findings show that only-child consumer is more likely to choose distinctive products than sibling-child consumer, mediating by CNFU. Moreover, the effect of only child or not on consumer choice does not differ across public and private consumption contexts.

**Key words:** only-child, CNFU, distinctive product, consumption context

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# Contents

Abstract .....	i
Contents .....	iii
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Statement .....	5
2.1. Only Child Researches .....	5
2.1.1. Only Child as Object .....	6
2.1.1.1. Personality .....	6
2.1.1.2. Intelligence .....	6
2.1.1.3. Sociality .....	7
2.1.1.4. Mental Health .....	8
2.1.1.5. Independence .....	8
2.1.2. Only Child as Research Variable .....	10
2.1.2.1. Family Structure .....	10
2.1.2.2. Family Norms .....	11
2.1.2.3. Little Emperor Syndrome .....	11
2.1.2.4. Child-Driven Consumption .....	13
2.2. Product Distinctiveness .....	13
2.2.1. Scarce Product .....	14
2.2.2. Unpopular Product .....	15
2.3. Only Child and Product Choice .....	16
2.4. CNFU and Product Choice .....	17

2.5. Consumption Context and Product Choice .....	20
2.5.1. Chinese Face Culture .....	21
2.6. Statement of Hypotheses .....	23
2.7. Path Diagram .....	24
3. Experiment .....	26
3.1. Method .....	26
3.1.1. Participants and Design .....	26
3.1.2. Procedure .....	27
3.2. Result and Discussion .....	28
3.2.1. Willingness to Pay for Scarce or Limited Products .....	29
3.2.2. Choice of Unpopular Product .....	29
3.2.3. Consumer's Need for Uniqueness .....	31
3.2.4. CNFU as Mediator .....	31
3.2.5. Consumption Context as Moderator .....	34
3.2.6. Test of Hypotheses .....	34
3.2.7. Discussion .....	36
4. General Discussion .....	37
4.1. Implications .....	37
4.2. Limitations and Future Research .....	38
5. References .....	40
6. Appendix .....	53
6.1. Appendix A: Questionnaire .....	53
6.2. Appendix B: Questionnaire (Chinese Version) .....	61

6.3. Appendix C: Need for Uniqueness (NU) Scale .....	68
6.4. Appendix D: Self-Attributed Need for Uniqueness (SANU) Scale .....	71
6.5. Appendix E: Consumer's Need for Uniqueness(CNFU) Scale .....	73
6.6. Appendix F: CNFU Scale (Chinese Version) .....	76
7. 국문초록 .....	78

## Tables

Table 1: Participants' General Information .....	27
Table 2: Participants' Willingness to Pay for Scarce or Limited Products .....	29
Table 3: Participants' CNFU .....	31

## Figures

Figure 1: Proportion of Only Children .....	2
Figure 2: Path Diagram .....	25
Figure 3: Choice of Unpopular Product .....	30
Figure 4: Mediation Analysis .....	32
A. WTP for Scarce or Limited Product .....	32
B. Choice of Unpopular Product .....	33

# **1. Introduction**

## **-Positioning and Overview of the Paper-**

Throughout history, only children were relatively uncommon. However, in recent years, the number of families in the United States, Europe, and Japan choosing to have only one child has increased considerably, since the 1940s, coinciding with achieving equality in the workforce (Grigoriadis, V. 2005). In the United States, the number of one-child family has grown to 43%, which is 10% higher than that in 40 years ago (Xu, D. H. 2013). In Australia, the number of women who had given birth to a single child increased progressively from only 8% in 1981 to 13% in 2006, let alone China, where the One Child Policy<sup>1)</sup> was introduced in 1979 to alleviate social, economic, and environmental problems. Due to a variety of reasons, including personal preference, family planning, financial and emotional or physical health issues, desire to travel, stress in the family, educational advantages, late marriage, stability, focus, time constraints, fears over pregnancy, advanced age, infertility, divorce, and death of a sibling or parent (Syson, D. 2009; Wan C, Fan C, Lin G, Jing Q 2010; Martin, C. E. 2013; Sandler, L. 2013), a growing proportion of one-child families will most likely be seen in the future, and only children will soon become the main purchasing power in most markets in the world.

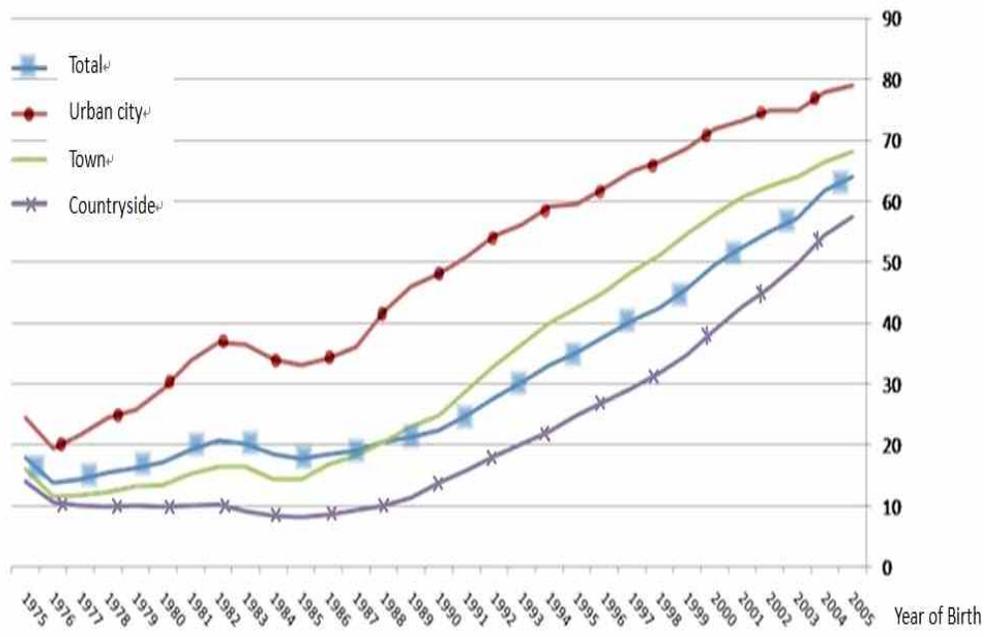
This research focuses on the only-child consumers in China, and chose to do the experiments in urban China, because China has the largest population

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1) The Only Child Policy emerged in 1979 and was officially announced by the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council's Resolution Concerning the Strengthening of Birth Control and Strictly Controlling Population Growth (1980): The State advocates the one couple has only one child. Except for special cases, with approval for second birth, government officials, workers and urban residents can only have one child for each couple. In rural areas, the State also advocates that each couple has only one child. However, with approval, those who have real difficulties can have their second child, several years after the birth of the first. (p. 1)

of only children as a result of the largest and most dramatic population-control policy in the world, the One Child Policy. In the national level, the one-birth rate rose from 20.7% in 1970 to 72.4% in 2003 (White 2006). Over 95% of preschool children in urban areas, such as Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, were only children (Rosenberg and Jing 1996). According to macroeconomic data, the proportion of only children in total population keeps on a rise (See Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1**  
**PROPORTION OF ONLY CHILDREN IN TOTAL POPULATION,**  
**CHINA (%)**



*Source of data: National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China*

Only children in China are facing a special situation: they are unique in their families, but not unique in the Chinese society. On this account, the CNFU of Chinese only children is worth studying. Though the government is trying to ease the One Child Policy by a new Second Child Policy<sup>2)</sup>, only-child consumers will still be a major purchasing power in Chinese market in at least next three decades.

As there is a special “face culture” in China, in which “face”, *mianzi*, stands for the kind of prestige that is emphasized in China: a reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation (Hu, H. C. 1944), Chinese people value status and relationship with others more than Western cultures (Martin, D. A.L. 1990). People tend to act differently in front of others. Only-child consumers may not choose distinctive products intentionally to show that they conform to others and get connect with others when they are in a public condition. On this account, this research also explores how the results differ in public and private consumption conditions. Both publicly consumed products and privately consumed products are included in the experiment.

Over the past few decades, a large number of studies about only children have examined how people’s characteristics differ between only children and sibling children. Related studies are mainly focused on two kinds of streams: On the one hand, only child is the object of these studies, which explored only child’s personality, socialization, social adjustment, and so on. Researchers in this stream suggest that only children have a higher need for uniqueness than sibling children (Zhu, Y. J. 2009; Zhang, R. 2012). On the other hand, only child is used as a research variable, investigating

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2) In November 2013, following the Third Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, China announced the decision to relax the One Child Policy. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed a resolution allowing couples to have two children if either parent is an only child, the state news agency Xinhua reports.

only-child's effects to family and society (Xiao and 2010). In consumer behavior, as need for uniqueness affects people's choices of distinctive products (Wan, E. W., Jing, X., and Ying, D. 2014), are only-child consumers more likely to choose distinctive products?

This research falls into the second stream, aiming to investigate only child's effects to a consumer behavior context. The objective of this research is to examine how product choices differ between only-child consumer and sibling-child consumer. It is proposed that only-child consumers are more likely to choose distinctive products than sibling-child consumers, as well as examining how the effect differ in public and private conditions.

Across an experiment, this research explored the only child's effect on product choices and the underlying mechanism, as well as examining whether the results will differ across different consumption contexts (public vs. private). In doing so, this research makes several contributions to the literature. First, the current research contributes to the researches on only child studies in a consumer behavior context by exploring the different product choices between only-child consumers and sibling-child consumers. Second, as only-child consumers have become the main purchasing power in most markets, especially in Chinese markets, the research investigates the consumer behavior of the only children their own, rather than the product choices of the parents of only children. Then, the research provides evidence that this difference occurs due to the different levels of CNFU between only-child consumers and sibling-child consumers. Finally, the research explores the possible differences of the effect caused by different consumption contexts by considering publicly consumed products and privately consumed products separately.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Statement**

### **2.1. Only Child Researches**

An only child is a person with no siblings, either biological or adopted. Although a large body of researches have examined differences between only children and sibling children in terms of personality, physical development, psychological adjustment, living skills, academic related outcomes and educational environment (Jiao S., Ji G., and Jing Q. 1986; Fan, C. et al. 1994; Xu, K. Y., and Song, B. P. 1996; Li, Z. 1998; Chen, Z. Y., and Liu, R. X. 2014; Wan C., Fan C., Lin G., and Jing Q. 2014), the effects of only child or not on consumer behavior have received less attention.

As early as the end of the 19th century, American child psychologist G. S. Hall and his student E. W. Bohannon had studied only children. In the year 1898, E. W. Bohannon published the first article related to only child, *The Only Child in a Family*. In the following a hundred years, a large number of psychologists, educators, and even medical researchers were dedicated to researches about only child. Mainly through comparative research approaches, these researches can be classified into two streams. In the first stream, only child is the object of the research, which explored only child's personality, socialization, social adjustment, academic achievement, and so on. In the second stream, only child is used as a research variable, investigating only-child's effects to family and society.

### **2.1.1. Only Child as Object**

#### ***Personality***

Fan, C. et al. (1994) made a survey among 787 primary school students, and found that only children are more self-centered and learning-motivated than sibling children, but less independent than sibling children. According a survey by Cui, Y. et al. (1994) among 1732 students in Hubei province, only children are more gregarious and more positive than sibling children, but less cautious than sibling children. Through a survey among 197 high school students, Li, X. et al. (2001) found that there are differences between only children and sibling children in term of personality. According to these studies, remarkable features of only children are self-centered, open, and gregarious, adventurous, uniqueness-seeking, but less independent. There are also some researchers found that the personality difference between only children and sibling children are not obvious (Liang and Cai 1998). They indicated that only children are gregarious, adventurous, and like to express themselves, but their personalities are similar with sibling children.

#### ***Intelligence***

Multiple studies have shown that the intelligence of only children are higher than that of sibling children in various stages, including primary school students, high school students, and college students (Kong and Zhang 1998; Cui, Y. et al. 1994; Long, W. 1997). Cui, S. et al.(1992) specially did a

research on cognitive competence. Through the comparison between 146 only children and 171 sibling children, they found that only children did better on verbal memory and common items than sibling children, and only children in Grade 1 did better on general cognitive competence than sibling children in Grade 1.

### ***Sociality***

After analyzing a survey among 593 students, Hao and Feng (1997) found that only children have better social competence than sibling children, and are less likely to feel lonely than sibling children. A survey did among college students (Falbo and Tao 2011) also found that only-child college students have more positive parent relationships and peer relationships than sibling-child college students. Among researches about sociality, there are also some researches suggest that there is no difference between only children and sibling children in terms of sociality. Three items regarding primary students-teacher relationships indicated that the primary student-teacher relationship, social competence, and social competence development are the same between only children and sibling children (Cui, Y. 2004; Zhao, Q. 2006; Xiao, F. 2008). Through a survey among 264 students, Bai, Y. (1992) also found that there was no obvious difference between only children and sibling children in terms of social competence, even including all the subitems. A sample survey of working youths from 12 cities investigated Chinese only children's work, love relationship, interpersonal relationship, autognosis, and so on (Feng, Tianxiao 2005), finding that there are no obvious differences between only children and sibling children.

## ***Mental Health***

In terms of only children's mental health, researchers' opinions are divided on this point. Among researches about primary and middle school students, many researches thought that there were problems in only children's mental health. According to the research of Hao and Wang (2009), in terms of mental state, only children are more likely to be positive than sibling children, and are more likely to be negative than sibling children, too. An, Q. and Jia's research among 460 middle school students in Beijing (2009) also found that among middle school students, male only children are more likely to show problematic behavior, and female only children are more likely to show affinitive behavior. Two researches aiming at college students also suggest that only children have a higher level of mental health than sibling children (Duan, X. et al. 1997; Dong and Duan 2001). Other researches thought that there is no abnormality in only children's mental health. Through a survey among 238 college students, Gao and Sun (2007) found that there was no difference between the mental health status of only children and the mental health status of peer groups. A similar result was obtained by a survey among 897 college students from 9 colleges, suggesting that the mental health of college students was not related to whether they have siblings or not (Falbo and Tao 2011).

## ***Independence***

There are researches suggesting that only children are less independent than sibling children (Hao and Wang 2009; Cui, Gao, and Wang 1994). Hao and Wang (2009) found that only children's living ability and problem-solving ability are weaker than sibling children's. However, there are also some research suggesting that there is no difference between only child's social living ability and sibling child's social living ability (Yang, S. et al. 2003; Hao and Feng 1997). They even found that most only children are independent, and are similar with sibling children in terms of self-care ability.

Terms used to describe only children are changing from negative ones to positive ones, which suggest that being an only child is no longer undesirable. G. Stanley Hall, known as the founder of child psychology, was one of the first commentators to give only children a bad reputation by calling being an only child “a disease in itself” (Chang, J., and Holmberg, S. 2007). There was a widespread belief that these only children are being overprotected and may have undesirable behavioral and personality traits (Wan, C., Fan, C., Lin, G., and Jing, Q. 2010). Chinese parents sometimes figuratively name only children “little emperors” or describe them as having acquired the so-called little emperor syndrome (Cutler and Blayne 1988). Research on only children in the West started at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. A widely held view at that time was that only children were more egocentric, less cooperative, less affiliative, and more maladjusted than sibling children. Some reported that only children were more likely to be diagnosed as psychologically disturbed than sibling children (Belmont, Wittes, and Stein 1976). However, more and more researches based on empirical studies view the only children in more positive ways. In a comprehensive meta-analysis of some 100 studies of only children, Falbo and Polit (1986) concluded that single children, in general, are not

disadvantaged in their psychological development. Chinese studies of only children are increasing in number. The results indicate that only children are superior to sibling children in some characteristics and possess less positive assessments in other characteristics (Polit, D. F. and Falbo, T. 1988; Liu 1988; Poston and Falbo 1990b; Gao 1992; Wan, Fan and Lin 1994; Yang, Ollendick, Dong, Xia and Lin 1995; Tao, Qiu, Li, Zeng and Xu 1996; Tao, Qiu, Li, Zeng, Xu and Goebert 1999; McKibben, B. 1998).

In summary, we have no clear picture about the personality characteristics of only children. Regardless of whether only children are more disadvantaged in personality development or other aspects than sibling children, one thing is clear that there are many differences between only children and sibling children in many aspects, which in turn may lead to differences in product choice between only-child consumers and sibling-child consumers.

### **2.1.2. Only Child as Research Variable**

#### ***Family Structure***

Only Child has changed the family and kinship structure, the norms of family, and intergenerational relationships (Settles, B. H., Sheng, X., Zang, Y., and Zhao, J. 2008). Outsiders always consider large extended families to be the major family pattern in China, because the patriarchal, patrilineal, patrilocal and familistic values of Confucian ideals were characteristic of Chinese life and values for centuries (Deutsch 2006). However, the real situations in China were always different. A survey examined 1293 families with primary school children in five cities of Hubei province by Feng

(1992) showed that about 80 percent of urban only-child families are three-member families, and almost all of the three-member families in Chinese cities are only-child families. Being the only child in the family, only children also cause the so-called "four-two-one" problem<sup>3</sup>).

### ***Family Norms***

Some researches found that when there is only one child in a family, there is a tendency for a reduction in the degree of patriarchy and gender effect, especially when the only child is a daughter (Feng, Poston, and Wang 2014). Gender is important traditionally in the Chinese family, and the family used to be treated as patriarchal, patrimonial, patrilineal, and patrilocal (Thornton and Lin 1994). However, when the only child is a girl, the situation changes. Chinese families with only daughters have little choice but to invest in their female offspring, which is an important difference from the situation in the traditional Chinese family, leading to a breakthroughs in gender differences in individual achievements and post-marriage relations (Fong 2002). Nowadays the only daughter, especially in urban areas, will not be neglected because of her gender, but will be treated as well as she would have been the case had she been a boy (Fong 2002). Gender effect is to some degree reduced by only child.

### ***Little Emperor Syndrome***

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3) "Four-two-one" problem, that is, four grandparents, two parents and a single child, an effect of China's One-Child Policy. This is also referred to as the "Six Hands One Pocket" idea (the phenomenon of both sets of grandparents and parents all contributing to the single child's financial needs).

Wikipedia defines the Little Emperor or Empress Syndrome as "an aspect of China's One-Child Policy where only children gain seemingly excessive amounts of attention from their parents and grandparents."<sup>4)</sup> As there is only one child in the family, the only child has become the focal point of the family. In traditional Chinese families, it was the elderly grandparents who were the center of the family and honored by all the other families members. In modern families, the members of the younger generation now tend to replace the ancestors in the family, and they have become the centers of the modern families (Feng, Poston, and Wang 2014). Parents and grandparents of these only children lived through the Great Leap Forward<sup>5)</sup> and the Cultural Revolution<sup>6)</sup>, and there see it as imperative to provide their children with a better life than the one they experienced. These only children were called "Little Emperors and Empresses" because of the large portion of time and money their parents bestowed onto them (Martin, D. A. L. 1990).

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4) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_Emperor\\_Syndrome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Emperor_Syndrome)

5) The Great Leap Forward of the People's Republic of China is defined by wikipedia as "an economic and social campaign by the Communist Party of China (CPC) from 1958 to 1961. The campaign was led by Mao Zedong and aimed to rapidly transform the country from an agrarian economy into a communist society through rapid industrialization and collectivization. The campaign caused the Great Chinese Famine." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Leap\\_Forward](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Leap_Forward)).

6) The Cultural Revolution is defined by Wikipedia as " a social-political movement that took place in the People's Republic of China from 1966 until 1976. Set into motion by Mao Zedong, the Chairman of the CPC, aiming to preserve 'true' Communist ideology in the country by purging remnants of capitalist, and traditional elements from Chinese society, and to re-impose Maoist thought as the dominant ideology within the Party." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution)).

## ***Child-driven Consumption***

The new focus on the only child of Chinese family has changed Chinese parents' consumer behavior. Martin, D. A. L. (1990) explained this change, saying that "consumer behavior of Chinese parents today reflect their desires to live vicariously through providing for their children the products and opportunities denied." Child-driven consumption is a main factor in purchasing patterns in Chinese family. Only children are provided with higher quality food than other family members to ensure health and necessary energy for schoolwork. A parent can do anything to give the child "comfort and peace of mind" to help the child's intellectual development. Parents pay heavily for such items as extracurricular books, electronic organs, pianos, computers, and all kinds of learning tools. The hiring of tutors and the sending of the children to special skills classes have also become an important part of the families' consumptions (Feng, Poston, and Wang 2014). Existing researches studied the consumer behavior of only children's parents, but few studied the consumer behavior of the only children their own.

## **2.2. Product Distinctiveness**

There are many product choices that are related to the product distinctiveness dimensions. According to the consumer's need for uniqueness scale, three dimensions of consumer behavior, unpopular choice counter-conformity, creative choice counter-conformity, and avoidance of similarity, were used to capture how people fulfill their need for uniqueness (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001; Tian, and McKenzie, 2001). Distinctive

products can also be scarce products, innovative products, customized products, or unpopular products (Lynn, M. and Snyder, C. R. 2002). When investigating the effect of optimal distinctiveness on consumer product consumption, He, L. et al. (2010) investigated two kinds of consumer choices as means to reestablish distinctiveness, scarce commodity choice and unpopular choices. This research adopts the method of He, L. et al. to concern with mainly two types of distinctive product: scarce product and unpopular product.

### ***2.2.1. Scarce product***

Product scarcity is always treated as an important marketing instrument which enhances the desirability of experiences and objects (Lynn 1989). The meta-analysis of Lynn (1991) also showed that scarcity enhances the value of anything that can be possessed. Lynn also explained why scarcity enhances the desirability of commodities. One of the reasons is the fact that possessing a scarce resource provides the consumer with a sense of distinctiveness (Lynn 1991). This distinctiveness can be used to satisfy consumers' uniqueness needs or provide a standard of comparison between the consumer self and less fortunate others (Wills, 1981, as cited in Lynn, 1991).

In the Commodity Theory (Brock 1968), a "commodity" is defined as anything which has usefulness to the possessor and which can be conveyed from person to person (Brock 1968:246). The main premise of the Commodity Theory is that "any commodity will be valued to the extent that it is unavailable". Brock indicated that unavailability refers to scarcity and other limits on availability.<sup>7)</sup> According to Brock, the scarcer a commodity

is, the more valued or desirable it becomes, that is to say, the more restricted and less available a commodity is, the more it will be valued or desired by consumers.

When examining the effect of product availability on consumers' preferences and the corresponding uniqueness judgements and cost evaluation for the same products, Verhallen and Robben (1994) classified conditions of product availability into four types: unlimited availability, limited availability due to popularity, limited availability due to limited supply, and accidental unavailability. When examining the attractiveness of scarce products, Gierl and Huettl (2010) classified scarcity into two types, scarcity due to supply (e.g. "limited edition") and scarcity due to demand (e.g. "only a few units remain"). In this research, several limited edition products will be used as scarce products to investigate only-child participants' and sibling-child participants' choices of distinctive products.

### ***2.2.2. Unpopular product***

When defining three dimensions of consumers' need for uniqueness, Tian, Bearden, and Hunter (2001) define unpopular choice counterconformity as "the selection or use of products and brands that deviate from group norms and thus risk social disapproval that consumers withstand in order to establish their differentness from others." They also indicated that unpopular product choices may also enhance self-image and social image, the logic under which is that people who take social risks to express their uniqueness

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7) Brock operationalized unavailability as:

- a). limits on the supply, or the number of suppliers, of a commodity,
- b). costs of acquiring, of keeping, or of providing a commodity,
- c). restrictions limiting possession of a commodity,
- d). delays in providing a commodity.

often possess strong characters, so uniqueness-seeking behavior may enhance their self-images.

Lynn and Synder (2002) indicated that some brands, designs, and products are more common or popular than other ones, which gives people an opportunity to assert their uniqueness by resisting conformity pressures and selecting less popular offerings. Thompson and Hayko (1997) also reported that some consumers maintain fashionability by disposing of fashion items once they become popular and seek out emerging innovations in an effort to resist conformity. Some researches also indicate that there may be consumers resisting or countering the acceptance of popularized goods that symbolically convey conformity, as well as disposing of goods that become popular in search of new and special products, innovations, and emerging fashion trends (Snyder 1992; Tepper 1997). In the present research, several unpopular products will also be used to investigate only-child consumers' and sibling-child consumers' choices of distinctive products.

### **2.3. Only Child and Product Choice**

As, in one-child family, parents' love and money have focused on a single child, these researches are mainly focused on the product choice of the only children's parents (Shao, Herbig, P., and Alan, T. 1994; Gooding and Kenneth 1998). As the only child is unique in the family, parents of only child began to their "little emperors" and they enjoy making sure that their only child will live a happy life and will do almost anything to meet their wishes, resulting a generation of spoiled children. These children have been showered with toys, clothing - almost anything they want, and their parents can afford, they get. Children are often the best-dressed members of their

families (Cutler and Blayne 1988).

Now this one-child generation has become the main purchasing power in the consumer market. Wang, X. and Zhou, J. (2011) even said that the future development of China would be in the hands of the “only child generation”. Marketers should put more focus on these only children’s own product choices, rather than the choices of their parents. As only children were born unique in their families, their product preferences may reflect their personalities, which are supposed to be different from sibling children (Chen, Z. Y., and Liu, R. X 2014; Jiao S., Ji, G., and Jing Q. 1986; Fan, C. et al. 1994; Wan C., Fan C., Lin G., and Jing Q. 2014). This research focuses on the only children’s own product choices in a consumer behavior context. As they are unique in their families and they have got used to be unique, they may choose products to show their uniqueness, namely, distinctive products. On this account, this research investigated that the product preferences of only-child consumers are different from those of sibling-child consumers. That is to say, only-child consumers have a higher desire to acquire distinctive products.

**H<sub>1a</sub>: Only-child consumers are willing to pay more for scarce or limited products than sibling-child consumers.**

**H<sub>1b</sub>: Only-child consumers are more likely to choose unpopular products than sibling-child consumers.**

## **2.4. Consumers' Need-for-Uniqueness (CNFU) and Product Choice**

Tepper, K., Tian, Bearden, W. O., and Hunter, G. L. (2001) defined CNFU as follows:

*the trait of pursuing differentness relative to others through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's self-image and social image.*

In uniqueness theory, Snyder and Fromkin (1980) addressed people's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to information about their similarity to others. They posited that people seek to establish and maintain a sense of moderate self-distinctiveness, because perceptions of either extreme similarity or extreme dissimilarity to others are experienced and being unpleasant. Previous researches found that all individuals crave uniqueness (Fromkin 1972; Snyder 1992; Snyder and Fromkin 1977, 1980).

Snyder and Fromkin (1977) developed and validated the first individual differences measure of need for uniqueness (see Appendix C). Although a number of studies support the construct validity of Snyder and Fromkin's need for uniqueness (NU) scale, it has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on public and socially risky displays of uniqueness (Lynn and Harris 1997). Tepper, Bearden, and Hunter (2001) have noted that NU scale scores predicted consumer's selections of public but not private products. On this account, Lynn and Harris (1997) developed a four-item measure to provide an alternative measure that does not emphasize the public and risky displays of uniqueness that are tapped by the NU scale, called the self-attributed need for uniqueness scale (see Appendix D). Lynn and Harris (1997) also found that the self-attributed need for uniqueness (SANU) scale was more strongly related to the desire for scarce products. They also

argued that "the effects of individual differences in the need for uniqueness on various consumer behaviors and dispositions would be mediated by a latent variable reflecting individual differences in the tendency to pursue uniqueness through consumption. Thus a 31-items, called the consumers' need for uniqueness (CNFU) scale, was developed. Lynn and Snyder (2002) considered the CNFU scale as a scale that "can be used as independent variable to provide stronger predictions of unique consumer preferences and behaviors than is possible via the use of the more general NU and SANU scales." Moreover, they also suggested that the CNFU scale can be used as dependent measures in research examining the factors that direct the pursuit of uniqueness to the consumer domain rather than to other domains (Lynn and Snyder 2002).

Consumers' need for uniqueness is exhibited through their acquisition and display of distinctive self and social image (Tepper, K., Tian, Bearden, W. O., and Hunter, G. L. 2001). Based on need-for-uniqueness theory, nonconformity research, and the consumer behavior literature, consumers' need for uniqueness is measured with three underlying factors or dimensions: creative choice counter-conformity<sup>8)</sup>, unpopular choice conter-conformity<sup>9)</sup>, and avoidance of similarity<sup>10)</sup> (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). Research has documented that need for uniqueness affects the preference for distinctive products (Lynn and Harris 1997).

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8) The first underlying factor, creative choice counter-conformity, reflects that the consumer seeks social differentness from most others but that this consumer makes selections that are likely to be considered good choices by these others (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001).

9) The second underlying factor, unpopular choice conformity, refers to the selection or use of products and brands that deviate from group norms and thus risk social disapproval that consumers withstand in order to establish their differentness from others (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001).

10) The last underlying factor or dimension, avoidance of similarity, refers to the loss of interest in, or discontinued use of, possessions that become commonplace in order to move away from the norm and reestablish one's differentness (Tian, Bearden, Hunter 2001).

As mentioned earlier, only-child consumers may use products as expressive symbols of uniqueness, which may be driven by CNFU. Fromkin, Williams, and Dipboye (1973) also noticed that students who are firstborn or only children versus latter born have a higher than usual need for uniqueness. On this account, this research propose that only-child consumers have a higher level of CNFU, which in turn leads to their choice of distinctive products.

**H<sub>2a</sub>: Only-child consumers have a higher level of CNFU than sibling-child consumers.**

**H<sub>2b</sub>: CNFU mediates the effect of only child on product choice.**

## **2.5. Consumption Context and Product Choice**

The effect of consumption context has been studied by studies in various aspects. Tepper, Bearden, and Hunter (2001) have noted that consumer's selections may be different between publicly consumed and privately consumed products. Wan, Xu, and Ding (2014) also noticed that consumer choice differs across private and public consumption contexts. As social consensus has been documented as being important in consumer decisions (Bearden and Etzel 1982; West and Broniarczyk 1998), consumers often choose products that are preferred by a majority of consumers to show their conformity with others (Wang, Zhu, and Shiv 2012). When talking about the influence of reference group, Bearden and Etzel (1982) indicated that all of the forms of influence of reference group requires the opportunity for social

interaction or public scrutiny of behavior. Seeking information, complying with the preference of others, and adopting values of others all involve some form of communication or observation of decisions, opinions, or behavior, which implies products that will be seen by others in a purchase context (Bearden and Etzel 1982). Ratner and Kahn (2002) also examined whether a desire to be evaluated favorably by others can lead consumers to switch away from their favorite items on variety-seeking behavior. In a culture that put emphasis on collectivism, the relationship with others is important, which may lead consumers to behave differently in front of others. As this research is focused on Chinese only-child consumers, the effect of Chinese Face Culture on consumer behavior should not be neglected.

### ***Chinese Face Culture***

The sociologist Goffman (1955) introduced the concept of "face" into social theory. He defined the face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact." Goffman (1955) also considered face as "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes - albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself.

Ho (1976) said that the concept of "face" is Chinese in origin. It has long been recognized that one of the most significant features of Chinese culture is its emphasis on a harmonious society and the appropriate arrangement of interpersonal relationships (Abbott 1970). Compared with Western consumers, one notable difference of Chinese consumers is that

Chinese consumers are heavily influenced by the norms or rules of their social groups (Qi, H. 2001). The richness in symbolic representations of face behavior in the Chinese linguistic system also suggests that the Chinese have been very face conscious in social interactions (Chiu, Tsang, and Yang 1988). Hwang, K. (1987) also mentioned that in Chinese society norms are heavily shaped by the hierarchically structured network of social relations, in which "people are embedded, by the public nature of obligations, and by the long time period over which obligations are incurred through a self-conscious manipulation of face and related symbols." Chinese people often emphasize the value of maintaining personal harmony and social order among persons situated in hierarchically structured relationships. Ho (1980) concluded that there had been unanimous agreement among social scientists that Chinese attach great importance to face. It is obvious that when making decisions or choosing products, Chinese consumers emphasize more on others' opinions than Western consumers, which is a manifestation of face culture. Because of the salience of face concern in Chinese culture, consumers would be less likely to choose distinctive products when the products are used in public.

In this research, I follow Bearden and Etzel's (1982) definitions<sup>11)</sup>, and provide the following definitions:

- A *public* product is the product consumed in a public context, namely,

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11) Bearden, William O., and Etzel, Michael J. (1982) defined public product as product that "other people are aware you possess and use. If they want to, others can identify the brand of the product with little or no difficulty", and they defined private product as product that "one used at home or in private at some location. Except for your immediate family, people would be unaware that you own or use the product" in their article "Reference Group Influence on Product and Brand Purchase Decisions", published in *Journal of Consumer Research*.

the product used in front of others.

- A *private* product is the product consumed in a private context.

As people also have a need for similarity (Lynn and Snyder 2002), only-child consumers may not choose distinctive product intentionally in front of others to show their conformity to others. Wang, Zhu, and Shiv (2012) have found that when preferences are subject to public evaluation, lonely consumers conform to the norm because of their fear of being evaluated negatively. For publicly consumed products, consumer's sensitivity to the evaluation by others should result in a weaker effect of only child on consumer behavior. As only-child consumers might be considered as lonely consumers, can the effect of consumption context on lonely consumers also apply to only-child consumers? If it can be applied to only-child consumers, the effect of only child on consumer choice might be weakened when the product is consumed in a public context. On this account, I proposed a moderating effect of consumption context (public product vs. private product) on the effect of only child on consumer choice.

**H<sub>3</sub>: The effect of only child on consumer choice might be weaker when the product is consumed in a public context than when the product is consumed in a private context.**

## **2.6. Statement of Hypotheses**

### *Main Effect*

**H<sub>1a</sub>: Only-child consumers are willing to pay more for scarce or limited products than sibling-child consumers.**

**H<sub>1b</sub>: Only-child consumers are more likely to choose unpopular products than sibling-child consumers.**

### *Mediator*

**H<sub>2a</sub>: Only-child consumers have a higher level of CNFU than sibling-child consumers.**

**H<sub>2b</sub>: CNFU mediates the effect of only child on product choice.**

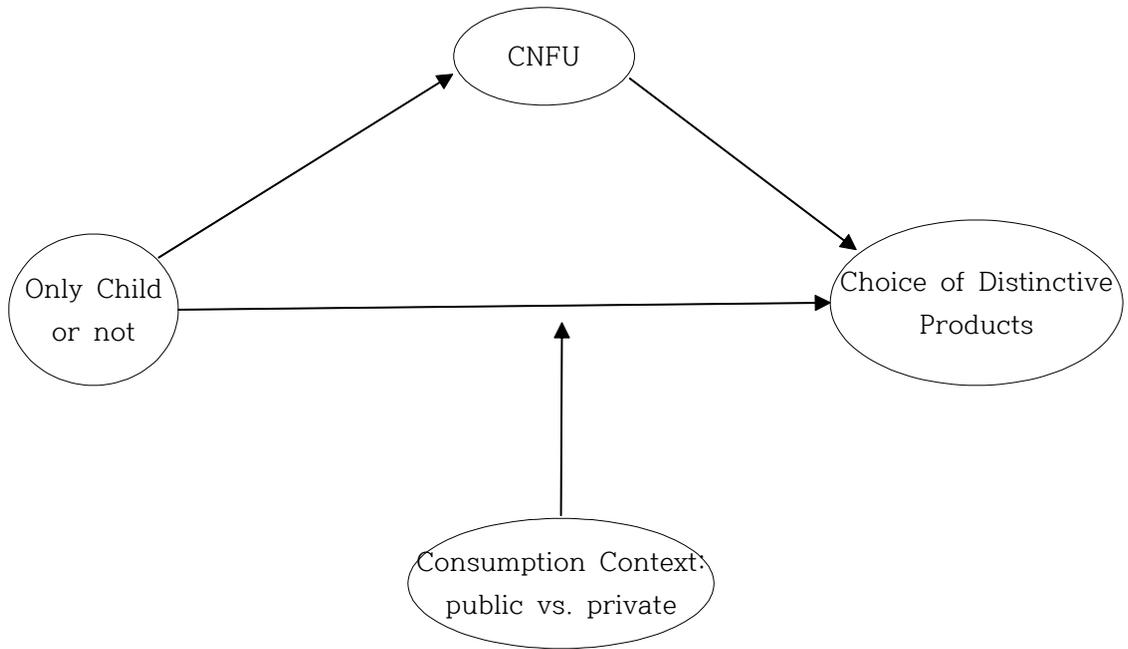
### *Moderator*

**H<sub>3</sub>: The effect of only child on consumer choice might be weaker when the product is consumed in a public context than when the product is consumed in a private context.**

## **2.7. Path Diagram**

Following is the path diagram of the hypotheses:

**FIGURE 2**  
**PATH DIAGRAM**



## **3. Experiment**

This experiment is designed to test the hypotheses by examining the effect of only child or not on the willingness to pay for scarce or limited products, and the effect of only child or not on the likelihood of choosing unpopular products, as well as exploring the mediating role of participants' CNFU and moderating role of product context.

### **3.1. Method**

#### ***3.1.1 Participants and Design.***

The questionnaire was uploaded on a Chinese questionnaire website<sup>12)</sup>. 221 participants from China (125 females, 83 males; 127 only children, 81 sibling children, see Table 1), aged between 19 and 37 years, answered the Chinese questionnaire (see Appendix A for the original version, and Appendix B for Chinese version) online. 13 participants over 37 were eliminated from the study, because they are not considered as the only-child generation.

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12) [heep://www.sojump.com/jq/4111508.aspx](http://heep://www.sojump.com/jq/4111508.aspx)

**TABLE 1**  
**Participants' General Information**

	male	female	total
only child	52	75	127
sibling child	31	50	81
total	83	125	208

### ***3.1.2 Procedure.***

Participants first were instructed to report their consumers' need for uniqueness on 31 items adopted from the CNFU scale (Tepper et al. 1999, see Appendix A). Participants indicated the strength of their agreement or disagreement with each of the 31 items on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongest Disagreement; to 5 = Strongest Agreement). As the research focuses on Chinese only-child consumers and Chinese sibling-child consumers, the experiment was done in China, and the Chinese version of CNFU was used (see Appendix B).

Subsequently, participants were given instructions for a seemingly unrelated study in examining their willingness to pay for scarce or limited products. Participants were shown pictures of four products (T-shirt and bag as public products, while night-suit and slipper as private product). For each product, they were given two pictures (one for an ordinary model, and the

other for a limited-edition model). Participants were asked to answer “Would you like to pay more for the limited edition instead of the ordinary products?” and indicate “How much more money at most would you be willing to pay for the limited edition instead of the ordinary product?” Participants responded the second question on a 10-point scale, where 1 = 105% of the price of the ordinary item, 2 = 110% of the price of the ordinary item, and the increasing intervals of 5% per scale point up to 10 = 150% of the price of the ordinary item.

Then participants reported their personal information, including family status (only child or not), age (to see whether they are only-child generation, aged under 35), gender and so on.

Finally, participants were told that the experiment was over. The online questionnaire system randomly told half of the participants that they would be given a chance to receive a T-shirt (or night-suit for the other half) in a game for their participation. The online questionnaire system showed participants two T-shirts (or night-suits) to choose from. Participants were told that a recent survey among people from the same area showed that 90% of them preferred T-shirt A (or Night-suit A), and 10% of them preferred T-shirt B (or Night-suit B), making T-shirt A (or Night-suit A) a popular choice and T-shirt B (or Night-suit B) a unpopular choice. Participants were also informed they had an equal chance of winning no matter which T-shirt (or Night-suit) they choose. Participants were asked to write down the choice they would like to win.

### **3.2. Result and Discussion**

### ***3.2.1 Willingness to Pay for Scarce or Limited Products***

I calculated scores of participants' willingness to pay more for the scarce or limited products by averaging their choices of willingness to pay more for the limited edition of the four products in the second part of the questionnaire ( $M = 7.02$ ,  $\sigma = 9.49$ , see Table 2). A one-way ANOVA of only-child consumers on participants' willingness to pay more for scarce or limited edition products indicated a significant main effect of only child or not ( $F(1, 206) = 6.467$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Supporting hypothesis 1a, only-child consumers are more willing to pay more for scarce or limited products than sibling-child consumers.

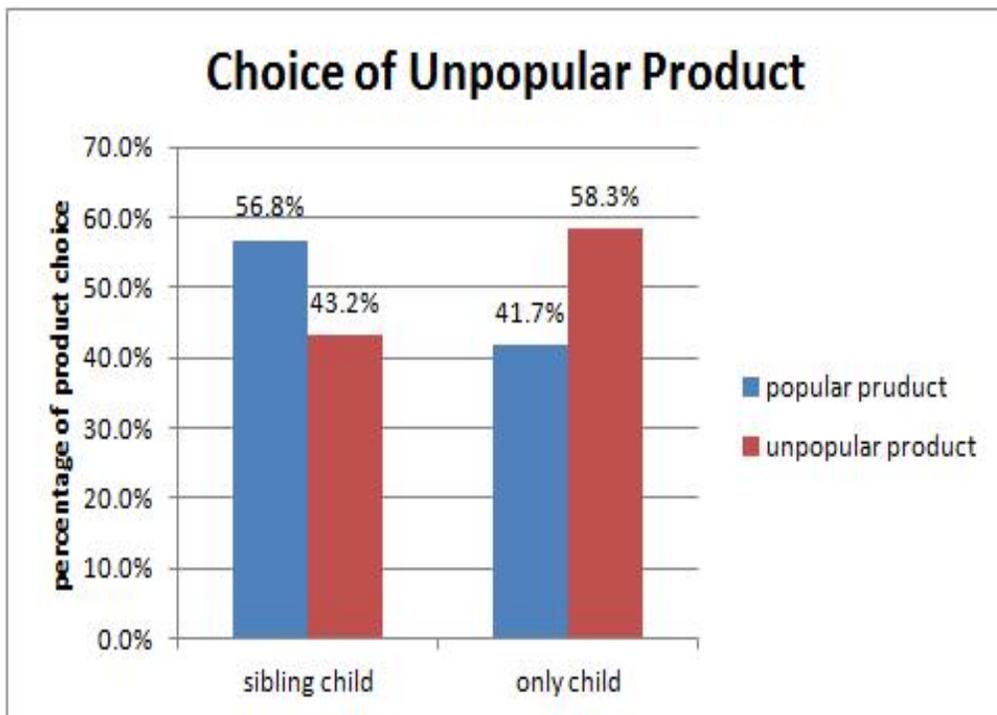
**TABLE 2**  
**Participants' Willingness to Pay**  
**for Scarce or Limited Products (%)**

<b>Family Status</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Sibling Child	4.95	81	8.56
Only Child	8.34	127	9.84
Total	7.02	208	9.49

### ***3.2.2 Choice of Unpopular Products***

I examined participants' choices of unpopular products. I coded the choice as one if they chose the unpopular product (T-shirt B or Night-suit B) and as zero if they chose the popular product (T-shirt A or Night-suit A). As show in Figure 2, 56.8% of sibling-child consumers chose popular products, whereas 43.2% of the sibling-child consumers chose unpopular products(T-shirt B or Night-suit B). Conversely, 58.3% only-child consumers chose unpopular products(T-shirt B or Night-suit B), whereas 41.7% of the only-child consumers chose popular products (T-shirt A or Night-suit A) (Pearson Chi-Square = 4.496,  $p < 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 1b was supported.

**FIGURE 3**



### ***3.2.3 Consumer's Need For Uniqueness***

Participants' responses to the 31 items for measuring consumer's need for uniqueness were summed to form a score ( $M = 94.52$ ,  $\sigma = 22.39$ , see Table 2). A one-way ANOVA on this score revealed a significant effect of only child ( $F(1, 206) = 6.227$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), supporting hypothesis 2a. Only-child consumer has a higher CNFU than sibling-child consumer.

**TABLE 3 Participants' CNFU**

Family Status	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Sibling Child	89.73	81	25.53
Only Child	97.57	127	19.64
Total	94.52	208	22.39

### ***3.2.4 CNFU as Mediator***

To test whether the effect of only child on product choice is mediated by CNFU, I performed the mediated moderation analysis for the willingness to pay for scarce or limited products and the choice of unpopular product separately (Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005). For the scarce or limited products, regressing scores of WTP for scarce or limited products on

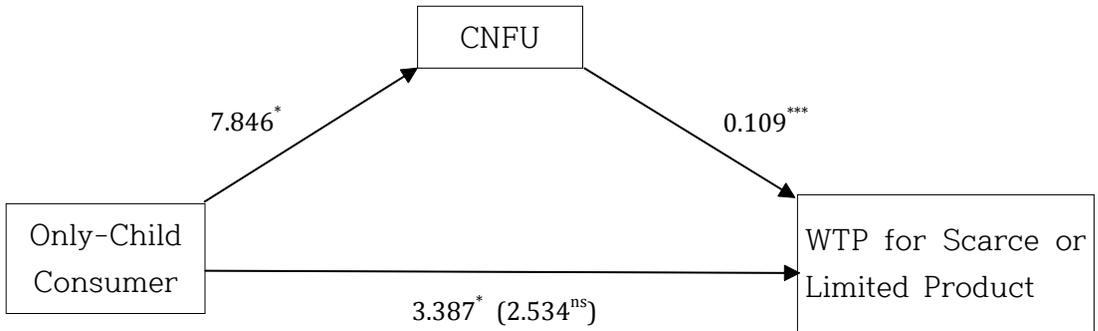
only-child consumers resulted in a significant effect ( $\beta = 3.387, p < 0.05$ ). Regressing scores of CNFU on only child also resulted in a significant effect ( $\beta = 7.846, p < 0.05$ ). Regressing scores of WTP for scarce or limited products on both only child and CNFU only resulted in a significant effect of CNFU ( $\beta = 0.109, p < 0.001$ ). Notably, the only child effect was no longer significant ( $\beta = 2.534, p > 0.05$ ). As shown in Figure 3a, these results supported the mediating role of CNFU.

A similar analysis for the choice of unpopular products was conducted. regressing choice of unpopular product on only child resulted in a significant effect ( $\beta = 0.151, p < 0.05$ ). Regressing scores of CNFU on only child also resulted in a significant effect ( $\beta = 7.846, p < 0.05$ ). Regressing choice of unpopular product on both only child and CNFU only resulted in a significant effect of CNFU ( $\beta = 0.009, p < 0.001$ ). Notably, the only child effect was no longer significant ( $\beta = 0.078, p > 0.1$ ). As shown in Figure 3b, these results also supported the mediating role of CNFU. Together, these two analyses confirmed a significant mediating pathway from only child to product choice through CNFU, supporting hypotheses 2b.

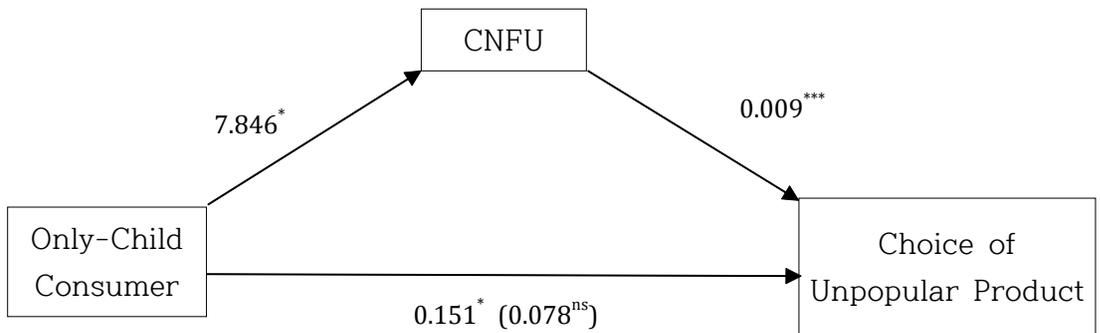
## **FIGURE 4**

### **MEDIATION ANALYSIS: CNFU AS A MEDIATOR**

#### **A. WTP FOR SCARCE OR LIMITED PRODUCT**



### B. CHOICE OF UNPOPULAR PRODUCT



NOTE.-- \*Significant at the 0.05 level; \*\*significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*\*significant at the 0.001 level.

### ***3.2.5 Consumption Context as Moderator***

111 participants (70 only children, 41 sibling children) were put into the public product context (T-shirt), and 97 participants (57 only children, 40 sibling children) were put into the private product context (night-suit) randomly. To test whether consumption context (public vs. private) could account for the effect of only child on consumer choice since people tend not to choose distinctive product in front of others to show their connection with others, we averaged WTP for scarce or limited publicly consumed products and privately consumed products separately, coding as WTP-public and WTP-private. A 2 (only child, sibling child)  $\times$  2 (consumption context) mixed ANOVA on participants' WTP for scarce or limited products yielded a not significant effect of consumption context ( $F(1,206) = 0.496, p > 0.05$ ), indicating that consumers' choices of scarce or limited products did not differ across different consumption context. No matter the scarce or limited product is used in front of others or the scarce or limited product is used by oneself at home, the effect of only child on product choice is the same. A similar analysis was conducted for choice of unpopular products. The result also indicated a not significant effect of consumption context ( $F(1, 206) = 2.029, p > 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 3 was rejected. The effect of only child on consumer choice does not differ across different consumption contexts, namely, only-child consumers will not intend not to choose distinctive product in front of others to show their connection with others.

### ***3.2.6 Test of Hypotheses***

#### ***Main Effect***

H<sub>1a</sub>: Only-child consumers are willing to pay more for scarce or limited products than sibling-child consumers.

--> supported (F (1, 206) = 6.467, p < 0.05).

H<sub>1b</sub>: Only-child consumers are more likely to choose unpopular products than sibling-child consumers.

--> supported (Pearson Chi-Square = 4.496, p < 0.05).

### *Mediator*

H<sub>2a</sub>: Only-child consumers have a higher level of CNFU than sibling-child consumers.

--> supported (F (1, 206) = 6.227, p < 0.05).

H<sub>2b</sub>: CNFU mediates the effect of only child on product choice.

--> supported ( $\beta = 0.109$ , p < 0.001 for scarce or limited products;  $\beta = 0.009$ , p < 0.001 for unpopular products)

### *Moderator*

H<sub>3</sub>: The effect of only child on consumer choice might be weaker when the product is consumed in a public context than when the product is consumed in a private context.

--> rejected (F (1,206) = 0.496, p > 0.05 for scarce or limited products; F (1, 206) = 2.029, p > 0.05 for unpopular products).

### ***3.2.7 Discussion***

This experiment demonstrates that only-child consumers are more likely to choose scarce or limited products and unpopular products than sibling-child consumers. Moreover, CNFU mediated the effect of only child on consumer choice. The experiment also rejects the hypothesis that the effect of only child on consumer choice might be weaker when the product is consumed in a public context than when the product is consumed in a private context. Only-child consumers' choice will not differ across different consumption contexts. I think this result might be because only children care less about others' thoughts, so they would not intend to choose common choice in front of others to show their connection with others. I will discuss the possible explanations for this issue and propose further research in detail in the limitation and future study section in the General Discussion.

## **4. General Discussion**

The current research examines how only child or not affect consumer's choice of distinctive product, and explores its underlying mechanism and possible moderator. I propose that only-child consumers are more likely to choose distinctive products than sibling-child consumers (hypothesis 1), mediating by consumer's need for uniqueness (hypothesis 2). A moderating role of consumption contexts (public vs. private) was also proposed (hypothesis 3). Results from the experiment support the first and second hypotheses, the third hypothesis was rejected.

In the experiment, only-child consumers showed a higher willingness to pay more for scarce or limited products, and are more likely to choose unpopular products than sibling-child consumers. Importantly, it revealed the underlying mechanism of this effect by measuring the participants' consumer's need for uniqueness. This mediation of consumer's need for uniqueness is robust whether for scarce products or unpopular product.

However, there are no significant differences of the effect between public products and private products. Even Wan, Xu, and Ding (2014) noticed that consumer choice differs across private and public consumption contexts, and only-child consumers may not choose distinctive product intentionally in front of others to show their conformity to others, the results of the experiment rule out this concern. The effect of only child on consumer choice is the same whether in public consumption context or private consumption context.

### **4.1. Implications**

The current research contributes to the researches on only child studies in a consumer behavior context by exploring the different product choices between only-child consumers and sibling-child consumers. As only-child consumers have already become the main purchasing power in China, and there will be more and more only-child consumers in the world, their distinctive product choices should be considered by marketers.

Though low labor cost makes mass production prevalent in China, Chinese consumers are no longer satisfied with merely low-cost products. As scarce or limited products are preferred by only-child consumers, customized products will become a trend when the market is targeted on only-child consumers.

As the effect of only child on consumer choice did not differ across different consumption contexts. Limited edition products are not constrained to products consumed in front of others. Some private products can also issue limited edition versions to attract only-child consumers.

## **4.2. Limitations and Future Research**

One question that remains unresolved is that the current research did not replicate past findings of the effect of consumption context on lonely consumers (Wang, Zhu, and Shiv 2012) to only-child consumers, not confirming that the private versus public context moderates the effect of only child on consumer choice. This suggests that though only-child consumers are born alone, they could not be considered as lonely consumers. Based on prior research that only children are more self-centered than sibling children (Nyman 1995), another possible explanation is that only-child consumers usually did not care about other people's thoughts, so

the possibility that participants may intentionally not choose distinctive products to show their conformity to others may not hold true for only-child consumers. It is also recognized that the current research did not provide adequate tests for the explanation. Future researches should examine the explanation and find other reasonable explanations.

As willingness to pay is affected by income, CNFU is affected by age, apart from consumption context, other possible factors, such as income, gender, age, may also affect the results and need to be tested in the future.

This research only used a limited number of products like T-shirt, night-suit, backpack, and slipper. A broader variety of products could be used to prevent the participants from being aware of the purpose of the research.

People from different cultures display different motives toward distinctiveness and similarity (He, L. et al. 2010). In order to rule out possible effect that cultural differences may have on the results of the research, the participants were recruited from only one country, China, where only child is very common. Future research may find some way to generalize the findings to other cultures or investigate the effect of only child on consumer choice across cultures.

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## 6. Appendix

### 6.1. Appendix A: Questionnaire (English Version)

#### Consumer Behavior Survey

Thank you very much for participating in this research.

I am a graduate student in Seoul National University Business School, majoring in marketing. This questionnaire is about consumer behavior, aiming to collect data for analyzing in my graduation paper.

All the information gathered in this survey will solely be used for marketing research purposes and will be kept anonymous. I appreciate your cooperation.

Thank you.

November 2014

**Researcher: Ma Huan**  
**E-mail: mahuanjoy@gmail.com**

1. Please indicate the strength of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following items (1 = strongly disagree; to 5 = strongly agree).  
 Please choose the number that represents your idea.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree			
	①	②	③	④	⑤			
1-1.	I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I'm different.			①	②	③	④	⑤
1-2.	When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are			①	②	③	④	⑤

	likely to disapprove.					
1-3.	When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-4.	As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-5.	I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-6.	I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-7.	I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-8.	Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-9.	I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can't be duplicated.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-10.	I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-11.	I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-12.	I rarely act in agreement with what others think are the right things to buy.	①	②	③	④	⑤

1-13.	When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-14.	I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-15.	As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-16.	I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-17.	Concern for being out of place doesn't prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-18.	Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-19.	The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-20.	I give up wearing fashions I've purchased once they become popular among the general public.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-21.	When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have often broken customs and rules.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-22.	The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.	①	②	③	④	⑤

1-23.	Products don't seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-24.	I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-25.	I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-26.	I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-27.	I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-28.	When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-29.	I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn't seem to accept.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-30.	If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-31.	When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I'm peculiar, but I don't care.	①	②	③	④	⑤

2. There are two models for the following four products: one for an ordinary model, and the other for a limited edition model. Would you like to pay more for the limited edition instead of the ordinary product?
1. Yes
  2. No (Please skip to Question 3)

2-1. How much more money at most would you be willing to pay for the limited edition T-shirt (right side) instead of the ordinary T-shirt (left side)?



- ① 5%    ② 10%    ③ 15%    ④ 20%    ⑤ 25%    ⑥ 30%    ⑦ 35%    ⑧ 40%    ⑨ 45%    ⑩ 50%

2-2. How much more money at most would you be willing to pay for the limited edition night-suit (right side) instead of the ordinary night-suit (left side)?



- ① 5%
- ② 10%
- ③ 15%
- ④ 20%
- ⑤ 25%
- ⑥ 30%
- ⑦ 35%
- ⑧ 40%
- ⑨ 45%
- ⑩ 50%

2-3. How much more money at most would you be willing to pay for the limited edition backpack (right side) instead of the ordinary backpack (left side)?



- ① 5%
- ② 10%
- ③ 15%
- ④ 20%
- ⑤ 25%
- ⑥ 30%
- ⑦ 35%
- ⑧ 40%
- ⑨ 45%
- ⑩ 50%

2-4. How much more money at most would you be willing to pay for the limited edition slipper (right side) instead of the ordinary slipper (left side)?



- ① 5%    ② 10%    ③ 15%    ④ 20%    ⑤ 25%    ⑥ 30%    ⑦ 35%    ⑧ 40%    ⑨ 45%    ⑩ 50%

**Personal Information**

1. What is your gender?

- ① Male  
② Female

2. Are you a only child?

- ① Yes  
② No

3. What is your age?

- ① Below 20
- ② 21 to 35
- ③ Above 35

The survey is over. In return for your participation, you will be given a chance to receive a T-shirt (night-suit) in a game. A recent survey among people from the same area showed that 90% of them preferred T-shirt A (night-suit A), and 10% of them preferred T-shirt B (night-suit B). You have an equal chance of winning no matter which T-shirt (night-suit) you choose. Which one would you like to win?

- ① T-shirt A (Night-suit A)
- ② T-shirt B (Night-suit B)

**End of Questionnaire  
Thank you for your help!**

## 6.2. Appendix B: Questionnaire (Chinese Version)

### 消费者行为调查问卷

首先，非常感谢您在百忙之中抽空完成该问卷。

我是首尔大学经营大学院市场营销专业硕士课程的学生。这份调查问卷是为完成研究生学位论文而设的调查问卷。意在收集相关数据而支持论文相关假设。

问卷将采取匿名的形式，所有结果只用于市场调查和数据分析。欢迎您提出宝贵意见！十分感谢您的配合！

谢谢！

2014年11月

研究员: 马欢

联系方式: [mahuanjoy@gmail.com](mailto:mahuanjoy@gmail.com)

1.请回答对每条陈述的赞成程度，“1”表示“非常不赞成”，“5”表示“非常赞成”。  
请选择代表你的看法的数字。

	非常不赞成 ①	比较不赞成 ②	一般 ③	比较赞成 ④	非常赞成 ⑤
1-1. 我通过收集不同寻常的产品来向人们展示我的与众不同。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-2. 我有时敢于打扮得与众不同，即使别人可能会不欣赏。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-3. 当我喜欢的产品或者品牌变得非常流行，我就会对它们失去兴趣。	①	②	③	④	⑤

1-4.	我的观念是：在购买和使用商品时，那些习俗和成规时注定要被推翻的。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-5.	我有时通过购买一些与众不同的产品或品牌来塑造更为独特的个人形象。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-6.	我经常寻找那些独一无二的产品或品牌，以便创造出只属于我的个人风格。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-7.	我会避免购买和使用那些被一般消费者所接受和购买的产品和品牌。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-8.	通常我在购物时的一个重要目的就是找到一些能表达我独特性的东西。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-9.	我常常通过搭配我所购买的东西来创造没有人能够模仿的个人形象。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-10	我常在穿着打扮上标新立异，即使这样可能会冒犯他人。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-11	我常努力寻找更为有趣的日常用品，因为我喜欢创新。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-12	当众人都认为某件东西应该买时，我常持与他们相反的看法。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-13	当我拥有的某种产品在大众中流行起来时，我便开始减少对它的使用。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-14	我通常不会购买和使用大众化的产品或品牌。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-15	通常来说，我不喜欢那些每个人都习惯性购买的产品或品牌。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-16	我通过购买特别的产品或品牌来积极地创造个人独特性。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-17	对“不合时宜”的担心不会阻止我穿自己想穿的衣服。	①	②	③	④	⑤

1-18	对有趣且特别的产品独具慧眼有助于我确立与众不同的形象。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-19	我最喜欢的产品或品牌是那些能体现我个性的。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-20	一旦我购买的服装的样式在大众中流行起来，我就不会再穿这种样式的衣服。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-21	在购买和使用商品时，我经常打破常规。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-22	在大众中越普遍的商品或品牌，我越没兴趣购买。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-23	大家经常购买的产品对我来说不具有很大价值。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-24	在买东西和做事情的时候，我通常关注怎样利用它们来塑造更加与众不同的个人形象。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-25	我经常特意寻找那些能够增加我的个人独特性的新产品或品牌。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-26	在涉及购买什么或拥有什么时，我经常违反我所属的社会团体公认的规则。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-27	在涉及某种产品何时和如何使用时，我经常违反我所属的社会团体公认的规则。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-28	当我拥有的服装样式变得太大众化时，我通常就不穿它了。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-29	我喜欢通过购买人们不大会接受的东西来挑战流行品味。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-30	如果有人暗示我在某社会场合穿着不合适，我会继续以同样的方式着装。	①	②	③	④	⑤
1-31	当我的穿着与众不同时，我通常会意识到	①	②	③	④	⑤

别人认为我古怪，但我并不在意。

2. 以下四种产品，每种都有普通版和限量版，您是否愿意为了购买限量版而支付额外的价格？

- ① 愿意
- ② 不愿意（请跳转到第3个问题）

2-1. 对于图片里面的限量版体恤，您愿意比普通版多支付的多少？



- ① 5%
- ② 10%
- ③ 15%
- ④ 20%
- ⑤ 25%
- ⑥ 30%
- ⑦ 35%
- ⑧ 40%
- ⑨ 45%
- ⑩ 50%

2-2. 对于图片里面的限量版睡衣，您愿意比普通版多支付的多少？



- ① 5%
- ② 10%
- ③ 15%
- ④ 20%
- ⑤ 25%
- ⑥ 30%
- ⑦ 35%
- ⑧ 40%
- ⑨ 45%
- ⑩ 50%

2-3. 对于图片里面的限量版背包，您愿意比普通版多支付的多少？



- ① 5%
- ② 10%
- ③ 15%
- ④ 20%
- ⑤ 25%
- ⑥ 30%
- ⑦ 35%
- ⑧ 40%
- ⑨ 45%
- ⑩ 50%

2-4. 对于图片里面的限量版拖鞋，您愿意比普通版多支付的多少？



- ① 5%
- ② 10%
- ③ 15%
- ④ 20%
- ⑤ 25%
- ⑥ 30%
- ⑦ 35%
- ⑧ 40%
- ⑨ 45%
- ⑩ 50%

个人信息

1. 您的性别是？

- ① 男
- ② 女

2. 您是否是独生子女？

- ① 是

② 否

3. 您的年龄是

① 20岁以下

② 21到35岁

③ 35岁以上

为了感谢您的参与，您将有机会参与抽奖，获得两款体恤（睡衣）中的一款。最新的一项调查显示：90%的人更喜欢A款体恤（睡衣），10%的人喜欢B款体恤（睡衣）。两款体恤（睡衣）的中奖概率相同，请选择您希望得到的体恤（睡衣）款式：

① A款体恤（睡衣）

② B款体恤（睡衣）

问卷结束  
感谢您的参与！

### 6.3. Appendix C: Need for Uniqueness (NU) Scale

Respondents indicate the strength of their agreement or disagreement with each of the following items on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongest Disagreement; to 5 = Strongest Agreement).

1. When I am in a group of strangers, I am not reluctant to express my opinion publicly.
2. I find that criticism affects my self-esteem.
3. I sometimes hesitate to use my own ideas for fear that they might be impractical.
4. I think society should let reason lead it to new customs and throw aside old habits or mere traditions.
5. People frequently succeed in changing my mind.
6. I find it sometimes amusing to upset the dignity of teachers, judges, and "cultured" people.
7. I like wearing a uniform because it makes me proud to be a member of the organization it represents.
8. People have sometimes called me "stuck-up."
9. Others' disagreements make me uncomfortable.
10. I do not always need to live by the rules and standards of society.
11. I am unable to express my feelings if they result in undesirable consequences.
12. Being a success in one's career means making a contribution that no one else has made.
13. It bothers me if people think I am being too unconventional.
14. I always try to follow rules.
15. If I disagree with a superior on his or her views, I usually do not keep it to myself.

16. I speak up in meetings in order to oppose those whom I feel are wrong.
17. Feeling "different" in a crowd of people makes me feel uncomfortable.
18. If I must die, let it be an unusual death rather than an ordinary death in bed.
19. I would rather be just like everyone else than be called a "freak".
20. I must admit I find it hard to work under strict rules and regulations.
21. I would rather be known for always trying new ideas than for employing well-trusted methods.
22. It is better to agree with the opinions of others than to be considered a disagreeable person.
23. I do not like to say unusual things to people.
24. I tend to express my opinions publicly, regardless of what others say.
25. As a rule, I strongly defend my own opinions.
26. I do not like to go my own way.
27. When I am with a group of people, I agree with their ideas so that no arguments will arise.
28. I tend to keep quiet in the presence of persons of higher ranks, experience, etc.
29. I have been quite independent and free from family rule.
30. Whenever I take part in group activities, I am somewhat of a nonconformist.
31. In most things in life, I believe in playing it safe rather than taking a gamble.
32. It is better to break rules than always to conform with an impersonal society.

Reverse each of the scores on items 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, and 31. That is, on these items only, perform the following reversals: 1 -> 5; 2 -> 4; 3 -> 3; 4 -> 2; 5 -> 1. Then add the scores on all 32 items, using the reversed scores for the aforementioned items. Higher scores reflect a higher need for uniqueness.

*Source:* From C. R. Snyder and H. L. Fromkin. (1977), "Abnormality as A Positive Characteristic: The Development and Validation of Scale Measuring Need for Uniqueness," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 86: 518-527.

## 6.4. Appendix D: Self Attributed Need for Uniqueness (SANU) Scale

Respondents complete the following sentences with the alternative that best describes them:

1. I prefer being \_\_\_\_ different from other people.
  - (a) no,
  - (b) slightly,
  - (c) moderately,
  - (d) very,
  - (e) extremely
  
2. Being distinctive is \_\_\_\_ important to me.
  - (a) not at all,
  - (b) slightly,
  - (c) moderately,
  - (d) very,
  - (e) extremely
  
3. I \_\_\_\_ intentionally do things to make myself different from those around me.
  - (a) never,
  - (b) seldom,
  - (c) sometimes,
  - (d) often,
  - (e) always

4. I have a \_\_\_\_ need for uniqueness.

- (a) weak,
- (b) slight,
- (c) moderate,
- (d) strong,
- (e) very strong

For scoring, a = 1, b = 2, c = 3, d = 4, and e = 5. The total score reflects the sum of the responses to the four items. Higher scores reflect a higher need for uniqueness.

*Source:* From M. Lynn & J. Harris. (1997), "Individual Differences in the Pursuit of Self-Uniqueness through Consumption", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 27: 1861-1883.

## **6.5. Appendix E: Consumer's Need for Uniqueness Scale**

Each item is formatted into a five-point (strongly agree to strongly disagree) Likert-type response scale. Respondents indicate the strength of their agreement or disagreement with each of the following items on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongest Disagreement; to 5 = Strongest Agreement).

1. I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I'm different.
2. When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.
3. When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.
4. As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, customs and rules are made to be broken.
5. I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.
6. I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.
7. I avoid products or brands that have already been accepted and purchased by the average consumer.
8. Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.
9. I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can't be duplicated.
10. I often dress unconventionally even when it's likely to offend others.
11. I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.
12. I rarely act in agreement with what others think are the right things to buy.

13. When a product I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin using it less.
14. I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population.
15. As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily purchased by everyone.
16. I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.
17. Concern for being out of place doesn't prevent me from wearing what I want to wear.
18. Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.
19. The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.
20. I give up wearing fashions I've purchased once they become popular among the general public.
21. When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have often broken customs and rules.
22. The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it.
23. Products don't seem to hold much value for me when they are purchased regularly by everyone.
24. I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.
25. I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.
26. I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.
27. I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group

regarding when and how certain products are properly used.

28. When a style of clothing I own becomes too commonplace, I usually quit wearing it.
29. I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they wouldn't seem to accept.
30. If someone hinted that I had been dressing inappropriately for a social situation, I would continue dressing in the same manner.
31. When I dress differently, I'm often aware that others think I'm peculiar, but I don't care.

## 6.6. Appendix F: CNFU Scale (Chinese Version)

题目采用 Likert 5点量表计分，要求调查者回答对每条描述的赞成程度，“1”表示“非常不赞成”，“5”表示“非常赞成”。

1. 我通过收集非同寻常的产品来向人们展示我的与众不同。
2. 我有时敢于打扮得与众不同，即使别人可能会不欣赏。
3. 当我喜欢的产品或者品牌变得非常流行，我就会对它们失去兴趣。
4. 我的观念是：在购买和使用商品时，那些习俗和成规时注定要被推翻的。
5. 我有时通过高买一些与众不同的产品或品牌来塑造更为独特的个人形象。
6. 我经常寻找那些独一无二的产品或品牌，以便创造出只属于我的个人风格。
7. 我会避免购买和使用那些被一般消费者所接受和购买的产品和品牌。
8. 通常我在购物时的一个重要目的就是找到一些能表达我独特性的东西。
9. 我常常通过搭配我所购买的东西来创造没人能够模仿的个人形象。
10. 我常在穿着打扮上标新立异，即使这样可能会冒犯他人。
11. 我常努力寻找更为有趣的日常用品，因为我喜欢创新。
12. 当众人都认为某件东西应该买时，我常持与他们相反的看法。
13. 当我拥有的某种产品在大众中流行起来时，我便开始减少对它的使用。
14. 我通常不会购买和使用大众化的产品或品牌。
15. 通常来说，我不喜欢那些每个人都习惯性购买的产品或品牌。
16. 我通过购买特别的产品或品牌来积极地创造个人独特性。
17. 对“不合时宜”的担心不会阻止我穿自己想穿的衣服。
18. 对有趣且特别的产品独具慧眼有助于我确立与众不同的形象。
19. 我最喜欢的产品或品牌是那些能体现我个性的。
20. 一旦我购买的服装的样式在大众中流行起来，我就不会再穿这种样式

的衣服。

21. 在购买和使用商品时，我经常打破常规。
22. 在大众中越普遍的商品或品牌，我越没兴趣购买。
23. 大家经常购买的产品对我来说不具有很大价值。
24. 在买东西和做事情的时候，我通常关注怎样利用它们来塑造千架与众不同的个人形象。
25. 我经常特意寻找那些能够咋呢国家我的个人独特性的新产品或品牌。
26. 在涉及购买什么或拥有什么时，我经常违反我所属的社会团体公认的规则。
27. 在涉及某种产品何时和如何使用时，我经常违反我所属的社会团体公认的规则。
28. 当我拥有的服装样式变得太大众化时，我通常就不穿它了。
29. 我喜欢通过购买人们不大会接受的东西来挑战流行品味。
30. 如果有人暗示我在某社会场合穿着不合适，我会继续以同样的方式着装。
31. 当我的穿着与众不同时，我通常会意识到别人认为我古怪，但我并不在意。

## 7. 요약 (국문초록)

전 세계에서 외동가정의 수량이 증가하고 있다. 일부 시장 특히 인구 정책을 시행하고 있는 중국 시장에서 외동 소비자가 이미 주축 구매력이 되었다. 본 연구는 외동이 소비자 상품 선호에 미치는 영향을 조사하였다. 외동 소비자가 형제자매가 있는 소비자보다는 더 높은 소비자 독특성 욕구(CNFU)를 가지고 독특한 상품을 선택하는 가능성이 더 높다고 가정하였다. 게다가, 외동이 소비자 선택에 미치는 영향은 공중 소비 콘텍스트(context)와 개인 소비 콘텍스트에서 다르다고 추정하였다. 그래서 개인 소비 콘텍스트에서 선택을 내릴 때보다 공중 소비 콘텍스트에서 선택을 내릴 때 외동이 소비자 선택에 미치는 영향은 더 약하다고 가정하였다. 독특한 상품에 있어, 연구에서 독특한 상품을 추구하는 수단으로 희소하거나 한정된 상품의 선택과 인기 없는 상품의 선택, 이 두 가지의 소비자 선택을 조사하였다.

가설을 검증하기 위해 실험을 실시하였다. 이 실험은 i) 외동이 희소하거나 한정된 상품의 지불의사에 미치는 영향과 ii) 외동이 인기 없는 상품을 선택하는 가능성에 미치는 영향 또는 소비자 독특성 욕구(CNFU)의 매개효과를 조사하였다. 소비 콘텍스트(consumption context)의 조절효과를 조사하기 위해 공개적으로 소비된 상품(다른 사람 앞에서 사용하는 상품)과 개인적으로 소비된 상품(집에서 스스로 사용하는 상품)을 모두 실험 문항에 포함 시켰다. 실험 결과에서 외동이 소비자 선택에 미치는 영향과 소비자 독특성 욕구(CNFU)의 매개효과를 확정하였다. 하지만 소비 콘텍스트(consumption context)의 조절효과를 확정하지 않았다. 공중 소비 콘텍스트나 개인 소비 콘텍스트에서, 외동이 소비자 선택에 미치는 영향이 다른 것으로 나타나지 않는다.

결과를 종합해 보면 외동 소비자가 형제자매가 있는 소비자보다는 독특한 상품을 선택하는 가능성이 높다는 결론을 내릴 수 있다. 이외에도 소비자 독특성 욕구(CNFU)의 매개효과를 밝혔다. 그리고 외동이 소비자 선택에 미치는 영향이 다른 소비 콘텍스트에서 다른 양상을 보이지 않았다.

주요어: 외동, 소비자 독특성 욕구, 독특한 상품, 소비 콘텍스트

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