

2009

# China's image as perceived by the American public after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

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**China's image as perceived by the American public  
after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games**

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

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2009

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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the influence of hosting the Olympics on the country's national image. Based on the 2008 Beijing Olympics, it investigated the relationships among people's perception of the national image dimensions and those of the image that the host country tried to project during the Olympics. This study also examined the routes for the formation of these perceptions. An online survey was conducted.

It was indicated that while majority of the respondents indicated different degrees of attitude change, only small portion reported a complete change of attitude. Also, more than thirty percent of those whose attitude has changed reported a more negative view toward China.

It was found that although respondents were generally favorable toward the 2008 Olympics, the three promoted Olympic concepts were not well received; especially for the concepts of *green Olympics* and *people's Olympics*. A lack of clear understanding of the three concepts was also identified among the respondents. Strong correlations were found among most of the national image dimensions and the projected Olympic image. The two lowest rated national image dimensions, *government* and *exports*, were found more correlated to the other dimensions and the projected Olympic image.

Traditional media was found to be the dominant information source for both information about China and the Olympics. But *personal experience with the Chinese people* had become a very important route for information about China. And the internet played a big part in the distribution of information about the 2008 Olympics.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Among many elite international sports events, the Olympic Games are probably one of the most competitive. This competition culminates with the athletes' performance in every sport event but begins with the fierce bidding and jockeying for the prerogative to host the Games in the first place. When the modern Olympic Games started in Athens in 1896, it had only 14 participating nations, mainly from Europe. Today, it is a prestigious global ceremony with contestants from 201 countries on six continents. The Olympics, therefore, is not only a stage for young athletes to fulfill their dreams, but also an arena for nations to present their economic, cultural and political might.

Without any doubt, hosting the Olympics can be very costly. It is estimated that the 2008 Beijing Olympics required an investment of U.S. \$14.3 billion (Bidding Committee Beijing 2008, as cited in Preuss, 2004), excluding what was spent on the bidding efforts. Cities, regions and nations wanting to host the event spare no effort for a variety of reasons. According to Preuss (2004), hosting the Olympics brings both tangible and intangible benefits to the host country within a seven-year period which otherwise would take several decades. It can act as a facilitator for urban redevelopment, enabling changes. Many research efforts (Weed, 2008; Alpha Bank, 2004; Australia Tourist Commission, 2000) have demonstrated the impact of hosting the Olympics on the nation's tourism, housing, sports facilities, transportation, and economics. Other impacts,

such as its effects on the host country's (or city's) image, are more subtle, but not less significant.

Newsworthy events have been used by many governments for the purpose of influencing national images in foreign publics (Manheim, 1989). Its newsworthiness has made the Olympics a good opportunity for the host country to project its image to the rest of the world. For example, according to the International Olympic Committee (2004, as cited in Young & Wamsley, 2005), the broadcast of the 2004 Athens Games reached 3.9 billion viewers in 220 countries and territories. Indeed, hosting the Olympics is considered to be a golden opportunity for a host country to bolster its national image.

Many studies (Dong, 2005; Espy, 1979) have provided evidence that the Olympics affords the host country a good opportunity to build an image that reflects its military, economic, political, and cultural importance in a favorable way (Giffard, 2000). Studies on the Olympics (Wang, 2007; Dong, Li, Shi, Yu, Chen, & Ma, 2005) in South Korea, Spain, Australia and Greece showed that the host countries became more visible in the international media, and the tone of the reports about them became more positive over time. Stories about the host countries were considered less unusual, and depicted them as less threatening to the global status quo and to common values after the Games.

### **China and 2008 Beijing Olympics**

Hosting the Olympic Games is a part of China's 100-year Olympic-related dream that began in 1908, when the country was invited by the London Olympic committee to participate in the Games. Facing unstable domestic circumstances and without a clear



understanding of the concept of the Olympics, the then-ruling Qing government denied the invitation. The worldwide popularity of the Games, however, has made citizens wonder whether the nation is missing out on an important opportunity. Some educated Chinese started questioning the following: when would China send its first athlete to the Olympics, when would China win the first Olympic gold medal, and when would China host the Games for the first time. Hosting the Games is a logical next step after its athletes first competed in 1932, and after winning its first Olympic gold in 1984. Beijing's bid for the Olympics started as early as 1991 when it attempted to host the 2000 Games, but suffered a narrow loss (by two votes) to Sydney. In July 2001, Beijing was finally declared the host city of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.

As host, China vigorously promoted three main themes of the 2008 Games: (1) green Olympics, (2) high-technology Olympics and (3) the people's Olympics. The idea is to proclaim a new image for China, one that is more environmentally friendly, high-tech and humanistic (Berkowitz, Gjermano, Gomez & Schafer, 2007). These themes could not have come at a more auspicious moment, amidst global concern over the way the country handles its environment, its policy toward human rights, and the cheap low-quality products it sends to foreign markets.

For China, foreign relations have never come easy. How it managed its image as Olympic host was a major national challenge. In July 2007, Hollywood producer and director Steven Spielberg resigned as artistic adviser to the Games in protest over of the country's stance on Darfur, which drew a harder line for China on that issue. In March

2008, demonstrations about Tibet threw the spotlight again on internal politics and allegations of human rights violations. (Berkowitz et al., 2007). The torch relay was confronted with “Free Tibet” protests in many cities on its way around the world. Similarly, the environmental situation and low quality of manufactured products have also been identified as big concerns in building China’s national image leading up to the Olympic Games.

Although the International Olympics Committee (IOC) and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) have not spared any effort in emphasizing that the Olympics is a sports event that should not be related to political issues, activist groups took advantage of this opportunity to publicize their protests. For China, the protesting has brought a lot of pain for their Olympics campaign. The amount and frequency of negative coverage about China in the foreign media were serious challenges to the Beijing Olympic Committee who wanted to promote a positive image of the nation.

Under these circumstances, did China succeed in improving its national image by hosting the Olympics? Or did the world keep criticizing China on the issues such as environmental degradation and human rights regardless of the Olympic Games? While many studies have shown the positive effects of hosting the Olympics on a nation’s image, is it possible that this mega-event may have had a negative impact on China’s national image?

For campaigners, it is important to keep a running tab on the public's perception of campaign messages and the achievement of campaign objectives. It is also essential to understand how these perceptions are formed through various sources. Despite the large number of studies that have been done on the national image-building effects of the Olympics, very few scholars have attempted to explain exactly how the Olympics benefits the host country's image. Furthermore, previous studies have failed to examine whether the public's perceptions of the Games was consistent with the images that the host nation intended to promote, and whether perceptions of the nation reflects their perception of the hosting of the Games.

To bridge these knowledge gaps and to gain a better understanding of the image-building effect of the Olympics, this study investigates the hosting of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing as part of China's image management strategy. This study explores the American public's perceptions of China's general national image and their perceptions of the images China attempted to promote as the host of the Beijing Olympics. It also examines the routes through which these perceptions are formed in people's minds.

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between China's national image and the American public's perception of the national image China attempted to project during the 2008 Olympics.

2. To map the routes of the formation of these images by determining which information sources American audiences frequently used and which information sources are most trusted.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

National image is a concept that is becoming more and more important to both governments and businesses. For business organizations, a favorable image abroad gives a strong advantage in building and enhancing corporate reputation. It is also an indicator of extra product value. As many studies (e.g., Al-Sulatiti & Baker, 1998; Gurhn-Canil & Maheswaran, 2000; Knight & Calantone, 2000) have shown that international consumers' intentions to purchase products and brands made in a given country can be influenced by that country's reputation. For government leaders, a positive national image can be beneficial economically and politically (Anholt, 2007).

#### **National Image - Dimensions and Routes of Formation**

##### **Definitions of national image**

The concept of image has been extensively studied in the field of business. Kotler (1997) defined image as "a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions a person holds regarding an object" (p. 607). Thus, the image of an object plays a crucial part in shaping people's attitudes and actions toward it.

In the area of organizational reputation management, studies have often referred to nations as objects of image perception (Passow, Fehlmann, & Grahlow, 2005), claiming that reputation management is not limited to the organizational level. Scholars have differentiated among three sub-concepts of image: (1) the image the senders try to project, (2) the image the mass media portray, and (3) the image the public perceives (Nimmo &

Savage, 1976; Wang, 2003). For example, Manheim and Albritton (1984) and Giffard and Rivenburgh (2000), operationalizing national image as the portrayal of a nation in the foreign media found that successful public relations campaigns can contribute to changing national image. In a later study, Wang (2003) found a partial correlation between the image the Chinese government promoted and the country's image as perceived by the public.

National image, however, is often defined as “the way a nation is viewed by foreign publics” (Wang and Wang, 2007, p. 3). This definition is used for the purposes of this study.

### **Dimensions of national image**

In order to measure national image, scholars have identified several factors that make up the concept (i.e., Boulding, 1956; Boulding, 1969; Manheim & Albritton, 1984).

Adopting the widely used Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient (Fombrun & Gardberg, 2000; Fombrun, Gardberg & Sever, 2000) in the field of corporate image measurement, Passow, Fehlmann and Frahlow (2005) proposed the Fombrun-RI Country Reputation Index (CRI) as an instrument with which to measure national image. CRI is composed of 20 attributes which can be grouped under six dimensions: emotional appeal, physical appeal, financial appeal, leadership appeal, cultural appeal and social appeal.

In a study of South Korea's reputation as perceived by Americans, Yang, Shin, Lee & Wrigley (2008) used the term “global appeal” as equivalent to “social appeal,” and

added a new dimension to the list—“political appeal.” These seven dimensions are defined as follows:

- (1) *Emotional appeal* refers to the extent a country is respected, liked, and trusted;
- (2) *Physical appeal* refers to perceptions of the country’s people, environmental appearance, and infrastructure such as roads, housing, public services, health care and communications capability;
- (3) *Financial appeal* refers to perceptions of the country’s investment environment, profitability, and risk profile;
- (4) *Leadership appeal* refers to perceptions of the charisma of the nation’s leaders, their efficiency in communicating an appealing national vision, their management quality, and their obedience to international laws;
- (5) *Cultural appeal* refers to perceptions of the country as socially and culturally diverse, with a rich history, and with an abundance of entertainment opportunities;
- (6) *Global appeal* refers to perceptions of the country as having high standards in its dealings with the global community, good causes, and sound environmental policies; and
- (7) *Political appeal* refers to perceptions of the country’s political status, such as its internal conditions and relationships, the existence of democratic institutions and processes, and a stable political environment.

Another emerging measurement instrument is the Anholt Nation Brands Index (NBI). According to Anholt (2003; 2007), the national brand is the sum of people’s perceptions of a country across six areas of national competence. He presented a hexagon

of competitive identity that includes six main factors: brands, people, policy, tourism, culture, and investments (Figure 1). NBI has been used since 2005 to measure the power and appeal of a nation's image. Using data from a poll of five million consumers worldwide, images of 39 countries are measured quarterly using the following dimensions:

- (1) *Exports* - People's level of satisfaction with a country's products and services, and their perceptions of the country's contribution to progress in science and technology;
- (2) *People* - How the country views its human capital;
- (3) *Governance* - The competence and fairness of a country's governance;



**Figure1.** The hexagon of competitive identity. Source: Anholt, 2003.



(4) *Tourism* - The physical appeal and tourism value of a country;

(5) *Culture and heritage* - People's perceptions of a country's cultural heritage and their willingness to appreciate and take part in its cultural activities; and

(6) *Immigration and investment* - People's willingness to live, work, and study in the country, and their views of the country's current economic and social condition.

### **Routes of national image formation**

National image can be formed through various routes. Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006) pointed out that the formation of national images is a complex communication process involving different information sources. These sources may include one's early experiences in school and general education; comments and observations by relatives, acquaintances, and friends; and personal experience in foreign cultures, among others. Anholt (2007) contends that national reputation can be created through six natural channels: (1) tourism promotion and people's first-hand experience in a country; (2) the country's export brands; (3) the country's policy decisions; (4) the country's solicitations of inward investment, recruitment of foreign talent and students, and expansion into the country by foreign companies; (5) cultural exchange and cultural activities; and (6) the people of the country themselves.

Yang, Shin, Lee & Wrigley (2008) reviewed previous studies, and divide the routes of national image formation into two types of individual experiences: personal and second-hand. Personal experience is first hand experience acquired from doing business in or by traveling to a country; personal use of products or service; personal participation

in cultural events; and meeting international publics personally. On the other hand, second-hand experience refers to word-of-mouth communications, and information about a country received from other communication channels, including the mass media.

Previous studies have supported the effectiveness of these routes in shaping an individual's image of a particular nation. Beaudoin (2004) suggests two aspects of personal experience — international involvement and interpersonal discussion. He claims that interpersonal discussion is an effective route to national image formation so that a higher level of interpersonal discussion indicates a higher level of knowledge about a country. Yang, Shin, Lee & Wrigley (2008) found that an individual's experience in South Korea is positively related to his or her awareness of the country, which in turn leads to a more favorable view of South Korea.

Other scholars have emphasized the importance of second-hand experiences of a country, especially through the mass media. As they pointed out, individuals and even public officials mainly depend on the mass media for information on international actors and events (Lippmann, 1922; Palmgreen & Clarke, 1977). Kunczik (1997) agrees that the mass media play a big part in helping form images of other people and governments primarily because these audiences get information about foreign countries from the mass media to which they are exposed. In their study, Yang, Shin, Lee & Wrigley (2008) suggest that the online media, national newspapers and cable TV are more effective in managing the reputation of South Korea, compared to other information sources.

Experimental investigations reveal that source credibility can significantly influence the persuasive effect of messages (Kioussis, 2001; Metzger, Flanagin, Eyal, Lemus, & McCann, 2003). Cook (1969, as cited by Savolainen, 2007) points out that the more competent the source is, the less counter-argumentation that source elicits.

Heesacker, Richard and Cacioppo (1983) also state that source credibility can enhance message-relevant thinking for those who typically do not scrutinize message content, which may result in attitude change. Chatman (1991) argues that people tend to prefer first-level information from first-hand experience or personal communication, while second-level information received from outsiders was perceived to be less trustworthy.

Schweiger (2000) notes that, among the mass media, people prefer to place their trust in traditional media over the Internet, while TV is considered to be more credible than newspapers.

Studies on national image also answer the question “By which routes are opinions about national reputation formed?” In their research on the reputation of South Korea, Lee et al. (2008) identified personal experience, interaction with the Korean people, consumption of products, and mass media as major routes in the formation of the country’s reputation. In the interviews, people claimed personal experience as the most effective and trusted route. Yang et al. (2008) sought to answer this question by asking respondents what channels they are most likely to use to learn about other nations, and found online media on the top of the list, followed by personal communication, TV, and newspapers, respectively. However, these studies did not pay much attention to (1) how

people frequently use each route, (2) how much attention they pay to each route, and (3) how much they trust each route. In trying to identify the routes of national image formation, this study investigates these three variables.

### **Promotion of National Image**

Early studies in sociology have found that once a population has formed its image of a country, that image is hard to change. Social psychologists Sherif and Sherif (1956) observe that “once established in a group, stereotypes tend to persist” (p. 653). Similarly, Deutsch and Merritt (1965), in their meta-analysis of the effects of events on national and international images, came to the conclusion that “human thinking and imaging” (p. 183) is to a large extent resistant to sudden environmental changes. “Almost nothing in the world seems to be able to shift the images of 40 percent of the population even within one or two decades” (p. 183).

However, other communication researchers argue that national image can be modified or damaged by certain communication processes or incidents. Analyzing U.S. media coverage of five developing countries, Albritton & Manheim (1985) found a reduction in volume and an increase in the proportion of positive coverage after these countries’ hiring of public relations consultants. As a result, these countries were more likely to be portrayed as cooperative nations, leading to a more favorable national image. Other studies have also shown that through reputation management strategies, national image, especially the portrayal of a country in the foreign news media, could be improved

dramatically (e.g., Francis, Reichelt & Wang, 2005; Harris, Fury & Lock, 2005; Harris, Kolovos & Lock, 2001; Lee, 2007).

Many posit that in an era of globalization, the power of a nation is derived from its ability to project a favorable image of its military, economy, political impact or cultural importance among other nations. Therefore, countries are now more concerned about how they are perceived by other nations and are becoming more active in measuring and managing their reputation abroad.

Manheim & Albritton (1984) claim that the majority of the world's governments are involved in active campaigns to manage their image by, for example, contracting public relations firms in target countries. To evaluate such efforts, scholars have studied national image in terms of strategic public diplomacy (Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2005), effective nation building (Taylor & Kent, 2006), and national branding (Anholt, 2002 and 2007; Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

### **Public diplomacy**

Public diplomacy is an overarching concept that covers various efforts to promote a country's image in foreign publics. Public diplomacy has been recognized as a powerful image-shaping tool for governments. Signitzer and Coombs (1992) describe "tender-minded" public diplomacy as a way to build recognition and favorable opinion overseas. Nye (2004) suggests that public diplomacy is a form of "soft power" which can influence a foreign public's opinion using relationship building, economic assistance, cultural exchanges, and support for democratic efforts and human rights.

Public diplomacy is defined as “the way in which both government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government’s foreign policy decision” (Delaney, 1968, p. 3). Anholt (2003) emphasizes the impact of public diplomacy on foreign policy, defining public diplomacy as “the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies” (p.123).

As Lee (2007) points out, governments are becoming more and more active in dealing with other countries’ media and their publics to protect and promote national interests. Since the 1970s, more governments have started launching public information campaigns in other countries, especially in the United States. For example, according to the foreign agent registration records of the Department of Justice, between 1974 and 1978, 25 nations contracted with American public relations firms for assistance (Manheim & Albritton, 1984). This number has been increasing dramatically every year. During the second half of 2006, a total of 389 active registrations, representing 573 foreign principals, were recorded (U.S. Department of Justice, 2006).

### **The Olympic Games and national image**

The last few decades have witnessed the growing competition among countries to host global media events such as the Olympic Games, head-of-state summits, international conferences and symposia, commemoration of historical events, and international trade shows. These events are planned, symbolic performances targeted to an international media audience (Dayan & Katz, 1992). Hosting such international events

is therefore a way to reinforce a host nation's trade and economic relations as well as improve its national image (Larson & Park, 1993).

The Olympic Games has long been seen as a public diplomacy tool and an image management strategy by which the host country could promote mutual understanding and beneficial relationships with foreign publics (Giffard & Rivenburgh, 2000; Karl, 1982; Kunczik, 2003). Anholt (2007) claims that the Olympics is the most effective tool for raising awareness and changing the image of a country, compared with other international sports events. This is so because in reporting about its own participation in the Games, the foreign media also place the host country in the spotlight. Thus, a host country's campaign messages are carried to all corners of the world (Giffard & Rivenburgh, 2000; Karl, 1982; Kunczik, 2003).

Many nations and cities have stood as convincing evidence of the so-called "Olympic effect." For example, the 1964 Games helped Japan project its image as an advanced country, among the most developed in the world, as opposed to its traditional reputation as a low-cost copycat producer. The successful introduction of the bullet train during the Games promoted the country as a technological powerhouse (Fishman, 2005).

The participation of the former Soviet-bloc countries in the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games announced the re-establishment of ties between South Korea and communist countries such as China and Vietnam. The nation's trade and economic relations were thus reinforced (Haberman, 1988).

Tradition and arts combined to depict Barcelona, the heart of Spain's Catalonia region, as the "land of passion". The 1992 Games introduced Catalonia to the world as more culturally and economically developed than the rest of Spain. As the Games progressed, Barcelona was transformed from "the capital of Catalonia" into the "capital of the world" (Spà, Rivenburgh, & Larson, 1995).

The 2000 Sydney Olympics strengthened the city's image as a modern, global city. Both tourism and convention business increased after the Games (Berkowitz, Gjermano, Gomez & Schafer, 2007).

However, if not handled properly, hosting the Olympics could lead to negative unintended effects. In 2004, during the Atlanta Winter Olympics, a bombing incident at Centennial Park became a big setback. The city had to spend millions of dollars hiring PR professionals to offset the negative outcomes.

### **China's National Image**

The Chinese government has been known to be very attentive to its national image, establishing an Overseas Publicity Department under the Central Party Committee in 1990 to promote the country through favorable publicity, cultural events and media relations in other countries launched by public relations firms it contracted.

The government frequently issues "white papers" on subjects such as human rights, the situation in Tibet, China's national defense, and the state of its environment. In 1991, China employed the American PR firm Hill and Knowlton to lobby the U.S.

Congress for the unconditional renewal of the most-favored-nation trade status. In the



summer of 2000, China spent millions of dollars on a road show that showcased its culture and technological prowess throughout the United States. It signed an agreement with AOL Time Warner to begin broadcasting English-language programs from the U.S. (Wang, 2003).

### **China's Image in the Media and among People**

There is no doubt that China is now a recognized major power in the world-stage. In a multi-nation survey of public opinion conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in 2006, Americans saw China as a strong and growing economic and military power. On a ten-point scale, with 0 being “not influential at all” and 10 being “extremely influential,” China received a score of 7.8, a rating that is expected to increase to 8.3 in the next 10 years. Sixty percent of Americans and 61% of South Koreans surveyed predicted that China's economy will grow to be as large as that of the U.S. (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006).

However, despite the public relations efforts and the global consensus on China's economic potential, the country's reputation is far from being favorable in many parts of the world.

Already, the US press has been accused of spreading the China-as-a-threat theory. Goodman (1999), examining the coverage of China in the Washington Post and New York Times, found that 70% of the stories referred to conflict, 32% to violence, and 24% to severe crisis. Mann (1999) observes that American news organizations tend to portray

China simplistically by using only one frame. He contends that such a reductionist way of framing led to many direct and indirect negative effects.

Some studies have found that media coverage of China has changed in recent years. Ching (1998) pointed out that although the U.S. media have been taking an anti-Chinese stance since 1989, articles covering Chinese lifestyles and social attitudes have started to emerge in the U.S. press, promoting a comparatively objective view of China.

However, in a study on coverage of China, Peng (2004) found that coverage has increased significantly over time, but the overall tone remained negative, especially in stories that depict political and ideological frames. Although Beaudoin & Thorson (2001) observe that the American press generally carries negative portrayals of other countries, this negative trend in Chinese media coverage has been relentless.

These media reports appear to resonate in people's perceptions. Wang (2003) examined the correlation between the image the Chinese government promotes and the American public's perception of China. He found that there was agreement in some aspects. For example, the American public sees China as a socialist country, a developing country, and a major power at the same time. However, they also view China as victimizing its neighbors, and as a militant and obstructive force instead of a peace-loving nation that had become a victim of foreign aggression, an international cooperator, and an autonomous actor.

In the 2005 Anholt Nation Brands Index (ANBI) survey, China as a brand, ranked 21st out of the 35 countries examined. While it received high ranks in culture and heritage, it was among the bottom three in all other dimensions. The two categories in which it received the least favorable scores were “governance” and “exports.” In the 2007 report, China ranked 23rd among 38 countries, declining in rank by four percent from the final quarter of 2005. The worst drop happened in the area of “immigration and investment,” specifically in terms of people’s willingness to live and work in China, which went down 11.4% (Anholt, 2007).

### **The 2008 Beijing Olympics and the projected Olympic image**

Hosting the modern Olympic Games has long been part of China’s 100-year Olympic dream. This three-part dream began to be realized when Changchun Liu, a sprinter, represented the country for the first time in the 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. The second part of the dream became a reality when China reaped 15 gold, eight silver and nine bronze medals in the 1984 Summer Olympics. Last year, the country completed the third part of its Olympic odyssey: hosting the Games. The efforts started in 1991, when China decided to bid for the 2000 Olympics. With the IOC’s concern for human rights and environmental issues, China came back with a narrow loss to Sydney by a margin of only two votes. Five years later, in 1998, China tried again. On July 13, 2001, Beijing was officially announced as the host city of the XXIX Olympics.

According to the global public relations firm Weber Shandwick Worldwide, the Chinese bid for the 2008 Olympics was more methodical and systematic compared to its

bid for the 2000 Olympics (Berkowitz et al., 2007). BOCOG hired Bovis Lend Lease, one of the world's leading project management and construction companies, as the technical adviser for bid development and strategic bid presentation (Lease, 2008). Pu (2006) pointed out that China was portrayed more positively by the U.S. media during the 2008 bid than in the 2000 bid.

During the 2008 bid, three main concepts were promoted: green Olympics, high-Tech Olympics and people's Olympics. One hundred days before the host city was announced, three Olympic action "theme months" launched the three concepts on which the 2008 Beijing Olympics were anchored.

As Berkowitz et al. (2007) stated, environmental problems, poor quality of exports, and handling of human rights issues have been three of the major challenges for China in improving its image in the global community. And in the 2008 Olympic campaign, China chose to address these three major concerns directly through the three Olympic concepts (Table 1).

**Table 1.** China's national image and the projected Olympic image

<i>China's National Image before the Games</i>	<i>Projected Olympic Image (Three promoted concepts)</i>
Environmental problems	Green Olympics
Low product quality	High-tech Olympics
Human rights issues	People's Olympics

## Green Olympics

China has long been known as having a poor record on environmental protection and awareness. Its lack of regulation in this area has drawn numerous critiques from many parts of the world in the last few decades (Berkowitz et al., 2007). Indeed, the environmental issue has been used by critics as an argument against the country's hosting of the Olympics. According to an article from the Associated Press (2007), Beijing's pollution still presents "an enormous problem, a health menace and a public relations minefield." With more countries concerned about the performance and health of their athletes, it is incumbent upon China to improve the country's environmental condition.

"Green Olympics" evolved from this background. According to the official Beijing Olympics website,

Environmental protection is a key prerequisite for designing and constructing the Olympic Games facilities, while strict ecological standards and systematic guarantee systems will be established. Environmentally friendly technologies and measures will be widely applied in environmental treatment to structures and venues. Urban and rural afforestation and environmental protection will be widely enhanced in an all-round manner. Environmental awareness will be promoted among the general public, with citizens greatly encouraged to make "green" consumption choices and urged to actively participate in various environmental improvement activities to help better the capital's ecological standards and build a city better fit for all to enjoy (BOCOG, 2008).

By the year 2007, 20 major environmental projects, including the construction of "clean" energy plants to prevent pollution from the burning of coal, ecological development plans, and environmental awareness plans costing U.S. \$12.2 billion, have been completed. In order to ensure a cleaner environment during the Games, the main

plants of the Capital Steel Group in west Beijing were moved, and production was stopped at the eastern chemical plant of the Beijing Eastern Petrochemical Company. Citizens were also encouraged to use public transportation (instead of driving) to cut down on air pollution and to achieve the 70 percent “blue- sky days” goal. About half of Beijing’s 3.3 million vehicles were prohibited from running from August 8 to August 24 (BOCOG, 2008).

### **High-tech Olympics**

China has been viewed as a copycat country that manufactures low-quality versions of products originating from other countries (Berkowitz, 2007). This image cannot stand if it aims to broaden investment categories as well as strengthen its own brands. The XIXX Olympics has been seen as an opportunity to showcase China’s achievement in technology. The official website explains the concept of “high-tech Olympics:”

A grand sporting event featuring high technology will be held by incorporating the latest domestic and international scientific and technological achievements. Beijing will upgrade its scientific innovative capabilities, boosting the industrialization of high-tech achievements and popularizing their use in daily life. The Beijing Olympic Games is to serve as a window to showcase the city’s high-tech achievements and its innovative strength. This concept has been tied to the Beijing Olympics all through the preparation. The National Aquatics Center, also called the “Water Cube,” uses a special material called ethylene/tetrafluoroethylene copolymer (ETFE), a high-tech material which was first used in the aviation industry. In addition, the structure of the building is guaranteed to last 100 years (BOCOG, 2008).

Furthermore, the National Stadium or “bird’s nest”, a major competition venue, was made out of a special type of steel that China used to import for supply, but now produces in large quantities. The brand recognition of Chinese companies that sponsored the games, such as Lenovo and China Mobile, as well as China’s national brand, was heightened (Berkowitz et al., 2007). Following the successful example of Japan’s launching of the bullet train, China also ran its new train system, based on cutting edge magnetic-levitation (MAGLEV) technology first tested in 2003, to serve the 2008 Olympics.

### **People’s Olympics**

Human rights issues in China have long received high attention of the foreign media. Analyzing the coverage of China in the New York Times, Li and Cyr (1998) found that the number of stories on human rights is on the rise. Many think human rights issues were one of the major reasons why China failed in its bid for the 2000 Olympics (Pu, 2006). Pu (2006) also points out however, that China received fewer critiques on this aspect from the world’s prestigious newspapers in 2008.

Thus, “people’s Olympics” is defined as the following on the official website of Beijing Olympics (BOCOG, 2008):

The Beijing Olympic Games will be an occasion to spread modern Olympic ideas while displaying the splendid Chinese culture, Beijing’s historical and cultural heritage, and its residents’ positive attitudes. It will also be an opportunity to advance cultural exchanges, to deepen understanding and friendship between the peoples of the world, and to promote harmonious development between mankind and nature. It will be a time to promote healthy interaction between individuals and society

and to foster mental and physical health. In line with the “people-oriented” and “athlete-centered” ideas, Beijing will spare no efforts to provide quality services and to build a natural and social environment that will satisfy all the Games’ participants (BOCOG, 2008).

The statement spurs the hope among the members of the international community that the Games would help improve democracy and human rights conditions in China. As IOC Vice-president Dick Pound said, “The Olympics is an incentive for China to expand human rights, and [should serve as] a vehicle for change” (Collins, 2002, p. 137). In a speech in Moscow, Liu announces that the Games “will help promote our economic and social progress and will also benefit the further development of our human rights cause” (BOCOG, 2008).

The successful bid, however, did not guarantee a reprieve from the world’s scrutiny of China’s human rights record. Human rights issues became more and more intense for China as the Games were fast approaching. Since 2004, proponents for stronger action on Darfur heavily criticized China for evading moral responsibility for a humanitarian disaster that it labels as “genocide”. In 2006, activists launched a campaign targeting China’s stake in Darfur, creating the slogan of "Genocide Olympics", in direct affront against the three Olympic anchor concepts. In July 2007, Steven Spielberg resigned as artistic adviser to the Games, dismayed about the Chinese handling the Darfur issue. In March 2008, a violent rebellion in Tibet threw the spotlight again on internal politics and human rights concern about China’s hosting of the Olympics, culminating with “Free Tibet” protests that disrupted the torch relay in many cities around the world.



## Research Questions

This study aims to explore the correlation between the American public's perception of China's national image in general and China's image as promoted in the 2008 Olympic Games. Based on the foregoing literature, the following research questions are asked:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the national image dimensions (exports, people, governance, tourism, culture and heritage, and immigration and investment) as seen by an American audience and the projected Olympics image (green, high-tech and people's Olympics), also from an American point of view?

Many researchers (e.g., Giffard & Rivenburgh, 2000; Karl, 1982; Kunczik, 2003; Anholt, 2007) claimed that hosting the Olympics is one of the most potent public diplomacy tools to promote mutual understanding and beneficial relationships with foreign publics and to improve a nation's image world wide. This research question looks more precisely into the relationship between the Olympics campaign messages and the host country's national image. The objective is to explore the linkage between national image dimensions and the promoted Olympics image.

Research Question 2: What information sources did American audiences frequently use, paid closer attention to, and trusted the most to shape their image of China?

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study aims to examine the relationship between American audiences' perception of the Beijing Olympics and their general perception of China after the Games. To gather data for this study, a survey was conducted. This survey has three main objectives: (1) to examine China's national image among Americans; (2) to examine Americans' perception of the three main concepts promoted by the Chinese government during the 2008 Olympics; and (3) to explore the routes through which these perceptions were formed.

#### **Sampling and survey procedures**

The sample for this study was derived from the population of a large state-run university in the Midwest. This university has a student body of about 27,000, of which 2,068 are international students, and about 4,000 are faculty and staff members. The American Midwest is composed of what political analysts call the "bellwether states", those whose general points of view are echoed by the rest of the country. The Midwest states comprise a geographic region where, in general, political tendencies match those of the entire nation, such that election results in the Midwest predict the eventual outcome of a national election. The political nature of this study demands respondents with the ability to understand national reputations and international affairs. Therefore, a university community was selected. Since the study aims to examine American perceptions of China and the Beijing Olympics, only non-Chinese members were selected.

An e-mail directory of the university student body was obtained from the Office of the Registrar while an e-mail directory of faculty and staff members was obtained from the human resource department. These email directories were used as the study's sampling frames. These directories listed the e-mail addresses of 21,032 undergraduate students, 2,799 graduate students and 6,203 faculty and staff members. A modified simple random sampling method was applied to each of the three email lists to select the sample. An add-in software, Random Number Generator, was used. This software allowed Excel users to fill in a selected range of cells with random numbers of any range. In this study, a new column was created in the undergraduate student email list file. A random number ranging from 1 to 21,032 was assigned to each of the undergraduate student e-mail address using the Random Number Generator. Cases were then sorted by this new column in ascending order. The top 2,800 (13.3%) e-mail addresses were picked. The same technique was used for the graduate student and faculty and staff list. The first 400 (14.3%) graduate student addresses, and first 800 (12.9%) faculty and staff e-mail addresses were picked.

Before data collection, the research proposal was approved by the university's institutional review board. Information of all participants' was kept confidential.

An invitation message was e-mailed to each of the identified respondents, including a description of the purpose of the research and a link to the online questionnaire. Once respondents click the link, they were led to a consent form page which described the risks and benefits entailed in the study as well as other information

necessary to make the decision to participate in the study. If they agreed to participate, they were directed to the first page of the questionnaire; if they declined, they were led to a thank you page. The invitation message was sent on October 1, 2008, five weeks after the 2008 Olympics officially closed, to reduce the impact of intensive media coverage.

The online questionnaire was accessible for a two-week period, from October 1, 2008 to October 12, 2008. In order to increase the response rate, two reminder messages were sent electronically. The first reminder was sent three days after the initial invitation; the second reminder was sent three days after the first reminder. A total of 457 people completed the questionnaire. Two respondents, who had stayed in the U.S. for less than a year, were taken out of the sample. Answers from 455 respondents were analyzed. The overall response rate was 11.4 percent (10 percent for students and 16.6 percent for faculty and staff).

### **Questionnaire design and operationalization of variables**

The questionnaire was divided into four major parts. The first part aims to measure China's general national reputation as seen by the respondents. To do this, six dimensions were adopted from Anholt's (2003) Nation Brand Index: (1) *export*, (2) *people*, (3) *governance*, (4) *tourism*, (5) *culture and heritage*, and (6) *immigration and investment*. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with a total of 24 statements regarding the six dimensions of national image on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, which means "strongly disagree" to 5, "strongly agree."

*Export* was measured using three items: (1) I'm satisfied with the quality of product and services offered by Chinese companies; (2) China has the scientific and technological strength to manufacture products of high quality; and (3) I will actively seek out products from China. The Cronbach's alpha reliability score for this index was .615.

*People* was measured by four items: (1) The Chinese people are nice and friendly; (2) The Chinese people make for a qualified workforce; (3) The Chinese people are well-educated; and (4) I would like to become close friends with Chinese people. The Cronbach's alpha reliability score for this index was .811.

*Governance* was measured by four items: (1) China is governed competently; (2) China is governed by a capable government; (3) the Chinese government supports good caucuses; and (4) China is a responsible member of the global community. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this index was .716.

*Tourism* was measured by four items: (1) China is a beautiful place; (2) China is a safe place to visit; (3) China offers fine entertainment activities; and (4) I'm eager to visit China. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this index was .701.

*Culture and heritage* was measured by four items: (1) China is a country with a rich history; (2) China has a distinctive culture; (3) The Chinese culture is attractive to me; and (4) I would like to participate in Chinese cultural activities. Here, the Cronbach's alpha reliability was .682.

*Immigration and investment* was measured by five items: (1) I'm willing to live and work for a substantial period of time in China; (2) I'm willing to study in China for a substantial period of time; (3) China is an inviting place to do business; (4) China is a safe place to invest; and (5) China maintains a stable economic environment. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this index was .751.

Scores were then averaged based on the six dimensions. As the statements were all positive toward China, a high score indicates a positive perception the respondent holds about China on each dimension.

The second part of the questionnaire intended to measure people's perception of the 2008 Olympic Games. It was divided into two parts: (1) people's perception of the general favorability of the 2008 Olympics; and (2) their perception of the Olympic image projected by China, which included three main concepts: (a) green, (b) high-tech and (c) people's Olympics.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with 18 statements, which included four items that measured general favorability and 15 that evaluated projected Olympic image, on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, which means "strongly disagree" to 5, "strongly agree."

Three items were used to measure people's general favorability of the 2008 Olympics: (1) China was well prepared for the 2008 Olympics; (2) The 2008 Olympics was successfully hosted; and (3) I would like to know more about China because of the Olympics. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this index was .762.

In the Olympics image part, *Green Olympics* was measured by five items: (1) The design and construction of the Olympics' facilities were environment-friendly; (2) The athletes' performance were negatively affected by environmental conditions; (3) The environmental condition in China was good enough for the hosting of the Olympics; (4) Hosting the Olympics has generated great environmental awareness in China; and (5) Hosting the Olympics has improved the environmental conditions in China. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this index 's was .685.

Four items were used to measure the respondent's perception of *high-tech Olympics*: (1) Advanced technologies were used in the design and construction of the Olympic buildings and facilities; (2) The 2008 Olympics demonstrated China's strength in science and technology; (3) Chinese companies offered quality products and services during the 2008 Olympics; and (4) Hosting the Olympics will advance China's achievements in science and technology to the next level. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this index was .724.

*People's Olympics* was measured by three items: (1) The 2008 Olympics deepened my understanding of the Chinese people and Chinese culture; (2) The 2008 Beijing Olympics was people-oriented; and (3) The 2008 Olympics helped improve the human rights conditions in China. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this index was .601.

Scores were then averaged based on each concept. As the statements were all positive toward the 2008 Olympics, a high score indicates positive perception about the Olympics on each concept.

There were additional questions that aimed to determine whether people's attitude toward China changed after the Olympics and their views on the political implications of the Olympics.

People's attitude change after the Olympics was measured by two items. The first assessed the extent to which respondents agreed with the statement, "My perception of China has changed because of the way it hosted the 2008 Olympics." The responses here ranged from 1 to 5, where 1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=somewhat, 4=a lot, and 5=completely. The second item asked: "If your perception of China changed after the 2008 Olympics, towards which direction did it change?" Here, the response options ranged from 1 to 5, 1 means "positively" and 5 means "negatively."

People's view on the political implications of the Beijing Olympics was measured by two items. First, they were asked if they think the Olympics should be tied to political events or not. Second, they were asked if the 2008 Olympics suffered from China's involvement in Tibet and Darfur.

The third part of the questionnaire explores the sources from which the respondents learned about and formed their opinion about China and the 2008 Olympics. The following sources were provided to the respondents: (1) online media, (2) personal experience with Chinese people, (3) personal communication with non-Chinese people, (4)



seminars, conferences, meetings or symposia, (5) traditional media (such as newspapers, TV, radio), (6) travel to China and participation in Chinese cultural events, and (7) other.

Respondents' information source use was measured in terms of how often they use the source (frequency), how much attention they paid to the source, and the extent to which they trust the source.

To measure frequency of use, respondents were asked the following questions: (1) How frequently do you use the following sources to get information about China? and (2) How frequently do you use the following sources to get information about the 2008 Olympics? Responses were coded as 1=hardly ever; 2=once in a while; 3=somewhat often; 4=often; 5=everyday; and 0=don't know/not applicable.

To measure how much attention respondents paid to each of the routes, two questions were asked: (1) When you use the following sources of information about China, how closely do you pay attention to them? and (2) When you use the following sources of information about the 2008 Olympics, how closely do you pay attention to them? Responses were coded as 1=no attention at all; 2=very little attention; 3=fair attention; 4=close attention; 5=as closely as I can; and 0=don't know/ not applicable.

Two questions were asked about the level of trust respondents place on each of the routes: (1) About how much do you trust these sources of information regarding China? and (2) About how much do you trust these sources of information regarding the 2008 Olympics? Responses were coded on a five-point scale, where 1 means "do not trust at all," and 5 means "trust completely."

The fourth part of the questionnaire gathered demographic information; including U.S. citizenship, number of years spent in the U.S., age, and classification in school. The respondents were also asked if they had ever visited China and the number of Chinese friends they have.

The online questionnaire was designed and maintained using the online survey software *Opinio*. The questionnaire was stored on the website which provided an online address that allowed respondents to access the questionnaire whenever and wherever they wanted to.

### **Pretest**

As Backstrom and Hursch (1963) point out, “no amount of intellectual exercise can substitute for testing an instrument designed to communicate with ordinary people” (as cited in Hunt, Sparkman & Wilcox, 1982, p. 269). The pretest, therefore, is a very important part of the questionnaire development process. The questionnaire was pretested on a convenience sample of five native English speakers. Five native English speakers, including ISU students, a government employee, and social workers, volunteered to pretest the survey instrument.

Each of the pre-test participants was sent the invitation message that described the purpose of the study and provided a link to the consent form and the online questionnaire. They were allowed to complete the questionnaire on their own. After finishing this task, the researcher asked them to evaluate the questionnaire and provide suggestions for improvement. Based on their comments, modifications were made to the questionnaire.

**Data analysis**

Frequency distribution was used to describe audiences' perception of each of the nation's image dimensions and the Olympics concepts.

To examine the relationship between people's perception of national image dimensions and the Olympics image, Pearson correlation tests were conducted.

Frequency distribution was used to ascertain what sources people use most frequently and the sources they trust to shape their perception of China and the Olympic concepts.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

The findings are presented in two parts. The first part consists of descriptive statistics. The second part presents the answers to the research questions.

#### Descriptive Findings

##### Demographic variables

Of the 455 valid questionnaires analyzed, a great majority (97.7%) came from U.S. citizens or permanent residents. The rest of the respondents indicated they had stayed in the U.S. for at least one year (Table 2). The male (50.5%) respondents slightly exceeded the females (49.5%). The respondents primarily fell within the 18 to 24 years age group (53.4%), followed by the 35 to 54 group (19.1%), and the 25 to 34 group (18.2%). Only 9.2% of the respondents were 55 years of age or older. Undergraduate students composed more than half of the respondents (51.4%). Graduate students (19.3%), faculty (11.9%), and staff members (17.4%) make up the rest. Most of the respondents (93%) have never visited China. However, more than 70% of the respondents have at least one Chinese friend or more. About half (46.2%) said they have had 1 to 3 Chinese friends, 13.6% have four to seven, followed by 13% who have eight or more.

##### National image variables

The descriptive data regarding national image dimensions are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 2** Demographic characteristics of respondents (N=455)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Citizenship</b>	
None U.S. citizen or permanent resident	3.3
U.S. citizen or permanent resident	96.7
Stayed in the US from 1 to 28 years	
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	50.5
Female	49.5
<b>Age</b>	
18 to 24	53.4
25 to 34	18.2
35 to 54	19.1
55 or over	9.2
<b>Classification</b>	
Undergraduate student	51.4
Graduated student	19.3
Faculty	11.9
Staff	17.4
<b>Have visited China</b>	
No	93.0
Yes	7.0
<b>Number of Chinese friends</b>	
None	27.3
1 to 3	46.2
4 to 7	13.6
8 or more	13.0

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics on national image dimensions (N=455)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Export</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>.731</b>
Overall, I'm satisfied with the quality of products and services offered by Chinese companies.	2.76	1.068
China has the scientific and technological strength to manufacture products of high quality.	3.79	.975
I will actively seek out products from China.	1.78	.867
<b>People</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>.696</b>
Overall, the Chinese people are nice and friendly.	3.92	.917
The Chinese make for a very qualified workforce.	3.50	.980
The Chinese are well-educated.	3.67	.910
I'd like to make close friends with Chinese people.	3.60	.976
<b>Governance</b>	<b>2.48</b>	<b>.766</b>
The Chinese government supports good causes.	2.55	.827
China is governed competently.	2.41	.925
China is governed by a capable government.	2.48	.933
China is a responsible member of the global community.	2.49	1.128
<b>Tourism</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>.766</b>
China is a beautiful place to visit.	3.91	.949
China offers fine entertainment activities.	3.41	.920
I'm eager to visit China.	3.20	1.300
China is a safe place to visit.	3.07	1.007
<b>Culture and heritage</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>.682</b>
China is a country with a rich history.	4.59	.730
The Chinese culture is attractive to me.	3.35	1.182
China has a distinct culture.	4.57	.676
I would like to participate in Chinese cultural activities (such as fairs and exhibitions).	2.94	1.114
<b>Immigration and investment</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>.768</b>
I'm willing to live and work for a substantial period of time in China.	2.26	1.236
I'm willing to study in China for a substantial period of time.	2.54	1.244
China is an inviting place to do business.	3.21	1.026
China is a safe place to invest.	2.99	.937
China maintains a stable economic environment.	3.08	.934

Note: Responses were coded using a five-point scale, where 1=*strongly disagree*, 5=*strongly agree*.

<sup>1</sup>Computed as the sum of answers to the items under each dimension divided by the number of items

Among the computed six dimensions of national image, positive perceptions were found in *culture and heritage* (mean=3.96, SD=.683), *people* (mean=3.67, SD=.696), and *tourism* (mean= 3.40, SD=.766), while *immigration and investment* (mean= 2.82, SD=.768), *export* (mean= 2.78, SD=.731), and *governance* (mean= 2.48, SD=.766) can be considered as falling under the neutral point.

Under the *export* dimension, the mean of the responses to the item “I intend to actively seek out products from China” was especially low (1.78, SD=.867), and so was the level of satisfaction with Chinese products and services (mean=2.76, SD=1.068). However, the respondents recognized that China had the scientific and technological strength to manufacturer products of high quality (mean=3.79, SD=.975).

All four questions under the *people* dimension showed positive results. Respondents agreed that the Chinese people were nice and friendly (mean=3.92, SD=.917), that they make for a qualified workforce (mean=3.50, SD=.980), and were well educated (mean=3.67, SD=.910). They also reported they would like to develop close friendships with Chinese people (mean=3.60, SD=.976).

The lowest ratings were reserved for the *governance* dimension (mean=2.48, SD=.766). For the four items comprising this dimension, the responses were consistently low. There were predominantly neutral to low responses to the statements that China is governed competently (mean=2.41, SD=.925), is governed by a capable government (mean=2.48, SD=.933), is a responsible member of the global community (mean=2.49,

SD=1.128), and that the Chinese government supports good causes (mean=2.55, SD=.827).

The responses were more favorable for the four items that make up the *tourism* dimension (mean=3.07, SD=1.007). Respondents generally agreed that China was a beautiful place to visit (mean=3.91, SD=.949), that it offers fine entertainment activities (mean=3.41, SD=.920), and that they were eager to visit China (mean=3.20, SD=1.30). Although people agreed that China is a safe place to visit, the mean score failed to meet the average score of the whole dimension (mean=3.07, SD=1.007).

Under *culture and heritage*, the respondents strongly agreed that China had a rich history (mean= 4.59, SD= .730) and a distinct culture (mean=4.57, SD=.676). The attractiveness of Chinese culture exceeded the neutral score with a small margin (mean=3.35, SD=1.182). However, respondents showed little interest in participating in Chinese cultural activities (mean=2.94, SD=1.114).

The mean of responses to the four items that comprise the *immigration and investment* was relatively low (2.82, SD=.768). The respondents were not at all interested in living, working (mean=2.26, SD=1.236), or studying in China (mean=2.54, SD=1.244). They also perceive considerable risk in China (mean=2.99, SD=.937). Despite these, the respondents saw China as an inviting place to do business (mean=3.21, SD=1.026), and a country with a stable economic environment (mean=3.08, SD=.934).

### **Olympic image variables**



Descriptive statistics of people's perception of the three projected Olympics concepts and general favorability of 2008 Olympics were presented in Table 4.

Among the three promoted Olympics concepts, assessments were positive only for *high-tech Olympics* (mean=3.47, SD=.654). People generally agreed that advanced technologies were used in the design and construction of Olympic facilities (mean=4.27, SD=.768), that the Games demonstrated China's strength in science and technology (mean=3.47, SD=1.028), and Chinese companies offered quality products and services during the Games (mean=3.18, SD=.774). The sample, however, did not agree that the 2008 Olympics would act as a catalyst for further accomplishments in the field of science and technology (mean=2.96, SD=.936).

Perceptions were low of *people's Olympics*, which received the lowest rating of the three concepts (mean=2.88, SD=.773). Most of the respondents said that the Olympics did not deepen their understanding of the Chinese people and the Chinese culture (mean=2.95, SD=1.075). When it came to their evaluations of the how hosting the Games could influence China's human rights performance, the ratings dropped dramatically (mean=2.29, SD=.988). Despite these assessments, they agreed that the 2008 Olympics was people-oriented (mean=3.41, SD=1.047).

Evaluations of the concept of *green Olympics* fell below neutral (mean=2.89, SD=.666). Respondents did not find the environmental conditions in China healthy enough to host the Games (mean=2.61, SD=.974). They thought the athletes' performance was negatively affected by the poor environmental conditions in

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics of the three promoted concepts and general favorability (N=455)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>High-tech Olympics</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>.65</b>
Advanced technologies were used in the design and construction of Olympic buildings and facilities.	4.27	.77
The 2008 Olympics demonstrated China's strength in science and technology.	3.47	1.03
Chinese companies offered quality products and services during the Olympics.	3.18	.77
Hosting the Olympics will advance China's achievements in science and technology to the next level.	2.96	.94
<b>People's Olympics</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>.78</b>
The 2008 Olympics deepened my understanding of Chinese people and the Chinese culture.	2.95	1.08
The 2008 Olympics was people-oriented.	3.41	1.05
The 2008 Olympics helped improve the human rights conditions in China.	2.29	.99
<b>Green Olympics</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>2.89</b>	<b>.67</b>
The Olympics facilities were environment-friendly.	3.11	1.00
The athletes' performance was negatively affected by poor environmental conditions like air pollution.	3.12	1.04
The environmental conditions in China are healthy enough for hosting the Olympics.	2.61	.98
Hosting the Olympics has generated great environmental awareness in China.	3.26	1.01
Hosting the Olympics has improved the environmental conditions in China.	2.60	.99
<b>Favorability of 2008 Olympics</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>.87</b>
I think China was well prepared for the 2008 Olympics.	4.00	1.01
I think the 2008 Olympics was successfully hosted.	3.95	1.04
Because of the 2008 Olympics, I would like to know more about China.	2.84	1.13
<b>Attitude change</b>		
My perception of China has changed because of the way it hosted the 2008 Olympics. <sup>2</sup>	2.22	.98
If your perception of China has changed after the 2008 Olympics, towards which direction has it changed? <sup>3,4</sup>	3.23	1.28
<b>Political implications</b>		
The Olympics should not be associated with politics.	3.92	1.23
The 2008 Olympics suffered from China's involvement in Tibet and Darfur.	3.39	1.08

Note: Responses were coded using a five-point scale, where 1=*strongly disagree*, 5=*strongly agree*.

<sup>1</sup> Negative statements were reverse-coded.

<sup>2</sup> Responses were coded as 1=*not at all*, 2= *a little*, 3= *somewhat*, 4= *a lot*, 5= *completely*.

<sup>3</sup> Responses were coded using a five-point scale, where 1= *changed negatively*, 5= *changed positively*.

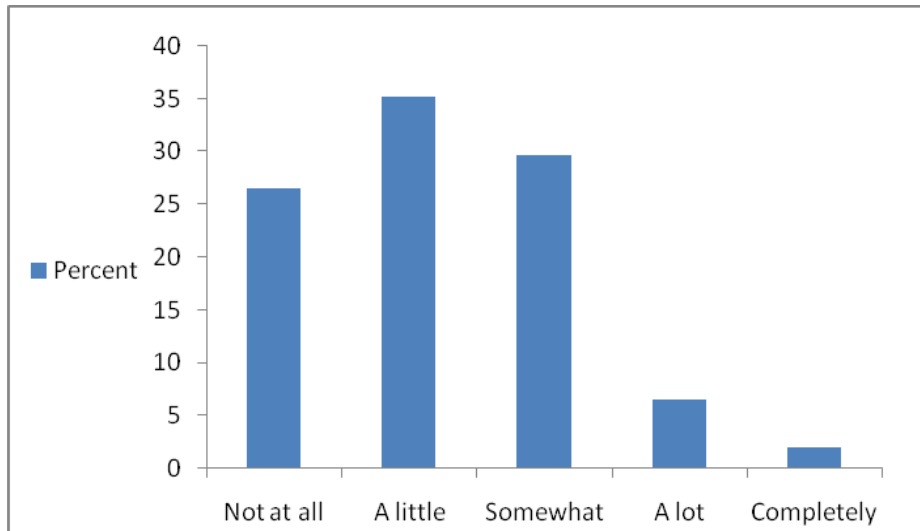
<sup>4</sup> n=274

Beijing (mean=3.12, SD=1.039), and that they did not think that hosting the Olympics had improved the management of the environment in China (mean=2.60, SD=.983). However, they saw the Olympics facilities as environmentally friendly (mean=3.11, SD=.997), and thought that hosting the Olympics might have enhanced environmental awareness in the country (mean=3.26, SD=1.010).

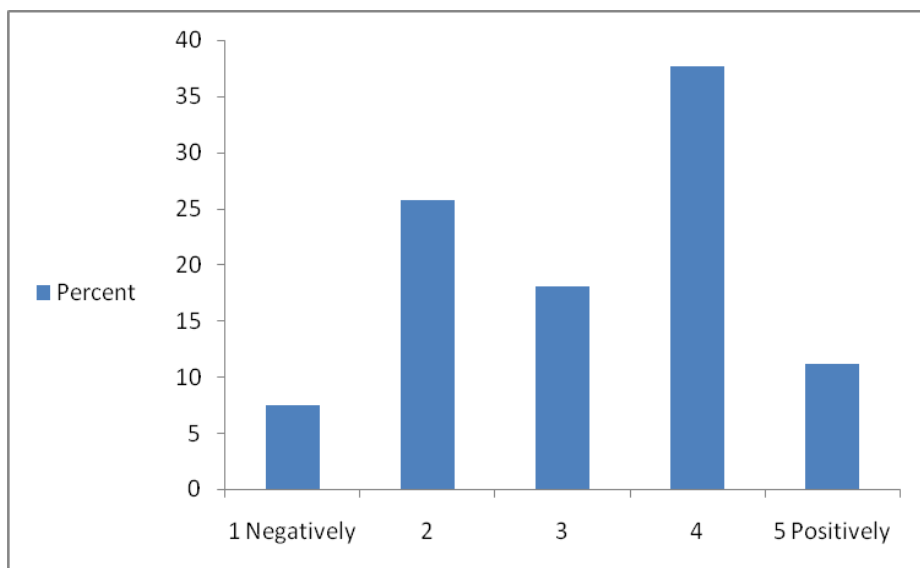
In general the respondents were positively predisposed to the Beijing Olympics (mean=3.60, SD=.875), indicating that they were satisfied with the level of preparation (mean=4.00, SD=1.012) and the hosting process (mean=3.95, SD=.1.044). Whereas, the hosting of the Olympics hadn't affected respondents' intentions to know more about China (mean=2.84, SD=1.128).

About thirty percent (26.6%) of the respondents reported that their attitudes toward China were unchanged by its hosting of the event. On the other hand, 73.4 percent of the respondents identified attitude change of different degree. About thirty-five percent (35.2%) of all the respondents indicated a little change, while another thirty percent (29.7%) of them had somewhat attitude change about China. Only 8.6% reported a lot of change or that their attitude toward the host completely changed (Figure 2). Among those who said they experienced attitude change, about half reported that they adopted a more positive stance toward China (48.8%), while about thirty percent (33.2%) moved the other way (Figure 3).

The respondents agreed that the Games should not be associated with politics (mean=3.92, SD=.1.233). However, they thought that the country's image suffered from its involvement in Tibet and Darfur (mean=3.39, SD=.1.076).



**Figure 2.** Degree of attitude change toward China after the hosting of the Olympics



**Figure 3.** Direction of attitude change toward China after the Games

### Information sources

Of the available information sources, the respondents said they frequently used the traditional media (mean=2.84, SD=1.141), personal experience with Chinese people (mean=2.41, SD=1.25), personal communication with non-Chinese (mean=2.28, SD=1.199), and the online media (mean=2.25, SD=1.107) to be informed about the Olympics (Table 5). They paid the most attention to their personal experience with Chinese people (mean=3.50, SD=1.20), the traditional media (mean=3.31, SD=1.018), the online media (mean=3.14, SD=1.001), and personal communication with non-Chinese (mean=2.96, SD=1.052). In terms of the most trusted sources, personal experience with Chinese (mean=3.73, SD=.965) exceeded traveling to China (mean=3.59, SD=1.327) by a small margin. The other trusted sources were the traditional media (mean=3.31, SD=.940), participation in Chinese cultural events (mean=3.28, SD=1.143), the online media (mean=3.19, SD=.837), seminars (mean=3.16, SD=1.045), and personal communication with non-Chinese (mean=3.05, SD=.908), in that order.

Among sources for information sources about the 2008 Olympics, traditional media (mean=3.65, SD=1.214), online media (mean=3.20, SD=1.186), and personal communication with non-Chinese (mean=2.69, SD=1.316) were the most frequently. Traditional media (mean=3.66, SD=1.063) received the most attention as a source of information about the Olympics, followed by online media (mean=3.47, SD=1.040), personal communication with non-Chinese (mean=3.08, SD=1.078), and personal experience with Chinese (mean=3.06, SD=1.313). The traditional media were also the

**Table 5.** Frequency of use, attention paid to, and perceived trust on information sources

Sources	China			2008 Olympics		
	Frequency <sup>1</sup>	Attention <sup>2</sup>	Trust <sup>3</sup>	Frequency <sup>1</sup>	Attention <sup>2</sup>	Trust <sup>3</sup>
	mean (SD)	mean (SD)	mean (SD)	mean (SD)	mean (SD)	mean (SD)
Online media (Internet)	2.25 (1.107) N=436	3.14 (1.001) N=430	3.19 (.837) N=432	<b>3.20</b> (1.186) N=436	<b>3.47</b> (1.040) N=436	3.53 (.903) N=432
Personal experience with Chinese	<b>2.41</b> (1.250) N=424	<b>3.50</b> (1.200) N=376	<b>3.73</b> (.965) N=372	1.65 (1.028) N=382	3.06 (1.313) N=323	<b>3.55</b> (1.027) N=321
Personal communication with non- Chinese	2.28 (1.199) N=418	2.96 (1.052) N=393	3.05 (.908) N=395	2.69 (1.316) N=416	3.08 (1.078) N=388	3.27 (.933) N=380
Seminars, conferences, symposia or meetings	1.36 (.714) N=368	2.40 (1.324) N=243	3.16 (1.045) N=212	1.19 (.616) N=315	2.15 (1.308) N=213	3.10 (1.123) N=185
Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)	<b>2.84</b> (1.141) N=440	<b>3.31</b> (1.018) N=430	3.31 (.940) N=437	<b>3.65</b> (1.214) N=438	<b>3.66</b> (1.063) N=434	<b>3.62</b> (.975) N=433
Travel to China	1.17 (.521) N=280	2.28 (1.555) N=169	<b>3.59</b> (1.327) N=146	1.12 (.548) N=258	2.04 (1.423) N=160	3.30 (1.323) N=131
Participation in Chinese cultural events	1.50 (.826) N=362	2.53 (1.329) N=249	3.28 (1.143) N=213	1.22 (.638) N=301	2.21 (1.321) N=205	2.97 (1.113) N=168
Others	1.56 (1.093) N=111	1.92 (1.412) N=101	2.27 (1.407) N=74	1.27 (.846) N=106	1.73 (1.211) N=94	2.44 (1.468) N=63

<sup>1</sup> Responses were coded as 1=*hardly ever*, 2=*once in a while*, 3=*somewhat often*, 4=*often*, 5=*everyday*, 6=*don't know/not applicable*. 6 was recoded into *system missing*.

<sup>2</sup> Responses were coded as 1=*no attention at all*, 2=*very little attention*, 3=*fair attention*, 4=*close attention*, 5=*as closely as I can*, 6=*don't know/not applicable*. 6 was recoded into *system missing*.

<sup>3</sup> Responses were coded as using a 5-point scale where 1=*not trust at all*, 5=*trust completely*, and 6=*don't know/not applicable*. 6 was recoded into *system missing*.

The top two sources per category are in bold face.

most trusted sources of information about the Games (mean=3.62, SD=.975), closely followed by personal experience with Chinese (mean=3.55, SD=1.027), and the online media (mean=3.53, SD=.903).

### **Results for research questions**

The first research question asked: What is the relationship among the national image factors and the promoted Olympics concepts?

In order to answer this question, a Pearson correlation test was employed to determine the bivariate relationships among the national image factors (exports, people, governance, tourism, culture and heritage, and immigration and investment), general favorability toward the 2008 Olympics, and perceptions of the Olympics concepts (green Olympics, high-tech Olympics, and people's Olympics).

The results showed varying strengths of correlation among most of the national image factors and the promoted Olympics concepts (Table 6). Among the national image factors, strong positive correlations were found between tourism and immigration and investment ( $r=.723$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), tourism and culture and heritage ( $r=.708$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), tourism and people ( $r=.633$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), people and culture and heritage ( $r=.624$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), people and immigration and investment ( $r=.568$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and cultural and heritage and immigration and investment ( $r=.549$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

On the other hand, the relationships between government and other national image dimensions was comparatively less strong ( $r=.539$ ,  $.388$ ,  $.387$ ,  $.487$ ,  $.236$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This is

the same with the correlations between export and other national image dimensions ( $r=.539, .508, .467, .538, .346$ ).

Among the Olympic concepts and perceptions of favorability (Table 7), strong relationships were detected between high-tech Olympics and people's Olympics ( $r=.650, p<0.01$ ), people's Olympics and Green Olympics ( $r=.642, p<0.01$ ), and general favorability and people's Olympics ( $r=.619, p<0.01$ ).

**Table 6.** Pearson correlation coefficients among national image dimensions (N=455)

	Export	People	Tourism	Immigration and investment	Culture and heritage
1. Government	.539*	.388*	.387*	.487*	.236*
2. Export	_____	.508*	.467*	.538*	.346*
3. People		_____	.633*	.568*	.624*
4. Tourism			_____	.723*	.708*
5. Immigration and investment				_____	.549*
6. Culture and heritage					_____

\* $p<.001$

**Table 7.** Pearson correlation coefficients among general favorability ratings and the Olympics concepts (N=455)

Variables	High-tech Olympics	People's Olympics	Green Olympics
1. General favorability	.601*	.619*	.533*
2. High-tech Olympics	_____	.650*	.601*
3. People's Olympics		_____	.642*
4. Green Olympics			_____

\* $p<.001$



Between the two variable groups (Table 8), significant correlations were found between government and green Olympics ( $r=.580, p<0.01$ ), government and people's Olympics ( $r=.577, p<0.01$ ), export and green Olympics ( $r=.510, p<0.01$ ), government and high-tech Olympics ( $r=.498, p<0.01$ ), tourism and general favorability ( $r=.495, p<0.01$ ) and government and general favorability ( $r=.489, p<0.01$ ). The lowest score was found between culture and heritage and people's Olympics ( $r=.293, p<0.01$ ). Strong correlations were found between government and all the Olympics concepts and ratings of general favorability. In addition, constant correlations were found between general favorability toward the 2008 Olympics and all national image dimensions, as well as with immigration and investment and all the Olympics concepts.

**Table 8.** Pearson correlation coefficients among national image dimensions, general favorability and the Olympics concepts (N=455)

<i>Variables</i>	General favorability	High-tech Olympics	People's Olympics	Green Olympics
Government	.489*	.498*	.557*	.580*
Export	.409*	.476*	.431*	.510*
People	.438*	.476*	.399*	.388*
Tourism	.495*	.456*	.357*	.415*
Immigration and investment	.460*	.462*	.412*	.451*
Culture and heritage	.405*	.346*	.293*	.258*

\* $p<.001$

The second research question asked: What were the sources that helped shape people's image of China? Which sources did people use most frequently? Which sources did they pay more attention to? Which source did they trust the most?

As Table 5 shows, personal experience with Chinese people was the most dominant source of information about China in general. Although the frequency was relatively low compared with the use of traditional media, it was the most personal experience with Chinese acquaintances received the most attention and was considered the most trusted. The traditional media also played an important part, having been used with the highest frequency. The mass media also garnered high attention and trust ratings. Although ranked high in attention and trust, travel to China (mean=1.17, SD=.521) and participation in Chinese cultural events (mean=1.50, SD=.826) were rarely used.

Traditional media topped other sources for information about 2008 Olympics in terms of frequency of use (mean=3.65, SD=1.21), attention (mean=3.66, SD=1.06), and trust evaluations (mean=3.62 SD=.975). Although online media was not given prominence for information about China, it was the second important source for information about 2008 Olympics. It ranked second in frequency of use (mean=3.20, SD=1.186) and attention (mean=3.47, SD=1.040), and third in trustworthiness (mean=3.53, SD=.903).

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### Conclusions and Implications

This study suggested that “the Olympics effect” does not necessarily work in favor of the host’s national image. In this research, among those who reported that their attitude changed, only less than half said their attitude moved to a positive direction; more than a third claimed a negative attitude change. This suggests that although hosting the Olympics can be a powerful national public relations tool, it can be used against the host nation as well.

This study found that the respondents’ perceptions of China’s national image and the concepts the country promoted during the Games were consistent with those of previous studies. As Berkowitz (2007) and Anholt (2007) pointed out, China had been viewed as a growing world economic powerhouse; it can also boast about its rich history culture and heritage. However, the country’s record on the protection of the environment, the quality of the products it produces, its competence to govern fairly, and its performance in upholding human rights have long been questioned.

The respondents of this study demonstrated positive perceptions of Chinese culture and heritage, the Chinese people in general, and China as a place to visit. They gave the country the lowest scores in governance, the quality of export products and services, immigration and investment. That the Chinese people were highly rated may be an artifact of sampling as Chinese students, faculty and staff members constitute about

3% of the university population, and respondents had a higher chance of personal experience with Chinese people. As found in the survey, indeed, more than 70% of the respondents report having at least one Chinese friend which opens opportunities with which to experience the Chinese culture and to know more about China and its people. And due to the high-educational level and academic nature of this community, it was also possible for this group of Chinese to form the image of well-educated and qualified workforce.

Most of the national image dimensions were closely related. However, the correlations that involved government and export, two dimensions that received the most unfavorable perceptions, were not as strong. Although national image is a multi-dimensional construct, the findings suggest that China should perform better in governance and in the production of goods and services for the world market as well as continue to emphasize its culture and heritage. The other dimensions of national image may have been negatively influenced by these two weak points. In other words, despite the fruitful efforts China had made in promoting herself as a cultural and historical attraction, foreign public's opinion about Chinese government and Chinese exporting tends to stay negative.

The findings also suggest a generally favorable view of the 2008 Olympics, and that ratings of favorability were correlated to how each of the national image factors was perceived. In other words, people with more positive attitude toward China also viewed

the 2008 Olympics more favorably. So, does this mean the Beijing Olympic Committee was successful in projecting a positive image about China?

Looking further into the projected Olympic images, in terms of the promoted concepts, high-tech Olympics was very well received. The respondents agreed that advanced technologies were applied to the facilities and conduct of the Games, and that China's strength in science and technology had been well demonstrated. Although the Olympics was viewed as high tech, export, the national image dimension closely related to this concept, received one of the lowest evaluations. However, a comparatively strong correlation was found between these two variables, suggesting that people who gave a high score to high-tech Olympics also viewed exports more positively.

The concept of people's Olympics was not well received. It was identified by BOCOG that the projected image of people's Olympics indicated the display of Chinese culture and historical heritage. Unfortunately, this concept was not received as it was projected. The respondents' understanding of people's Olympics seemed to have flowed to the direction of human rights issues. Although culture and heritage was the most favored dimension, it was the least correlated to people's Olympics. This could be explained by the negative media coverage of China before and during the Olympics, focusing on Tibet, Darfur, and questions about its under-age athletes. As McCombs and Shaw (1972) pointed out, the mass media can shape the public agenda by putting a spotlight on some issues while ignoring others. In the case of 2008 Olympics, human rights issues of China had long been a big concern among news media. In addition,

campaigns launched by activists and protesters such as Save Darfur Coalition had attracted intense media attention before and during the Games. Studying the U.S. news coverage of the Olympics bidding, Pu (2007) found that more than 30 percent of the reports use harsh verbs such as “torture,” “suppress,” “crackdown,” and “attack” in describing China’s human rights practices. None of the articles he analyzed portrayed China in a positive light.

Green Olympics did not receive positive ratings either. The respondents questioned the suitability of the Beijing environment as the venue of an important sports event. They also did not think that environmental conditions improved because of the Olympics. However, the Olympics facilities were considered to be environmentally friendly and there was a perception that the Games enhanced environmental awareness.

The limited favorability of the three promoted Olympic concepts showed people’s lack of clear understanding of the concepts. On one hand, people’s perception of the concepts was influenced by the intense media coverage on the issues before and during the games. On the other hand, the promoter failed to claim the definition expressly in a way that could be easily picked up by audiences from diverse culture background.

Looking back into the six national image dimensions, it appears that the respondents’ perceptions of national image dimensions did not working in favor of the Olympics images. Although culture and heritage received the highest score, it was not strongly correlated to the three promoted Olympic concepts. On the other hand, government, the lowest scored dimension, was found to be strongly correlated to the

Olympic images China tried to promote, especially the negatively-rated people's Olympics and green Olympics. These findings suggest that hosting the Olympics is not a panacea for a poor national image. Although some have shown that the image of some host nations did improve after the Olympics, the Games are insufficient to cover up the perceived limitations. Even worse, the flaws in national image may cause a disadvantage in the quality and effectiveness of the hosting of Olympics.

Among the information sources, the traditional media outperformed other information sources in terms of frequency of use, ability to grab attention, and trustworthiness. However, the respondents report that to get information about China, nothing surpasses personal experience with Chinese people in terms of attention and trust. This finding indicates that it may be a good idea for China to stir up national image awareness among the Chinese people, especially those who live in other countries. According to the 2008 census, there are about 1,330,000,000 Chinese in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). These, together with a growing number of Chinese immigrants and students flowing into the United States, can become a potent force with which to improve China's national image among the American publics.

Another important information source was the online media which captured people's attention and which the respondents thought were highly trustworthy, especially about Olympics information about which they were the second most frequently used. This comes as no surprise considering that the Beijing Games is now dubbed the first "online Olympics." News reports and over 2,000 hours of live videos were put on the Internet for

audiences all over the globe. According to NBCOlympics.com, since August 1, 2008, the site scored more than 127 million page views. During the opening day on August 8, 2008 alone, the website received 70 million page views. It catered to more than 1.2 million unique visitors per day. Fans in 10 countries visited Beijing2008.cn, the official web site of the Beijing Games, at a rate of 930,000 per day as they searched for Olympic results, news and videos. These findings indicate that the internet is a fast growing major route through which national images can be projected and formed.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study**

This study which attempts to explore the relationship between national image dimensions and projected images, and to investigate different information sources, is limited in its scope, focusing only on a single Olympic event. A study that examines the image of a number of host countries would provide a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of hosting the Games on national image. The study gathered data from a sample derived from the constituents of a university community in the American Midwest. A sample that consists of a cross-section of the American public will definitely yield richer and more generalizable data.

This study was exploratory in measuring the relationship between national image dimensions and the projected Olympic image. It was also the first measurement of people's perception of the projected Olympics image. The reliability of the instruments was not ideal. A perfection of the instruments would be essential for future studies.



This study also depended on respondents' recall to measure attitude changes about China and the Olympics after the Games. A pre-test/post-test design could have produced a more valid measure of these variables.

As this study focused only on the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the results of this study may not be applicable to other Olympics hosted by other countries. A study looking at multiple Olympics in multiple host countries would provide a more comprehensive picture of how national image and the Olympic campaign interact with each other.

The current study also did not scrutinize media content to determine changes in portrayal before, during and after the Games. It also did not analyze whether media consumption habits influenced attitude toward China and the 2008 Olympics. A more incisive examination of the nature and tone of coverage displayed in the information routes would provide deeper insights into how these information sources influence people's perceptions of the host country's image.

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## APPENDIX A. INVITATION EMAIL

Dear fellow Iowa Stater,

I am Sainan Wang, a graduate student at the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication, currently working on my thesis about China's national image and the 2008 Olympics. The purpose of this study is to determine how Americans think about China and its hosting of the recent Olympic Games.

Would you please take a couple of minutes to participate in this study?

Participating in this study entails completing a short online questionnaire composed mainly of multiple-choice questions. After returning this questionnaire, your name will be included in a drawing for a monetary prize.

Please note that your participation in this study must be completely voluntary. Your answers will be kept confidential.

This study has been approved by the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board [approval# 08-328]. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact me at (515) 572-4239 or at [sainanw@iastate.edu](mailto:sainanw@iastate.edu).

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Please click the link below to begin the survey.

Sainan Wang  
Graduate student  
Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication  
Iowa State University



## **APPENDIX B. RESPONDENT CONCENT FORM**

Thanks for participating in this survey of China's image as perceived by the American public and the 2008 summer Olympic Games. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how China and the hosting of 2008 Olympics are viewed in the U.S. You must be 18 years or older to participate in this study. Your responses will be kept confidential, and you may skip questions you may feel uncomfortable responding to. If you are not 18 or over, please exit the survey by closing your browser window.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES**

Participating in this study entails completing an online questionnaire that will take 20 minutes or less.

### **RISKS**

There are no foreseeable risks from participating in this study.

### **BENEFITS**

If you decide to participate in this study, there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will help communication professionals better understand the forming and changing of a country's national image.

### **COSTS AND COMPENSATION**

You will incur no cost from participating in this study. Four (4) participants will be selected at random to receive a \$20 Target gift card. If you are selected, you will be required to provide your mailing address and sign a Research Participant Receipt Form from Iowa State University.

### **PARTICIPANT RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or leave the survey at any time.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Once the data are collected, the materials will be stored on a secure Opinio server. Your e-mail address will be erased when data collection is finished. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

### **QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study, please contact Sainan Wang, 572-4239, [sainanw@iastate.edu](mailto:sainanw@iastate.edu). If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Iowa State IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, Office of Research Assurances, (515) 294-3115, 1138 Pearson Hall, Ames, IA 50011. If you would like a copy of the informed consent, please print it now for your records.

Please check one of the following:

- Yes, I have read the informed consent and agree to participate.  
 No, I decline to participate.

## APPENDIX C. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIR

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT CHINA?

**The following are statements people make about China. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”?**

#### **(Export)**

Overall, I'm satisfied with the quality of products and services offered by Chinese companies.

China has the scientific and technological strength to manufacture products of high quality.

I will actively seek out products from China.

#### **(People)**

Overall, the Chinese people are nice and friendly.

The Chinese make for a very qualified workforce.

The Chinese are well-educated.

I'd like to make close friends with Chinese people.

#### **(Governance)**

China is governed competently.

China is governed by a capable government.

The Chinese government supports good causes.

China is a responsible member of the global community.

#### **(Tourism)**

China is a beautiful place to visit.

China offers fine entertainment activities.

China is a safe place to visit.

I'm eager to visit China.

#### **(Culture and heritage)**

China is a country with a rich history.

China has a distinct culture.

The Chinese culture is attractive to me.

I would like to participate in Chinese cultural activities (such as fairs and exhibitions).

#### **(Immigration and investment)**

I'm willing to live and work for a substantial period of time in China.

- China is a good place to study.  
 China is an inviting place to do business.  
 China is a safe place to invest.  
 China maintains a stable economic environment.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE 2008 OLYMPICS?

The following are statements people make about the 2008 Olympics in general. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”?

26. I think China was well prepared for the 2008 Olympics.  
 27. I believe the 2008 Olympics was successfully hosted.  
 28. Because of the 2008 Olympic, I would like to know more about China.  
 29. The Olympics should not be associated with politics.  
 30. My perception of China has changed because of the way it hosted the 2008 Olympics.

Not at all      A little      Somewhat      A lot      Completely

31. If your perception of China has changed after the 2008 Olympics, towards which direction has it changed?

Positively      Negatively

The following are statements people make about some aspects of the 2008 Olympics. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”?

#### (High-tech Olympics)

32. Advanced technologies were used in the design and construction of Olympic buildings and facilities.  
 34. The 2008 Olympics demonstrated China’s strength in science and technology.  
 37. Chinese companies offered quality products and services during the 2008 Olympics.  
 42. Hosting the Olympics will advance China’s achievements in science and technology to the next level.

#### (People’s Olympics)

36. The 2008 Olympics was people-oriented.  
 33. The 2008 Olympics deepened my understanding of Chinese people and the Chinese culture.

40. The 2008 Olympics fostered my awareness of human rights issues in China.  
 43. The 2008 Olympics helped improve the human rights conditions in China.  
 44. The 2008 Olympics suffered from China's involvement in Tibet and Darfur.

**(Green Olympics)**

35. The Olympics facilities were environment-friendly.  
 38. The athletes' performance was negatively affected by poor environmental conditions, like air pollution, in China.  
 39. The environmental conditions in China are healthy enough for hosting the Olympics.  
 41. Hosting the Olympics has generated great environmental awareness in China.  
 45. Hosting the Olympics has improved the environmental conditions in China.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

46. How frequently do you use the following sources to get information about China?

		Hardly ever	Once in a while	Somewhat often	Often	Every day	Don't know/Not applicable
Online media (Internet)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experience with Chinese people		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal communication with non-Chinese		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars, conferences, symposia or meetings		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel to China		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in Chinese cultural events		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

47. How frequently do you use the following sources to get information about the 2008 Olympics?

		Hardly ever	Once in a while	Somewhat often	Often	Every day	Don't know/Not applicable
Online media (Internet)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experience with Chinese people		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal communication with non-Chinese		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars, conferences, symposia or meetings		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel to China		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in Chinese cultural events		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

48. When you use the following sources of information about China, how closely do you pay attention to them?

	No attention at all	Very little attention	Fair attention	Close attention	As closely as I can	Don't know/Not applicable
Online media (Internet)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experience with Chinese people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal communication with non-Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars, conferences, symposia or meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel to China	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in Chinese cultural events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

49. When you use the following sources of information about the 2008 Olympics, how closely do you pay attention to them?

	No attention at all	Very little attention	Fair attention	Close attention	As closely as I can	Don't know/Not applicable
Online media (Internet)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experience with Chinese people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal communication with non-Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars, conferences, symposia or meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel to China	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in Chinese cultural events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

50. About how much do you trust these sources of information regarding China? Please indicate your response on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you do not trust the source at all, and 5 means you trust it very much.

	1-Not trust at all	2	3	4	5-Trust completely	Don't know/Not applicable
Online media (Internet)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experience with Chinese people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal communication with non-Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars, conferences, symposia or meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel to China	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in Chinese cultural events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

51. About how much do you trust these sources of information regarding the 2008 Olympics? Please indicate your response on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you do not trust the source at all and 5 means you trust it very much.

	1-Do not trust at all	2	3	4	5-Trust completely	Don't know/Not applicable
Online media (Internet)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experience with Chinese people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal communication with non-Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars, conferences, symposia or meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel to China	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in Chinese cultural events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**PLEASE TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF.**

52. Are you a U.S. citizen or permanent resident? (1) Yes (2) No
53. (Please skip this question if you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.)  
How many years have you been in the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months
54. What's your gender? (a) Male (b) Female
55. What is your age? (a) 18-24 (b) 25-34 (c) 35-54 (d) 55 or over
56. What is your classification? (1) Undergraduate student (2) Graduate student  
(3) faculty (4) staff
57. Have you ever visited China? (1) Yes (2) No
58. How many Chinese friends do you have? (1) 0 (2) 1-3 (3) 4-7 (4) 8 or more

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank the many people who made this thesis possible.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to my uncle and aunt, Deping Xu and Ning Wang, for facilitating my living and study in the first place, and for always being supportive and promptive for my personal development.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Suman Lee for his guidance during my research and study at Iowa State University. He led me through the whole thesis-writing process with sound advices, patience, and lots of inspiration. Also, many thanks to Dr. Lulu Rodriguez, and Dr. Stephen Kim for their helpful comments and feedback, which greatly enriched my understanding of my research. I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr. Daniela Dimitrova, Dr. Jay Newell, and Dr. Eric Abbott, who have provided many precious advises for my study. Thank you all for the mentoring both inside and outside the classroom. Your expertise and compassion have been great motivation for my study here, and will always be my lighthouse for the rest of my odyssey.

I am indebted to my dear friends and colleagues who have renewed my spirit and refocused my energy. In particular I want to thank the Greenlee core group: Avril Deguzman, Karen Lee, Kojung Chen and Susu Qin; and my friends from IFC: Sunny Ma, Na Ning, and Xiaoyun Mao. They have been great companies and moral supporter for me.

I am extremely grateful to my parents, Jun Wang and Guiyun Yang. They have dedicated all their energy for the past twenty-four years to shape me as the person I am today. It is on their shoulder that I kept pushing myself further on the journey of life. And it is because of their love that I never give up hope, even when confronted with the greatest frustration.

It is never possible to personally thank everyone who has assisted in the successful completion of a project. To those of you who I did not specifically name, I also give my thanks.

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