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Children Preferences for Global and Local Brands: An Empirical Study Drawing on Symbolic Self-Completion Theory

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ABSTRACT

The marketing literature has examined extensively consumer preferences between global and local brands. However, there remains a dearth of research on the topic in the context of vulnerable consumers with insecure self-identities. Children largely embody insecure identities and, thus, there are several factors that can influence their global versus local brand preferences. Surprisingly, however, there is still limited empirical research examining how key demographic and socioeconomic factors influence children's brand preferences, especially in developing countries. Drawing on symbolic self-completion theory, and based on data from Serbia, we address this research gap and contribute to the social psychology and marketing literatures by showing how age, gender, poverty background, and external reference groups influence children's preferences between global and local brands.

1 | Introduction

Increased competition between global and local brands characterizes most contemporary markets, where consumers being globally orientated, still desire to express their originality and national pride through the purchase of local brands (Davvetas and Diamantopoulos 2016; Strizhakova and Coulter 2015). A substantial body of the marketing literature analyses the drivers underpinning consumer preferences between global and local brands (Batra et al. 2000; Davvetas and Diamantopoulos 2016; Özsomer 2012; Strizhakova and Coulter 2015; Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2008; Xie, Batra, and Peng 2015; Zhang and Khare 2009). Previous research establishes that perceptions of the identity-signaling properties of local and global brands are important determinants of consumer preferences and choices (Strizhakova and Coulter 2015; Xie, Batra, and Peng 2015). A general proclivity for global brands is observed, particularly in developing markets (Batra et al. 2000; Kumar, Lee, and Kim 2009). Global brands have status and self-esteem-enhancing properties, which may overpower ethnocentric predispositions and even feelings of animosity toward particular states and societies (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016).

Underpinning much of the research on consumer choice between local and global brands is social identity theory, which recognizes that an individual's self-concept comprises both a personal and a social identity (Turner 1982). Individuals categorize themselves, and others classify them, into (typically multiple) social groups, structuring their social environment and grounding their place within it, with social identities reflecting perceived belongingness to particular in-groups. However, social identity theory underplays the importance of insecure identities, as perceived both by members and non-members of particular groups. Specifically, more recent work in

social psychology emphasizes the importance of concealment and uncertainty reduction as motives for explaining social identity phenomena (Vignoles 2017). Recognition of the latter stimulated renewed interest in symbolic self-completion theory, developed by Wicklund and Gollwitzer (2013).

The symbolic self-completion theory posits that when critical symbols (indicators of self-definition) in relation to group membership are absent, an individual strives for additional, substitute symbols of self-definition. In contrast, those with numerous and well-recognized indicators of competence or status, are less likely to engage in self-symbolizing actions. Repeated self-aggrandizing behavior and attachment to status symbols reflect an individual's insecurity (lack of completeness in a particular social domain). Thus, the appeal of or preference toward specific brands may relate to insecurities in group identity rather than a manifestation of identities (as is the case with social identity theory).

Children, as a consumer group, largely embody insecure identities (Chaplin, Hill, and Roedder John 2014) and, thus, there are several factors that can influence their brand preferences. Although previous research has largely explored how children's brand preferences are influenced by social agents, such as their parents, friends, or the media (Rodhain and Aurier 2016; Valkenburg and Buijzen 2005), there remains limited empirical research examining how children's brand preferences are influenced by key demographic and socioeconomic variables, including age, gender, and especially poverty and external reference groups. Addressing this research gap is important because it can help understand how children from different backgrounds select brands that signal their identities, which is a relevant question for marketing practice given the growing consumer power of younger generations.

The above-mentioned research gap is especially prominent in developing countries, particularly those from Europe (Hanson et al. 2018; Sigirci et al. 2022). This is unexpected because it is precisely in developing countries where it is most important to address such research gap, because children from low-income households often view brands as symbols of social status, mostly in peer settings, and budget brands may lead to social exclusion (Elliott and Leonard 2004; Roper and La Niece 2009).

Moreover, in studying children's brand preferences, there is still limited literature dealing with children's understanding of local and global brands, and the use of such brands as signals of individual status, despite the fact that McAlister and Cornwell (2010) establish that children—even at the age of three—are able to use symbols to make judgments. While previous research considers the relative preference toward global and local brands for young adults—for example, college students aged 18–29 (Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2008) and undergraduate students (Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2012)—we are unaware of previous, similar research that specifically considers children. This is surprising because children constitute a very important subset of consumers, whose spending worldwide is growing in real terms and largely discretionary. For instance, the spending power of Generation Alpha (i.e., people born between 2010 and 2024) is anticipated to reach $5.46 trillion by 2029 (McCrindle 2024). Beyond their own spending, children influence wider family decision-making, represent important future markets, and act as trendsetters so that they are increasingly regarded as an independent and highly lucrative consumer group (Euromonitor 2015; Lindström and Seybold 2003).

Based on the above logic and gaps in the literature, and drawing on symbolic self-completion theory, this paper empirically examines how key demographic and socioeconomic variables (i.e., age, gender, poverty, and external reference groups) are related to children's preferences for global and local brands, using data from a prototype developing Eastern European country—Serbia. The paper contributes to the social psychology and marketing literatures in three main ways. First, we identify how children's brand preferences are influenced by key demographic and socioeconomic variables, including age, gender, and especially poverty and external reference groups. Regarding age, the analysis focuses on children aged 7–13, which captures the period when consumer socialization (i.e., the "process of learning consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes"; Moschis and Moore 1979, p. 101) is at its highest, as children transition into adolescence (Marshall 2010; John 1999). Second, we contribute through studying children's brand preferences in a developing context, which is typically overlooked in the research on brands for children (Delgado, Ocampo, and Robayo 2023; Sanyal et al. 2021). This is despite brands being typically more salient to children from poorer backgrounds—with esteemed ones masking poverty, and budget ones stigmatized and associated with social exclusion (Elliott and Leonard 2004; Roper and La Niece 2009). The study, thus, helps understand how children's preferences for brands vary according to their backgrounds, which is particularly pertinent for marketing practitioners. Finally, we contribute through the analysis of children's preferences for global versus local brands, which is currently absent in the literature, despite its importance and salience in explaining adults' relationships with brands (Salnikova, Strizhakova, and Coulter 2022; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003; Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2008; Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2012).

2 | Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

2.1 | Initial Overview

The table in Appendix A provides an overview of previous research that informs our study, covering the theories and methods employed, main findings, objectives, and the degree to which they consider the key variables included in this study. The overview shows that brand awareness and preference begin prior to formal schooling, with older children (ages 9 onwards), demonstrating an understanding of brand symbolism (Ross and Harradine 2004). By age 12, children typically associate brands with social meanings and status, with distinct and consistent preferences becoming apparent (Achenreiner and John 2003; Rodhain and Aurier 2016). However, while the literature on children preferences considers a wide range of brands (e.g., luxury, fast food, clothing), there is a dearth of research considering differences between local and global brands, despite this being a common distinction in research with adults

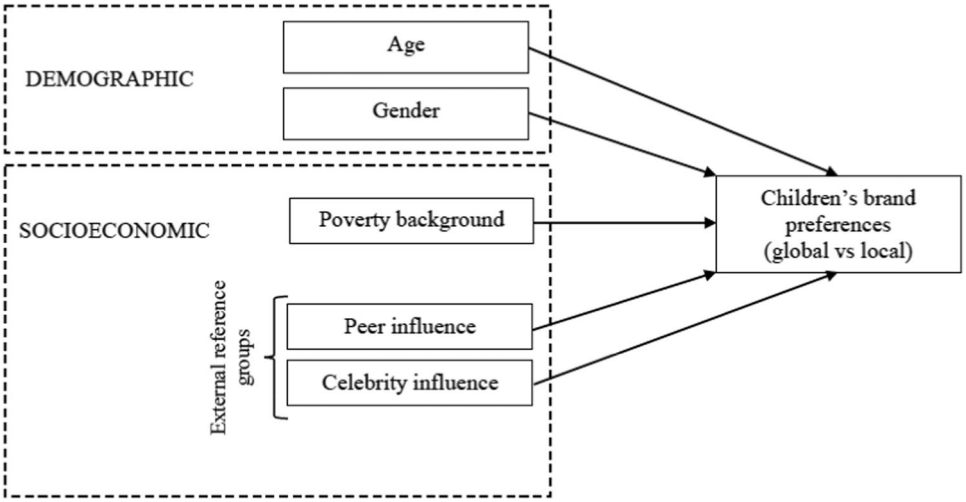

FIGURE 1 | Conceptual framework.

(e.g., Davvetas and Diamantopoulos 2016; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003; Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2008; Winit et al. 2014).

Extant research explores how the degree of clarity in children's self-concept and self-esteem affects their relationships with brands (Sanyal et al. 2021; Zhang et al. 2022). This literature identifies how children, especially those with insecure self-concepts and low self-confidence use brands as tools for social inclusion (Lovšin, Brina, and Koch 2014; Nairn, Griffin, and Gaya Wicks 2008; Roper and La Niece 2009). In particular, children low on self-esteem may use brands to cope with psychological and social deficits (Chaplin, Shrum, and Lowrey 2019), avoid peer ridicule, and feel more accepted (Lovšin, Brina, and Koch 2014). Children from low-income backgrounds may regard esteemed brands as means to mask poverty and avoid social isolation (Roper and La Niece 2009). However, there is an absence of work on how poverty is related to children's preferences toward global and local brands.

As children enter adolescence, the influence of peers and parents wanes (Rodhain and Aurier 2016), with older children perceiving peer pressure to conform to popular brand choices (Gil, Dwivedi, and Johnson 2017). Consequently, in peer settings, the salience of brands in children's consumption choices increases (Landwehr and Hartmann 2024; Zhang et al. 2022). However, the effect is far from uniform, with those lacking self-esteem and self-concept clarity being more susceptible to peer pressure (Gil, Dwivedi, and Johnson 2017; Sanyal et al. 2021). To contribute to this body of literature, we draw on and extend symbolic self-completion theory, which is outlined below and serves as a basis for developing the hypotheses.

2.2 | Symbolic Self-Completion Theory

Symbolic self-completion theory assumes individuals lay claim to specific qualities (self-defining) but that the emergence and survival of a sense of self depends, in part, on the acknowledgment of others. Individuals thus define themselves as scientists, footballers, fashionistas, and so on, referring to indicators of attainment in the given activity domain, such as possessing degrees from prestigious universities or playing for a particular sports team, depending on which symbols others recognize as indicators of progress toward completing the self-definition (Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1981). In the absence of salient symbols of self-definition, individuals strive for additional, substitute symbols (Wicklund and Gollwitzer 2013). Individuals possessing well-recognized and complete symbols of achievement in a specific, desired activity domain are less likely to seek additional, alternative symbols (self-symbolizing actions). Repeated self-aggrandizement behavior and attachment to status symbols, thus, indicate an individual's insecurity (lack of completeness in a particular domain).

Previous empirical evidence shows that self-symbolizing is most prevalent among those with less secure identities, where individuals are committed to the identities in question (Carr and Vignoles 2011). Symbolic self-completion theory is appropriate for understanding children's relationships with brands as young people are especially sensitive to interpersonal influence and rarely possess a sense of completeness (Chaplin, Hill, and Roedder John 2014; Isaksen and Roper 2008). It suggests that poverty, reference groups, and life stage influence children's preferences between global and local brands. On this background, below we develop and introduce the hypotheses. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed relationships.

2.3 | Poverty Background

In contemporary societies, certain brands are acknowledged markers of identity categories, where purchase reflects a desire to project a coveted self-image (Hollenbeck and Kaikati 2012). As recognized by Goffman (1951), some symbols such as brands may be employed in a "fraudulent manner," to signify a status that an individual does not actually possess. Desire for such symbols, according to symbolic self-completion theory, will be greatest among those lacking other compensatory markers, who are committed to the identity in question and who seek validation through others. For those who are relatively poor, particular brands (e.g., global ones in less developed countries) may be especially desirable as perceived camouflage for poverty (Van Kempen 2004). Empirical evidence supports this, with

individuals consuming status-enhancing goods to protect and repair their self-identity, especially in the absence of alternative mechanisms for doing so, with lower self-esteem driving low-income consumers to desire and purchase high-status goods (Sivanathan and Pettit 2010).

While children often seek status-enhancing brands (Belk, Mayer, and Driscoll 1984; Hémar-Nicolas and Rodhain 2017), this appears more acute for those who are from poor backgrounds, for whom status-enhancing brands are longed for as a means to disguise poverty, so that "the need and desire for status symbols in the form of external rewards, such as brands, is continually reinforced while the resources to obtain them remain scarce" (Isaksen and Roper 2008, p. 1070). In most developing countries and transitional economies, as well as many developed nations, global brands represent important antipoverty markers (Batra et al. 2000). In such an environment, it is expected that the appeal of global brands will be greatest for children from poorer backgrounds, who are more inclined to perceive material goods and desired brands as mechanisms for constructing positive self-identities (Chaplin, Hill, and Roedder John 2014; Isaksen and Roper 2008). This is because global brands are perceived as a means to disguise poverty—higher self-doubt and uncertainty, which comes from living in poverty (Haushofer and Fehr 2014), results in a greater desirability of perceived antipoverty markers (Elliott and Leonard 2004). Thus, we propose that:

H1: *Poverty background is positively correlated with children's preference for global brands over local brands.*

2.4 | External Reference Groups

A key tenet of the symbolic self-completion theory is that the emergence and survival of a sense of self depends, in part, on the acknowledgment of others. Consequently, no one is immune to the influence of others, although some are more vulnerable. The most important reference groups for children are parents and siblings (Moschis and Moore 1979; Valkenburg and Buijzen 2005), peers (Elliott and Leonard 2004; Nairn and Spotswood 2015; Valkenburg and Buijzen 2005), and aspirational role models drawn from films, television and sports (Giles and Maltby 2004). To maintain a positive self-concept, individuals engage in behaviors that demonstrate and strengthen desired identities with relevant reference groups. As children enter and experience adolescence, the influence of peers as a reference group waxes, while parents' influence wanes, especially for publicly consumed goods (Bachmann, John, and Rao 1993; Nairn and Spotswood 2015). Adolescent consumers differ significantly from consumers in other age groups, regarding the value they attach to their peer groups, as well as in their need to emerge as unique individuals (Bachmann, John, and Rao 1993; Brody and Stoneman 1981; Landwehr and Hartmann 2024). To a greater extent than adults, adolescents seek to fit into their reference groups, to comply with the expectations of their friends and to consistently demonstrate preferences that distinguish them from (out)groups (Gentina, Shrum, and Lowrey 2016).

The use of brands to look good in the eyes of reference groups (impression management) is linked to social anxiety (Gentina, Shrum, and Lowrey 2016; Sivanathan and Pettit 2010). Individuals most susceptible to interpersonal influence have the greatest insecurities regarding their degree of association/assimilation into reference groups (Rubin, Bukowski, and Bowker 2015). For instance, those uncertain of in-group status have higher preferences for membership or status-confirming branded products (Braun and Wicklund 1989; Carr and Vignoles 2011; Gentina, Shrum, and Lowrey 2016), with studies manipulating exclusion from a desired reference group finding individuals will consume even unappealing/risky products if they provide a potential mechanism for reconnection (Mead et al. 2011). Rucker and Galinsky (2008) term this compensatory consumption—individuals with threatened or uncertain identities desiring goods that symbolically compensate for the threatened aspect of their identity. Research with children ascertains relationships between materialism, attitude toward luxury brands and susceptibility to peer influence (Achenreiner 1997; Gentina, Shrum, and Lowrey 2016), with materialism negatively correlated with self-esteem (Chaplin and John 2007). Among adults, Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra (2006) identify that individuals with higher levels of susceptibility to normative influence (from family and friends) are more materialistic and hold more positive attitudes to global brands. In line with symbolic self-completion theory, and empirical evidence on the linkage between susceptibility to peer influence and the use of (global) brands as compensatory mechanisms, we propose that:

H2: *Peer influence is positively correlated with children's preference for global brands over local brands.*

Individuals may form one-way, "para-social" relationships with celebrities despite the lack of direct contact. The nature of such relationships can range from the use of celebrities as reference idols to obsessive devotion and stalking (Houran, Navik, and Zerrusen 2005). Celebrity attachments appear more important for adolescents than other age groups, reflecting their transition from parental to peer attachments and growing personal autonomy (Giles and Maltby 2004). For older children, celebrities provide a variety of identities for exploration and models for how to "think and feel in different circumstances" (Larson 1995, p. 538). Previous research establishes a strong correlation between celebrity interest and susceptibility to peer influence, with the former also predicted by low levels of security and closeness (Giles and Maltby 2004). As with peer influence, insecurity is thus an important driver of celebrity interest and attachment. Given the relationships proposed above between insecurity and the use of global brands as compensatory mechanisms, it is expected that:

H3: *Celebrity influence is positively correlated with children's preference for global brands over local brands.*

2.5 | Age

Children undergo both cognitive and social development, leading them to become more sophisticated consumers with age. Cognitively, younger children are less able to encode and

TABLE 1 | Overview of key indicators for cities covered in the research.

City	Population aged 65+ (%)	Population with primary education or less (%)	Average household size	Average monthly net salary (EUR)	Employment rate (employees per 1000 people)
Belgrade	20.28	13	2.4	806.88	402
Niš	21.08	15	2.5	611.63	360
Novi Sad	17.66	13	2.3	756.87	390
Šabac	21.51	26	2.7	558.89	346
Valjevo	22.83	26	2.5	553.86	376

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. (2023). Municipalities and regions of the Republic of Serbia, 2023. Belgrade: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. https://www.stat.gov.rs/publikacije/publication/?p=15527

retrieve consumer information, leading to less sophisticated consumer behavior regarding categorization, problem-solving, and scripted event knowledge (Gelman 1978; Peracchio 1992). While an aptitude to recognize brands in the preoperational and concrete operational stages of cognitive development typically exists, the ability to evaluate multiple attributes, motives, and intentions is less well-developed. With age, an understanding of the symbolic meaning of goods grows. Concurrent to cognitive development, socially, adolescence heightens insecurities with a greater focus on material goods as a mechanism for peer group acceptance and status management (Chaplin, Hill, and Roedder John 2014; John 1999). In an environment, where global brands, compared to local alternatives, convey superior symbolic status, it is expected that:

H4: *Age is positively correlated with children's preference for global brands over local brands.*

2.6 | Gender

Social psychology research establishes that women and men relate differently to material possessions. Generally, women place greater emphasis on the extent to which possessions provide emotional comfort and symbolize relationships, while men weigh more heavily a good's activity and use related features as well as its ability to convey self-expression (Csikszentmihalyi and Halton 1981; Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese 1996). These differences reflect stereotypical male and female gender identities, with females socialized to value more highly symbolic and self-expressive goods signifying emotional aspects of the self, particularly when connected to personal appearance (Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese 1996; O'Cass 2004). Consequently, females become more adept at making inferences based on consumption cues, including brand consciousness (Seock and Bailey 2008).

While some research suggests that male/female differences depend to some extent on product category (O'Cass 2001, 2004), research specifically with children (Belk, Mayer, and Driscoll 1984), based on a brand association and stereotyping exercise, finds that girls hold stronger stereotypes across most product categories. Similarly, Dotson and Hyatt (2005) find that girls exhibit greater brand sensitivity. In an environment where symbolic value is associated with global brands, particularly for goods linked to personal appearance (e.g., clothing and footwear), and given the persistence of traditional gender identities and empirical evidence on gender differences in brand consciousness among children, it is expected that:

H5: *For product categories related to personal experience, girls (compared against boys) have a greater preference for global brands over local brands.*

3 | Methodology

3.1 | Data Collection and Sample

We conducted a survey with Serbian children ($n = 979$), between the ages of 7 and 13, to test our hypotheses. Children were drawn from five locations: the capital—Belgrade, the second and third largest cities (Novi Sad and Niš respectively), as well as two medium-sized towns—Šabac and Valjevo. The sample contains a roughly equal number of responses from each year group (aged 7 $n = 128$, aged 8 $n = 144$, aged 9 $n = 154$, aged 10 $n = 141$, aged 11 $n = 127$, aged 12 $n = 130$ and aged 13 $n = 155$).

Serbia, a Central and Eastern European country, is apposite for exploring factors affecting preferences for global versus local brands in that it is open to imported goods but with a long history of domestically branded goods, possessing substantial market shares across fast-moving consumer goods categories, dating back to the socialist and presocialist eras (Brečić et al. 2013). Cultural values and consumption patterns are similar to other Central and Eastern European countries (Dmitrovic, Vida, and Reardon 2009). To better contextualize the empirical setting and enhance the analysis, Table 1 provides an overview of key socioeconomic indicators for the selected localities in Serbia. These indicators offer insights into regional variations, including demographic composition, education levels, and economic circumstances.

The selected cities represent a mix of large urban centers (Belgrade and Novi Sad), medium-sized cities (Niš), and smaller towns (Šabac and Valjevo), providing a diverse empirical setting. Belgrade, as the capital, stands out with the highest average net salary and employment rate, reflecting its economic prominence. In contrast, Šabac and Valjevo have higher proportions of individuals with primary education (or lower), larger household sizes, and lower average net salaries, indicative of their differing socioeconomic profiles.

Our selection of confectionary brands—Bananica, Plazma, Milka, and Kinder—was carefully made to include those with significant consumer trust, strong market presence, and high levels of recognition in Serbia, ensuring their relevance to the study's context. Plazma, as one of the most iconic Serbian brands, consistently ranks as the most beloved confectionery brand in the country (Kantar 2024). It commands 21.6% of volume in the biscuit category, which itself accounts for 60% of the total confectionery market in Serbia (Euromonitor International 2024b; InStore Magazine 2024). Bananica is another iconic Serbian brand, recognized as the most preferred regional sweet brand (InStore Magazine 2023) and the third most favored fast-moving consumer goods brand overall in Serbia, following Milka and Plazma (Kantar 2024). Milka leads the Serbian chocolate category with a 19.2% share of the market and is ranked as the most favored foreign confectionery brand in the country (Euromonitor International 2024a; Kantar 2024). Kinder is similarly influential, holding a 10.5% market share and ranking as the fourth most preferred confectionery brand in Serbia (Euromonitor International 2024a; Kantar 2024).

In the children's apparel market, we ensured that both local and global brands included in the study are well-known and relevant within the Serbian context. Local brands, Legend and Tiffany, are two of the most established Serbian clothing brands, each with over 25 years of market presence (Legend World Wide; Tiffany Production). Both brands operate specialized stores in major Serbian cities such as Valjevo, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, and Šabac, ensuring broad accessibility. Their recognition is reflected in accolades: Tiffany was named the favorite Serbian clothing brand in 2019 and 2021, while Legend received this recognition in 2021 and 2024 (The Best from Serbia). Global Brands, Levi's, and Diesel, are globally renowned brands with substantial advertising budgets and established reputations in children's apparel. Levi's, for example, is a top choice for children's clothing in multiple European countries, including Poland and Austria (Euromonitor 2024). Diesel, with its strong appeal to younger consumers, has gained global recognition and a consistent reputation as a "cool" brand among the youth (Statista Research Department 2024; Petruzzi 2022; Vianelli, Pegan, and Valta 2016). By selecting these brands, we aimed to capture a balance between local loyalty and international appeal, providing insights into both established local preferences and the influence of global market trends.

In order to address the ethical challenges encountered in research with children (Davis 2010; Isaksen and Roper 2010), including those related to acquiring permission for access, the research occurred in schools, after gaining the permission of school principals and teachers. The self-administered survey was completed in class during the school day, taking participants approximately 15–25 min. Class teachers, present during the whole process, helped children feel secure despite the presence of an unknown person (a researcher from the authors' team). Children were invited to ask any questions or request additional information; and reassured that their school results/grades would be entirely unaffected by the decision to participate in the study or not. Anonymity of the participants was guaranteed and achieved through the practice that children did not write their names on the questionnaires they completed, but only recorded their age and gender. Each questionnaire clearly stated that "nobody in your school or at your home will read your answers."

Given that the children sampled were of different ages and thus varied in their concentration span and reading abilities, three slightly different versions of the questionnaire were developed. For all three formats a thorough explanation of how to complete the questionnaire was provided at the beginning and the lead researcher, who was present throughout to provide additional help if required, emphasized that there were no right and wrong answers. Since young children prefer visually presented information (Peracchio 1992), the questionnaire for children aged 7–8 was in color. The questionnaire designed for children aged 9–11 contained numerous illustrations and was printed in black and white. The third version, for children aged 12–13, included fewer graphical elements and, as opposed to the previous two, which were in Cyrillic, was written using the Latin alphabet. At the end of each questionnaire, children were thanked for their participation and there was a maze game (adjusted to the children's age), to occupy those who were faster than their classmates in completing the questionnaire. The approach thus followed the recommendations of Baxter (2012), relating to why children find completing questionnaires to be fun: short length, the use of visual elements, an inability to be "wrong," and having an adult present to assist when required. Full approval was obtained for the research methodology and fieldwork from the lead author's university.

The survey collected data on gender, age, receipt of allowances (pocket money) and amount, payment for chores, the name of favorite brands of jeans and confectionery, whether they buy confectionery and clothes independently, preference for the same brands as their peers, and whether they notice what brands celebrities wear. The two product categories selected (jeans and confectionery) were deemed the most relevant as, for preteenage children, brand awareness, and preferences appear particularly well-developed in the product categories of food and apparel, where they are heavy consumers (Dibley and Baker 2001; Lindström and Seybold 2003). Some additional variables were included in the survey and used for a professional report written for a marketing agency. These variables encompassed: children's media preferences (TV, radio, newspapers, internet), entertainment preferences, store preferences, and participation in competitions.

In designing the questionnaire, we consulted the literature about using Likert scales with children (Mellor and Moore 2013). This literature suggests that younger children largely think dichotomously (Robson 2012), so that asking them to report responses on a 5-point or 7-point scale is beyond their capabilities (Mellor and Moore 2013). Accordingly, empirical studies with children aged 6–13 years found that Likert scales (strongly agree to strongly disagree), generate unreliable and biased responses (Mellor and Moore 2013). Research has also found that younger children (aged 7 and 8), and those with poorer reading skills, struggle to respond appropriately to negative items, biasing responses (Marsh 1986). Given these findings, the binary response format, especially as our sample includes children from 7 years old upwards, was deemed to be the most reliable option (Mellor and Moore 2013). We could

TABLE 2 | Description of the variables and descriptive statistics.

Label	Description	Descriptives
Dependent		
Global brand	Preference for global or local brand (global = 1, local = 0)	66.1% global brand preference, 33.9% local brand preference
Independent—fixed effects		
Age	Age in years	Mean = 10.03 years, SD = 2.00, Min = 7 years, Max = 13 years
Poverty rate	Percentage of households officially classified as poor in the municipality of the school	Mean = 19.73, SD = 8.87, Min 10.5, Max = 32.3
Gender	Gender (1 = girls, 0 = boys)	Boys = 73.26%, Girls = 26.74%
Jeans	Product category (jeans = 1, confectionery = 0)	Jeans = 50% of responses, confectionery = 50% of responses
Friends	Prefer the same brands as your friends do (yes = 1, no = 0)	Yes = 68.5%, No = 31.5%
Celebrity	Observe which brands celebrities wear (yes = 1, no = 0)	Yes = 63.91%, No = 36.09%
Allowance	Receive allowance (yes = 1, *n* = 0)	Yes = 88.37%, No = 11.63%
Random effects		
Location	Location of school (1 = Belgrade, 2 = Novi Sad, 3 = Niš, 4 = Valjevo, 5 = Sabac)	

have potentially used more sophisticated measurement scales with older children (12–13 years old) but this would be at the expense of analysis of differences by age—a key hypothesis which is integral to the application of symbolic self-completion theory to children.

3.2 | Data Analysis

We modeled the preference for global brands (dependent variable), where the classification of global and local brands followed Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008). We defined brands as local if the product was marketed under the given name only in one country or its region (e.g., in the Serbian case, the former Yugoslavia [*Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*]). We defined global brands as those marketed under the same name in multiple countries and regions of the world.

We estimated a mixed-effects logit model to investigate the determinants of preference for a global brand. As some of the covariates are grouped according to one or more characteristics (i.e., representing clustered and, therefore, dependent data with regard to location), we applied a mixed-effects, hierarchical modeling strategy (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012) containing both fixed and random effects. The fixed effects are analogous to standard regression coefficients and are estimated directly. The random effects are not directly estimated but are summarized according to their estimated variances and covariances. We estimated a two-level model by incorporating random effects for a child's city/town (second level) with the observations for each child comprising the first level of the nested structure.

We included gender, age, receipt of allowances, product category, an interaction term between product category and gender, poverty rate, stated influence of celebrities, and stated influence of peers as independent (fixed effect) variables. The latter two are dummy variables (yes/no answers) based on the following questions: "do you observe which brands celebrities wear?" and "do you prefer the same brands as your friends do?" respectively. Estimates of household income were not solicited from children as erroneous or missing data was likely to a major problem. Rather, following the approach of Isaksen and Roper (2008) and Chaplin, Hill, and Roedder John (2014), the official poverty rate in the municipality (locality) of the school was taken as a proxy (Belgrade, e.g., has 17 municipalities). Table 2 summarizes the variables included in the model and presents descriptive statistics.

Given that the data set consists of a limited number of observations, we ensured the robustness of the estimated coefficients by applying a stochastic re-sampling procedure drawing on bootstrapping techniques (Efron and Tibshirani 1993). We assessed the model for multicollinearity. As is common for such survey data, we found evidence of some but not severe multicollinearity (O'brien 2007; Williams 2015). Specifically, the analysis of the t-ratios for the individual coefficients, and the stability of the coefficients when re-estimating the model without one of the regressors, suggest that the results are robust (Williams 2015). None of the Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were above the thresholds of 8 or 10 commonly recommended in the literature (O'brien 2007), and the condition number was below 15 (Williams 2015). All estimated model specifications are statistically significant at a satisfactory level with no severe signs of misspecification.

TABLE 3 | Mixed effects logistic regression model of preference for global brands.

	Odds ratio	Std. Err.	Z	$p > z$	95% Conf. Interval	
Age	1.1156	0.0455	2.68	0.007	1.0299	1.2085
Poverty rate	1.0201	0.0088	2.31	0.021	1.0030	1.0376
Gender	1.0556	0.0949	0.60	0.547	0.8851	1.2590
Jeans	3.5874	0.6409	7.15	0.000	2.5275	5.0915
Jeans*Gender	2.4630	0.7503	2.96	0.003	1.3558	4.4746
Friends	1.2091	0.0956	2.40	0.016	1.0355	1.4117
Celebrity	1.3393	0.1861	2.10	0.035	1.0201	1.7585
Allowance	0.7374	0.1011	−2.22	0.026	0.5636	0.9648
Random effect						
Location	0.2749	0.2851			0.0036	0.2010

Note: Dependent: Preference for global brand (binary variable). Mixed-effects logistic regression. $n = 1262$. Group variable: location, number of groups = 5. Observations per group: min = 172, average = 252.4, max = 492. Log pseudolikelihood = −753.27422.

4 | Results

In both the cases of jeans and confectionery, global brands are, overall, preferred. For jeans, 75.1% acknowledge a preference for a global brand. In the confectionery market, the division between global and local brands is less pronounced, with 57.1% stating one of the former categories as their favorite. Most children (68.5%) report that they prefer the same brands as their friends. For this, there is no significant difference between boys and girls ($\chi^2 = 0.221$, $p = 0.638$). Similarly, the majority indicates that they observe what brands celebrities wear (63.9%), with no significant differences between boys and girls ($\chi^2 = 0.023$, $p = 0.879$).

Table 3 presents the bootstrapped mixed effects logit regression model with the dependent variable being the favorite brand classified into one of two groups: global (coded 1) and domestic (coded 0) brands. The main local brands of jeans are Tiffany and Legend while the most popular global brands identified in the survey are Levi's and Diesel. The main local brands of confectionery are Plazma and Bananice while Milka and Kinder are the most popular global brands. Table 1 reports Odds Ratios (OR), confidence intervals as well as significance tests.

The results indicate that a preference for a global brand is positively associated with the poverty rate (OR = 1.02, $p < 0.05$), with the OR suggesting that the odds of preferring a global brand increase 1.02 times with each percentage increase in the poverty rate in the municipality. Thus, the evidence supports H1 that global brands, opposed to local alternatives, have greater appeal for children from poorer backgrounds. Consistent with this, receipt of an allowance (pocket money) negatively affects preferences for global versus local brands, as indicated by the OR being < 1 (OR = 0.74, $p < 0.05$). While the receipt of an allowance only provides an incomplete picture of the financial circumstances of the household and children (e.g., kids may not be given an allowance from their parents but still receive expensive presents and benefit from a comfortable upbringing), it is one, albeit imperfect, indicator of the financial state of the household.

Highlighting the importance of reference groups on preference for brands, children who prefer the same brands as their friends are more likely to prefer a global brand (OR = 1.21, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, those that state that they noticed what celebrities wear are also more likely to prefer a global brand (OR = 1.34, $p < 0.05$). In other words, those children who notice what celebrities wear are 1.34 times more likely to prefer a global brand. These two results support H2 and H3 respectively. The positive relationship between age and preference for global brands (OR = 1.12, $p < 0.01$) is consistent with H4, with the OR indicating that the odds of preferring a global brand is 1.12 times higher for each yearly increase in age. This is consistent with the notion that branding-related status becomes more salient in consumption choices as children enter adolescence. Finally, girls are significantly more likely to prefer a global brand of jeans compared to boys (OR = 2.46, $p < 0.005$), supporting H5.

5 | Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 | Theoretical Implications

Children's social identities are generally incomplete and insecure, particularly during adolescence and teenage years (Chaplin and John 2007). Consequently, following symbolic self-completion theory, children often seek out socially approved markers to project desired identities (Roper and La Niece 2009; Zhang et al. 2022). Our research extends symbolic self-completion theory to the marketing literature relating to children, utilizing it as a framework for understanding preferences for global versus local brands. Specifically, we show how the latter are influenced by age, poverty, and external reference groups, in a manner consistent with symbolic self-completion theory.

Our analysis confirms the hypothesis based on symbolic self-completion theory that global brands have enhanced appeal for those from poorer backgrounds. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds have a heightened desire for brands which are perceived as providing "symbolic self-completion" by disguising

poverty, aiding social acceptability, and conveying higher status (Roper and La Niece 2009). Moreover, the appeal of global brands is greatest for products where consumption is highly visible and linked to notions of the ideal self (e.g., "badge items"), as is the case of clothing. The strong market presence and accessibility of local apparel brands, i.e. Legend and Tiffany, suggest that children's preference for global brands cannot solely be attributed to a lack of awareness or availability of local alternatives. Instead, the results reflect the symbolic value attached to global brands, particularly in fashion, where global brands may symbolize a connection to international lifestyles and trends.

While poor people generally may desire global brands to camouflage poverty (Van Kempen 2004), this is likely to be heightened for children given their lower self-concept clarity (Isaksen and Roper 2008). While important, relations between poverty and children's brand preferences have previously been understudied, in part due to the relative lack of consideration of less developed contexts in this literature.

Previous research shows that those with less clear self-concepts, insecure identities, or who fear their identity to be threatened, are more susceptible to external influence from peers and form attachments to celebrities (Gentina, Shrum, and Lowrey 2016; Giles and Maltby 2004; Vignoles 2017). Consistent with symbolic self-completion theory, the present study identifies relationships between stated peer and celebrity influence and a preference for global brands. Extant theory on celebrity endorsements largely focuses on admirable source qualities (e.g., expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness), the endorser's role as a medium, and the importance of fit between the endorser and endorsed brand/product (Keel and Nataraajan 2012; Ohanian 1990). This literature typically lacks a theoretical understanding of variations in consumer susceptibility to celebrity influence, which as with interpersonal peer influence and presupposed by symbolic self-completion theory, partially reflects insecure identities.

Moreover, previous research, partly drawing on Piaget's theory of cognitive development, identifies that children's relationships with brands change with age (Achenreiner and John 2003; Ross and Harradine 2004), but has not considered changing preferences for global and local brands. This research identifies that the lure of global brands increases as children mature and enter adolescence. This is consistent with the notion that local and global brands have different social meanings and identities (Gentina, Shrum, and Lowrey 2016; Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2012). Global brands, particularly for clothing, help children feel accepted, self-confident, and avoid peer ridicule—critical concerns for adolescents (Lovšin, Brina, and Koch 2014; Nairn, Griffin, and Gaya Wicks 2008). Personal insecurities and the desire for external confirmation of identities are thus important factors affecting the appeal of global and local brands, as suggested by our research.

5.2 | Managerial Implications

Our research provides insights for practitioners regarding market attractiveness, brand management, and positioning strategies, particularly in understanding the relative attractiveness of global and local brands and the identification of significant determinants of preferences. In the study, three-quarters expressed a preference for a global brand of jeans and even in the confectionery market, where there is an array of established and revered domestic brands (Brečić et al. 2013); nonlocal alternatives perform well. As with adults in transitional and emerging economies (Batra et al. 2000; Kumar, Lee, and Kim 2009), there is evidence of generalized preferences in favor of global brands.

However, the relatively balanced preference split in the confectionery category highlights the enduring emotional and cultural significance of local brands such as Plazma and Banica. Notably, the negative effect of financial autonomy (receipt of allowances) on global brand preferences ($OR = 0.74$, $p < 0.05$) suggests that children with greater financial independence may gravitate toward familiar, culturally resonant local brands. This implies that their consumption decisions reflect personal tastes and emotional connections rather than aspirational pressures. For practitioners, these findings underscore the importance of leveraging cultural heritage and emotional attachment in positioning local brands, while global brands can maintain their appeal by emphasizing aspirational and modern attributes.

Global brands are most appealing to children from poorer backgrounds, and this presents a dilemma for brand managers. The allure of global brands typically rests with their ability to enhance status, particularly in the clothing and footwear markets, where such "badge items" may camouflage poverty. However, poor children, particularly in emerging economies, often lack the financial resources to convert preferences for global brands into realized demand. This may suggest an adaptation of prices to reflect the lower purchasing power in particular markets. However, making global brands more affordable could sacrifice their perceived ability to camouflage poverty, which underpins their heightened appeal to the poor.

Our research also highlights the importance of age as a determinant of preferences for global versus local brands. The results are consistent with the notion that older children are more sensitive to the social associations of brands (Achenreiner and John 2003; Ross and Harradine 2004). Specifically, certain brands convey the attributes of "rich or popular" in a peer group (Nairn and Spotswood 2015; Ross and Harradine 2004), so that the social practice of consumption is internalized and reinforced by children (Elliott and Leonard 2004; Nairn and Spotswood 2015). Local brands may fare better targeting younger children or for older groups creating a global image for their brands, by establishing an "international" brand name and a promotional mix that reflects global culture.

The significant interaction term between girls and the product category jeans is consistent with previous research that finds girls and young women are more fashionable and brand conscious in categories related to personal appearance (Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese 1996; Dotson and Hyatt 2005; O'Cass 2004; Yarrow and O'Donnell 2009). Regarding positioning strategies, for domestic clothing companies targeting boys or implementing, especially for girls, a "chameleon strategy" (Stoebe 2013) may be more fruitful. The latter involves adopting a Western-

sounding brand name and disguising the domestic origins of products to improve attractiveness. Local brands of jeans in Serbia have attempted this strategy, for instance, by using English brand names (e.g., Tiffany and Legend). Consequently, they can benefit from adjusting their marketing strategy to better emphasize the global credentials of their brands.

5.3 | Limitations and Future Research

Although this study draws on a relatively large data set and identifies important determinants of preferences for global and local brands, future research should address several issues. First, given the age range of children considered and preteenage children's cognitive capacities, this study followed the findings of Mellor and Moore (2013) and eschewed the use of Likert and semantic differential scales. With older children, more complex questioning could be employed, for instance, measuring levels of global connectedness and xenocentrism using the scales developed by Strizhakova and Coulter (2015) and Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2016) respectively. It would be fruitful to test whether xenocentrism scale scores are, in keeping symbolic self-completion theory, higher for children from poorer backgrounds and the degree to which they could predict preferences for global and local brands among older children. With older children, it would also be possible to apply more detailed, scale measures of peer and celebrity influence (e.g., Dotson and Hyatt 2005; Lachance, Beaudoin, and Robitaille 2003).

Second, this study, following consultations with schoolteachers, avoided any topics which could have evoked distress. For instance, as in other studies (Chaplin, Hill, and Roedder John 2014; Isaksen and Roper 2008), children were not specifically asked about their own household incomes (where responses would likely be unreliable) and they answered questions relating to brand preferences rather than ownership of particular brands. Questions related to home life and the quality of their relationships with parents were also omitted. The nature and stability of family relationships, given the importance of insecurity and desire for status enhancement as motivators for the appeal of global brands, are likely to be important determinants (Rodhain and Aurier 2016).

Third, given the ages of children considered and requirement for teachers to grant in-class time for questionnaire completion, the study investigated a limited number of determinants. Without these constraints, a more comprehensive picture could be established, for instance, by measuring personality traits (e.g., extroversion/introversion, self-construal, need for uniqueness/need for belongingness) to provide a more detailed picture of how self-identities affect preferences for global and local brands.

Fourth, in this study, we did not measure brand familiarity, although it could potentially play a role in defining children's brand preferences (Baker et al. 1986; Monroe 1976), even if the studied brands are well-known. Thus, future studies could incorporate measures of brand familiarity, such as aided and unaided recall tests or surveys on exposure to advertising and retail presence. These measures would provide a more controlled analysis of the role of brand visibility in shaping preferences, ensuring a more nuanced understanding of the findings.

Finally, this study draws on data from a single country. In Serbia, while there are well-known and revered local brands, there is a dearth of, following the definition of Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008), local brands that have global coverage. In more developed markets, there may be local brands which have symbolic properties, acting as antipoverty markers. The data are also cross-sectional in nature, so they fail to capture the extent to which brand preferences evolve over time. However, following symbolic self-completion theory, it is expected that uncertainty over one's social and economic standing heightens feelings of insecurity and desire for status projection (Carr and Vignoles 2011). As a result, we may expect that the appeal of status-enhancing brands to be particularly pronounced for those who are upwardly or downwardly mobile. In this regard, longitudinal data charting changes in socioeconomic status and brand preferences would be informative.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The authors have nothing to report.

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Appendix A

See Table A1.

TABLE A1 | Overview of key studies in the literature.

Study	Research questions	Age	Geography	Theories	Methods	Sample size	Glo/Loc	Product	Friends	Celebrities	Economic status	Location	Gender	Findings
Achenreiner and John (2003)	• At what age do children begin to use conceptual brand meanings for consumer judgments? • How do age and product experience affect children's use of brand names for judgments?	8, 12, 16	US	Consumer socialization theory; Piaget's theory of cognitive development	Experiment	202	No	Fashion	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	By age 12, children begin to use brands conceptually, associating them with social meanings (e.g., popularity) beyond just familiarity or appearance. Older children (12 and 16 years) showed distinct preferences and judgments based on brand associations, while younger children (8 years) did not use brand meanings in this way
Chaplin, Shrum, and Lowrey (2019)	• How do identity and socialization influence materialism in children? • How do psychological needs, such as self-esteem, drive materialism	2–18	Western cultures	Identity theory; consumer socialization theory	Systematic literature review				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	• Materialism in children is closely tied to socialization processes and psychological needs. Children with lower self-esteem or feelings of social exclusion are more likely to become materialistic, using possessions to cope with social and psychological deficits. • Parental material parenting styles and peer pressure fostering materialistic tendencies.
Delgado, Ocampo, and Robayo (2023)	• How are the most relevant trends and	Gen Z, 12+	Colombia	Identity theory; symbolic self-	Semiotic and narrative analyses	n/a	Y.	Fashion	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	• Self-completion through Fashion: centennials use

(Continues)

TABLE A1 | (Continued)

Study	Research questions	Age	Geography	Theories	Methods	Sample size	Glo/Loc	Product	Friends	Celebrities	Economic status	Location	Gender	Findings
	identities among centennials shaped? • How do their clothing practices communicate these identities and trends?			completion theory:										clothing as a tool for self-completion, creating an identity that aligns with global streetwear trends while infusing local cultural meaning. • Symbolic Identity Formation: Fashion provides youth with a language of symbols, where appearance and clothing styles convey complex identities.
Gil, Dwivedi, and Johnson (2017)	1. How do popularity and peer pressure affect teenagers' social consumption motivations? 1. How do self-concept clarity and peer influence contribute to attitudes toward luxury among teenagers?	12–19	Brazil	Self-concept theory; social influence theory	Survey	558	Luxury brands		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	• Peer pressure and Popularity positively impact social consumption motivations, encouraging teens to adopt favorable attitudes toward luxury brands. • Self-concept clarity: Teens with high self-concept clarity are less susceptible to peer pressure and popularity, showing lower motivation for social consumption and luxury goods.
Jiang et al. (2015)	Does peer rejection increase adolescent materialism? 2	12–16	China	Sociometer theory and. temporal-need threat model	Experiment		No	n/a	Yes	No	No	No	No	• Peer rejection significantly increases materialistic values among adolescents. • Implicit self-esteem mediated the

(Continues)

TABLE A1 | (Continued)

Study	Research questions	Age	Geography	Theories	Methods	Sample size	Glo/Loc	Product	Friends	Celebrities	Economic status	Location	Gender	Findings
														relationship between peer rejection and materialism, suggesting that materialism might serve as a coping mechanism for self-esteem threats.
Landwehr and Hartmann (2024)	1. Does the presence of peers influence children's purchasing decisions? 1. How does peer influence affect children's brand awareness	8–10	Germany	Social learning theory; random utility theory	Experiment	128	Yes	Food	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	• Peer Influence: Peer presence significantly impacted snack choices, with children more likely to choose popular or branded options in peer settings. • Health Choices: children in peer groups were less likely to choose healthier snacks, exhibiting higher price sensitivity and preference for branded items like McDonald's.
Lovšin, Brina, and Koch (2014)	1. How does possessing of popular brands affect children's peer relationships? 1. Are children with low self-confidence more sensitive to popular clothing brands?	10–14	Slovenia	Consumer socialization theory; social identity theory	Survey	145	No	Fashion	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	• Clothing brands are important to children, especially as indicators of group identity and self-confidence. • Brands are more valued by older children and boys. Children with low self-confidence feel more accepted and secure when wearing popular brands, which helps them avoid peer ridicule.

(Continues)

TABLE A1 | (Continued)

Study	Research questions	Age	Geography	Theories	Methods	Sample size	Glo/Loc	Product	Friends	Celebrities	Economic status	Location	Gender	Findings
Nairn, Griffin, and Gaya Wicks (2008)	1. How do children interpret and utilize brand symbols in their everyday lives? 1. How do children negotiate the concept of "cool" and brand symbolism within peer groups?	7–11	UK	Consumer culture theory; symbolic interactions; gender theory	Focus groups	128	Yes	Games	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	• Complex brand perception: Children interpret "cool" brands dynamically, often placing brands in a "middle" category to reflect nuances in social meanings. • Gendered brand symbolism: Brands serve as a means of expressing gender identities, with certain brands being associated with hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine stereotypes. • Symbolic Identity Construction: Children use brands as tools for social inclusion, negotiating social meanings and establishing peer group boundaries.
Rodhain and Aurier (2016).	• How do social interactions within family, peer groups, and schools influence children's relationships with brands?	10–11	France	Symbolic interactions; consumer–brand relationship theory	Observations, interviews, focus groups, sociograms	136 children, 9 mothers	No	Fashion	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	• Children's relationships with brands are highly influenced by peer and family interactions, and consistency across social spheres (e.g., peers, family, teachers) supports stable brand relationships and higher self-esteem. Conflicting

(Continues)

TABLE A1 | (Continued)

Study	Research questions	Age	Geography	Theories	Methods	Sample size	Glo/Loc	Product	Friends	Celebrities	Economic status	Location	Gender	Findings
														messages across these groups can negatively impact children's self-image.
Roper and La Niece (2009)	• What role do peers play in shaping children's brand preferences • How does the symbolic meaning of food brands affect children's social status?	7, 11, 14	UK	Consumer socialization theory; symbolic consumption	Interviews	30	No	Food	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	• Children from low-income backgrounds view branded food items as symbols of social status, with older children experiencing peer pressure to conform to popular branded choices. By age 14, peer influence strongly dictated brand choices to avoid social isolation or bullying associated with budget brands.
Ross and Harradine (2004)	• At what age do children begin to recognize and prefer brands? • How do children's attitudes toward brands change as they age? • How able are children of different ages to articulate brand preferences?	5–11	UK	Consumer socialization; brand awareness and perception theories; maslow	Focus groups	107	No	Fashion	Yes	No	No	No	No	• Brand recognition and preference begin as early as age 5, with older children (ages 9–11) showing a more sophisticated understanding of brand symbolism. Peer influence is strong, particularly among older children, with many associating branded items with social

(Continues)

TABLE A1 | (Continued)

Study	Research questions	Age	Geography	Theories	Methods	Sample size	Glo/Loc	Product	Friends	Celebrities	Economic status	Location	Gender	Findings
														acceptance and status. Children could articulate their preferences better with age, indicating a development in brand perception and understanding.
Sanyal et al. (2021)	• How do self-related perceptions such as self-concept clarity, uncertainty, and self-esteem influence affluent teenagers' attitudes toward luxury brands?	12–18	India	Self-concept theory; self-discrepancy theory	Survey	610	No	Cars	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	• Teenagers with low self-concept clarity and high uncertainty exhibit more indecisiveness, impacting their luxury brand choices. Peer influence and media exposure further enhance their motivation to purchase luxury brands for social acceptance. Social consumption motives lead to a positive attitude toward luxury brands among affluent teenagers.
Zhang et al. (2022)	• How does peer influence affect teenagers' preference for brand-name food products?	13–18	China	Social identity heory; relative deprivation theory	Survey	917	No	Food	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	• Peer identity significantly mediates the effect of peer influence on brand-name food consumption. Teenagers who eat

(Continues)

TABLE A1 | (Continued)

Study	Research questions	Age	Geography	Theories	Methods	Sample size	Glo/Loc	Product	Friends	Celebrities	Economic status	Location	Gender	Findings
														with peers are more likely to favor brand-name foods.
Current study	*What determines children's preferences for global and local brands*	*7–13*	*Serbia*	*Symbolic self-completion theory*	*Survey*	*979 (1262 choices)*	*Yes*	*Jeans and confectionery*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	• Age, poverty rate, peer influence, celebrity influence, and presence of allowances are positively correlated with a preference for global brands (vs. local brands).