ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to reveal the essence behind the *bakugai* phenomenon of overseas Chinese consumers. In response to the portrayal of foreign media that Chinese consumers are a disturbance, my research indicates that the shopping boom employs the Chinese traditional networking system built upon shared affinities, or "*guanxi*" (such as kinship and dialect), that is rooted from centuries ago. In today's media/market mediated consumer cultural environment, infinite accessibility to information and unlimited choices makes it possible for ordinary individuals to achieve their personal transformation and self-realization through consumption. In this context, *guanxi* network sustained and shapes informal transnational businesses of laymen across the globe, in the form of *daigou*. It plays a significant role as a bridge between Chinese consumers and their desired foreign items. The data I collected through both field research in France and in-depth interviews with nine *daigou* practitioners demonstrates the significance of *guanxi* network in *daigou*'s cross border business. In all, *guanxi* is served as the core function of Chinese transnational network.

Keywords: *daigou*, *guanxi* network, informal economy, transnationalism, electronic media culture