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ETHNOCENTRISM TENDENCIES OF CONSUMERS: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN

On one hand, consumers are reluctant to buy imported goods, and on the other hand, producers are trying to judge and evaluate consumers' attitudes and tendencies towards their products based on their marketing and promotional activities in developing countries. In this regard very little is known about consumers' choice of imported or local products in developing countries. The objective of our study is to examine this relationship and importance of consumers' attitude towards imported and local products and their ethnocentrism tendencies in order to know how and why they prefer any or both products in the context of Pakistan. The results of our study show that Pakistani consumers are more sensitive towards purchasing and owning homemade products as compared to imported products. They perceive quality of local products higher than of imported ones and intend to purchase and own local products more often. Current study confirms that Pakistani consumers prefer home made products to imported ones. Implications of the study and directions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: Pakistan; consumers; ethnocentrism; perceived quality; purchase intention; marketing strategies; foreign products.

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ЕТНОЦЕНТРИЗМ СПОЖИВАЧІВ: ДАНІ ЩОДО ПАКИСТАНУ

У статті обгрунтовано, що з одного боку, споживачі не поспішають купувати імпортні товари, з іншого – виробники намагаються визначити ставлення споживачів до певних товарів на основі маркетингових дій у країнах, що розвиваються. При цьому малодослідженою залишається проблема вибору споживачем товарів імпортних або місцевих. Досліджено ставлення споживачів до імпортних та місцевих товарів, оцінено значення етноцентризму в їхній поведінці для визначення товарних переваг на прикладі Пакистану. Результати дослідження показали, що споживачі у Пакистані скоріше схильні до товарів місцевого виробництва, ніж до імпортованих. Якість місцевої продукції вони оцінюють вище і частіше схильні купувати місцеві товари. Запропоновано напрямки для подальших досліджень у цьому контексті.

Ключові слова: Пакистан; споживачі; етноцентризм; сприйняття якості; намір купити; маркетингові стратегії; зарубіжні товари.

Рис. 1. Табл. 3. Літ. 48.

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ЭТНОЦЕНТРИЗМ ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЕЙ: ДАННЫЕ ПО ПАКИСТАНУ

В статье обосновано, что с одной стороны, потребители не спешат приобретать импортные товары, с другой – производители стараются определить отношение потребителей к определенным товарам на основе маркетинговых действий в развивающихся странах. В этой связи малоисследованной остается проблема выбора потребителями товаров импортных или местных. Исследовано отношение потребителей к импортным и местным товарам, оценено значение этноцентризма в их поведении для определения товарных преимуществ на примере Пакистана. Результаты исследования показали, что потребители в Пакистане скорее склонны приобретать

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товары местного производства, чем импортные. Качество местной продукции они оценивают выше и чаще склонны к покупкам местных товаров. Предложены направления для дальнейших исследований в данном контексте.

Ключевые слова: Пакистан; потребители; этноцентризм; восприятие качества; намерение приобрести; маркетинговые стратегии; зарубежные товары.

Introduction. Globalization and trade policies have made consumers more mystified to whether buy local or non-local products when more choices are available. In this way, both local and non-local marketers are facing tough competition on how to satisfy customers in bringing high value and quality products. Ethnocentrism is an important factor that affects customers' decisions to buy or not to buy certain products and which one to choose and prefer. Wind et al. (1973) conclude that ethnocentrism opposes internationalism, and is a concept that handicaps firms entering the international market (Ranjbariane, et al., 2010). However, the majority of researchers examine ethnocentrism from different angles. They argue that ethnocentrism is related to nationalism, culture structure, lifestyles, corporate identity, national identity, and shortage of domestic alternatives (Caruana and Magri, 1996; Thomas and Hill, 1999; Kucukemiroglu, 1999; Keillor and Hult, 1999; Watson and Wright, 2000; Wang, 2005; Altintas and Tokol, 2007). Ethnocentrism helps consumers to evaluate products of their home country and foreign countries basing on favorable and unfavorable attitudes and behavior (Lundstrom, Lee and White, 1998). Product nationality is an area of interest to see its negative and positive effects on customer evaluations of local and non-local products (Dmitrovic and Vida, 2010).

Today, Pakistani consumers have the variety of choices in selecting, buying and purchasing both local and non-local products. Imported products and local products make consumers more knowledgeable in terms of quality, purchasing and ownership. Due to mixed cultural environment, rich traditions and norms Pakistani consumers are more reluctant to their purchase decisions on the point of purchase of foreign or local products. They are highly conscious about the quality. They inquire about the country of origin when making purchase decisions. High rate of imports and evolving global have market made Pakistani consumers more ethnocentric in terms of products. Studies have witnessed that in Pakistan ethnocentrism is low for low involvement products while high for high involvement products (Malik & Merunka, 2007). Incessantly changing customer needs in different cultures and countries seek more attention (Saffu and Scott, 2009). Shaheen (2009) finds that normative (ethnocentric) belief positively influences purchase intentions of customers through consciousness of a brand, perceived quality, and emotional value of Pakistani consumers.

Despite fair number of literature on ethnocentrism, in developing countries little research is documented on consumer ethnocentrism in perspective of owning and not owning local and non-local products. Research lacks concein not only Pakistan but also the whole Indian sub-continent to look at the variables that effect the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and product ownership, with moderating effects of product quality and purchase intention. Prior studies on ethnocentrism are limited to the context of measuring consumers' ethnocentrism tendencies and choice of local and non-local products, by comparing only two or three countries' products

quality, attitudes and purchase intentions. Due to technological development, improvements in the lifestyles of people, and growth of multinational countries our study attempts to provide an indepth analysis of consumer ethnocentrism, incorporating new products, and extend the circle of countries. This study strives to investigate the relationship between the variables in the context of developing country like Pakistan.

Literature review

Consumer ethnocentrism. There is enough literature on consumer ethnocentrism and its effects on consumer perceptions. According to Sumner (1906), ethnocentrism is the view and perception of different things in his/her surroundings in which a person perceives that his or her group is the center of everything, and all other things are related and scaled to it. Ethnocentrism was first a sociological concept, which then with the passage of time became a psychosocial concept (Levine, Campbell, 1972). Ethnocentrism is the cognitive, normative and affective orientations of a consumer toward imported products or products manufactured abroad. Shimp & Sharma (1987) find that ethnocentrism is the normative belief of any citizen of a country that buying foreign products deteriorates domestic economy. Shimp & Sharma (1987) expand the ethnocentrism concept and develop Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale (CETSCALE). Consumer ethnocentrism is the expression of the wish to contribute to the welfare and domestic economic, social, political growth (Shimp, Sharma & Shin, 1992). An ethnocentric consumer has strong positive attitude toward products of his/her country (Durvasula et al., 1997). According to Ranjbarian, Rojuee & Mirzaei (2010), ethnocentric consumers are affected by images of different countries. Consumer with high ethnocentrism often selects domestic products and ethnocentrism of consumers is related negatively to purchase of foreign products (Shimp et al., 1987, 1992; Jianlin, Ning & Qi, 2010).

Concept of consumer ethnocentrism is an important dimension of purchasing decisions (Hamin, Elliott, 2006). In addition, Yoo and Donthu (2005) find that consumer ethnocentrism is related negatively to purchase intentions and perceived quality of foreign products. Customer ethnocentrism plays an important role in products' evaluation (Winit and Gregory, 2009; Ranjbarian et. al., 2010; Jialing, Ning and Qi, 2010).

Ethnocentrism and Perceived Quality. Product quality is the overall dimension of any product that a consumer perceives to fulfill his needs and wants. Eminence and quality are the basis of any product to be purchased and then used or consumed it for some needful purpose by a consumer. To see the relationship of ethnocentrism with perceived quality of product Shimp & Sharma (1987) conclude that ethnocentrism is negatively correlated with the quality perception of foreign products whereas associated positively with quality perception of local products. Research proves that in developing countries consumers tend to assess the quality of local products higher than that of products made outside the home country while, in developed countries consumers perceive foreign products as more excellent (Morganosky and Lazarde, 1987; Herche, 1992; Bow and Ford, 1993; Damanpour, 1993; Eliott and Cameron, 1994; Sklair, 1994; Agbonifoh, and Elimimian, 1999; Batra et al., 2000; Wang et al., 2000; Malik & Merunka, 2007). However, Klein, Ettenson and Morris, (1998) and Weerasiri and Dissanayake, (2010) find that product quality judgments by consumers are affected by a country associated with that product and are more influenced psy-

chologically that foreign products have good quality and performance. Brodowsky (1998) in his study finds that ethnocentrism of U.S. consumers compels them to buy US manufactured cars rather than Japanese imported cars.

Summarizing the past research on ethnocentrism and quality perception of consumers, we conclude that the basis of quality attributes of both local and foreign products is still an important issue and that consumers perceive sensitively in the selection of products. In other words, quality of both local and non-local products plays an important role in the selection of products by consumers.

Ethnocentrism and Purchase Intention. Purchase intention is the measurement of behavioral intentions of a consumer, the prediction of one's behavior at the point of purchase. Shimp & Sharma (1987) conclude that ethnocentrism is negatively associated with purchase intention as for foreign products while positively related with purchase intention for local products. Netemeyer, Durvasula, and Lichtenstein (1991) show that there is a positive relationship of consumer ethnocentrism and their attitudes towards buying local products and the negative relations toward buying non-local products. The study conducted to measure ethnocentrism of Russian and Polish consumers shows a negative association of ethnocentrism and purchase intention for apparel products (Good and Huddleston, 1995). It means that ethnocentrism of consumers play an important role in buying local and non-local products (Wang and Chen, 2004).

The research proves that consumers with high ethnocentrism intentions have a propensity to buy local products more than to buy foreign products (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2004). Shankarmaheshs' (2006) finds that consumers' ethnocentrism affects their attitude towards local and non-local products' quality and purchase intentions. Ethnocentrism has significant relationship with buying preferences in domestic products' evaluation. However, the research highlights that consumers are reluctant to purchase products from foreign countries; they feel argumentativeness towards that country (Rose, Rose, Shoham, 2009). Ranjbarian (2010) concludes that tendency to purchase local products lessens in case of Iranian consumers if quality of non-local product is higher.

Ethnocentrism and product ownership. The concept of ownership products relates to two broad concepts, i.e. local-owned and foreign-owned products (Batra et al., 2000). Similarity in quality of local and non-local products compel consumers according to their perceptions to own local products and to own non-local products, because local products suit their wants and needs (Steenkamp et al., 2003). Connecting consumer perceptions of buying and owning local or non-local products, current study follows Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action (TRA). According to TRA, a person's attitude toward any object is calculated by its subjective importance of that attribute, and when the focal object possesses such an attribute then an intention to own this object arises from developing his or her consistent behavior. In the context of product ownership following TRA it is predicted that there is a negative or positive relationship between perceived quality of foreign products and purchase intentions and product ownership. Consumers either buy or do not buy foreign and or domestic products if their quality is perceived low or high they will have an intention to purchase local or non-local, products and then own local or non-local products (Yoo and Donthu, 2004).

Research Framework and Hypotheses. The research model of our study is formulated in Figure 1. It explains ethnocentrism perceptions of consumers, product quality and purchase intentions, ownership of foreign and local products in the context of Pakistan.

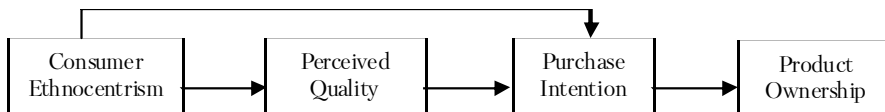


Figure 1. The Research Model

Our study investigates the hypotheses basing on the literature previously described. The first two hypotheses test the effects of consumer ethnocentrism on perceived quality and purchase intention of foreign or local products, and the last two hypotheses test the interrelationship of perceived quality and purchase intention and the effect of purchase intention on product ownership of local or foreign products. Following are the hypotheses of our study:

H1: Consumer ethnocentrism has negative relationship with perceived quality of foreign or imported products and is positively related to local products.

H2: Consumer ethnocentrism has negative relationship with purchase intention of foreign or imported products and is positively related to local products.

H3: Perceived quality of local products is related positively to purchase intention of local products and is negatively related to the intention to purchase foreign products.

H4: Purchase intention of local products is positively related to ownership of local products and related negatively to ownership of foreign products.

Methodology. 17 items measurement of the CETSCALE scale on consumer ethnocentrism is used in this study developed by Shimp & Sharma (1987). The items in that scale are modified similarly to the researchers that used the same scale in their studies. CETSCALE is widely accepted, validated and a reliable scale to measure consumer ethnocentrism in different countries such as Russia, Korea, Poland, Spain, Singapore, United States, Germany, India, Turkey, Malaysia, and China (Netemeyer et al., 1991; Durvasula, Andrews, & Netemeyer, 1992; Sharma et al., 1995; Good & Huddleston, 1995; Luque-Martinez, Ibanez-Zapata, & Barrio-Garcia, 2000; O'Cass & Lim, 2002; Kumar, Kim and Pelton, 2008; Candan, Aydin, & Yamamoto, 2008; Ranjbarian, 2010; Jianling, Ning & Qi, 2010). The scale to measure perceived quality is 6 items, 6 items for purchase intention and product ownership has 6 facets as well adopted from the studies conducted previously in the context of investigating consumer ethnocentrism (Klein, Ettenson and Morris, 1998; Yoo and Donthu, 2005). Our study extend the items of product ownership by incorporating more products as compared to previous studies. The items are shoes, garments and electronic products. Subsequently, before final distribution of questionnaires, for purification of the measurement scale a pilot study was conducted. For that purpose 40 consumers were randomly selected and the questionnaire was distributed among them, they were asked about the wordiness and vagueness of the measurement scale. After that, in addition 5 academic researchers and 2 professors were contacted to evaluate the measurement scale items. After that we have modified the statements in light of the suggestions and the expert opinions. Total number of 250 questionnaires was distributed among con-

sumers in the capital cities of 4 provinces and one state of Pakistan. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis.

Data analysis and findings. Demographic information, for example, age, gender, income level, education level and marital status are presented in Table 1. The respondents of the study comprise of young and adult consumers in the age from 25 to 40 years old. For better results, we have contacted educated consumers who understand and know the concept of the current study. The respondents of both genders, married and single, with low and high level of income were contacted for opinions on purchasing and owning foreign or local products.

Table 1. Profiles of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age:	Below 25	29	11.6
	26-30	53	21.2
	31-35	77	30.8
	36-40	58	23.2
	Above 40	33	13.2
Gender:	Male	195	54.6
	Female	55	45.4
Education:	Intermediate	30	12
	Bachelors	53	21.2
	Masters	113	45.2
	M.S/M.Phil.	54	21.6
Marital Status:	Married	154	78
	Un-Unmarried	128	22
Income Level:	PKR 15,000 to 19,999	34	13.6
	PKR 20,000 to 24,000	61	24.4
	PKR 25,000 to 29,999	93	37.2
	PKR 30,000 to 34,999	46	18.4
	Above 35,000	16	6.4
Product ownership	Owens at least one local product:	155	62
	Owens at least one foreign/imported product:	95	38
Product(s) Category:	Shoes (Local)	33	13.2
	Shoes (Foreign/Imported)	18	7.2
	Garments (Local)	41	16.4
	Garments (Foreign/Imported)	14	5.6
	Kitchen/Home appliances (Local)	38	15.2
	Kitchen/Home appliances (Foreign/Imported)	24	9.6
	Electronic Item (Local)	25	10
	Electronic Item (Foreign/Imported)	57	22.8

Reliability Analysis. Overall Cronbach's alpha of the ethnocentrism questionnaire items were 0.880, that is more than acceptable and recommended value of 0.50 by Nunnally (1970). This shows that all 30 items were reliable and valid to measure the opinions of consumers towards ethnocentrism.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha

Scales	Items	Alpha
Ethnocentrism	17	0.739
Perceived quality	6	0.781
Purchase Intention	6	0.676

All the items of consumer ethnocentrism are found valid, reliable, and consistent with the Shimp and Sharma (1987) scale items. Therefore, we can conclude that in

Pakistan consumers are more ethnocentric towards their homemade products as compared to foreign products. Scale items of perceived quality tendencies towards local products are found reliable and valid to measure the perception of quality of local products as compared to foreign products, and are more than 0.50 values recommended by Nunnally (1970). A purchase intention of consumers towards local and foreign products is also found reliable to measure the opinions of consumers and is more than recommended by Nunnally (1970).

Hypotheses results. Relationship between ethnocentrism of consumers and perceived quality of local, foreign/imported products shows that Pakistani consumers have favorable perception towards quality of local products as compared to quality of foreign/imported products. Ethnocentrism and perceived quality perception of consumers are related partially positively and thus, our study accepts H1.

Relationship between ethnocentrism and purchase intention of local and foreign goods is computed and the results of correlation between these two factors are found to be positive with correlation value ($r = .492$) and significance value ($p = < 0.05$). The correlation results between consumers' ethnocentrism and their purchase intentions of local or foreign products reveals that Pakistani consumers are more attracted towards local products as compared to foreign (imported) products. Thus, we conclude that our study supports the hypothesis H2.

To prove H3 the authors of the current study have found that there is a perfect positive relationship between perceived quality of local products and purchase intention of local products – ($r = .362$) and ($p = < 0.05$). The correlation results for perceived quality and purchase intention prove that Pakistani consumers prefer local products to foreign ones due to their quality and intention to purchase. Therefore, we accept H3.

Purchase intention of local products and its relationship with product ownership is negative with value ($r = -.052$) with significance value of ($p = > 0.05$). Therefore, it reveals that relationship between purchase intention of foreign products by consumers and the ownership of foreign products are negatively correlated and consumers do not own foreign products but only local products. Therefore, in the light of the correlation results for purchase intention and product ownership we accept H4.

Table 3. Correlation (N = 250)

Variable-Name		Product Ownership	Purchase Intention	Perceived Quality	Ethnocentrism
Product Ownership	Pearson Correlation				
	Sig.				
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	-.052			
	Sig.	.410			
Perceived Quality	Pearson Correlation	-.027	.362**		
	Sig.	.675	.000		
Ethnocentrism	Pearson Correlation	.028	.492**	.511**	
	Sig.	.659	.000	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion. Our study concludes that ethnocentrism of Pakistani consumers is favorable and positive towards perceived quality, purchase intention and ownership of

local products whereas negative towards foreign products. This study concludes that Pakistani consumers prefer favorable outcomes of consumers ethnocentrism in Pakistani context that is a significant sign for local manufactures and producers. The relationship between consumers' ethnocentrism, perceived quality, and purchase intention and product ownership is examined (Yoo and Donthu, 2005). It is a general belief that there is a negative relationship between tendencies of consumers and perceived quality, purchase intention and product ownership of foreign products whereas a positive relationship between tendencies of consumers and perceived quality, purchase intention and product ownership of local products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Our study supports previous studies that there is a negative relationship of ethnocentrism and perceived quality, purchase intention, and ownership of foreign products (Yoo and Donthu, 2005; Ranjbarian, Rojuee & Mirzaei, 2010; Jianlin, Ning & Qi, 2010). The positive relationship is the reason. Pakistani consumers feel more risks towards purchasing foreign products, it may be the price difference or may be the ease of access issue that majority of consumers does not buy foreign products as compared to local products. Pakistani consumers are more ethnocentric, show less interest, and give less importance to foreign products (Shaheen, 2009).

Recommendations for Future Research. In relation to ethnocentrism of consumers, current study suggests future studies to extend and test the results of the current study in different cultures and environments. Additionally, relationship of current factors are not sufficient to extract exact opinions and responses from consumers but to include culture and social norms with current variables in future research will also be fruitful. It will help researchers to see ethnocentrism more broadly, the core of its importance is how consumers from different cultures perceive ethnocentrism. Alternatively, is it still an important attribute that stops people from buying foreign products? On the other hand, are there other factors that play an important role in diverting consumers' buying and purchasing behavior to own local or non-local products?

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