



Effects of ethnocentric tendency on consumers' perception of product attitudes for foreign and domestic products

Effects of
ethnocentric
tendency

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B. Zafer Erdogan
*Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Bilecik University,
Bilecik, Turkey, and*
Cevahir Uzkuurt
*Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences,
Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Eskisehir, Turkey*

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to determine the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and product attitudes, including country of origin, and to investigate whether ethnocentric tendencies and product attitudes vary by demographic variables.

Design/methodology/approach – Data for the study were collected through a face-to-face survey of consumers in Turkey. Of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 283 were accepted as usable for the study. Consumer ethnocentrism was measured by CETSCALE.

Findings – The findings show that shoppers with high levels of ethnocentricity are more likely to be less educated and to earn lower monthly income than those with low levels of ethnocentric tendency. As expected, those with low-ethnocentricity levels perceive foreign products more favorably than their high-ethnocentricity counterparts.

Research limitations/implications – The study has two limitations. First, the research sample was located in only one Turkish city which is a clear constraint on the generalizability of the results. Second, consumers were asked to evaluate the attributes of foreign-origin products without reference to a specific product group.

Practical implications – These findings provide useful market intelligence for marketing strategists targeting Turkey, but must be generalized with caution.

Originality/value – This paper both supports and contributes to the existing literature by examining consumer ethnocentrism and country of origin together.

Keywords Ethnocentrism, Country of origin, Turkey, Consumer behaviour

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Knowing consumers' buying motivations, and developing close relationships with them, are critical means of competition for firms in today's increasingly crowded marketplaces. Of special significance in the case of economies relying significantly on imported goods are consumer attitudes towards foreign and domestic products, and the ethnocentricity that affects them. Accordingly, the study reported here offers market intelligence about Turkish consumers' ethnocentric tendencies and their evaluation of the attributes of foreign and domestic products attributes to marketing strategists operating in Turkey.

There are two general streams of research in the area: consumer ethnocentrism and country of origin effects. As the literature review will show below, a number of studies have analyzed the effect of the behaviors and attitudes of highly ethnocentric consumers on foreign products. These studies have provided insights in understanding individual and organizational attitudes towards domestic and foreign products, which in turn assists managers to form effective marketing strategies in given markets.



Other studies have focused on the country of origin effect, sometimes called the “made in” effect, under the influence of which consumer perceptions about products are influenced by the image of producer country (Huddleston *et al.*, 2001; Kaynak and Kara, 2002). These studies have attempted to measure consumers’ country of origin perceptions on various product groups produced in different countries (Beverland and Lindgreen, 2002; Elliott and Cameron, 1994; Garland and Coy, 1993; Han and Terpstra, 1988; Kaynak and Cavusgil, 1983; Lawrence *et al.*, 1992; Manrai and Manrai, 1995; Watson and Wright, 2000).

Country of origin effects have also been attributed to consumer buying behavior (Ettenson, 1993), product image (Peris *et al.*, 1993) and consumer perception of domestic and foreign product/service attributes (Kaynak *et al.*, 1994; Strutton *et al.*, 1995). The findings from these studies indicate that many consumers tend to buy products from their own countries in preference to foreign products (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Samiee, 1994). When they have to choose among foreign country products, they tend to prefer those from countries with similar cultures to their own over those from culturally distant countries (Heslop *et al.*, 1998; Wang and Lamb, 1983; Watson and Wright, 2000).

Country of origin studies presuppose that consumers use intrinsic cues, such as style or design as well as extrinsic ones such as price or branding, as indicators of quality in product evaluation. Such studies must be differentiated in some respects from consumer ethnocentrism studies, which assume a social acceptability, since the customer’s product decision process of customers focuses on the producer country as a product attribute rather than as an indicator of social acceptability (Huddleston *et al.*, 2001).

Reported studies have found the presence and strength of relationships among the consumer ethnocentrism, product attitude, and demographic variables to vary in different countries. Therefore, there is a need to do more research into different cultures, and this paper accordingly aims to explore the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and product attitudes including those relating to country of origin. It also investigates whether or not ethnocentric tendencies and product attitudes vary with demographic variables.

The focus is on Turkey, which has been transformed since the economic reforms begun in 1981 by economic growth and relative political stability into an important commercial center with a vibrant and lucrative consumer market. In recent years, the growing size of that market, its increasing disposable income, and the greater sophistication of its members and its Turkish consumer market in size as well as consumer wealth and sophistication has attracted significant attention from multinational companies (Kaynak and Kara, 2002).

This study is structured as follows. First, the literature of product attitude, country of origin effects, and consumer ethnocentrism is reviewed and summarized. Second, research hypotheses are presented and tested. Finally, the findings are analyzed and discussed, conclusions are presented, and limitations identified.

Literature review

Product attitude and country of origin effect

Product attitude is commonly defined as consumers’ overall evaluative judgment of a product’s attributes, such as style, brand, and quality. In general, country of origin affects consumers’ product evaluation because they assess a product on the basis of information cues available (Kaynak and Kara, 2002). Country of origin research assumes that, when evaluating products, consumers use intrinsic cues, such as style or material, and extrinsic cues, such as price or brand, as indicators of quality (Huddleston *et al.*, 2001). Country of origin effects is used as an important cue in

forming positive and negative influences of a product's country of manufacture, and hence affecting decisions and purchases (Elliott and Cameron, 1994; Mitchell and Greatorex, 1990; Watson and Wright, 2000). Furthermore, a product's country of manufacture can be more important in shaping customer attitudes and purchasing decisions than brand name, price, and quality (Lantz and Loeb, 1996; Okechuku, 1994). Evidence from some studies suggests that consumers favor products from countries that they find culturally, politically, or economically closer (Crawford and Lamb, 1981; Kaynak and Cavusgil, 1983; Lantz and Loeb, 1996) to their own country. According to Huddleston *et al.* (2001), there is a linear relationship between a country's image and consumer perceptions for the quality of goods produced in the country. Consumers may assume that more developed countries produce better quality products (Huddleston *et al.*, 2001).

However, a positive relationship between country image and consumer perception of foreign products cannot always be assumed (Ozsomer and Cavusgil, 1991). Bilkey and Nes (1982) have identified studies where a negative correlation between these two variables was found. Al-Sulaiti and Baker (1998) assert that knowledge of the country of origin is especially very influential when there is insufficient knowledge on other variables. However, it is difficult to generalize on how this influence occurs.

The effect of country of origin on product evaluation has been studied in four main ways (Kaynak *et al.*, 2000): single-cue studies, multi-cue studies, conjoint (trade-off) analysis, and environmental analysis. In the first of these, consumers are required to base their evaluation decisions on both intrinsic cues (e.g. design and tastes) and extrinsic cues (e.g. warranty, brand name, and price) (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Han, 1990; Kaynak and Cavusgil, 1983). In the second group of studies, country of origin is among a variety of factors that a consumer considers when selecting eligible products and making ultimate purchasing decisions (Johanson, 1989; Johanson *et al.*, 1985; Wall *et al.*, 1991). In the third group, researchers attempt to provide a measurement standard for how much consumers value respective attributes of foreign products compared to the domestic alternatives (Akaah and Yaprak, 1993; Klenosky *et al.*, 1996; Okechuku, 1994). In last group of studies, the main emphasis is on the effect of various environmental factors on consumers and company decision makers (Cordell, 1992; Papadopoulos and Heslop, 1993).

The focus of country of origin studies can further be classified by four main areas of comparison. These areas include region (Schweiger *et al.*, 1995), country (Barrett, 1996), product type (Han and Terpstra, 1988), and consumer types (Küçükemiroğlu, 1999) as noted Kaynak and Kara (2002).

Consumer ethnocentrism

"Ethnocentrism" refers to the tendency of individuals to see their cultural group as proving the norms for acceptable behaviors and preferences. Highly ethnocentric individuals are intolerant and judgmental with respect to cultures different from their own (Booth, 1979; Luque-Martinez *et al.*, 2000). They perceive ethnic and national symbols and values as a source of pride, while often despising the values of others (Luque-Martinez *et al.*, 2000). Analyzing ethnocentrism together with consumer behavior from the perspective of consumer economic behavior results in "consumer ethnocentrism." "Consumer ethnocentrism" expresses the effects of buying intentions with regard to products from the home country and from countries that are perceived to resemble or differ from it (Kaynak and Kara, 2002). Consumer ethnocentrism calls into question the appropriateness of preferring foreign-made products over domestic products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Consumers who have a high tendency to ethnocentrism will perceive the quality of local products to be higher than foreign equivalents (Kasper, 1999;

Sharma *et al.*, 1995). Cultural closeness between countries also plays an important role in ethnocentric buying behavior (Watson and Wright, 2000).

According to Huddleston *et al.* (2001), consumer ethnocentrism is expressed by economic behavior such as purchases and boycotts, based on the fear that foreign-made products harm individuals and national economies. It gains moral and social dimensions when a consumer avoids or prevents others from buying imported products because of this concern (Myers, 1995; Ozsomer and Cavusgil, 1991).

Positive relationships between consumer ethnocentrism and buying behavior have been found by some researchers (Herche, 1992). However, the same relationship is not apparent in all studies of these concepts (Good and Huddleston, 1995). According to McIntyre and Meric (1994) highly ethnocentric consumers are more likely than the less ethnocentric to accord more importance to the place of manufacture of goods and to prefer local products. The importance of a product to the consumer also influences ethnocentric perceptions. Consumers tend to be less ethnocentric for the products that they perceive as necessary in their daily lives (Sharma *et al.*, 1995). Kucukemiroglu (1999) found that consumers who are non-ethnocentric tend to have more favorable beliefs, attitudes, and intentions for import products than do ethnocentric consumers in Turkey.

Shankarmahesh (2006) has reviewed the antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism and classified them in to four main categories: socio-psychological, economic, political, and demographic. Recently, Altintaş and Tokol (2007) have identified three main constructs of antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism: xenophobia, negative attitudes towards foreigners, and conservatism. Their results show that xenophobia and conservative values influence ethnocentrism, but not negative attitudes towards foreigners in the Turkish market.

Studies that analyze the relationship between demographic variables and consumer ethnocentrism have found that consumer ethnocentrism correlates with age positively, but education level negatively (McLain and Sternquist, 1991; Caruana and Magri, 1996). However, there is not a relationship with gender and marital status (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Caruana and Magri, 1996). In addition to such demographic factors, others such as beliefs, intentions, attitudes, and consciousness level may determine customer ethnocentrism (Luque-Martinez *et al.*, 2000).

Hypotheses of the study

Demographic variables and consumer ethnocentrism

Watson and Wright (2000), Good and Huddleston (1995), Shimp and Sharma (1987), and Sharma *et al.* (1995) examined relationships between demographic variables and consumer ethnocentrism and found significant differences among them. For example, Watson and Wright (2000) found that high-ethnocentric consumers were more likely to be female, older, less educated, and less wealthy, than low-ethnocentric consumers. Therefore it is hypothesized that:

- H1.* There is a significant relationship between Turkish consumers' ethnocentrism scores and their demographic characteristics.

Consumer ethnocentrism and product attitudes/country of origin

The impact of consumer ethnocentrism on attitudes towards foreign products has been extensively researched and significant relationships among them found (Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Ozsomer and Cavusgil, 1991; Myers, 1995; Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Wang *et al.*, 2004; Watson and Wright, 2000; Lantz and Loeb, 1996; Huddleston *et al.*, 2001). Sharma *et al.*

(1995), Lantz and Loeb (1996), and Watson and Wright (2000) found that cultural similarity is one factor that may influence the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on attitudes towards products made in foreign countries. Shimp and Sharma (1987) found that highly ethnocentric consumers evaluated imported products according to their perceived effect on the economy. Most of these studies have established that the higher the ethnocentric tendency, the more negative the attitudes towards foreign or imported products, and thus the more positive they are towards domestic products. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

- H2. Turkish consumers exhibiting high levels of ethnocentrism will have less favorable attitudes towards foreign products than those with low levels of ethnocentrism.
- H3. Turkish consumers exhibiting high levels of ethnocentrism will have more favorable attitudes towards domestic products than towards foreign products.

Demographic variables and product attitudes/country of origin, and consumer ethnocentrism

Evanschitzky *et al.* (2008) found that consumer buying behavior towards foreign vs domestic products can be explained by a combination of demographic variables and country of origin effects. Also, some studies reveal significant relationships between demographic variables and attitudes towards products. For instance, Schooler (1971), Wall *et al.* (1988), and Good and Huddleston (1995) found that older consumers were more negative towards foreign products than younger consumers. Significant differences between education and perceptions of foreign product attributes have been found in other studies (Good and Huddleston, 1995; Schooler, 1971; Wall and Heslop, 1986). The findings suggest that the higher the educational level of consumers, the more positive their attitudes towards foreign products. Studies have also found that the higher the income level, the more positive the attitudes towards products made in foreign countries. Schooler (1971), Han and Terpstra (1988), and Good and Huddleston (1995) found significant differences between sex and attitude towards foreign products. The results of these studies, except Han and Terpstra (1988), show that females have more positive attitudes towards foreign products than men. Hence, it is finally hypothesized that:

- H4. There is a significant relationship between consumers' attitudes towards foreign products and their demographic characteristics.

Methodology

Sample selection and data collection

Data for this study were collected via a survey of consumers living in the city of Eskisehir, one of the largest in Turkey and one of the most cosmopolitan in respect of its demographic, social-economic, and cultural characteristics. It was chosen on the strength of its consequent potential to yield a demographically diverse sample. Interviews were conducted by 20 graduate students, all of whom had been trained and given instructions about their responsibilities during the data collection process. They conducted the survey at the entrances to the largest five supermarkets in the city. Shoppers were invited to take part in the survey and, if willing, given a questionnaire to complete on the spot.

Data collection occurred over a two-week period, daily between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 283 were accepted as usable for the study.

Measures

Questionnaires used for the research consisted of three parts. The first uses the familiar CETSCALE (Shimp and Sharma, 1987) to measure the respondents' ethnocentric tendency, modified to fit the Turkish context. This scale assumes that a positive attitude towards domestic products is a matter of national responsibility and loyalty. It has been tested by different studies in different (the USA, France, Japan, West Germany, Korea, and Poland), all of which achieved a Cronbach's alpha value of over 0.90 as an indicator of its reliability (Netemeyer *et al.*, 1991; Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Good and Huddleston, 1995; Huddleston *et al.*, 2001). As Netemeyer *et al.* observe, the scale thus demonstrates both the discriminant and nomological validity. In Turkey specifically, the Cronbach alpha coefficient has been measured at 0.93 (Kaynak and Kara, 2002).

A member of faculty educated in the USA translated the items to which the scale was applied into Turkish. Back-translation from Turkish to English was also performed by another, also educated in the USA and in the UK, to check for translation errors.

The second part of the questionnaire contained questions relating to "product attitudes" including country of origin. Countries chosen for the study are main trade partners of Turkey from the "triangle." They are namely; Japan and China from the Asia Pacific, the USA from the America, and France, Germany, and Italy from the EU. Respondents rated products from Turkey and six foreign countries in terms of quality, performance, robustness, brand image, style, design, diversity, and price: dimensions were selected from previous studies (Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Watson and Wright, 2000; Han and Terpstra, 1988). The responses for the six factors were aggregated to create a total product attitude mean value for the products of each country, which was used in the statistical analyses.

Seven countries were chosen to be the sources of foreign products, for the questionnaire. Germany, France, and Italy are the European Union member countries from which Turkey imports the most products. The other four selected for the study were Japan, China, and the USA. Five-point Likert scales, anchored by 1 = very good and 5 = very bad, measured respondents' evaluation of the attributes of products originating in each country.

The questionnaire also collected demographic data, specifically age, gender, monthly income, and educational level.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviations were calculated. ANOVA was used to test the impact of demographic variables on consumer ethnocentrism. The independent-samples *t*-test compared perceptions of the attributes of foreign and domestic products among respondents exhibiting high and low ethnocentricity. MANOVA was employed to test relationships between demographic variables and product attitudes including country of origin. In addition, paired sample *t*-test is used to compare highly ethnocentric consumers' perceptions about foreign and domestic product attributes.

Results*Profile of the respondents*

The demographic profile of the 283 respondents is shown in Table I. More than half are male. Over two-thirds had completed either high-school or university study. More than half are between 21 and 40 years old, and two-thirds were classified in the two lowest income brackets out of four.

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	163	57.6
Female	120	42.4
<i>Education level</i>		
Primary	61	22.0
Secondary	96	34.0
University	92	32.0
Postgraduate	34	12.0
<i>Age</i>		
15-20	59	20.9
21-30	86	30.4
31-40	65	23.0
41 and older	73	25.7
<i>Monthly income (YTL)</i>		
Less than 400	99	35.0
401-800	94	33.2
801-1,200	54	19.1
1,201 or more	36	12.7

Note: Monthly income in New Turkish Liras (YTL). At the time of study 1.38 YTL was equal to \$1; $n = 283$

Table I.
Sample characteristics

Reliability and mean values of the perceptions

Mean values, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha reliability are presented in Table II. They suggest that respondent's ethnocentric tendencies were generally moderate. The reliability of these measures is good, as confirmed by an overall alpha of 0.92.

Hypothesis testing

To understand relationships between demographic variables and ethnocentrism, one-way analysis of variance was carried out, with the results are displayed in Table III. These show significant differences across gender, education, age, and income. In this sample, females are more ethnocentric than males ($F = 11.969, p < 0.01$), consumers with low income ($F = 14.257, p < 0.001$) and low levels of education ($F = 3.451, p < 0.001$) are more ethnocentric than those with the opposite characteristics and age is a predictor of ethnocentricity ($F = 17.882, p < 0.001$). Therefore, $H1$ was accepted.

To distinguish high- and low-ethnocentricity respondents' perceptions of foreign products, the independent sample t -test was applied, separately for each country presented in the questionnaire. The results are shown in Table IV, showing that consumers with high levels of consumer ethnocentrism have more negative perceptions of foreign products and more positive perceptions of domestic products than do consumers with low levels. There is no statistically significant difference between the two sub-samples' perceptions of Chinese products. The results provide strong support for $H2$.

$H3$ asserts that high-ethnocentricity consumers will have more favorable perceptions of domestic products than perceptions of foreign products. It was tested by paired sample t -tests, comparing their scores relating to Turkish products with those for foreign products. The results in Table V show significant differences in six comparisons of attitudes to Turkish and foreign products, supporting $H3$. In other

Statements	Mean value*	Standard deviation	Reliability ^a
Turkish people should always buy Turkish products instead of imports	2.52	1.33	0.92
Only those products that are unavailable in Turkey should be imported	2.34	1.21	0.92
Buy Turkish products. Keep Turkey working	1.88	1.05	0.92
Turkish products, first, last, and foremost	2.65	1.24	0.91
Purchasing foreign-made products is un-Turkish	3.74	1.21	0.92
It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Turkish people out of a job	3.12	1.25	0.92
A real Turk should always buy Turkish products	3.48	1.26	0.92
We should purchase products manufactured in Turkey instead of letting other countries get rich from us	2.80	1.21	0.91
It is always best to purchase Turkish products	3.03	1.20	0.92
There should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from other countries unless out of necessity	2.92	1.30	0.92
Turkey should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Turkish business and causes unemployment	3.09	1.18	0.91
Curbs should be put on all imports	3.54	1.16	0.92
It may cost me in the long run but I prefer to support Turkish products	2.58	1.20	0.92
Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products on our markets	3.33	1.14	0.92
Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into Turkey	3.16	1.26	0.92
We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country	2.55	1.27	0.92
Turkish consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Turks out of work	3.46	1.66	0.92

Table II. Seventeen-item CETSCALE applied to Turkish consumers

Notes: ^aAlpha if item deleted; *scale: 1 = "strongly agree"; 5 = "strongly disagree"; overall alpha = 0.92

Table III. Analysis of variance results: relationships between demographic variables and consumer ethnocentrism

	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F
Sex	48.105	2	24.051	11.969**
Education level	13.315	2	7.658	3.451*
Age	37.761	1	37.761	17.882*
Income	93.631	3	31.211	14.257*

Notes: * $p < 0.001$ and ** $p < 0.01$

words, Turkish consumers with high-ethnocentric tendencies perceive Turkish products more positively than products from these six countries.

To test $H4$, multivariate analysis of variance was employed. The results in Table VI show no significant difference between demographic variables except gender and product attitudes including country of origin; product attitudes cannot be differentiated according to education, age, or income. $H4$ is therefore rejected.

Ethnocentric tendencies	Japan PA		China PA		Italy PA		Germany PA		France PA		USA PA		Turkey PA	
	Mean	<i>t</i> -value	Mean	<i>t</i> -value	Mean	<i>t</i> -value	Mean	<i>t</i> -value	Mean	<i>t</i> -value	Mean	<i>t</i> -value	Mean	<i>t</i> -value
High ethnocentric	3.08		4.02		3.85		3.65		3.87		3.64		1.84	
Low ethnocentric	1.92	2.974*	3.96	3.845 ns	2.07	3.476**	2.45	1.576*	2.36	2.775*	2.21	2.603*	2.86	-3.055***

Notes: PA = product attributes; **p* < 0.001; ***p* < 0.01; ns: not significant; 1 = “very good”; 5 = “very bad”

Table IV.
Independent-sample
t-tests: comparison of
high- and low-
ethnocentricity
consumers’ attitudes to
foreign and domestic
products

Conclusions

Discussion or findings

The objective of this study was to investigate relationships among Turkish consumers' ethnocentric tendencies and their product attitudes, and demographics. The research findings suggest that ethnocentric tendencies are strongly associated with demographic characteristics. For example, as education level increases, ethnocentric tendency decreases. In addition, younger and higher-income consumers are less ethnocentric than their older and lower-income counterparts, and men are less so than women. The study also found that high levels of consumer ethnocentrism were significantly associated with strongly negative perceptions of foreign products and very positive perceptions of domestic products.

The findings that gender, income, and educational level are directly related to levels of ethnocentrism (*H1*) are consistent with those described by Watson and Wright (2000), Good and Huddleston (1995), and Sharma *et al.* (1995). The significant relationship of high levels of consumer ethnocentrism to relative perceptions of Turkish and foreign products (*H2*) are also consistent with much of the literature, though the lack of significance in the case of products of Chinese origin is noteworthy. The specific connection between ethnocentrism and preference for domestic products (*H3*) is consistent with the findings of Watson and Wright (2000), who further found that consumers extended their approval to those originating in countries perceived to be culturally similar to one's own.

On the other hand, whereas Good and Huddleston (1995), Schooler (1971), and Wall and Heslop (1986) found a significant relationship between demographic variables and product evaluation, the results of the MANOVA tests related to *H4* did not with the exception of gender.

Managerial implications

The findings of this study potentially provide useful market intelligence for marketing strategists in both international and national firms operating in Turkey, which is a

Table V.
Paired sample *t*-test:
country comparisons
for highly ethnocentric
consumers' perceptions
of foreign and domestic
products attribute

	<i>t</i> -score	df	Significance	Mean difference
Turkey vs Japan	-2.50	124	0.001	1.24
Turkey vs China	-4.39	132	0.001	2.18
Turkey vs Italy	-4.07	135	0.001	2.01
Turkey vs Germany	-3.70	142	0.001	1.81
Turkey vs France	-4.14	129	0.001	2.03
Turkey vs USA	-3.68	155	0.001	1.80

Table VI.
Summary of analysis
of variance: the
relationships between
demographic variable
and product attitude

Source	<i>F</i>						
	Japan PA	China PA	Italy PA	Germany PA	France PA	USA PA	Turkey PA
Gender	0.435 ns	3.384*	2.084*s	2.318*	3.463*s	3.117*	0.489 ns
Education	0.766 ns	1.508 ns	1.175 ns	2.059*	0.315 ns	0.344 ns	0.775 ns
Age	2.184*	0.933 ns	0.498 ns	0.756 ns	1.901 ns	1.757 ns	1.456 ns
Income	1.042 ns	1.645 ns	1.639 ns	1.855 ns	2.786*	1.766 ns	0.294 ns

Notes: PA = product attributes; **p* < 0.05; ns = not significant

candidate to join the European Union. With countries in the Caucasus region that have similar cultures, this amounts to a fast-developing total market of more than 100 million consumers.

The overall conclusion is that companies targeting their products at market segments that include women or low-income or less educated consumers should emphasize product quality, price, and product attributes, rather than county of origin.

In addition to this, foreign companies in cooperative arrangements with domestic partners could advantageously deploy brand names and the domestic images, or might support domestic values by, for example, sponsoring a major-league football team. They could at the same time deliberately select market segments that are known to be characterized by relatively low ethnocentrism.

By contrast, domestic companies can derive a real competitive advantage from inherent ethnocentricity in the marketplace by stressing their domestic image as well as the specification of their product ranges. As a case in point, a newly marketed domestic soft-drink company (Cola Turka) has built all its marketing communications strategies on its domestic brand name and image, and has captured an important market share.

Firms from Italy, Germany, France, and the USA operating in Turkey should emphasize the quality of their products in their marketing strategies. Since Japanese origin evokes positive perceptions, the appropriate route to competitive advantage in that case would be both to emphasize the country of origin and to cooperate with Turkish companies.

Chinese products, on the other hand, are negatively perceived, probably due to low quality and low price. The only strategy obviously open to Chinese marketing planners will be to focus on price-sensitive segments of the market.

Methodological limitations

The fact that the research sample was located in one Turkish city only is a clear constraint on the generalizability of the results. Further, consumers were asked to evaluate the attributes of foreign-origin products without reference to a specific product group or a brand. Studies of broader samples from other nationalities and cultures are required to further validate the findings of this study. Future research can also enrich understanding of consumer ethnocentricity by focusing on cultural values, varied product groups, brands, and different product features.

Despite these limitations, any study that casts light on the relationship between personal values and ethnocentric tendencies can offer important insights into effective segmentation of challenging target markets based on a clearer understanding of the life styles of local customers.

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Corresponding author

B. Zafer Erdoğ an can be contacted at: bzerdogan@yahoo.co.uk