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How consumer ethnocentrism can predict consumer preferences – construction and validation of SCONET scale

Abstract: *Consumer ethnocentrism is a concept defined as a consequent and conscious preference for local products over foreign, usually measured by using CETSCALE (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Besides its popularity, this scale is criticized because of its too strong a normative and ideological character. We assume that consumer ethnocentrism also has a psychological aspect – it can be more automatic, sometimes unconscious, and also based on social identification mechanisms. To investigate these assumptions, we conducted three studies. The first one (N = 590), which was conducted in Poland, validated a new tool to measure consumer ethnocentrism: SCONET – a 6-item scale, and its relation to brand preference (BPM). Moreover, we used Cameron's social identification scale (Cameron, 2004). The analysis showed that social identification with one's own group does not directly explain the choice of foreign vs. local products (BPM) but this relationship is moderated by consumer ethnocentrism (measured by SCONET). The second study, conducted in Poland on a representative nationwide sample (N = 1002), confirmed that SCONET is a single-factor scale with good statistical parameters (confirmatory factor analysis). The third study, conducted in Indonesia (N = 323), was a cross-cultural validation of the SCONET scale and explored the relationship found in study 1 in other cultures. The results confirmed the relationship between SCONET, social identity, and brand preference (BPM) that was found in Poland.*

Keywords: *consumer ethnocentrism, brand preferences, social identification, SCONET Scale*

Introduction

Consumer ethnocentrism is a concept introduced in USA in 1987 by Shimp and Sharma and is defined as a consequent and conscious preference for local products over foreign (Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Watson & Wright, 2000). The authors also constructed a scale called the Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale (CETSCALE) that originally measured the tendencies of American consumers to favour American-made products over foreign. The scale is based on 17 items with a 7-point Likert response scale and has good validity, with Cronbach's alpha around 0.94–0.96 (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). The CETSCALE was widely used in many different countries around the world (Netemeyer et al., 1991; Durvasula et al.,

1997; Fakharmanesh & Mijandehi, 2013). However, despite the CETSCALE being the most widely used and cited tool for measuring consumer ethnocentrism, it is also criticized because of its normative and ideological character (Vida & Reardon, 2008; Wanat & Stefańska, 2014)

The goal of our research project was firstly to construct and validate new tools for measuring consumer ethnocentrism – the Scale of Consumer Ethnocentrism (SCONET) – devoid of the strong ideological component present in the old scale. In our opinion, there are three reasons why a revision of CETSCALE is called for. The first is connected to the understanding of the construct of consumer ethnocentrism, which might be much less ideology-based than the authors of the classic scale assumed and, instead, be far more psychologically-rooted in

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