

**LIVING IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: EXTENDING THE
CONCEPT OF CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM**

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to the belief that it is inappropriate – or even immoral – to purchase foreign products because to do so is damaging to the domestic economy, will increase domestic unemployment, and is generally unpatriotic (Shimp and Sharma 1987). In our research, we aim to examine how the concept of ethnocentrism has evolved over time and consequently, how it should be measured in the current globalized world; specifically, with regards to biculturals. Note, biculturals are individuals who identify with more than one culture (e.g., an Indian student coming to study at an US university for several years and currently associating with both the Indian and US cultural set of values).

The consumer ethnocentrism scale (CETSCALE) developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987) has been used extensively among researchers seeking to measure attitudes and preferences toward foreign goods. Using the CETSCALE, several research studies tested the effects of consumer ethnocentrism across bicultural consumers and found, in general, that biculturals are less ethnocentric than monocultural consumers (Zolfagharian and Sun 2010). This may be the result of biculturals identifying with both country-of-origin *and* the country where the products are sold. However, the current customer ethnocentricity scale does not fully capture the current market conditions in our globalized world, whereas a few brands are truly domestic or foreign, because of extensive outsourcing that companies use.

For instance, consider the case of Nina, who is an Indian student studying in the U.S. for the last ten years. She finds herself connecting to both the Indian and the American culture. A bicultural like Nina shops at Gap, one of her favorite American brands, and finds products that are made in India, in the U.S., or in China. How would Nina's ethnocentrism and country-of-

manufacturing affect her purchasing decision? Would she be more likely to choose the Gap products made in India versus the U.S. or China?

In our research study, we would like to explore whether country of manufacturing matters to bicultural individuals like Nina. Specifically, we believe that the current concept and the scale for consumer ethnocentricity should be redefined to capture not only identification with the country-of-origin (Bilkey and Nes, 1982) or the country where the product is sold, but also identification with the country-of-manufacturing. We believe that, because of their multiple identities, today's biculturals (quite a large percentage of the global population) would prefer the "relatively more hybrid" brands that will better connect with their diverse identities. Thus, biculturals may be more ethnocentric than previously believed, but this is not captured well through the current scale, CETSCALE (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Netemeyer, Durvasula, and Lichtenstein, 1991).

Therefore, a new consumer ethnocentricity scale that captures biculturals' preference for different products sold/originating/manufactured in countries with which biculturals identify with versus other countries will be needed to better convey the current market conditions in our globalized world. The main objective of our research is to first develop an updated version of the ethnocentrism scale and further demonstrate how a recent version will give us a better picture of biculturals responses to some of the current global brands.

Finally, the data for this study will be collected through "mall intercepts (scale development)" and experiments (bicultural effects) in three different countries. Approximately 1000 completed questionnaires will be included in the data analysis of the study. The data will be collected by randomly approaching adult consumers in one developed, one lesser developed and one developing nation. In this regard, the scales that will be used to measure the dependent and

independent variables are currently being developed and are originating in previous ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma (1987) and country of origin (Bilkey and Nes, 1982) research.

Key References:

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Zolfagharian, Mohammad Ali, and Qin, Sun, 2010. "Country of origin, ethnocentrism and bicultural consumers: the case of Mexican Americans," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 27 (4), 345 – 357.