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Using standard CETSCALE and other adapted versions of the scale for measuring consumers' ethnocentric tendencies: An analysis of dimensionality

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Abstract   The consumer ethnocentrism tendencies scale (CETSCALE) was developed by Shimp and Sharma in 1987 to measure consumer ethnocentrism. It is one of the most commonly used scales in the marketing literature. As well as the original 17-item version, there are many empirical applications using other adapted versions of CETSCALE. These versions differ in terms of the number (and composition) of items, incorporating additional items and even accounting for the nationality of the foreign products under study. Some of these papers question the unidimensionality of such a scale. We intend to analyse the dimensionality of the CETSCALE. In order to do this, an extensive review of previous studies that have considered CETSCALE—whatever the version—is developed. In addition, we analyse the dimensionality of an adapted version of the CETSCALE including the product category (vegetables) under study. Our results support the multidimensionality of the CETSCALE.
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1. Introduction

Consumer feelings towards foreign products have long been an issue of great interest both in the field of consumer behaviour and in the field of international marketing (Luque-Martínez et al., 2000). This interest has been reinforced as a result of the increasing globalization of markets and increased international competition between products and services and additionally as a consequence of a new ''global scenario'' in which consumers feel more involved with their cultural identities and ethnicity (Netemeyer et al., 1991; Vida et al., 1996). In this context, the concept of ethnocentrism plays a major role in the decision to enter foreign markets (Thomas and Hill, 1999), especially because consumer beliefs, perceptions and emotions linked to the goods' country of origin determine buying behaviour. Therefore, when entering into international markets, it is necessary to know if consumers have an ethnocentric attitude in their buying

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behaviour, because this may be a restriction to successful market penetration. However, the fact that a consumer is ethnocentric and therefore has a greater preference for domestic products does not always have to mean the rejection of those from abroad. Indeed, when domestic production is clearly limited and demand is high, non-ethnocentric consumer behaviour would be expected as domestic consumption depends on imports from foreign countries.

To measure consumer ethnocentrism, the literature has extensively used the consumer ethnocentrism tendencies scale (CETSCALE). The CETSCALE was developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987) in the context of U.S. consumers; there are many international studies validating this scale. In particular, many empirical applications support the unidimensionality and the internal consistency of the scale (e.g. Netemeyer et al., 1991; Durvasula et al., 1997; Luque-Martínez et al., 2000; Supphellen and Rittenburg, 2001; Orth and Firbasova, 2003; Kwak et al., 2006; Nadiri and Tümer, 2010). However, as previous studies over the last 20 years have used adapted versions of the original CETSCALE, which differ in terms of how many and what items are included, the results have varied substantially, thereby questioning the unidimensionality of the scale. Indeed, in parallel with literature that provides support for the unidimensional character of the CETSCALE, there are many studies undertaken in different cultural contexts that question the existence of a single dimension, e.g. Marcoux et al. (1997) in Poland; Mavondo and Tan (1999) in Malaysia; Supphellen and Gronhaug (2003) in Russia; Douglas and Nijssen (2003) in the Netherlands; Bawa (2004) in India; Saffu and Walker (2005) in Russia; Khan and Rizvi (2008) in India; Wei et al. (2009) in China. These studies obtained two or, in many cases, three or even four different dimensions that explain the individual's ethnocentric tendencies within a specific cultural geographical context.

Among those studies supporting the multidimensionality of the CETSCALE, there are empirical applications that use the standard 17-item scale version originally proposed, other papers that consider the shortened version (10 items) also proposed by Shimp and Sharma's (1987) pioneering study and papers using adapted versions of the CETSCALE. These adapted versions differ both in the number of items included (e.g. three, four, five, 11, 14 or 16 items) and what items are considered for measuring consumer's ethnocentric tendencies. Nevertheless, the common feature of all these studies is that—beyond adaptation to original citizenship in each case—they do not modify the items originally proposed by Shimp and Sharma (1987). We have to note that such items do not include, in any case, the origin of foreign products attitudes to which are being measured, nor—if any—the specific product category under study. As a result, all the studies named CETSCALE as the scale used in their empirical analysis,[1] even if many of them did not use any of the two original proposals (17 or 10 items) offered by Shimp and Sharma (1987).

Nevertheless, there are two papers that modified the original items developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987): the paper by Douglas and Nijssen (2003) and that by Altintas and Tokol (2007). The former, in addition to modifying the original CETSCALE by translating it into Dutch (the paper is focused on the Dutch context), adds a specific item related to the particular relationship between the Netherlands (the country in which ethnocentric tendencies are analysed) and Germany (the country of origin of the foreign products under study). Altintas and Tokol (2007), meanwhile, use only six of the 17 items of the original CETSCALE to analyse Turkish consumers' aversion towards European products, replacing the term ''foreign products'' with ''European products''. To our knowledge, these two papers are the only examples of modification of the CETSCALE—beyond translation of the language—used to analyse the ethnocentric tendencies of a particular group of consumers. On the contrary, there are no studies in the literature that include the product category under study in the original item statements.

The goal of this paper is to examine the question of the dimensionality of the CETSCALE in depth. In order to do this, we first develop an extensive review of the main aspects of those papers supporting the multidimensionality of the CETSCALE. The objective of this analysis is to ascertain what aspects of each empirical application (i.e. CETSCALE version, items considered, sample size, sample type, etc.) might be the source of the multidimensionality result. Secondly, given the absence of previous CETSCALE versions that include the specific product category in the drafting of the items, we check the dimensionality of an adapted CETSCALE including the product category (vegetables) under study. We should note that vegetables have rarely been used in the context of ethnocentrism studies. In addition, there is only one study (Netemeyer et al., 1991) that has analysed the dimensionality of the CETSCALE in the context of German consumers. These authors supported the unidimensionality of the scale originally proposed by Shimp and Sharma (1987). The sample used in our study is based on German tourists. Another goal of this paper is, therefore, to establish whether including the product category in the drafting of the items may influence the dimensionality of the CETSCALE version used.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly analyses the concept of consumer ethnocentrism. Following this, an extensive review of previous literature considering the question of CETSCALE dimensionality is developed in Section 3. The empirical study analysing German consumers' ethnocentric tendencies when purchasing vegetables is described in Section 4. Section 5 presents the results of the empirical analysis. We conclude with the contributions of this study and a discussion of both its limitations and directions for further research in Section 6.

2. Consumer ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is a word composed of the terms ''ethnic'', which means group, and ''centrism'', which means focused (Usunier and Lee, 2005). William Summer introduced the term ethnocentrism in 1906 from a sociological point of view and defined it as the ''view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are

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[1] According to this practice, this paper will use the term CETSCALE for all those scales used to analyse consumers' ethnocentric behaviour, provided they have the original version of this scale as a starting point, regardless of the number of items used in each empirical application.