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ARTICLE

Parental influence on the levels of regional ethnocentrism of youth: An exploratory analysis

P. Fernández-Ferrín^{a,*}, B. Bande^b, M.M. Galán-Ladero^c

^a Associate Professor, University of Basque Country UPV/EHU, Facultad de Economía y Empresa, Department of Marketing and Finance, C/Comandante Izarduy, 23, 01006 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

^b Associate Professor, University of Navarra/Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Facultad de Económicas, Campus Universitario, 31009 Pamplona, Spain

^c Associate Professor, University of Extremadura – UEx, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Department of Business Management & Sociology, Avda. Elvas, s/n, 06006 Badajoz, Spain

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KEYWORDS

Regional consumer ethnocentrism;
Parental influence;
Reference groups;
Regional identity;
Local products

Abstract This investigation studies the influence of parents on the level of regional ethnocentrism in their children. The proposed model considers the parents' levels of regional identity and regional ethnocentrism as potential antecedents of ethnocentrism among their children.

The results are based on 195 triads consisting of young consumers and their parents. The findings show that despite low levels of ethnocentrism among youth, parental influence is significant and greater than the effect of other variables. The exploratory analysis presented here supports the assumption that consumer ethnocentrism is a general tendency acquired during childhood through the process of socialization.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Etnocentrismo regional del consumidor;
Influencia parental;
Grupos de referencia;

La influencia parental en los niveles de etnocentrismo regional de los jóvenes: un análisis exploratorio

Resumen Este trabajo estudia la influencia de los padres en los niveles de etnocentrismo regional de sus hijos a través del planteamiento y contrastación de un modelo en el que la identidad regional y los niveles de etnocentrismo regional de los padres son considerados posibles antecedentes del etnocentrismo de los hijos.

* Corresponding author at: University of Basque Country UPV/EHU, Facultad de Economía y Empresa, Department of Marketing and Finance, C/Comandante Izarduy, 23, 01006 Vitoria-Gasteiz Spain.

E-mail address: pilar.fernandezf@ehu.eus (P. Fernández-Ferrín).

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Identidad regional;
Productos locales

Los resultados, basados en 195 tríadas formadas por consumidores jóvenes y sus padres, muestran que, a pesar de que los niveles de etnocentrismo de los jóvenes son relativamente bajos, la influencia de los padres es muy significativa y, en todo caso, muy superior al efecto de otras variables. El análisis exploratorio realizado apoya el supuesto de que el etnocentrismo del consumidor es una tendencia general adquirida durante la infancia, por medio del proceso de socialización.

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Introduction

Currently, there is great interest in understanding the factors related to consumer choices between products of differing origins. However, for decades, this interest has been focused on identifying those factors that determine consumer preference for national products compared with foreign products (Fischer & Zeugner-Roth, 2016; García-Gallego, Chamorro-Mera, & García-Galán, 2015). Studies about the demand for local products are more recent, and studies in the area of marketing are still scarce (see, for example, Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2015; van Ittersum, Candel, & Meulenbergh, 2003), particularly in the Spanish setting.

Current studies have revealed an increasing tendency among consumers to purchase food products from the local (or a nearby) region (Campbell, 2011). This is motivated in part by local consumer groups that seek to support local economies in the face of competition from large multinational corporations. Motivations for buying local products are a combination of private and public attributes (Fernández-Ferrín, Bande, Calvo-Turrientes, & Galán-Ladero, 2016; García-Gallego et al., 2015; Onozaka & Mcfadden, 2011; Stere & Trajani, 2015; Thilmany, Bond, & Keeling Bond, 2008): freshness, a reflection of the regional identity, a specific quality based on human expertise and/or the natural environment, and a desire to support the local economy, keep local jobs, or reduce the carbon footprint by buying products that have been produced at a closer distance.

There is a significant amount of literature regarding the antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism. These publications are based on empirical studies that have been conducted in a large number of countries and have considered multiple variables. Thus, when reviewing the literature, certain biases toward the most frequently analyzed socio-demographic variables must be considered, such as age, gender, level of education, and level of income (e.g., Caruana, 1996; Erdogan & Uzkurt, 2010; Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2015; Ganideh & Good, 2016; García-Gallego & Chamorro-Mera, 2016).

To the best of our knowledge, the possible influence of parental attitudes on the level of ethnocentrism among children has not yet been examined. However, in one of the first studies on the subject, Shimp (1984) stated that ethnocentric tendencies for a consumer are derived principally from his or her socialization experiences within the family and,

to a lesser extent, from opinion leaders, classmates, and media beginning in childhood.

This study hopes to bridge these two gaps in the literature: first, a subnational scale of analysis is applied to complement the more common scale (domestic products compared with foreign products); second, one of the less studied antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism is investigated: the influence of the parental reference group on young consumers.

This study is based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which states that individuals tend to classify themselves into groups of individuals (one's own group) that they differentiate from other groups (outside groups). In the literature, this theory has served to explain consumer choice between domestic and foreign products.

This study is structured as follows. First, the definitions of a local product are reviewed, and the absence of a universally accepted definition of these concepts is highlighted. Second, the evolution of the concept of ethnocentrism is examined from its original conception to its depiction of regional ethnocentrism, with a particular focus on consumer ethnocentrism. Third, the foundations of social identity theory, on which this study is based, are presented. Fourth, the hypotheses of this study, which are based on a review of the literature regarding antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism, are stated. Fifth, the methodology of the study is detailed. Finally, the main results of the empirical analysis are discussed, and the main conclusions of this study are summarized.

Definition of local product

Thilmany et al. (2008) suggested that the importance of the 'local food' movement was manifested by the selection of 'Locavores' in 2007 as the word of the year by the New Oxford American Dictionary, which defines the term as a resident who tries to consume food produced within a 100-mile radius. Locavores preferentially choose local food over non-local food (Edwards-Jones, 2010). Sneed, Dena, Berry, and Fainhurst (2012) noted that the US Congress defined a local agricultural product as one that requires less than 400 miles of travel between its origin and its market or one that is produced within the state where it is sold. For Hand and Martinez (2010), this definition manifests the difficulty of delimiting what a local product is using geographic criteria, especially in a country (the USA) that includes states of varying size (large western states compared with smaller

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