

# **Influence of Customer Loyalty, Consumer Animosity and Purchase Intention on Consumer Ethnocentrism**

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## **Abstract**

The study examined the influence of customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention on consumer ethnocentrism. The research was a cross-sectional survey which made use of purposive sampling technique to select 196 (males = 109; females = 87) undergraduates from two public universities in Nigeria. Standardized scales that measured customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention and consumer ethnocentrism were adapted into a questionnaire format and used for data collection after they were revalidated for cultural relevance. Three hypotheses were tested in the study. Results showed significant positive relationships among customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention and consumer ethnocentrism ( $p < .01$ ). Additional result revealed significant independent and combined influence of customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention on consumer ethnocentrism. However, gender did not influence consumer ethnocentrism. It was concluded that customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention were strongly related to consumer ethnocentrism. The findings of the study were discussed alongside recommendation.

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**Keywords:** Customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention, consumer ethnocentrism

## **Introduction**

Consumer decision to purchase either a foreign or home-made product is influenced by ethnocentric attitude. To increase patronage of home-made brands may require an understanding of the underlying factors that are related to consumer ethnocentrism. Studies on consumer behavior in Nigeria have examined personality and preference for foreign products (Agbonifoh, 1995;

Ezeh, Abamara, Ugwuaju & Obike, 2017; Orji, Sabo, Abubakar, & Usman, 2017), consumers' propensity for foreign products (Ewah, & Ikwun, 2010) and consumption complex syndrome (Okpara & Anyanwu, 2011). However, the underlying consumer attitudes that may play a role in the expression of ethnocentric tendency towards local products is understudied in Nigeria.

Consumer ethnocentrism is the tendency whereby foreign products are evaluated unfavorably because of the belief that locally-made products are superior to imported brands (Kaynak & Kara, 2002; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004). Consumer ethnocentric tendency may trigger a boycott of foreign brands on offer because of the belief that purchasing imported products is inappropriate, immoral, and unpatriotic (Sharma, Shimp, & Shin, 2005; Shimp & Sharma 1987), and represents a threat to a people's culture (Cleveland, Laroche & Papadopoulos, 2009). However, despite the negative sentiments towards foreign brands held by ethnocentric consumers, findings suggest that consumer ethnocentrism impact favorably on the patronage of both home-made and foreign products (Hsu & Nien, 2008; Parker, Haytko, Hermans, 2011). It may be worthwhile to investigate consumer attributes that might predict consumer ethnocentrism.

One consumer attribute that may be related to consumer ethnocentrism is consumer animosity. Consumer animosity describes the negative feeling displayed by a consumer towards products from another country because of perceived unfriendly attitude and hostility it exhibited in the past (Klein & Ettenson 1999). In consumer behavior context, consumer animosity might increase the level of consumer ethnocentric attitude against products from a disliked nation because any encounter with its products is likely to trigger a recall of memories of past hurts. The reawakening of past unpleasant memories may repel the consumer from buying products associated with the 'enemy' country. Findings of some recent studies which showed that consumer ethnocentrism and consumer animosity were positively related (Gineikiene & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Richard, Kyung & Jianyao, 2017; Quang, DinhChien, & Long, 2017) provided evidence in support of the proposition. Also, Park & Yoon (2017) reported that consumer ethnocentrism, susceptibility to normative influence and consumer animosity were positively associated.

Customer loyalty is a consumer attribute that may be related to consumer ethnocentrism. Consumer loyalty is described as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour (Oliver, 1999)." In other words, customer loyalty might be regarded as a favourable disposition that sustains repeat purchase of a specific product or brand continuously. Thus, it may be

logical then to propose that the tendency to repurchase a preferred home-made product repeatedly could be the behavioural manifestation of an increase in the level of ethnocentric tendency in a loyal customer. A number of studies have reported that loyal customers expressed willingness to repurchase from the same provider, and to also consider the preferred product only for future purchases over and above competing brands (Akdogan & Ozgener, 2012; Colgate, Tong, Lee, & Farley, 2007; Tsai, Huang, Jaw, & Chen, 2006; Woisetschläger, Lentz & Evanschitzky, 2011).

As a consumer attitude, purchase intention describes a consumer's forecast concerning what product to buy from competing or similar brands in the market (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Previous studies have reported findings that showed that consumer ethnocentrism is positively related to purchase intention (Laksamana, 2016; Wang & Chen, 2004). However, it was further pointed out by Wang & Chen (2004) that variables such as perception of home-made products as being of a lower quality could weaken the strength of the relationship.

Past studies that investigated the influence of personal attributes on consumer ethnocentrism have reported mixed findings (Al Ganideh & Al Tae, 2012; Chendo, 2013; Han, 2017; Han & Won, 2017; Hat, 2016; Park & Yoon, 2017; Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2010; Sharma, Shimp, & Shin, 1995). Individual analysis of specific findings showed that consumer ethnocentrism correlated positively with age; negatively with education and wealth (Bawa, 2004; Nadiri & Tumer, 2010). This means that the older a person is, the more ethnocentric they are likely to be. On the other hand, the inverse relationship indicated that highly educated individuals exhibited less ethnocentric tendency; also the more financially stable a person is, the less ethnocentric they tend to be.

With respect to gender, findings indicated that females are more ethnocentric than males, with the difference attributed to females' higher tendency on conservatism and patriotism (Han, 1988; Wall & Heslop, 1986). However, Pentz, Terblanche & Boshoff (2014) failed to replicate this result as their study showed no significant gender influence in consumer ethnocentrism in a sample of South African consumers. Finally, findings of consumer ethnocentrism in different cultures showed that it correlated positively with collectivism and patriotism (Tsai, Lee & Song, 2013; Yoo & Donthu, 2005) and negatively with individualism (Yoo & Donthu, 2005). These findings implied that the level of consumer ethnocentrism may be higher in a collectivist society than in individualist culture.

It is interesting to note that majority of the studies reviewed in the preceding paragraphs were conducted in developed, western countries. Insufficient literature on the relationship among customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention and consumer ethnocentrism has contributed to

knowledge gap about the dynamic relationship between these variables in Nigeria. The resulting lacuna is what the present study is designed to fill in the context of a less developed economy such as Nigeria. Therefore, the findings of the study will add the African unique perspective to the consumer behavior literature and also help gauge the universality of the relationship among customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention and consumer ethnocentrism.

To achieve its objectives, the following hypotheses were tested in this study:

- i. There would be significant positive relationship among consumer ethnocentrism, customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention
- ii. There would be significant independent and combined influence of customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention on consumer ethnocentrism.
- iii. Female undergraduates will be significantly higher on level of consumer ethnocentrism compared to male undergraduates.

## **Method**

### **Research design**

Cross-sectional research design was adopted in the study. The dependent variable is consumer ethnocentrism, while the independent variables are consumer loyalty, consumer animosity, and purchase intention, which were measured continuously. Gender was divided into male and female and measured as a categorical variable.

### **Participants and setting**

Respondents comprised of 196 university undergraduates (109 males and 87 females) with age range from 20 to 40 years. The choice of the southwest as the study location was based on the fact it is home to many businesses and industries that deal in both local and foreign products. It is assumed that conglomeration of many business concerns in the southwest means there will be a large variety of imported and local brands in the market and this would allow consumers to have more options in terms of product choice.

### **Instrument**

A self-report questionnaire that consisted of five sections was used for data collection in the study. Respondents' demographic characteristics were measured from their responses on age, gender, what attribute attracts you most to a product?; how will you rate your sense of attachment and loyalty to your country?; how will you rate your sense of willingness to learn and interact with people of other countries?; and how will you rate your sense of priority of working with others over working alone?.

Customer loyalty was assessed with consumer loyalty scale (Polaris marketing research incorporation, 2010). There are 7 items in this scale rated on a 5-point Likert type response format with options that ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Total scores ranged from 7 (minimum score) to 35 (maximum score). Examples of items in the included: “locally made products have been well satisfying”, and ‘locally made products can be recommended to friends and relatives’. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale is .84.

Consumer animosity was measured with consumer animosity scale (Klein, 1998). The scale was used in this study because it assesses locals feeling of resentment toward foreign-made products. It contains 5 items that are rated on a 5-point Likert-type response format with options that ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Sample items in the scale are: ‘foreign-based companies and products often out-smart local companies and products’, and ‘foreign-based companies and countries want economic power over the locals’. Total scores on the scale ranged from 5 to 25. The Cronbach alpha of the scale in the present study is .75.

Consumer ethnocentrism was assessed with consumer ethnocentrism scale (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). The scale contained 17 items rated on a 5-point Likert type response format with options that ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale was adapted to make it culturally relevant for the Nigerian sample. To achieve this, the word America as used in the original version of the scale was replaced with Nigeria in the version that was administered in this study. For example, item 1 that reads American people should always buy American-made products instead of imports, was adapted to read ‘Nigerian people should always buy Nigerian-made products instead of imports. Shimp and Sharma (1987) reported coefficient alpha that ranged from .94 to .96 for four studies during validation of the scale. In addition, they reported high correlation  $r = .77$  ( $n = 138$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in two administrations of the scale separated by a 5-week interval. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale in the present sample is 0.91.

Purchase intention was assessed with the willingness to buy scale (Dodds, Monroe & Grewal 1991). It is a 5- item scale with responses that were rated on a 5-point scale format (Strongly Disagree = 1; Strongly Agree = 5). In interpreting the scores, scores above the mean indicated willingness to buy while lower score indicated less willingness to buy. In this present study, the scale yielded Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .79

## **Procedure**

Respondents were approached at the student relaxation center and in classrooms during lecture free hours on the campuses of the two universities where data for the study were collected. Once the researcher met a student who

satisfied the inclusion criteria, the purpose of the study was explained to the individual, and afterward, he/she was asked to indicate whether or not they still wanted to participate in the study. Oral consent was obtained from those who agreed to participate further in the study. Also, they were informed about their rights and beneficence of the study, and encouraged to give honest response to all items in the questionnaire. In addition, they were informed that participation was voluntary and told that were free to withdraw if they ever felt uncomfortable continuing in the study.

### Data analyses

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyze the data generated in this study. Data was analyzed with descriptive statistics (simple percentage), t-test of independent samples, Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression.

### Results

Table 1 Analysis of descriptive characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	N	%
What attributes attracts you most to a product?		
Durability	110	56.1
Price	35	17.9
Packaging	11	5.6
Not sure	40	20.4
Rating on sense of attachment and loyalty to one’s country		
Low	11	5.6
Moderate	113	57.7
High	72	36.7
Rating on willingness to learn and interact with foreigners		
Low	7	3.6
Moderate	63	32.1
High	126	64.3
Gender		
Males	109	55.1
Females	87	44.9

Table 2 A summary of the relationship among customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention and consumer ethnocentrism

VARIABLES	MEAN	SD	1	2	3	4
<b>1. CUSTOMER LOYALTY</b>	23.39	5.04	1			
<b>2 .CONSUMER ANIMOSITY</b>	16.09	3.86	.25**	1		
<b>3. PURCHASE INTENTION</b>	72.59	9.65	.42**	.41**	1	
<b>4. CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM</b>	59.35	11.99	.44**	.52**	.42**	1

\*\*p < .01, n = 196

Analysis of the results in Table 2 showed that there was significant relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and the predictor variables; customer loyalty ( $r = .44$ ;  $p < .01$ ); consumer animosity ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and purchase intention ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The analysis of the results further revealed that all three variables were positively associated with consumer ethnocentrism. This means that the hypothesis which assumed that there would be positive among the variables was confirmed.

Table 3 A summary of multiple regression analysis showing the prediction of consumer ethnocentrism by customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention

Dependent variable	Independent Variables	$\beta$	t	P	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Consumer ethnocentrism	Customer loyalty	.28	4.39	<	.62	.38	38.94	<
	Consumer animosity	.39	6.19	.01				
	Purchase intention	.15	2.18	<				
				.01				.01
				<				
				.05				

\*\* Significant at  $p < .01$ ; \* Significant at  $p < .05$

The results in Table 3 showed that customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention jointly accounted for 38% variance of consumer ethnocentrism [ $R^2 = .38$ ;  $F(3,195) = 38.94$ ;  $p < .01$ ]. The analysis of the results of the independent contribution of the predictors revealed the following: customer loyalty [ $\beta = .28$ ,  $t = 4.39$ ,  $p < .01$ ]; consumer animosity [ $\beta = .39$ ,  $t = 6.19$ ,  $p < .01$ ] and purchase intention [ $\beta = .15$ ,  $t = 2.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. The analysis showed that consumer animosity contributed the highest (39%) to variance in consumer ethnocentrism. The results showed that all three variables predicted consumer ethnocentrism, but consumer animosity contributed the most to the explanation of consumer ethnocentrism. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 4 A summary of t-Test of independent samples showing gender influence on consumer ethnocentrism

Gender		t	df
Males	Females		
109	87	-.82	193
58.72	60.15		
(12.27)	(11.67)		

The result in Table 4 showed that there was no significant gender influence on consumer ethnocentrism [ $t(193) = -.82$ ,  $p > .05$ ]. The estimated marginal means showed the mean consumer ethnocentrism score of males ( $Mean = 58.72$ ,  $s.d = 12.27$ ) was not significantly different from the mean consumer ethnocentrism score of females ( $Mean = 60.15$ ,  $s.d = 11.67$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis is not confirmed.

**Discussion**

The study investigated the influence of customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention on consumer ethnocentrism in a sample of undergraduates. Gender influence on consumer ethnocentrism was also examined in the study. The study assumed that there will be significant positive relationship among customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention and consumer ethnocentrism. The result showed that the hypothesis was supported. It confirmed the findings of previous studies (Akdogan & Ozgener, 2012; Laksamana, 2016; Parker et al. 2011; Quang et al. 2017). These studies reported findings that showed positive association among customer loyalty, consumer animosity, purchase intention and consumer ethnocentrism. The explanation for the finding is that ethnocentric consumers may have adjusted their beliefs, thoughts and actions to achieve consistency with their ethnocentric views about home-made products and imported brands.

The second hypothesis which predicted that there would be significant joint influence of customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention on consumer ethnocentrism was confirmed. Similarly, there was significant independent contributions of customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention to consumer ethnocentrism. The finding accords with previous studies which had reported that these consumer attitudes were positively associated with ethnocentric tendency towards locally manufactured products (Colgate et al, 2007; Gineikiene & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Park & Yoon, 2017; Tsai, Huang, Jaw, & Chen, 2006). In explaining the findings, one might argue that as customer loyalty for home-made products and consumer animosity towards foreign products became stronger, consumer ethnocentric tendency for home-made products increased also. In addition, it is equally logical to conclude that higher consumer ethnocentrism for locally made products increased the intention to purchase local brands over foreign brands.

The finding of the present study showed that there was no gender influence on consumer ethnocentrism and supported the findings of past studies which showed that male and female did not differ on the level of ethnocentric attitude towards home-made products (Al Ganideh & Al Tae, 2012; Pentz et al. 2014). The similarity in attitude towards home-made products suggested that there may have been a convergence in the prevailing level of patriotism that culminated to a favorable evaluation of local brands between the sexes. The likelihood is high that this may be the case on the basis of the ongoing intense buy-made-in-Nigeria campaign aimed at persuading consumers to increase patronage of local products. In the final analysis, the findings of the present study are in line with what would have been expected of the relationship among the factors investigated in cultures that are tilted towards collectivism (Tsai et al; 2013 & Yoo & Donthu, 2005). Nigeria being a collectivist culture, the finding thus confirmed that expectation. **Conclusion**

The findings of the study support the conclusion that customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention were significantly related to consumer ethnocentrism, and confirmed previous studies that reported similar findings in other countries. In addition, the finding concluded that gender was not related to consumer ethnocentrism in a sample of Nigerian consumers.

### **Recommendation**

The findings of the study revealed that customer loyalty, consumer animosity and purchase intention are related to consumer ethnocentrism. It is recommended that patronage of locally made products would be strengthened through sustained attitudinal change program that would sensitize the citizenry about the economic, cultural and social benefits that result with patronage of home-made brands.

### **Limitation**

The small sample size in the present study may affect the generalisability of its findings to the larger population of undergraduates in Nigeria. Again, the sample included only undergraduates schooling in public universities. But the inclusion of other undergraduates from private universities may have yielded results that are different to findings with the present sample. Therefore, future research should investigate the relationship among these variables in a mixed sample undergraduates selected from public and private universities. A mixed sample participants has the advantage to allow for comparative analysis of the findings which may be interpreted along philosophical peculiarities that characterise public and private universities in Nigeria.

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