



# Consumer ethnocentrism and purchasing intention in developing countries

## Etnocentrismo del consumidor e intención de compra en países en desarrollo

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### Abstract

*Companies in countries with less productive experience have seen threatened by the introduction of foreign products to their local markets, perceived as superior among consumers. Therefore, local producers require effective strategies to give their products competitive advantages over imports. In this regard, research on consumer behavior has identified that the beliefs, perceptions and attitudes associated with the country of origin of the products have an influence on the purchase intention. In this way, the present article analyzes the degree to which the consumer's ethnocentrism has an effect on the intention to buy national footwear, as well as possible predictive and conditioning factors of the relationship. For such purpose, a survey was used in a sample made up of 361 university students. It was composed by an adapted version of the CETSCALE scale used to measure the level of the consumer ethnocentrism, and a scale that measures the intention to buy national and foreign products. Consequently, it was found that the level of ethnocentrism in the consumer positively influences the purchase intention of the national product and that it conditions the effect of the purchase habit on the purchase intention; in addition, it was possible to verify that the CETSCALE scale is a tool that can be used in developing economies with interesting results. The managerial implications and limitations of the research are discussed in detail.*

### Resumen

Las empresas en los países con menos experiencia productiva se ven amenazadas por el ingreso de productos extranjeros, percibidos como superiores entre los consumidores, lo que pone en desventaja a los suyos. Por consiguiente, los productores locales requieren de estrategias efectivas que doten a sus géneros de ventajas competitivas frente a las importaciones. Al respecto, investigaciones sobre el comportamiento del consumidor, han identificado que las creencias, percepciones y actitudes asociadas al país de origen de los productos tienen influencia en la intención de compra. En este sentido, el presente artículo analiza el grado en el que el etnocentrismo del consumidor tiene efecto sobre la intención de compra de calzado nacional, también examina posibles factores predictores y condicionadores de la relación; para esto, se empleó una encuesta en una muestra conformada por 361 estudiantes universitarios. En ella se utilizó una versión adaptada de la escala CETSCALE para medir el nivel de etnocentrismo del consumidor más una escala que mide la intención de compra de productos nacionales. En consecuencia, se comprobó que el nivel de etnocentrismo en el consumidor influye positivamente en la intención de compra del producto nacional y que condiciona el efecto del hábito de compra sobre la intención de compra, además, que la escala CETSCALE es una herramienta que puede ser utilizada en economías en desarrollo con interesantes resultados. Las implicaciones gerenciales y limitaciones de la investigación son discutidas a detalle.

### Keywords | palabras clave

*Consumer Ethnocentrism, CETSCALE, Moderation effect, buying intention, buying habits, national-made products, foreign-made products, developing countries.*

Etnocentrismo del consumidor, CETSCALE, efecto moderador, intención de compra, hábito de compra, producto nacional, producto extranjero, países en desarrollo.

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## 1. Introduction

Globalization has facilitated the trade of products beyond their localities therefore in shopping malls it is common to find products of various origins (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019; Teng, 2019). Consequently, it has become notable that certain products enjoy advantages over others due to their origin of manufacture. This effect is studied under the name “country of origin effect” (COE) (Hamin, 2006). This term represents the positive or negative influence that the country of manufacture of a product can have on the consumer’s purchase decision processes or subsequent behaviors (Elliott & Cameron, 1994). Recently, Kausuhe et al. (2021) analyzed the influence of brand image and country of origin (COE) in the decision to purchase the Chinese smartphone Oppo in Manado (Indonesia), finding a positive and significant effect of brand image on loyalty, and another positive but not significant effect of the COE on the purchase decision. Now, what is important at this point is to analyze the purchase preference that could exist in consumers towards products of national origin in developing countries such as Ecuador; given that many people see globalization as a threat to the interests of their ethnic groups and nationality, including the culture of consumption (Bizumic, 2018).

The biases in favor of home-made products in consumers are explained through a personality trait called “consumer ethnocentrism” (Balabanis & Dimantopoulos, 2004), that is, the more importance a person gives to home-made manufacturing of a product, the greater the ethnocentric tendency (Huddleston et al., 2001). Indeed, the importance of the concept lies in its ability to provide marketing management with an approach to the reasons underlying the preference for buying domestic products versus imported ones, as well as why certain segments of consumers prefer domestic goods while others are not interested in the origin of these (Acikdilli et al., 2017). For Sharma et al. (1995), ethnocentrism has provided useful information for both importers and exporters in the selection of target markets and formulation of more appropriate marketing strategies; such as market penetration, when reviewing whether the ethnocentric behavior of people is decisive for the purchase of a product.

In Latin America, Muñoz and Velandia (2014) tried to establish the level of ethnocentrism in relation to the attitudes and intention to buy products of national and foreign origin in the markets of Brazil and Colombia, the findings showed a low level of ethnocentrism for the Brazilian sample and a medium level for the Colombian, however, no attitudinal differences were identified in the consumption of foreign and domestic products in the Colombian-Brazilian market. However, Camarena and Sandoval (2016) in a study carried out in Sonora, Mexico, found differences in the levels of ethnocentrism between populations of the same region and even the existence of microcultures, which led to different patterns of eating behavior. In Ecuador, Crespo and Salas (2020) studied the behavior of the Quito consumer of the product “chocolate” through structural equation models. The findings showed that the higher the ethnocentricity of the consumer, the greater the negative attitude towards the purchase of imported chocolates. It should be noted that no empirical evidence has been found on moderating effects between the level of consumer ethnocentrism and the intention to purchase local genres in Ecuador.

Therefore, this study aims to measure the level of consumer ethnocentrism in young Ecuadorian university students and its effect on the purchase intention of both domestic and imported products, in order to identify the interaction of the construct in developing economies, and also possible predictors and conditioning factors of the relationship.

### ***1.1. Ethnocentrism of consumption***

Ethnocentrism was conceptualized by William Sumner (1906), a sociologist at Yale University, recognized for developing the concepts of “diffusion”, “in-group” and “ethnocentrism”; the latter has been defined as the tendency of people to reject others who are culturally different while favoring those who are similar. Later, the concept was transferred to consumer behavior, inheriting the main premises and properties of the original construct. Applied to consumption, ethnocentrism has indicated the morality of the individual when buying or refusing to buy foreign products (Shimp, 1984; Spillan et al., 2007) and has placed the importation of products as a moral and social problem (Spillan et al. al., 2007). However, recent research results justify the denomination of this protectionist attitude as “ethnocentric” since people with this characteristic are very concerned about the strength of their ethnic group and reject ideas, people, and products that can weaken their group in a certain way; including consumer culture (Bizumic, 2018).

In concept, consumer ethnocentrism (hereinafter CE) represents beliefs about the appropriateness and morality of buying foreign-made products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Thus, consumers with a high level of ethnocentrism qualify as “incorrect” the purchase of imported products because, from their point of view, this damages the domestic economy and causes job losses, in addition, they consider foreign products as a threat (Sharma et al., 1995). In sum, these consumers are more likely to bias their judgments by being more inclined to emphasize the positive aspects of domestic products and to disregard the virtues of foreign products (Kaynak & Kara, 2002; Shimp & Sharma, 1987); also manifesting a protectionist attitude towards the economic well-being of the country and the employment of their compatriots (Bizumic, 2018; Jiménez & Gutiérrez, 2010).

### ***1.2. Ethnocentrism and purchase intention***

According to Herche (1994), the perceptions of the morality of buying imported products among members of a market have a greater influence on purchasing decisions and intentions than a traditional marketing strategy, since the decision-making process is composed of a normative and a descriptive component (Slovic et al., 1977). Given that the CE models lines of action that adjust to the beliefs and values of the individual with respect to the group to which they belong, it has a normative character (Shimp, 1984). Indeed, the subjective norm, namely the normative beliefs and motivation to comply; is one of the components of the theory of reasoned action; model of social psychology that explains the elements that influence the intention of people’s behavior; in this case, the consumer (Rosero & Montalvo, 2015). In addition, CE is characterized by the love and concern of the individual for the country and the threat to its economic interests derived from the damage to oneself and to the country caused by imports (Sharma et al., 1995); the perceived threat of foreign competition would be expected to generate a psychological reaction that causes individuals to refuse to buy imported products (Jiménez & Gutiérrez, 2010; Luque et al., 2000; Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and pressure other group members to replicate such behavior (Huddleston et al., 2001). Consequently, it has been shown that consumer ethnocentrism is inversely related to the intention to purchase imported products, considering behavior as inappropriate and harmful to the domestic economy (Granzin & Painter, 2001; Jiménez & Gutiérrez, 2010; Netemeyer et al. al., 1991; Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

On the other hand, the consequences of ethnocentrism on domestic products include their overestimation and the moral obligation to buy and prefer them (Kaynak & Kara, 2002; Sharma et al., 1995). Indeed, several investigations found that the

higher the EC level, the more positive the beliefs and attitudes about locally manufactured products and the greater the importance of buying them (i.e.: Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Durvasula et al., 1997; Herche, 1992; Klein, 2002; Nadiri & Tümer, 2010; Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

Therefore, ethnocentric consumers must show more positive attitudes towards products made in their country rather than imported products, in accordance with the sense of obligation they have towards them (Shoham & Makovec, 2003). So, when consumers have a positive attitude towards the product, this perception is expected to be translated into real purchase intentions (Hamin, 2006; Wu et al., 2010). Thus, the more ethnocentric the consumer, the greater the possibility that he or she will choose locally made products (Nadiri & Tümer, 2010; Shoham & Makovec, 2003). This is how Akbarov (2021) recently demonstrated the effect of ethnocentrism on purchasing behavior between different product categories in Azerbaijan, a country with specific consumer characteristics.

Therefore, in accordance with the foregoing, the following hypothesis is postulated:

**H1:** The ethnocentrism of the consumer influences the purchase intention of domestic products.

On the other hand, it is important to mention that most of the studies on CE have been carried out in developed economies, where domestic products generally have a better appreciation than foreign ones (Elliott & Cameron, 1994; Herche, 1992; Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). In fact, Klein et al., (1998) indicated that ethnocentric consumers prefer locally sourced products because they believe that their national production is the best. On the other hand, the results of the research by Acikdilli et al. (2017) in Turkey, point out that consumers have a preference for local products if they are of equal or better quality than imported ones, likewise, in Vietnam, Pham (2020) found that consumer purchasing behavior was significantly influenced by their country of origin.

On the contrary, according to Wang and Chen (2004), in a developing country, a consumer with high levels of ethnocentrism does not necessarily tend to perceive domestic products as superior to imported ones, so an admiration for foreign products added to the negative perception of national products would mitigate the effect of the CE on purchase intention. Therefore, it is important to study the effect of CE in developing countries, where foreign brands are generally considered better than domestic ones (Batra et al., 2000; Hamin, 2006; Kinra, 2006; Wang & Chen, 2004). This suggests that the CE is able to more effectively explain the positive biases of consumers towards local products than the negative biases towards foreign products (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Hamin, 2006; Kausuhe et al., 2021; Klein et al., 2005; Luque et al., 2000; Supphellen & Rittenburg, 2001).

With the foregoing, the following hypothesis is raised:

**H2:** The ethnocentrism of the consumer favors the perceived quality of (H2a) domestic products and has no effect on the perceived quality of (H2b) products of foreign origin.

### ***1.3. Conditioning factors of the ethnocentric effect***

Now, considering that consumers in developed countries value their products better, ethnocentric behavior would guide their purchasing preference; consequently, the perceived quality of a product would moderate the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intention (Wang & Chen, 2004). Indeed, Yagci (2001) pointed out that con-

sumer ethnocentrism is a predictor of the intention to purchase domestic products only when the competition originates from a less developed country. Likewise, Wang and Chen (2004) showed that, in a developing country, the relationship between the CE and the willingness to buy domestic products was weaker for consumers with a low-quality judgment of their domestic products or when they hold high values of conspicuous consumption; since consumers in developing countries perceive imported products as symbols of social status.

On the other hand, it should be noted that habits are what guide the making of unconscious purchasing decisions (Ji & Wood, 2007); and they are a form of automaticity in which the purchase decision is guided by the context (Wood & Neal, 2009) and not by a more detailed analysis of the product information. In this framework, in a developing country, where imports generally have symbolic and social status meanings, buying habits can negatively influence the purchase intention. Consequently, it is necessary to know, in the first instance, the influence of the buying habit on the intention of national purchases; and in the second instance, and where the novelty lies, if the level of ethnocentrism of the consumer conditions the effect of the habit on the purchase intention. It is worth mentioning that Akbarov (2021) demonstrated the moderating effect of some sociodemographic variables, such as gender, personal income, and marital status, but did not contrast the moderating role of the ethnocentric level. Therefore, the following hypotheses are established:

**H3:** The buying habit negatively influences the purchase intention of national products.

**H4:** The ethnocentrism of the consumer conditions the effect of the habit of buying footwear on the purchase intention.

## 2. Materials and method

This research was carried out in Ecuador, a country considered a developing one and with little industrial experience. Ecuadorian consumers tend to replicate the consumption trends of developed western countries. Indeed, fashion and footwear are sectors highly invaded by foreign brands that have hampered the positioning of Ecuadorian brands that, in addition to being conditioned when trying to globally expand due to the high costs derived from dollarization against the national currency of the rest of the regional competitors, find within their local environment a saturated market. Consequently, it is necessary to identify competitive strategies that provide advantages to Ecuadorian-made products; proposing the ethnocentrism of the consumer as a factor favorable to the sector to promote the consumption of its products in the face of foreign competition. For the purposes of this research, footwear was chosen because the industry has a wide and specialized national production; It has 5,800 companies that design and produce shoes for the local and foreign market (Lara, 2018). In addition, the sector is of great weight in the national economy; According to the National Chamber of Footwear (CALTU), annually, the sales of the sector reach an amount of \$ 600 million, generating around 100,000 direct and indirect jobs (Lara, 2018).

In the first place, the questionnaire used in the study collected information on sex, age, study area, and consumption habit. Then, through the 6-item CETSCALE scale, version of Klein et al. (2005), the ethnocentrism of the consumer was measured. Originally, the items on the scale reflect a preference for US products over those man-

ufactured in other countries; and measure loyalty to the purchase of US products; and the refusal to buy, or import, foreign products (Bizumic, 2018). Among the items used in the scale are “only those products that are not available in Ecuador should be imported” and “a true Ecuadorian should always buy products made in Ecuador”; the scale is measured in a five-point Likert format where (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree, which are added to obtain a score of between 6 to 30 points in which a higher score means a higher level of ethnocentrism. ( $M=15.45$ ,  $DT=4.82$ ; Cronbach's Alpha=.81). An index variable of consumer ethnocentrism was created ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $DT = .80$ ).

Purchase intention was measured using the Josiassen, Assaf, and Karpen (2011) scale. Respondents were asked to indicate their intention to purchase Ecuadorian versus imported shoes through items such as “I would feel guilty if I buy an imported product” and “whenever it is available, I would prefer to buy national products”, the statements were measured with a Five-point Likert format ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Finally, an index variable of purchase intention was created. ( $M=2.09$ ,  $DT=.82$ ; Cronbach's Alpha=.81). It is worth mentioning at this point that, according to the obtained average, the index of purchase intention of the national product is low (2.09), which means that the study participants prefer to buy imported products. The difference of the mean with the theoretical midpoint (3) was statistically significant [ $t(360)=-20.387$ ,  $p=.000$ ]

The perceived quality of a product was measured with the price that the consumer is willing to pay for a product of foreign origin and national origin; under the premise that when more information about a product is lacking, pricing has an effect on perceived quality (Chang & Wildt, 1994; Dodds & Monroe, 1985; Olson & Jacoby, 1972). The questions, how much are you willing to pay for a pair of Ecuadorian shoes? With price ranges ranging from \$ 10 to \$ 70 or more, they also asked about imported shoes. And finally, the buying habit was measured with the number of shoes that have been bought in the year (from one pair to nine onwards).

The number of valid questionnaires was 361 for which the non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was applied due to the ease of recruitment of the participants since all were students from the University of Azuay, Cuenca-Ecuador. The sample consisted of 213 women (59%) and 148 men (41%), between 17 and 37 years old from different areas of university specialization.

### 3. Results

Hypothesis 1 proposes that the ethnocentrism of the consumer influences the intention to purchase domestic products. To test the hypothesis, a linear regression was performed. As can be seen in Table 1, the value of  $F = 183.950$  has a  $p$ -value of less than 0.05, which is why it is concluded that the linear dependence is statistically significant.

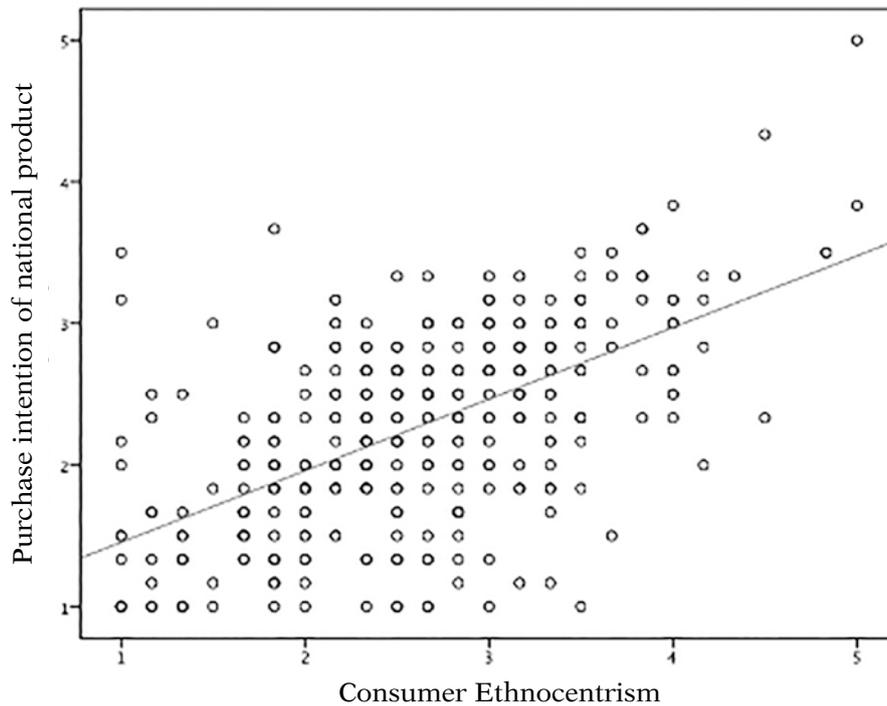
Therefore, hypothesis 1 is confirmed, the level of ethnocentrism of the participants influences their intention to purchase domestic products, in addition, the relationship indicates that the higher the index of consumer ethnocentrism, the greater the intention to purchase the national product. (See Figure 1).

**Table 1. Linear regression on the intention to purchase a national product**

	R	R squared	F	Beta	t	Sig.
CE	0,582	0,339	183,950	0,506	13,562	0,000

Note: Dependent variable: Purchase intention.

**Figure 1. Dispersion, consumer ethnocentrism, and purchase intention**



Hypothesis 2 formulates “The ethnocentrism of the consumer favors the perceived quality towards (a) domestic products and has no effect on the perceived quality regarding (b) foreign origin products”, a linear regression is applied for their contrast. For domestic products, a value of  $F = .682$  is obtained, but having a  $p$ -value greater than 0.05, H2a is rejected. In other words, the ethnocentrism of the consumer does not influence the perception of the quality of domestic products. However, regarding products of foreign origin, the value of  $F = 3.352$  has a  $p$ -value lower than 0.1 and greater than 0.05, which indicates that it is a trend. In other words, if the sample or the study context were to be expanded, this data could change. For the moment, H2b is rejected as it does not find sufficient empirical support to confirm that there is no effect of consumer ethnocentrism on the perceived quality of imported products (See Table 2).

**Table 2. Linear regression on the perceived quality towards the domestic and foreign product**

	R	R squared	F	Beta	t	Sig.
CE <sup>1</sup>	0,044	0,002	0,682	-0,044	-0,826	0,409
CE <sup>2</sup>	0,096	0,009	3,352	-0,096	-1,831	0,068

1. Dependent variable: Perceived quality towards the domestic product.
2. Dependent variable: Perceived quality towards the foreign product.

For the verification of hypothesis 3 that states that the buying habit negatively influences the intention to buy national products, under the assumption that the habit is not a conscious purchase; and that, furthermore, in a developing country like Ecuador, highly consuming people prefer imported goods; those who, in addition, tend to have high purchasing power, do not tend to buy national product and, therefore, present conspicuous consumption values, “what is imported is better”.

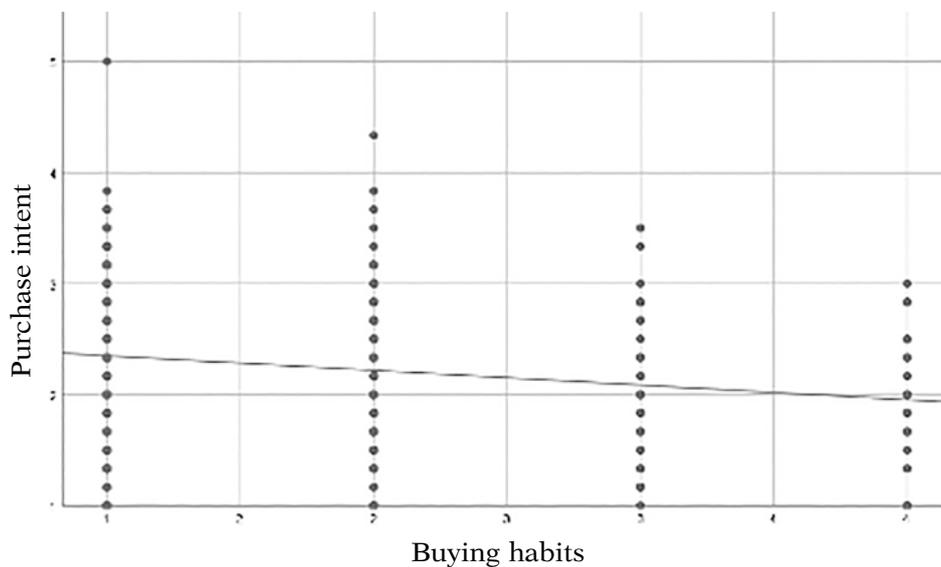
To contrast this hypothesis, a simple linear regression was applied, as shown in Table 3, according to the values of the F statistic of the ANOVA, [ $F = (1, 359) = 11,482$ ,  $p < .0001$ ] confirms H3. Furthermore, through the beta coefficient, it can be established that there is a negative relationship between the buying habit and the intention to buy the national product [ $b = -0.17$ ,  $t(359) = -3,388$ ,  $p < .0001$ ]. See also in Figure 2 that as the buying habit increases, the intention to buy national footwear decreases.

**Table 3. Linear regression on the purchase intention of national products**

	R	R squared	F	Beta	t	Sig.
Buying habits	-0,176	0,031	11,482	-0,176	-3,388	0,001

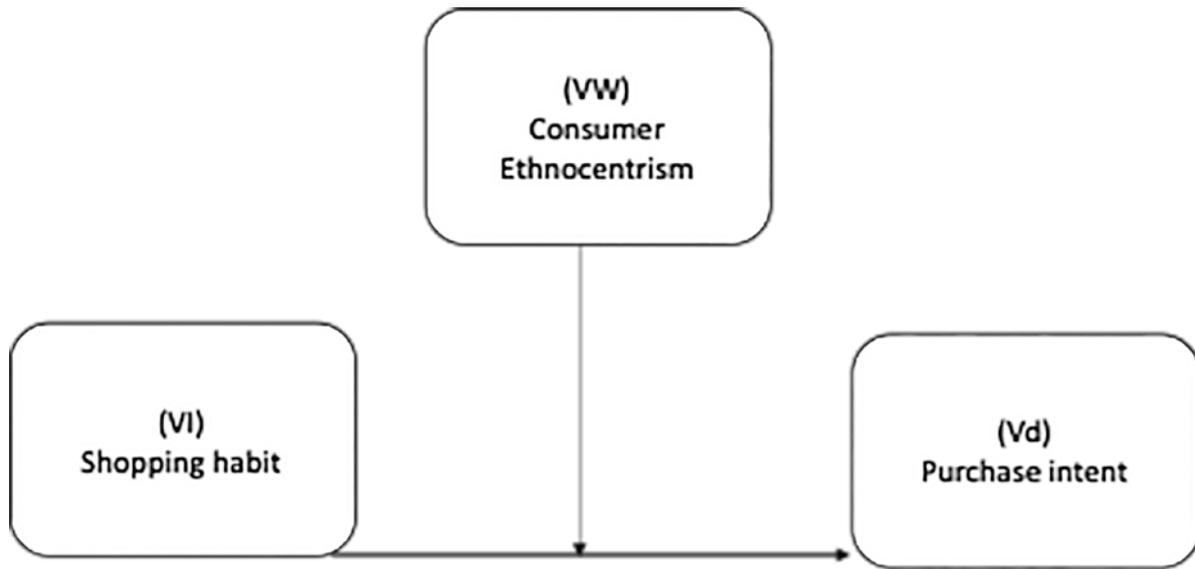
Dependent variable: Purchase intention

**Figure 2. Linear regression of buying habit on purchase intention**



Finally, hypothesis 4 formulates that the level of ethnocentrism of the consumer conditions the effect of the buying habit on the intention to buy a product of national origin. (See model in Figure 3). For the contrast of this hypothesis, moderation model 1 of the macro-PROCESS elaborated by Hayes (2013, 2018) was applied, which is based on multiple linear regression.

**Figure 3. Conditional model**



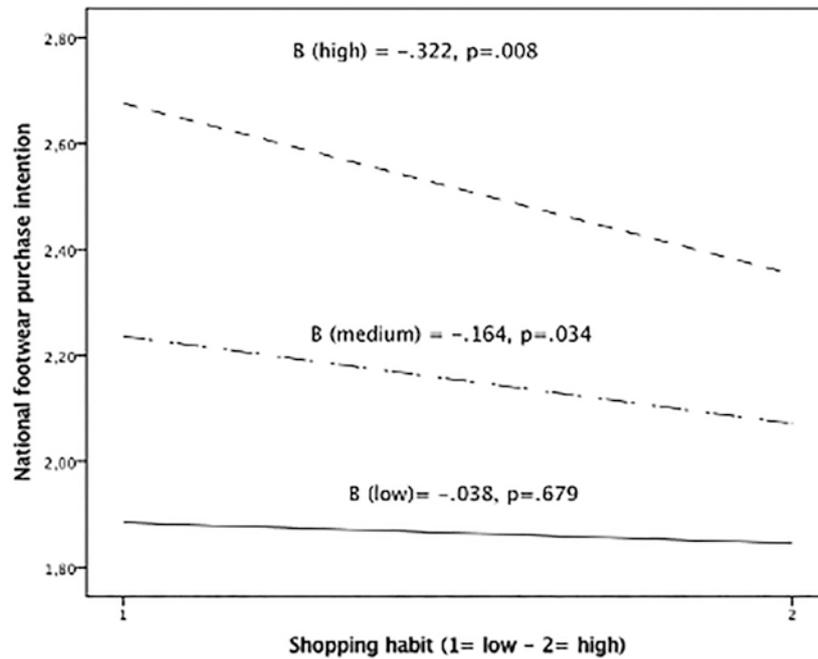
The results of the analyzes confirm hypothesis 4. On the one hand, there is a statistical trend interaction between the shopping habit and the level of ethnocentrism ( $b=-.189$ ,  $p=.057$ ), in addition, a moderating or conditioning effect of the consumer's ethnocentrism was found in the intention to purchase (See Table 4). That is, when the buying habit is high, the intention to purchase the national product decreases, but this only happens in people with high ( $B= -.322$ ,  $p=.008$ ) and a medium level of ethnocentrism ( $B= -.164$ ,  $p=.034$ ) (See Figure 4). This result is discussed in the next section.

**Table 4. Analysis of moderation of consumer ethnocentrism in the purchase intention of national product**

Moderating variable (W)	B	ES	p	IC 95% LI LS	
Consumer ethnocentrism (low)	-.038	.094	.679	-.223	.146
Consumer ethnocentrism (medium)	-.164	.077	.034	-.317	-.011
Consumer ethnocentrism (high)	-.322	.122	.008	-.562	-.082

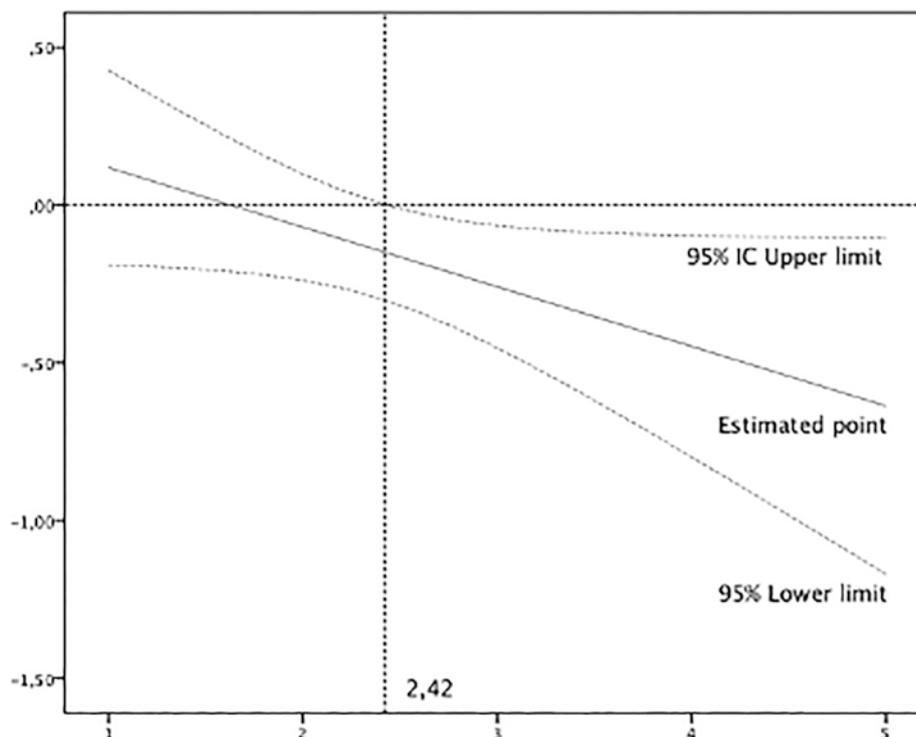
*Nota:* B=interaction coefficient. ES= standard error. CI= confidence interval. Ll= Lower limit, Ul= Upper limit.

**Figure 4. Interaction of how ethnocentrism interferes between the purchase habit and the intention to purchase a national product**



With the Johnson-Neyman technique (Hayes 2013, 2018) it was possible to know that the exact point at which the interaction begins to be statistically significant was from 2.42 (from the range of the moderating variable “level of consumer ethnocentrism” of 1 to 5) (See Figure 5). Before that, there was no conditional effect of consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intention.

**Figure 5. Region of significance of the conditional effect (Johnson Neyman technique)**



#### 4. Conclusions and discussion

In the first place, this study demonstrates the validity and reliability of the CETSCALE scale in Ecuador, such as the study by Crespo and Salas (2018) but with another type of product, they analyzed the consumption of chocolate, in this case, we analyzed footwear; In this way, it contributes to the investigation of consumer ethnocentrism in developing countries. As mentioned in the literature, most studies on the subject have been carried out in developed countries where generally local products are more widely accepted due to their perception of quality derived from the image of the country to which they belong (Wang & Chen, 2004). Indeed, through the purchase intention scale, the sample that made up this study showed that there is a very low level of preference for domestic products and, likewise, they indicated that they do not feel morally bad if they buy a product of foreign origin.

Based on the above, and considering that previous studies showed that there is a significant relationship between the CE and the intention to buy goods produced in the country, it was necessary to investigate in what way and extent the CE can influence the purchase decision in countries where there is a greater preference for foreign products over domestic products. According to Shimp and Sharma (1987), the universality of the concept must have the same predictive ability of the beliefs and perceptions of consumers in any economic context, and, therefore, it must be able to predict preferences and purchase intentions, such as it does so in advanced economies. Consequently, H1 demonstrated that, in the study sample, the CE positively affects the purchase intention of the domestic product. Although the group's EC level is generally low ( $M = 2.57$ ), it was shown to positively affect the purchase intention of domestic products.

In the same way, according to Klein et al. (2005), in environments where foreign brands are perceived as superior to local ones, the effect of CE is expressed in more positive perceptions about domestic products and with little or no effect on foreign brands. In this way, H2 was proposed in order to examine whether the consumer's ethnocentrism favored the perceived quality towards (a) domestic products and would not have an effect on the perceived quality regarding (b) products of foreign origin. However, it was found that the ethnocentrism of the consumer does not influence the perception of the quality of domestic products. However, the result was marginally statistical for products of foreign origin. In other words, if the sample were expanded or the study context changed, this data could be statistically significant. In addition to what was found, it can be affirmed that ethnocentrism in consumption is a moral construct independent of the quality evaluation that the consumer has of a national product. This is also supported by research findings by Teng (2019), who demonstrated that consumer ethnocentrism does not have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between perceived quality and the intention to purchase national products.

Now, the literature on consumer behavior suggests that there are social motivations that determine purchase intention. In this sense, conspicuous consumption, measured through purchase frequency, was established as a determining factor in the purchase decision process. Indeed, when people have often made a response in particular contexts, the context can trigger the response directly in the sense that it does not require supportive goals and intentions (Wood & Neal, 2009). Thus, it was argued that the intention to purchase national products would be affected when the consumer makes unconscious purchases, based on experiences and not necessarily on the intangible attributes of the product such as its place of manufacture. Indeed, the H3 results confirmed the above, and therefore, purchasing habits negatively affect the purchase intention of national products.

On the other hand, considering that the CE empirically goes beyond quality evaluations and represents a moral behavior (Shimp & Sharma, 1987), it was estimated that for the EC to favor the intention to purchase a national product, it is necessary for the consumer to know the origin of manufacture. To verify the above, the CE was evaluated as a moderator of the buying habit in the purchase intention. Consequently, H4 confirmed the premise and, it turns out, that ethnocentric behavior in the habitual consumer does not motivate the purchase of national products. This may be due to the fact that regular consumers are people with a higher purchasing power and are more interested in the brand image and the social status that it can represent.

In short, once the influence of ethnocentrism on the intention of buying national products has been demonstrated; consumer ethnocentrism has important practical implications for businesses and governments. On the one hand, local producers benefit from the ethnocentrism of the consumer by having a perception of the advantage they may have over the local market due to the fact that their production is national and because of the knowledge that their participation in the market implies benefits for the whole of society. This is necessary, since, in economic contexts such as Ecuador, local SMEs try to survive in a relatively small market saturated by foreign products. In this sense, this study was developed with the purpose of identifying practical implications that benefit the strengthening and expansion of the local industry; by providing small local businesses with information about the advantage that their products have due to the fact that they are nationally manufactured.

At present, it is important to direct marketing plans to the consumer considering their social, personal, cultural, and psychological factors, as Ortega-Vivanco (2020) concludes in his study carried out in the current situation caused by COVID-19. It shows that there is a significant relationship between changes in consumption habits and the factors that influence consumer behavior in times of pandemic, such as the increase in preferences in the consumption of local products and the need for companies to design digital marketing strategies focused more on the customer than on the product, which satisfies their post-COVID-19 needs, clearly associated with savings and the promotion of local entrepreneurship.

At the same time, the government or buy local organizations can lead campaigns that evoke a patriotic sentiment; that is, to propose the purchase of local products as a way of being Ecuadorian; and at the same time represent imports as a form of threat to the economy, highlighting the damage they cause to the entire society. All this as a result of having shown that the effect of the CE on the purchase intention is a clearly nationalistic behavior regardless of price or quality considerations (Shankarmahesh, 2006).

Finally, future lines of research are suggested, such as determining the emotional-traditional point of the consumer and its relationship with his ethnocentric level; as well as other determining factors of the CE on the purchase intention that can be identified, such as conspicuous consumption; so that the effect of the CE can be enhanced for the benefit of the local industry. In addition, it is important to extend the study to other industries in order to confirm the results found in this study and generalize them to other sectors. Likewise, the scarce research on EC in developing economies was in the literature review mentioned, therefore, it is proposed to study and apply CETSCALE in other spaces with similar characteristics to Ecuador and with other categories of products.

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