Does Consumer Ethnocentrism Matters on Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA) of Young Malay Muslims in Malaysia?

Poh-Chuin Teo^a, Ramayah Thurasamy^b, Theresa C. F. Ho^c

Abstract: In sustaining the research excellence of country of origin research, recent researchers have challenged the assumptions of this research topic and introduced a new direction namely Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA), which aims to examine the accuracy of consumers' capability in recognizing brand's origin country. Despite several studies have been carried out in BORA, the results remain inconsistent and provide further room for investigation. The objective of this research is to see how consumer ethnocentrism affects the abilities of young Malay Muslims to recognise domestic brands. A BORA matrix was developed based on the suggestions given by Samiee et al. in their seminal BORA research in 2015; and Consumer Ethnocentrism Scale (CETSCALE) used to capture consumer ethnocentrism. The SmartPLS findings of the study revealed that consumer ethnocentrism explained a large portion of respondents' local BORA score. Research limitations and recommendations for future studies were discussed.

Keywords: Consumer ethnocentrism, Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA), Consumer Ethnocentrism Scale (CETSCALE), Dimensionality, Malaysian brand, Young Malaysians.

1. Introduction

Since the seminal work of Schoolar (1965) in international marketing and consumer behaviour research, country of origin (COO) has been a key focus. The COO research not only attracted considerable attention of academic researchers and industry practitioners, but it has also been an important focus for policy makers resulted by the nationalist sentiment wave (Magnusson et al., 2022). If consumers have a high level of origin identification, the origin of a brand is apparent to them. Consumers' perceived brand quality is affected by their perceived origin country of the focal brands rather than its global reach and availability (Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos, 2013). Samiee et al. (2005) mentioned that it is critical to build and emphasize this COO information in the field global strategies and international marketing. Heslop et al. (2008) also stated that more than 1,000 published publications in this area of study demonstrate the significance of COO. Though, recent researchers challenge the relevance of COO cue in consumers' decision making and empirically examined consumers' capability in recognizing brand's origin country accurately, therefore initiated a new research direction for this field of study, namely Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA).

With the magnitude research on the COO concept, Samiee and Chabowski (2021) pointed out their concern on the missing effort to unwrap the ground of COO research. Past studies on BORA examined consumers' ability in identifying a brand's correct origin country. tested the determinants and consequences of it. Individuals' socio-demographic background such as age, educational background, gender, have been proven to be significant predictors in determining their ability in recognising brands' origin country accurately (i.e. Samiee et al., 2005; Martin & Cervino, 2011; Magnusson et al., 2011; Almani et a., 2011; Abdullah-Kilani & Zorai, 2019). However, limited studies were carried out in examining the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on BORA. There is only limited evidence on consumer ethnocentrism on BORA. Samiee et al. (2005) mentioned in their study that consumer ethnocentrism has been a good predictor of BORA, but it showed no impact on domestic BORA. Therefore, Abdellah-Kilani and Zorai (2019) called for future studies on the potential influence of consumer ethnocentrism has on consumers' ability in recognizing brands' origin in order to gain a comprehensive view on the factors that affecting consumers' ability in identifying brand origin correctly. In addition, recently researchers also pointed out the importance to leverage the COO study in the context of emerging nation (Islam & Hussain, 2022; Porto et al., 2021; Witek-Hadduk & Grudecka, 2021). With that in mind, this research sought to explore the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on domestic BORA, particularly among Malaysia's young Malay Muslims in response to the calls by past researchers.

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2. Literature Review

Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA)

Samiee et al. (2005) stated that the crucial underlying and hidden assumptions in this line of research is that customers do in fact have correct knowledge about the countries of origin of products and they do use this information in decision making, though there is a considerable amount of literature in the field of international marketing dedicated to the study on the impact of COO effects on consumer behavioral responses. Likewise, Lee (2020) observed that a fit between brand origin and brand name leads to a higher rating of the brand and a lack of compatibility results in a lower evaluation of the brand. According to Abdellah-Kilani and Zorai (2019), categories are utilised to retain market information, and consumers evaluate and classify information based on cognitive representations.

Besides that, Samiee et al. (2005) stated that customer has little knowledge of a brand's country of origin and, it is unlikely to be important to them, which contradicts the implicit premise in the COO literature that consumers are aware of a brand's genuine origin and use this information in their purchasing decisions. As a result, they postulated that the conclusion of most of the research in this field of study is predicated on the assumption that customers genuinely perceived information about brand origins when making judgements or purchasing decisions. Their argument has been statistically proven in few studies (e.g.,; Samiee et al., 2005; Magnusson et al., 2011; Martin & Cervino, 2011; Almani et a., 2011; Abdullah-Kilani & Zorai, 2019; Samiee & Chabowski, 2021; Magnusson et al., 2022). Empirical research has been undertaken in the United States and India to investigate customers' understanding of brand origin. When evaluated on chosen local and foreign brands, Americans had only a low level of knowledge about the countries of origin of brands (Samiee et al., 2005). Nonetheless, most Indian consumers accurately recognised most of the brands' countries of origin and had a decent understanding of the brands' origin countries (Jin et al., 2006).

Besides, Magnusson et (2022) found that the country image can evolve and displays impacts on consumers' brand evaluation though they were not able to match the real origin of a brand. The results of Abdulleh-Kilani and Zorai's (2019) study suggested that that accuracy was determined by consumers' capability to infer the actual origin country of a brand based on how the brand sounds, instead of depending on consumers' product-related experience and objective knowledge. This lends further support to Usunier's (2011) explanation that BORA is linked to language congruence with the origin of a brand. According to Abdellah-Kilani and Zorai (2019), scholars and practitioners are sceptical of customers' ability to identify the actual origin country of a brand. They summarised the concerns highlighted by past researchers on the limited importance of brand origin, which resulted by:

- 1. Proliferation of hybrid products, whereby a product is designed, built and manufactured in multiple countries:
- Product standardisation due to globalization which affect consumers' perception towards national identities;
- Practitioners' decision in choosing a global sounding brand name, with the aim to confuse consumers' mind; and,
 - 4. Dominance of brand identity, which is perceived as negating any interest in the cue of COO.

Indeed, several customers recognised foreign products as being of local origin. Localization effects, according to Jin et al. (2006), explain this condition. They discovered that Indian consumers link brands with the countries where the brands were formed instead of the countries where the items are currently manufactured. Nevertheless, Jin et al. (2006) stated that the association weakens over time as the brands are manufactured locally. Therefore, to improve in the understanding of consumer behaviours, it is crucial to determine the cause of BORA. As indicated below, Samiee et al. (2005) hypothesised four alternative BORA scenarios:

- 1. Consumers associate a brand with its actual origin country, and they store this information in memory;
- 2. Consumers may merely but inaccurately perceived the brand origin information and they used this information in their internal evaluative process;
- 3. Consumers may be completely unaware of brand's origin country, and therefore this information has no influence in consumer's choice behaviour; and lastly,
- 4. Consumers tend to associate a brand with a variety of origins, and store it in their memory.

Paswan and Sharma (2004) discovered that consumers' socioeconomic class, education level, as well as international travelling experience were all significantly connected with the reliability of knowledge on brand-origin country. Previous studies have empirically examined the antecedent, which was social identity of consumers, including age, consumer ethnocentrism, gender, social position, socioeconomic class, and

international travelling experience, which affected the consumers' country knowledge on the brand's COO. According to Jin et al. (2006), social status and knowledge level did not influence consumers' ability to identify brand origin, and most respondents could identify the majority of the brand's origin country. In addition, consumers' age and socioeconomic level directly and indirectly, in particularly mediated by international experience, impacts on BORA (Samiee et al., 2005). In addition, they also accounted that other antecedents such as consumer ethnocentrism, international travelling experience and gender have significant and direct effects on BORA. Hence, the purpose of this research was to examine the association between consumer ethnocentrism and local BORA.

Consumer ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is deemed as an ancient, complex attitude and a broad social-psychological concept in relation to ethnic ingroups and outgroups (Bizumic, 2019). Consumer ethnocentrism refers to the consumer's preference for domestic over foreign products, which is another common norm of COO. Shimp and Sharma (1987) defined consumer ethnocentrism as "the belief held by consumers about the appropriateness and morality of purchasing foreign-made products". Shimp & Sharma (1987) stated that this is mostly based on consumers' moral judgments on purchasing foreign-made items. Gurhan-Canli et al. (2018) explained that the effects of COO on branding are closely linked to consumer ethnocentrism, whereby consumers perceive superiority of their homegrown brands and reluctance to buy imported goods in order to protect the local industry and economy.

CETSCALE proposed by Shimp and Sharma (1987) used to assess consumer ethnocentric preferences while purchasing imported goods. CETSCALE, which consists of 17 items, was initially created to represent American consumers' opinions regarding the acceptability of purchasing foreign-made products. CETSCALE was discovered to be a predictor of customer beliefs, attitudes, buying intentions, and consumer choice. This scale has been found to have great validity and frequently used in various countries to assess consumer ethnocentric tendencies (Kaynak & Kara, 2002; Chryssochioidis et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2008; Teo et al., 2011; Teo & Mohamad, 2017; Bizumic, 2019; Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019).

Consumer ethnocentrism indicates the reason why customers choose domestic products instead of foreign offerings when there is no evident rationale for such a preference, such as cheaper price, higher quality or better design (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Verlegh (2007) stated that consumers frequently have a favourable bias when rating domestic items, but a negative bias when rating international products, as they believe purchasing imported products is unpatriotic and unethical, and has a negative influence on the domestic market. Hence, even if the quality is lower than imported goods, they still choose to buy local products. (Wall & Heslop, 1986; Verlegh, 2007; Maher et al., 2010; Han & Won, 2017; Teo & Mohamad, 2017). The research findings of Karoui and Khemakhem (2019) provide further support to this situation, with even Tunisians with weak ethnocentric tendencies behaving in a higher ethnocentric manner than usual, especially when they were confronting homegrown and foreign brands.

Past studies in the research of country of origin have proven that consumer socio-demographic background and psychological characteristics associated with the level of ethnocentric tendencies (Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Sharma et al., 1995; Wetzels et al., 1996, Balabanis et al., 2001; Chryssochoidis et al., 2007). Shankarmahesh (2006) highlighted four major categories of antecedents in his integrative assessment of the antecedents and consequences of consumer ethnocentrism: economic, demographic, socio-psychological and political antecedents. It explained that consumers' perception towards the foreign brand is tied to the potential cultural stereotypes (Lee, 2020).

In terms of consequences, majority of the studies focused on consumers' attitude, purchase intention and actual purchase behavior, with the exception of Samiee et al. (2005) that examined the influence of consumer ethnocentrism on BORA, both foreign and local BORA. Their study found consumer ethnocentrism had a significant positive relationship with foreign BORA, where the more ethnocentric the lower Americans' ability to recognize foreign brands accurately. However, the finding showed no relationship between local BORA and consumer ethnocentrism. This research aimed to determine the relationship between local BORA and consumer ethnocentrism in the context of young Malay Muslims in Malaysia.

It is believed that high ethnocentric consumers, who are inclined to purchase imported goods, tend to show high awareness about foreign brands. So, their awareness of local brands is relatively low. Therefore, their ability in recognising domestic brands is low. So, it is believed that consumer ethnocentrism presents a negative relationship with local BORA, as posited:

H1: Consumer ethnocentrism has a negative relationship with local BORA.

The research model of this research is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Research Model

3. Research Methodology

This study focused on young Malay Muslims aged 16 to 30 years old; earlier research (e.g. Bennett, 1998; Lim and O'Cass 2001; Hensen, 2007) defined consumers in or within this group as young consumers. A self-administered survey was utilised for the data collection purpose, and a structured questionnaire was given to respondents via convenience sampling. Usable responses were 238. A structured questionnaire was formed for the purpose of data collection. It will be divided into three sections. Section 1 was intended to capture respondents' socio-demographic information, which contains age, gender, educational level and marital status. Section 2 elicits consumer ethnocentric tendencies among respondents. Shimp and Sharma's (1987) initial measurement of consumer ethnocentrism (CETSCALE) was adopted and adapted. CETSCALE had 17 measures that assessed consumer ethnocentric tendencies. A 5-point Likert scale was employed, where 1 "strongly disagree", 2 "disagree", 3 "Neutral", 4 "agree", and 5 "strongly agree". Lastly, this questionnaire was designed to measure respondents' ability in recognising local brands.

The measure was created based on the recommendations of Samiee et al. (2005), which include: first, brands should be able to represent both men and women; second, brands should represent various levels of price and functionality; third, brands should span multiple product categories; and finally, foreign sounding local brands should be included. Following the recommendations of Samiee et al. (2005), whereby 1) selected brands must originate both domestically and internationally; 2) maintain a balance of local and foreign brands; 3) include anglicised foreign brands; and 4) include fake brands to capture the possibility of guessing, whereby those who demonstrate perfect knowledge will respond "Not listed" for these three brands. A total of 35 brands were identified from the market lists available from Global Market International Database. Amongst, 16 each for local and foreign brands, and 3 fake brands. All these brands represented six (6) product categories, which include cosmetics and toiletries, footwear, clothing, electrical appliances, healthcare, as well as packaged food. Brand names were listed down in a table, while the available options included Singapore, UK, USA, "Not listed" and "Don't know".

4. Results and Findings

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)-Partial least squares (PLS) was employed to serve the data analysis purpose. A two-step analytic approach recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) being applied. The bootstrapping method with 200 resamples was utilised to assess the significance thresholds for loadings, path coefficients and weights, as suggested by Chin (1998) and Gil-Garcia (2008).

Measurement Model

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity, the degree of agreement a set of multiple items are measuring a same concept, was first tested. In this study CETSCALE items are conceptualized to be reflective measures whereas BORA score is conceptualized as a formative measure. For formative measures, the standard assessment of AVE, factor loadings and composite reliability are not meaningful to be analysed. This research used the extracted factor loadings, average variance and composite reliability to examine convergence validity, as indicated by Hair et al. (2010). All of the loadings had exceeded the recommended 0.6 value as suggested by Chin et al. (1997). Next, the extracted average variance was calculated. An extracted average variance that reveals the overall amount of

variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct was found at 0.511, which was greater than the recommended 0.5 value by Hair et al. (2010). Following, a composite reliability value of 0..879, that has exceeding the recommended 0.7 value proposed by Hair et al. (2010), was presented in Table 1. A composite reliability value illustrates the degree to which the construct indicators reveal the latent construct. T

Table I

Factor loadings and reliability

	Scale Type	Loadings/Weight	h	h	Cronbach
		s ^a	CR ^b	AVE^b	α
CE11	Reflective	0.701	0.879	0.511	0.813
CE12		0.734			
CE14		0.660			
CE15		0.718			
CE17		0.708			
CE5		0.650			
CE6		0.819			
Anakku	Formative	0.549	NA	NA	
Asadi		0.155			
Audrey		-0.318			
Bioglo		-0.363			
Bonia		0.016			
Cosway		-0.172			
Elken		-0.150			
Enchant					
eur		0.153			
Eversoft		0.139			
Jasmine		0.023			
Mamee		0.136			
May		-0.017			
Padini		-0.326			
Pensoni					
c		0.487			
Semloui s		-0.175			
Vincci		0.246			
VIIICCI		0.240			

Note: ^aFor reflective scales, the standardized loading is provided; for formative scales, the weight of the linear combination is given. ^bCR = Composite reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, both NA (Not applicable) for formative scale.

Structural Model

The structural model displays the causal linkages among the model's constructs, according to Sang et al. (2010). A structural model includes the estimations of the R2 value and path coefficients, which determine the prediction potential of a model. Both the R2 value and path coefficients (referred to loadings and significance)

indicate how well the data support and hypothesise a research model (Chin, 1998; Sang et al., 2010). The structural model output from the PLS shown in Figure 2. CETSCALE score (\$=-0.566, p< 0.01) was negatively related to BORA explaining 32% of the variance thus consumer ethnocentrism has a negative relationship with local BORA.

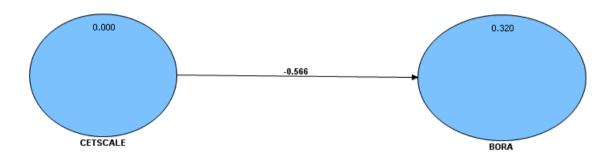


Figure 2. The Structural Model

5. Discussion

This study results revealed that consumer ethnocentrism showed negative influence on local BORA, and also acted as a good predictor of it. High ethnocentric consumers possessed lower ability in recognising homegrown brands. In other words, the higher ethnocentric tendencies the lower Malaysia BORA score, where they showed lower ability in recognising domestic brands, and vice versa. This result is different from the finding of previous study, where Samiee et al (2005) indicated consumer ethnocentrism has no significant relationship with consumers' local BORA score. As discussed in the preceding section, high ethnocentrism consumers are more aware about foreign brands, as compared to domestic brands. Therefore, they possess relatively low ability in recognising domestic brands.

Marketers that target or aim to target young Malay Muslims are encouraged to take this research finding into account. Marketers of local brands that target this group of consumers who are high ethnocentric are encouraged to increase consumers' awareness about the presence of their brands in market. Besides, they are also encouraged to provide information about the "Malaysian brand" in their marketing communication, in order to increase the consumers' ability in identifying and recognising their brands. However, marketers for foreign brands are encouraged to hide or mask the brand origin information when targeting this group of consumers, as it has been widely proved that consumer ethnocentrism has significant negative effects on consumers' attitude, preference, judgment, and purchase intention towards foreign brands (e.g. Wall & Heslop, 1986; Verlegh, 2007; Maher et al., 2010). It is believed this practice will help in avoiding unfavourable evaluation on their brands.

6. Conclusion

This study focused only on young Muslims in Malaysia. Therefore, researchers for future studies are encouraged to expand this study by examining different consumer segments or sub-identities in Malaysia or different countries. Subsequently, the research findings will be more comprehensive, and can provide a clearer view on the effects of consumer ethnocentrism on consumers' ability in recognising brands' country of origin. Other than that, future researchers are also encouraged to explore other antecedents of BORA score. For example, they shall test consumers' psychographic variables such as consumer cosmopolitanism, materialism, cultural elements, worldmindedness, nationalism, patriotism and national identity on their ability in recognising both homegrown and foreign brands. Other than that, this study tested consumer ethnocentrism and local BORA only. So, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and foreign BORA in different contexts.

Conflict of Interest

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organization related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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Appendix - The CETSCALE Measure

Original CETSCALE

N o.	Items
1	American people should always buy American-made products instead of imports.
2	Only those products that are unavailable in USA should be imported.
3	Buy American-made products. Keep American working.
4	American products, first, last, and foremost.
5	Purchasing foreign-made products is un-American.
6	It is not right to purchase foreign products.
7	A real American should buy American-made products.
•	
8	We should purchase products manufactured in America instead of letting other countries get rich off us.
9	It is always best to purchase American products.
10	There should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from other countries unless out of necessity.
11	Americans should not buy foreign products, because this hurts American business and causes unemployment.
12	Curbs should be put on all imports.
13	It may cost me in the long-run but I prefer to support American products.
14	Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products on our markets.
15	Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into the USA.
16	We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.
17	American consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Americans out of work.

Source: Shimp and Sharma (1987)

Adopted and adapted original CETSCALE

N	Items
0.	
1	Malaysian people should always buy Malaysian-made products instead of imports.
2	Only those products that are unavailable in Malaysia should be imported.
3	Buy Malaysian-made products. Keep Malaysian working.
4	Malaysian products, first, last, and foremost.
5	Purchasing foreign-made products is un-Malaysian.
6	It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Malaysian out of jobs.
7	A real Malaysian should buy Malaysian-made products.
8	We should purchase products manufactured in Malaysia instead of letting other countries get rich off us.
9	It is always best to purchase Malaysian products.
10	There should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from other countries unless out of necessity.
11	Malaysians should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Malaysian business and causes unemployment.
12	Curbs should be put on all imports.
13	It may cost me in the long-run but I prefer to support Malaysian products.
14	Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products on our markets.
15	Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into Malaysia.
16	We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.
17	Malaysian consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Malaysians out of work.

Source: Yeong et al. (2007)