

The Impact of Country of Origin Effect and Consumer Ethnocentrism on Purchase Intention of Foreign Brand Recreational Materials Used in Sports Activities: An Empirical Research

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Abstract

Enterprises operating in international markets in a globalizing world must take many factors into consideration in their activities. Country of origin effect and consumer ethnocentrism are among these factors. In this study, the goals were to determine (i) the effect of consumer ethnocentrism and the the country of origin effect on attitude towards the foreign brand and (ii) the effect of attitude towards the foreign brand on the purchase intention of foreign brand products. Foreign products were considered as recreational materials used in sports activities. A total of 335 participants (195 women (58%) and 140 men (42%), participated in the study. The data collected with the help of a structured questionnaire were statistically analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results revealed that consumer ethnocentrism negatively influences attitude towards the foreign brand, country of origin effect positively influences attitude towards the foreign brand, and finally attitude towards the foreign brand has a strong and positive effect on the purchase intention of foreign brand products. Considering that Turkish consumers generally behave in favor of purchasing local products in textiles and clothing products, the fact that the country of origin effect has a positive effect on the foreign brand attitude of recreational materials used in sports activities has been the most striking point of the study.

Keywords: Country of Origin Effect, Consumer Ethnocentrism, Foreign Products, Recreational Materials, Purchase Intention

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide rapid change has also been reflected in consumer demands and needs and as a result, radical changes have occurred in the understanding of marketing. The development process from the production concept to the social marketing approach has led to a rise in the importance given to the consumer. While success for businesses was considered as the sale of what was produced, it has started to be measured with the degree of satisfaction of consumer demands and needs as a result of the change over time (1).

Brands with high market shares all over the world, primarily the U.S.A., EU countries, and Japan

are those of the most developed countries in the world. The high market shares of these brands have an important contribution to the images of the countries they belong to. The positive country image attributed to the product is a positive result of development. This concept, which is called the "country of origin effect" in consumer behavior, has a great role in consumer purchase decisions (2). Consumers also use the "the country of origin" of the product as information about the product apart from its quality, brand, and function. This effect, also known as the the country of origin factor, has been in the focus of the marketing world for many years. This process objective as well as subjective with the effect of psychological factors is called

"country-of-origin" in the international marketing literature (3). Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993) define the country of origin as a clue that has an external product feature, as it is not related to the physical property of the product and that is expressed as "made in...." (4). In this context, it refers to information about the place of production of a particular product (5).

Consumer ethnocentrism is an important concept that should be emphasized when determining the international marketing strategies of companies. For, while the competition in national markets has become extremely impetuous in the globalizing world, operating in international markets is also vital for the survival of companies. At this point, international marketing strategies that are set by measuring and analysing consumer ethnocentrism may gain companies a sustainable competitive advantage (6). The concept of ethnocentrism is a concept consisting of the combination of the words "ethnos" in Greek, meaning "nation, race", and "kentron", meaning the centre (1). One of the most important variables used in explaining negative attitudes towards foreign products is consumer ethnocentrism. Although the pressure of consumer ethnocentrism on the the country of origin effect is variable, studies reveal that consumers with high levels of ethnocentrism prefer products of local origin (7). Turkish consumers do not find it right to purchase foreign products like other developing countries and think that this harms the economy (8, 9). Consumers' perceptions towards the quality of the product are directly associated with the country of origin. For this reason, the the country of origin information and the tendency of consumers to ethnocentrism can be an advantage that marketers can make use of; otherwise, it can turn into a disadvantage if it is not managed properly. Business executives should act on purpose and should not disregard ethnocentrism and the country of origin information while conducting their marketing activities (10).

The literature review reveals studies on the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on the attitude towards the foreign brand products (11, 12, 13) and on its effect on purchase desire and preference towards foreign brand products (14, 15, 16, 17). Likewise, there are studies examining the effect of the country of origin on purchasing foreign brand products (18), its effect on purchase preference and intention towards foreign brand products (19, 20) and its effect on consumers' product evaluation and

purchase intention. (21, 22, 23, 24). In addition, there are a limited number of studies taking into consideration consumer ethnocentrism and the country of origin as a whole and their effects on consumer behavior (25, 26, 27, 28, 29).

There are also studies on the effects of consumer ethnocentrism on the purchase behavior in Turkey (30, 31, 32, 33, 34), on the effect of the country of origin on purchase behavior (35, 36), on the effects of consumer ethnocentrism and the country of origin on the purchase behavior of consumers (37, 38, 2, 29, 39).

Participation of the society in recreation and sports activities brings the interaction of commercial areas economically covering a wide industry ranging from the construction of sports and recreation areas, infrastructure works, production of all kinds of sports equipment and those working in these sectors to the tourism sector, press, and broadcasting (40). The fact that sports-centred businesses are multi-purpose businesses that are built in recreational activities rather than act only as places where people benefit from sports, results in higher participation of people benefiting from the services offered. Sports-centred businesses have to renew themselves and expand their range of services, both as private and public enterprises, in terms of integration with society and spreading sports. This situation leads to the emergence of higher quality and modern facilities and thus increasing the standards.

Although rising standards increase the costs of businesses, it is more necessary to establish environment-friendly sports businesses, which are suitable for recreational use, include open spaces, compete not only with competitors but also with themselves (41). Although the issue of examining the effects of consumer ethnocentrism in tandem with those of the country of origin draws the attention of academicians, it is beneficial to increase the number of studies carried out in this regard both in terms of the sample and the type of product. At this point, it has been evaluated that it would be appropriate to examine the materials used in this sector within the paper, especially as in recent years consumers have attached more importance to leisure, namely recreation and sports activities (42). In this context, this study aims to determine the effect of consumer ethnocentrism and the country of origin on attitude towards the foreign brand and the effect of attitude towards the foreign brand on

purchase intention of foreign brand products. Recreational materials of foreign brand used in sports activities are used as examples of foreign products.

This paper will include sections devoted to the literature review and hypotheses development and explanations of the methods to be used to collect data and test the structural and measurement model proposed. Finally, findings from the data analysis will be presented along with a section of the conclusion and discussions on the possible contribution and implications of this research.

2- Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to consumers' opinions on how appropriate or moral it is to use and buy foreign products (12). Although the two important concepts, which are the "the country of origin effect" and "consumer ethnocentrism", are handled independently of each other, they are actually very closely related concepts. Consumer ethnocentrism is a preconceived judgment that gives the motive to use the products of one's own country. The country of origin effect is a factor that may cause individuals to preconceive through prejudices in their perceptions. Therefore, consumers who are sensitive about the country of origin do not have to be ethnocentric; on the other hand, ethnocentric consumers have to be extremely sensitive about countries of origin of the products purchased (43). However, the most important factor for consumers with low ethnocentrism is the price, whereas the most important factor for consumers with high ethnocentrism is the country of origin concept (44).

Baker and Ballington point out that, with the current technological changes and developments, especially in the fields of transportation and communication have led to a great competitive environment on the basis of countries and that a competition that can be continued without interruption in such a situation may be advantageous (45). In an on-going competitive environment, if companies seek to take part in this sustainable development, they should pay attention to the concepts of consumer ethnocentrism and the country of origin effect (7).

Both studies in Turkey (33, 30, 37) in the world (46, 47) have shown that high levels of ethnocentrism negatively affect foreign brands.

Hypothesis 1: Consumer ethnocentrism negatively influences the attitude towards the foreign brand recreational materials used in sports.

In the study of Batra et al. on the consumers of developing countries, it was determined that non-local products of foreign origin were preferred due to factors such as perceived quality and social status compared to products perceived locally (48). The country of origin has a positive effect on the purchase intent and perceived quality of foreign brand products (28). Cilingir and Basfirinci revealed that the country of origin is an important factor in the product evaluations of consumers. The attitudes of consumers towards the products of developed countries are positive (29). In the developing countries, the country of origin of the products is preferred by consumers in favor of the foreign brand products of the more developed countries (49, 50, 29). Global brands have a large market share in the sports products industry. Moreover, the imports made from developed countries by Turkey in both apparel industry (51), as well as footwear industry (52) has a big share at high rates. However, according to Kaynak and Çavuşgil, consumers do not give privileges to local products, especially in the electronics, medicine, chemistry and textile sectors. In line with these explanations, the following hypothesis has been proposed (53).

Hypothesis 2: Country of origin effect positively influences the attitude towards the foreign brand recreational materials used in sports.

It can be mentioned that attitude plays an important role in explaining behavior within the scope of the Theory of Planned Behavior. Attitude towards the behavior refers to the positive or negative attitudes of the individual who acts in the direction of behavior (54). In this context, based on the assumption that attitude influences intention and behavior, it can be evaluated that attitude towards the foreign brand influences the purchase intention of foreign products. In light of this information, the following hypothesis has been proposed.

Hypothesis 3: The attitude towards the foreign brand recreational materials used in sports positively influences the purchase intention of foreign brand recreational materials used in sports.

The conceptual model developed based on the literature with the hypothesis explained above is shown in Figure 1 below.

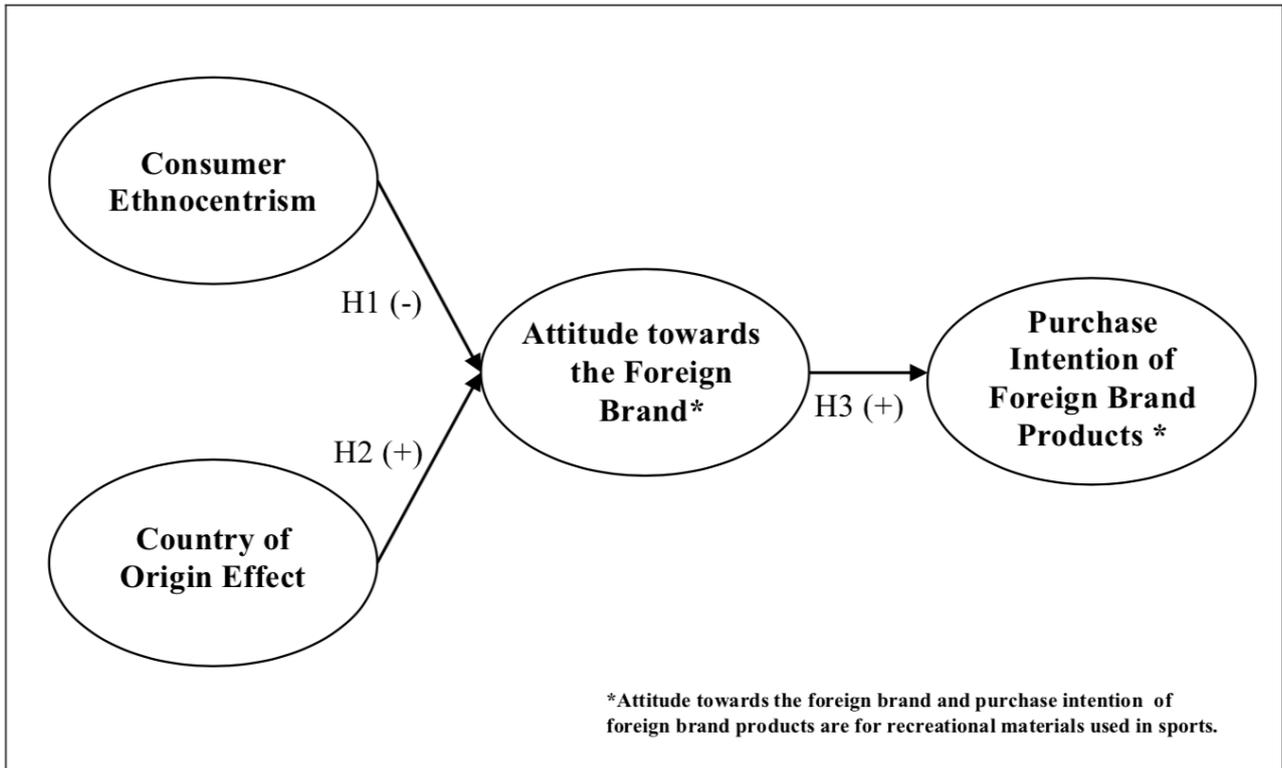


Figure 1. Conceptual model

3. Research methodology

The necessary information about sampling, data collection, measurement, and the research methodology applied to test hypotheses has been explained in the following sections.

3.1 Measurement

Four constructs were measured in this study. These are; consumer ethnocentrism, country of origin effect, attitude towards the foreign brand, and purchase intention of foreign products. These constructs were measured by multiple items, using a five-point Likert-type scale with measure indicators ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). In Table 1, the measurement items are shown together with the sources from which they were taken. In this study, Turkish brands with foreign brand names were excluded by using the term "overeas brand products in foreign language" within the questions included in the questionnaire, In order for the mentioned products to be considered as materials used in recreation activities, firstly, the questions asked in terms of attitude towards the and purchase intention of foreign products were specifically mentioned as the tracksuits and sneakers used in "sports and exercise activities", and secondly, particular attention was paid to the fact that the participants of the

questionnaire are comprised of individuals who do not do exercise professionally.

Table 1. Measurement items			
Construct	Item no.	Measurement items	Source
Consumer Ethnocentrism	CE1	Turkish people should always buy Turkish-made products instead of imports	(47)
	CE2	Only those products that are unavailable in Turkey should be imported.	
	CE3	Buy Turkish-made products. Keep Turkey working.	
	CE4	Turkish products, first, last, and foremost.	
	CE5	Purchasing foreign-made products is non-Turkish.	
	CE6	It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Turks out of jobs.	
	CE7	A real Turk should always buy Turkish-made products.	
	CE8	We should purchase products manufactured in Turkey instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	
	CE9	It is always best to purchase Turkish products.	
	CE10	There should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from other countries unless out of necessity.	
	CE11	Turks should not buy foreign products, because this hurts American business and causes unemployment.	
	CE12	Curbs should be put on all imports.	
	CE13	It may cost me in the long-run but I prefer to support Turkish products.	
	CE14	Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products on our markets.	
	CE15	Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into Turkey.	
	CE16	We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.	
	CE17	Turkish consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Turks out of work.	
Country of Origin Effect	COO1	When buying an expensive item, such as a car, TV or refrigerator I always seek to find out what country the product was made in	(55)
	COO2	To make sure that I buy the highest quality product or brand, I look to see what country the product was made in	
	COO3	I feel that it is important to look for country-of-origin information when deciding which product to buy	
	COO4	I look for the "Made in ..." labels in clothing	
	COO5	Seeking country-of-origin information is less important for inexpensive goods than for expensive goods	
	COO6	A person should always look for country-of-origin information when buying a product that has a high risk of malfunctioning, e.g. when buying a watch	
	COO7	I look for country-of-origin information to choose the best product available in a product class	
	COO8	I find out a product's the country of origin to determine the quality of the product	
	COO9	When I am buying a new product, the country of origin is the first piece of information that I consider	
	COO10	To buy a product that is acceptable to my friends and my family, I look for the product's the country of origin	
	COO11	If I have little experience with a product, I search for country-of-origin information about the product to help me make a more informed decision	
	COO12	A person should seek country-of-origin information when buying a product with a fairly low risk of malfunctioning, e.g. when buying shoes	
	COO13	When buying a product that is less expensive, such as a shirt, it is less important to look for the country of origin	
Attitude towards the Foreign Brand (recreational materials used in sports)	ATF1	I think that foreign tracksuits and sports shoes brands in foreign languages give positive tips about the product.	(54)
	ATF2	Foreign brands in foreign language among tracksuits and sports shoes have a positive image for me.	
	ATF3	I believe that foreign brands in foreign language among tracksuits and sports shoes meet my expectations.	
	ATF4	I think that foreign brands in foreign languages among tracksuits and sports shoes add prestige to me.	
Purchase Intention of Foreign Brand Products (recreational materials used in sports)	PIF1	When I buy tracksuits and sneakers, I pay attention to whether it is a foreign brand in a foreign language.	(56, 57)
	PIF2	When I buy tracksuits and sneakers, I often buy a foreign brand in a foreign language.	
	PIF3	I would like to buy more of the foreign brand of tracksuits and sports shoes.	
	PIF4	The fact that the tracksuit and sports shoes brand is a foreign brand in foreign language speeds up my decision to purchase that brand.	
	PIF5	I prefer the foreign brand if I have to decide between the one in local language and the one in the foreign language.	

3.2 Sampling and Data collection

The sample group of the study was determined by the convenience sampling method, and individuals selected from the province of Karaman on a voluntary basis were preferred. The study included 335 participants in total (195 women (58%) and 140 men (42%)).

4. Data analysis and results

Partial least squares (PLS) methodology with Smart PLS 3.0 were used in this study to test the proposed model and related hypotheses. The following sections present the results of the statistical analysis.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

As can be seen in Table-2 below, the sample size of the study is 335 people, and 140 participants are women while 195 participants are men. The age ranges of the participants vary between 18 and 65+, with 112 participants (33%), which is the highest number, ranging between the ages of 18-24 and with 6 participants (2%), which is the lowest number, being 65+. Besides, 77 participants (23%) range in the 25-34 age group, 92 participants (27%) in the 35-44 age group, 25 participants (7%) in the 45-54 age group, and 23 participants (7%) in the 55-64 age group.

Considering the education levels of the participants, they were evaluated in terms of pre-high school education, high school education, university undergraduate education, master's degree education, and doctorate degrees. There were 57 participants (17%) with pre-high school education, 104 participants (31%) with university undergraduate education, 11 participants (3%) with master's degree education, and 163 participants (49%) with high school education.

The income level was taken from the highest income level range with 4 participants having an income level of (8000+ TL - 1%). This was followed by 6 participants with an income level of 6000-7999 TL (2%). The most common income level among the participants was determined as the income level ranging between 2000-2999 (29%) with 96 participants. The next one was 80 participants with 1000-1999 TL (24%). It is also seen that participants with low income ranging between 1000-2999 TL were chosen. Students constitute a large part of these last two groups.

Table 2. Sample characteristics

Sample characteristics		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	195	58
	Female	140	42
Age	18-24	112	33%
	25-34	77	23%
	35-44	92	27%
	45-54	25	7%
	55-64	23	7%
	65+	6	2%
Level of education	Pre-high school	57	17
	High school	163	49
	University	104	31
	Master's degree	11	3
	Doctorate	0	0,0
Income	0-499 TL	32	10%
	500-999 TL	36	11%
	1000-1999 TL	80	24%
	2000-2999 TL	96	29%
	3.000 TL-3.999 TL	33	10%
	4.000 TL-4.999 TL	26	8%
	5.000 TL-5.999 TL	22	7%
	6.000 TL-7.999 TL	6	2%
8.000 TL and over	4	1%	

4.2 SEM analysis

The model estimation was carried out in SmartPLS 3 (58). This study first analysed the measurement for its validity. This step was followed by the analysis of the structural equation model to test the relationships hypothesised in the research model.

4.2.1 Measurement model analysis

With the help of confirmatory factor analysis, the convergent validity of each structure was tested. Test results related to the convergent validity of constructs are given in Table 3. Examining the standardised factor loadings of each item in the measurement model, the reliability, and the average

variance extracted (AVE) for each construct were examined to evaluate convergent validity.

A factor loading greater than 0.5 is considered a valid condition for item reliability (59). In this respect, the standardised factor loadings of each item were observed and the reliability of the individual items was confirmed.

Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs are above the stipulated level of reliability (0.70), and the AVE for each construct higher than 0.5. The AVE value of the country of origin (0,478) is below 0,50, which is below the critical value. However, where other reliability criteria are met, values below 0.5 can also be accepted (60). As a result, the model satisfies the requirements for the convergent validity.

Table 3. Validity of constructs

Construct	Item no.	Factor loading	Std. Error	t value	AVE (>0.5)	Cronbach's alpha (>0.7)
Consumer Ethnocentrism	CE1	0.531	0.127	4.187	0.527	0.944
	CE2	0.587	0.118	4.976		
	CE3	0.603	0.127	4.736		
	CE4	0.712	0.105	6.771		
	CE5	0.773	0.104	7.449		
	CE6	0.725	0.102	7.097		
	CE7	0.833	0.100	8.312		
	CE8	0.690	0.100	6.897		
	CE9	0.790	0.101	7.844		
	CE10	0.763	0.100	7.633		
	CE11	0.766	0.098	7.861		
	CE12	0.734	0.100	7.351		
	CE13	0.739	0.095	7.816		
	CE14	0.791	0.101	7.846		
	CE15	0.759	0.101	7.500		
	CE16	0.709	0.095	7.468		
	CE17	0.766	0.100	7.654		
Country of Origin Effect	COO1	0.708	0.062	11.511	0.478*	0.920
	COO2	0.640	0.074	8.641		
	COO3	0.706	0.069	10.283		
	COO4	0.659	0.079	8.329		
	COO5	0.502	0.091	5.515		
	COO6	0.662	0.084	7.887		
	COO7	0.718	0.071	10.052		
	COO8	0.771	0.059	12.986		
	COO9	0.675	0.057	11.917		
	COO10	0.806	0.031	25.625		
	COO11	0.711	0.046	15.417		
	COO12	0.787	0.031	25.794		
	COO13	0.580	0.063	9.258		
Attitude towards the Foreign Brand	ATF1	0.907	0.014	67.106	0.838	0.935
	ATF2	0.927	0.011	85.146		
	ATF3	0.912	0.013	68.574		
	ATF4	0.915	0.012	77.280		
Purchase Intention of Foreign Products	PIF1	0.869	0.015	56.301	0.762	0.921
	PIF2	0.917	0.009	101.614		
	PIF3	0.887	0.017	50.871		
	PIF4	0.896	0.014	63.483		
	PIF5	0.790	0.027	28.735		

*Note : Where other reliability criteria are met, AVE values just below 0.5 can also be accepted (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. Construct cross-loadings

	Consumer Ethnocentrism	Country of Origin Effect	Attitude towards the Foreign Brand	Purchase Intention of Foreign Products
CE1	0.531	0.243	0.029	0.041
CE2	0.587	0.332	0.074	0.092
CE3	0.603	0.335	0.015	-0.006
CE4	0.712	0.410	0.139	0.035
CE5	0.773	0.475	0.155	0.160
CE6	0.725	0.387	0.037	0.090
CE7	0.833	0.502	0.117	0.127
CE8	0.690	0.381	0.079	0.054
CE9	0.790	0.406	0.108	0.104
CE10	0.763	0.447	0.101	0.048
CE11	0.766	0.465	0.083	0.080
CE12	0.734	0.471	0.078	0.133
CE13	0.739	0.450	0.117	0.137
CE14	0.791	0.475	0.083	0.121
CE15	0.759	0.514	0.097	0.129
CE16	0.709	0.535	0.061	0.075
CE17	0.766	0.482	0.077	0.147
COO1	0.460	0.708	0.180	0.148
COO2	0.395	0.640	0.118	0.084
COO3	0.463	0.706	0.157	0.079
COO4	0.440	0.659	0.067	0.030
COO5	0.408	0.502	0.029	0.032
COO6	0.416	0.662	0.080	0.078
COO7	0.509	0.718	0.109	0.112
COO8	0.567	0.771	0.174	0.121
COO9	0.467	0.675	0.146	0.154
COO10	0.542	0.806	0.232	0.229
COO11	0.459	0.711	0.190	0.225
COO12	0.565	0.787	0.270	0.254
COO13	0.147	0.580	0.501	0.502
ATF1	0.155	0.399	0.907	0.745
ATF2	0.105	0.324	0.927	0.788
ATF3	0.121	0.291	0.912	0.813
ATF4	0.115	0.301	0.915	0.833
PIF1	0.118	0.313	0.769	0.869
PIF2	0.134	0.329	0.844	0.917
PIF3	0.117	0.296	0.732	0.887
PIF4	0.109	0.297	0.794	0.896
PIF5	0.122	0.236	0.632	0.790

Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct. If the square root of its AVE is higher than each correlation values with other constructs, discriminant validity is achieved (60). The results shown in Table 5 indicate good discriminant validity.

Table 5. Square root of AVE (Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity criteria)

	Consumer Ethnocentrism	Country of Origin Effect	Attitude towards the Foreign Brand	Purchase Intention of Foreign Brand Products
Consumer Ethnocentrism	0.726			
Country of Origin Effect	0.601	0.691		
Purchase Intention of Foreign Products	0.137	0.339	0.873	
Attitude towards the Foreign Brand	0.135	0.359	0.869	0.915

4.2.2 Hypothesis testing

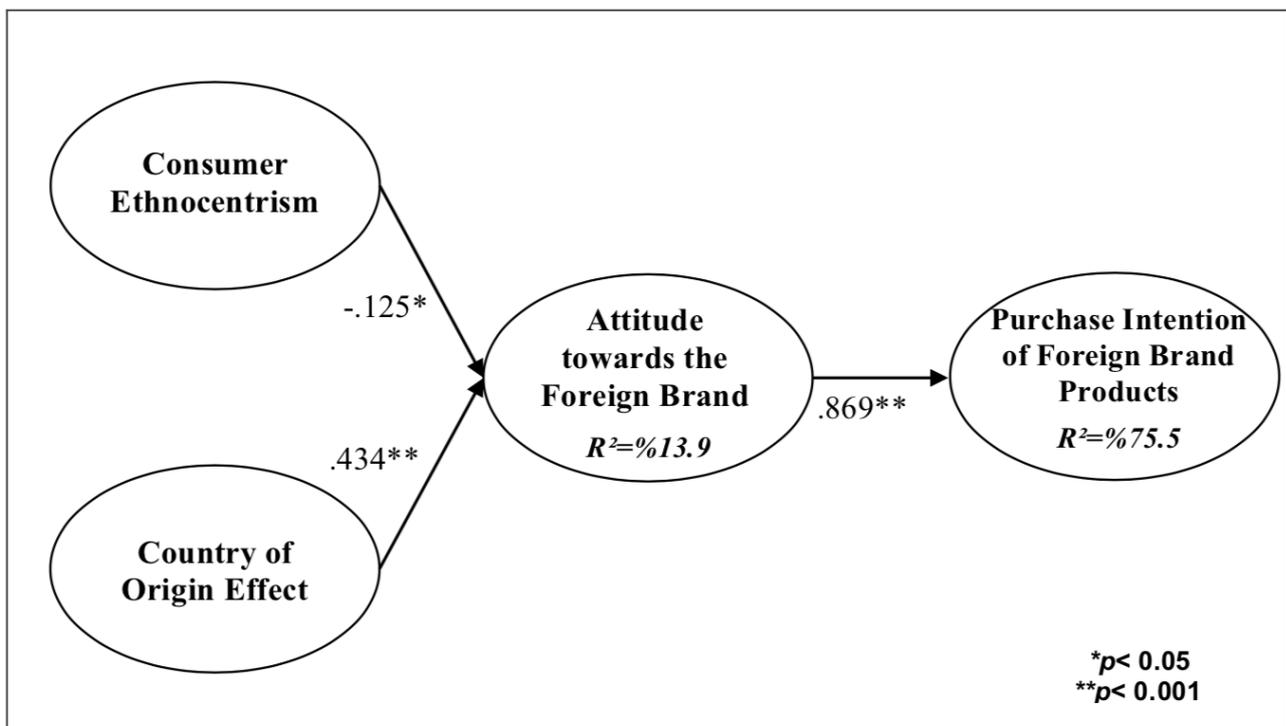
As summarized in Fig. 2 and Table 7, all hypothesized paths were significant.

Table 7. Summary of hypotheses testing results

	Hypothesis			Original Sample	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	s.d.	Supported
H1	Consumer Ethnocentrism	-->	Attitude towards the Foreign Brand	-0.125	2.064	0.039	0.061	Yes
H2	Country of Origin Effect	-->	Attitude towards the Foreign Brand	0.434	8.578	0.000	0.051	Yes
H3	Attitude towards the Foreign Brand	-->	Purchase Intention of Foreign Brand Products	0.869	57.447	0.000	0.015	Yes

Consumer ethnocentrism was significantly and negatively ($\beta = -0.125$, $t = 2.064$, $p < 0.05$) related with attitude towards the foreign brand. Thus Hypothesis 1 is supported. The results further show that the country of origin effect was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.434$, $t = 8.578$, $p < 0.001$) associated with attitude towards the foreign brand, providing

support for Hypothesis 2. The results also found that attitude towards the foreign brand was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.869$, $t = 57.447$, $p < 0.001$) related to the purchase intention of foreign brand products. Hypothesis 4 is thus supported. Attitude towards the foreign brand explained 75,5% of the variance in the purchase intention of foreign brand products.

**Figure 2.** PLS results of the structural model

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has been designed to find out whether there is a relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and attitude towards the foreign brand, the country of origin effect and attitude towards the foreign brand, finally attitude towards the foreign brand and the purchase intention of foreign brand products. In this study, it was estimated that the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and attitude towards the foreign brand is negative, and the relationship between the country of origin effect and attitude towards the

foreign brand as well as the relationship between attitude towards the foreign brand and the purchase intention of foreign products is positive.

Studies conducted relating to consumer ethnocentrism both in Turkey (33, 30, 37) and in the world (46, 47) have shown that high levels of ethnocentrism have a negative effect on foreign brands. In this study, the same result has been reached and the existing literature has been strengthened both on sample and product basis.

On the other hand, it is useful to evaluate the relationship between the country of origin and

attitude towards the foreign brand in two main axes. The first is the development level of the country and the other is the product category. While the country of origin effect in developed countries can generally be in favor of their own countries, the country of origin effect in developing countries may be against their countries in terms of the products of more developed country (29, 49, 50). It can be stated that the positive effect of the country of origin effects on the recreational materials used in sports activities cause consumers consider foreign products in this category more positively, and this may be related to these products in question being from developed countries. This may be a reference point for future research.

The second axis within the relationship between the country of origin and attitude towards the foreign brand can be the evaluation of product categories. Customers do not give privileges to local products, especially in the electronics, medicine, chemistry, and textile sectors (53). Some studies conducted in Turkey have proven the contrary of the findings of Kaynak and Çavuşgil in relation to the textile and apparel industry (53). Armağan and Gürsoy found that Turkish consumers view Turkish-made products more positively in textile products (38). Similarly, Arı and Madran found that Turkish consumers view Turkish-made products more positively in clothing products (2). Unlike these studies, which deal with textiles and clothing in general, in this study, recreational materials such as tracksuits and sports shoes that are used in sports activities in attitude towards the foreign brand were taken as a basis. In this study, despite the fact that the sports shoes industry is close to the clothing sector in terms of both the use of consumers and the raw materials used in its production, and the tracksuit product belongs to the clothing sector, the country of origin effect has been claimed and proved to have a positive effect on the attitude towards the foreign brand. It can be considered as the most striking point of the study. It is estimated that one of the factors causing this is the impact of global brands in this sector. This point also constitutes a basis for future research.

Taking the subject of analysis in terms of businesses, some conclusions can be drawn from this study that can be applied in practice. It is beneficial for the companies operating in the tracksuits, sports shoes and sports equipment sectors to consider the fact that consumer

ethnocentrism has a negative effect on the attitude towards the foreign brand in the sector in question. It can be said that consumer ethnocentrism should also be taken into consideration while evaluating the customer segmentation factor in marketing strategy and action plans. In order to protect the global brands from the negative impact of consumer ethnocentrism, it may be recommended to use a new local brand with the strategy of producing their products in the country in question or using a completely adaptation strategy.

Apart from the above-mentioned implications for businesses, some practical implications can be made from this study for Turkish businesses that produce sports equipment exclusively. While Turkish consumers generally prefer local products in clothing under normal conditions (38, 2), according to the results obtained from this study, they choose tracksuits and more generally sportswear from foreign brands. This result is estimated to be related to branding problem in the sports goods industry in Turkey. In this context, it can be evaluated that it is essential for Turkish companies to work on branding efforts in the sportswear industry.

Considering in terms of public actions and policies, it can be said that the government may work on taking advantages taking into consideration of consumers' attitude towards the foreign brand and purchase intention of foreign branded product. Branding especially in sectors in which production levels are high, (e.g., Turkey's textile, marble, etc.) may be carried out on an educational and financial level through effective vision and planning and implementation.

There are also several limitations of this study. As the study is based on Turkey, generalizing the study to other nations may be a drawback due to cultural differences. In addition, the scope of the study can be extended by including more variables that influence attitude towards the foreign brand and purchase intention.

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