

Effects of Ethnocentrism on Vietnamese Consumers' Attitudes in the case Vietnam Joining Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP)

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Abstract - The purpose of the current research is to investigate the effect of ethnocentric attitudes of consumers in selecting between the domestic products and the imported ones, focuses on the two samples of product: the fresh foods (meat, vegetable, fruit...) and the electronic products.

Demographic factors affecting ethnocentric consumers are also exploited in this study.

Index Terms: ethnocentrism, consumer attitude, trans-pacific partnership agreement, fresh food, domestic product buying motto.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the process of international economic integration, the Vietnamese enterprises find many opportunities and challenges. The free trade agreements that Vietnam has signed, notably opening the retail market and the event that Vietnam prepare to enter the strategic partnership agreement trans-Pacific (TPP), created the trend of the goods from all over the world appeared in Vietnam. Vietnam's consumers can purchase goods with numerous brands from all countries. As reported by the General Statistics Office on the import and export of goods in 2014 shows that China is still the largest export market of Vietnam with an estimated turnover of 43.7 billion US dollars, up 18.2 % compared to 2013, second after China is the products imported from Asia: Korea and Japan, the essential products include cosmetics, electrical appliances; handbags, wine, ... from the Europe although a downward trend, but generally accounted a big part of the retail locations in Vietnam market. Imported goods is still the preferred option for some parts Vietnamese people as sentiment favored foreign goods, but looking back after 5 years to launch a movement "*Vietnamese people consume Vietnamese goods*", the enterprises in the country has achieved much success on the domestic market, especially the rate of Vietnamese goods has increased in the supermarkets. The survey found that 63% of consumers preferred buying Vietnamese good, 55% consumers recommend

their close relationship buying Vietnamese ones. Domestic goods is favored by consumers than the previous years, such as textiles, garments, shoes are up to 80% of consumers prefer, foods and vegetable are 58%, food appliances is 50%.

The study of the effects of ethnocentric attitudes of consumers in the case Vietnam join partnership agreements across the Pacific have not done by any author; this is also the space this research focused.

The purpose of the research is to study on the effect of ethnocentric attitudes of consumers in selecting between the domestic product and the imported one, focus on the two types, include the fresh foods (meat, vegetable, fruit...) and the electronic products, include domestic and import from TPP members (New Zealand, Australia, Japan). Demographic factors affecting ethnocentric consumers are also exploited in this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the author will summarize the issues related to the Ethnocentrism, consumer attitudes and factors in the research model.

2.1. Ethnocentrism

Concept of Ethnocentrism

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism was first introduced in 1906 and is defined as "*the standard of the community that is thought to be the center, the norm of*

everything and *the measure* of all other things

other author argued that ethnocentrism not only applies to tribes and nations but also to many types of social organizations, the pride of the family, localism and religious opinion, racism, and patriotism.

Prefixes of consumer ethnocentrism

According to some research authors, there are four prefix groups of consumer ethnocentrism: (1) psychology - sociology, (2) economics, (3) politics, (4) demographics. In addition, consumer ethnocentrism is different between groups, communities and countries and is also influenced by demographic variables such as age, gender, education, income.

Sharma, Shimp & Shin (1995) [13], pointed out that factors affecting the ethnocentrism of American consumers include two main elements: Social Psychology (foreign cultural openness, patriotism, conservatism, collectivism) and Demographics (age, gender, education, income)..

In addition, in this study, the authors have also built the CETSCALE scale for ethnocentrism including 17 variables, which were the basis for other studies to adjust the measurement scale to suit condition and certain research circumstances. The results indicated seven aspects of consumer orientation for foreign products: (1) consumer trends, (2) value perception, (3) profitability concerns, (4) reciprocal spending, (5) rationality of choice, (6) limitations, psychology and (7) freedom of choice.

In the study in Czech Republic, the authors have pointed out two factors affecting the ethnocentrism of foreign beer consumption are income and education, but in the Sharma's research, Shimp & Shin (1995) [13] mentioned gender does not affect to the consumers' ethnocentrism. Gender is also not the factors affecting to the ethnocentrism of consumers in South Africa, in the study of Andrew R. Kamwendo, Karen M. Corbishley and Roger B. Mason [1], ethnic is identified as the highest affected factor.

Intensity of consumer ethnocentrism

The magnitude of the impact of ethnocentrism on the evaluation and willingness to purchase foreign goods or domestic goods depends on: (1) the existence and availability of internal goods instead of foreign goods; (2) technology gap between domestic and foreign goods; (3) information and knowledge of consumers about goods; (4) cultural similarity between the host country (domestic goods) and the exporting country (foreign goods); (5) economic threat.

Impact of ethnocentrism

Shimp and Sharma (1987) [14], identified ethnocentrism as a non-tariff barrier that hindered international trade activities between countries. Causes of consumer racialism include nationalism, xenophobia, national favor (Adorno et al., 1950) [2], hostility, and a feeling of immortality (Shimp and Sharma, 1987) [14].

The ethnocentrism of consumers

Consumer ethnocentrism is available beliefs and conceptions of correctness, moral relevance for foreign purchases (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) [14]. The buyer's ethnocentrism has the following characteristics: (1) that is the result of patriotism and the fear of losing the control ability its economic due to the negative effects of imports; (2) create a mind to not buy foreign goods. For those who are highly ethnocentrism, buying foreign goods is not only economic but also ethical: not buying foreign goods is patriotic, buying foreign goods is contrary to national benefit; (3) leads to prejudices against imports. Therefore, the consequence of ethnocentrism is the biased assessment: raising domestic goods, lowering foreign goods, always prioritizing domestic goods and not willing to buy foreign goods. The higher the predominant person, the lower the value of foreign goods. The bias assessment results also contribute to directly support the ethnocentrism characteristics, increasing the decay attitude of foreign goods.

Scale of consumer ethnocentrism (CETSCALE)

The CETSCALE buyers' ethnocentric scale consists of 17 variables that have been tested through various studies around the world. According to this scale, all showed the negative impact of ethnocentrism on attitudes towards foreign goods. When some research use the "borrowed" scale in specific transnational studies, two advises are created: One is, scale must be weighed on contextual suitability: macroeconomics, culture and characteristics of each country.

The ethnocentrism is affected by the interaction of psychosocial factors and the domination of demographic factors. Sharma, Shimp and Shin (1995) [13] realized the main psychosocial factors: (1) openness to foreign culture, (2) patriotism, (3) conservatism, (4) collectivism. The research results showed that the ethnocentrism has a negative correlation with the openness to foreign culture and positive correlation for the remaining elements.

With demographic variables: age, sex, education, income, the results show that older people are more ethnocentrism than young people, women has higher

ethnocentric attitude than men, the higher income and higher education, the lower the ethnocentrism identity.

Ethnocentrism and the country origin of the product

COO effect is commonly known as the "made in" concept, defined as the positive or negative effects that a country produces products which can affect to the process of consumer decisions or subsequent behavior. Within the scope of consumer decision making, COO is said to be an external sign (like price, brand, warranty, etc.) acting as a sign of quality or risk reduction for customers. COO has a significant influence on product attitudes and ability to purchase these products, often demonstrating stronger or stronger influence over brand, price, or quality (Lantz and Loeb, 1996) [10].

Some studies research about the effect of COO on consumer ethnocentric levels. Consumer ethnocentrism focuses on the responsibility and ethics of imported goods and consumer loyalty for domestic products. Sharma believes that ethnocentrism can affect overestimation of domestic product and underestimate the quality of imported products.

Bilkey and Nes (1982) [5] have introduced the Country of Origin of Product effects on product evaluation. There is a tendency for consumers to rate their products as often higher than equivalent products of foreign countries. Comparison between the developed and developing countries, the results indicate that there is a positive relationship between product evaluation and the level of economic development of the country of origin. Bilkey and Nes (1982) note that this trend can be turned into real assessments that lead to consumer's ethnocentrism. Consumers who are high ethnocentrism will prefer to emphasize the positive aspects of domestic products. Some scholars point out that older people, women, and rich people often value foreign products more than young people, men and the poor.

Wang and Lamb (1983) [18] pointed out a positive bias for products from countries with similar culture. Crawford and Lamb (1983) [18] found a high willingness to buy products from countries with similar economic and political characteristics to those of native countries.

Sharma et al. (1995) [14] point out that cultural similarities between countries are a factor that can influence the impact of consumer trends on attitudes towards imported products. Similarly, Lantz and Loeb (1996) [10] have shown that high-end customers have a more favorable attitude towards products from similar cultural countries.

In the study of Byeong-Joon Moon (2004) [4], the relationship between the ethnocentrism, information

about the origin country and the understanding of the product influence a lot on consumer choice of goods.

Ethnocentrism and attitude of consumers

In WU Jianlin, ZHU Ning and DAI Qi's research (2010) [19] the model of the relationship between Chinese ethnocentrism, attitude toward products and the intention of buying in China was created. In this study, the author emphasizes the determinant of Chinese consumers' choice of internal goods and they do not consider the product thoroughly before making a decision to buy.

2.2. Consumers' attitude

Consumer attitudes are understood as the overall consumer reviews of a product or brand.

Attitude plays an important role in shaping consumer behavior. Attitudes are used to segment markets and select target markets. The nature of attitude is: the attitude is always directed towards a specific object; attitudes allow individuals to behave relatively stable with what they are familiar; The individual's attitude towards a specific object is not easy to change; behavior occurs in certain situations and is influenced by circumstances.

The structure of attitude consists of three factors: emotions, perceptions and intentions to act. Emotion is understood as the way consumers feel about the object. Awareness is understood as the understanding and belief of consumers about an object. The intention to act indicates the tendency of an individual to act on the subject.

Measuring attitudes: attitudes can be measured by measuring the person's understanding and feelings about the subject

2.3. Trans-Pacific Strategic Partnership Agreement

February 4, 2016, Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP) was signed between 12 countries, including Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States and Vietnam. The economic scale of TTP member countries accounts for 40% of GDP and 30% of global trade. This is a new generation of free trade agreements - expected to become a model for regional and world trade development with higher demands in the context of rapidly developing production forces and the economic integration is increasing deeply. TPP is a comprehensive market access agreement, ensuring a higher level of free movement of goods, services, capital and technology through a commitment to quickly eliminate import and export taxes and tariff

barriers; create an equal and non-discriminatory business environment; facilitating trade and investment, thereby bringing more benefits to business and production, workers and consumers.

3. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the theory foundation and refer some research models, the author proposed the following research model:

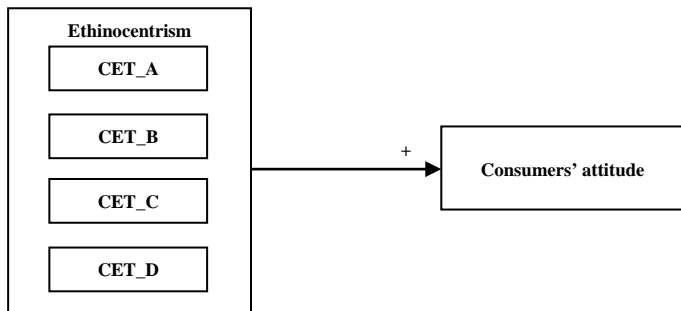


Figure 1: research model

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Table 1: Describe the factors in the research model through the table of observed variables

Order	Components of CET	Code	Variable
1.	CET_A Impact of domestic goods purchase	CET_1	Buy domestic goods to help develop the country's economy.
2.		CET_2	Purchasing home-made goods is keeping the job for the Vietnamese.
3.		CET_3	Buy domestic goods to protect domestic businesses.
4.	CET_B Domestic purchase motto	CET_4	Vietnamese people have to buy Vietnamese goods.
5.		CET_5	Only buy imported goods if there are no locally produced goods instead.
6.		CET_6	Accepting to buy Vietnamese goods even at higher prices.
7.		CET_7	Vietnamese goods are not inferior to foreign goods in terms of quality and design.
8.		CET_8	It is best to buy Vietnamese goods.
9.	CET_C Impact of imported products purchase	CET_9	Choosing to buy imported goods instead of domestic goods is incorrect behavior.
10.		CET_10	Purchasing imported goods causes unemployment for Vietnamese workers.
11.		CET_11	Purchasing imported goods is harmful to Vietnam's economy.
12.		CET_12	Consumers who buy imported goods are responsible for making Vietnamese workers lose their jobs.
13.	CET_D Attitude with foreign trade	CET_13	Only trade in goods with few foreign countries and when necessary.
14.		CET_14	Should impose barriers on imported goods.
15.		CET_15	Imported goods must not be stretch out in the Vietnamese market.
16.		CET_16	Foreign goods should be heavily taxed.
17.		CET_17	Only buy imported goods when there are no similar domestic goods.

The hypotheses were stated as follows:

H1: The relationship between the ethnocentrism composition and consumer behavior

H1.a: The impact of internal purchasing awareness is positively correlated with consumer attitudes.

H1.b: Domestic product buying motto is positive correlated with consumer attitude.

H1.c: The impact of imported good buying is positively correlated with consumer attitudes.

H1.d: The attitude towards foreign trade is positively related to consumer attitudes.

H2: The relationship between demographic and ethnocentrism

H2.a: There are differences between age in terms of ethnocentrism.

H2.b: There are differences between gender in terms of ethnocentrism.

H2.c: There are differences between income and ethnocentrism.

H2.d: There are differences between education level and ethnocentrism.

H2.e: There are differences between occupation and ethnocentrism.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and quantitative methods are used simultaneously with descriptive and analytical research methods. In which qualitative research is a preliminary study to screen the variables included in the research model. Quantitative research aims to test hypotheses in the research model through data collected by sending survey questionnaires. Data after collection will be cleaned before included in the analysis.

According to Hair and colleagues, the general rule for the minimum sample size in exploratory factor analysis is 5 times the number of observed variables and 5 times the number of suitable samples for multivariate regression analysis. In order to test the difference of the ethnocentrism according to the variables, the ANOVA and T-test analyzes will be performed.

The study was carried out on the Vietnamese consumers, however, due to time and financial limitations, the study focused on surveying customers who currently live and work in Hanoi with sample size is 200 consumers.

Measurement of ethnocentrism

The current study used Cetscale scale of Sharma, Shimp & Shin (1995) [13] with 17 variables as the foundation for measurement. The original CETSCALE is a unidirectional scale, but the research results show that it is multidirectional with four components: (1) awareness of the impact of internal purchases (CET_A); (2) be aware of the impact of foreign purchases and evaluate that ethical behavior (CET_B); (3) the motto of internal purchases (CET_C) and (4) attitudes towards foreign trade (CET_D). The variables are used Likert scale with scores from 0 to 5.

The study selected 2 groups of products to conduct the survey on consumers' attitudes including: (1) group of fresh food (vegetables, fruits, meat...); (2) high tech

products (electronics, refrigeration, electrical appliances). Group of food products (vegetables, fruits, meat, ...) are Vietnamese products which does not require high level of science and technology and Vietnam has advantages to export to other countries TPP members. The group of electronics, refrigeration, and household electricity are the products that Vietnamese enterprises are starting to produce partially / fully assembled, requiring the high level of scientific and technic.

Currently, among TPP members, Vietnam has good foreign trade activities with New Zealand in importing fruits, milk, beef, ... and importing computers, electronic devices, ... from Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Therefore, the topic limits the scope of research on the ethnocentrism of consumers for 2 groups of products: fresh food (vegetables, fruits, meat, ...); electronic products (refrigeration, electrical appliances) and conduct attitude measurement of consumers between selecting the domestic and foreign products from New Zealand and Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

Statistics describing observed variables

Ethnocentrism with fresh food

Survey results showed that the majority of consumers appreciate the positive impact of buying fresh domestic food for the domestic economy (mean CET1a-CET3a > 3.5). However, Vietnamese consumers do not fully agree with the negative assessment views on foreign buying behavior and foreign trade (mean CET 9a- CET17a < 3). 89.7% of the respondents disagree with the negative assessment view of the purchasing behavior of foreign goods (mean CET9a = 1.98), only 6.3% of consumers believe that foreign buyers must be responsible when making domestic workers lose their jobs (mean CET 12a = 1.83).

The rate of priority buying Vietnamese goods is relatively high (mean CET 4a = 3.84; 67% agree). However, when there is a price difference, only 20% agree to accept Vietnamese goods even if they pay a higher price (mean CET 6a = 2.56).

Ethnocentrism for electronic products

Similar to the group of fresh food products, consumers has positive impact of purchasing electronics, refrigeration made in Vietnam (mean CET1b-CET3b > 3.3). However, most people's opinions are disagreeable or uncertain for negative reviews of foreign purchases and foreign trade (mean CET9b-CET17b < 2.7). Similar

to the group of fresh food, although most people agree with the viewpoint "Vietnamese people must prioritize Vietnamese goods" (mean CET4b = 3.46), but are not willing to buy Vietnamese goods when prices become higher than imported goods (mean CET6b = 2.30).

Sumarry, the resesrch results showed that consumers express satisfy when buying the domestic fresh foods but have higher attitudes towards foreign trade of electronic products if compared to fresh food.

Consumer attitudes towards imported fresh food imported from New Zealand and Australia

Although the majority of consumers rated fresh food imported from New Zealand, Australia better than domestic goods in design (3.44 > 2.90), quality (3.29 > 2.79) but still tend to favor domestic goods (3.32 > 2.92) and plan to consume more domestic goods than imported goods (3.48 > 2.95).

Consumers rated the safety and health of domestic fresh food products lowest (mean AT5a1 = 2.79) while underestimating the suitability of the price of imported fresh food (mean AT3a2 = 2.76).

Consumer attitudes towards electronic products imported from Japan

In general, consumers have a more positive assessment of electronics, refrigeration, and electrical appliances imported from Japan than domestic products at all survey variables. Consumers underestimate the design of domestic goods if compared to other factors (mean AT4b1 = 2.86). Consumers like the imported goods from Japan much higher than domestic goods (mean AT6b1 = 2.98 and mean AT6b2 = 3.87; mean AT7b1 = 3.26 and AT7b2 = 3.75).

Test research hypotheses

Test hypothesis 1: The relationship between the ethnocentrism composition and consumer attitude toward product selection

From the results of the regression analysis, the study shows that the majority of the components of ethnocentrism has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes towards both product groups. However, the ethnocentrism has a positive effect on domestic production which is stronger than imported goods. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Test hypothesis 2: The relationship between demographic and ethnocentrism

a) For domestis fresh foods

When considering the relationship between *gender and ethnocentrism*, the survey results show the statistical significance of variable CET_Da < 0.05. It can be concluded that there is a difference in gender assessment

of internal purchasing motto and attitudes towards foreign trade for fresh food.

For the relationship between *education and ethnocentrism*, the p value >0.05 indicates that there is no difference in education level affecting the ethnocentrism of consumers for fresh food items.

The survey results on the relationship between *age and ethnocentrism* have p value > 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is no difference in age affecting the ethnocentrism of people.

The level of p value > 0.05 when testing the relationship between *income and ethnocentrism* indicates that there is no difference in income affecting consumer ethnocentrism of fresh food products.

Finally, the survey results on *occupation and ethnocentrism* showed that p value of CET_Aa <0.05 so there is a difference in occupation and ethnocentrism when giving decision to buy domestic fresh food.

In summary: from the analysis for fresh food products, it can be concluded that the hypothesis H2.b and H2.e are accepted; Hypotheses H2.a, H2.c, H2.d are rejected.

b) For electronic products (refrigeration, household electricity)

The survey results on the relationship between *gender and ethnocentrism* showed p value of CET_Cb <0.05, so there is a gender difference which affected to purchasing the imported electronic products. When examining the relationship between education and ethnocentrism, the results showed that p value > 0.05, therefore, there is no difference in education affecting to the consumers' ethnocentrism with electronics, refrigeration, household electricity. Regarding the relationship between age and ethnocentrism, the statistical significance of p value > 0.05, so, there is no difference in age which affecting to the ethnocentrism of consumers for electronic goods, refrigeration, household electricity.

Conclusion: From the analysis of electronic, refrigeration, household electrical products, it can be concluded that the hypothesis **H2.b** is **accepted**; The hypotheses **H2.a, H2.c, H2.d, H2.e** are **rejected**.

Systematizing the research results

- **For the group of fresh food products:** Research results indicate that the majority of the composition of ethnocentrism has a positive impact on consumers' attitude. In particular, the ethnocentrism have a stronger influence on attitudes towards goods which is made in Vietnam. Gender affect attitudes towards foreign trade and occupational factor affect to the domestic purchases, and women prefer domestic fresh foods than men.

- **For electronic products:** Research results indicate that the ethnocentrism has positive impact on consumers' attitude. In particular, the ethnocentrism have a stronger influence on attitudes towards the domestic goods. There is a gender difference in the impact of foreign goods purchases, in which men prefer imported goods due to a better understanding of technology.

Table 2. Summary of hypothetical research and testing results

<i>Hypotheses</i>		<i>Hypotheses testing</i>
Ethnocentric and attitude toward product selection		
<i>For the domestic fresh foods</i>		
The impact of domestic goods purchasing is positively correlated with consumer attitudes when selecting products.	H1.a1	Accept
The domestic purchasing motto is positively correlated with consumers' attitudes when selecting products.	H1.b1	Accept
The impact of foreign good buying is positively correlated with consumer attitudes when selecting products.	H1.c1	Reject
The attitude towards foreign trade is positively related to the attitude of consumers when selecting products.	H1.d1	Accept
<i>For the imported fresh foods</i>		
The impact of domestic goods purchasing is positively correlated with consumer attitudes when selecting products.	H1.a2	Accept
Domestic good purchasing motto is positively correlated with consumers' attitude when choosing products.	H1.b2	Reject
The impact of foreign good buying is positively correlated with consumers' attitude when selecting goods.	H1.c2	Reject
The attitude towards foreign trade is positively corelated to the attitude of consumers when choosing products.	H1.d2	Accept
<i>For the domestic electronic products</i>		
The impact of domestic product purchasing is positively correlated with consumer attitudes when selecting products.	H1.a3	Accept
The local purchasing motto is positively corelated with consumers' attitudes when selecting products.	H1.b3	Accept
The impact of foreign product buying is positively correlated with consumer attitudes when selecting products.	H1.c3	Accept
The attitude towards foreign trade is positively related to the attitude of consumers when selecting goods.	H1.d3	Reject
<i>For the imported electric appliances</i>		

The impact of domestic product purchasing is positively correlated with consumer attitudes when selecting goods.	H1.a4	Accept
The local purchasing motto is positively correlated with consumers' attitudes when selecting goods.	H1.b4	Reject
The impact of foreign product buying is positively correlated with consumer attitudes when selecting products.	H1.c4	Reject
The attitude towards foreign trade is positively related to the attitude of consumers when selecting goods.	H1.d4	Reject
Demographics and ethnocentrism		
<i>For the group of fresh products</i>		
There are differences between age groups in terms of ethnocentrism.	H2.a5	Reject
There are differences between gender groups in terms of ethnocentrism.	H2.b5	Accept
There are differences between income groups in terms of ethnocentrism.	H2.c5	Reject
There are differences between educational level groups in terms of ethnocentrism.	H2.d5	Reject
There is a difference between occupations and professions on ethnocentrism.	H2.e5	Accept
<i>For the group of imported electric appliances</i>		
There are differences between age groups in terms of ethnocentrism	H2.a6	Reject
There are differences between gender groups in terms of ethnocentrism.	H2.b6	Accept
There are differences between income levels on ethnocentrism	H2.c6	Reject
There are differences between academic groups about ethnocentrism.	H2.d6	Reject
There is a difference between occupations and professions on ethnocentrism.	H2.e6	Reject

6. Sugesstions for marketing

Based on the research results, some suggestions for marketers as follows:

With a group of fresh food items which 3 accepted hypotheses, marketers should develop a marketing strategy: Vietnamese consumers should use Vietnamese goods and consider importing some kinds of fresh foods if consumers still need.

With the group of domestic electronic products: refrigeration, electrical appliances with 3 accepted hypotheses, so building marketing programs for

promoting Vietnamese people using Vietnamese goods is still a trend that needs to pay attention.

With the group of imported electronic and refrigeration products, electrical appliances: 3 hypothesis rejected, so this is not a key products for marketers to focus on exploitation. It is better to change the trend from importing these products into assembly or domestic production to attract more consumers.

Gender and occupation greatly affect to the ethnocentrism of consumers in goods selection, so marketing programs should focus on this factor in providing products that meet consumers' needs.

Although there are many attempts, due to time constraints, the study can not avoid some defects: the author only obtained 126 online surveys which is not big enough. The survey only focus on two groups of product, the extensive research which focus on demographic characteristics of regions and more specific product groups may be the attractive suggestion research trend in the future.

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