

Ethnocentrism Scales: Reliability, Validity, and Relationship with Political Affiliation

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Abstract

This paper finds that ethnocentrism scales are a reliable and valid measurement of ethnocentrism for US consumers. Notably, the results show the relationship between ethnocentrism and political affiliation as well as a relationship between ethnocentrism and tendency to purchase domestic and foreign products. Implications of the findings are presented.

Key words: ethnocentrism, consumer ethnocentrism, Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale (CETSCALE), United States Ethnocentrism Scale (USE), Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale (GENE)

1. Introduction

After the Second World War, U.S. foreign policy emphasized globalization and democracy. With the inauguration of President Trump, foreign policy reached a turning point. President Trump implemented “America First,” which is both a political and economic policy. Further, on April 18, 2017, President Trump signed an Executive Order, “Buy American, Hire American.” It is clear that President Trump’s “America First” policy is geared toward domestic supporters, who prioritize economic competence above all.

Underlying the support of President Trump’s “America First” policy is the rise of ethnocentrism, which is due to certain political factors that are not limited to what is seen in the United States. The territorial disputes between China and its neighboring countries; the United Kingdom’s decision, in a June 23, 2016 referendum, to leave the European Union, also known as Brexit; and the U.S.-China trade war are well-known examples of growing ethnocentrism. Due to the strong role of ethnocentrism in the world today, it is important to have a reliable and valid scale to measure degrees of ethnocentrism. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine the reliability and validity of ethnocentrism scales as applied to U.S. consumers. A secondary objective is to determine the extent to which ethnocentrism is related to political affiliation and how it affects global marketing.

2. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is an attribute of people who know only their own culture or religion and believe that their culture or religion should serve as a standard of thought and behavior. Jewish people divide the world into two categories—Jews as the “chosen people” and others as Gentiles. Greeks and Romans called outsiders barbarians. Arabs consider themselves the noblest nation and, like Greeks and Romans, all others are barbarians. Russian books and newspapers present the country’s “civilizing mission,” as do books and newspapers

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of France, Germany, and the United States. Many countries tend to regard themselves as the leader of a civilization—the best, the freest, and the wisest. All others are considered “inferior” (Klopf 2001).

We also can see such ethnocentrism by examining the meaning of countries’ names. For instance, “China” means “the country at the center of the world.” China’s ethnocentrism is seen in the fact that, among the ancient Chinese, non-Chinese people from countries such as Japan and Korea were referred to as the “Dong Yi,” the “Eastern Barbarians.” From the perspective of China, there also were Southern, Western, and Northern Barbarians.

The concept of ethnocentrism was developed by Sumner (1906), a prominent sociologist, in his book *Folkways* and became the theoretical basis of what is known as the consumer ethnocentrism effect. The term *ethnocentrism* consists of two Greek words: *ethnos*, meaning nation, and *kentron*, meaning center. Combined, two words take on the meaning, “Our nation is the center of the world” (Klopf 2001).

Sumner (1906) defined ethnocentrism as “a view wherein our group is the center of all things, and everything else is measured and assessed based on the relationship with us”. Each group believes that its own folkway alone is correct, and individuals experience feelings of contempt upon noticing that other groups have different folkways, leading to such terms as “pig-eaters,” “beef-eaters,” “heathens,” and “bigmouths” (Sumner 1906). For Sumner, ethnocentrism connoted two key ideas. The first is that groups are naturally at war with one another and that peace within a nation, tribe, or state can be explained only by the demands of war with outsiders. The second is that this situation of open or latent warfare necessarily produces appropriate sentiments, namely, loyalty toward ingroups and approval of one’s ingroup customs and beliefs, combined with hatred and contempt for outsiders (Forbes 1985).

There is an old Asian proverb about a frog that lives in a well. The frog, it seems, is quite happy because, after all, the well is a perfectly good place, and the patch of sky he can see from the bottom of his well is a perfectly nice bit of sky. The frog has no need for, nor any interest in, any place but his own. Like the frog in the well, we are all prone to elevate our own place or our own culture as the standard against which we judge others and to see our own as superior to others (Keith 2011).

3. Consumer Ethnocentrism Scale

Ethnocentrism, one of the most important theories in the field of social sciences, is brought to bear in areas such as cross-cultural psychology, sociology, intercultural communication, and consumer behavior. Consumer ethnocentrism, the term adapted from the general concept of ethnocentrism by Shimp and Sharma (1987), is regarded as a critical field of study. Shimp and Sharma use consumer ethnocentrism as a means to represent the beliefs held by U.S. consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products.

Consumer ethnocentrism has been measured using the Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale (CETSCALE), developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987), which is considered the standard scale for the measurement of consumer ethnocentrism (Table 1). It grew out of consumer ethnocentrism in the United States in the 1980s. From the perspective of consumer ethnocentrism, purchasing foreign products leads to profits for foreign companies and decreases the profitability of competing domestic companies. Further, it is believed that the purchase of foreign products could lead to a downward spiral in terms of a decrease in the earnings of the company, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate of workers and a reduction in consumers’ purchasing power.

Table 1. Consumer Ethnocentrism Scale (CETSCALE)

1	American people should always buy American-made products instead of imports.
2	Only those products that are unavailable in the U.S. should be imported.
3	Buy American-made products. Keep America 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, because it puts Americans out of jobs.
7	A real American should always 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 U.S.
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.

SOURCES: Shimp & Sharma (1987)

4. Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale

Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) contend that the Ethnocentrism Scale developed by Adorno et al. (1950) is outdated and is based on the “White” group perception of “other” groups (e.g., Blacks, Jews, Filipinos). Thus, Neuliep and McCroskey developed a reliable and valid scale to standardize the operationalization of ethnocentrism in the field of intercultural communication: the United States Ethnocentrism Scale (USE) and the Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale (GENE). USE comprises 16 items, half worded positively and half worded negatively, and was developed according to a conceptualization of ethnocentrism seen in individuals in the United States. Similarly, GENE comprises 21 items, 11 worded positively and 10 worded negatively, and was developed to reflect a conceptualization of ethnocentrism that may be experienced by anyone, regardless of culture.

To determine the reliability and predictive validity of USE and GENE, Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) asked participants to complete the following items: (a) Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA) and (b) Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension (PRECA) as well as to report on the (c) size of their hometown, (d) frequency of travel outside of their home state, (e) number of same race/ethnicity people in their hometown, (f) frequency of contact with people from a different country, and (g) frequency of contact with people from a different culture. They found that USE and GENE are reliable and have predictive validity. They further found that GENE is more predictive than is USE for each

of the seven predictor variables. The USE and GENE items and factor loadings are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Scale Items and Factor Loadings for USE

	Phase I		Phase II	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
1. Other countries should model themselves after the United States.	.56	-.46	.65	-.21
2. People in the United States have just about the best lifestyles of anywhere else.	.60	-.18	.68	-.10
3. People in the United States could learn a lot from people of other countries.	.03	.64	-.13	.30
4. The United States is a poor example of how to run a country.	-.08	.47	.17	.75
5. Most people would be happier if they lived like people in the United States.	.67	-.31	.73	.06
6. Most other countries are backward in comparison with the United States.	.57	-.29	.64	.09
7. The United States is a poor role model for other country.	-.16	.46	.14	.86
8. Lifestyles in other countries are just as valid as in the United States.	.23	.77	-.10	.22
9. Countries are smart to look up to the United States.	.87	.00	.66	-.21
10. Life in the United States is much better than most other places.	.73	.11	.57	-.07
11. The United States should be the role model of the world.	.81	-.13	.73	-.18
12. Countries really should not use the United States as a role model.	.04	.62	-.07	.66
13. A lot of other countries are primitive compared to the United States.	.67	.10	.41	.16
14. I enjoy learning about the customs and values of other countries.	.27	.72	-.06	.32
15. Although different, most countries have equally valid value systems.	.30	.64	-.03	.25
16. The United States would be better if it were more like other countries.	.18	.62	.08	.65
Eigenvalue	4.1	3.6	4.1	2.0
Percent of Variance	26.1	22.6	26.0	12.7

SOURCES: Neulip & McCroskey (1997)

Table 3. Scale Items and Factor Loadings for GENE

	Factor One	Factor Two
1. Other countries should model themselves after my country.	.62	-.33
2. People in my country have just about the best lifestyles of anywhere else.	.65	-.31
3. My country should be the role model of the world.	.72	-.34
4. Most other countries are backward in comparison with my country.	.71	-.05
5. Most people would be happier if they lived like people in my country.	.68	-.18
6. My country is a poor example of how to run a country.	-.16	.88
7. My country is a poor role model for other countries.	-.23	.90
8. Lifestyles in other countries are just a valid as in my country.	-.61	.07
9. Countries are smart to look up to my country.	.57	-.37
10. Life in my country is much better than most other places.	.40	-.14
11. People in my country could learn a lot from people of other countries.	-.49	.07
12. Countries really should not use my country as a role model.	-.26	.43
13. A lot of other countries are primitive compared to my country.	.42	-.10
14. I enjoy learning about the customs and values of other countries.	-.42	.08
15. Although different, most countries have equally valid value systems.	-.36	.05
16. I'm not interested in the values and customs of other countries.	.55	-.06
17. Many other countries have really strange and unusual customs as compared to mine.	.42	-.05
18. People from other countries act strange and unusual when they come into my country.	.47	.03
19. People should respect the values of customs of other countries.	-.10	-.07
20. I have little respect for the values and customs of other countries.	.44	-.08
21. Most people from other cultures just don't know what is good for them.	.49	-.08
Eigenvalue	4.6	2.5
Percent of Variance	21.9	12.2

SOURCES: Neulip & McCroskey (1997)

It should be noted that Neulip and McCroskey's (1997) research has some limitations. As seen in Tables 2 and 3, GENE and USE comprise almost identical questionnaires. GENE was not sufficiently refined to measure ethnocentrism, and these scales are strongly related. Thus, to improve the accuracy of the measurement of ethnocentrism, GENE needs to be refined and its reliability and validity checked.

5. Procedure

A marketing research company collected the data using an online survey questionnaire. The questionnaire pretested with a small ($n = 15$) sample of U.S. undergraduate students. Thereafter, initial version of the questionnaire was refined. Then, 480 U.S. consumers were recruited to participate in this study. Data were again collected through an online survey questionnaire during February 2019. The sample characteristics are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Sample Characteristics

U.S. (<i>n</i> =400)		<i>n</i>	%
City	Michigan	200	50
	California	200	50
Gender	Male	200	50
	Female	200	50
Age	18-25	46	11.5
	26-29	34	8.5
	30-35	50	12.5
	36-39	30	7.5
	40-45	51	12.75
	46-49	29	7.25
	50-55	40	10
	56-59	40	10
	60-65	44	11
Education	66-69	36	9
	High school or less	84	21
	Some college	141	35.25
	College graduate	116	29
Annual Household income	Graduate school	59	14.75
	under \$10,000	42	10.5
	\$10,000-\$29,999	76	19
	\$30,000-\$49,999	88	22
	\$50,000-\$69,999	57	14.25
	\$70,000-\$89,999	54	13.5
	\$90,000-\$99,999	15	3.75
Identity	\$10,000orMore	68	17
	American Indian or Alaska Native	11	2.75
	Asian	34	8.5
	Black or African American	55	13.75
	Hispanic or Latino	31	7.75
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5	1.25
	White	264	66

6. Measures

The researcher measured the tendency toward ethnocentrism with 22 items adapted from Neuliep (2017). Originally called GENE Scale from Neuliep and McCroskey (1997). The researcher measured consumer ethnocentrism with 17 items adapted from Shimp and Sharma (1987). The researcher measured foreign product purchasing intention with four items adapted from Klein et al. (1998) and Klein (2002). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The 22-items of GENE / GENE-USA shows the factor loadings and Cronbach's alphas of all scales.

Table 5. GENE and GENE-USA

	GENE	GENE (USA)
Q1	Most other cultures are backward compared to my culture.	Most other countries are backward compared to the United States.
Q2	My culture should be the role model for other cultures.	America should be the role model for other countries.
Q3	People from other cultures act strange when they come into my culture.	People from other countries act strange when they come into the United States.
Q4	Lifestyles in other cultures are just as valid as those in my culture.	Lifestyles in other countries are just as valid as those in the United States.
Q5	Other cultures should try to be more like my culture.	Other countries should try to be more like the United States.
Q6	I'm not interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	I'm not interested in the values and customs of other countries.
Q7	People in my culture could learn a lot from people of other cultures.	People in the United States could learn a lot from people of other countries.
Q8	Most people from other cultures just don't know what's good for them.	Most people from other countries just don't know what's good for them.
Q9	I respect the values and customs of other cultures.	I respect the values and customs of other countries.
Q10	Other cultures are smart to look up to our culture.	Other countries are smart to look up to American culture.
Q11	Most people would be happier if they lived like people in my culture.	Most people would be happier if they lived like people in the United States.
Q12	I have many friends from other cultures.	I have many friends from other countries.
Q13	People in my culture have just about the best lifestyles of anywhere.	People in the United States have just about the best lifestyles of anywhere.
Q14	Lifestyles in other cultures are not as valid as those in my culture.	Lifestyles in other countries are not as valid as those in the United States.
Q15	I'm very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	I'm very interested in the values and customs of other countries.
Q16	I apply my values when judging people who are different.	I apply my values when judging people who are different.
Q17	I see people who are similar to me as virtuous.	I see people who are similar to me as virtuous.
Q18	I do not cooperate with people who are different.	I do not cooperate with people who are different.
Q19	Most people in my culture just don't know what is good for them.	Most people in the United States just don't know what is good for them.
Q20	I do not trust people who are different.	I do not trust people who are different.
Q21	I dislike interacting with people from different cultures.	I dislike interacting with people from different countries.
Q22	I have little respect for the values and customs of other cultures.	I have little respect for the values and customs of other countries.

To refine the GENE and GENE-USA, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. A minimum loading of .64 was used to isolate factors. The analysis yielded 11 items that were considered unreliable (Table 6).

Table 6. 11-item GENE vs. GENE-USA Factor Loadings

GENE		GENE (USA)	
Q22	0.800	Q20	0.820
Q21	0.764	Q22	0.798
Q18	0.760	Q18	0.789
Q14	0.745	Q21	0.767
Q20	0.740	Q6	0.761
Q5	0.714	Q1	0.748
Q8	0.700	Q8	0.729
Q11	0.685	Q3	0.724
Q1	0.676	Q14	0.711
Q6	0.659	Q5	0.680
Q3	0.635	Q11	0.615
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	0.905	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	0.917

The Cronbach's alpha of the 11 items of the GENE, 11 items of the GENE-USA, and the 17 items of the CETSCALE (Table 7) in this study was .905, .917, and .959. The Cronbach's alphas demonstrate that the current research can be considered a reasonable high reliability construct.

Table 7. 17-item CETSCALE Factor Loadings

CETSCALE	Factor loading
Americans should not buy foreign products, because this hurts American business and causes unemployment.	0.869
We should purchase products manufactured in America instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	0.836
A real American should always buy American-made products.	0.829
It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Americans out of jobs.	0.828
American products, first, last, and foremost.	0.815
There should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from other countries unless out of necessity.	0.804
American people should always buy American-made products instead of imports.	0.787

American consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Americans out of work.	0.786
It is always best to purchase American products.	0.78
We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.	0.78
Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into the U.S.	0.774
Only those products that are unavailable in the U.S. should be imported.	0.738
Curbs should be put on all imports.	0.737
Purchasing foreign-made products is un-American.	0.724
Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products on our markets.	0.714
It may cost me in the long-run but I prefer to support American products.	0.713
Buy American-made products. Keep America working.	0.712

To confirm whether the ethnocentrism scale is a suitable representation of GENE, GENE-USA, and CETSCALE construct reliability and variance extracted measures were calculated. The composite reliability of a construct is calculated as

$$\text{Construct reliability} = \frac{(\sum \text{std. loading})^2}{(\sum \text{std. loading})^2 + \sum \epsilon_j}$$

where the standardized loadings are obtained directly from the program output, and ϵ_j is the measurement error for each indicator. The measurement error is 1.0 minus the reliability of the indicator, which is the square of the indicator's standardized loading. The indicator reliabilities should exceed .50, which roughly corresponds to a standardized loading of .7 (Hair et al. 1995).

The variance extracted measure is calculated as

$$\text{Variance extracted} = \frac{\sum \text{std.loading}^2}{\sum \text{std.loading}^2 + \sum \epsilon_j}$$

This measure is quite similar to the reliability measure but differs in that the standardized loadings are squared before they are summed. Hair et al. (1995) recommends that the variance extracted value should exceed .50 for a construct.

The construct reliability of the 17-item CETSCALE has a value of 0.981 and a variance extracted of 0.509. The construct reliability of the 11-item GENE has a value of 0.921 and a variance extracted of 0.515. The construct reliability of the 11-item GENE-USA has a value of 0.931 and a variance extracted of 0.551. The CETSCALE, 11-item GENE, and 11-item GENE-USA exceed the values recommended for reliability and variance extracted (0.7 and 0.5, respectively).

To examine the nomological validity of each scale (GENE, GENE-USA, CETSCALE), the researcher conducted a correlation analysis. The correlation of the factors of the GENE, GENE-USA, and CETSCALE with buying foreign products (from Japan and China) is significant ($p < .01$). In addition, correlation of the factors of the GENE, GENE-USA, and CETSCALE with the tendency to buy foreign products is significantly negative ($p < .01$). The correlation of the factors of the CETSCALE with the tendency to buy domes-

tic products is strong, whereas the correlation of the factors of the GENE and GENE-USA with the purchase of domestic products is weak. The correlation between the factors of the CETSCALE and the tendency to buy foreign products is moderately strong than that of GENE and GENE-USA. These results support the nomological validity of GENE, GENE-USA, and the CETSCALE. Table 8 shows the correlation between the factors of each ethnocentrism scale and the tendency to purchase domestic or foreign products.

Table 8. Correlations of Ethnocentrism Scales

Correlations

	GENE	GENE (USA)	CETSCALE	Purchase Intention (USA)	Purchase Intention (China)	Purchase Intention (Japan)
GENE	1	.836**	.470**	.264**	-.457**	-.451**
GENE (USA)	.836**	1	.501**	.228**	-.417**	-.443**
CETSCALE	.470**	.501**	1	.715**	-.574**	-.595**
Purchase Intention (USA)	.264**	.228**	.715**	1	-.473**	-.452**
Purchase Intention (China)	-.457**	-.417**	-.574**	-.473**	1	.863**
Purchase Intention (Japan)	-.451**	-.443**	-.595**	-.452**	.863**	1

** $p < .01$

7. Political Factors

To determine the relationship between political factors (political party and support of the “America First” policy of Trump) and ethnocentrism among U.S. consumers, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results showed that Republicans scored higher than did Democrats on the CETSCALE ($F(4,395) = 2.764, p < .01$), GENE ($F(4,395) = 3.491, p < .01$), and GENE-USA ($F(4,395) = 3.397, p < .01$). Table 9 shows the means and standard deviations of the CETSCALE, GENE, and GENE-USA by political party.

Table 9. Ethnocentrism by Political Party

Scale	Party	N	M	S.D
CETSCALE	Republican	94	52.85	11.91
	Democrat	184	45.05	14.74
	Independent	90	45.42	13.68
	Something else	32	46.41	13.77
	Total	400	47.08	14.13
GENE	Republican	94	27.02	7.37
	Democrat	184	22.65	8.27
	Independent	90	24.08	7.86
	Something else	32	23.91	8.28

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GENE	Total	400	24.1	8.13
GENE-USA	Republican	94	27.56	6.66
	Democrat	184	23.03	8.43
	Independent	90	25.13	8.64
	Something else	32	24.31	8.63
	Total	400	24.67	8.28

In regard to opinion about the “America First” policy, the favorable group had higher means than did the unfavorable group in terms of the CETSCALE ($F(6,393) = 7.907, p < .01$), GENE ($F(6,393) = 6.310, p < .01$), and GENE-USA ($F(6,393) = 9.041, p < .01$). Table 10 shows the means and standard deviations of the CETSCALE, GENE, and GENE-USA by opinion about the “America First” policy.

Table 10. Ethnocentrism by Opinion about “America First” Policy

Scale	Opinion	N	Mean	S.D
CETSCALE	Very favorable	46	56.61	14.08
	Favorable	28	52.39	12.91
	Somewhat favorable	42	51	11.02
	Somewhat unfavorable	39	48	11.5
	Unfavorable	35	46.57	15.27
	Very Unfavorable	192	43.2	14.08
	Don’t know	18	45.56	10.61
	Total	400	47.08	14.13
GENE	Very favorable	46	28.83	10.11
	Favorable	28	27.68	6.76
	Somewhat favorable	42	25.69	6.98
	Somewhat unfavorable	39	23.69	6.78
	Unfavorable	35	23.77	7.87
	Very Unfavorable	192	22.09	7.85
	Don’t know	18	25.67	6.01
	Total	400	24.1	8.13
GENE-USA	Very favorable	46	30.8	8.87
	Favorable	28	28.11	6.79
	Somewhat favorable	42	26.52	7
	Somewhat unfavorable	39	24.1	6.61
	Unfavorable	35	24.49	8.05
	Very Unfavorable	192	22.31	8.18
	Don’t know	18	26.06	5.99
	Total	400	24.67	8.28

8. Discussion

This study concerned the reliability and validity of ethnocentrism scales as based on U.S. consumers. To

demonstrate the reliability and validity of the ethnocentrism scales, the 17-item CETSCALE, 11-item GENE, and 11-item GENE-USA scales were analyzed. The results suggest that the CETSCALE and GENE and GENE-USA scales are all reliable and valid scales for understanding the purchasing behavior of U.S. consumers.

One of the most significant findings in the paper was that political factors are correlated with ethnocentrism. Rosenblatt (1964) explained that group leaders frequently act to increase group ethnocentrism and nationalism, often through opportunistic exploitation of fear or hate of some outgroup. The high score on the CETSCALE is indicative of high dogmatism, patriotism, and conservatism (Shimp and Sharma 1987). Republicans had higher scores than did Democrats on all of the ethnocentrism scales. A key finding was that support of President Trump's "America First" policy was correlated with the degree of ethnocentrism.

This study has some limitations. Based on the design of the study, it was not possible to determine the antecedents versus consequences of ethnocentrism for global marketing. This is an area for future research.

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