

## A Research On Consumer Ethnocentrism and Consumer Boycotts

**Hürsit Ertuğrul DERE**  
Afyon Kocatepe University  
Sultandağı Vocational School  
Turkey  
[hursitdere@yahoo.com](mailto:hursitdere@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** The objective of this study is to investigate the consumer ethnocentric tendency and consumer boycotts. Participants who are consumers upper 18 age in 8 different cities of Turkey formed the sample for this study. For the empirical investigation consumer ethnocentric tendency and a new improved consumer boycott scales were used. Data collected were analyzed by using Anova, t-test and descriptive statistical techniques. Considerable findings in the matter of understanding consumer ethnocentric tendency and consumer boycott in Turkey market. End of this study it is found that significant relationship between age and consumer ethnocentric tendency and significant relationship between marriage status and consumer boycott tendency.

**Keywords:** Consumer ethnocentrism, Consumer boycott behaviour, CETSCALE

### Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the correlation between the ethnocentric tendencies of the consumers and consumer boycott behavior. Consumer ethnocentrism provides emotional perception of the consumers towards national goods. On the other hand, it is seen that even ethnocentric consumers prefer the cheaper goods even if they are foreign originated ones when they are comparing the goods in terms of prices which is a rational qualification.

Today, the increase of the competition, transformation of the world into a common market by transportation and information technologies, and the encountered economical difficulties have made the consumers more conscious and caring more about rational factors compared to old days. In fact, even consumer boycotts that are mostly done with emotional base don't last long because of the rational factors. Consumers end the boycott for the brand, good, or the country when they realize that they will get the maximum benefit from these goods. Although national goods which are bought as a substitution to the foreign ones, reach a high number of sales income during the boycott, they have dramatical decreases of sales income when the boycott ends. National manufacturers can have a constantly increasing sales income if they focus on the issues such as quality development and basing the market, rather than taking advantage of the cases like these.

### Consumer Ethnocentrism

The concept of ethnocentrism means the tendency of the individuals to see their groups as the center of the universe and judging of the other groups that have cultural differences and blindly acceptance of the groups that are similar. In this context, the symbols and values of their own group are seen as a resource of pride while the values of the other groups are scorned. As a result of relating ethnocentrism with the consumer behaviors, the consumer ethnocentrism has appeared. In general concept, consumer ethnocentrism expresses the effects of consumers' national emotions on purchasing intentions. (Uzkurt & Özmen, 2004).

Many scientific researches, mostly foreign, have been conducted about consumer ethnocentrism recently.

In the research which was conducted in 2004 in Eskişehir by Uzkurt and Özmen, data was obtained by interviewing the customers who were chosen using convenience sampling method. Analysis has been conducted over 172 surveys in total. As a result of the analysis, the old compared to the young, ones with a lower education level compared to the higher ones, ones who have lower income compared to the higher ones and married people compared to the bachelors have higher ethnocentric tendencies.

In the research which is conducted by Güneren and Öztüre (2005) in Cyprus using CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale), data is obtained from the survey applied to 114 people who were chosen with convenience sampling method. As a result of the survey, the participants with a high level of ethnocentrism were

mostly amongst women, people with lower education level and lower income. No remarkable correlation has been seen with the age of the participants and ethnocentrism.

In the research which was conducted by Orth and Firasova in 2002 in Brno, the second biggest city of the Czech Republic, and which was on ethnocentrism and yoghurts produced in Czech Republic, data was obtained using a survey applied to 297 people who were randomly chosen and four different correlation model were formed. As a result of the analysis it has been seen that, old consumers who have a high level of ethnocentric tendency, like Czech yoghurts more than the young costumers who have a lower level of ethnocentric tendency. It makes it hard to generalize the research that the number of the participants is low and it was only about yoghurt.

Fang Liu and others examined the correlation between the brand names from different languages and customers' ethnocentric tendencies in 2007 in Guangzhou, the capital city of Guandong state in China. As a result of the research it has been found that there is a remarkable correlation between the ethnocentric tendencies of the customers and their ages and education levels.

In the research that was conducted by Chakrabarty and Conrad in 1995, a survey was applied on the phone to 315 people who were chosen randomly. It has been found that ethnocentric tendencies decrease for good quality products.

## **Consumer Boycotts**

The tendencies of consumers on not buying a brand or none of the brands of a country is called consumer boycott (Balıkcıođlu and others, 2008). Consumer boycotts can be divided into various kinds considering the duration, scope, organization type and reasons to do.

However, it is very difficult to consider a boycott in one class. For example, a boycott that is started because of political reasons may last for a long time or in contrast it may last for a short time.

According to Balıkcıođlu and others' statements, Friedman (1999) and Smith (2000) divide the consumer boycotts into four considering their functions. These are: instrumental, expressive, punitive and buycott.

When boycotts in Turkey are examined, it is seen that products of Denmark were boycotted as the last one. As a result of the publication of Hz. Mohammed's cartoons one after the other negatively, not only in Turkey but also in the whole Islamic World they had confronted with enormous reaction and a boycott towards Danish products was started. However, the very little trading volume between Turkey and Denmark was resulted this boycott not to be so effective. Besides this boycott which was done as a result of religious exploitation, Italy and France were boycotted because of political reasons and enterprises in the public towards boycotting the products of these countries were started. Just like it was in Denmark sample, the little trading volume between Turkey and these two countries and employment of thousands of Turkish citizens in Italian and French originated corporations in Turkey with their national partners resulted these two boycott enterprises to fail.

Besides country boycotts also brand boycotts have been made. Especially in 2005, an organized boycott on the Internet was started against Danone that is one of the biggest food companies, with messages distributed on the Internet telling that additional substances that cause mental deficiencies are used in the child-oriented products of this company and these statements caused dramatical decreases in the sales of the company.

Danone firm, that had great damage because of this case, has started legal process for the responsible ones who distributed these messages on the Internet and for the next marketing works focused on the message that its products include no additional substances that may damage human health transmitting it in various medias.

## **Research Method**

In the research data is obtained using a survey. Surveys were applied to consumers who live in eight different cities by interviewing them. 900 survey copies for consumers who live in 8 different cities were prepared and 514 of them returned, thus the analysis has been made using these 514 survey copies. The distribution of the participants according to the cities is given below.

Province	Frequency	%
İstanbul	98	19.1
Ankara	99	19.3
İzmir	85	16.5
Adana	71	13.8
Afyonkarahisar	63	12.3
Konya	49	9.5
Samsun	20	3.9
Gaziantep	29	5.6

**Table 1:** The Distribution of the Participants According to the Cities

The survey used in the research has four parts. In the first part the participant's city, his/her attitude related to consumer behaviors and if he/she is a member of any kind of consumer organization or not are asked. In the second part basing on the February 2008 data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) ten countries are given from which Turkey imported goods and the participants are asked to state their attitude towards these countries. In this part a fivefold likert scale has been used and attitudes are listed from (1) the country from which I can buy products with peace of mind, to (5) the country which must be boycotted the most.

In the third part, five scales, which are in "I certainly agree" and "I certainly disagree" interval, are given for 19 attitude items that are prepared in accordance with likert scale. Six of these items are taken from CESTSCALE which was developed by Shimp ve Sharma (1987). 10 items are related to consumer boycott and final 3 items are asked in order to find out the attitudes of the consumers towards foreign goods and EU.

In the fourth part the demographic features of the participants have been tried to evaluate. In addition, it has been asked the participants how do they defined themselves and whether they had any foreign product on at the moment when the survey was being applied.

## Research Findings

### Demographic Structure of the Participants

64.6 % of the participants are male and 31.3 % of the participants a female. According to the 2008 TSI data male-female rationale is equal in total population but it has been a limit of the study that female rationale is less than male one. Besides according to the 2007 TSI data, the ratio of the university graduates to the total population is C (vocational schools+faculties+masters degree and Phd) about 10%. In the sample the ratio of the university graduates is 39.7%. This situation is the other limit of the research.

Demographic Structure	Frequency	Current %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	332	66,7
Female	161	32,3
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	292	58.9
Single	190	38.3
Widow-divorced	14	2.8
<b>Education</b>		
Primary education	79	15.7
High education	221	43.8
University	204	40.5
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	138	27.7
25-31	102	20.4
32-40	121	24.2
40-50	89	17.8
51-60	43	8.6
Over 60	6	1.2
<b>Income (YTL)</b>		
Below 580	107	24.2
581-800	84	19
801-1200	136	30.8
1201-2000	71	16.1
Over 2000 YTL	42	9.5
<b>Occupation</b>		
Officer	95	20.9
Laboring	120	26.4
Tradesman	72	15.8
Retired	33	7.3
Self-employed	33	7.3
Housewife	21	4.6
Student	81	17.8

**Table 2:** Demographic Structure of the Participants

### The World View of the Participants

At the end of the survey it has been asked the participants how they defined themselves and to choose one option out of six ones. 37% of the participants have defined themselves as patriots.

View	Frequency	%
Leftist	40	8.1
Social Democrat	92	18.7
Conservative	59	12
Religious	59	12
Nationalist	183	37.2
Liberal	36	7.3
None	23	4.6

**Table 3:** The World View of the Participants.

67% of the participants have stated that they had foreign products on at the moment of replying the survey. It has been found out that the most common foreign product that the participants have on is the mobile phone.

### Research Findings About Consumer Boycott Behavior

46.5 % of the participants have stated that they had boycotted a country or a brand.

In table 4 that is given below, the product groups that the consumers had boycotted are shown. As a result of the analysis it has seen that the product group which is boycotted the most is food group with a ratio of 44.7 % and the least is medical group with a ratio of 2.5%.

Product Group	Frequency	Current %
Food	106	44.7
Confection-textile	36	15.2
Automotive	21	8.9
Personal care products	16	6.8
Cleaning products	11	4.6
Whiteware	13	5.5
Newspaper-magazine	11	4.6
Furniture-carpet-home products	9	3.8
Banking-insurance group	8	3.4
Medical Group	6	2.5

**Table 4:** Boycotted Product Groups.

When the boycott durations are analyzed, 61.3 of the participants have stated that they have been still going on with the consumer boycotts.

Boycott duration	Frequency	Current %
Below 3 mounths	25	10.6
3-6 mounths	25	10.6
6-12 mounths	19	8.1
1-2 years	14	6
Over 2 years	8	3.4
Still going on	144	61.3

**Table 5:** Boycott Duration

### Boycotted Countries and Brands

With a ratio of 35.7% it has been found out that mostly boycotted country is USA and 39% of the participants believe USA to be boycotted constantly. Five of the participants have stated that they boycott Turkey.

Country	Frequency	Current %
U.S.A	74	35.7
France	38	18.4
Israel	28	13.5
Italy	16	7.7
China	13	6.3
Russia	1	0.5
England	4	1.9
Denmark	16	7.7
Netherland	12	1
Germany	6	2.9
Iran	1	0.5
Turkey	5	2.4
Sweden	1	0.5
Japan	2	1

**Table 6:** The Boycotted Countries

It has been found out that the participants boycott 41 different brands. According to the results of the analysis mostly boycotted brand is Coca-Cola. As Coca-Cola is a food company that belongs to the USA, it is seen that research findings about the boycotted product group, country and brand are consistent. It has been found out that 11 different Turkish brands are boycotted by the participants.

Brand	Frequency	Current %
Coca-Cola	49	36.6
Ariel	10	7.5
Danone	5	3.7
Mc Donalds	3	2.2
Nestle	7	5.2
Nescafe	2	1.5
Rodi	1	0.7
Motorola	5	3.7
Gucci	1	0.7
İpek shampoo	1	0.7
Colgate	1	0.7
Bosche	1	0.7
Benetton	3	2.2
Newspaper of Turkey	1	0.7
Ülker	1	0.7
Rosche	5	3.7
Profilo	1	0.7
Adidas	1	0.7
Pınarsüt	1	0.7
Fruko	1	0.7
Leke	2	1.5
Knorr	1	0.7
Converse	1	0.7
Amway	2	1.5
Telefunken	3	2.2
Vestel	1	0.7
İstikbal	1	0.7
Avon	2	1.5
Beta	3	2.2
Leman	1	0.7
Newsweek	1	0.7
Peugeot	1	0.7
Renault	4	3
Ford	1	0.7
Fiat	1	0.7
Scharzkopf	2	1.5
Siemens	1	0.7
İpana	2	1.5
Philips	1	0.7
Toyota	1	0.7
Loreal Paris	1	0.7

**Table 7.** The Boycotted Brands

34.3 % of the participants have stated that they bought a product again later which once they had boycotted. 16.1 % of the participants have replied the question. The reasons of the re-purchasing these products are shown in Table 8.

Reasons for Repurchasing	Frequency	Current %
Quality	18	21.7
Chepness	12	14.5
Obligation	43	51.8
Reason of the boycott was disappeared	10	12

**Table 8:** Consumers Reasons for Repurchasing The Brands That They Boycotted.

More than half of the participants who have replied to the question have stated that they re-purchased the products that they once boycotted because they had to do it. 21.7 of the participants have re-purchased the products because of its good quality.

The attitudes of the participants towards ten countries from which Turkey had imported goods according to the February 2008 data of TSI have been evaluated. A fivefold scale has been used starting from the country from which you can buy goods in peace of mind (1) to the country that must be boycotted the most (5) In table 9 attitudes of the participants towards these ten countries are shown.

Countries	The country which should be boycotted most (%)	The country which should be boycotted (%)	The country which doesn't need to be boycotted (%)	The country which should be cooperated (%)	The country which we get their products with peace of mind (%)	The participants that have no informed (%)
Russia	9.7	17,3	27	27	3.5	15.4
Germany	8	13.6	28	23.2	13.6	13.6
China	35.6	24.7	15.6	10.9	1.8	11.5
Italy	10.9	22	27.4	14.2	3.5	22
U.S.A.	55.6	24.5	7	4.5	1.9	6.4
France	42.8	26.1	11.9	6.4	1.6	11.3
England	28.8	19.8	19.5	12.5	2.7	16.7
Switzerland	12.5	11.5	30.5	17.5	7.2	20.6
Ukrain	5.4	8.4	35	22.8	5.8	22.6
Iran	10.5	5.1	29.4	30.5	8.6	16

**Table 9:** View of the Participants About Ten Selected Countries

Only 1.8 % of the participants have been a member of any kind of a consumer organization.

Evaluation results about the 19 items which are located in the third part of the research and which are prepared using a fivefold likert scale about the attitudes of the participants towards consumer boycotts are given in Table 10.



Statement	Mean	S.D.
1. Domestic products should be taken at any time instead of imported products.	4.18	1.03
2. The products not only in our country should be imported.	3.94	1.03
3. Foreign products should'nt be bought because this will cause unemployment.	3.64	1.14
4. I prefer to support my country's product, even if the cost burden to me.	3.72	1.15
5. Access of the foreign products to Turkish market should be complicated	3.71	1.07
6. Consumer boycotts are effective on companies.	3.73	0.92
7. Local businesses organize the boycotts that against to the foreign products.	3.26	0.92
8. Media orientate the consumer boycotts.	4.01	0.87
9. I boycott the products of companies which exploited my religious beliefs.	4.19	0.99
10. I boycott the products of companies which damaged my country's political interest.	4.33	0.89
11. People around me effect met to do consumer boycott.	2.35	1.15
12. I boycott the products with my own volition.	4.04	1.61
13. I never purchase a product of a country or firm which I boycotted before.	3.85	1.02
14. I try to orientate the other consumers to boycott.	3.57	1.1
15. Boycott is an individual reaction against the negative bahaviour.	3.96	0.94
16. Importation sholud be prevented because it is a big threat for domestic production.	3.97	1.02
17. Quality product should been in my country even if it is foreigner	3.49	1.12
18. I believe that EU membership would be useful for our country.	3.35	1.34
19. Imported products increases our quality of life.	2.82	1.24

**Table 10:** Average Values Related to the Participants' Ethnocentric Tendencies and Consumer Boycott Behaviors

The correlation between the demographic characteristics of the participants and consumer ethnocentric and consumer boycott behaviors has been examined. T-test and variance analysis results are separately given in Table 11 and Table 12.

Demographic Structure	Calculated Value	Significance Level	(P= 0,05)
Gender	14.684	0.188 (t)	
Age	2.297	0.048	
Marital status	0.601	0.549	
Income	2.548	0.02	

**Table 11:** The Examination of the Correlation Between Ethnocentric Tendencies and Demographic Features of the Participants

As a result of the T-test it has seen that ethnocentric tendencies don't change according to the gender. As a result of the variance analysis no remarkable correlation is found between the consumer ethnocentric tendencies and marital status. Besides that it is seen that consumer ethnocentric tendencies differ according to age and marital status.

Demographic Structure	Calculated Value	Significance Level	(P= 0,05)
Gender	1.073	0.451	
Age	0.843	0.519	
Marital status	3.076	0.047	
Income	0.676	0.669	

**Table 12:** The Examination of the Correlation Between Consumer Boycott Behavior of the Participants and Their Demographic Features.

In the result of the T-test it has been found out that consumer boycott behaviors tendencies don't differ according to the gender. In the results of variance analysis it has been found out that consumer boycott behavior tendencies differ according to the marital status. In addition to that it has been found out that consumer boycott behavior tendencies don't differ according to the age and income.

### Conclusion and the Limits of the Research

Inadequate quantity of the sample group and because available sample group doesn't reflect the demographic features of the main group prevent the research results from generalization. Another limit of the research is because of the disparity of the number of the participants from 8 different cities compared to the number of each city's population.

As a result of the T-test it has been found out that consumer ethnocentric tendencies don't differ according to the gender. As a result of the variance analysis no remarkable correlation has been found out between consumer ethnocentric tendencies and consumer marital status. However, it has been found out that consumer ethnocentric tendencies change according to the age and income.

As a result of the research, the upper location of the countries and brands that are mostly boycotted in the list in terms of Turkey's exporting volume and intensifying of consumer boycotts in especially some definite countries and brands can be subjects of future researches.

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