
ETHNOCENTRISM MINDS AND LOCAL BRANDS: A STUDY ON CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM, ATTITUDES AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN MILK POWDER INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has increased the presence of international products in Sri Lanka, creating drastic competition between local and foreign brands. Especially, the local milk powder market faced this crisis. This study aims to examine the impact of consumer ethnocentrism using the consumer ethnocentrism extended scale CEESCALE, which consists of five main dimensions in measuring consumer ethnocentrism as cognition, pro-sociality, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation on purchase intention for domestic milk powder products in Sri Lanka by mediating consumer attitude. Thus, this study utilizes social identity theory in investigating the consumer ethnocentrism perspective. A quantitative research design was adopted, targeting milk powder consumers in Sri Lanka's Western Province. A sample of 384 respondents was selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire. Data analysis through both SPSS & AMOS. Thus, all the Cronbach's alpha values exceed the 0.7 threshold level, KMO values exceed the 0.5 expected level, the regression model fit indicates 0.668, and the PROCESS macro is used for mediation testing. Among the five main dimensions, cognition indicates the strongest contribution to purchase intention towards domestically produced milk powder because it indicates the strongest reliability B value of 0.444. Thus, consumer attitude acts as a partial mediator on both consumer ethnocentrism & purchase intention. Thus, this study provides valuable implications to local dairy firms, marketers & brand managers, and policymakers promoting domestic milk powder products can leverage consumer ethnocentrism strategies and appeals to face drastic foreign competition.

Keywords: *Consumer Ethnocentrism, CEESCALE, Consumer Attitudes, Globalization, Milk Powder Industry.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, globalization has facilitated the entry of numerous international products into the Sri Lankan domestic market, leading to drastic competition between local and foreign brands. However, the ongoing trend of market globalization does not necessarily imply that all people are placed to globalize (Wang and Chen, 2004). As a result of globalization, consumers now enjoy greater freedom in selecting from a wide variety of foreign brands, owing to their increased availability (Baber *et al.*, 2024). Even though there are many consumers who value local products instead of foreign-made products (Tomić Maksan, Kovačić and Cerjak, 2019). As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, many global firms have emerged with the purpose of capitalizing on the opportunities available in the global market. During this situation, domestic firms of many countries face huge challenges due to global competition. Therefore, most local firms began to use ethnocentrism as a strategic tool to attract local customers towards their domestic brands. According to the study (Zeren, Kara, and Arango Gil, 2020) emphasis that consumer ethnocentrism has a negative impact on willingness to purchase foreign products. The milk powder market is a very complex and competitive market in Sri Lanka, where domestic brands and international brands are operating in a competitive manner. But currently, the international dairy brands, especially the milk powder brands, are playing a bigger role in the Sri Lankan market. The marketing of milk in Sri Lanka is complex and varied (Ranaweera, 2010). Currently, the term consumer ethnocentrism applies to various research fields, including consumer behavior, marketing, and international business. Consumer ethnocentrism reflects a consumer's sense of identity and feeling of belongingness (Makanyeza and Du Toit, 2017). According to the study by (Yonfá-Medrandá *et al.*, 2024), consumer ethnocentrism reflects consumers' attitudes towards both local and foreign products. In relation to marketing literature, the negative attitude of consumers toward buying foreign-made products can be called consumer ethnocentrism. Sumner (1906) defines consumer ethnocentrism as "a view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything". In the past as well as present, analyzing consumers' ethnocentrism is very much in the field of marketing as well as a country's economic perspective. Marketing practitioners should always monitor the changing attitudes of consumers to make effective marketing strategies. Therefore, (Sharma (2015) applied the consumer ethnocentrism concept in marketing and consumer behavior. In the previous research, scholars investigated the concept of consumer ethnocentrism and applied it to various industries and products. Recently, in the Sri Lankan context, there is a conflicting social opinion towards imported milk powder due to the harmful contaminated chemicals found like melamine and dicyandiamide (DCD), Sri Lankan consumers have a positive perception towards domestic milk powder brands (Wijesinghe, Abeynayake, and Priyadarshani, 2020). Therefore, deep analysis regarding consumer ethnocentrism towards the domestic milk powder market is crucial for both marketers and domestic milk powder manufacturers. And due to the presence of a higher number of foreign milk powder brands, local milk powder brands needed to adopt unique point of differentiation strategies to enhance the market share and customer attraction, so the concept of consumer ethnocentrism needed to be used to mitigate this issue. Thus, this study adopted CEESCALE developed by (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015), as a valid extended scale to measure consumer ethnocentric tendencies, according to the ethnocentric extended scale (CEESCALE) which

consists of five dimensions, namely pro-sociality, cognition, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation. This research applies both the theory of planned behavior and the social identity theory to further investigate consumer ethnocentrism and consumer attitude. The final objective of this study was to identify the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intention with the mediation effect of consumer attitude related to the milk powder market in Western Province, Sri Lanka.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

With the liberalization of the Sri Lankan economy in 1977, Sri Lanka entered the arena of globalization. Since then, foreign products and services have flowed to the country, and it highly impact on the economy. The worst part of it many local industries were threatened, and some industries have been wiped out completely due to the intense competition from foreign companies. At present, the milk powder market is a very complex and competitive market in Sri Lanka, where domestic brands and international brands are operating in a competitive manner. The marketing of milk in Sri Lanka is complex and varied (Ranaweera, 2010). Sri Lanka is currently producing only about 40% of its milk demand domestically and thus heavily depends on imports to cater to the demand (Damunupola *et al.*, 2022). Currently, the milk powder industry faces a real crisis regarding milk powder quality. There have been issues relating to the quality and food safety of imported milk powder products in recent years due to the presence of harmful additives in milk products (Nisath *et al.*, 2024). Especially, the DCD chemical component found in imported milk powder in the recent past raised health concerns at that time. In those circumstances, the government of Sri Lanka banned imported milk powder brands, stopping marketing and promotional strategies related to imported milk powder in related Lanka milk powder market. Due to the disputable issues of imported powdered milk during the last several years, consumer preference has changed towards the local milk powder products in Sri Lanka (Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka, 2018). Sri Lanka spends around USD 400 million a year on the importation of milk powder. However, statistically, some marketers promote their milk powder brands to consumers based on ethnocentric appeal. But there is no significant empirical evidence to say to what extent the effort impacts consumer ethnocentrism. In relation to past studies on consumer ethnocentrism, consumer attitudes on purchase intention have not been studied deeply in the Sri Lankan context. Thus, ethnocentrism directly influences consumer attitudes and, through these attitudes, likely influences their purchase decisions (Thomas *et al.*, 2020). Although there seem to be numerous empirical and theoretical studies related to consumer ethnocentrism based in developed nations (Sharma, 2015). There seemed to be a dearth of studies related to consumer ethnocentrism in developing nations (Alam *et al.*, 2022). In paying attention to the Sri Lankan context, it is evident that the impact. Consumer ethnocentrism has not been studied enough (Silili and Karunarathna, 2014). Most studies related to consumer ethnocentrism have focused on consumer products in general (Wang and Chen, 2004), electronic products (Alam *et al.*, 2022), and only a few studies have considered milk powder-related products. Although consumer ethnocentrism has been widely examined in developed economies, there is limited evidence on how CE, attitude & PI relationship are examined in developing nations.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since the Sri Lankan economy has transitioned towards an open economy perspective, imported milk powder brands have gained a strong presence in the local market, creating drastic competition for domestic producers. Although recent quality and food safety concerns related to imported milk powder have encouraged consumers to consider local alternatives, Sri Lanka continues to rely heavily on imported milk powder to meet domestic demand. As a result, marketers increasingly use ethnocentric appeals to encourage consumers to purchase locally produced milk powder. However, there is limited empirical evidence on whether consumer ethnocentrism effectively influences purchase intention in the Sri Lankan milk powder industry. Therefore, this study addresses these research gaps.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

MAIN OBJECTIVE

- To examine the impact of Consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intention with the mediating Consumer Attitude with special reference to the milk powder industry in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To examine the impact of Consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intention with special reference to the milk powder industry in the western province of Sri Lanka
- To examine the impact of cognition, pro-sociality, insecurity, reflexiveness, and Habituation on purchase intention with special reference to the milk powder industry in the Western province of Sri Lanka.
- To examine the mediating effect of consumer attitude towards the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase intention with special reference to the milk powder industry in the Western province of Sri Lanka.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM

The research avenue regarding the concept of consumer ethnocentrism was first introduced by Sumner in 1960, who brought the formal definition of the term consumer ethnocentrism as "The center of everything is one's own group and everything else is scaled with reference to one's own group. Consumer ethnocentrism denotes the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness and morality of purchasing foreign-made products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). In marketing literature, the negative perception or attitude of consumers towards buying foreign products can be called consumer ethnocentrism. Highly ethnocentric consumers emphasize that purchasing imported goods will directly impact the local economy, potentially result in job losses, and be viewed as unpatriotic behavior. Ethnocentric consumers can sacrifice their self-interest for the patriotic love and well-being of their country. So, the country's interest gives

priority over a person's self-interest (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015). At present, many studies have been conducted to measure consumer ethnocentrism in relation to various countries, different industries, and product categories. Initially, Shimp & Sharma (1987) developed CETSCALE to measure consumer ethnocentrism, and the scale consists of 17 questions that identify the consumer preference to buy foreign-made products or local products. Ethnocentric consumers put aside their selfishness and volunteer to come forward to help their nation without expectation of any reward (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). According to past studies, when there is higher altruism, there is high intention of consumer preference for domestic products (Powers & Hopkins, 2006). (Sharma, 2015) indicates that ethnocentric consumers are negatively correlated towards imported products and positively correlated towards domestic products. A strong ethnocentric attitude can lead to domestic products being rated higher, and consumers may even be willing to pay a premium for local products (Sabina del Castillo, Díaz Armas, and Gutiérrez Taño, 2024). In past decades, the concept of consumer ethnocentrism has emerged in developed countries where consumers generally positively evaluated the quality of domestic products as higher (Wang and Chen, 2004). Current research (Farhan and Ganideh, 2010) has shown that the same concept can be adopted in developing countries. As Sri Lanka is still a developing country, deeply analyzing consumer ethnocentrism is a crucial factor. Some authors argue that consumer ethnocentrism represents the overall attitude towards domestic and foreign products, consisting of affective reaction, cognitive bias, and behavioral preference and use the above ABC structure to reconceptualize consumer ethnocentrism as a three-dimensional attitude. Affective reaction emphasizes ethnocentrism not only involves making a distinction between one's own group and others, but is also accompanied by uncertainty and hate for other groups. This may indicate why high ethnocentric consumers show a loyalty towards domestic products and reject foreign products, irrespective of their respective quality. Cognitive bias emphasizes that perceptions about the in-group versus the out-group are a vital part of ethnocentrism (Grant, 1991). Behavioral preference refers to the rejection of foreign products and acceptance of domestic products, which is the most important part of consumer ethnocentrism (Sharma, 2015). Consumer Ethnocentrism integrates important theoretical foundation as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which emphasizes how consumer attitudes mediate the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase intention. Past scholars (Sharma, 2015) identify that consumer ethnocentrism significantly influences purchase intention and consumer attitude, serving as the key mediating variable. Additionally, the research incorporates social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), utilized to explain how consumer ethnocentrism creates group-based identity. The ethnocentrism construct needed to be further revised because the initial CETSCALE had some parts that were not captured on consumer ethnocentrism (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015). This study adopted CEESCALE, developed by Siamagka and Balabanis (2015), as a valid extended scale to measure consumer ethnocentric tendencies. (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015) have introduced the consumer ethnocentric extended scale (CEESCALE), which consists of five dimensions, namely, pro-sociality, cognition, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation.

2.2 PURCHASE INTENTION

Assessing consumers' purchasing behavior is difficult; (Kimery & McCord, 2002) as a result, studying consumers' intentions is one of the most prominent methods used by marketers to attain a better knowledge of their actual behavior (Ghalandari & Norouzi, 2012). (Shoham and Brenčić, 2003) reported that ethnocentric appeal had a significant impact on consumers' intentions to purchase domestically produced goods. Traditionally, the term intention has been defined as the factors that influence and motivate customers to acquire goods and services (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). It is defined by Blackwell et al. (2001) as "what we think we will buy." In other words, purchase intention is a complicated process that is linked to customer behavior, perceptions, and attitudes, making it a useful tool for predicting the buying process (Vuong and Khanh Giao, 2020). In recent years, due to the globalized marketplace, examining what impacts buyers' intentions to purchase domestic and foreign products been an important subject. The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1991) is an attitude intention-behavioral model which demonstrates that an individual's social environment has a notable influence on their intention and behaviors' this theory was applied in a purchasing context, it would state that buying behavior is greatly determined by the belief that such behavior is approved of by society and, especially, by the individual's closest environment. Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) explain that purchase intention is one of the psychological aspects that has a considerable influence on consumer behavioral attitudes and perceptions. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) argued that an individual's behavior will be measured through their purchase intention to perform the behavior.

2.3 CONSUMER ATTITUDE

In past studies, emphasis that consumer attitude towards a product or brand means the consumer's overall evaluation or perception of the product attributes contained within that product (Hysen *et al.*, 2008). A more positive attitudes towards a product increase the likelihood of making a preference to purchase that product (Lee and Lee, 2009; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). According to Ajzen & Fishbein's (1977) study, they identified that there is a strong correlation between behavior and intention. And also, they state that attitude can be predicated by attitude toward action. There is a positive relationship between consumer attitudes and their intention to buy either domestic or imported products (Chung and Thorndike Pysarchik, 2000). (Nadugala and Weerasekera, 2025) indicate that consumer ethnocentrism in related to American consumers represents the negative attitudes towards the foreign brands while it affects positively on attitude towards domestic brands. On the other hand An Attitude define as a person's overall evaluation of a concept or object" (Peter & Olson, 2010, P: 128), and also evaluations can be favorable or unfavorable towards things, ideas, or behaviors (Kotler & Keller, 2011), and attitudes toward behavior can be divided into two view points as personal and social attitudes according to (Park, 2000). Many studies have demonstrated that attitude toward domestic products influences purchase intention (Al-Swidi, 2014; Miguel et al., 2022; Manalu & Adzimatunur, 2020; Miftari et al., 2021; Alswedi). Consumer ethnocentrism is a three-dimensional attitude construct with consist of Affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects (Sharma, 2015)

2.4 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Social Identity Theory Social identity theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), asserts that all individuals tend to classify themselves and set themselves apart from the out-group. The ingroup category consists of social objects that originate from the home country, while the outgroup category consists of imported products that originate from foreign countries (Čutura, 2020) Ethnocentrism is a result of intense commitment to the ingroup and is strongly associated with ingroup partiality. The majority of past research has repeatedly demonstrated that consumer ethnocentrism is positively connected to both product judgments and intent to purchase domestic goods, as well as adverse views and negative purchase intentions toward foreign products.

2.5 CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM EXTENDED SCALE (CEESCALE)

The ethnocentrism construct needed to be further revised because the initial CETSCALE had some parts that were not captured on consumer ethnocentrism (Siamagka, 2009). The initial scale consists of a unidimensional construct consisting of 17 tendencies in measuring consumer ethnocentrism. This study adopted the consumer ethnocentrism extended scale (CEESCALE) developed by Siamagka and Balabanis (2015) as a valid extended scale to measure consumer ethnocentrism. (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015) have introduced the consumer ethnocentric extended scale (CEESCALE), which consists of five dimensions, namely, pro-sociality, cognition, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation. Beyond the traditional CETSCALE, it shows a unidimensional construct because it measures overall ethnocentrism in one dimension, which cannot get exact idea regarding the overall concept (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015)

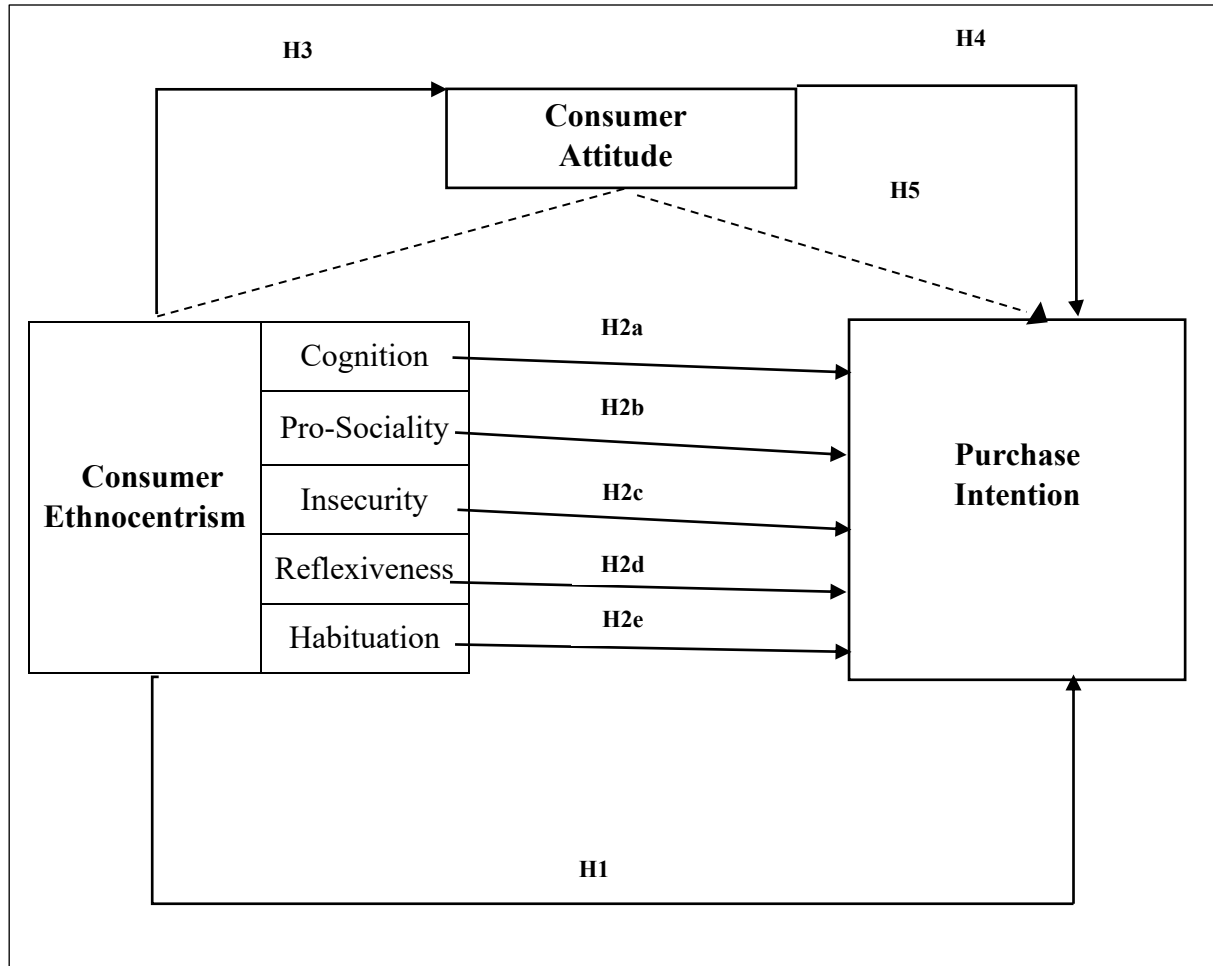
2.6 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH GAPS

Early research on consumer ethnocentrism primarily relied heavily on the Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale (CETSCALE) developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987), which emphasizes consumer ethnocentrism as a unidimensional construct. Although the CETSCALE has been widely validated across different countries, it has been criticized for failing to capture the multidimensional perspective of consumer ethnocentrism, particularly the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015). To address this limitation, the Consumer Ethnocentrism Extended Scale (CEESCALE) was introduced, incorporating five dimensions: pro-sociality, cognition, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015). Furthermore, numerous studies have emphasized positive relationships between consumer ethnocentrism, consumer attitude, and purchase intention. In the Sri Lankan context, empirical studies on consumer ethnocentrism are relatively limited, and little attention has been given to the milk powder industry despite its heavy dependence on imports and increasing consumer concerns regarding product quality and food safety. Moreover, previous research has largely examined the direct effects of consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intention, with limited investigation of the mediating role of consumer attitude.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: (Developed by the Researcher 2025)

3.2 HYPOTHESIS

H₁- There is a significant effect of consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intention with special reference to the milk powder industry in the western province of Sri Lanka

H_{2a,b,c,d,e} - There is a significant effect of cognition, pro sociality, insecurity, reflexiveness and habituation on purchase intention with special reference to the milk powder industry in the western province of Sri Lanka

H₃-There is a significant effect of consumer ethnocentrism on consumer attitude with special reference to the milk powder industry in the western province of Sri Lanka

H₄- There is a significant effect of consumer attitude on purchase intention with special reference to the milk powder industry in the western province of Sri Lanka

H₅- There is a mediating effect from consumer attitude towards the relationship between ethnocentrism and purchase intention, with special reference to the milk powder industry in the western province of Sri Lanka

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chosen methodology for this study was a quantitative approach. Through a quantitative research approach, numerically measurable results and conclusions can be derived. This study primarily adopted a Deductive approach, because the researcher thus originates a straightforward research question based on existing theories, collects the data using quantitative methods, and tests the hypothesis. Thus, this study applies positivism philosophy worldview because positivist philosophy is rooted in the belief that reality is objective and can be measured using scientific methods. This objectivity significantly enhances the reliability and validity of the research findings. An online survey was used as a survey strategy, though a large amount of data can be gathered within the shortest possible time with limited resources

Thus, the researcher utilize cross sectional research time horizon, because this strategy allows for the capture of information from a comprehensive set of respondents for a specific point in time, providing a snapshot of characteristics or behaviors of a population. This study adopted an explanatory cross-sectional research design, as it aims to explain causal relationships between consumer ethnocentrism, consumer attitude, and purchase intention at a single point in time. Simply, this research approach can be described as a “cause and effect” analysis. The unit of analysis is identified as the individual consumers within the Western Province of Sri Lanka who are consuming milk powder. The population of the study would be the consumers who are consuming milk powder in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The sample was selected using a non-probability sampling method under a convenience sampling technique to ensure adequate respondents were selected from the target population. The sample size was determined to be 384 participants out of an estimated population of 6113,698 in the Western province of Sri Lanka in 2024(Department of Census and Statistics report, 2024). The sample size of 384 was determined based on the Krejcie-Morgan table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). This research adopted convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was considered appropriate for this study because a comprehensive sampling frame of milk powder consumers in the Western Province was unavailable, making probability sampling impractical. Furthermore, the study collected responses from readily accessible consumers who were actively purchasing or consuming milk powder during the study period. Due to the limited time, financial, and geographical constraints associated with data collection, convenience sampling provided a practical and cost-effective sampling strategy. Unlike probability sampling methods, which involve random selection of participants from the target population, non-probability sampling methods do not guarantee that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. Instead, participants are selected based on factors such as convenience, accessibility, or specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives.

This research uses two main types of data collection methods as primary method and secondary method. Close-ended structured questionnaires have been used as per the primary data collection technique ,also gathered data and relevant theories from textbooks, journals, and

articles which are the secondary data sources. Both descriptive and inferential statistics can be used in data analysis, Descriptive statistics helps to understand the details of data by summarizing and finding patterns from the specific data sample. Mainly descriptive statistics include mean, median, standard deviation, mode, range and skewness analysis. On the other hand, inferential statistics aim to make predictions or highlight possible outcomes from the analyzed data obtained from descriptive statistics, and also it helps to showcase the relationship between multiple variables. Inferential statistics includes regression analysis, which helps to identify relationships between a set of variables and correlations between dependent and independent variables. In addition to this, the statistical technique Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the internal consistency and reliability. Mediation analysis: The researcher used version 4.2 of Process Macro for this study. This study employs the data analysis tool software "Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.4 VALIDATED SCALES FOR MEASURING VARIABLES

The study uses CEESCALE developed by (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015) measure consumer ethnocentrism, which is an extended and validated scale with five dimensions as cognition, pro-sociality, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation. This scale is a multi-dimensional construct which consists of 16 n items which used to understand consumer ethnocentrism in much deeply, (Siamagka and Balabanis, 2015) argued that consumer ethnocentrism isn't one dimensional and built a broader measure that predicts domestic over foreign product preferences more accurately than traditional CETSCALE. Items for all constructs were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) with multi-item scale. The purchase intention construct was measured using a 5-item scale. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), this five-item scale adopted from the scale which used by an Atar Thaung Htet (2022). Consumer Attitude Scale was measured using a 9-item scale, also rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The items assessed consumer attitude related to trust, packaging, taste, price, availability, awareness, appearance, solubility, and nutritional value of local milk powder. This scale was adopted with reference to (De Costa, Sivashankar and Elapata, 2021)

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Reliability Analysis

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
CECO	3	0.854
CEPS	4	0.872
CEI	3	0.857
CER	3	0.874
CEH	3	0.868
PI	5	0.840
CA	9	0.839

Source: SPSS survey output,2025

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the constructs in this study. All variables show strong reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. The dimensions CEC (0.854), CEPS (0.872), CEI (0.857), CER (0.874), CEH (0.868) all indicate high reliability. The construct of Purchase Intention (PI) records an alpha of 0.840, and Consumer Attitude (CA) demonstrates the highest reliability at 0.839.

4.2 Validity

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.838
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1511.910
	df	21
	Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS survey output,2025

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test for each dimension and variable

Variable Code	KMO Value	Sig.
CECO	0.795	0.000
CEPS	0.689	0.000
CEI	0.754	0.000
CER	0.675	0.000
CEH	0.688	0.000
PI	0.885	0.000
CA	0.887	0.000

Source: SPSS survey output,2025

This indicates the KMO value table, which shows that all variables load strongly onto a single component, with factor loadings ranging from 0.675 to 0.887. The highest loadings are seen in Consumer Attitude (CA) at 0.887 and Purchase Intention (PI) at 0.885, indicating these variables contribute most to the component.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Correlations

		CE	CEC	CEPS	CEI	CER	CEH	PI	CA
CE	Pearson	1							
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)								
CE	Pearson	.745**	1						
C	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000							
CE	Pearson	.773**	.490**	1					
PS	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000						
CEI	Pearson	.779**	.448**	.597**	1				
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000					
CE	Pearson	.686**	.362**	.267**	.539**	1			
R	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000				
CE	Pearson	.666**	.457**	.331**	.432**	.436**	1		
H	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			
PI	Pearson	.764**	.737**	.508**	.574**	.538**	.526**	1	
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
CA	Pearson	.786**	.716**	.553**	.513**	.550**	.571**	.805**	1
	Correlation								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS survey output,2025

Correlation Analysis is commonly used to quantify the connection between two continuous variables. The correlation table shows how each variable correlates with other factors, both independent and dependent. Correlations in the matrix are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating strong and meaningful relationships among the variables. The highest correlation is found between Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) and Consumer Attitude (CA) ($r = 0.786$), and CE and Purchase Intention (PI) ($r = 0.764$), suggesting that ethnocentric beliefs are strongly associated with both positive attitudes and purchase intentions toward local products. Among CE dimensions, CEPS and CEI show high correlations with CE ($r = 0.773$, $r = 0.779$, respectively), and CEC also correlates strongly with CE ($r = 0.745$) and PI ($r = 0.737$), indicating its predictive role.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Table 5: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.817 ^a	.668	.663	.40771
a. Predictors: (Constant), CEH, CEPS, CER, CEC, CEI				
b. Dependent Variable: PI				

Source: SPSS survey output,2025

The multiple correlation coefficient (R) value 0.817 indicates a strong positive linear relationship between the dependent variable, Purchase Intention (PI), and the set of independent variables (CEC, CEPS, CEI, CER, CEH). The R Square value of 0.668 suggests that approximately 66.8% of the variance in PI is explained by these five predictors. This implies a high explanatory power of the model. The Adjusted R Square of 0.663, which adjusts for the number of predictors and sample size, confirms the model fit and reliability.

Table 6:ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	126.158	5	25.232	151.790	.000 ^b
	Residual	62.834	378	.166		
	Total	188.992	383			

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. Predictors: (Constant), CEH, CEPS, CER, CEC, CEI

Source: SPSS survey output,2025

Above Anova table indicates whether the regression model significantly predicts the dependent variable purchase intention. The F - statistic value of 151.790 and a p-value of .000 indicate that the model is statistically significant, meaning the predictors (CEH, CECO, CEI, CEPS, CER) collectively contribute meaningfully to explaining variation in PI.

Table 7: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.497	.146		3.411	.001
	CEC	.444	.032	.506	13.676	.000
	CEPS	.067	.030	.087	2.209	.028
	CEI	.134	.044	.131	3.041	.003
	CER	.162	.028	.210	5.673	.000
	CEH	.103	.031	.118	3.304	.001

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Source: SPSS survey output,2025

Coefficients table indicates the influence of five predictors CEC, CEPS, CEI, CER, and CEH on the dependent variable, Purchase Intention (PI). All variables are statistically significant, as their p-values are below 0.05, confirming their meaningful contribution to the model. Among them, CEC has the strongest impact on PI, with a standardized Beta value of 0.506 and a highly significant p-value of 0.000, suggesting that it is the most influential factor in determining purchase intention. CER also shows a strong and positive effect (Beta = 0.210, p = 0.000), followed by CEI (Beta = 0.131, p = 0.003), CEH (Beta = 0.118, p = 0.001), and CEPS (Beta = 0.087, p = 0.028).

4.5 Mediation Testing

Table 8: Mediation Testing

Total effect of X ON Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.8404	0.0363	23.1438	0.0000	0.7690	0.9118
Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.3775	0.0505	7.4732	0.0000	0.2782	0.4768
Indirect effect(s) of X ON Y					
Effect	BootSE			BootLLCI	BootULCI
CA 0.4629	0.0600			0.3455	0.5774

Source: Hayes process macro-4.2

The mediation analysis results show that consumer ethnocentrism has a strong and statistically significant total effect (0.8404, p=0.0000) on purchase intention. Direct effect without mediating variable indicates value (0.3775, p=0.0000) and the indirect effect with mediating variable, consumer attitude (0.4629). This indicates that consumer attitude does act as a partial mediator in driving the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase intention.

4.6 Hypothesis Testing Summarization Table

Table 9:Hypothesis Testing Summarization Table

Hypothesis	Correlation			Regression		
	r Value	sig Value	Decision	B Value	sig Value	Decision
CE → PI	0.764	0.000	Accepted	0.840	0.000	Accepted
CEC → PI	0.737	0.000	Accepted	0.444	0.000	Accepted
CEPS → PI	0.508	0.000	Accepted	0.067	0.028	Accepted
CEI → PI	0.574	0.000	Accepted	0.134	0.003	Accepted
CER → PI	0.538	0.000	Accepted	0.164	0.000	Accepted
CEH → PI	0.526	0.000	Accepted	0.103	0.001	Accepted
CE → CA	0.786	0.000	Accepted	0.866	0.000	Accepted
CA → PI	0.805	0.000	Accepted	0.534	0.000	Accepted
CA, Mediate → CE → PI				0.462	0.000	Accepted

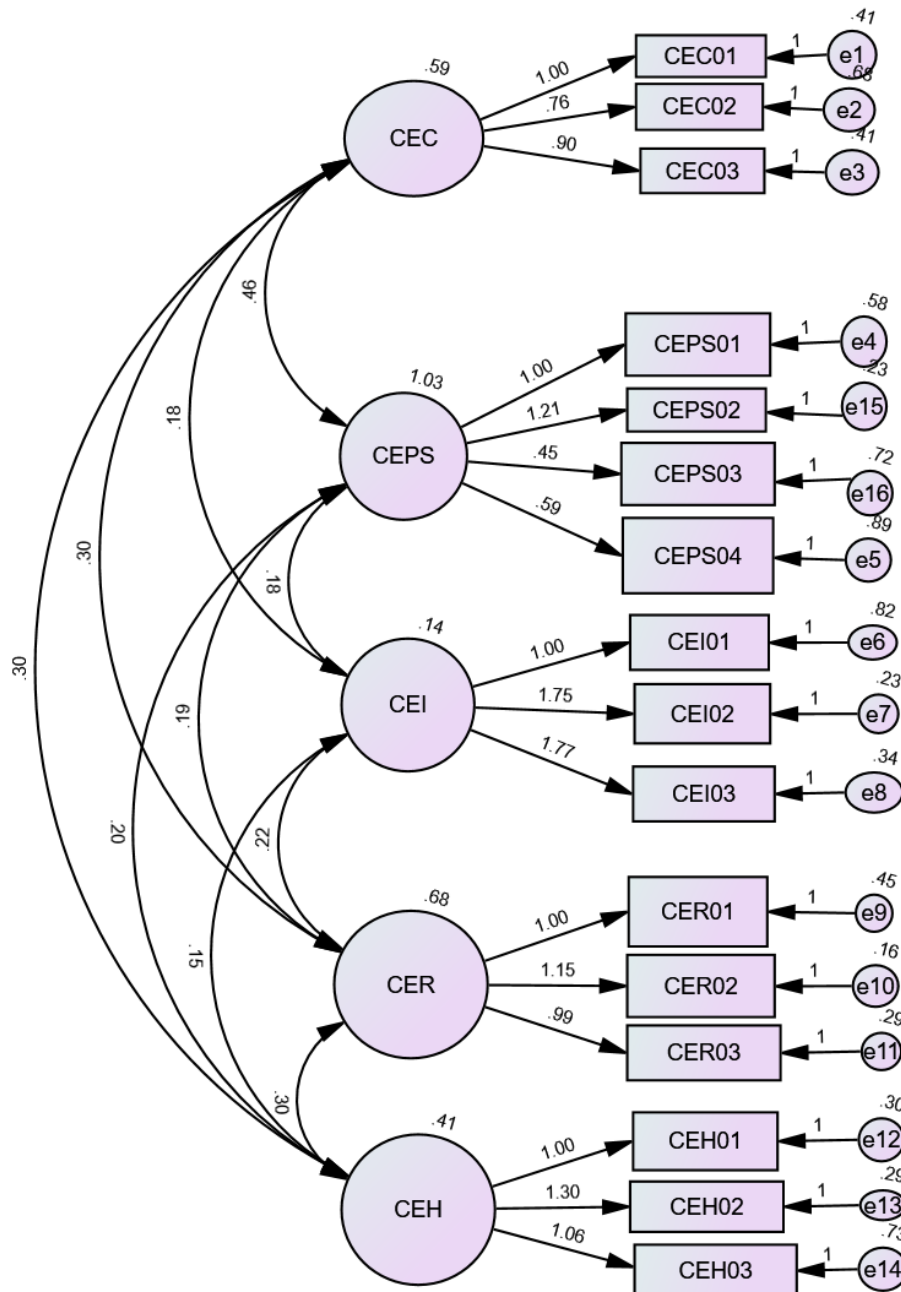
Source: SPSS survey output,2025

The study employed both correlation and regression analyses to explore the relationships between consumer ethnocentrism (CE, CEC, CEPS, CEI, CER, and CEH), the mediator variable CA, and the outcome variable PI, the correlation analysis revealed statistically significant and positive associations among all variables, indicating that enhancements in various consumer ethnocentrism dimensions are linked to increased purchase intention.

4.7 AMOUS OUTPUT

AMOS Output of dimensions of the Independent Variable

Figure 2 Amous Output



Source: Amous output,2025

The above diagram illustrates the dimensions of Consumer Ethnocentrism. This represents a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis output using AMOS, showing the relationships between five latent variables: Consumer Ethnocentrism Cognition (CEC), Consumer Ethnocentrism Pro-sociality (CEPS), Consumer Ethnocentrism Insecurity (CEI), Consumer

Ethnocentrism Reflectiveness (CER), and Consumer Ethnocentrism Habituation (CEH). Each of these theoretical constructs is precisely measured by multiple observed indicators, with the numerical values along the straight arrows representing their factor loadings. For instance, CEC is strongly measured by CEC01 (0.89), CEC02 (0.90), and CEC03 (0.92), indicating that these observed variables are excellent reflections of the underlying CEC construct. Similarly, CEPS indicators (0.90, 0.91, 0.93, 0.94) and CEH indicators (1.00, 0.99, 0.99) show very high loadings, suggesting strong measurement reliability.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study aimed to investigate the impact of Consumer Ethnocentrism on the Purchase Intention of domestic milk powder in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, with Consumer Attitude examined as a mediating variable. The research involved a sample of 384 respondents and utilized SPSS and the Hayes Process Macro for data analysis and Amos software for especially analyzing the relationship between independent variable dimensions. The demographic profile revealed that the majority of respondents were female, between the ages of 30 and 39, and held at least a bachelor's degree, reflecting a relatively educated and economically stable consumer base. The descriptive statistics and frequency analysis revealed strong consumer support for domestic milk powder, with nearly all respondents currently purchasing local milk powder brands and showing high awareness of harmful chemical additives such as DCD in imported milk powder. The high mean scores for all the main study variables Consumer Ethnocentrism (CEC, CEPS, CEI, CER, CEH), CA, and PI suggest generally favorable perceptions and positive Consumer Attitude towards purchase intention. Correlation analysis demonstrated significant positive relationships between all dimensions of Consumer Ethnocentrism and both Consumer Attitude and Purchase Intention. The strongest correlations were observed between CE and CA ($r = 0.786$) and CE and PI ($r = 0.764$). Among the consumer ethnocentrism dimensions, CEC (Cognitive Ethnocentrism) and CEI (Insecurity) displayed particularly strong links to Purchase Intention. Regression analysis confirmed these relationships, showing that each of the five CE dimensions significantly predicted PI. The overall regression model explained a substantial 66.8% of the variance in Purchase Intention (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.663$), indicating that the ethnocentrism dimensions collectively provide a detailed explanation of consumer behavior in this context. Most importantly, the mediation analysis revealed that Consumer Attitude plays as a partial mediator between Consumer Ethnocentrism and Purchase Intention. The indirect effect ($B = 0.4629$) was greater than the direct effect ($B = 0.3775$). This indicates that while ethnocentric beliefs do directly influence purchasing behavior, a significant portion of this effect is channeled through changes in consumer attitude. Among the ethnocentric dimensions, cognition and reflexiveness have the strongest impact on domestic milk powder purchase intention among all other consumer ethnocentrism dimensions. These findings support the arguments of Shimp and Sharma (1987), who proposed that highly ethnocentric consumers perceive purchasing domestic products as economically and morally appropriate. Similarly, the results are consistent with the findings of Siamagka and Balabanis (2015), who reported that consumer ethnocentrism positively influences favorable evaluations of domestic products and strengthens consumers' intentions to purchase local brands.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on the purchase intention of domestic milk powder in Sri Lanka's Western Province, emphasizing the mediating role of consumer attitude. Findings confirmed that consumer ethnocentrism significantly influences purchase intention both directly and indirectly, with all five CEESCALE dimensions cognition, pro sociality, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation showing positive effects. Among these, cognition ($B = 0.444$) and reflexiveness ($B = 0.162$) emerged as the most influential dimensions, while all significance values were below the 0.05 threshold, confirming strong relationships. The mediation analysis revealed that consumer attitude strengthens the link between ethnocentrism and purchase intention, with the effect rising from 0.377 (direct) to 0.462 (mediated). These results validate the conceptual framework and accepted all hypotheses. Practically, the study suggests that marketers and domestic milk producers should leverage ethnocentric appeals and foster positive consumer attitudes to enhance local brand loyalty. Strategies highlighting national pride, local sourcing, product safety, and economic benefits can effectively boost consumer confidence and habitual purchasing. Overall, the research underscores that cognitive and reflexive aspects of ethnocentrism are the key drivers of domestic milk powder purchase intention, providing valuable insights for marketers and policymakers to strengthen Sri Lanka's local dairy industry. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the consumer ethnocentrism literature by the application of the CEESCALE framework, a context that has received limited empirical attention. The findings also provide evidence that both social identity theory and the theory of planned behavior directly contributed to investigating consumer ethnocentrism phenomena in related to purchase intention and consumer attitude.

7. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This research makes several significant theoretical contributions to the field of consumer behavior and marketing by integrating the theory of Planned Behavior and social Identity theory. By employing the CEESCALE framework and examining five key dimensions under consumer ethnocentrism, such as pro-sociality, cognition, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation, the research offers a meaningful understanding of how different dimensions of ethnocentrism shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. From a contextual perspective, the study contributes original empirical evidence from the Sri Lankan domestic milk powder industry, a high-involvement and socially sensitive product category in an emerging economy. The study provides actionable guidance for marketers and milk powder producers seeking to enhance the competitiveness of local milk powder brands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that domestic milk powder producers, marketers, and policymakers in Sri Lanka adopt an effective approach to strengthen the market position and market share of local milk powder brands. First, marketers or local milk powder promoting companies should develop marketing campaigns that emphasize ethnocentric appeals, national pride, product safety, and the economic and social benefits of supporting

domestic industries, as these themes strongly resonate with ethnocentric consumers and positively influence purchase intention. Messaging should consistently highlight the superior quality, health standards, and trustworthiness of domestic milk powder, especially in light of public concerns over the safety of imported products. Engaging in transparent communication and showcasing the local sourcing and manufacturing processes can further build consumer trust and reinforce positive attitudes toward local brands. Additionally, the companies should foster long-term relationships with consumers by supporting community-based initiatives, collaborating with local dairy farmers, and participating in awareness campaigns that raise awareness about the benefits of consuming domestic milk powder. These activities not only reinforce habitual purchasing behaviors but also strengthen the emotional connection between consumers and local brands. Marketers should also develop loyalty programs and reward systems to encourage repeat purchases and deepen brand loyalty. From a policy perspective, government agencies and industry bodies should implement and promote quality certification programs, ensure product safety standards, and conduct public awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of supporting the local dairy industry for national economic development and employment generation. Policymakers can further support the industry by providing incentives for local producers, facilitating access to modern technology, and investing in infrastructure to improve the competitiveness of domestic milk powder brands.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS AND LIMITATIONS

Future researchers should expand beyond the Western Province to other regions of Sri Lanka and different countries to enhance generalizability and identify regional or cultural variations in consumer ethnocentrism and purchase intention. Adopting qualitative or mixed-methods approaches, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide deeper insights into consumer motivations and attitudes. Longitudinal studies are recommended to track changes in ethnocentric behavior and marketing effectiveness over time. Further, analyzing demographic and psychographic variables like age, gender, income, and education can reveal moderating effects and guide targeted marketing strategies. Increasing the sample size beyond 384 respondents would improve reliability and scope. Additionally, future studies should examine the influence of digital media and social networks on ethnocentrism and attitudes toward domestic brands. Expanding research to other local product categories competing with imports can also provide a broader understanding of ethnocentric consumer behavior across industries.

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