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# **ETHNOCENTRIC TENDENCIES OF POLISH, HUNGARIAN, AND UKRAINIAN CONSUMERS – THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE BASIS OF DIRECT RESEARCH<sup>1</sup>**

## **Introduction**

In the present conditions – market development, strong internationalist processes and growing competition, consumers' behaviour has been so far characterised, by unusual dynamics and changeability. The meaningful influence on the customers' behaviour have their individual features, such as: needs, attitudes, motives, personality, perception or experience which mainly results from the usage of products, as well as external factors, which come directly from the environment e.g. The existing value system customs, traditional forms of behaviour, information which directly comes from the media, mechanisms and institutions which rule modern economy.

Customers in their marketing choices also follow trends in consumption and more general phenomena like for example consumption globalization or the opposite tendency of consumer ethnocentrism. Consumption globalization in other words is the spread of identical or similar consumption models in the international scale and the creation of consumer global culture. The models usually come from the area of the West European countries and the United States called the core of modern world. Consumer ethnocentrism, in turn, is the reaction to the globalisation which is growing very fast and means the consistent and aware preference of the domestic products in relation to the foreign ones. Ethnocentric behaviour

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usually takes place when consumers perceive such feature like the country of the product origin and in their decision making process actively look for information, which allows them to differentiate the domestic products from the imported ones. It is also worth to stress the fact that ethnocentric customers often present the view which is clearly harmful to the economy (for example for domestic industry or agriculture) in case of buying imported products. It can be stated at this point that ethnocentric consumers, by choosing the products, take into consideration not only economical rational favours but also patriotic and moral ones.

The identification of consumers' ethnocentric attitudes is a very valuable source of knowledge about the subject of the preferences of the buyers of products offered on the market. This information allows to elaborate efficient enterprises' strategies, especially connected to the marketing segmentation and communication.

In the flowing article the phenomenon of consumer ethnocentrism has been discussed and the empirical research results have been presented. The aim of the empirical research results was the widespread diagnosis of the ethnocentric attitudes of Polish, Hungarian and Ukrainian consumers taking into consideration their national differences. The particular attention has been paid to defining the level of consumer ethnocentrism and proving the influence of the socio-economic factors on the CETSCALE values.

## **1. The essence of consumer ethnocentrism – basic concepts and definitions**

The concept of ethnocentrism was first described in the beginning of XX century in social sciences. American ethnologist and sociologist William G. Sumner. defined ethnocentrism as "(...) a way of seeing the world, in which one's own group is seen as the centre of the world, and everything around is judged and classified in relation to it"<sup>2</sup>.

A few dozen years later a well-known American anthropologist, M.J. Heraskovits, researched ethnocentrism. He characterized this social phenomenon as specific, positive assessing the way of one's own group life as better than others<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> M. N., Khan, S. R. Rizvi: *Consumer Ethnocentrism: Relevance and Implications for Marketers*. "The Icfai Journal of Consumer Behaviour" 2008, Vol. III, No. 1.

<sup>3</sup> A. Szromnik: *Etnocentryzm konsumencki jako zjawisko społeczne i problem badawczy*. In: *Konsument. Przedsiębiorstwo. Przestrzeń*. Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej, Katowice 1998, pp. 238-245.

By contrast, a French psychologist N. Sillamy explained that ethnocentrism is "(...) a widely dominating mental attitude which rests on referring all social phenomena to those we meet most often because they are proper to our social group"<sup>4</sup>.

The above definitions define ethnocentrism as an attitude or a tendency to adopt attitudes. The objects of these attitudes are: one's own group and other groups. Ethnocentric attitude in relation to one's own group or other unit, always has a positive sign, however, it has a negative one towards other groups or units.

American scholars – T. A. Shimp and S. Sharma brought the concept of ethnocentrism to the ground of marketing relations. They defined the term 'consumer ethnocentrism' and conducted wider empirical research in the USA, giving the beginning to the more detailed researches of this phenomenon in different countries of the world<sup>5</sup>. According to these authors, consumer ethnocentrism is "(...) a belief shared by consumers concerning obligation and morality of buying domestic products"<sup>6</sup>. Ethnocentric behavior of the customers concerns decisions connected to the choice, the purchase and the use of the domestic products.

Consumer ethnocentrism can be characterized by the following properties<sup>7</sup>. Firstly, it emanates from the care of one's own country and the fear of losing control over the economy, what can be caused by import. Secondly, it contains motives prompting to stop buying foreign products. For the consumers with a high level of ethnocentrism, purchasing products made in other countries is not only an economical matter but it also creates moral problems. This moral engagement makes consumers, in extreme cases, look for domestic products, even though, their quality is much lower than the quality of imported ones. Thirdly, it can be assumed that the ethnocentric level is the sum of individual tendencies of people who belong to a given social group. The consequence of consumer ethnocentrism is thus: overestimating domestic products, depreciating the meaning of import and the feeling of moral duty to buy domestic products, which in consequence creates barriers for the international trade development.

The most important research instrument which is used to measure ethnocentric attitudes is elaborated by T. A. Shimp and S. Sharma questionnaire CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale)<sup>8</sup>. In the first version CETSCALE was

<sup>4</sup> N. Sillamy: *Słownik psychologii*. Książnica, Katowice 1995, p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> T. A. Shimp, S. Sharma: *Consumer Ethnocentrism. Construction and Validation of the CETSCALE*. "Journal of Marketing Research" 1987, 24(3), pp. 280-289.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> A. Szromnik, A. Figiel: *Etnocentryzm konsumencki jako bariera rozwoju i wymiany towarowej*. In: *Wybrane problemy handlu międzynarodowego*. Materiały V ogólnopolskiej konferencji naukowej. AE, Kraków 1997, pp. 129-140.

<sup>8</sup> T. A. Shimp, S. Sharma: Op. cit.

meant exclusively for researches done in chosen regions of the USA (most questions referred only to America). It proved to be very reliable there. In order to adapt, the above mentioned scale, to the needs of other countries the questionnaire was translated into several foreign languages. Then, in order to eliminate all inaccuracies, the versions were translated into English again and tested on a chosen group of respondents.

## 2. The diagnosis of the consumer ethnocentrism level of Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian people with the usage of the CETSCALE method

### 2.1. The research methodology

In the following research the main source material was achieved thanks to direct interviews done in three towns which belong to Karpacki Euroregion: Rzeszów (Poland), Debrecen (Hungary) and Iwano-Frankowsk (Ukraine). The interviews were done from December 2011 to April 2012. The survey sample was 1200 respondents<sup>9</sup> (400 people in every town), chosen in a quota way. The quotas were – gender, age, and education.

As a measuring tool the CETSCALE questionnaire has been used. It was translated into Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian<sup>10</sup>. This instrument consists of 17 questions to which answers are marked on seven point Likert's scale, where 7 means "I absolutely agree", however 1 "I absolutely disagree". The points from

<sup>9</sup> The size of the sample complies with the requirements of the representative nature. It has been calculated on the basis of the formula:

$$n = \frac{\Pi(1-\Pi)Z_{\alpha}^2}{E^2};$$

where  $\Pi$  = population proportion,

E = permissible mistake,

$Z_{\alpha}^2$  = the number of standard deviations, por. S. Mynarski: *Praktyczne metody analizy danych rynkowych i marketingowych (Practical methods of marketing and market data analysis)*. Wyd. Zakamycze, Kraków 2000, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> In Rzeszów direct interviews have been conducted by the authors of the article and the respondents chosen to this aim. However, in Debrecen, the empirical material has been gathered by a group of employees of the consulting group – "Tö-Vill Kft." (székhelye: H-4220, Hajdúböszörmény, Széchenyi u. 5). However, in Iwano Frankowsk the interviews were done by academic teachers and the students of Higher School of Socio- Computing Technology in Tarnopol, in charge of dr A. Goszczyńskiego.

particular questions are summed up and are between 17 to 119. In order to eliminate any inaccuracies in translation, which could cause that a given tool may not be as effective as expected, a CETSCALE questionnaire was validated. Taking into consideration the fact that the measure was done only once, the validation was done only in the range of internal accuracy. The most adequate measure in this case was the use of  $\alpha$ -Cronbacha factor<sup>11</sup>. In the result of the calculations, which were carried out, it turned out that the discussed factor for the questionnaires in Polish, Hungarian and Ukrainian had values higher than 0.70. It means that both measuring instruments were correct – internally correct.

The collected research material, after previous reduction, served to create the data base. The results of the questionnaire researches were elaborated with the use of STATISTICA 7.0. programme, which was used to tabulation and classification of the sets of data based mainly on the scaling process. The ANOVA variance analysis and the linear correlation analysis have also been used at work, especially to determine dependencies which occur between the objects and features researched.

## 2.2. The consumer ethnocentrism level research

The direct research conducted among Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian respondents defined and average level of consumer ethnocentrism in the three researched communities. In order to do the intended task, the above mentioned international CET scale was used. The results of the comparison analysis showed that the CETSCALE value for Polish people was 65,8 points, for Hungarians 71,9 whereas for Ukrainians 75,0 (Table 1). This data indicate that Ukrainians, in their marketing choices, show the highest ethnocentric tendencies. This diversity is very crucial statistically, which is confirmed by the testing factor result of ANOVA variance<sup>12</sup> –  $p = 0,0000***$ , with the use of which an average level of prejudices to foreign products was compared in all three groups.

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<sup>11</sup> J. Brzeziński: *Metodologia badań psychologicznych*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> The variance analysis (ANOVA) is a statistical technique which serves to compare an average level of the numerical feature in a few populations. In this test zero hypothesis is put, according to which in all the compared groups the numerical feature, which is taken into consideration, has the same average level. On the basis of the value of the probability test  $p$ , appointed on the basis of the variance analysis test, the hypothesis can be rejected (if  $p$  is adequately low), what in fact means the influence of the grouping factor on the numerical feature. Por. A. Luszczewicz, T. Słaby: *Statystyka z pakietem komputerowym STATISTICA Teoria i zastosowania (Statistics with a Computer Set. Theory and the usage)*. C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2001, p. 225; A. Zeliaś: *Metody statystyczne*. PWE, Warszawa 2000, pp. 112-157.

Table 1

The average CETSCALE values for the respondents from Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine

Country	CETSCALE				
	$\bar{x}$ (average)	Me (the median)	s (standard deviaton)	Min	Max
Poland	65,8	65,0	26,5	17	119
Hungary	71,9	72,0	15,4	17	119
Ukraine	75,0	77,0	20,0	17	119
$P_{ANOVA}$ (test factor $p$ of variance analysis ANOVA)	0,0000***				

The distribution of the CETSCALE values in the 10-point range has been presented in the histogram 1. It turns out that only 50% of the respondents (including 20% Hungarian respondents, 15% Ukrainian ones, and 13% Polish respondents) have achieved the sum of points from the individual questions in the range from 50 to 80 (these are middle values). A very high consumer ethnocentric level – over 80 points, had 15% of Iwano-Frankowsk inhabitants and 10% of citizens of Debrecen and Rzeszów. However, the lowest CETSCALE values (in the range from 17 to 40) could be observed in the Polish group of consumers, only 9%, in the Ukrainian 4% and among Hungarian buyers only 2%.

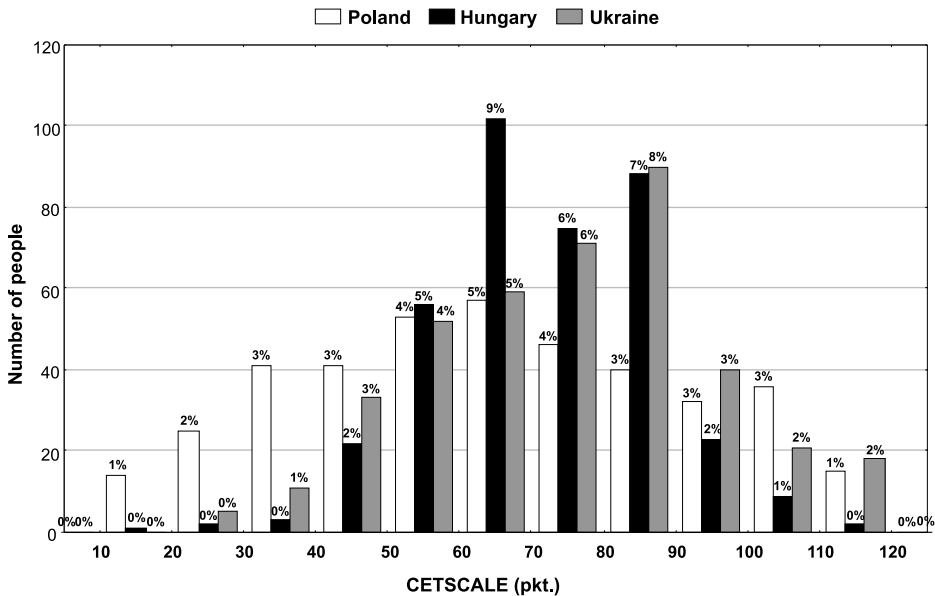


Figure 1. The sample structure with reference to the achieved values of the CETSCALE

### 2.3. The research of the influence of the chosen socio-economic factors on the CETSCALE values

In the following research, the influence of chosen socio-economic factors on the level of consumer ethnocentrism of the Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian respondents has also been analysed. In order to do that, the earlier discussed variance analysis ANOVA has been used. The data from the Table 2 indicate that there is a crucial, statistical difference in the CETSCALE value among women and men, in Poland and in Hungary as well. Polish respondents show higher ethnocentric tendencies than men, however, in Hungarian population men are prejudiced towards imported products. As far as Ukrainian respondents are concerned, it should be stressed that the level of attachment to domestic products is very high among women and men, however the factor – gender does not differentiate an average level of CETSCALE value.

Table 2

Gender as the determinant of the CETSCALE value – the results of ANOVA variance analysis

Gender	CETSCALE											
	Country											
	Poland				Hungary				Ukraine			
	<i>N</i>	$\bar{x}$	Me	<i>s</i>	<i>N</i>	$\bar{x}$	Me	<i>s</i>	<i>N</i>	$\bar{x}$	Me	<i>s</i>
woman	222	68,4	65,0	26,8	199	68,9	68,0	13,5	218	73,6	74,0	20,5
man	174	62,6	62,5	26,0	183	75,3	79,0	16,3	182	76,7	78,0	19,4
$P_{ANOVA}$ (test <i>p</i> factor)	0,0308*				0,0000***				0,1190			

The research conducted also concerned establishing the influence of age on the CETSCALE value in reference to three groups of the respondents: Poles, Hungarians, and Ukrainians. In order to determine the strength of the connection which appears between the researched features, linear correlation analysis<sup>13</sup> has been used. In table 3 the values of linear correlation factors (R) and corresponding to them probability test *p* values, have been presented. As it can be seen, there is a crucial statistical dependency between the result and CETSCALE values in a Polish and Ukrainian community. It can be noticed that there is a tendency, among Polish and

<sup>13</sup> Correlation factor R is a rate which receives values in the range of –1 to 1. Absolute value of a factor gives evidence for the correlation strength and a sign of its direction. The results may and should) be completed by the results of the relevance correlation factor (*p*): which would allow to assess if a dependency found in a sample is a reflection of a more general relation which is in the whole population, or is it a matter of coincidence.

Ukrainian respondents, that relatively older people show tendencies to higher level of prejudices against foreign products. This dependency has low strength however – CETSCALE level indicates that there is a big range, regardless of age. Such tendency hasn't been stated among the Hungarian respondents.

Table 3

The results of the linear correlation analysis including the influence of age on the CETSCALE value

Specification	Linear correlation factor – R	Probability of test $p$ values
Poland	0,15	0,0023**
Hungary	0,06	0,2576
Ukraine	0,17	0,0008***

In the following research, the influence of the level of the respondents' education on the value CET scale, has also been defined. The results of the analyses in the Figure 2 very clearly indicate that there are crucial differences in summary CETSCALE, in the reference to three levels of education of Polish and Hungarian consumers.

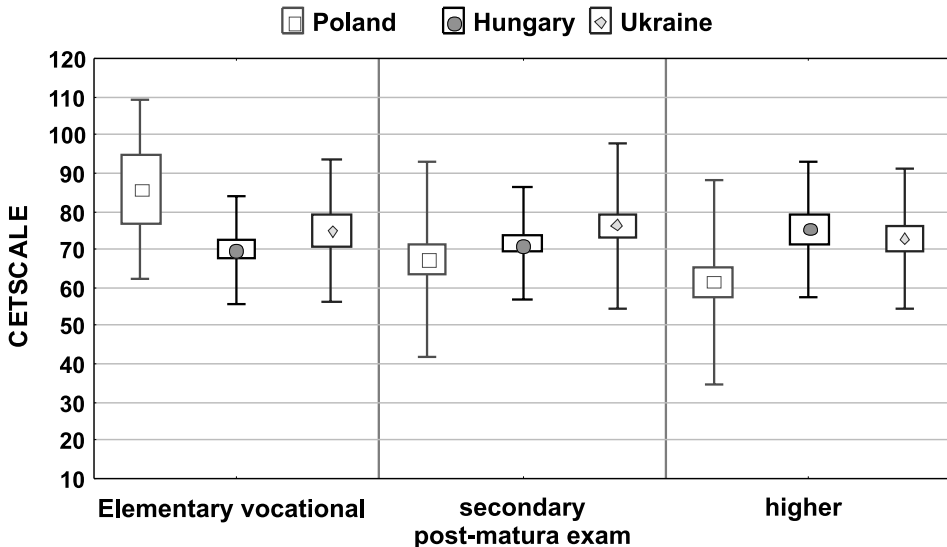


Figure 2. The average values of CET scale depending on the level of Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian consumers' education



It turns out that, for Polish population, respondents with elementary and vocational education prove to be much more ethnocentric than the people who have secondary and higher education (test  $p$  factor ANOVA = 0,0000\*\*\*). However in the Hungarian group there is an opposite situation than among Poles (however to much lower extent) – the consumers more educated the higher the level of consumer ethnocentrism (test  $p$  factor ANOVA = 0,0468\*). It cannot be stated, however, that there is a statistically crucial variety on an average level of CETSCALE values in the Ukraine (test  $p$  factor ANOVA = 0,3779).

In the analyses done, some dependencies appearing between income and a summary CETSCALE value have been noticed (Table 4).

Table 4

Income as a value CETSCALE determinant – the results of the ANOVA variance analysis

Specification	CETSCALE								
	Country								
	Poland			Hungary			Ukraine		
	$\bar{x}$	Me	s	$\bar{x}$	Me	s	$\bar{x}$	Me	s
to 100 euro per person	70,1	64,0	31,3	70,1	72,5	17,9	78,5	79,0	22,6
110-200	74,3	75,5	27,1	74,5	76,0	15,3	73,1	74,5	19,8
210-300	65,5	66,0	21,7	73,4	75,0	15,2	71,1	71,5	17,3
above 300	54,8	56,0	26,5	76,9	76,0	18,9	77,9	81,0	15,3
refused to answer	69,6	66,0	24,7	70,8	70,0	14,6	71,5	73,0	18,6
$P_{ANOVA}$ - test $p$ factor	0,0000***			0,2236			0,443*		

Income significantly differentiates attitude towards domestic products in Polish community – the higher the rate of income, the lower the CETSCALE values. In the Polish group these relations are statistically important. In turn, a diversity of CETSCALE value concerning the level of income among the respondents from the Ukraine can be observed. The direction of this dependency is puzzling – prejudice to foreign products is higher in extreme income groups (to 100 and above 300 euro per person). It is worth stressing the fact that in Hungarian community no relations have been noticed between income and the CET scale value.

## Conclusion

The presented research results allow to formulate some meaningful suggestions. In general, Polish, Hungarian and Ukrainian consumers show ethnocentric tendencies, however, there are crucial, statistical differences between these groups. The Ukrainian respondents have the highest ethnocentric level (the CETSALE value is 75,0 pkt.). Hungarians take the second place (72,0 points), Poles are on the third position with 65,8. In order to compare, it is worth to mention the international research results conducted at that time. By analysing the answers of a given – representative group of the USA inhabitants, G. H. Brodowsky (1998) defined the CETSCALE rate for them on the level of 61,68. G. Chryssochoidis in 2007 showed that the sum of points from the particular questionnaire questions for Greece inhabitants was – 65,49<sup>14</sup>. However, C.Y. Wong in 2008 stated that Chinese have average ethnocentric tendencies (56,25 points)<sup>15</sup>.

The empirical research conducted also showed the influence of socio-economic factors on the consumer ethnocentric level of the Poles, Hungarians and Ukrainians who were questioned. It turned out that there is a statistically crucial difference in the CETSCALE value among women and men in Poland and in Hungary. The female Polish respondents tend to be more ethnocentric than men, however, the tendency in Hungarian population is just the opposite – men are much more prejudiced to imported products than women. There are no similar relations in Ukraine.

In the following research, correlations appearing between the level of Polish, Hungarian and Ukrainian consumers' ethnocentrism and their age has been established. It results from the data received that in the Polish and Ukrainian communities older people tend to have stronger ethnocentric tendencies in relation to imported products. Such dependency was not noticed among the respondents in Hungary.

The results of the analyses significantly showed that there are crucial differences in summary CETSCALE in relation to three levels of Polish and Hungarian consumers' education. In particular, for Polish population, the respondents with elementary and vocational education tend to have much stronger ethnocentric tendencies than the ones who have secondary and higher education. However, in the Hungarian group the situation is just the opposite than among Poles – the more

<sup>14</sup> G. Chryssochoidis, A. Krystallis, P. Perreas.: *Ethnocentric Beliefs and Country-of-origin (COO) Effect: Impact of Country, Product and Product Attributes on Greek Consumers' Evaluation of Food Products*. "Eur. J. Mark." 2007, No. 41(11/12), pp. 1518-1544.

<sup>15</sup> C. Y. Wong, M. J. Polonsky, R. Garma: *The Impact of Consumer Ethnocentrism and Country of Origin Sub-components for High Involvement Products on Young Chinese Consumers' Product Assessments*. Asia Pac., "J. Mark. Log." 2008, No. 20(4), pp. 455-478.

educated the consumers, the higher level of consumer ethnocentrism. Similar relations were not seen in the Ukrainian community.

In the conducted analyses dependencies appear between the income and the summary CETSCALE value. It turns out that the income differentiates attitude towards domestic products among Polish and Ukrainian respondents. However, in the Hungarian community no relations between income and CET scale value have been noticed.

Concluding the above, it should be stressed that the results of the following researches have the crucial meaning for the marketing practice. The determined, in the result of the analyses CETSCALE values, prove that there are clear ethnocentric tendencies in the researched communities (especially among people in the Ukrainian and Hungarian groups). From the point of view of the international trade and marketing, ethnocentric attitudes of the consumers can be a barrier in gaining competitive dominance of the enterprises on the international markets. That is why including consumer ethnocentric tendencies and the factors which determine them in elaboration of the enterprises' strategies (especially segmentation) will allow to reach strong position of certain products on the domestic and foreign markets.

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### **Summary**

In the following publication the results of empirical research are presented. Their purpose was to define the consumer ethnocentrism level of the inhabitants in Poland, Hungary and Ukraine. The main source material was achieved thanks to direct interviews in three towns: Rzeszów (Poland), Debrecen (Hungary), Iwano-Frankowsk (Ukraine), on the sample of 1200 respondents (400 people in every town). International CETSCALE questionnaire has been used as a measuring instrument. It was validated. The analyses presented clearly show ethnocentric tendencies, however, the highest CET scale values were achieved in the Ukrainian community. There is also a meaningful influence of socio-economic factors on the level of ethnocentrism in the three researched groups.

Keywords: customers' behaviour, consumer ethnocentrism, CETSCALE