



Consumer Ethnocentrism on the Purchase of Milk Powder: A Comparative Study Between Foreign and Local Brand in Mullaitivu District

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Abstract

Consumer Ethnocentrism has a huge impact on consumption of domestic and foreign manufactures goods. Previous research witnessed that Consumer Ethnocentrism affects the consumers' decision of whether to buy domestic or foreign made products. The purpose of this study is to examine that how far the consumers embrace Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk Powder in Mullaitivu District since milk powder is the most widely used dairy product in Sri Lanka. This paper also investigates the factors influencing the Consumer Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk Powder. A mixed method approach has been adopted and the data were gathered by using the questionnaire survey and the personal interview method. Researchers used Descriptive Statistics under the quantitative data analysis and Interpretative Analysis under the qualitative research method. The sample size was 60 consumers by using Judgmental sampling method to select 30 Anchor consumers and 30 Nespray consumers among the respondents. The findings revealed that the quality, brand and country of origin are the influencing factors on Consumer Ethnocentrism and this research also confirms that the people in Mullaitivu district have a positive attitude towards foreign made products and the attraction towards these products is high. Compared with Nespray consumers, consumers of Anchor have exposed constructive attitude towards the Anchor's brand perception, reliability, brand recognition and brand image. Therefore, they have less Consumer Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk powder.

Keywords: Brand, Consumer Ethnocentrism, Country of origin, Patriotism, Quality

Introduction

Milk and milk products have always been an integral part of people's consumption habits. The dairy industry is one of the most prominent industries experiencing no dips in sales, as consuming tea with milk is an essential part of Sri Lankan's daily routine. Milk powder is the most widely used dairy product in Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka spends huge amount of money on importing milk powder. However, Sri Lanka has its own milk powder too. Sri Lanka stands in the fourth position in the world in terms of importing powdered milk from New Zealand. Sri Lankan consumers have several options in the market. For a producer, understanding the consumers' decision making behavior and its significance is vital for the business. If the local producers want to increase their sales and market share, they have to compete against international brands. Therefore, marketers should identify the consumers' attitude towards the local versus foreign products.

The consumer's purchasing behavior impacted by individual and environmental factors. Individual factors include demographics, consumer knowledge, perception, beliefs, and lifestyles. Environmental factors are Ethnocentrism, culture, social class, reference group, and Country of origin (Sivashankar et al., 2021). Among these factors, Consumer Ethnocentrism plays a major role. Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) is an attitude of consumers who prefer domestic products or be prejudicial to foreign products (Sivashankar et al., 2021). Consumer Ethnocentrism is a psychological concept that describes how consumers purchase products based on country of origin. It can affect the consumers' decision of whether to buy Domestic or Foreign made goods. It directly affects the consumer's willingness to purchase imported goods (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). If consumers have positive impact on Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of domestic products, it will help to uplift the local community livelihoods. Sometimes, based on brand image, quality, or brand perception, etc. they may prefer foreign products. The result showed, for foreign brands, consumer self-brand connection increased through the effect of country affinity and product quality judgment. For domestic brands, self-brand connection was influenced by ethnocentrism and not country affinity or quality judgment (Fail-Salehi et al., 2020).

CE studies are based on either country of manufacture (COM) or country of origin (COO). Ethnocentric consumers prefer domestic goods over imported goods (Nguyen et al., 2022). The previous research show that the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on purchasing behavior differs across product categories. Further gender, marital status and personnel income moderates this relationship (Agarwal, 2022). The people in developed countries are more ethnocentric and consumers from developing countries and least developing countries reveal less ethnocentric behavior (Sivashankar et al., 2021; Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). CE may play an important role when people believe that their national well-being is under threat from imports (Wang&Chen, 2004).

Given the current competitive environment in the global market, most of the organizations tend to increase their sales and market share as well as increase their consumers' purchase intention for their product than others since the decision making process of consumers is extremely complex and challenging. It is constantly changing due to various factors. CE is an important factor that influences the decision making ability of consumers. As such most of the organizations identified consumers' ethnocentric behaviors and strategically move their marketing activities. However, in Sri Lankan context very few organizations understand the consumer's ethnocentric behaviors. Most of the Sri Lankan companies cannot understand how CE affects the consumption of products. Organizations dislike to change their sales methods based on consumer's ethnocentric behaviors and they are afraid to try new methods. It is imperative for companies to be aware of CE and how they impact on products' consumption. Sri Lanka is a country that consumes a lot of milk powder (Bogahawatte & Herath, 2006).

Therefore, there are many companies involved in milk powder production. In the market, there are more imported brands and few local milk powder brands. In this situation domestic and foreign milk powder companies are competing to increase their sales and retain their position in the market (Karunaratne & Wanninayake, 2018). As there is a lacuna in scientific research to analyze the nature of CE, this study attempted to evaluate the Consumer Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk Powder in Mullaitivu District: A comparative study between Anchor and Nespray.

In Mullaitivu district most of the people consuming Milk Powders for their daily needs and Anchor and Nespray are the most widely consumed milk powders. This study focuses on the market in Mullaitivu District by considering the people who prefer to consume Milk Powders. Even though Milk Powder Companies (Fonterra & Nestle) sell their products globally, this study tries to analyze the CE towards the consumption of milk powder among Sri Lankan consumers. Aim of the current study is to identify how far the consumers embrace Ethnocentrism towards the purchasing of Milk Powder in Mullaitivu District. In this background, the objective of this paper is to investigate how far the consumers embrace Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk powder in Mullaitivu District and specifically explore the influence of quality, country of origin and the brand on ethnocentrism.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The second section reviews the available literature on Consumer Ethnocentrism in different eras. Next, the conceptual model, sampling plan, data collection and data analyzing methods have been stated under Methodology section. While the fourth section illustrates the quantitative data analysis and the qualitative interpretive analysis and finally, the fifth section includes the conclusion and policy implications.

Literature review

Consumer Ethnocentrism

The common definition of ethnocentrism mentions that an exaggerated preference for one's own group and an accompanying dislike of other groups (Good & Huddleston, 1995). CE depends on several factors. Ethnocentrism affects attitude formation. This indicates a preference for purchasing locally produced goods. A consumer who has ethnocentric tendencies may buy imported products as a result of quality associated with products from a particular country. There may also be a willingness on the part of ethnocentric consumers to buy foreign products that are considered very necessary (Stere & Trajani, 2015).

CE is also essential to global positioning, branding, market entry decisions and the measure (Simagka & Balabanis, 2015). To an ethnocentric consumer, purchasing foreign made product is immoral and unpatriotic, hurts the domestic economy and leads to loss of jobs. CE increases the positive effect of perceived quality and positive brand image on the willingness to buy domestic products in developing countries, whereas it may increase the negative effect of perceived price on the willingness to buy domestic products (Yen, 2018). Mostly, people in developed countries prefer to purchase their home country products. Meanwhile, people in developing countries prefer foreign made products. Literature suggests that consumers' ethnocentrism depends on the level of the development of the country.

The CE concept has come out in developed countries where consumers positively evaluated the quality of domestic goods (Karunaratne & Wanninayake, 2018). Allegiance and loyalty as well as the feeling of a country's superiority can be seen as a reflection of ethnocentrism. CE is the more general concept of ethnocentrism (Shimp, 1984). Commonly the concept of ethnocentrism means the universal proclivity for people to view their own group as the center of the universe, to interpret other social units from the perspective of their own group, and to reject persons who are culturally not similar while blindly accepting those who are culturally same (Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

Ethnocentrism is a sociological concept first introduced by Sumner (1906) that refers to a tendency to regard the beliefs, standards, and code of behavior of one's own as superior to those found in other societies. Ethnocentrism entered the marketing field when it had been suggested to be one of the important factors that can impact and make consumer behavior (Javalgi et al., 2005). CE increases the positive effect of perceived quality and positive brand image on the willingness to buy domestic products in developing countries, whereas it may increase the negative effect of perceived price on the willingness to buy domestic products (Yen, 2018).

CE impacts negatively on consumers' purchase intention toward foreign products. This indicates that the high ethnocentric tendencies lead to unfavorable attitude toward purchasing imported products (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). The predictors of the reluctance to purchase the foreign products are CE, discomfort with differences, economic animosity and war animosity. Differences mediate the relationship between Consumer ethnocentrism and reluctance to purchase (Belbag, 2021). The result show that the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on purchasing behavior differs across product categories, further gender, marital status and personnel income moderate this relationship (Akbarov, 2021). The result showed, for foreign brands, consumer self-brand connection increased through the effect country affinity and product quality judgments. Tantry(2018) explored the possibility of reviving the segmentation and positioning strategies by employing ethnocentrism as a strategic tool. It further explained the antecedents and consequences of the consumer ethnocentrism besides the roles of mediating and moderating variables and the literature gap. The research of Subhanjali and Meenakshi (2022) spells out the concept and nature of consumer ethnocentric tendencies; and highlights the antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism. The study presents a comprehensive structure in elaborate summary tables that provides a holistic view of consumer ethnocentrism in a multi-cultural society.

Quality

According to Kown & Lee (2009) quality is the totality of features and characteristics of the products or services that depends on its ability to satisfy the expected needs. Product quality refers to how well a product satisfies customer needs, serves its purpose and meets industry standards. It is also affect the consumers' purchase decision or consumption of products. Age, income and education level influence the perception of product quality, which affects the consumers' purchasing decisions. CE has effect on product quality evaluations. Non ethnocentric consumers compare the quality and performance of international and local goods to select the best product. The product quality is to understand and measure the needs of the consumers (Saleem et al., 2015). Consumers' evaluation of the quality of products influences or determines their purchase preferences, the impact of ethnocentrism on willingness to buy domestic or imported goods would, therefore, be different in developing and developed countries (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). A product is rated superior by consumers when it is perceived to be of higher quality than its competitor (Amri & Prihandono, 2019). Product quality has a positive correlation with purchasing decisions.

The product quality is to understand and measure the needs of the consumers (Saleem et al., 2015). Darby and Karni (1973) added a third type of quality: credence qualities. These cannot be evaluated even in normal use; additional costly information will be needed. One example of a product with credence qualities is legal services. The

average consumer is not very familiar with the law. Cultural similarity between countries is one factor that may influence the effect of consumer ethnocentric tendencies on attitudes toward foreign products. (Sharma et al., 1994). The product quality affects sales volume. Product quality is derived from the difference between actual products and the alternative products (Mohd et al., 2011). The result from the past research findings on the impact of perceived product quality on purchase intentions were contradictory to some which reported a direct positive impact of perceived product quality towards purchase intentions (Mohad et al., 2011). The quality of the product also affects to attitudes of consumers (Khalek, 2014)

Country of Origin

The improvement of country of origin (COO) goes back to World War I. At that time, the defeated countries were forced to put the symbol of COO on their product, by those that triumphed. Studies show that the aim of this act was to punish countries like Germany thereby creating a bad reputation for them (Cai et al, 2002). Scholars have shown that COO has been an extrinsic indication for evaluating products since 1960s and that it is still a topic of study now. COO is a significant subject when examining consumer purchase behavior according to foreign products. In addition, it is also a label for brands, which guides the consumers to know the firm and the country of origin (Michaelis et al., 2008). Studies demonstrate that people care about which country products come from and where they are made and consider these factors when evaluating the quality of products, (Purwanto, 2014). COO information should have a significant impact on consumers' evaluations of products from different countries. Indeed, it has long been evident that COO affects product assessment and purchase decision as well (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). Liu and Hang (2020) found the effects of consumer cosmopolitanism and CE among the cross border e-commerce consumers. Political system, culture and the economy of the country can be a cause of sensitivity to people (Kilders et al., 2021). Another study found consumer ethnocentrism does not significantly affect the product country image perception. On the contrary, both the general country image and product country image positively impact Vietnamese consumers' intentions to buy Chinese imported goods (Nguyen et al, 2023).

CE focuses on the responsibility and morality of purchasing foreign-made products and the loyalty of consumers to products manufactured in their home country (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Many researchers who have conducted surveys on country of origin effects on consumer behavior (Cordell, 1991), When the foreign manufactured products as alternatives, COO effect is completely unknown (Watson & Wright, 2000). If local substitutes are available, ethnocentrism plays an important role in consumer attitudes (Watson & Wright, 2000; Wang & Chen, 2004). Several decades of research have informed our knowledge of whether and how individuals are affected by COO

when facing purchase or consumption decisions (Pharr, 2005). Attitude and perceived behavior control had a positive effect on the intention to purchase foreign functional foods (Xin & Seo 2019). Products from more developed countries generally get more positive evaluations from consumers than do products from less developed countries (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). For foreign brands, consumer self-brand connection increased through the effect country affinity and product quality judgment. For domestic brands, self-brand connection was influenced by ethnocentrism and not country affinity or quality judgment (Fail-Salehi et al., 2020).

Brand

Brand is the most visible cue that provides identification and continuity in the market place. As the familiarity with the brand increase it is said that, consumers are less likely to use other extrinsic cues such as price and country of origin, since the information retrieved in the brand name become more useful. A familiar brand is a powerful sign that may even overcome the consumer ethnocentrism where there is a strong association of brand name with a country. Brand image is, used for quick reference or short hand reference by consumers in terms of quality and value representation. Brand image significantly affected the quality of the product. The concept of brand trust was first coined in 1969 by Howard & Sheth.

Keller (1993) debated that brand image is “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory.” Brand trust will have a positive impact on consumer ethnocentrism (Watson & Wright, 2000). Brand image is favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand associations (Keller, 1993) or six brand dimensions in the work of(Anselmsson et al.,2014), which include awareness, uniqueness, perceived quality, and positive associations with corporate social responsibility, origin, and social image. This brand image allows customers to declare their needs and wants regarding the brand and distinguishes the brand from others.

Ethnocentric consumers are likely to focus on the brands with which they are most familiar. Attitudes toward familiar brands are stronger and more accessible and have more extensive associations (Bettman & Sujaan, 1987). Brands are connected with specific favorable user stereotypes, and consumers may be favorably classified in social terms by using certain brands (Aaker, 1997). When consumers think about a particular brand, human personality traits come to mind, thus providing a basis for brand differentiation (Aaker, 1997; Wang et al., 2009). Previous studies indicate that a well-established brand personality can increase consumer preference and usage (Sirgy, 1982), foster feelings of comfort and confidence in the minds of consumers (Haigood, 2001), enhance levels of loyalty and trust and provide a basis for brand differentiation among the myriad brands in the market, hence potentially influencing consumers’ brand purchase intention (Keller, 1993, 2003; Wang et al., 2009). The findings suggest that although consumer

ethnocentrism does not impact the purchase intention of either domestic or foreign beer brands, patriotism and cultural openness have a statistically significantly positive, but collectivism negative impact on the purchase intention of domestic beer brands. The purchase intention of foreign beer brands, however, is statistically significantly affected only by cultural openness (Goldmanis and Zubarevičs, 2022).

Recent research findings also indicate that a strong and positive brand personality can result in favorable product evaluations such as perceived quality (Wang & Yang, 2008). Brand personality is positively related to perceived quality of a brand, because when consumers make judgments about quality, they assess not only the product, but also brand attributes, such as packaging and style (Ma et al., 2019). In their preference for certain brands, consumers reveal some characteristics about themselves to others, and their own self, and thus obtain social recognition as well as maintain and develop their identities (Camacho et al., 2021).

Research Methodology

Conceptual framework

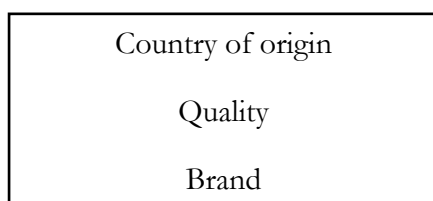
It describes about the relationship between Consumer Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk Powder as dependent variable and factors influencing the Ethnocentrism as independent variable.

Population and Sampling

Researchers used sampling method to collect the data from the respondents within the stipulated time frame since it is a cross-sectional study.

Model

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE



DEPENDENT VARIABLE

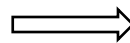
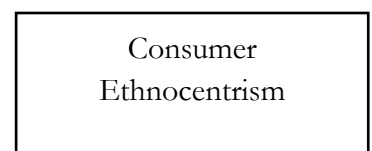


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model

Sources: Chaudhry *et al.*, (2020), Kwon & Lee (2011), Pecotich & Rosenthal (2001).

The population of this study is identified as the total number of customers who purchase Milk Powders at Maritimpattu DS Division in Mullaitivu District. Researchers gathered the data from 60 respondents at Mullaitivu district which includes 30 from Anchor and another 30 from Nespray. The data were collected from these

respondents by using judgmental sampling method since one of the researchers is from Mullaitivu district. Further, in order to get the right responses from the respondents, the number is restricted to 30 for each milk powder.

Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

Researchers gathered data by using both primary and secondary data collection sources. Primary data collection plays a major role in this study. Secondary data collection methods were also used to justify the results and findings. Under the primary data collection methods, questionnaire survey and interview method have been incorporated in this study. Under the Secondary data collection method, researchers mainly used government statistics, Newspapers and journals. 30 consumers of Anchor and 30 consumers of Nespray were selected and interviewed by the researchers. Primarily, the research started with a deductive method and in order to increase the validity and reliability, the mixed method has been adopted. i.e., Personal Interview is also incorporated. The collected data were analyzed in two ways. The data collected from the questionnaire have been analyzed by using the descriptive statistics. Moreover, since the results of using other statistical methods have been considered not valid, interviewing method has been given higher prominence. Responses from the interviewees have been scheduled and transcribed by using the interpretative analysis and it is discussed as a comparative study.

Results and Data Analysis

Researcher used Descriptive statistics under the Quantitative analysis and interpretive analysis under the Qualitative method.

Gender

Table 1 provides the information regarding the personal details. Based on the analysis carried out 30 respondents of Anchor, out of these respondents 50% (15 Respondents) of them are male and 50% (15 Respondents) of them are female. This presupposes that generally, the margin between males and females is very low since both males and females' responses are equal. This shows that there is a strong interest on foreign made Milk Powder for both males and females in Mullaitivu District.

Age Group

The above table illustrates that 16 respondents are in the age group of 40-60. This is 53% of the total. Secondly large respondents are in the 60 plus age category, this consist of 20% of respondents. That means 5 customers belonging to this age group. The next large respondents are in the age group of 25-39, this consist of 17% of respondents.

It refers to 5 people. And rests of the respondents are in the age group of 18-24, it refers to 3 respondents. This is 10% of the total.

Table 1: Anchor's Frequency and Percentage of Sample profile

Description	Category of data	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	15	50
	Female	15	50
Age Group	18-24	3	10
	25-39	5	17
	40-60	16	53
	60 Plus	6	20
Education Level	Primary	16	53.3
	Secondary	10	33.3
	Higher - Studies	4	13.3
Income Level	Below 20,000	6	20
	20,000-34,000	10	33
	35,000-49,000	8	27
	Above 50,000	6	20
Awareness about country of manufacture	Yes	23	77
	No	07	23

Source: Survey data, 2022

Educational Level

Based on the information, most of the respondents completed primary education; this consists of 53.3% (16 Respondents) of the total. The next larger consumers completed their secondary level education. That is 33.3% (10 Respondents) of the total. Rest of the consumers, 13.3% (4 Respondents) of them completed their

higher studies. From this, it can be known that customers with primary and secondary educational level are preferred to consume foreign made Milk Powder in Mullaitivu.

Income Level

Table 1 shows that 33% (10 Respondents) of consumers are in between the 20,000- 34,000 rupees income level category. Also 27% (8 Respondents) of consumer's income level is Rupees 35, 000 -49,000 and 20% (6 Respondents) of consumers earn below 20,000 as well as the remaining 20% (6 Respondents) of consumer's income level is above 50,000.

Awareness about Country of Manufacture

According to Table 1, 77% (23 Respondents) of respondents know that, in which country this Milk Powder is being produced and 23% (7 Respondents) of users are not clear about it. Although there are customers who know the country in which Anchor is produced, there are also a small number of customers who consume the milk powder without knowing it.

Gender

In Table 2, 33% (10 Respondents) of males and 67% (20 Respondents) of females purchase Nespray Milk Powder for their consumption purpose. From this, it can be known that females prefer to purchase more domestic products than males.

Age Group

Regarding the age group, 40% (12 Respondents) of them are in the age group of 40-60. Secondly large respondents are in the 60 plus age category, this consist of 20% (6 Respondents) of consumers. The next large respondents are in the age group of 25-39, this consist of 27% (8 Respondents) of consumers and rest of the respondents are in the age group of 18-24, that consist of 13% (4 Respondents) of consumers.

Educational Level

Based on the information, most of the respondents completed their higher studies; this consists of 47% (14 Respondents) of Nespray consumers. The next larger consumers completed their secondary level education; this consists of 33.3% (10 Respondents). Rest of the consumers completed their primary level education. That is 20% of the total Nespray consumers (6 Respondents).

Table 2: Nespray's Frequency and Percentage of Sample profile.

Description	Category of data	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	33
	Female	20	67
Age Group	18-24	4	13
	25-39	8	27
	40-60	12	40
	60 Plus	6	20
Education Level	Primary	6	20
	Secondary	10	33
	Higher - Studies	14	47
Income Level	Below 20,000	5	17
	20,000-34,000	10	33
	35,000-49,000	9	30
	Above 50,000	6	20
Awareness about country of manufacture	Yes	26	87
	No	04	13

Source: Survey data, 2022

Income Level

Table 2 further shows that, 33% (10 respondents) of consumers earn 20,000-34,000 rupees. Also 30% (9 Respondents) of Nespray consumers' income level is Rupees 35, 000 -49,000 and 20% (6 Respondents) of consumer's income level is above 50,000. As well as the remaining 17% (5 Respondents) of consumers' income level is below 20,000.

Awareness about Country of Manufacture

87% (26 Respondents) of respondents know that, in which country this Milk Powder is being produced and 13% (4 Respondents) of consumers are not clear about it. Although there are customers who know the country in which the milk powder is produced, there are also a small number of customers who consume the milk powder without knowing it.

Interview Interpretations

“I consider more nutritional information displayed in the Milk Powder”

The findings show that 87 percent of Anchor customers pay much attention to more nutritional information displayed in the product. An Anchor milk powder packet displays 25 nutritional ingredients. Mullaitivu district people consume milk tea as an energy drink in the morning. It is a daily routine from children to elder. So they pay much attention to the nutritional information displayed in the anchor to know the nutritional content of the milk powder.

(26 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

Likewise, 73 percent of Nespray consumers consider more nutritional information displayed in the Nespray packet. 17 nutrients are displayed in it. Nespray consumers reported for buying more nutritious alternatives and nutritional information displayed in the milk powder are enabling them to identify the milk powder which may fit their needs.

(22 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“When I am comparing milk powders to buy, nutritional information affects my decision”

Nutritional information of the Milk powder influences the purchase decision of 86 percent of Anchor consumers. Comparing two products, can determine which milk powder contains the maximum nutrients and whether any of the nutrients it contains can cause an allergic reaction. A customer stated that he is allergic to protein and that protein is not included in Anchor that is why he consumes Anchor Milk powder. Anchor is high in calories than other milk powders available in the store. Not only that, it contains 8 more nutrients than other milk powders.

(26 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

Also 83 percent of Nespray consumers exhibit similar behavior. Many of these consumers indicate that they have switched to Nespray since the Sri Lankan government temporarily suspended Anchor in 2013 due to the Dicyandiamide (DCD) issue. Customers said that when they buy milk powder, they compare the nutritional content

of all the milk powders in the market. One of the reasons why they chose Nespray is that, this milk powder has less milk fat than other milk powders. It also has a nutritional component that other milk powders do not have. That is known as niacin (vitaminB3).
(25 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“I consider the advantages of consuming the Milk Powder”

90 percent of Anchor consumers consider the benefits get from the milk powder. They also mentioned that the taste, aroma and texture of Anchor are excellent. It tastes nearly identical to fresh milk. Anchor is naturally rich in disease-fighting antioxidants. It is easy to absorb calcium from Anchor milk powder. Parents mentioned that Anchor milk powder is preferred by children because they can drink it not only hot but also cold. This milk powder contains 25+ nutrients. Further Anchor is creamy and delicious, supports bone strength and boosts immunity.
(27 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

80 percent of Nespray consumers consider the benefits get from the Milk Powder they use. They said that the Milk Powder is thick enough to make more tea with less powder. So if they buy a Nespray packet, they can use it for long days. People said that Nespray is a milk powder which is sold at a reasonable price contains sugar. Most of the Nespray consumers mentioned that, it is sold as a Quality product with essential nutritional content.
(24 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“I prefer the Milk Powder from New Zealand”

80 percent of Anchor consumers agree with the statement that they prefer Foreign Milk Powder. From the consumer's point of view, foreign products are more quality than domestic products. Even local products made for export are of better quality than those sold in local market. Consumers have trust on the Anchor brand. It is a promise of certain level of quality, taste. So consumers know what they are buying and they always know what to expect. While local products can certainly meet or exceed these expectations, there is always a risk of being disappointed. Due to this reason, most of the Anchor's consumers choose what they know best, and this is the most often branded product. Almost all foreign goods have a clear brand name that convinced many customers to buy them. The same is true for the Anchor milk powder.
(24 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

Moreover 20 percent of them neither agree nor disagree with the statement, they said that there is no problem whether the Milk Powder is produced locally or abroad but product must be available in the market. These types of customers place great importance on product availability. They explained that they chose Anchor milk powder because of

its availability in the Mullaitivu district's market. They also said that they ready to purchase domestic milk powders if they are available in the market at any time.

(6 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“I always prefer the Milk Powder from foreign country rather than locally”

90 percent of Anchor consumers prefer New Zealand Milk Powder. They said that, New Zealand's grass-fed cows produce some of the world's best quality milk. These cows produce milk with more balanced fatty acids. So they said that they buy milk powder made from such world class milk in the hope that it is better.

(27 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“When I think of milk powder, this product comes to mind”

80 percent of consumers who consume Anchor, exhibit the brand recall attribute. Consumers said that as far as we are concerned, Anchor is the first thing that comes to mind when we think about milk powder and it is easy to recall because it is a popular brand. People described that when they think of buying milk powder, the way Anchor is displayed in stores and the sky blue color of its packaging, its logo comes to mind and the logo is unique and highly memorable. Also, some customers mentioned that they follow Anchor through social Media and get to know about its new ingredients and additional benefits and they participated to the Anchor's contests and won prizes.

(24 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

70 percent of consumers who purchase Nespray also exhibit the brand recall attribute. Most of the Nespray consumers said that, this was their first milk powder. The people of Mullaitivu district said that Nespray's company buys milk from them and they provide training, subsidies and equipment to motivate them. Because of these reasons that the brand has become closely associated with them and that is what Nespray come to mind when they think of milk powder.

(24 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“I purchase the Milk Powder, because of its brand reputation and image”

The study shows that 85 percent of Anchor users give important to the brand image and brand reputation of the Milk Powder. Consumers mentioned that Anchor's brand sells its products not only in Sri Lanka but all over the world. And it is a globally recognized brand. So it takes great care in the quality of its products. Apart from that it is easy to get information about Anchor milk powder so they don't have to spend a lot of time for searching information to buy this milk powder.

(26 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

And 77 percent of Nespray users give importance to the brand image and brand reputation of the Milk Powder. Nespray is a brand that is loved and respected by many people in Sri Lanka. It is also one of the most widely used brands in Sri Lanka. Customers said that, this brand is releasing very high quality products in the market. Nespray shows itself as a means of strengthening the livelihood of the people of Sri Lanka.

(23 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“This is a brand I can trust”

80 percent of customers have more trust on foreign brand and 60 percent of customers have more trust in domestic brand. Consumers who consume Anchor milk powder said that they have a lot of trust in in Anchor and it has been in the global market since almost 1886 and so far people have not faced any side effects. According to customers who are using Nespray, various complaints were registered regarding the ingredient of foreign made milk powder, thus it was temporarily suspended by the Sri Lankan government. Therefore, they said that they have no faith in foreign milk powder and have more trust in the quality of the domestic milk powder and the ingredients it contains.

(24 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“Buying domestic product is important to me”

50 percent of Nespray customers mention that they give more important to patriotism behavior while purchase Milk Powder. Respondents said that, to begin with, it is irrefutable that buying local goods is advantageous for the local community and its economic development. First and foremost, purchasing local goods and services encourages small businesses and creates employment opportunity for local people. In fact, locally produced goods do not have to travel long distances to reach their end users; hence, they are beneficial for the environment as well. Also, increase in local production increases the GDP of the nation.

(15 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

“I pay much attention on whether the Milk Powder manufactured in Sri Lanka”

53 percent of Nespray consumers prefer to purchase Sri Lankan manufactured products. International Products are too expensive because of extra cost such as taxes. So, there are large numbers of Nespray consumer think that they can't purchase it and they prefer to use local items. In foreign countries, hormones drugs are injected to cows to increase milk production. Consumption of foods prepared by using that milk is believed to cause side effects in human. Meanwhile, local dairy farmers are feeding their

cows with healthy and natural foods. So consuming milk powder which made from local milk is not causing any side effects or diseases.

(16 Respondents: Personal Interview, 2022)

Comparative Analysis

Anchor and Nespray are highly competitive products in the milk powder market. Both brands apply different strategies to maintain their dominance. In that respect the following can be mentioned as their strategies. Anchor has built a reliable distribution network that can reach majority of its potential market. The company with its dedicated customer relationship management department has able to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction among present customers and good brand equity among the potential customers. Further, Anchor Resources Limited has a strong relationship with its dealers that not only provides them with supplies but also focus on promoting the company's products and training and such matters give much strength to Anchor. The strengths' of the Nespray milk powders are; Nespray's product diversification method is help to enhance the market shares. It has positive publicity and brand perception. The brand has setup milk Centre in every village in Sri Lanka and procures milk from people for its production. So this increases close connection between the brand and the people.

Anchor has failed to consistently deliver quality products. After the arrival of DCD issue in the market, customer perception was damaged towards the Anchor. DCD issue hits anchor massively. In such situation Anchor suffered with a massive decline in the sales. There are gaps in the product range sold by the company. This lack of choice can give a new competitor a foothold in the market. Low marketing and advertising activities are the biggest drawback for Nespray. Due to this, they are not able to inform people about the new changes in their products. Lack of availability in all areas of Sri Lanka is one of the weaknesses of Nespray milk powder.

Even if Anchor is a popular brand, there are some opportunities for it to develop itself further. New technology provides an opportunity to practices differentiated pricing strategy in the new market. Further new trends in the consumer behaviors can open up new market for Anchor. For Nespray, there are some opportunities to increase the market share. After the DCD issue, consumer's positive perception of domestic milk powder is starting to increase. So Nespray can use this situation to its advantages. Nespray must make sure that their milk powders are available in sufficient quantities everywhere. Nestle has a remarkable opportunity to boost its e-commerce sites and online shopping platforms. Nestle has its online stores in a few countries, expanding its online services to more areas including Sri Lanka will prove a rewarding decision for the company. Through this, it can increase the sales of Nespray milk powder.

New trends in the consumer behavior can open up new market for the Anchor. When it comes to competition, there are many threats. Changing consumer buying behavior is one of the biggest threats for Anchor. Rising raw material can pose a threat

to the Anchor's profitability. New technologies developed by the competitor or market distributor could be serious threat to the industry in medium to long term future. After the DCD issue, consumers have negative perception towards Anchor. This situation creates huge boost for local brands. Being a domestic product, Nespray also faces many threats. Many milk powders companies like Fonterra, Maliban and Milco offer milk powders to Sri Lankan market. It is hard for Nespray to compete in such a situation where the substitute products are easily accessible. The economic problems in Sri Lanka are affecting it as well. As it is manufactured by using domestic raw materials and labor, it has been affected due to rising prices of raw materials and rising wages.

Findings of the Study

Under the research findings, researchers tend to explain the outcome of the data analyzed. In this part, the researchers explain the findings in terms of the impact of the identified dimensions of Consumer Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk Powder. Consumers who give importance to nutritional information displayed in the Milk Powder are mostly purchase Anchor. Many consumers compare the nutritional information of other milk powders in the market while buying milk powder. Anchor is the primary choice of consumers who do so. Consumers of Anchor have shown more preference to the foreign made Milk Powder with the percentage of 80. Another 20% of them neither agree nor disagree with the statement. None of the Anchor consumers prefer local Milk Powder. 90 percent of Anchor consumers prefer to consume New Zealand Milk Powder. Consumers of Anchor have shown 10 percent higher the brand recall attribute than Nespray consumers. 85 percent of Anchor consumers and 77 percent of Nespray consumers purchase the Milk Powder because of their brand reputation and image. Consumers of foreign brand have more trust on their Milk Powder than the consumers of domestic brand by the percentage of 20. 50 percent of Nespray consumers have given more importance to purchasing domestic made product. 53% of Nespray consumers pay more attention to the fact that the Milk Powder they consume should have been manufactured in Sri Lanka. Researchers further found that the current research findings are consistent with the previous research findings (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019 & Purwanto, 2014 for country of origin on CE. Amri & Prihandono, 2019 & Sharma et al., 1994 regarding quality on CE and for brand trust on CE, Watson & Wright, 2000 and Bettman & Suajan, 1987).

Conclusion and policy Implications

The main objective of conducting this research was evaluating how far the consumers embrace Ethnocentrism towards the consumption of Milk Powder in Mullaitivu District. This research helps to examine how the CE dimensions impact on consumption of Milk Powder. The result of the analysis specified that CE depends upon

certain dimensions. Three variables; Country of Origin, Quality, Brand have a positive impact on the purchase of Milk Powder for their consumption.

Researchers have found out in which way these dimensions cause consumption behaviors, especially in products like Anchor and Nespray Milk Powders take more and more attention from the consumers during the consumption. According to the result obtained in this study, it can be concluded that the quality, country of origin and brand of the Milk Powder heavily affect the consumption of Mullaitivu district people. Most of the people consume Anchor because of the nutritional fact contained in the Milk Powder, food safety and their sensory attributes such as taste, color, texture and aroma. People of Mullaitivu District have a positive attitude towards foreign made products and the attraction towards these products is high. Compared to Nespray consumers, consumers of Anchor have exposed constructive attitude towards the Anchor's brand perception, reliability and brand recognition and brand image.

Along with the above factors, patriotism, country affinity and country of manufacture influence on consumer's decision to purchasing Nespray Milk Powder. Moreover, even if these three factors are influential, their impact is low which means only about half of the Nespray consumers express the Consumer Ethnocentric behavior in Mullaitivu. Nespray consumers also pay much attention to the quality and brand. These consumers may change their choice, if there is any negative change in the quality of the Nespray. Analyzed the above findings, it can be seen that there is less CE towards the consumption of Milk Powder in Mullaitivu District.

Based on these research findings and conclusions drawn, the researchers recommend the following.

In the Sri Lankan context, there is a huge research gap on this kind of studies. Therefore, this study's findings and conclusions would be help marketers to know the importance of Consumer Ethnocentrism. Consumer ethnocentrism is an important attribute of consumers. Therefore, Consumer Ethnocentrism has a direct impact on customer's consumption decision. The Quality, brand and country of origin dimensions help marketers to get consumer's attention. Therefore that dimensions can be used by marketers for specially get more market share in the international markets. Nespray Milk Powder has to keep a close eye on its competitors and create many strategies to overcome the competition. Nespray Milk Powder should contain more nutritional information. It should increase their promotional strategies in such a way that can easily reach the customers. Adequate campaign should be carried out on social Media. Advertisements are the ways to easily remain in the hearts and minds of people for a long time. So that brand or the particular item will memorable for them. The availability of Nespray Milk Powder should be increased in the market. A brand can gets success in the market if it is known how far consumers embrace Ethnocentrism and take marketing activities accordingly.

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