

VALUES VERSUS ETHNOCENTRIC ATTITUDES OF CONSUMERS ON THE FOOD MARKET

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Abstract. The purpose of the research, the results of which are presented in this paper, was to show the significance, systems and hierarchy of values, as well as the relation of values with the ethnocentric attitudes of consumers. Among the most important values for consumers are: family, health and physical fitness. The ethnocentric attitudes of the surveyed consumers were correlated with the values they believe in. Original materials from a questionnaire survey made by direct personal interviewing are used in this paper. The respondents were chosen by non-random quota sampling. The respondent group was made up of individuals responsible for household food provisions. The cultural and symbolic values occurred with similar frequency and significance among the consumer groups formed by the criterion of ethnocentrism intensity. The approach to ethnocentrism was differentiated by traditional, national and custom values. The consumers with a higher ethnocentrism level declared a relatively higher significance and attachment to Catholicism, traditionalism and patriotism.

Key words: consumer ethnocentrism, attitudes, values, food market

INTRODUCTION

Ethnocentrism is currently becoming one of the more apparent trends in economic and sociocultural areas of countries. Ethnocentrism may also have a variety of forms, intensity levels and scale of occurrence. In the area of consumer behaviour, ethnocentrism is construed as a belief that purchasing of imported goods is bad, since it is an unpatriotic attitude which harms the domestic economy and labour market. Consumer ethnocentrism is often equated with the tendency to purchase domestic products and passing over foreign goods due to a conviction that such attitude is more correct and moral [Falkowski and Różnowski 1996, p. 2].

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The foundations of ethnocentrism are first and foremost ethnicity, patriotism, a strong sense of national identity, as well as traditionalism and xenophobia, i.e. a conviction of superiority of one's group or nation. Considering the preferred values and the attitude to domestic and foreign products, three basic consumer types can be identified: (i) ethnocentric consumers, who prefer domestic products, (ii) internationalist consumers, who intentionally prefer foreign products, and (iii) cosmopolitan consumers, who prefer the characteristics of product they purchase to the country of origin [Karcz and Kędzior 1999, p. 26].

The attitudes are very complex structures which include, among others, cognitive and behavioural elements, as well as convictions concerning values. Hence in terms of ethnocentrism, three basic members can be identified: (i) the awareness of product characteristics guaranteed by the country of origin, (ii) emotional attitude to the country of origin, and (iii) the tendency to display behaviour towards products of different origin [Sajdakowska and Gutkowska 2000, p. 432].

Ethnocentric attitudes are conditioned by numerous factors, among which those of special importance are the socio-psychological ones, e.g. openness to foreign cultures, patriotism, conservatism, collectivism and individualism. More than once these factors can be highly correlated with demographic factors, e.g. age, sex, education, or material status.

The purpose of the research, the results of which are presented in this paper, was to present the significance, systems and hierarchy of values as well as the relation of values with the ethnocentric attitudes of consumers.

INPUTS AND METHODOLOGY

To illustrate the theoretical deliberations over the values accepted by consumers and their impact on the assumption of ethnocentric attitudes, selected results are presented from the survey campaigns carried out in 2013 among the citizens of the Wielkopolskie Province, Poland, and focused on surveying consumer ethnocentrism on the food market. Original materials from a questionnaire survey made by direct personal interviewing are used in this paper. The respondents were chosen by non-random quota sampling. The respondent age structure reflected the general population age structure. A total of 350 interviews were qualified for analysis. The respondent group was made up of individuals responsible for household food provisions. The interviews were carried out in selected cities of North-Western Poland.

One of the research objectives was to establish the importance of values accepted by the respondents. Several value groups were specifically referred to, i.e. (i) traditional national values: family, statehood, patriotism and Catholicism, (ii) custom values: spontaneity and openness to other cultures, (iii) national character values: traditionalism (tradition), emotionalism and optimism, (iv) US based popular culture: achievement and success (sense of fulfilment), material comfort, health, and fitness and (v) symbolic values which excess consumer desires: freedom, self-fulfilment, and friendship.

The hierarchy of values was determined by handing out a set of 15 cards to each respondent. Each card represented one value. Each respondent was asked to choose six cards with the values most important to them and rank the cards from the most significant to the least significant.

VALUES VERSUS ETHNOCENTRIC ATTITUDES: THE SURVEY RESULTS

The research results seem to demonstrate that the respondents value their families most (among all values to be identified). Note that this value is related to specific family-wise goals, which include the direct family, friends, helpfulness or acting for the good of others. The next most important values held in high esteem by the responded included health and fitness; one out of three of the interviewed listed ranked them on the first place in their hierarchy of values. The next rank in the hierarchy of values was assigned to happiness; however, the differences between the percentages of the respondents who ranked the values on the 3rd place were worth 22 percentage points. Over 60% of the respondents deemed that friendship was important and ranked on the 4th place in the hierarchy. Only 16% of the respondents gave the top rank to material comfort. The values of emotionalism, freedom and optimisms were identified as “important” by nearly 40% of the respondents. Nearly one out of five respondents identified achievement, success and tolerance as “important” values. The least “important” values were Catholicism, openness to other cultures, traditionalism, statehood, patriotism and spontaneity (Fig. 1).

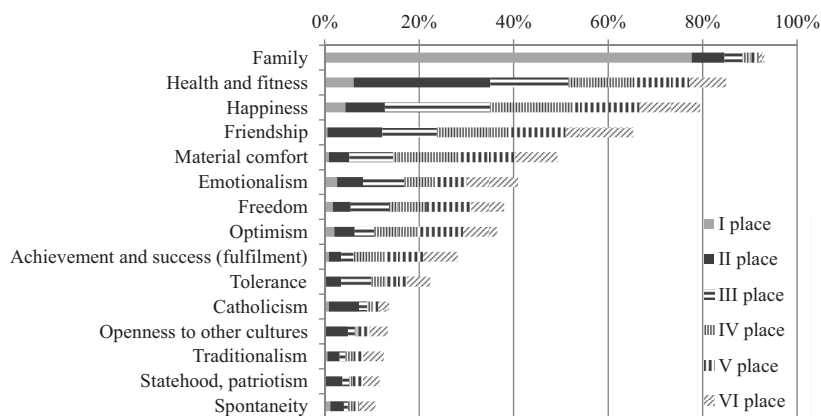


Fig. 1. Hierarchy of respondents' values
Source: Proprietary survey.

In order to investigate the relationship between the ethnocentric attitude intensity and the hierarchy of values, the average ranking of each value shown to the respondents was determined in three groups of the respondents set up by the ethnocentrism index on the CET scale¹.

The results of the consumer grouping by the ethnocentric attitude intensity demonstrate that the largest group declared a low ethnocentric level (47.7%), whereas the least populated group declared the highest ethnocentric level (16%). Nearly every third respondent represents a moderate ethnocentric attitude.

¹The CET scale is based on the Likert scale and has 17 statements scored from 1 to 7. This tool defines the tendency to prefer domestic products by reference to four groups of psycho-social factors: openness to foreign cultures, patriotism, conservatism and collectivism.

Each of the values under analysis had a null hypothesis (H_0) put forward, which assumed statistical insignificance of the differences in the average hierarchy of values rank in the three respondent groups identified by ethnocentrism index (i.e. low, moderate and high ethnocentrism). The hypothesis test results are shown in Table 1. Figure 2 presents a comparison of the value significance (the share of respondents to choose the value) for which statistical testing revealed significance in differences.

Table 1. Hypothesis test results (grey cells denote a statistically significant difference between the surveyed groups)

Specification	Low ethnocentrism	Moderate ethnocentrism	Low ethnocentrism
	vs. moderate ethnocentrism	vs. high ethnocentrism	vs. high ethnocentrism
Critical value (paired t test)	1.97	1.97	1.97
	Absolute value of t Stat		
Family	1.14	0.63	0.20
Health and fitness	0.68	1.54	2.27
Happiness	0.12	1.58	1.78
Friendship	0.17	2.27	2.45
Material comfort	1.58	0.68	1.89
Emotionalism	0.16	0.10	0.02
Freedom	1.54	0.39	1.70
Optimism	0.56	1.03	1.52
Achievement and success (fulfilment)	0.41	0.77	0.60
Tolerance	0.41	0.11	0.20
Catholicism	0.53	2.51	3.12
Openness to other cultures	1.44	0.09	0.97
Traditionalism	2.39	0.46	2.59
Statehood, patriotism	0.62	4.55	4.18
Spontaneity	1.22	0.17	0.79

If the absolute t statistic value is higher than the critical value (in the paired t test), the null hypothesis can be rejected; hence the differences between the investigated variables are statistically significant.

Source: Proprietary survey.

The family values had the highest rank in all types of attitude. Family and its happiness, health, and safety were the values most dear to all of the respondents.

Differentiated occurrence frequency can also be identified for certain values. While e.g. cultural or symbolic values of those investigated occur at a similar frequency and with a similar significance among all three consumer groups, certain traditional national values or custom values differentiate the ethnocentrism intensity. Consumers with a higher ethnocentrism level declared a relatively higher significance and attachment to Catholicism, traditionalism and patriotism. The values of health and fitness or friendship had a slightly lower significance to the high ethnocentrism group.

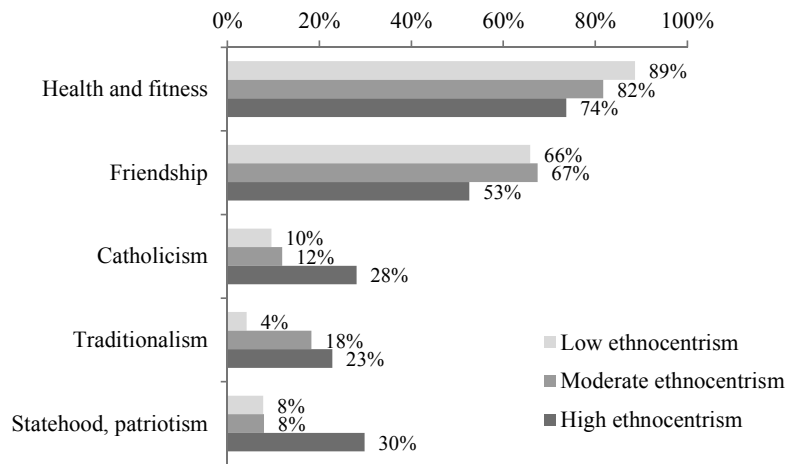


Fig. 2. Significance comparison of selected values by the varying ethnocentrism level groups
Source: Proprietary survey.

VALUES AS A LODESTAR IN HUMAN LIFE

When attempting to define values as such no single universal approach can be elected. These issues are the subject of philosophy of values and axiology, where the latter defines the values as “everything that passes as important and dear to individuals and societies, desirable, related to positive experiences, and simultaneously an objective of human aspirations” [Łobocki 1993, p. 125]. Aside from the multi-faceted and interdisciplinary perspective of values, they have been customarily defined as the “things” valuable to man and of positive significance. Values can be defined for objects, but more often they relate to characteristics defined by people. Values may concern things, e.g. the taste of a meal; they may concern humans, as altruism does; they may also concern acts, such as patriotism or states, e.g. happiness. A value can usually be positive or negative or be a negation, i.e. the lack of values, the contradiction of value or an anti-value.

The values play a major role in the life of each human; they are the objectives humans strive to achieve; they are objects of desire, choice, a kind of aspiration, and give a feeling of meaning to life. The values assume functions which regulate various dimensions of human life: physical, social, cultural, mental or spiritual. A world devoid of values – both moral and extra moral – would be chaotic, dangerous, lawless and risky.

The definition and scope of a value is very often depreciated by connotation with moral standards and indicators. Values can also be health, happiness, education, beauty, activity or emotionalism. The values a man recognises are tell-tale of his personality, characterise his behaviour, decision-making, attitudes, interests, aspirations and drive towards objectives. Koźmińska and Olszewska [2007, p. 41] highlight that values are: “things and affairs which are important, precious and desired; they stand as life’s lodestars, road maps or compasses; they are the standards of our thinking, attitudes, behaviours, and form the criteria for our assessments, decisions and choices”.

CLASSIFICATION AND SYSTEMS OF VALUES

Numerous classification types exist for values. One of the first ones was proposed by E. Spranger [Lesicki 2013], who grouped values into six basic categories: theoretical, economic, social, aesthetic, political and religious. An interesting classification of values was offered by J. Puzynina, who discriminated between absolute values, essential values and instrumental values, where the latter category is applied to reach the first two [Kurzab 2012]. According to another typology of the same author, values can be divided into declared values, experienced values, acknowledged values and executed values.

Apart from the classification of values, reference literature describes the concept of the system of values. It is equal to the concepts of the hierarchy of values or the scale of values. Each human being makes judgement on various planes of their development and activity. This occurs first and foremost in the biological, emotional and socio-cultural domains. The process of judgement is based on processing of information, organisation of values, orientation of choice, and self-control of behaviour. A known approach to the system of values is presented by Bielicki, who defines it as: “a state of affairs which results from organisation of individual experience in the process of evaluating the reality, i.e. defining what is good or evil, and thus the process attributes values and price to objects, and becomes one of the essential premises for regulation of behaviour of subjects” [Bielicki 2013].

The approach proposed by Milton Rokeach [2013] is of special importance when considering the system of values. That author established a model of values which has been frequently used as a basis for consumer segmentation. According to Rokeach, values form the so-called RVS, or Rokeach Value Survey / System. Rokeach defined two groups of values: terminal values, which are the objectives of humans and being values themselves, such as happiness, and instrumental values, which are certain convictions related to desirable behaviours that aim at securing the terminal values and include honesty, among others. The Rokeach values can be classified in seven topically different areas, which are: pleasure, safety, achievement, independence, maturity, conformism and social values.

Another known system of consumer grouping by accepted values is the List of values – LOV, created by L.R. Kahle and G.F. Timmer. The LOV was designed with A. Maslov’s theory or hierarchy of needs and includes nine value types: pleasure, excitement, security, accomplishment, respect, self-respect, self-fulfilment, sense of belonging, and warm relationship with others [Kahle and Timmer 1938, pp. 48–49].

The SVS (Schwarz Value Survey) has a great importance in modern investigations into the value systems of consumers. Created by S.H. Schwarz, the SVS features nine groups of values which relate to three areas: the nature of relationship between an individual and their group, the national security and the relationship of man with the natural environment [Bartosik-Purgat 2011, p. 131].

A very interesting approach to values exists in Polish reference literature as defined by A. Kusińska who differentiates between global values, specific domain values, and values on the level of product characteristics evaluation [Kusińska 2005, p. 27]. The global values are convictions concerning e.g. desired behaviours or states, as well as national or social values, such as freedom, honesty or security. The specific domain values concern the behaviours desired in various domains, e.g. economic, social or cultural. Kusińska’s third type of values relates to the expected benefits from owning and using specific goods,

and includes e.g. brand loyalty. Kusińska also offers an analytical approach to the factors which condition consumer behaviour and terms it “the consumer system of values”. The consumer system of values assumes that every consumer has “thousands of values on the level of product characteristics assessments, hundreds of values related to specific domains, and only dozens of global values” [Kusińska 2005, p. 28]. The author argues that all those values form a hierarchy in various areas while being highly affected by e.g. culture, social or economic factors.

VALUES ACCEPTED BY POLES

The research by A. Jachnis and J. Terlak features an analysis of values of the Polish society in the face of the social and economic transformation at the turn of the 1980s and the 1990s. The authors identified three significant sources of values of the Poles which shaped the Polish systems of value at the end of the 20th century: traditional national values, e.g. family, the state, Catholicism, readiness for sacrifice, openness to other cultures, tolerance; values of the Communist ideology, e.g. egalitarianism, equality, work for all, collectivism; and the values of the popular culture mimicked from the US one, e.g. consumerism, success, activity, progress, individualism, and material comfort [Jachnis and Terelak 1998, p. 344]. The modern statistical Pole in their middle age represents a system of values which derives from the mixture of the aforelisted cultures with a shift in the gravity centre towards the elements of popular or mass culture values. The values recognised by the younger Polish generation are different; that generation was brought up in the free market economy, when a new and different schema of valuation was developed. The research of Kusińska indicate that the young people, who start their families, have their hierarchy of values dominated by good health, love, family happiness, independence, self-reliance, living in a free country, high income, and living in line with ones convictions and beliefs. Hence the family values have a high priority, followed in descending order of significance by ideal values, material values, and finally, the values related to self-fulfilment and aspirations [Kusińska 2005, p. 29].

The directions of changes in the values of Poles were also illustrated by an interesting research completed under the EVS (European Values System) in the years 1990, 1999 and 2008. The basis of values system differentiation between the EU countries identifies four sources: the processes of globalisation, the historical and cultural processes, the political transformations and the EU integration processes. As much as the Poles in the beginning of the 1990s differed from other European nations by a much stronger attachment to family values, work, and religion at the expense of free time value, politics or friendship, the trend was completely reversed by the end of the 2000s. Currently the Polish consumers seem to be more traditional and attached to material values while preferring survival to self-fulfilment than other Europeans. Despite this the changes in progress are indicative of an increase in the significance of post-materialistic values, e.g. freedom of speech or political liberty. Note that the current trends in accepted values are correlated with the increase in economic development and differentiation between socio-demographic and economic groups of consumers. As the EVS program has proven, the traditional and materialistic values are chosen by Poles in elderly years, of lower education, lower income and lower social standing [Jasińska-Kania 2012, p. 337].

VALUES VERSUS ETHNOCENTRIC ATTITUDES OF CONSUMERS

The values of man strongly affect his attitude to various things, states, phenomena, persons or concepts. The attitudes usually define a certain type of individual predisposition for positive or negative valuation of specific objects. It has been widely agreed that attitudes are closely related to such categories as values or emotions. Assumption of a specific attitude, especially a positive one to an object, and making a purchase as a consequence, may be related to fulfilment of values, e.g. preference for healthy products, which a consumer purchases to fulfil their care for health.

The objective and area of investigation shown in this paper was to focus on ethnocentric attitudes and demonstrate the relationships of those attitudes to values recognised or accepted by consumers. The reference sources state that the types and occurrence range of ethnocentric attitudes depends on many significant factors, e.g. patriotism, sense of threat, psycho-social and demographic factors, openness to cultures, the ratio of individual values to collective values etc. [Witek 2010]. Glińska with associates expand those socio-psychological determinants with nationalism, conservatism and lifestyle [Glińska et al. 2008, p. 124]. Many researches in the field of ethnocentrism point out that under certain circumstances those variables provide a better and more precise explanation of ethnocentrism than demographic factors. Based on a review of results of empirical studies several major relationships can be demonstrated between ethnocentric attitudes and certain values. A decisive preference for procurement of domestic products is often related to the values of work and economic security, as demonstrated by a research among French consumers [Grzesiuk 2002, p. 14]. Such attitudes are also favoured by values related to conservatism, traditionalism, patriotism or a strong sense of nationality. They are usually characteristic of elderly persons.

A relatively significant relationship in the opposite direction of effect is the ethnocentric level vs. the openness to other cultures. The higher the openness, the higher the ethnocentrism is, and thus the stronger is the attitude. This pattern is definitely favoured by travels by consumers and their experiences with foreign cultures and other systems of value [Figiel 2004, p. 15].

Ethnocentric attitudes are more frequently represented by citizens of those countries which have strong national traditions, are highly developed and boast a deeply entrenched sense of national identity. The examples here include the Germans or the British [Mazurek-Łopacińska 2000, p. 4].

Each nation is characterised by a different hierarchy of values, i.e. with the priority or essential values with the highest ranks, down to the values of secondary importance. There has been a very strong impact of cultural values observed in the Polish society which have been becoming the guidelines for behaviour. A part of Poles usually negates the cultures which give priority to material values instead of the more prized values that are objectives of effort, e.g. family, honesty, honour, or lawfulness [Witek 2010].

Some research which is currently being done among Polish consumers and concerning the importance of the country of origin to the choices made in food indicate that over 80% of Poles definitely prefer domestic articles. The attachment to the Polish bidders on

insurance or banking markets is slightly weaker². Other investigations also provide an equally high importance of the country of origin among the factors which determine the purchase choices, with over 85% of Polish consumers minding what the country of origin when buying food is³.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to present the significance, systems and hierarchy of values as well as the relation of values with the ethnocentric attitudes of consumers. The basic input for this discussion was reference research and, last, but not least, the results of direct personal interviews with citizens of the Wielkopolskie Province in 2013. The investigation area focused on consumer ethnocentrism on the food market.

The results of the research into the values accepted by the consumers prove that the respondents' highest value is family, which is linked to specific family-related objectives. Another value of very high importance is health and fitness, according to the respondents.

The investigation also demonstrated certain differences in the hierarchy of values between the respondents on various (low, moderate and high) ethnocentrism levels.

The cultural and symbolic values were presented with similar frequency and significance in all three consumer groups identified by ethnocentrism intensity, whereas certain traditional values, national values and custom values differentiated the approach to ethnocentrism. The consumers with a higher ethnocentrism level declared a relatively higher significance and attachment to Catholicism, traditionalism and patriotism.

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²<http://www.networkmagazyn.pl/polacywolapolskieprodukty> (23/11/2013).

³Polscy zachwalali, wielu przekonali. TNS OBOP, http://www.google.pl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Foboparch.tnsglobal.pl%2Fuploads%2F714%2FTNSOBOP_efekt_kampanii_KupujPolskie.doc&ei=ThpqU8mhHanR7A-aA2YGQBQ&usg=AFQjCNGW5o2lo9tzDBDFAXfG1IUU_t8bXw&bvm=bv.66111022,d.ZWU (22.11.2013).

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WARTOŚCI A POSTAWY ETNOCENTRYCZNE KONSUMENTÓW NA RYNKU ŻYWNOŚCIOWYM

Streszczenie. Celem badań, których wyniki zawarto w artykule, było przedstawienie istoty i znaczenia wartości, ich systemów i hierarchii, a także ich powiązania z postawami etnocentrycznymi konsumentów. Wśród najważniejszych wartości dla konsumentów należy wymienić rodzinę, zdrowie i kondycję fizyczną. Postawy etnocentryczne badanych konsu-

mentów były powiązane z wyznawanymi przez nich wartościami. W artykule wykorzystano materiały pierwotne z badania ankietowego wykonanego techniką bezpośrednich wywiadów osobistych. Ankietowani zostali dobrani w sposób nielosowy, z wykorzystaniem metody doboru kwotowego. Respondentami były osoby odpowiedzialne za zaopatrzenie gospodarstwa domowego w produkty żywnościowe. Wartości kulturowe i symboliczne występowały z podobną częstotliwością i znaczeniem wśród grup konsumentów utworzonych na podstawie natężenia etnocentryzmu. Wartości tradycyjne, wartości narodowe i obyczajowe różnicowały stosunek do etnocentryzmu. Relatywnie większe znaczenie i przywiązanie do takich wartości, jak katolicyzm, tradycjonalizm, patriotyzm deklarowali konsumenci o wysokim wskaźniku etnocentryzmu.

Słowa kluczowe: etnocentryzm konsumentki, postawy, wartości, rynek żywnościowy

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