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Consumer ethnocentrism in the German market

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Abstract

Purpose – International marketing researchers have long been concerned with determining whether consumers are predisposed towards a preference for domestic products, as opposed to foreign products. The purpose of this paper is to assess such a domestic-country bias (DCB) in the German market.

Design/methodology/approach – This study empirically investigates DCB across six countries and 14 product categories in the Germany market. By so doing, it replicates an earlier study conducted in the UK. Ordered logit analysis was employed as well as multidimensional unfolding to present results.

Findings – As in the study conducted in the UK, there is in general a strong DCB in the German market. However, it differs largely across the 14 product categories. Results indicate that consumer preference rankings can best be explained by a combination of demographic variables and country-of-origin effects.

Practical implications – Results indicate that domestic firms in Germany can well rely on a safeguarding effect when marketing their products. At the same time, managers from foreign countries cannot rely on consumer ethnocentrism as a reliable indicator of the inclination of consumers to downgrade their products.

Originality/value – This study confirms some findings from the UK. However, results from Germany indicate that at least economic competitiveness of the country-of-origin plays a role in determining respondents' judgments. This study underlines the value of replication studies in cross-cultural settings in particular.

Keywords Germany, Ethnocentrism, Country of origin, Consumer behaviour

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

International marketing researchers have long been concerned with determining whether consumers are predisposed towards a preference for domestic products, as opposed to foreign products. Empirical studies have consistently confirmed the existence of such as "domestic-country bias" (DCB), which is manifested in stronger product preferences and buying intentions for home-made products (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). DCB has typically been explained by an individually varying,

traitlike property labeled as "consumer ethnocentrism" (CE; Shimp and Sharma, 1987). In brief, the more ethnocentric consumers are, the stronger the DCB, and, consequently, their predisposition to prefer domestic over foreign products.

In a recent study, Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) identify a number of weaknesses of prior research linking CE to DCB. First, earlier research had typically been restricted to one product category, thereby not allowing researchers to investigate potential variation of DCB across product categories. Second, previous studies had focused on a very limited number of countries of origin (COO) of the researched product categories, which in turn prevented findings regarding varying degrees of DCB for different COOs included in the study. Because there are some indications that the effect of CE on DCB depends on the specific configuration of COO and product category, it is important to consider both aspects jointly. In sum, there are reasons to believe that the effect of CE on domestic country bias is likely to differ both across countries and across product categories, but prior research has not been designed to test this assumption.

Based on those weaknesses, Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) investigated the effect of CE on DCB for one domestic (Britain) and five foreign countries in eight product categories, and find initial support for the assumption that this effect varies across product categories and COOs. The present study attempts to extend the work by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) in a culturally different context (i.e. Germany), as the original study showed only weak explanatory power of CE. Therefore, we examine its impact in a second economically developed country whose products also tend to dominate world markets. The results of both studies can be compared easily because Germany and the UK differ little in cultural, institutional, and socio-economical characteristics. Hence, the cultural distance (CI) index, using the formula proposed by Kogut and Singh (1988) which converts Hofstede's four cultural dimensions into a distance value for each country, indicates that the UK's distance to Germany can be considered medium, with a value of 0.58 (within a range of 0.21-1.32 for the other four countries under investigation). Germany is also similarly economically developed with a GDP 28,303US$ compared to 30,821US$ for the UK. Even the United Nations' human development index, which measures health and length of life, levels of knowledge, and standards of living (HDI UK = 0.940; HDI Germany = 0.932), indicates little difference between the two countries. Institutionally, both countries are well developed, and have liberalized markets. Therefore, for both countries global imports are an important part of the national economy. In sum, the psychic distance between both countries is rather small.

Although there is general agreement that study replications are important for generalizations in marketing (Leone and Schultz, 1980), a number of authors acknowledge that there is still far too little replication work performed (Campbell and Stanley, 1963; Easley et al., 2000; Evanschitzky et al., 2007), in part due to a bias of editors and reviewers against accepting replication studies (Armstrong, 2003; Easley et al., 2000). In part, as a response to these calls for more replication work, the present paper contributes to the literature by:

· conducting a replication study of the paper by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004), using a large sample of German consumers; and

- extending the original research by investigating a total number of 14 product categories (including the eight categories originally investigated by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos).

Therefore, this paper empirically tests in Germany the hypotheses proposed by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) that were based on the UK market and by so doing offers a more reliable support for the general assumption that CE relates to DCB. It is shown that the impact of CE on DCB depends on the particular COO and the product category. From a managerial perspective, such research helps domestic managers understand the potential advantage they may have in marketing their products. On the other hand, companies planning to enter a particular market gain an understanding of the barriers their products are likely to face in foreign markets.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

The term "CE" originates from the general concept of ethnocentrism, which was introduced by Sumner (1906). In general, ethnocentrism represents the universal proclivity of 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 dissimilar while blindly accepting those who are culturally like themselves (Booth, 1979). CE, however, is an application of the more general concept of ethnocentrism to the economic context. From this broader concept, CE has inherited the main premises and properties (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2004). In order to measure CE related to foreign- vs non-foreign-made products, Shimp and Sharma (1987) introduced a 17-item measurement instrument, the consumer ethnocentrism scale (CETSCALE) which we use here in the shortened ten-item version. The scale has been proven valid in numerous studies (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). In Table I, previous research on the influence of CE on preference for domestic (foreign) products deploying the CETSCALE is listed.

In the following, we detail which was conducted in close accordance with Balabanis and Diamantopoulos' (2004) work. CE represents the belief held by consumers about the appropriateness, in fact the morality, of purchasing foreign-made products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). In the minds of ethnocentric consumers, the purchase of foreign-made products is wrong because it hurts the domestic economy, causes loss of jobs, and is unpatriotic. Therefore, it is anticipated that ethnocentric consumers tend to be biased towards domestic products. In line with that reasoning, Herche (1992) shows that CE can predict consumer preferences to buy domestic as opposed to foreign products. Thus, if all other characteristics of the product are perceived equal, consumers tend to prefer domestic products. Following Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) we hypothesize the following:

H1a. CE will be positively related to consumer preferences for domestic products.

H1b. CE will be negatively related to consumer preferences for foreign products.

Furthermore, as Herche (1992) and Sharma *et al.* (1995) show, consumers with similar levels of CE tend to discriminate across products coming from the same country. Thus, the influence of CE on customers' buying behavior seems to differ across product categories. Replicating Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004), the following hypotheses are stated:

Author, year of publication	Sample size, location of survey	Subject under investigation	Method	Results
Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004)	465 consumers, UK	Preference patterns of UK consumers for domestic and foreign products (eight categories)	Self-completion questionnaire	Variability in preferences is linked to CE. Effect varies depending on product category and country of origin
Herche (1992)	200 computer owners and 320 automobile owners, USA	Predictive validity of the CETSCALE on import buying behavior (two product categories)	Mail survey	CETSCALE is a stronger predictor of import buying behavior than are demographic variables. Effect varies depending on product category
Lantz and Loeb (1996)	188 students, Canada and USA	Determination of the influence of CE on the utility of domestic and foreign products	Self-completion questionnaire and conjoint experiment	People with greater CE are willing to pay a price premium for domestic mundane, low-involvement products
Netemeyer et al. (1991)	290 students in four countries	Cross-national assessment of the CETSCALE, preference patterns for domestic and foreign products (general, two product categories)	Self-completion questionnaire	Importance of buying domestic products is linked to CE. Influence of CE on preference varies across countries and depending on product category
Nielsen and Spence (1997)	426 consumers, USA	Moderating effect of patriotic events on CETSCALE, influence of ethnocentrism on domestic car ownership	Telephone interview	No significant main effect of patriotic events on CETSCALE-score. Ownership of domestic cars is linked positively to CE
Sharma et al. (1995)	125 consumers and 542 students, Korea	Antecedents of consumer ethnocentricity and the effect of CE on foreign product evaluations (ten product categories)	Mail survey (consumers) and self-completion questionnaire (students)	CE is increasingly influential, when products are perceived as relatively unnecessary and when consumers perceive themselves and/or the domestic economy to be threatened by the import of the product
Watson and Wright (2000)	421 consumers, New Zealand	Relationship between CE and consumer attitudes toward foreign manufactured products if a domestic alternative is (not) available (three product categories)	Mail survey	Cultural similarity is an important consideration for highly ethnocentric consumers in the evaluation of foreign products. If a domestic alternative is available, they exhibit an even greater preference for domestic products
Witkowski (1998)	400 consumers, Hungary and Mexico	Determinants and predictive validity of CE in emerging markets (nine product categories)	Self-completion questionnaire	Predictive validity of the CETSCALE is product and country specific

Table I.
Survey of selected previous research on the influence of CE on preference for domestic/foreign products deploying the CETSCALE

H2a. The magnitude of the (positive) link between CE and preferences for domestic products will vary depending on the specific product category involved.

H2b. The magnitude of the (negative) link between CE and preferences for foreign products will vary depending on the specific product category involved.

Lantz and Loeb (1996) show that ethnocentric Canadian consumers differed in their evaluation of a set of equal products coming from two countries of different competitiveness. Therefore, it seems important to examine the effect of a product's COO on the strength of the link between CE and preference for foreign products. Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) identified two country-specific characteristics that may affect CE's ability to explain preferences for foreign products from a given country: economic competitiveness and cultural similarity. Competitiveness encapsulates a country's ability to produce globally competitive products. It is an information cue that affects a consumer's perception and mental representation of a COO (Lin and Sternquist, 1994). Therefore, the following hypothesis seems plausible:

H3. The higher the level of a country's economic competitiveness, the weaker the negative link between CE and consumer preferences for that country's products.

Watson and Wright (2000) show in their recent study in New Zealand that ethnocentric consumers are more likely to buy products from culturally similar countries. These similar countries are their first choice when a domestic alternative is not available. Cultural similarity is measured by using the composite CD index introduced by Kogut and Singh (1988). To analyze the influence of cultural similarity on CE's ability to explain buying preferences, we will test the following hypothesis:

H4. The higher the level of a country's cultural similarity to the home country, the weaker the negative link between CE and consumer preferences for that country's products.

3. Method
3.1 Study design and data collection
The study was designed as a replication and extension of Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004). Therefore, we used the same six countries as they did: USA, France, Great Britain, Japan, Italy, and Germany. While Germany was a stimulus country in the original study, it is the domestic country for the respondents in our study. For the first time, German consumers rank products from their country and other countries. Eight of the product categories we used are the same as in the original study: cars, food products, TV sets, toiletries, fashion wear, toys, do-it-yourself equipment, and furniture. We included additional product categories to derive further insights: pharmaceutical products, shoes and leather goods, textiles, electronic products, packaged food, and fresh food (creating a total of 14 product categories). These products were included, following the argumentation of the original study, because:

- Germany imports a large percentage of these products;
- the consumers spend a large proportion of their budgets for these products; and
- even domestic firms offer these products.

These products represent categories summarizing 86.77 percent of consumption expenses of German private households. Therefore, the dependence of CE on product category could be investigated in more detail.

Respondents were asked to rank the six different countries under the assumption that products originating from them had similar attributes and price (1 = the most preferred country of origin, 6 = the least preferred country of origin). This was done for all product categories. Then, they were asked to respond to the ten-item version of CETSCALE (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). The second part of the questionnaire relates to the socio-demographics of participants.

Data were collected by means of the self-completion questionnaire, using the "drop off and collect" method (Brown, 1987). Questionnaires were distributed by three trained interviewers in a metropolitan area of Northern Germany. They were instructed to fulfill a quota concerning age and gender that represented the structure of the German population. Around 60 percent of the people intercepted agreed to participate in the study. By so doing, 674 questionnaires were collected. Comparing the sample with that of the German population composition, male and female respondents balanced at roughly half each, and with a slight overrepresentation of respondents younger than 45. The educational level displayed a higher proportion of respondents with a university degree (32.9 percent) compared to Germany as a whole. A test of interviewer bias showed that there were no significant differences in the answers coming from respondents intercepted by the different interviewers.

3.2 Measures

In order to measure CE related to foreign- vs non-foreign-made products, Shimp and Sharma (1987) introduced a ten-item measurement instrument (based on the original 17-item scale), the CETSCALE. The scale has been validated in numerous studies (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). As expected, fit measures (Cronbach's α: 0.902; item-to-total values around 0.6) indicate a good reliability of the scale in the German sample.

As proposed by Kogut and Singh (1988), we measured cultural similarity of countries by means of the CD index, which converts Hofstede's four cultural dimensions into a distance value for each country. In this, CD from country j to Germany is computed as:

$$\mathrm{CD}_j = \frac{\left\{ \sum_{i=1}^{4} (I_{ij} - I_{ig})^2 / V_i \right\}}{4}$$

where I_{ij} is the index for the ith cultural dimension for country j, V_i is the variance of index i, and g indicates Germany. By applying the formula, the CD from Germany to Italy is 0.21, to the USA 0.40, to Great Britain 0.58, to France 1.18, and to Japan 1.32.

As indicators for economic competitiveness, we used data from the World Economic forum ranking, where the USA is 2nd, the UK is 6th, France 12th, Japan 15th, and Italy 24th.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis overview

Data analysis was conducted in several steps. First, to identify consumer preference patterns for domestic products and products originating from other (specific) countries, we computed descriptive statistics, which are displayed in Tables I and II. Second, we conducted a multidimensional unfolding (MDU) analysis (Borg and Groenen, 1997) across all product categories in order to analyze the full set of rankings, captured from the respondents. Lastly, because the preference responses required ranking alternatives and the dependent variable has ordinal measurement level, we conducted ordered logit analysis.

4.2 Consumer preference patterns for domestic and foreign products

Following Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, a general overview of consumer preferences was generated by calculating the frequencies of the first choices for each product category (Table II). Accordingly, only 4.3 percent of respondents ranked Germany as a first choice in all 14 product categories, but just 1.5 percent did not rank Germany as a first choice in any of the 14 product categories. The second most common first choices after Germany are Great Britain and Italy. Although there is a strong tendency towards domestic products, our findings, in an analogy to the British results, confirm past research on DCB indicating that "universal domestic preference is a fallacy" (Heslop and Papadopoulos, 1993, p. 45).

In addition, Table III shows consumers' first choices for different product categories and COOs. Clearly, Germany represents the first choice most frequently in fresh food products, with 88.07 percent, followed by DIY tools with 85.59 percent, packaged food products as well as food products in general, and cars, as these product categories show a higher DCB. Interestingly, Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) obtained similar results for Great Britain. Overwhelmingly, British food products with 74.9 percent and British DIY tools with 72.4 percent have been the most frequent first choices for respondents in Great Britain. In both studies, the domestic country showed the most first choices in the seven of the product categories, with the exception of televisions.

Times that a country is the first choice	Germany	Great Britain	Japan	Italy	USA	France
0	1.5	79.5	35.5	34.9	64.9	67.9
1	3.7	13.6	20.4	23.2	18.9	19.3
2	1.8	4.8	27.9	16.3	7.3	6.9
3	2.7	1.2	10.9	12.3	4.6	3.6
4	4.2	0.4	3.9	7.8	2.2	0.9
5	6.3	0.1	0.6	4.2	1.2	0.9
6	9.9		0.7	0.7	0.3	0.4
7	10.6	0.1		0.3	0.4	
8	11.7	0.1		0.1		
9	9.6					
10	9.0					
11	9.1					
12	6.3					
13	9.1					
14	4.3					

Table II.
First choices by country
(in percentages)

	Cars	Fashion wear	Toiletries	Food products	TV sets	Toys	Do-it-yourself products	Furniture	Pharmaceuticals	Shoes and leather goods	Textiles	Electronic products	Packaged food products	Fresh food products
Germany	77.08	42.63	82.48	81.76	44.25	66.55	85.59	65.22	84.85	31.20	43.77	41.13	84.76	88.07
Great Britain	1.73	5.19	2.31	1.12	1.92	3.36	3.02	4.83	1.30	3.78	2.86	1.16	1.34	0.82
Japan	10.68	1.78	1.65	2.24	47.76	14.96	3.85	2.83	1.63	1.64	3.70	49.09	1.01	0.98
Italy	2.35	30.15	1.32	6.40	0.64	2.52	1.51	19.97	1.63	55.01	35.19	1.82	4.52	4.90
USA	2.51	14.26	3.31	1.12	4.47	10.08	5.36	2.66	8.14	5.75	6.90	5.64	3.35	0.49
France	5.65	6.00	8.93	7.36	0.96	2.52	0.67	4.49	2.44	2.63	7.58	1.16	5.03	4.74

Table III.
First choices by product
category (in percentages)

In this category Japan displayed most first choices, perhaps due to the competitiveness of its electronics product industry. Furthermore, Japan has been the most frequent first choice in the category of electronic products. For the same reason, Italy appears to be the first choice for shoes and leather goods. As the percentages for Germany's first choices are clearly higher than the percentages for Britain's first choices, the DCB in Germany for these products is higher than in Great Britain.

However, for shoes and leather goods, electronic products, fashion wear, textiles, and televisions, the majority of German respondents did not choose Germany as the most preferred COO. This, again, confirms that COO effects are specific to a product category, which is a finding also obtained by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004).

In order to analyze the full set of preference rankings, a MDU was conducted. We followed Balabanis and Diamantopoulos in using a two-dimensional configuration, using the statistical package for the social sciences, alternating least square algorithm. In Figures 1-14, individuals are represented as ideal points in a multidimensional space so that the distances from each ideal point to stimuli points correspond to the preference scores. The closer a stimulus point lies to an ideal point, the more the stimulus is preferred by the respective individual. The smaller the distance between two countries, the more similar the countries are perceived in terms of preference. The results of Stress 2 measure for the product categories (ranging from 0.038 to 0.088) are within acceptable levels (Borg and Groenen, 1997). A two-dimensional configuration was found to be sufficient, because increases of dimensions resulted only in minor improvements of Stress 2 values (ranging from 0.027 to 0.052).

Comparing the results of MDU analysis, the results of first choice analysis can be described in more detail. To identify how well the preference patterns can be explained by CE, property fitting was used. The CETSCALE scores were fitted in the MDU map, as ideal points (Figures 1-14) as well as vectors (Table IV). Table IV shows CE is not a strong predictor of preference configurations; these results are in line with the British study. Furthermore, the impact of CE differs between the various product categories.
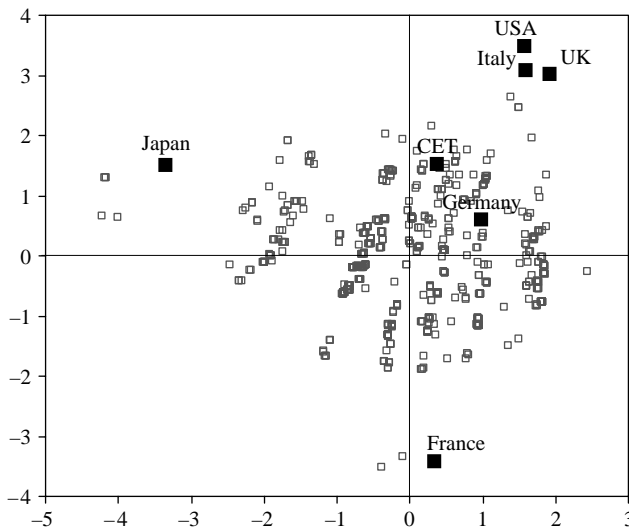
Figure 1.
Preference map for cars

16

Figure 2.
Preference map for TV sets
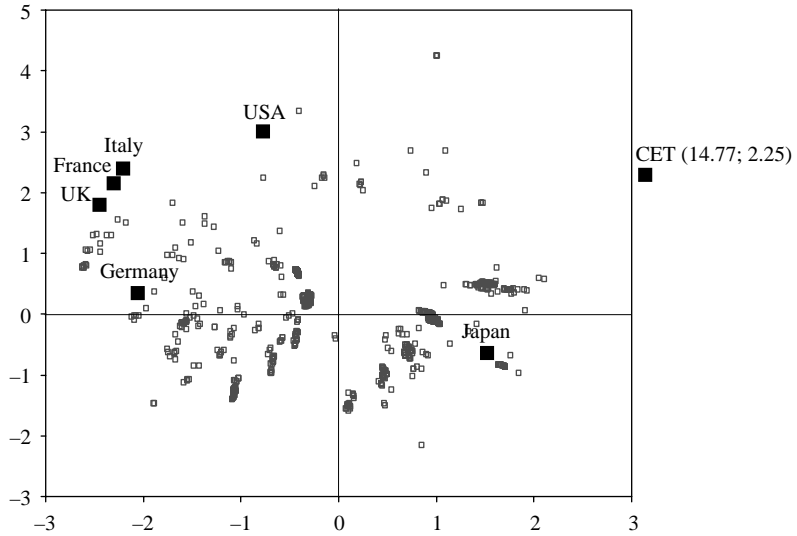
Figure 3.
Preference map for fashion wear
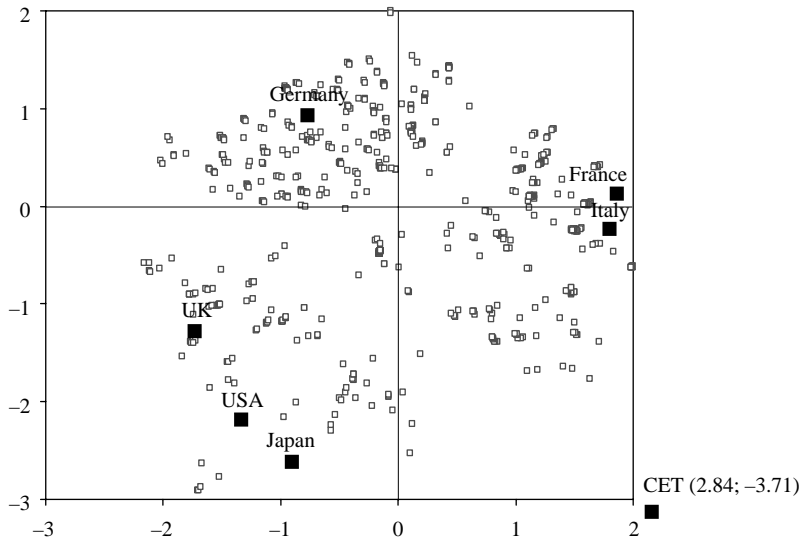
However, as expected, in most cases the distance between CETSCALE and Germany is smaller than for other country stimuli, indicating that those customers preferring domestic (German) products tend to be CE. In the British study, Britain showed the smallest distance to CETSCALE. Correspondingly, those countries being located far away from CETSCALE are those most disfavoured by ethnocentrics. In the British
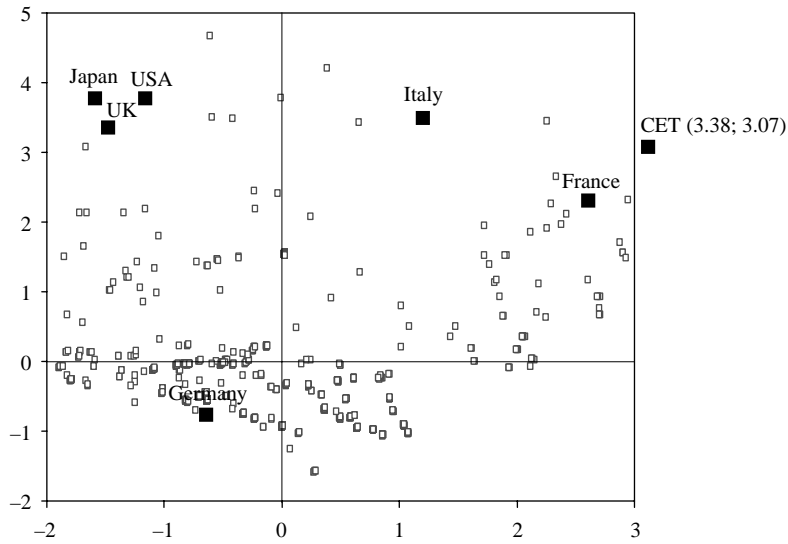
Figure 4.
Preference map for
toiletries
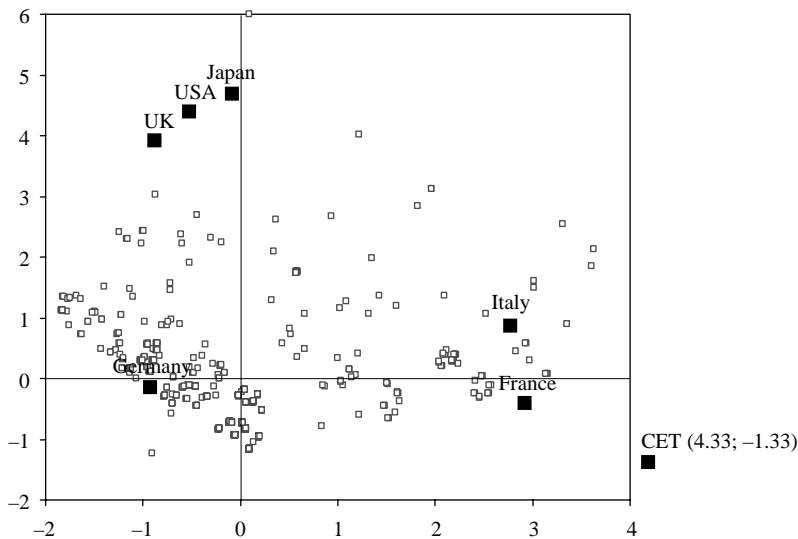
Figure 5.
Preference map for food
products

study, in the category cars Germany was the most disfavoured country, whereas in the case of TV sets it was Japan. In this study, France is most disfavoured for cars, the UK for TV sets, food products, packaged food, and fresh food, Germany for fashion wear, textiles, toiletries, and shoes, the USA for toys and do-it-yourself equipment, and Japan for furniture, pharmaceutical products, and electronic products. Furthermore, countries
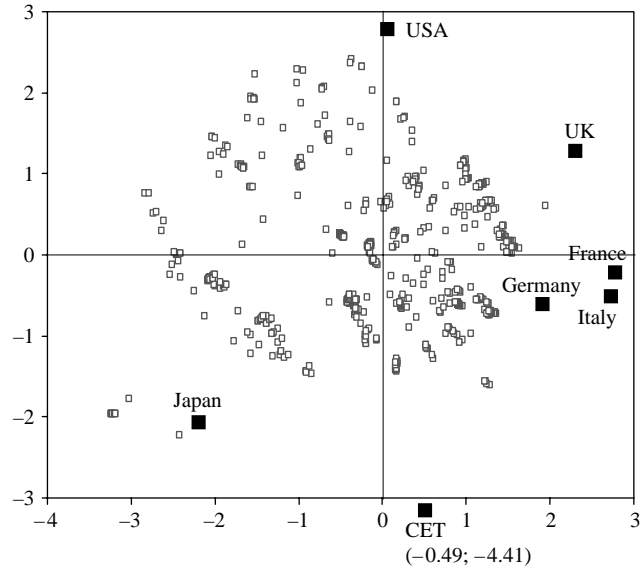
Figure 6.
Preference map for toys
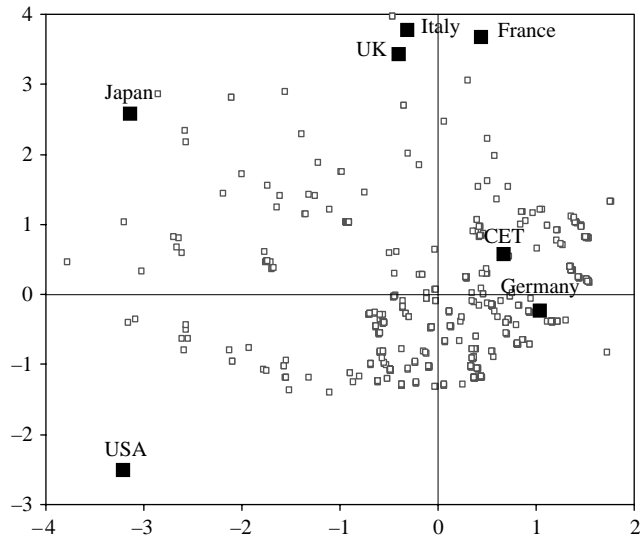
Figure 7.
Preference map for
do-it-yourself equipment

form identifiable groups. For example, in Figure 1, Italy, the UK and the USA are perceived as one group, being preferred by only a few customers. Particularly, customers preferring domestic products (being more ethnocentric) prefer German products, resulting in a small distance between CET and Germany. As already indicated, many individuals tend to belong to this cluster. Contrary to these findings in Figure 2, the structure of consumer preferences differs. Two large clusters for German
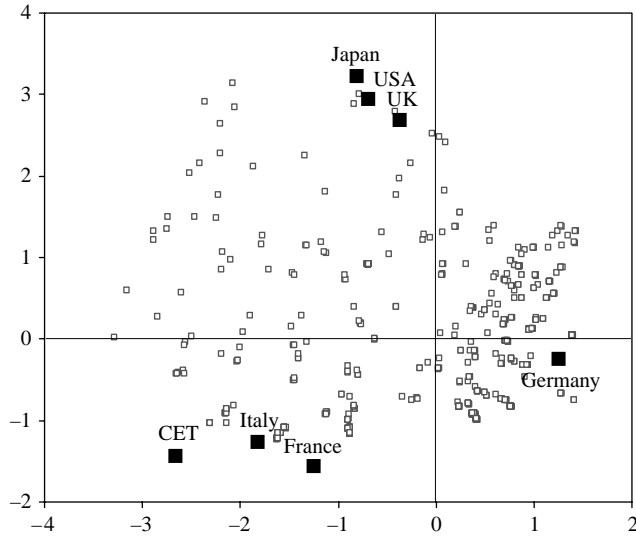
Figure 8.
Preference map for
furniture
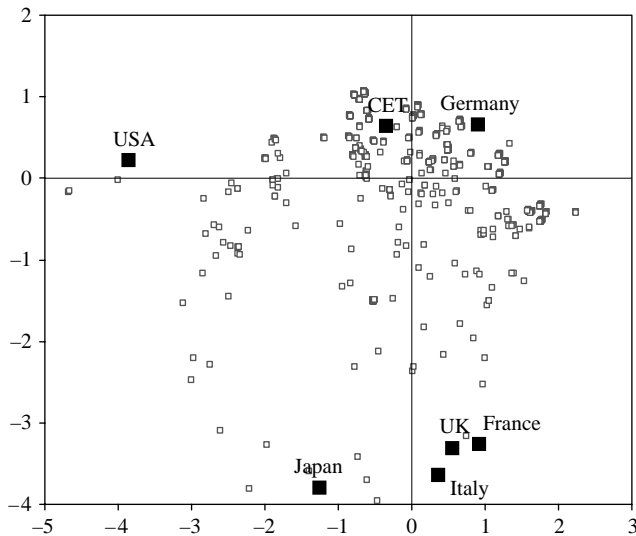
Figure 9.
Preference map for
pharmaceutical products

and Japanese TV sets could be found. The distance between country stimuli and CET is quite large. Briefly, summarizing the results of the derived preference maps, Japan tends to be perceived to be unique in the following product categories cars, TV sets, toys, do-it-yourself equipment, and electronic products. In the product categories fashion wear, toiletries, food products, furniture, shoes, textiles, packaged food, and fresh food, Italy and France form an exclusive identifiable group. The USA and the UK
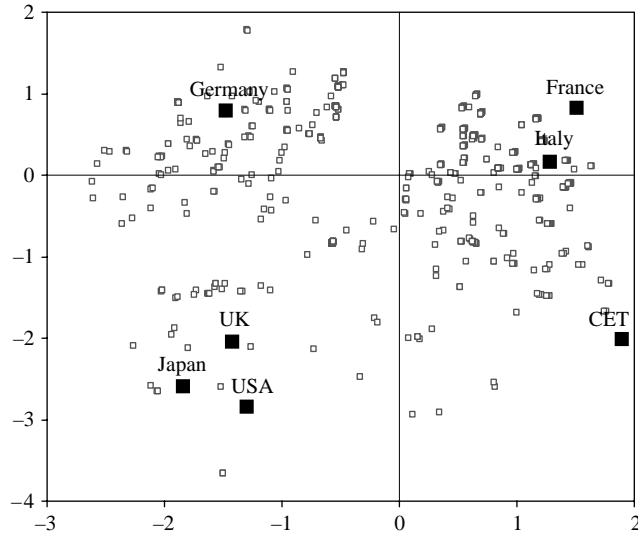
Figure 10.
Preference map for shoes
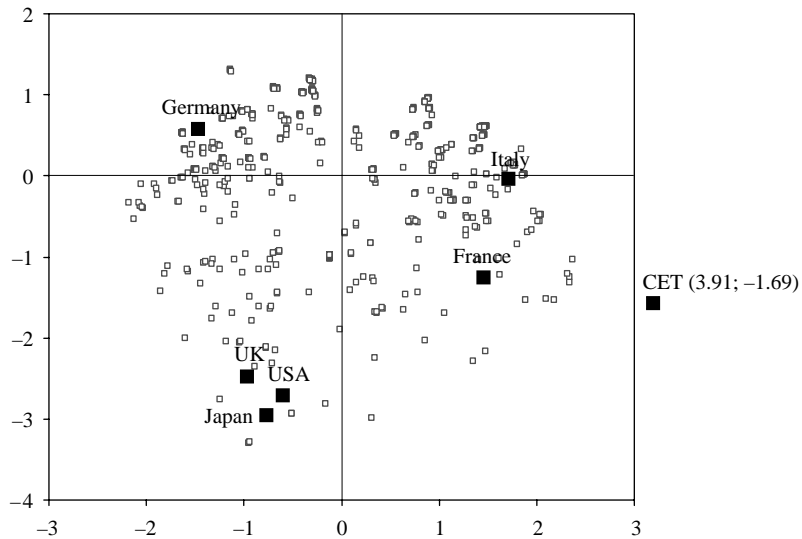
Figure 11.
Preference map for textiles

are perceived to belong to one group, except in the product categories do-it-yourself equipment and pharmaceutical products. In the categories cars and TV sets, our findings predominantly supported the original study. In our case, in the category of cars the UK is perceived to belong to a group with the USA and Italy instead of being grouped with France. For TV sets, instead of a grouping of France, Italy, and Germany,
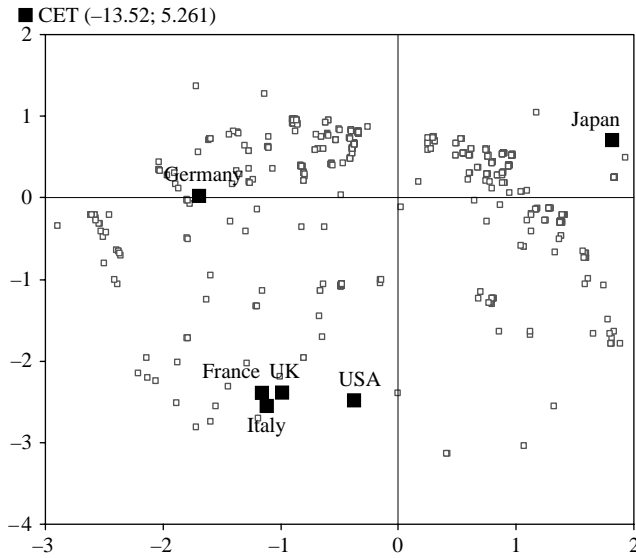
Figure 12.
Preference map for
electronic products
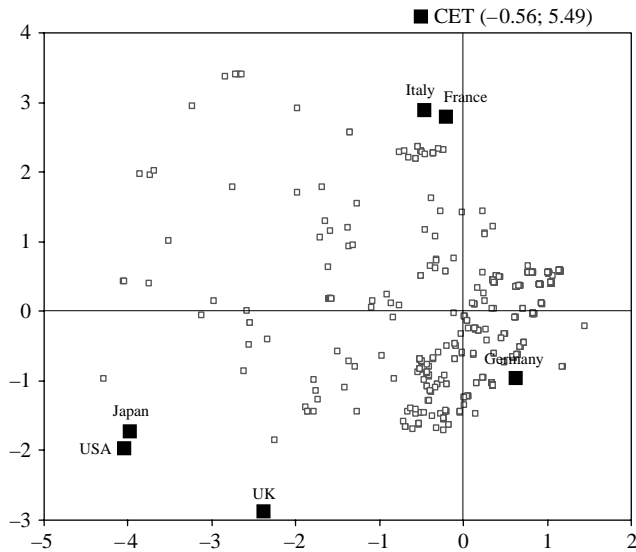
Figure 13.
Preference map for
packaged food

in our case Italy, France, and the UK form an identifiable group. This comparison
shows that the domestic country is predominantly perceived as being unique.

To provide a more formal test to our *H1-H4*, ordered logit analysis was conducted,
with the preference ranking per country and product as the dependent, and the
CETSCALE, age, gender, income, and education as independent variables. Although the

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Figure 14.
Preference map for fresh
food

Product category	RSQ	Variance accounted for
Cars	0.996	0.00
TV sets	0.999	0.05
Fashion wear	0.992	0.07
Toiletries	0.998	0.02
Food products	0.997	0.04
Toys	0.998	0.01
Do-it-yourself equipment	0.997	0.00
Furniture	0.996	0.06
Pharmaceutical products	0.998	0.00
Shoes	0.994	0.07
Textiles	0.996	0.06
Electronic products	0.998	0.05
Packaged food	0.996	0.03
Fresh food	0.997	0.03
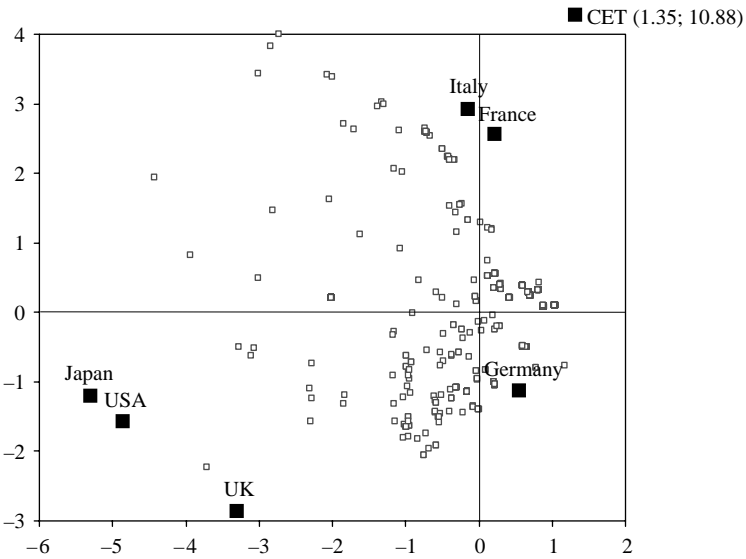
Table IV.
Property fitting of
consumer ethnocentrism
on preference
configurations

relatively high correlation between the two scales may create multicollinearity
problems, both constructs were included into the ordered logit models. Using only one
of the two scales as explanatory variable did not produce substantially different
results. Parameter estimates for the ordered logit models for Germany, Britain, France,
the USA, Japan, and Italy are displayed in Tables V-X.

As can be seen from the tables, CE exhibits negative influence on the preference
rankings for German products in all product categories, although it is a statistically
significant predictor in only seven out of the 14 analyzed product categories.
Hence, H1a is confirmed, since high-CE scores lead to a high preference (preferred rank)
for the home country.

Variable	Cars	Fashion wear	Toiletries	Food products	TV sets	Toys	Do-it-yourself	Furniture	Pharma-ceuticals	Shoes	Textiles	Electronics	Packaged food	Fresh food
CETSCALE	−0.057**	−0.050***	−0.007	−0.018	−0.041**	−0.032	−0.023	−0.040*	−0.010	−0.062***	−0.060***	−0.069***	−0.010	−0.023
Age	0.061	−0.373***	0.134	−0.200*	−0.275***	−0.359***	−0.147	−0.279***	−0.268**	−0.272***	−0.210**	−0.305***	−0.168	−0.199
Income	−0.192	−0.095	−0.299**	0.054	0.078	−0.140	−0.108	−0.026	0.153	−0.022	−0.191**	−0.023	−0.040	−0.146
Education (1 = high)	0.615	−0.065	−0.519	−0.176	0.132	0.140	0.259	−0.211	0.409	0.020	−0.274	0.188	0.148	0.451
Gender (1 = male)	−0.113**	−0.071	0.385	−0.118	0.323*	0.601***	−0.274	0.070	0.475*	−0.008	0.167	0.171	0.018	0.455
−2LLN	671.658	1,136.952	574.553	591.836	1,005.641	884.294	481.104	930.364	536.277	1,201.791	1,122.010	1,038.501	514.152	419.889
χ^2/6 df	23.006	75.618	13.103	7.667	43.598	38.169	6.755	39.332	11.394	76.991	62.499	59.351	4.067	14.006
R^2	0.063	0.172	0.040	0.023	0.105	0.098	0.023	0.098	0.036	0.176	0.148	00.143	0.013	0.050

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

Table V.
Estimates for ordered
logit model – Germany

Variable	Cars	Fashion wear	Toiletries	Food products	TV sets	Toys	Do-it-yourself	Furniture	Pharma-ceuticals	Shoes	Textiles	Electronics	Packaged food	Fresh food
CETSCALE	0.032*	0.021	0.046***	0.073***	0.009	0.035**	0.009	0.053*	0.038**	0.043**	0.071***	0.037**	0.051***	0.058***
Age	−0.210***	−0.301***	−0.262***	−0.218***	−0.234***	−0.214***	−0.210***	−0.134	−0.157**	−0.175**	−0.199***	−0.291***	−0.206***	−0.185***
Income	−0.018	0.056	0.067	0.077	0.044	−0.031	0.137	0.022	−0.068	−0.077	0.066	0.091	−0.024	0.152
Education (1 = high)	0.286	0.421**	0.658***	0.193	−0.208	−0.022	0.080	0.491**	0.028	0.479**	0.282	−0.174	0.314	0.378*
Gender (1 = male)	0.042	0.305*	0.052	−0.075	0.031	0.216	0.023	0.076	0.234	0.492**	0.227	0.038	0.074	−0.087
−2LLN	1,397.764	1,366.379	1,306.279	1,206.467	1,248.061	1,285.030	1,264.665	1,291.209	1,293.081	1,237.911	1,286.880	1,204.954	1,136.102	1,036.519
χ^2/6 df	17.289	33.451	32.626	31.594	16.276	17.184	11.372	19.371	14.478	33.681	27.577	24.097	21.232	21.336
R^2	0.042	0.080	0.081	0.077	0.041	0.044	0.029	0.049	0.037	0.084	0.070	0.061	0.055	0.055

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

Table VI.
Estimates for ordered
logit model – France

Variable	Cars	Fashion wear	Toiletries	Food products	TV sets	Toys	Do-it-yourself	Furniture	Pharma-ceuticals	Shoes	Textiles	Electronics	Packaged food	Fresh food
CETSCALE	−0.013	0.055***	0.004	−0.002	−0.018	0.001	−0.012	0.038*	−0.030*	0.040**	0.051***	−0.053***	0.027	0.037**
Age	0.034	−0.120*	−0.193***	−0.060	−0.067	−0.201*	0.011	−0.064	−0.111	−0.028	−0.031	−0.025	−0.022	−0.010
Income	−0.050	−0.091	−0.044	−0.020	−0.069	−0.119	−0.072	−0.065	−0.169	−0.193*	−0.052	−0.096	−0.063	−0.205
Education (1 = high)	−0.171	0.185	0.007	0.056	0.027	0.095	0.028	0.082	−0.106*	0.131	0.369*	−0.036	0.308	−0.348*
Gender (1 = male)	0.386**	−0.110	0.135	0.610***	0.376*	0.246	0.558*	−0.066	0.725***	0.124	−0.090	0.026	0.198	00.412
−2LLN	1,369.167	898.405	1,261.291	1,244.955	1,103.991	1,273.980	1,215.615	1,315.996	1,227.625	997.371	1,236.617	1,109.473	1,211.218	1,127.245
χ^2/6 df	8.542	12.996	12.045	16.974	9.881	17.120	12.240	28.549	26.868	43.043	23.042	12.004	6.838	16.707
R^2	0.021	0.035	0.031	0.042	0.025	0.044	0.032	0.071	0.067	0.107	0.058	0.031	0.018	0.043

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

Table VII.
Estimates for ordered logit model – Italy

Variable	Cars	Fashion wear	Toiletries	Food products	TV sets	Toys	Do-it-yourself	Furniture	Pharma-ceuticals	Shoes	Textiles	Electronics	Packaged food	Fresh food
CETSCALE	0.016	−0.029	0.019	−0.054***	0.036**	−0.023	−0.005	−0.027	−0.010	−0.030	−0.035*	0.061*	−0.034*	−0.045**
Age	−0.218***	−0.033	0.051	0.147**	0.062	0.090	−0.094	0.074	0.130*	0.102	0.093	0.029	0.074	0.109
Income	0.025	0.091	−0.092	−0.063	−0.078	0.098	0.006	0.133	0.002	0.013	0.078**	−0.039	−0.049	0.013
Education (1 = high)	−0.430	−0.300	−0.225	0.106	−0.049	−0.247	−0.237	−0.116	−0.092	−0.471**	−0.530	0.050	−0.226	−0.510*
Gender (1 = male)	−0.276**	−0.051	−0.525***	−0.106	−0.561**	−0.407***	−0.193	−0.073	−0.523***	−0.451**	−0.070	−0.240	−0.123	−0.317
−2LLN	1,426.717	898.405	1,084.531	1,138.348	1,047.092	1,391.915	1,321.177	1,099.765	1,148.298	960.938	999.195	1,050.589	1,051.038	990.649
χ^2/6 df	26.601	12.996	14.816	12.527	38.174	10.267	8.937	8.446	14.280	14.122	16.428	30.299	5.722	14.804
R^2	0.063	0.035	0.039	0.032	0.093	0.026	0.023	0.022	0.037	0.038	0.044	0.076	0.015	0.040

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

Table VIII.
Estimates for ordered
logit model – Japan

Variable	Cars	Fashion wear	Toiletries	Food products	TV sets	Toys	Do-it-yourself	Furniture	Pharmaceuticals	Shoes	Textiles	Electronics	Packaged food	Fresh food
CETSCALE	−0.019	0.005	−0.024	−0.018	−0.018	0.026	0.023	−0.029*	0.012	−0.005	0.011	0.008	−0.044*	−0.016
Age	0.244***	0.030	0.236***	−0.200	0.019	−0.004	0.141**	0.059	0.132*	0.150**	0.035	0.111	−0.014	0.058
Income	−0.004	0.065	0.107	0.054*	−0.043	0.103	−0.010	0.075	0.064	0.182**	−0.048	0.098	0.121	0.041
Education (1 = high)	0.033	0.145	−0.241	−0.176	−0.103	0.338	0.215	0.090	0.027	−0.176	−0.098	−0.152	0.084	0.423*
Gender (1 = male)	0.284	−0.069	−0.047	−0.118	0.582*	0.196	0.329*	−0.054	0.314*	−0.057	0.230	0.516*	0.029	−0.220
−2LLN	1,343.905	1,363.025	1,301.342	591.836	1,250.723	1,315.688	1,276.837	1,322.125	1,244.971	1,301.572	1,277.386	1,164.682	1,222.199	1,136.516
χ^2/6 df	23.150	3.840	23.612	7.667	18.173	8.634	14.011	7.690	12.388	17.606	2.090	20.610	9.261	9.592
R^2	0.056	0.010	0.059	0.023	0.045	0.022	0.036	0.020	0.032	0.045	0.005	0.053	0.024	0.025

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

Table IX.
Estimates for ordered logit model – Great Britain

Variable	Cars	Fashion wear	Toiletries	Food products	TV sets	Toys	Do-it-yourself	Furniture	Pharmaceuticals	Shoes	Textiles	Electronics	Packaged food	Fresh food
CETSCALE	−0.009	−0.024	−0.022	−0.016	0.006	−0.011	−0.002	−0.013	−0.012	−0.009	−0.050***	−0.010	0.005	−0.018
Age	0.197***	0.539***	0.081	0.231***	0.268*	0.411*	0.208***	0.178*	0.074	0.206***	0.236***	0.278***	0.178*	0.030
Income	0.090	0.028	0.061	−0.092	0.061	0.004	−0.038	−0.049	0.058	0.048	0.138	0.001	0.044	0.164
Education (1 = high)	0.145	−0.502**	−0.117	−0.301	0.177	−0.231	−0.086	−0.406**	0.046	−0.271	−0.002	0.123	−0.269	0.012*
Gender (1 = male)	−0.187	−0.228	0.230	−0.303	−0.194	−0.237	−0.369**	0.081	−0.653*	−0.229	−0.415*	−0.141	−0.196	0.010
−2LLN	1,258.675	1,383.856	1,336.117	1,245.143	1,327.415	1,342.264	1,352.341	1,240.688	1,389.924	1,304.909	1,325.118	1,300.278	1,239.152	1,018.543
χ^2/6 df	17.585	80.716	9.030	16.523	29.403	43.509	13.663	9.729	14.660	13.870	30.566	24.890	10.366	8.105
R^2	0.043	0.182	0.023	0.041	0.071	0.107	0.035	0.025	0.036	0.035	0.077	0.062	0.027	0.022

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

Table X.
Estimates for ordered
logit model – USA

Regarding *H1b*, CE exhibits statistically significant effects in the expected (negative) direction in 11 out of the 14 observed product categories for France, in five product categories for Italy, and in two product categories for Japan. For GB and the USA, no negative and even a few statistically significant positive relationships can be observed.

As already indicated by the described results, effects of the CETSCALE vary depending on the specific product category, which lends credence to both *H2a* and *H2b*. However, as can be seen from the above discussion, it seems that the stronger effect is between countries, which makes investigation of *H3* and *H4* especially interesting.

As demonstrated above, the link between CE and preferences is most strongly pronounced for France, less for Italy and Japan, and weak for the USA and Britain. Of the six countries, France, Italy, and Japan score lowest on the competitiveness rankings, and France and Japan are culturally most dissimilar to Germany. In sum, this suggests that especially the competitiveness hypothesis seems to hold: when a country is perceived as not being able to produce competitive global products, it will in general be less preferred in foreign product preference rankings (Table XI, for illustrative purposes).

Because Italy is culturally most similar to Germany out of the five countries, results for the culture hypothesis are less clear (Table XII, for illustrative purposes). The index of cultural similarity amplifies the measurement problems associated with Hofstede (Shenkar, 2001). Differences in culture exist but do not seem to be measured adequately to reflect preference rankings.

5. Discussion and implications

The present study represents a replication of the work by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004). In a German context, we examine the relationship between CE on consumer preferences, and investigate whether competitiveness and cultural similarity can help explain the varying strength of CE effects.

Variable	USA	UK	France	Japan	Italy
Economic competitiveness	2nd	6th	12th	15th	24th
CETSCALE_Cars	−0.009	−0.019	0.032*	0.016	−0.013
CETSCALE_Fashion	−0.024	0.005	0.021	−0.029	0.055***
CETSCALE_Toiletries	−0.022	−0.024	0.046***	0.019	0.004
CETSCALE_FoodProd	−0.016	−0.018	0.073***	−0.054***	−0.002
CETSCALE_TVSets	0.006	−0.018	0.009	0.036**	−0.018
CETSCALE_Toys	−0.011	0.026	0.035**	−0.023	0.001
CETSCALE_DIY	−0.002	0.023	0.009	−0.005	−0.012
CETSCALE_Furniture	−0.013	−0.029*	0.053***	−0.027	0.038*
CETSCALE_Pharma	−0.012	0.012	0.038**	−0.010	−0.030*
CETSCALE_Shoes	−0.009	−0.005	0.043**	−0.030	0.040**
CETSCALE_Textiles	−0.050***	0.011	0.071***	−0.035*	0.051***
CETSCALE_Electronics	−0.010	0.008	0.037**	0.061*	−0.053***
CETSCALE_PackFood	0.005	−0.044*	0.051***	−0.034*	0.027
CETSCALE_FreshFood	−0.018	−0.016	0.058***	−0.045**	0.037**

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

Table XI.
Link between economic competitiveness, CE, and consumer preferences over product categories

Variable	Italy	USA	UK	France	Japan
Cultural distance	0.21	0.40	0.58	1.18	1.32
CETSCALE_Cars	−0.013	−0.009	−0.019	0.032*	0.016
CETSCALE_Fashion	0.055***	−0.024	0.005	0.021	−0.029
CETSCALE_Toiletries	0.004	−0.022	−0.024	0.046***	0.019
CETSCALE_FoodProd	−0.002	−0.016	−0.018	0.073***	−0.054***
CETSCALE_TVSets	−0.018	0.006	−0.018	0.009	0.036**
CETSCALE_Toys	0.001	−0.011	0.026	0.035**	−0.023
CETSCALE_DIY	−0.012	−0.002	0.023	0.009	−0.005
CETSCALE_Furniture	0.038*	−0.013	−0.029*	0.053***	−0.027
CETSCALE_Pharma	−0.030*	−0.012	0.012	0.038**	−0.010
CETSCALE_Shoes	0.040**	−0.009	−0.005	0.043**	−0.030
CETSCALE_Textiles	0.051***	−0.050***	0.011	0.071***	−0.035*
CETSCALE_Electronics	−0.053***	−0.010	0.008	0.037**	0.061*
CETSCALE_PackFood	0.027	0.005	−0.044*	0.051***	−0.034*
CETSCALE_FreshFood	0.037**	−0.018	−0.016	0.058***	−0.045**

Table XII.
Link between cultural
similarity, CE, and
consumer preferences
over product categories

Notes: *Statistically significant at $p < 0.10$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; ***statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

In general, it seems that preference rankings can be better explained by the combination of demographic variables and CE for Germany than for Britain. The highest R^2-value in the study by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) is 0.14 (Cars/Britain), while the highest explained variation in the present study is 0.18 (Shoes/Germany). Taken together, the fact that the highest R^2-value in both studies is obtained for the home country suggests that CE is better suited for explaining domestic rather than foreign-country bias. Still, the level of explained variance is far from satisfactory. One implication from this study is that further research is needed to better understand how preference judgments for domestic versus foreign products are formed.

The effect of CE on domestic product preference is a consistent finding in both Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) and the present study. Domestic firms in Germany can well rely on a "safeguarding" effect when marketing their products to consumers high in CE. At the same time, managers from foreign countries cannot rely on CE as a reliable indicator of the inclination of consumers to downgrade their products.

The findings of the study confirm that CE effects are product- and country-specific, which confirms Balabanis and Diamantopoulos' (2004) findings. However, the results of the study contradict Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) somewhat, in that at least economic competitiveness of the country-of-origin plays a role in determining respondents' judgments. One explanation for this finding may be that Germans are higher in uncertainty avoidance than Britons. Therefore, Germans tend to choose products that they believe to be superior rather than to "experiment" with home country products when competitively better offers are available. This finding is also important from a managerial perspective, as Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) conclude that, in Britain, managers from economically strong countries cannot count on a country-of-origin effect in their favor, due to economic competitiveness. For the German market, however, that seems to be the case; American and British firms are not

negatively affected by CE effects, and in a few cases it even seems that CE is positively related to preference for them.

When further examining the structure of effects of CE on preferences, we are able to generate some exploratory insights that could help shape further research questions. First, it seems that CE affects preference ratings for the home country positively in product categories that are perceived as being strong drivers of the economy (in Germany: cars, TV sets, electronics) and/or buying from foreign firms may endanger employment in the home economy (fashion wear, toys). Consequently, CE exhibits the expected effects in product-country configurations that are likely to be perceived as threats for the home economy (e.g. French food products, Italian fashion wear and shoes, Japanese electronic products and TV sets). From that perspective, it may be concluded that German ethnocentrists view British and American products as good and competitive, but not as harmful for the German economy, and therefore do not discount them in their preference ratings.

6. Conclusion

Replications can further deepen our understanding of constructs and interrelationships among them. Results of our study indicate that consumer purchase behavior towards foreign vs domestic products can be explained by a combination of demographic variables and country-of-origin effects. Obviously, that general finding holds across two countries: Germany and the UK. Nevertheless, there are several differences in the predictive power of CE across national borders. Such findings call for further investigations of domestic country bias and country-of-origin effects in order to develop a more comprehensive model of preferences in the choice between products coming from different nations.

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