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EFFECTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA'S CITIZENS' PATRIOTISM AND ANIMOSITY TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN UNION ON CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM

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Economic, political and militaristic tensions between countries are present throughout the world. The devastating effects of the global financial crisis are still generating the ever-increasing instability of the world economy. Patriotism and nationalism, as well as animosity towards the economic and military policies of certain foreign countries, seem to be on the rise across many countries and nations in recent years. It is precisely the current situation in the world that is favorable for encouraging citizens to purchase domestic products. The policy can be particularly useful for less-developed import-oriented economies. Thus, in the conditions of the economic crisis, the study of consumer ethnocentrism is gaining in importance. The paper examines the effects of the patriotism of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia and animosity towards the EU on consumer ethnocentrism. The results show that both these variables stand out as the statistically significant antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism; however, it should be noticed that patriotism shows a stronger influence on the consumer's orientation towards buying domestic products. The research findings indicate that love of one's country may direct consumer choices towards domestic brands, despite the positive image and high quality of foreign ones. In addition, due to citizens' strong dislike towards the EU economic policy, some of them may decide to buy lower-quality domestic products; however, this does not necessarily negatively affect one's perception of foreign products.

Keywords: consumer ethnocentrism, patriotism, animosity, buying local products, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation model

JEL Classification: M31, M37

INTRODUCTION

Whether it is desirable that the government should encourage citizens to purchase domestic products and whether such measures have a positive effect

on the growth of the national economy is quite an interesting question to be answered by the economic policy makers of a country. On the one hand, encouraging consumers to buy domestic products can indeed support the growth of domestic production and employment, especially when a particular country is facing an economic crisis, as well as in the case of less-developed and/

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or import-oriented countries. On the other hand, whether it is justified to encourage consumers to buy lower-quality local products should be considered. Also, there is the issue of whether it is possible to implement this policy in the same manner in different sectors, particularly in the case where the quality of domestically made products is inferior compared to the quality of foreign ones. Finally, healthy competition in a particular market is stifled in this way.

Therefore, there is a dilemma in terms of the justifiability of shifting demand from foreign to domestic products. The author of the paper disagrees with this practice since it directly leads to consumer ethnocentrism, which is actually the consumer's orientation towards buying domestically made products. T. Shimp (1984) is among the authors who were the first to identify and deal with this phenomenon. His research has made a significant contribution to clarifying the complex nature of consumer ethnocentrism and has encouraged many authors throughout the world to focus their research studies on identifying its key antecedents. He defines consumer ethnocentrism as citizens' belief that products made in their native countries are superior to foreign ones. Accordingly, ethnocentric consumers are more likely to buy domestically made products. Research findings show that many such consumers believe that buying domestically produced products is a patriotic act and that this supports the growth of the national economy as well. According to them, the citizens who buy foreign products are largely responsible for economic problems in the native country, especially for the growth of unemployment (Good & Huddleston, 1995).

The aforementioned arguments have contributed to the growing interest in studying consumer ethnocentrism at the global level. Today, this phenomenon attracts the attention of macroeconomists, particularly in terms of analyzing the cost-effectiveness of the „Buy domestic products“ type of promotional campaigns.

The dilemma “for and against promoting the buying of domestic products” is the subject matter of numerous debates, considered in an attempt to answer the question whether or not this strategy really mitigates the effects of the financial crisis and protects citizens' jobs. Another question must also be posed: do these measures produce only short-term effects, particularly where domestic products are inferior to foreign ones in terms of their quality? Could it be that in this way the long-term development of the national economy is in fact jeopardized? Consumer ethnocentrism is a very interesting concept also from the point of view of marketing research. Accordingly, marketing researchers are particularly interested in finding an adequate methodology to measure consumers' ethnocentric tendencies and to also determine the degree to which consumer ethnocentrism is present among citizens of different countries. Measuring and comparing the levels of consumers' general ethnocentric tendencies across different regions of a single country is an important issue, too. Currently, marketing research is generally oriented towards a modeled approach to measuring consumer ethnocentrism, with the intention of designing research models marked by respective clearly identified key antecedents.

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism, i.e. its analysis and clarification, including its potential antecedents and the measurement methodology, is the objective of this study. The studies of consumer ethnocentrism are, by their nature, very specific since they include different sociological and marketing, as well as macro-economic components. In this respect, finding an adequate methodological solution to measuring consumer ethnocentric tendencies is a challenging task. For more than three decades now, researchers from many countries have been trying to design new and improve the existing scales to measure consumer ethnocentrism. This is a very important research activity since consumer ethnocentric tendencies can have significant social and economic implications.

Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the effect that animosity towards the EU and patriotism may have on the overall level of consumer ethnocentrism. In addition, the paper examines whether the intensity of Serbian consumers' ethnocentric tendencies is higher than the level of their patriotism and animosity towards the EU.

A survey was used as a primary data collection method. As far as the statistical analysis is concerned, reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis - CFA (in order to assess the internal consistency and to construct the validity of the model) were applied, as well as the structural equation modeling that was used so as to test the effect of patriotism and animosity on consumer ethnocentrism. In addition to that, by applying the paired t-test, the (non)existence of the statistically significant differences in the respondents' attitudes regarding the three analyzed model variables was determined.

The paper is organized in five sections. Following the Introduction Section, the paper continues with the Literature Review Section, which deals with the concepts of consumer ethnocentrism, patriotism and animosity and their mutual relationships. The research hypotheses to be tested are set out in the concluding part of this section, in line with the results of the previous research. The third section explains the methodology of the research, as well as the structure of the sample. The fourth section contains the results of the empirical study, whereas the fifth section points to the conclusions and contributions of the paper, identifies the limitations of the present research and suggests the directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Consumer Ethnocentrism

Prior to the analysis of consumer ethnocentrism, it is necessary to address a broader concept of

ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is a sociological concept fundamental to the study of the related concept - consumer ethnocentrism. By its nature, however, consumer ethnocentrism is not only a sociological concept, but it also has an economic aspect, which attracts the attention of sociologists, macroeconomists and marketing researchers. The first formal definition of ethnocentrism was formulated by W. G. Sumner (1906), and according to his definition, ethnocentrism is a view in which one's own group is the center of everything, whereas all others are scaled and rated with reference to it (Shankarmahesh, 2006). In this respect, ethnocentric individuals believe their group is superior to others and their system of values, attitudes and behaviors as well. Ethnocentrism does not only necessarily apply to national, religious or racial groups; it can also occur in small social groups, such as families. Simply put, ethnocentrism is an integral part of human nature.

Scientists' interest in studying ethnocentrism has led to the expansion of the field of the existing analysis and the introduction of a new concept, named consumer ethnocentrism. As previously stated, ethnocentric consumers are largely oriented towards purchasing domestic products. Consumer ethnocentrism is based on the view that imports harm the national economy and can cause numerous economic problems; on the other hand, buying domestic products is considered not only as an economic, but also as an ethical issue (Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

Due to its complex nature and its social implications, consumer ethnocentrism is an important field of cultural and economic research (Maričić, 2011). Assessing a nation's degree of consumer ethnocentrism is very important for export-oriented companies, especially when planning to enter the international market. However, it should be noted that a high level of a nation's ethnocentrism does not necessarily imply that members of a particular nation exhibit a high level of consumer ethnocentrism. For example, the results of a study

indicated that India's citizens were ethnocentric and showed a high degree of patriotism; however, they were also shown to be open to buying foreign products (Deb & Chaudhuri, 2014). The relationship between cultural openness and consumer ethnocentrism is a source of disputes among many authors. The results of certain studies identified a negative (inverse) correlation between these two phenomena (Deb & Sinha, 2016; Prince, Davies, Cleveland & Palihawadana, 2016), on the one hand, whereas on the other, some researchers indicated that consumers' favorable attitudes towards other cultures and their values were not correlated with ethnocentric tendencies (Vida, Dmitrovic & Obadia, 2008).

By analyzing the results of the existing studies, M. Shankarmahesh (2006) provides us with a detailed list of the antecedents and consequences of consumer ethnocentrism. Antecedents in this respect generally include socio-psychological factors (cultural openness, patriotism, conservatism, collectivism, animosity, a list of values), as well as economic factors (the stage of a country's economic development), political factors (political propaganda and leader manipulation) and demographic factors (gender, age, education, income). The main consequence of consumer ethnocentrism is the consumer's intention to buy domestic products, i.e. their unwillingness to buy foreign products.

A. T. Shimp and S. Sharma (1987) developed the most acclaimed scale to measure consumer ethnocentrism. This is the CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale), commonly used by many researchers worldwide today. The scale consists of the 17 items that a respondent evaluates by specifying his/her level of agreement or disagreement with a particular item on the scale ranging from 1 to 7. This means that when applying this scale, the highest possible score, i.e. the level of consumer ethnocentrism, is 119, which signifies the consumer's absolute orientation towards purchasing domestic products. On the

other hand, the lowest ethnocentricity score is 17. In addition to the original CETSCALE, some researchers use modified CETSCALEs to measure consumer ethnocentric tendencies and these scales usually contain a smaller number of items (Vida, Dmitrovic & Obadia, 2008). In addition, consumers' ethnocentric tendencies do not necessarily need to be measured within the 17-119 range, or on a 1-7 point scale; 5-point or 9-point scales can be used as well. It is important to note that besides the mentioned CETSCALE, there are other scales used for measuring consumer ethnocentrism. Among these scales, NATID (National Identity Scale) is most frequently used; however, it primarily measures the national identity, whereas consumer ethnocentrism makes one of its four dimensions (Veljković, 2009).

The measurement results show that the level of consumer ethnocentrism varies among different nations. The study conducted by A. O'Cass and K. Lim (2002) produced interesting results: it showed that the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Moscow was lower than the levels of consumer ethnocentrism in three US cities (Los Angeles, Denver and Detroit). The results of this study indicate that the citizens residing in Detroit show significantly higher levels of consumer ethnocentrism in relation to the residents of Los Angeles. This result is logical due to the fact that the American automobile industry is located in Detroit, whereas the population of Los Angeles consists of many nations. In terms of the results of the studies conducted in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, Central Serbia shows the highest level of consumer ethnocentrism, and is followed by Belgrade, whereas the lowest level of consumer ethnocentrism is identified in A. P. Vojvodina. In addition, as household income increases, the tendency to buy domestic products decreases (Veljković, 2009). The rural population generally shows a higher level of consumer ethnocentrism than the urban, which is also the case with the older population in comparison to the young (Marinković, Stanišić & Kostić, 2011).

Implications of the Animosity and Patriotism in Terms of Consumer Ethnocentrism

Animosity implies strong emotions based on the position that it is immoral and unethical to buy products that originate from an offending country (Klein, Ettenson & Morris, 1998). Animosity towards a particular country is usually influenced by military, political or economic events (Deb & Chaudhuri, 2014). Animosity is an emotion that conditions consumers' buying decisions. This implies consumers' unwillingness to buy a product from a particular country that is perceived as the offending country, independently of consumers' judgments about the quality of the products originating from that particular country. Therefore, consumers may have a positive attitude towards the quality of the products produced in a particular country, but due to their animosity towards that particular country they are unwilling to buy these products (Fernández-Ferrín, Bande-Vilela, Klein & del Río-Araújo, 2015; Cheah, Phau, Kea & Huang, 2016). It is important to note that there are disagreements among the authors over this particular issue since the findings obtained in some studies show that animosity may also affect product judgments, as well as purchasing decisions (Lee & Lee, 2013).

The position that there are two distinctive categories of animosity - war animosity and economic animosity - is generally accepted in literature (Klein, Ettenson & Morris, 1998). Thus, hostility towards a particular country is either the result of the military operations that particular country has implemented in other countries or the result of the economic policy of that particular country. This traditional concept was further expanded by E. B. Nes, R. Yelkur and R. Silkset (2012), who identify the four dimensions of animosity: war animosity, economic animosity, political animosity and people animosity. The majority of research models chose to observe animosity as a single variable despite its identified multidimensional character.

The study of animosity is very important for marketing research since it may constitute a significant antecedent of consumer ethnocentrism, willingness to buy and purchasing choices. Animosity and consumer ethnocentrism can be analyzed as the variables of a specific research model. These variables do have certain similarities; however, the essential difference is that animosity relates to the assessment of how justifiable it is to buy foreign products because of some past events, whereas consumer ethnocentrism is related to a preference for domestic products over foreign ones (Cui, Wajda & Hu, 2012). The results of the previous research show that animosity has a positive statistically significant effect on consumer ethnocentrism (Deb & Chaudhuri, 2014). The positive effect of consumer ethnocentrism and animosity towards foreign products was also confirmed in a study conducted by Z. Ahmed, R. Anang, N. Othman and M. Sambasivan (2013). Similarly, animosity has a negative effect on the purchase of foreign products (Rose, Rose & Shoham, 2009; Huang, Phau & Lin, 2010).

In accordance with the review of relevant literature and the analysis of the geographical, economic and political situation of the Republic of Serbia, the author of this study decided to analyze the economic dimension of animosity, more precisely animosity towards the EU economic policy. In this respect, the first research hypothesis is defined as follows:

H1: Animosity towards the European Union influences Serbian consumers' orientation towards buying domestic products.

Patriotism can be defined as love of one's own country and one's concern for the well-being of their country, as well as the level of one's identification with one's nation and its symbols (Burns, 1997). Patriotism is also understood to depend on the two different perceptions of the sense of belonging to one's nation: instrumental and sentimental attachment (Meier-Pesti & Kirchler,

2003). Instrumental attachment implies the benefits that a person can gain as a member of a certain nation. The best example of this type of attachment is the citizenship that defines a person as being a member of a particular nation. In this context, it can be concluded that this type of attachment is based on a person's rational reasoning. Sentimental attachment develops in situations where personal values coincide with national ones. This type of attachment is of emotional nature and stems from cultural heritage, tradition and one's dedication to national symbols. According to the work by K. Meier-Pesti and E. Kirchler (2003), sentimental attachment has a stronger effect on the overall level of patriotism than instrumental attachment, although both effects are statistically significant.

Relevant literature distinguishes between the concept of nationalism and the concept of patriotism. Generally, both terms are related to a positive identification with a particular nation. However, nationalism implies the superiority and domination of one nation over others. On the other hand, patriotism as love of one's country does not imply national dominance (van der Toorn, Nail, Liviatan & Jost, 2014). While patriotism is based on emotional attachment to one's own nation, nationalism discriminates members of other nations. Patriotism also involves a comparison of the quality of one's life with the value system of the nation which they belong. On the other hand, nationalism involves comparing the social values of two or more nations, where members of one nation devalue the values of other nations.

Patriotism evokes a sense of pride in a person and affection for domestically made products; such affection may arise from emotional attachment and can also be related to the intangible elements of quality. The study conducted by I. Vida and J. Reardon (2008) confirms a statistically significant effect of patriotism on consumer ethnocentrism and the purchase of domestic products. Citizens, who consider themselves to be patriots, usually

prefer domestic products to foreign ones (Han, 1988). In accordance with the aforementioned facts, the second research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: The patriotism of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia has positive impacts on consumer ethnocentrism.

METHOD

The primary objective of the study is to examine the effects of animosity towards the EU and the patriotism of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia on consumer ethnocentrism. Based on such a definition of the objective, it is clear that the proposed research model contains two independent variables (animosity and patriotism) and one dependent variable (consumer ethnocentrism). In addition to this, each of these variables is measured by a series of statements, which is the method commonly used in field marketing research (Table 1). The statements were formulated based on relevant marketing literature (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Vida, Dimitrijevic & Obadia, 2008; Rose, Rose & Shoham, 2009; Ahmed *et al*, 2013). The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement about or disagreement over the statements on the seven-point Likert scale, where score 1 indicates strong disagreement, whereas score 7 signifies strong agreement.

The personal interview method was used for data collection. The research was conducted in six cities in the territory of Central Serbia during 2015. A total of 221 questionnaires were completed by the respondents. The analysis of the demographic profile of the sample shows that women are represented in a slightly higher percentage compared to men, i.e. 57% of the respondents are women and 43% are men. The younger respondents (aged 18-31) account for 29.4% of the

Table 1 Model variables and statements

Model variables	Statements
Consumer ethnocentrism	<p>S1: Serbian products first and foremost.</p> <p>S2: We should buy products made in Serbia instead of letting other countries become rich at our expense.</p> <p>S3: Buying Serbian products is always the best choice.</p> <p>S4: It may cost me more in the long run; however, I prefer buying Serbian products.</p>
Patriotism	<p>S1: I am proud to be a citizen of Serbia.</p> <p>S2: I am emotionally attached to Serbia and everything that happens in it concerns me to a great extent.</p> <p>S3: I am proud to live in Serbia.</p> <p>S4: I am proud to see the national flag waving.</p>
Animosity towards the EU	<p>S1: One should be careful when dealing with EU companies.</p> <p>S2: EU companies are not reliable trading partners.</p> <p>S3: EU companies have a negative attitude towards Serbian companies.</p>

Source: Author

sample. The middle-aged persons (32-45) are the largest demographic group and constitute 40.3% of the sample. The respondents aged 45 and older constitute 30.3% of the sample. The respondents are also classified according to their education level. In this respect, the sample mostly contains highly educated respondents (44.3%). The respondents who completed secondary education account for 36.2% of the sample. The persons with a college degree take a share of 19.5% of the sample.

The data were analyzed by using the SPSS and Amos software. For the purpose of determining statistically significant differences in the levels of animosity, patriotism and consumer ethnocentrism, a Paired t-test was applied. The reliability and validity of the research model were tested by the CFA. The structural equation model was used to test the statistical significance and the magnitude of the effect of animosity and patriotism on consumer ethnocentrism.

RESULTS

In the first step of the statistical analysis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for all of the three observed variables (consumer ethnocentrism, patriotism and animosity) were calculated. In addition, the average values for each of these variables were determined for all the respondents based on their evaluation of the questionnaire's statements. Then, the arithmetic means were calculated for all the three variables in terms of the total sample. The paired t-test was applied so as to find out whether there were statistically significant differences between the values of the arithmetic means of the two observed variables. This test shows whether the average values of the answers to the two specified questions are equal or whether they vary from one another, where the respondents evaluate these questions on the same measurement scale (Soldić-Aleksić i Chronos-Krasavac, 2009).

The results of the paired t-test indicate that there is a significantly higher level of patriotism in the sample in relation to the intensity of consumer ethnocentrism and animosity towards the EU (Table 2). On the other hand, the sample does not show any differences between the general level of consumer ethnocentrism and animosity towards the EU ($p = 0.865 > 0.05$) Based on the results of the paired t-test, as well as the respondents' subjective perceptions, it is evident that they express a high level of patriotism and the moderate levels of consumer ethnocentrism and animosity. In general, in terms of the seven-point scales, the values of the arithmetic means that exceed 5 can be considered as high values for all constructs. On the other hand, the values lower than 3 can be characterized as low, whereas the values ranging from 3 to 5 are considered as moderate. The highest degree of the heterogeneity of the respondents' attitudes was identified for the consumer ethnocentrism variable ($SD = 1.55$).

In the second step of the statistical analysis, the reliability of the three observed variables, as well as the internal consistency of the statements used for their measurement, were assessed. Reliability analysis usually implies the calculation of Cronbach's alpha. The minimum acceptable value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 for each variable

(Nunnally, 1978). All of the three variables fulfilled this reliability condition. Consumer ethnocentrism shows the highest reliability level (Cronbach's alpha = 0.93). Furthermore, the other two variables are also characterized by the high level of reliability (patriotism: Cronbach's alpha = 0.89; animosity: Cronbach's alpha = 0.80).

Since this study implies the testing of the effects of patriotism and animosity on consumer ethnocentrism, it is only logical that the proposed research model contains two independent variables and one dependent. The accepted practice is to assess the validity of the model prior to testing the effects. With this in mind, the CFA was applied. This analysis includes a series of tests and calculations of a number of indices based on which the validity of the research model is determined (RFI - the relative fit index; NFI - the normed fit index; GFI - the goodness-of-fit index, CFI - the comparative fit index, TLI - the Tucker-Lewis index; IFI - the incremental fit index; RMSEA - the root mean square error of approximation; AVE - the average variance extracted; CR - composite reliability).

The results of the CFA are shown in Table 3. Based on the data presented, all the obtained values of the indices are considered to be satisfactory. The ratio of χ^2 / df is lower than 3, which is the set threshold value (Byrne, 1998). The values of the RFI, NFI,

Table 2 The results of the paired t-test

Variable	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	t	df	p
Consumer ethnocentrism	4.32	1.55	-10.038*	220	0.000
Patriotism	5.23	1.40			
Consumer ethnocentrism	4.32	1.55	-0.170 ^{ns}	220	0.865
Animosity	4.33	1.42			
Patriotism	5.23	1.40	8.961*	220	0.000
Animosity	4.33	1.42			

Note: * The result is significant at the 0.01 level; ^{ns} The result is not statistically significant.

Source: Author

GFI, CFI, TLI and IFI indices are approximately equal to or exceed the threshold value of 0.9 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006), whereas the value of the RMSEA index is lower than the threshold value of 0.1 (Steiger, 1990). The AVE values of all of the three variables exceed the threshold of 0.5 (consumer ethnocentrism: AVE = 0.77; patriotism: AVE = 0.67; animosity: AVE = 0.59). Therefore, the model meets all the requirements in terms of convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, the CR coefficient values are higher than the threshold value of 0.7 for all of the three variables (consumer ethnocentrism: CR = 0.93; patriotism: CR = 0.88 animosity: CR = 0.81). It is important to note that all of the factor loadings are greater than 0.65 and at the 0.05 level of significance.

patriotism expressed by the citizens of the Republic of Serbia are indicative of their orientation towards buying domestic products. This confirms both hypotheses formulated in this paper. However, based on the higher value of the β coefficient, it is evident that patriotism stands out as a significant antecedent of consumer ethnocentrism. Obviously, love of one's country has a stronger effect on consumers' choices over buying domestically made products than antipathy towards the EU economic policy. The research findings indicate the fact that consumers may perceive foreign products as high-quality ones, but because of the emotion of love for their home country, or anger towards the EU, some may decide to buy domestic products, despite their poorer quality.

Table 3 The goodness-of-fit indices of the research model

Goodness-of-fit indices of the model	Recommended values	Calculated values
χ^2 / df	< 3	2.90
RFI	> 0.9	0.91
NFI	> 0.9	0.93
GFI	> 0.9	0.91
CFI	> 0.9	0.96
TLI	> 0.9	0.94
IFI	> 0.9	0.96
RMSEA	< 0.1	0.09

Source: Author

Following the testing of the validity of the model, the structural equation model (SEM) was applied in the final step of the statistical analysis. The SEM analysis was used in order to calculate the statistical significance and the magnitude of the effects of the two tested variables. The results of the SEM analysis are shown in Table 4. Both tested effects were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Thus, we can conclude that animosity towards the EU and

Table 4 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Standardized β coefficient	Conclusion
H1: Animosity \rightarrow consumer ethnocentrism	0.341*	Confirmed
H2: Patriotism \rightarrow consumer ethnocentrism	0.456*	Confirmed

* The result is significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$).

Source: Author

Finally, it is important to note that the independent variables describe the 48.4% of consumer ethnocentrism variability ($R^2 = 0.484$). Since this model contains only two independent variables, this percentage can be characterized as a very satisfactory one. The degree of linear correlation between the two observed variables is 0.517, and this value is significant at the 0.05 level. It is evident that the degree of the linear correlation in the model is not high; therefore, multicollinearity does not represent a serious problem in this study.

Multicollinearity was also tested by assessing the level of tolerance in terms of the observed independent variables and by analyzing the VIF (the variance inflation factor) values. Given the fact that the model contains two independent variables, the level of tolerance is 0.804 (which is significantly higher than 0.1), whereas the VIF value of 1.244 is lower than the threshold value of 5 (Field, 2000). This further confirms the low level of multicollinearity in the given research model, as well as the validity and reliability of the calculated values of the standardized coefficients.

CONCLUSION

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism has traditionally attracted the attention of economists and sociologists. Although researched over several decades, this issue is still relevant and engaging. Moreover, it can be concluded that its importance has been growing in recent years due to the effects of the global economic crisis. The economic crisis is perhaps the right time to encourage an ethnocentric behavior, or to point citizens in the direction of buying domestic products in order to strengthen domestic production and reduce unemployment. The implementation of this policy is especially characteristic of less-developed export-oriented economies.

Another factor giving importance to the study of consumer ethnocentrism and the identification of its antecedents is the rise of nationalism in many countries and increasing tensions in the world, which are not only of economic, but also of militaristic nature. The political crises in the North African countries, the tensions in the Middle East, the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan and the Russian military intervention in Syria are just some examples of the unstable economic situation in different regions and it is these occurrences that add to the importance of this study, primarily focused on testing the effects of patriotism and animosity on consumer ethnocentrism.

The above discussion points to the suitable choice of the model variables, especially concerning the current geopolitical situation, where the patriotism of many nations, as well as the animosity towards economic and/or military policies of certain countries, has been growing increasingly stronger. The contribution and originality of this paper are precisely reflected in this context, which is characterized not only by a strong economic dimension, but also by the social and political ones. However, it should be noted that there are a small number of the studies of consumer ethnocentrism in the Western Balkan Region. The special contribution of this research paper refers to the design of the research model, which has made it possible to analyze the antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism; thus, the paper is characterized by a pronounced marketing research dimension. Modern methods (CFA and SEM) are used in the research, which nowadays are considered as standard methods worldwide in terms of the similar types of field research.

Although the paper presents a relatively simple model that contains only two potential antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism, the choice of these variables makes a unique feature of the proposed model. In fact, patriotism is a very significant and frequently used variable in related cultural and economic research, particularly when identifying the magnitude of the effects of various factors on consumer ethnocentrism. On the other hand, researching the relationship between animosity and consumer ethnocentrism is a more recent topic. In a relatively small number of studies, researchers examine the impact of animosity on consumer ethnocentrism. Since this variable is rarely used in similar studies, its incorporation into the research model gives a distinctive contribution to the paper. In addition, if the papers where animosity is included in the research model as a variable are analyzed, it can be noted that the animosity of different countries/nations towards either the USA or the UK (Rose, Rose & Shoham, 2009; Ahmed *et*

al, 2013), as well as the animosity of Asian countries towards the economic policy of China or Japan (Huang, Phau & Lin, 2010; Cui, Wajda & Hu, 2012; Lee & Lee, 2013) is usually analyzed in them. Although, generally, these types of studies examine the attitudes of Asian consumers (especially those from the Middle East and East Asia), there are also the studies that examine the animosity of European countries towards the economic policy of the USA or Germany (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). However, as far as the author of this paper is aware of that, the animosity of the citizens of one European country towards the EU has this far not been studied.

The research findings confirm that the two independent variables (animosity and patriotism) stand out as the statistically significant antecedents of consumer ethnocentrism. Here, patriotism has a stronger effect on consumer ethnocentrism compared to animosity towards the EU. Consumers are primarily driven to buy domestically made products because of their emotion of love for their own country. On the other hand, antipathy towards the EU is also an important factor affecting Serbian consumers' purchasing decisions. This does not mean that consumers have a negative attitude towards the products that come from the EU; they feel animosity towards the economic policy of the European Union, which can influence them to buy domestic products. The results also confirm the presence of a high degree of patriotism and the moderate degrees of animosity and consumer ethnocentrism in the sample. Love of one's country among citizens is greater than their orientation towards purchasing domestic products. The lower level of consumer ethnocentrism in relation to patriotism indicates that, in spite of their love of their own country, some citizens prefer buying foreign products, probably because of the quality and branding of those products.

There are certain limitations to this study. Firstly, the research was carried out only once and it would be desirable that such research be conducted

successively (on the same sample) in order to monitor changes in citizens' attitudes and behavior in relation to purchasing. Secondly, the study uses a simple research model that contains only two independent variables. It is desirable that future research models should contain a more complex set of variables. New models can be designed in order to additionally test the effects of nationalism, the national identity and cultural openness on consumer ethnocentrism. This would provide valuable and interesting results. Thirdly, the current research was conducted in the territory of one single country. The cross-cultural studies of consumer ethnocentrism would definitely provide a highly valuable input since that would provide an opportunity to compare the attitudes of different nations.

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