Transformational Management Review
(Transform. Manag. Rev.)

Vol.02, Issue No.01, January-June, 2027
pp. 14-52
E-ISSN: 3139-5813

Article Type: Research Article

Beyond National Ethnocentrism: A Qualitative Exploration of Regional Consumer Ethnocentrism

Received: 24/05/2026
Accepted: 10/09/2026
Published: 13/11/2026

Bharti Sharma*, Kartik Dave

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) 110006, India.
*Email: *researcher.bhartisharma@gmail.com*

Abstract

Consumer ethnocentrism research has traditionally focused on consumer preferences in the context of national vs foreign, with limited exploration at the regional level, i.e., within the same country. This study addresses this gap by exploring consumer ethnocentrism at the regional level in a culturally diverse marketplace. The study follows a hybrid thematic approach, based on in-depth interviews with 21 participants across 13 regions in India. The findings suggest that regional consumer ethnocentrism (RCE) is expressed as an overall attitude comprising cognitive beliefs, affective emotions, and behavioural tendencies towards regional product preference. Apart from identifying the internal constitution of the concept, emergent themes are also identified. Unlike national ethnocentrism, which is predominantly driven by normative and external threats, regional ethnocentrism is often grounded in internalised regional identity. The study refines understanding by highlighting what constitutes RCE through inductive insights from a non-Western, multi-cultural country. Finally, the academic and managerial implications, along with future research directions, are provided.

Keywords: National Ethnocentrism, Consumer ethnocentrism research, Consumer ethnocentrism, Regional consumer ethnocentrism

1. INTRODUCTION

In culturally diverse markets, consumers not only orient towards the nation but also have a regional orientation. Businesses' marketing strategies usually tap into place of origin cues, including cultural and local brand elements (Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015; Trentinaglia et

al., 2023). Often, businesses use beyond the national-level branding cues for more 'hyperlocal positioning' for countries with diverse interregional differentiations (Tandon, 2020). This implies that consumption can be influenced by local, context-specific identities, emphasising the role of regional cultural practices and traditions in shaping consumer preferences. How consumers relate to products from their own region, therefore, has direct market consequences for both national and foreign brands targeting local markets and regional brands seeking wider reach. Research on the consumption of local products is important for encouraging sustainable practices, strengthening local economies, and preserving cultural identity (Del Castillo et al., 2024). A prominent concept central to local consumption literature is consumer ethnocentrism.

Consumer ethnocentrism (CE), as introduced by Shimp and Sharma (1987), explains a consumer's trait-like tendency to favour domestic products over foreign products, grounded in moral obligation and economic threats, and based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It has resulted in substantial exploration in consumer behavioural literature explaining global vs local evaluation along with its antecedents, outcomes and interaction with other marketing variables (Balabanis & Siamagka, 2022; Shankarmahesh, 2006). At the national level, the construct was later re-conceptualised as an overall attitude with cognitive, affective, and conative components (Sharma, 2015). The regional counterpart has not undergone the same development.

These conceptualisations, however, have been developed and validated at the national level, with little exploration about their nature in the regional context, i.e., regional ethnocentrism (RE). Regional ethnocentrism, i.e. consumers' orientation towards products from their home region rather than other regions (Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013), it continues to be defined largely as a purchase disposition, but what comprises this regional disposition remains unspecified.

The region-of-origin literature has focused much on the role of origin cues, symbols, and marketing communication in regional products (Bannor & Abele, 2021; Herz et al., 2023; Van Ittersum et al., 2007), but studies examining the underlying identity-based mechanisms driving such regional preferences are limited. Research is situated in European countries (Abdelwahab et al., 2022, 2023; Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013; Fernández–Ferrín & Bande–Vilela, 2015), broadly in the food and beverages category. Even with growing interest in regional consumption, the literature critically adapts the national-level understanding to the regional landscape while keeping key elements intact.

Recent systematic reviews confirm that research on consumer ethnocentrism has been dominated by Western, national-level frameworks, indicating critical contextual gaps, along with theory development gaps (Baber et al., 2024; Yadav, 2024). Systematic review by (Trivedi et al., 2024) call for exploring sub-national or regional ethnocentrism within a nation. Borrowing a

national-level concept, which inherently focuses more on 'should be done,' i.e., threat-activated norms and obligations, may not fully explain ethnocentricity at a regional level and thus requires exploration. Consumers may feel closer to their local identity than national; therefore, regional ethnocentrism must be explored distinctively (Siemieniako et al., 2011).

Emerging markets like India and China are marked by strong regional heterogeneity in economic, cultural and institutional terms, making the domestic market more complex than a homogeneous national market (Sudhir et al., 2015). India provides a theoretical context for exploring regions' consumer ethnocentrism due to its embedded subnational identities that are active on a daily basis. It is often reflected in a wide span of regional product categories with more than 500 GI-tagged products (Sharma, 2019). The regional salience is also reflected in the preference for ads and digital content in regional languages (KPMG India & Google, 2017). Therefore, the distinct multicultural identity within a large market makes India a suitable context in which regional ethnocentrism is expected to be salient and observable, which motivates this study.

Accordingly, this study broadly asks (1) What constitutes its composition and how it is expressed based on insights by Indian consumers? (2) Whether regional ethnocentrism is a regional extension of national ethnocentrism, or is it a distinct concept?

Consumer ethnocentrism studies at the national and, especially, regional levels are examined using a quantitative approach, utilising previous conceptualisations and measurement scales. This study adopts a qualitative approach due to limited knowledge of how consumers experience this phenomenon globally, particularly in the Indian context, and of whether it is expressed in similar ways to previous conceptualisations. Conclusively, scant empirical literature on regional ethnocentrism and limited qualitative exploration, especially in a non-Western context, point to conceptual, contextual and evidence gaps, which are explored through consumers' own accounts.

This study offers a revised perspective on regional consumer ethnocentrism following MacInnis (2011) typology of conceptual contributions, which is based on the premise that "what is seen, known or observable can be seen alternatively" (p. 139). It builds on the existing understanding of CE and RCE and explores an alternative view of its components based on the inductive insights. Compared with previous explorations of regional ethnocentrism, it identifies that RE attitudinal tendencies are interpreted differently through affective, cognitive, and conative expressions, with attachment to home-region products and less harsh orientations towards non-regional products.

It also attempts to distinguish the construct from adjacent concepts to explain its boundaries. These findings pave the way for further theoretical advancement and for marketing managers targeting audiences based on regional-national cues. It further broadens the understanding of regional products, contributing to the place-of-origin and consumer behaviour literature.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Evolution of Consumer Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism has been widely studied as a key construct in understanding how identity shapes consumption behaviour. Originally given by Sumner (1906), ethnocentrism denotes a tendency for individuals to perceive their own group as the centre of the world and evaluate other groups based on that. It is grounded in the Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Tajfel & Turner (1986), which posits that individuals derive a part of their self-concept from the group to which they belong, where they favour in-group beliefs and notions and discount those of the out-group.

Shimp and Sharma (1987) introduced the construct into international marketing as consumer ethnocentrism (CE). They conceptualised it as a belief that purchasing foreign products could harm the domestic economy, undermine the national interest, and be inappropriate and unpatriotic (p. 280). From a consumption perspective, it is seen as a preference for products associated with one's ingroup as a means of superiority, reinforcing identity and maintaining a positive self-concept. Since then, the concept is central to international marketing - how consumers perceive brand signals and make choices based on country-of-origin. However, this conceptualisation was unidimensional and normative, measured through CETSCALE, and it was criticised for extreme item wordings that risked response and social desirability (Siamagka & Balabanis, 2015).

Extending the work of Shimp and Sharma (1987), Siamagka & Balabanis (2015) reconceptualised consumer ethnocentrism as a tendency with multiple facets: prosociality (moral duty to buy domestic), cognition (superior evaluation of domestic products), insecurity (perceived threat from foreign imports), reflexiveness (ethnocentric beliefs require triggers to activate), and habituation (generational and habitual buying patterns). This conceptualisation highlights the role of external triggers, e.g. economic threats, campaigns, and media awareness, in activating the latent national identity. This further raises the question of whether regional ethnocentrism is similarly triggered by external factors or manifests through internal, chronic identity orientations.

Sharma (2015) argues the disconnect between the definition and operationalisation of the original consumer ethnocentrism construct. Shimp and Sharma (1987) define CE as a 'tendency' instead of an attitude, as attitudes are formed towards a specific object, while a tendency is a general disposition that may not be directed towards a specific object. Contrarily, Sharma (2015) notes that in practice, the construct measures the evaluation of objects. i.e., domestic/foreign products. Thus, based on LaPiere's (1934) tripartite attitudinal model, reconceptualised CE as an "overall attitude towards domestic and foreign products consisting of affective reaction, cognitive bias, and behavioural preference" (p. 384). Affect refers to emotional responses such as pride or disdain; cognition to evaluative beliefs about the superiority or inferiority of products; and conation to the disposition to act rather than the act itself (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Conclusively, there is a substantial body of research examining ethnocentrism as a nationally anchored phenomenon. However, the previous conceptual versions and scales were originally developed and validated at the national level, suggesting the need to explore regional differences.

2.2 Regional Consumer Ethnocentrism: Current Understanding and Gaps

Based on the social identity theory, scholars further explored whether consumer ethnocentrism exists only at the national level (domestic vs foreign) or within the country (regional vs non-regional). Multiple terms exist for similar phenomenon: regional ethnocentrism.

In a seminal study Siemieniako et al. (2011) qualitatively explore the national and regional ethnocentrism among Polish consumers, and noted that consumers felt morally obliged to buy local products. Subsequent work has consistently defined the regional construct, grounded in the original conceptualisation of national CE by Shimp and Sharma (1987). Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela (2013) adapted the national construct to the regional level directly, defining *regional ethnocentrism* (RE) as a preference for one's own region over non-regional.

Alternatively, van Ittersum (2001) derived it from the national concept, considering that if consumer ethnocentrism increases the intention to buy domestically, then the same is expected for regional products as well, and termed the phenomenon as *regiocentrism*. This definition treats the construct as a disposition that increases purchase intention for products from one's own region and reduces preference for products from other regions.

Lee et al. (2016) built on van Ittersum and defined *'regiocentrism'* as the preference for local products over non-regional products. Bryła (2019) studied regional ethnocentrism, focusing on the importance of product origin and preference towards regional products. Lehmann et al. (2022) termed it *"regional product beliefs,"* implying favourable beliefs about regional products stemming from consumer ethnocentrism. Despite multiple terminologies, the regional construct originates from a single national conceptualisation and shares similar measurement items.

Two implications follow. First, the definitions specify the construct in terms of what an ethnocentric consumer does, i.e. a preference or purchase intention, rather than what this orientation comprises. This reproduces at the regional level the same disconnect between the definition and operationalisation that Sharma (2015) identified nationally, because the regional construct is based on a national definition, along with how it is measured. Thus, the revisions that addressed this gap for the national construct may not have been carried out for the regional one.

Second, applying national-level ethnocentrism, which primarily reflects normative and moral obligations, i.e., "should be done," may not fully capture consumer dispositions at the regional level. The national definition assumes activation by external threat and expression through out-group rejection; however, the empirical findings also indicate a distinct nature as discussed in

Section 5.4.

Consumers with a strong regional identity and parental influence exhibit a higher degree of regional ethnocentricity and purchase intention (Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2017), indicating that the identity is chronically held rather than triggered by external threats. Consumers also trade off with dual-origin brands they love originating from regions they hate (Abdelwahab et al., 2020), and highly ethnocentric people are willing to pay extra for regional products and prefer purchasing directly from local producers (Bryła, 2019).

Research on locavorism (favouring regional food) and regiocentrism examines the role of neophobia, trust, pride, anger, guilt, etc., towards regional/non-regional products (Abdelwahab et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2016; Lin-Schilstra et al., 2022), suggesting that, in the context of regional consumption biases such as ethnocentrism, these feelings and emotions are profusely evident. Therefore, as discussed, national conceptualisation is guided by normative-cognitive ethnocentric evaluations; its adapted versions may also fail to capture this affective component. Pointing to a gap between what consumers appear to experience and what the concept captures.

Finally, scholars argue that an adapted version of national ethnocentrism does not capture purchase preference for regional products, as originally it was developed for imported goods, and therefore call for exploring beyond threat perceptions and moral obligations towards a more neutral approach (Waehning & Filieri, 2022). In the Indian context, Joshi et al. (2024) studied regiocentrism as a predictor affecting subjective norms in a quantitative study of millet consumption, with less focus on its nature inductively or culturally.

This shows a gap in understanding the nature of regional ethnocentrism furthering the need to further explore and understand the concept individually to identify what comprises its core nature. Is it only a moral tendency driven by obligations or beliefs about quality, or is it also ingrained in deeper emotions towards regional products?

2.3 Theoretical Grounding - Social Identity Theory and ABC-Attitude Model

This study is grounded in the social identity theory and the social comparison theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1979) to understand the nature of regional consumer ethnocentrism. It explains how individuals categorise themselves into social groups, develop attachments to those groups, and differentiate among them. In the regional consumption context, this process shifts from the nation to the home region, where consumers may view their own home region as the in-group and other regions within the same country as relevant out-groups. However, SIT predicts that out-group rejection increases when the out-group is perceived as a threat or when there is greater psychological distance. Regionally, the out-group is a fellow national region rather than a foreign nation, i.e. the psychological distance between in-group and out-group is

smaller, and outright rejection is expected to be less possible (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The literature on RCE is primarily based in contexts with strong regional distinctions or salient regional identities. SIT suggests that people derive a sense of identity and belonging from the groups that they associate with. Therefore, ethnocentric tendencies may be reflected not only in negative views towards other regions but also in stronger preference and attachment towards one's own group (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Therefore, it is theoretically relevant to explore whether this form of regional ethnocentrism holds true in a culturally diverse country that is also embedded in a shared national identity.

A consumer may have multiple identities (Saint Clair, 2023) where identities remain a part of self-concept, i.e., 'chronic identity', or become activated in specific situations, i.e., 'situational identity' (Hinton et al., 2024). This implies that while a consumer might feel part of a greater national identity, other levels of identity operating within the region (subnations) also significantly influence consumer behaviour. This distinction between chronic and situational identity is central to the study as it explores whether regional ethnocentrism is triggered by circumstances or sustained by a consistent sense of regional belonging, and how regional and national identities are reflected in consumption behaviour. The study draws on the tripartite model following the conceptualisation of ethnocentrism, with affective (A), conative (behavioural) (B), and cognitive (C) components by Sharma (2015), as an attitudinal lens to revisit the conceptualisation of RCE. The affective reaction captures the favourable and unfavourable emotional responses towards regional/non-regional products. The cognitive element comprises evaluative beliefs about the superiority/inferiority of regional/non-regional products. Conative element captures behavioural orientation towards regional products and not the behaviour itself (Bakanauskas et al., 2020; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). This study follows this conceptualisation from a tripartite lens and examines regional consumer ethnocentrism to determine whether it also encompasses the affective-cognitive-conative component.

2.4 What regional consumer ethnocentrism is not?

Because regional consumption has been studied under several overlapping labels: regiocentrism, regional ethnocentrism, regional affinity, sub-national ethnocentrism, etc., with the same term denoting different ideas, it is imperative to distinguish RCE from related constructs to better understand it and comprehend what it is not (Mackenzie, 2003; Teas & Palan, 1997). Existing literature suggests RCE involves (a) comparative evaluation and (b) is directed towards products and not regions.

Several adjacent constructs focus on the region rather than its products. *Regional identity* is the extent to which an individual identifies with their region (Lantz & Loeb, 1998); it is a matter of

self-categorisation, and scholars note that regional identity is an antecedent of RCE rather than orientation itself (Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2017) or an element within RCE (Waehning & Filieri, 2022). RCE differs from *consumers' affinity* towards one's region, where affinity indicates a general positive orientation (sympathy and attachment) towards one's place and people, but not product evaluation (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). It is distinct from *place attachment*, which is an emotional bond between a person and his place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). It neither entails evaluative beliefs about products nor a disposition to choose them over alternatives. RCE is separate from cultural embodiment, which means the extent to which products carry the meanings and elements of culture (Jakubanecs & Supphellen, 2016). RCE may arise out of *cultural embodiment*; however, merely following one's culture doesn't constitute regional ethnocentrism.

Other constructs concern products but lack an identity basis. Consumer localism is conceptualised as consumers' preference for local products and sellers within their place of residence (Leicht et al., 2025). In contrast, RCE reflects consumers' orientation toward products originating from their own region, which may differ from their place of current residence. RCE is not only *regional/local product preference*, but also a favourable outcome of regional ethnocentrism (Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013) and can also be influenced by other factors, such as price, availability, habit, other than RCE. Also, RCE is not general ethnocentrism as described by Sumner (1906). It is ethnocentrism in the consumption context, implying that a person may not be ethnocentric in general (in social-political scenarios) but express ethnocentrism in consumption contexts, and vice versa. Finally, regional ethnocentrism differs from national consumer ethnocentrism, as the latter is situated in a domestic vs foreign context and is often seen as a moral obligation to protect domestic interests - a perspective present study attempts to answer.

3. METHODOLOGY

As research evidence is scarce and contextual evidence is limited, the study follows a qualitative research design to capture complex meanings and consumer experiences in an underexplored domain (Creswell et al., 2007; Kipnis et al., 2012).

3.1 Sampling Design and Procedure

Participants were selected following a purposive sampling design using a criterion sampling strategy to establish eligibility, and a maximum variation sampling strategy to ensure diversity in the sample (Palinkas et al., 2015). Interested participants first completed a brief form. Participants with an ethnocentric orientation and having purchased at least one regional product in the last year were included. This served as a screening tool and also provided descriptive insights.

Variation was sought across major culturally distinct regions to accommodate the research

objective. Maximum variation sampling was applied, as it is appropriate when the objective is to observe "important common patterns that cut across variations" (Palinkas et al., 2015, p.534). Sampling across multiregional representation, an approach used in other qualitative interview studies, to capture geographical diversity (Ding et al., 2025; Aarons et al., 2009; Henke et al., 2008), ensured the data reflected varied rather than single regional identities. Regions were categorised following Cabral & Dhar (2020), who derive their classification from Part III of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 and the North Eastern Council Act. The final sample was distributed across five zones comprising 11 states and 2 union territories. Participant profiles and their regions are depicted in Table A in the appendix. The north-eastern zone was not represented, which is acknowledged as a limitation.

Participants who met the selection criteria and provided consent were interviewed. Participants were recruited until data sufficiency was achieved, at which point no new substantive themes emerged. Evidence on thematic saturation indicates that thematic patterns commonly stabilise around 6-7 interviews in homogeneous sample (Guest et al., 2020; Ozturk et al., 2025). This study, with a heterogeneous sample, further recruited participants to reach similar data patterns. With the inclusion of new samples, no new themes emerged, confirming the previous pattern. Thus, criterion sampling ensured that only information-rich participants were included, thereby contributing to in-depth discussion, while maximum-variation sampling allowed exploration of a common phenomenon that cut across diverse contexts. Thus, the data were deemed adequate and informative (Malterud et al., 2016). Twenty-one semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted, lasting 80 min.

3.2 Material

The interview guide, comprising form questions, interview questions, and visuals, was preliminarily reviewed by experts. Questions followed a funnel approach, moving from broader prompts to more sensitive ones (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). It was further refined after three pilot interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005).

Visual stimuli were also integrated in the interview process to elucidate symbolic meanings which direct questioning may not capture (Dodds et al., 2026). Visuals facilitated richer narration by helping recall experiences and share meanings predominantly related to marketing cues and to how these regional cues were perceived. Images of products with regional cues (regional packaging, regional language, regional markers, and regional brand elements) were included (Gill, 2024). Thus, images along with projective and evaluative prompts, enhanced narration, and symbolic interpretations (Harper, 2002). These were also corroborated by participants' narratives and scores, and helped interpret the results. E.g., a few participants with comparatively lower ethnocentric scores found regional cues gimmicky, while participants showing greater favour towards regional cues were enthusiastic about regional versions and cues.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using hybrid thematic analysis (HTA) by (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) integrating inductive and deductive coding within a single process. Throughout, the cognitive-affective-conative framework functioned as a set of sensitising concepts rather than a definitive template (Blumer, 1954) i.e., categories were not forced onto the template from the outset; rather, first codes were generated inductively and then further interpreted through the lens of the ABC structure.

In Phase 1, in-vivo open-ended codes in participants' languages were derived inductively without forcing them into predetermined categories using Braun & Clarke (2006). These were further refined and merged to generate categories.

In Phase 2, the finalised categories were interpreted deductively in relation to the ABC-dimension (Sharma, 2015), with national CE's conceptualisation serving as a coding lens for the final themes. Data were assigned to the affective, cognitive, and conative parent categories as discussed further. The cognitive lens comprised what consumers thought or believed. Affective lens included emotions expressing favouring regional products and regions. The behavioural or conative lens captured underlying behavioural tendencies. (e.g., 'I prioritise') rather than their actual behaviour (e.g., 'I buy'). This ensured that regional ethnocentrism was viewed as an attitudinal tendency rather than a behaviour. Segments that did not fit into the three ABC dimensions were retained as emergent themes. The progression from initial codes to categories, sub-themes and themes (dimensions) is presented in Tables (A-E) in the appendix.

Rigour was pursued against trustworthiness criteria by Lincoln & Guba (1985). It included keeping a reflexive journal, engaging deeply with data in two phases, and documenting the researcher's observations. Credibility was strengthened through peer debriefing during analysis and through oral member checking, in which preliminary interpretations were discussed with three participants. Negative cases were used to refine the conceptualisation and not discarded (Patton, 2002).

4. ANALYSIS

The thematic analysis generated themes based on the cognitive-affective-conative lens, along with three emergent themes. The negative case analysis presents the boundary conditions for that theme.

4.1 Cognitive Themes

The cognitive dimension comprised four interrelated belief structures through which participants justified their preference for products from their home region based on (a) quality beliefs, (b) authenticity beliefs, (c) cultural ownership beliefs, and (d) normative beliefs.

4.1.1 Geographically based regional beliefs (C1)

Consumers strongly believed that the region's geography (soil, water, terroir, and climate) creates superior-quality products that may not be replicated elsewhere. P2 expressed:

> "*It's made well in the water there. if you use the same recipe and try to make it anywhere, the water is different, and the product will simply not be the same."*

P4 continued purchasing coconut oil from a local Kerala store, sourcing the oil directly from Kerala, based on perceived quality beliefs. Participants also believed regional products can easily be distinguished from non-regional (P10). Consumers perceive that superior quality emerges from unique geography. However, the negative case analysis indicated a boundary condition that the belief may weaken if the person doesn't know about the product.

4.1.2 Provenance and Authenticity Beliefs (C2)

Consumers believed that regional products were authentic and trustworthy because they genuinely originated there. The association of the product with its region works as a heuristic of quality, i.e., the region itself functions as the quality signal. From consumer accounts,

> "*Banana chips, if they are from Kerala, then they would be definitely good (P4)*" "*The brand is associated with a region which is actually known for Ayurveda, it helps the marketers" (P15)*

While the first sub-theme identified the irreplaceable geographical and environmental factors, this theme captures the region's reputation for that regional product; i.e., it is sufficient to believe that the quality will be superior and the best. Symbolic markers such as geographical indication (GI) tags and language further reinforced perceptions of authenticity.

4.1.3 Cultural Ownership Beliefs (C3)

Beyond authenticity and quality, participants strongly affirmed that their regional products are unique and distinct from those of other states. Participants viewed regional products as their 'own', representing the region's heritage and cultural distinctiveness. As P1 expressed:

> "*Absolutely, we are the largest producer of fox nuts; we have litchis, Madhubani paintings, and so many unique things. . . originated here*."

P11 shared pictures of Kutch work (a traditional fabric craft) specific to his region. P19 voluntarily prepared a detailed list of different districts and their unique regional products. These accounts highlight familiarity with their regional products and the belief that these products represented

their region's uniqueness. These beliefs were stronger for consumers with greater exposure to regional culture through language, consumption, traditions, and symbols.

However, these beliefs are not universal. P2 did not express strong cultural distinctiveness about her home region, stating that she did not see anything she carries forward from her state, suggesting that if consumers perceive their region as not offering distinct products, this belief weakens.

4.1.4 Normative Regional Advancement Beliefs (C4)

This sub-theme captures participants' beliefs that supporting regional products contributes to the welfare of regional products and the development of the regional economy. Participants who had direct exposure to regional producers, including artisans and cultural practitioners, consciously preferred regional products because they believed their consumption choices had economic consequences for these communities. Consumers believed certain regional products exist in a delicate economic ecosystem, where continuous consumer support is required for them to remain relevant. E.g. P7 and P13 made,

> *"...efforts and directly sourced from weavers to support them instead of middlemen"*

Participants also expressed a sense of responsibility and normative beliefs about their regional products. P5 deliberately purchased tickets to extend consumer support for the regional dance form and expressed,

> *"It's our personal duty and collective responsibility to preserve this ancient art"*

A soft preference for one's region prevails. Rather than advocating against other non-regional products (kimchi), P8 believed regional products should be preserved, developed, and promoted as a local equivalent within his region and questioned,

> *"Why can't we make our own Ladakhi pickle, which can be as good as kimchi?"*

This aspirational belief later motivated him to develop his own regional brand. Consistent with consumer ethnocentrism literature, these accounts reflect a sense of consumer responsibility or moral obligations towards supporting; however, as a distinct finding, these normative preferences are soft, i.e. the prescription is for the self and the people in that region (in-group), but not against the out-group (other states within the country).

These normative support and stewardship beliefs towards regional products are conditional.

Negative case analysis indicates that normative beliefs were prevalent among participants who had direct contact with sellers and producers of regional products, whereas individuals lacking firsthand experience with producers or the product's source did not express this rationale for supporting local producers. As P1 explicitly mentioned,

> *"Regional promotion should not come at the expense of quality, i.e. by saying 'buy regional', we are selling shabby products"*

Corroborated during the visual elicitation round, a few participants found certain regional packaging *"gimmicky"* and preferred non-regional products over regional when there was product-region-quality misfit (P1, P8, P3, P15). This shows that these normative beliefs may vary among participants along a continuum from weak to strong ethnocentrism. People with stronger ethnocentrism may express greater normativity and in-group cohesion, whereas those with weaker beliefs in cultural distinctiveness (as seen in C3) may not experience these effects as strongly.

4.2 Affective Themes

While the cognitive themes discuss beliefs about quality, the affective theme examines how consumers emotionally interact with products from their own region. Participants consistently associated regional products with emotions such as love, belonging, comfort and pride, indicating that these products reinforced emotional value beyond functional attributes. This theme comprises broadly two sub-themes.

4.2.1 Collective Regional Pride and Vicarious Emotion (A1)

This sub-theme reflects the emotions of regional and collective pride associated with one's region and its cultural products. Participants expressed pride in regional products, art forms, intellectual achievements, and even sporting successes when these received recognition both within and beyond their region.

At the individual level, participants described feeling proud when others appreciated products or cultural expressions from their region. Participants felt joy when they saw

> *"Regional stalls being flooded by non-regional buyers appreciating their regional products" (P1, P16).*

Participants also described a social dimension to regional pride; achievements associated with regions were experienced as shared successes. P5 explained the victory of the regional cricket team, RCB, by mentioning that,

> *"When RCB won. . . it felt as if it were a personal win. Me and my friends were going crazy. . . Somehow their win was our win. It represented Karnataka."*

Similarly, P8 described feeling proud of a sportsperson from their region winning an Olympic medal because "*he represented Haryana and made us proud*."

Thus, the theme highlights that participants experience pride in their regional products and in the region's recognition.

4.2.2 Emotional Belonging, Comfort and Rootedness (A2)

It was the most widely present sub-theme among participants, with the strongest expression. The participants experience an affective connection to their regional place and products through love, comfort, a sense of belonging, and familiarity. P20 noted,

> *"Whenever I wear this saree, it makes me feel special because it's from Maheshwar. I love how it's made"*

The insights indicate that people who favour their regions may experience affective emotions when consuming or engaging with their regional products. P14 shared,

> *"I absolutely love how so many products like the Baluchuri sarees and Terracotta toys of Bishnupur (West Bengal) are so aesthetically beautiful!"*

Others experienced "a sense of comfort" while consuming their regional product and "reducing the unfamiliarity with the new place" (P6, P20). P12 consumed regional products to stay near her roots:

> *"In Hong Kong, I wanted to wear a Baghalpuri saree on my wedding day and wanted to gift everyone because I felt I was nearer to my roots"*

P7 considered buying regional prints *"a wholesome experience. . . a very soul-touching thing"*.

While the affective theme reflected the positive emotional response to regional products, participants also expressed grief and anxiety (towards the in-group) about the dying traditional processes of creating regional products and art forms. Unlike traditional consumer ethnocentrism, where grief and fear stem from perceived threats posed by foreign products, participants here were concerned about their own regional products losing value, market share, and identity. P5 mentioned,

"I feel sad...this hurts and the culture is dying"

or modernisation and generational gaps resulting in the loss of valuable regional products

"Threat of losing one's culture due to modernisation (P7)"

Participants also discussed counterfeit products on the market, which erode local wealth and lead to the misappropriation of regional heritage and intellectual property. They expressed concern that a lack of awareness of the value of local products can lead to a loss of ownership. Referring to the recent case of a luxury brand's controversial adaptation of Kolhapuri footwear, P21 expressed:

"We couldn't even claim any copyright or patent that it belongs to our Kolhapur"

At this point, the threat and fear are from within the group, i.e., erosion of cultural products from within, with slight competition from counterfeit products or larger brands cashing in on the tradition. Therefore, contrary to the national ethnocentrism literature, the affective dimension shows mostly positive aspects, i.e., unipolarity, compared to previous literature, with minimal negative emotions projected towards the outgroup (non-regional products).

4.3 Conative Themes

This theme highlights consumers' general behavioural tendencies towards regional products. The sub-themes suggest a tendency to support regional goods and services rather than actual behavioural outcomes Eagly & Chaiken (1993).

4.3.1 Regional First Behavioural Tendency (CON 1)

Participants discussed a natural tendency to prefer their regional products when made accessible, especially in product categories with cultural embeddedness. P20 prioritised buying Ratlami Sev (a regional food item) online from the regional brand despite relocating or limited availability. P15 preferred sourcing Ayurvedic products from their home state. P4 favoured purchasing through state emporiums or local sellers sourcing directly from the home state.

Participants expressed a persistent in-group orientation to prioritise the regional products. This subtheme is closest to previous conative dimensions, where consumers expressed their preference towards domestic goods as "the first, last and foremost" (Sharma, 2015; Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Siamagka & Balabanis, 2015). However, this regional preferential orientation is conditional on functionality and quality.

Varying degrees of in-group orientation towards preference were observed, with some individuals strongly affirming continual purchase of regional products, while a few showed weaker preference,

depending more on the product's functionality and quality. Several participants chose packaging from their region when shown images of the same brand with packaging from different states, all identical in content. However, as an exception, a few selected another region to explore new culture and products. This conditionality is underexplored in the context of regional consumer ethnocentrism.

4.3.2 Selective Regional Support Tendency (CON 2)

Apart from personal consumption tendencies, participants expressed a tendency to advocate for regional products and to promote, support, and share their regional culture through them. Participants shared an inclination to consume regional products, and also to hold onto their identities as P6 reflects,

> *"When you feel you are losing something, you try to hold onto it more strongly"*

Several respondents shared that whenever given the chance, they are inclined to gift regional specialities to foreign friends or friends from other states to showcase their region's rich cultural heritage (P5, P7, P12). Participants also expressed willingness to invest extra efforts to obtain authentic products, as P5 affirmed,

> *"I would prefer to buy this Mysore incense only from my regional shop, even if I had to travel to another state".*

P16 explained that people in her state prefer buying from local truck drivers bringing in regional products from the interiors of Uttarakhand. Participants shared a tendency to continue engaging with the products and to provide conscious support for their development. As P10 notes,

> *"When you get to know that these things are associated with a 5000-year-old legacy that is still ongoing, you want to preserve them"*

The preference and advocacy orientation is not universal, but varies with categories: handicrafts, regional music, food, art, etc. Participants often simultaneously preferred regional products and brands to signal culture, while national brands for functional value. E.g. P2 preferred regional products as cultural symbols, while she wanted to restrict some products, e.g. to national brands.

Therefore, participants often preferred and continued to support culturally meaningful products in which RCE is expressed more as in-group favouritism than as strong out-group rejection, a pattern distinct from previous research.

4.4 Emergent Themes

Beyond the characterisation of RCE, three additional patterns consistently emerged across participants' accounts, providing additional insights.

4.4.1 Non-Exclusionary Regional Preference

The majority of participants showed greater favouritism towards their own regional products and less outgroup rejection (i.e., exclusion). As P8 noticed,

> *"It doesn't mean we are kind of creating a disharmony within states...moving forward by crushing others. . . but yes, we want our regional products to grow, and our people should start exploring our legacy products."*

While dominance of participants' expression - 'We should promote our regional products' and 'our products are superior' prevailed, but there were limited expressions of rejecting the regional products of other regions within the country.

However, this expression has exceptions. A few participants showed mild comparative evaluation and abstinence from buying non-regional goods, indicating inward preference and exclusion towards other goods. For instance, P4 mentioned she would choose her local Ayurvedic brand over any national brand, and P5 and P21 mentioned buying regional brands, even if costlier than alternatives. Thus, an expression of exclusion, i.e. negative pole, was observed faintly and was not completely absent.

4.4.2 Expanded Regional Product Domain

The preliminary screening form also collected data on buying patterns by category of regional products purchased. When explored through in-depth narration, participants corroborated and strongly expressed sourcing various regional products such as handicrafts, textiles, handloom, and GI-linked products and experiencing regional intangible art forms, along with the usual food, beverages, and agricultural products.

P12 deliberately chose to source a regional product all the way from Bihar (India) to Hong Kong. Across categories, participants interpreted the product as carrying regional and cultural meaning for consumers in relation to their home region. Additionally, the data identified an expanded domain of product categories, showing what all regional products encompass.

4.4.3 Chronic Regional Identity Salience

Another emergent theme discussed how regional identity and national identities were expressed and influenced, i.e., identity salience. Several participants themselves reflected on what activates their national identity vs. regional identity.

Participants described regional identity as something which is *"put into you as a child*" (P2), *"coming from the root"* (P5), and *"inseparable from one's core"* (P8) and not requiring activation. Participants shared the association with their region, and preference for regional products came naturally, not because of any fear or external pressure.

In contrast, regarding national identity, participants report that their national identity becomes more visible when they choose between a rival country's product and their own (P1). The preference for national products over foreign ones arises due to national crises, war, rivalry, international turbulence, or when the economy is perceived as under threat, as P8 asserted,

"When we see others coming together, we pledge as a nation"

Key insights highlight that regional identity was continuously reinforced in participants' lives through the consistent consumption of regional products, the use of regional language, and everyday preferences, whereas national identity was situational and typically activated by events.

5. DISCUSSION

The study attempts to qualitatively extend the conceptualization of 'regional consumer ethnocentrism' by exploring what constitutes RCE. The section first discusses regional ethnocentrism in the Indian context, followed by its conceptual structure along with emergent themes.

5.1 Understanding Regional Ethnocentrism: in-group favouritism and non-exclusion

Grounded in the social identity theory and tripartite attitudinal conceptualisation of national ethnocentrism by Sharma (2015), the study primarily finds that the composition of the construct is distinct from national ethnocentrism. The study represents regional ethnocentrism as an overall attitudinal tendency to prefer one's own regional product, reflected in cognitive beliefs about its authenticity and quality, and expressed through affective evaluations that reflect regional-first orientations.

However, unlike the conventional understanding of consumer ethnocentrism that incorporates both a preference for in-group products and a rejection of out-group alternatives (Sharma, 2015; Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Siamagka & Balabanis, 2015), RCE in the present study was expressed more strongly as in-group favouritism, with a mild out-group negative evaluation. RCE is closely related to an individual's regional identity, which is more consistent and accessible to them. Consumers sought to prioritise, support and preserve regional products from their region without necessarily rejecting other non-regional products. The pattern can be understood with varying intensities of ethnocentric expressions.

Rosenblatt (1964) note ethnocentrism ranges from mild ingroup preferences with superiority and pride, to simultaneously projecting rejection and hostility towards the outgroup, where the latter becomes more prominent when the outgroup is perceived to be dangerous, hostile, and competitive (pp. 132-133). Applied to the consumption context, states within India are characterised by close geographical, economic and cultural proximity with a shared national identity. Consequently, products originating from other states may not be perceived as a threat or as low-competition, which is probably why the negative expression of ethnocentrism has not emerged in the present study. In the reconceptualisation of national CE, Sharma (2015) included both positive orientation towards domestic products and negative orientation towards foreign goods. However, this study found that, in a regional context and in an eastern-collective society context, the negative pole did not emerge explicitly.

Such variation is consistent with previous distinctions between softer, in-group -supportive and harder, exclusionary forms of ethnocentrism. Chryssochoidis et al. (2007) distinguishes between soft ethnocentrism (expressing a preference for in-group products) and hard ethnocentrism (rejecting foreign products). Joshi and Joshi (2021) found national ethnocentrism in India comprised protective ethnocentrism, characterised by defence and rejection of outgroups and patriotic ethnocentrism, focused on supporting domestic products, further supporting the findings of this study.

Similarly, affection towards the ingroup vs defence/avoidance from the outgroup are separable components of ethnocentrism (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016); that is also prevalent among Chinese consumers as dogmatic ethnocentrism and patriotic ethnocentrism (Lee et al., 2019). According to SIT, outgroup rejection is driven more by perceived threat than by mere identification with the group.

Though these distinctions are prevalent at the national level, the present study finds that regional ethnocentrism may also vary along a continuum, with degrees depending on the perceived strength of outgroup threat. In this study, regional ethnocentrism has emerged as a soft position on the continuum, where consumers more readily prioritised products from their region than outrightly rejected non-regional products. The mild exclusion observed among some participants however suggest that negative pole is not absent but varies in intensity.

5.2 The Consumer Attitudinal Structure of Regional Consumer Ethnocentrism

Findings further show that consumers experience RCE through a tripartite model of attitudes, with consistent representations across cognitive, affective, and conative orientations.

The cognitive dimension of ethnocentrism captures how consumers evaluate and interpret the regional product. Consumers expressed beliefs about the superior quality, authenticity, and distinctiveness of one's regional products. Consumers also believed it was a moral duty to support

local producers, artisans, and their regional products, indicating a soft normative orientation. The literature predominantly evaluates out-groups negatively, such as those who buy outside the region and those responsible for unemployment (e.g., adapted versions of CETSCALE; Abdelwahab et al., 2020; Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013)).

However, in this study, consumers showed a less exclusionary normative orientation towards non-regional products and greater aspirations to preserve and promote regional products, with mild inward-normative tendencies to protect one's own regional product. The study clearly highlights the dominant expression of the affective element, which persists across 21 participants. This attitudinal orientation captures how consumers' emotional experience, linked to their own culture and place, can influence product evaluation beyond objective perceptions of quality. Sharma (2015) also found presence of affective element among national ethnocentric consumers. This is further supported by place-attachment literature (Del Castillo et al., 2024; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

Apart from personal attachment, consumers also experienced collective and vicarious pride when regional products, artisan and region received recognition. In line with Social Identity Theory, achievements associated with the regional in-group became emotionally meaningful to consumers themselves. This aspect has been underreported in regional CE research, and the study adds a social dimension to regional pride, distinguishing it from mere personal satisfaction and framing it as a collective sense of pride in being part of a larger, coherent group. The affective expression of love for regional products differs from regional identity, which may be one of the factors driving the formation of ethnocentric evaluations.

This also distinguishes the composition of regional consumer ethnocentrism from that of national consumer ethnocentrism, where the affective dimension has been least explored. Strong positive emotions towards regional products were more prominent (pride, affection, familiarity, comfort, rootedness), and negative emotions towards non-regional products (hate, disdain, anger), in contrast to Sharma's (2015) bipolar conceptualisation of affective dimension. This indicates that the affective dimension is predominantly positive; however, there is an inward-facing anxiety about cultural loss, which pushes them to be protective and to favour regional products.

The conative (behavioural) dimension captures how these evaluations and feelings are reflected in behavioural predispositions. Consumers expressed regional-first tendencies, continued sourcing, a preference for authentic, region-oriented products, an inclination to share regional products, and a willingness to put in extra effort to support regional products.

As discussed, while previous studies have measured this tendency to "buy domestic even if it costs them in the long run", other forms of dispositions to support or regional products are less visible. This study broadens this orientation through continued engagement, prioritisation of

regional products and support through regional networks. These remain tendencies to act rather than actual behavioural outcomes, and further require exploration of how they influence actual behaviour.

Thus, through empirical data and theoretical grounding, regional ethnocentrism manifests in cognition-affection and conation.

5.3 Identity Salience - Chronic vs Situational

Findings indicate the relative salience of regional and national identity in consumption. Identity salience explains how strongly an individual connects to an identity and how often that identity influences their thoughts, beliefs and behaviour. Some identities are continuously present in our daily lives, while others get activated occasionally. Hinton et al. (2024) termed these as 'chronic identity' and 'situational identity', respectively. The findings of the study are also interpreted through this lens to examine how regional and national identities can coexist and are expressed.

Participants' accounts indicate that regional identities are expressed more consistently than national identities as they are embedded in daily cultural and regional interactions. Therefore, regional identities may appear more chronic and persistent, whereas national identities may appear situational or contextual. Individuals hold multiple identities, arranged in order of salience, with chronically visible identities most readily activated across contexts (Saint Clair, 2023; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). A consumer simultaneously holds his identity as a resident of a particular state and his national identity, both of which are genuine. Consequently, while expression of regional identity and regional ethnocentrism arises from within, it requires an external prompt at the national level, such as war, economic threats, collective mobilisation, and international rivalry. One's worldview is more affected by local identities than by national identity (Siemieniako et al., 2011).

As regional identity becomes more salient and accessible, it may also shape consumption behaviour in a way similar to national identity. Tarabashkina et al. (2024) compares the roles of country of origin, region of origin, and terroir marketing to determine which is most significant for the consumption of regional products. The implications of this distinction for regional versus national consumer ethnocentrism are considered next.

5.4 Regional versus National Consumer Ethnocentrism

Although regional and national ethnocentrism both involve favourable evaluations of in-group products and can be explained by SIT, the findings suggest differences in consumer orientation, motivation, and identity activation.

First, conventional national CE has substantial normative and economic-protective influence. Whereas, regional ethnocentrism shows a dominance of internalised affective-cognitive elements

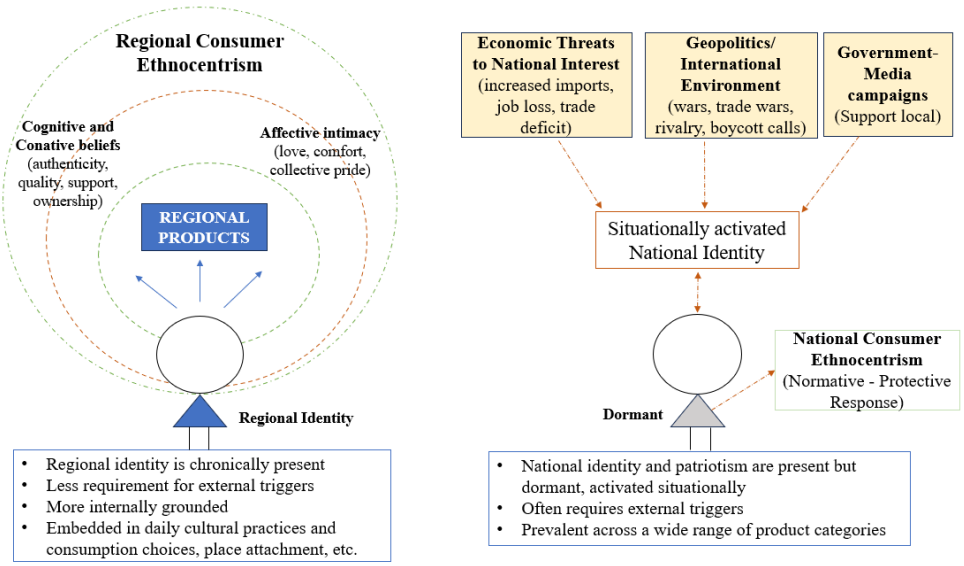


Figure 1: Identity and Consumer Ethnocentrism Salience (Source: Prepared by authors)

and mild normative aspects. Consumers may perceive purchasing foreign/non-regional products as inappropriate because it threatens domestic employment, businesses, or the national/regional economy and is guided by moral expectations (Balabanis et al., 2019; Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013; Shimp & Sharma, 1987). As observed under conative-cognitive themes, consumers also wanted regional producers and artisans to benefit from their purchases, but this reasoning was predominantly inward-supportive rather than outward-defensive. Consumers emphasised sustaining regional makers, products, traditions and cultural heritage on their own rather than being asked to do so.

Second, the difference also arises from identity salience, as explained above. Consumers deliberately choose local without any peer or external pressure, indicating that their identity is activated by deep-rooted associations with regional products, as seen in Figure 1(a). As the findings suggest, their cognitive beliefs and thoughts about regional products, along with emotional connections, are intrinsically grounded in preferences, i.e., ABC. On the other hand, consumers often choose domestic over foreign goods for external reasons, e.g., collective boycotts and national ethnocentric tendencies are expressed through reflection and media-government campaigns (Siamagka & Balabanis, 2015).

Therefore, their in-group identity as Indians is activated, and they follow consumption practices that make them feel closer to their in-group, i.e. fellow Indians, as shown in Figure 1(b).

In both scenarios, there is loyalty towards the region/country; however, in national ethnocentrism, this activation of identity often requires an external event, especially related to a threat to the economy or moral duty, (Farah & Mehdi, 2021; Shankarmahesh, 2006), while regional identity is more consistent and deeply influences the worldview Siemieniako et al. (2011).

Conclusively, consumer identities which are more central to the self-concept produce stronger and more consistent effects on consumer attitudes and behaviour, in comparison to identities which are situational or peripheral (Reed II et al., 2012). This distinction should not be interpreted as implying that national identity is always situational or that regional identity is consistently chronic. Rather, the present findings identify relative differences in their accessibility and expression within consumption contexts. Therefore, based on differences in identity salience and expressions of regional and national ethnocentrism, the study proposes that these orientations interact with consumers' perceptions of regional, national, and global marketing cues.

5.5 Broadening the meaning of Regional Products

There are multiple definitions of regional products, broadly tied to geographical boundaries, wherein such products are exclusively produced or characterised by unique cultural, environmental, and traditional characteristics within a region (Barham, 2003; Paasi & Metzger, 2017; Waehning & Filieri, 2022). While earlier regional-product literature acknowledged traditional handicraft-based production (Van Ittersum et al., 1999), research on regional ethnocentrism has focused on product categories such as food, wine, and agricultural produce.

However, these definitions broadly view regional products as having an exclusive origin from a production perspective.

This study extends understanding by emphasising the consumer's lens. Consumers perceive a product as 'regional' not only when it is exclusive to their home region, i.e., within a specific geographical boundary, but also when consuming it allows them to connect with and express their regional and cultural belonging. The regional product is distinct not only by geography but also by cultural practices, artisanal knowledge, and the identity it carries, as also described by Charton-Vachet et al. (2020).

Hence, the synthesis from traditional definitions of regional products and findings of this study implies a broader understanding of regional products in the Indian context, where a regional product includes culturally meaningful products that are exclusively produced in a protected designated origin (PDO) or are geographically indicated (GI), including food and beverages, along with handicrafts, manufactured products and other GI-protected products and services.

5.6 Boundary Conditions and Transferability of RCE

The negative case analysis further refined the conceptual boundaries of RCE by identifying conditions under which its manifestation in the consumption context varied. Findings suggest RCE is not unconditional but remains contingent on perceived product quality. Further RCE was more strongly expressed for culturally embedded products, such as food, handicrafts, textiles, arts, and GI-linked products, than for highly functional products, where utilitarian considerations were more prominent. These findings indicate that while RCE reflects a stable attitudinal orientation towards regional products, its marketplace expression varies with product/brand familiarity, product quality, and the cultural significance of the product category.

Although the present study was conducted in India, the proposed conceptualisation is theoretically transferable to contexts where subnational identities are salient and consumers associate products with distinct regional cultures, traditions, or places of origin. The transferability lies in the underlying consumer identity mechanism through which regional identity shapes consumers' product evaluations, emotional attachment, and behavioural orientations towards regional products, rather than in the specific Indian context. Existing studies on regional identity and regional product preferences in other contexts (e.g., Abdelwahab et al., 2023; Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013; Trentinaglia et al., 2023; Waehning & Filieri, 2022) suggest that similar consumer processes may operate beyond India. Future research may further examine the applicability and boundary conditions of RCE across different cultural and institutional contexts.

6. CONTRIBUTION AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Contribution

The study contributes through multiple streams. First, it extends the concept of regional ethnocentrism by drawing on qualitative evidence to understand how consumers experience this orientation. It provides a microscopic view of the multi-structure architecture: how consumers cognitively evaluate regional products through beliefs about quality, authenticity, and regional development; effectively experience pride, belonging, and concern for preservation; and conatively develop regional-first marketplace orientations.

It contributes to CE literature by highlighting that ingroup favouritism and outgroup rejection are distinct within consumer ethnocentrism, with varying degrees along a continuum, depending on perceived threat. When outgroup products and members are perceived as culturally similar or less threatening, there is lower expression of regional ethnocentrism, or “soft ethnocentrism”. The affective dimension shows dominance with positive emotions towards ingroup products. It also distinguishes between regional and national identity salience, suggesting that regional identity may also influence consumption behaviour through origin cues.

Table 1: Gaps and Future Research Directions

Area	Future Research Direction
Theoretical and Conceptual	• Examine antecedents and consequences of RCE • Explore mediators and moderators of RCE • Does RCE predict intention to engage in cultural patronage and support for regional products? • Investigate which dimension (affective, cognitive, or conative) most shapes consumer outcomes
Contextual	• Explore RCE in other countries with cultural diversity and distinctive sub-national identities • Examine product category (e.g., GI-tagged vs non-GI regional products) as a factor in how strongly RCE is expressed • Investigate if chronic-situational identity salience is universal and which identity influences consumer choices significantly
Methodological	• Examining for constructs' unidimensionality vs multidimensionality • Investing through mixed-method research, multi-method, experimental design to understand the influence of marketing interventions on RCE and consumer behaviour

Source: Prepared by Authors

It furthers understanding of regional products and broadens horizons, suggesting expansion of the domain to include other regional offerings, such as handicraft products made exclusively within a region. Negative case analysis further refines the construct by identifying boundary conditions under which it manifests more clearly and where it may not.

Novelly, it theoretically integrates social identity theory with the ABC attitudinal framework and the dual-identity salience, giving a fresh lens in the domain. Methodologically, it integrates qualitative screening, visual elicitation, and qualitative insights to achieve rigour throughout the research process. Thus, the study paves the way for further exploration in place-of-origin and CE literature.

6.2 Managerial Contribution

The study is important for firms operating in culturally diverse markets. Companies no longer compete only at the national vs foreign level, but also at the regional level. E.g., Coca-Cola adopted regionally localised communication strategies by using Hindi-Bengali scripts to tap

into the symbolic regional identity (Krishnakumar, 2020). Amid the rich literature on the place-of-origin effect, this study discusses the socio-psychological nuances prevailing at the regional level, which may further aid understanding of the effect at that level.

Thus, the study helps the firm understand not only whether consumers prefer regional products but also the underlying attitudinal orientations that drive these preferences, as articulated in the cognitive-affective-conative framework. The findings explain how consumers relate to authenticity, emotional belonging, and behavioural support. Findings are relevant to regional brands and sectors, including handicrafts, GI tags, vernacular digital platforms, regional tourism, and regional food brands, for how regional ethnocentrism may act as a catalyst for brand growth and for regional development. The relevance of regional orientation is further seen in the growing market importance of culturally rooted sectors such as handicrafts, with substantial growth to be witnessed in the coming years (IMARC, 2024). It provides direction for marketing strategies and communication for regional, national, and global brands regarding the use of origin cues, regional branding elements, and geographical indicators in a multicultural country.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Though the study aimed to provide a holistic insight into the composition of regional consumer ethnocentrism, it has a few limitations. First, the conceptualisation is grounded in inductive data and requires quantitative verification to generalise the results to other contexts. Second, the construct's thematic structure requires rigorous reliability and validity checks to identify the dimension, using a larger population. The study focused on the expression of regional ethnocentrism; however, its effects on outcomes, such as purchase intention to buy or pay a premium, remain to be identified. Finally, the study was conducted in India; thus, the operationalisation of the construct must be replicated in other contexts (countries and regions) to assess cross-cultural validity. Based on the study's evidence and gaps, future research directions are proposed in Table 1.

REFERENCES

Aarons, G. A., Wells, R. S., Zagursky, K., Fettes, D. L., & Palinkas, L. A. (2009). Implementing evidence-based practice in community mental health agencies: A multiple stakeholder analysis. *American Journal of Public Health*, *99*(11), 2087–2095.

Abdelwahab, D., Jiménez, N. H., San-Martín, S., & Prodanova, J. (2020). Between love and boycott: a story of dual origin brands. *Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC*, *24*(3), 377–402. https://doi.org/10.1108/SJME-12-2019-0105

Abdelwahab, D., San-Martín, S., & Jiménez, N. (2022). Does regional bias matter? Examining the role of regional identification, animosity, and negative emotions as drivers of brand switching: an

application in the food and beverage industry. *Journal of Brand Management*, *29*(1), 111–126. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-021-00260-8

Abdelwahab, D., San-Martín, S., & Jiménez, N. (2023). Will You Support or Oppose? The Impact of Region-of-Origin Bias on Oppositional Loyalty. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, *35*(3), 314–332. https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2022.2108182

Baber, R., Sankpal, S., Baber, P., & Gulati, C. (2024). Consumer ethnocentrism: What we learned and what we need to know? – A systematic literature review. *Cogent Business & Management*, *11*(1), 2321800. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2321800

Bakanauskas, A. P., Kondrotienė, E., & Puksas, A. (2020). The theoretical aspects of attitude formation factors and their impact on health behaviour. *Organizacijø Vadyba: Sisteminiai Tyrimai*, (83), 15–36.

Balabanis, G., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2016). Consumer xenocentrism as determinant of foreign product preference: A system justification perspective. *Journal of International Marketing*, *24*(3), 58–77.

Balabanis, G., & Siamagka, N. T. (2022). A meta-analysis of consumer ethnocentrism across 57 countries. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *39*(3), 745–763. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2021.12.002

Balabanis, G., Stathopoulou, A., & Qiao, J. (2019). Favoritism Toward Foreign and Domestic Brands: A Comparison of Different Theoretical Explanations. *Journal of International Marketing*, *27*(2), 38–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X19837945

Bannor, R. K., & Abele, S. (2021). Consumer characteristics and incentives to buy labelled regional agricultural products. *World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, *17*(4), 872–888. https://doi.org/10.1108/WJEMSD-12-2020-0173

Barham, E. (2003). Translating terroir: the global challenge of French AOC labeling. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *19*(1), 127–138. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(02)00052-9

Blumer, H. (1954). What is Wrong with Social Theory? *American Sociological Review*, *19*(1), 3–10. https://doi.org/10.2307/2088165

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2005). Confronting the ethics of qualitative research. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *18*(2), 157–181.

Bryła, P. (2019). Regional ethnocentrism on the food market as a pattern of sustainable consumption. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *11*(22). https://doi.org/10.3390/su11226408

Cabral, C., & Dhar, R. L. (2020). Ecotourism research in India: from an integrative literature review to a future research framework. *Journal of Ecotourism*, *19*(1), 23–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2019.1625359

Charton-Vachet, F., Lombart, C., & Louis, D. (2020). Impact of attitude towards a region on purchase intention of regional products: the mediating effects of perceived value and preference. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *48*(7), 707–725.

Chryssochoidis, G., Krystallis, A., & Perreas, P. (2007). Ethnocentric beliefs and country-of-origin (COO) effect: Impact of country, product and product attributes on Greek consumers' evaluation of food products. *European Journal of Marketing*, *41*(11–12), 1518–1544. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560710821288

Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Plano, V. L. C., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *35*(2), 236–264. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390

Del Castillo, E. J. S., Armas, R. J. D., & Taño, D. G. (2024). Ethnocentrism and place identity in the consumption of local products. *Heliyon*, *10*(10).

Ding, L., Antonucci, G., & Venditti, M. (2025). Unveiling user responses to AI-powered personalised recommendations: a qualitative study of consumer engagement dynamics on Douyin. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 28(2), 234-255.

Dodds, S., Palakshappa, N., & Bulmer, S. (2026). Studying complex marketing phenomena: a multi-phase, multi-method qualitative market research framework. *Qualitative Market Research*. https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-11-2024-0222

Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes.* Harcourt brace Jovanovich college publishers.

Farah, M. F., & Mehdi, N. I. (2021). Consumer ethnocentrism and consumer animosity: A literature review. *Strategic Change*, *30*(1), 19–28. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/jsc.2384

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *5*(1), 80–92.

Fernández-Ferrín, P., Bande, B., & Galán-Ladero, M. M. (2017). Parental influence on the levels of regional ethnocentrism of youth: An exploratory analysis. *Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC*, *21*(1), 52–62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sjme.2016.11.001

Fernández-Ferrín, P., & Bande-Vilela, B. (2013). Regional ethnocentrism: Antecedents, consequences, and moderating effects. *Food Quality and Preference*, *30*(2), 299–308. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.FOODQUAL.2013.06.011

Fernández–Ferrín, P., & Bande–Vilela, B. (2015). Attitudes and reactions of Galician (Spanish) consumers towards the purchase of products from other regions. *Global Business and Economics Review*, *17*(2), 131–150. https://doi.org/10.1504/GBER.2015.068563

Gill, S. L. (2024). About Research - Qualitative Data Collection: Photo Elicitation. *Journal of Human Lactation*, *40*(4), 503–505. https://doi.org/10.1177/08903344241273863

Guest, G., Namey, E., & Chen, M. (2020). A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PloS One*, *15*(5), e0232076.

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*, *17*(1), 13–26.

Henke, R. M., Chou, A. F., Chanin, J. C., Zides, A. B., & Scholle, S. H. (2008). Physician attitude toward depression care interventions: implications for implementation of quality improvement initiatives. *Implementation Science*, *3*(1), 40.

Herz, M., Diamantopoulos, A., & Riefler, P. (2023). Consumers' use of ambiguous product cues: The case of "regionality" claims. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, *57*(3), 1395–1422. https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12548

Hinton, J. D. X., Koc, Y., De la Piedad Garcia, X., Kaufmann, L. M., & Anderson, J. R. (2024). Chronic and contextual identity salience: Assessing dual-dimensional salience with the Identity Salience Questionnaire (ISQ). *Self and Identity*, *23*(5–6), 351–380.

IMARC Group. (2024). *India handicrafts market size, share, trends and forecast by product type, distribution channel, end use, and region, 2025–2033*. Retrieved October 28, 2025, from https://www.imarcgroup.com/india-handicrafts-market

Jakubanecs, A., & Supphellen, M. (2016). Cultural embeddedness of products: A new measurement of culture and its effects. *International Journal of Market Research*, *58*(2), 301–323.

Joshi, R. N., & Joshi, Y. C. (2021). Construction and validation of Indian consumer ethnocentrism scale: The ice-scale. *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business*, *23*(2), 173–192. https://doi.org/10.22146/gamaijb.58039

Joshi, S., Sengar, A., Nautiyal, A., Joshi, A. P., & Kumar, R. (2024). From mills to millets, the mediating role of regiocentrism on materialism: Augmenting the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*, *8*(7). https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i7.4297

Kipnis, E., Kubacki, K., Broderick, A. J., Siemieniako, D., & Pisarenko, N. L. (2012). "They don't want us to become them": Brand Local Integration and consumer ethnocentrism. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *28*(7–8), 836–864. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2012.698634

KPMG India, & Google. (2017). A study by KPMG in India and Google Indian Languages-Defining India's Internet. *KPMG*, 31–33.

Krishnakumar, T. (2020, March 4). Coca-Cola takes plunge into local language branding. *Business Standard*. https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/coca-cola-takes-plunge-into-local-language-branding-120030401396_1.html

Lantz, G., & Loeb, S. (1998). An examination of the community identity and purchase preferences using the social identity approach. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *25*, 486–491.

LaPiere, R. T. (1934). Attitudes vs. actions. *Social Forces*, *13*(2), 230–237.

Lee, J., Oh, J. Y., Oh, E., & Shin, M. M. (2019). Multinational products for consumer-driven global sourcing strategies. *Journal of Distribution Science*, *17*(8), 5–14. https://doi.org/10.15722/jds.17.08.201908.5

Lee, W. J., Cheah, I., Phau, I., Teah, M., & Elenein, B. A. (2016). Conceptualising consumer regiocentrism: Examining consumers' willingness to buy products from their own region. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *32*, 78–85. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.05.013

Lehmann, N., Sloot, D., Ardone, A., & Fichtner, W. (2022). Willingness to pay for regional electricity generation – A question of green values and regional product beliefs? *Energy Economics*, *110*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2022.106003

Leicht, T., Giovanardi, M., Darler, W., & Kavaratzis, M. (2025). Co-creating and managing resident-place relationships in place marketing and branding: a place brand equity approach. *European Journal of Marketing*, 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-03-2023-0154

LeVine, R. A., & Campbell, D. T. (1972). Ethnocentrism: Theories of conflict, ethnic attitudes and group behavior. In *(No Title)*. Wiley.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry. Newberry Park*.

Lin-Schilstra, L., Backus, G., Snoek, H., & Mörlein, D. (2022). Consumers' view on pork: Consumption motives and production preferences in ten European Union and four non-European Union countries. *Meat Science*, *187*, 108736. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meatsci.2022.108736

MacInnis, D. J. (2011). A Framework for Conceptual Contributions in Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, *75*(4), 136–154. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.75.4.136

Mackenzie, S. B. (2003). The Dangers of Poor Construct Conceptualization. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *31*(3), 323–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070303254130

Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample Size in Qualitative Interview Studies: Guided by Information Power. *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(13), 1753–1760. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444

Oberecker, E. M., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2011). Consumers' emotional bonds with foreign countries: does consumer affinity affect behavioral intentions? *Journal of International Marketing*, *19*(2), 45–72.

Ozturk, M., Wigelsworth, M., & Bagnall, C. (2025). Conceptualising teacher wellbeing: A qualitative investigation with primary school teachers in England. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *159*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2025.104989

Paasi, A., & Metzger, J. (2017). Foregrounding the region. *Regional Studies*, *51*(1), 19–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2016.1239818

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, *42*(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Papadopoulos, N., & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, L. (2015). Place Images and Nation Branding in the African Context: Challenges, Opportunities, and Questions for Policy and Research. *Africa Journal of Management*, *1*(1), 54–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/23322373.2015.994423

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. SAGE Publications. https://books.google.co.in/books?id=FjBw2oi8El4C

Reed II, A., Forehand, M. R., Puntoni, S., & Warlop, L. (2012). Identity-based consumer behavior. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *29*(4), 310–321.

Rosenblatt, P. C. (1964). Origins and effects of group ethnocentrism and nationalism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *8*(2), 131–146.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. sage.

Saint Clair, J. K. (2023). Consumer identity: a comprehensive review and integration of contemporary research. *The Cambridge Handbook of Consumer Psychology*, *2*, 179–227.

Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *30*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.09.006

Shankarmahesh, M. N. (2006). Consumer ethnocentrism: an integrative review of its antecedents and consequences. *International Marketing Review*, *23*(2), 146–172. https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330610660065

Sharma, P. (2015). Consumer ethnocentrism: Reconceptualization and cross-cultural validation. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *46*(3), 381–389. https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2014.42

Sharma, S. (2019). Geographical Indication In India: Current Scenario And Their Product Distribution. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*, *4*(4), 2792–2806.

Shimp, T. A., & Sharma, S. (1987). Consumer Ethnocentrism: Construction and Validation of the CETSCALE. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *24*(3), 280. https://doi.org/10.2307/3151638

Siamagka, N.-T., & Balabanis, G. (2015). Revisiting Consumer Ethnocentrism: Review, Reconceptualization, and Empirical Testing. *Journal of International Marketing*, *23*(3), 66–86.

Siemieniako, D., Kubacki, K., Glińska, E., & Krot, K. (2011). National and regional ethnocentrism: A case study of beer consumers in Poland. *British Food Journal*, *113*(3), 404–418. https://doi.org/10.1108/00070701111116464

Stryker, S., & Serpe, R. T. (1982). Commitment, identity salience, and role behavior: Theory and research example. In *Personality, roles, and social behavior* (pp. 199–218). Springer.

Sudhir, K., Priester, J., Shum, M., Atkin, D., Foster, A., Iyer, G., Jin, G., Keniston, D., Kitayama, S., Mobarak, M., Qian, Y., Tewari, I., & Wood, W. (2015). Research Opportunities in Emerging Markets: an Inter-disciplinary Perspective from Marketing, Economics, and Psychology. *Customer Needs and Solutions*, *2*(4), 264–276. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40547-015-0044-1

Sumner, W. G. (1906). *Folkways: A study of the sociological importance of usages, manners, customs, mores, and morals*. Boston: Ginn & Company.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations, chapter 3: An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. *Austin and Worchel Eds*.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, *2*, 7–24.

Tandon, S. (2020, March 4). Coca Cola India steps up regionalisation efforts, launches Bengali packaging for West Bengal. *Mint*. https://www.livemint.com/industry/retail/coca-cola-india-steps-up-regionalisation-efforts-launches-bengali-packaging-11583328723637.html

Tarabashkina, L., Schepis, D., & Purchase, S. (2024). Country-of-origin, region-of-origin or terroir branding to entice premium Price? The curious case of geographic place origin construal and psychic distance. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *23*(4), 2093–2109. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2327

Teas, R. Kenneth, & Palan, Kay M. (1997). The Realms of Scientific Meaning Framework for Constructing Theoretically Meaningful Nominal Definitions of Marketing Concepts. *Journal of Marketing*, *61*(2), 52–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299706100204

Trentinaglia, M. T., Cavicchioli, D., Pocol, C. B., & Baldi, L. (2023). Where was my cup of honey made? PDO honey and sub-regional ethnocentric consumer segments. *British Food Journal*, *125*(13), 296–315. https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-07-2022-0640

Trivedi, S. D., Tapar, A. V., & Dharmani, P. (2024). A Systematic Literature Review of the Relationship between Consumer Ethnocentrism and Product Evaluation. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, *36*(1), 41–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2023.2180790

Turner, J. C., Brown, R. J., & Tajfel, H. (1979). Social comparison and group interest in ingroup favouritism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *9*(2), 187–204.

van Ittersum, K. (2001). *The role of region of origin in consumer decision-making and choice*. Wageningen University and Research.

van Ittersum, K., Candel, M., & Torelli, F. (1999). The market for PDO/PGI protected regional products: consumers' attitudes and behaviour. In B. Sylvander, D. Barjolle, & F. Arfini (Eds.), *Paper presented at the 67th European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE) Seminar* (pp. 209–221). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.241121

van Ittersum, K., Meulenberg, M. T. G., Van Trijp, H. C. M., Candel, M. J. J. M., Besch, M., Garcia, P., Nelson, C. H., Pennings, J. M. E., Douwe Van Der Ploeg, J., Steenkamp, J.-B. E. M., Verlegh, W. J., Wansink, B., Sylvander, B., Lassaut, B., Fearne, A., Wilson, N., Barjolle, D., Dufour, M., Chappuis, J.-M., . . . Fotopoulos, C. (2007). Consumers' Appreciation of Regional Certification Labels: A Pan-European Study. In *Journal of Agricultural Economics* (Vol. 58, Number 1).

Verlegh, P. W. J., & Steenkamp, J.-B. E. M. (1999). A review and meta-analysis of country-of-origin research. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, *20*(5), 521–546. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870(99)00023-9

Waehning, N., & Filieri, R. (2022). Consumer motives for buying regional products: the REGIOSCALE. *Marketing Letters*, *33*(2), 215–236. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-021-09572-w

Yadav, S. (2024). A Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism. In *SAGE Open* (Vol. 14, Number 3). SAGE Publications Inc. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241264387

APPENDIX

Table A. Participant Profile

S. No	Region	Gender	Occupation	Age
P1	Bihar	Male	Service	45
P2	Haryana	Female	Self-employed	33
P3	Uttar Pradesh	Male	Service	59
P4	Kerala	Female	Self-employed	34
P5	Karnataka	Female	Self-employed	25
P6	Madhya Pradesh	Female	Service	32
P7	Rajasthan	Female	Service	51
P8	Haryana	Male	Service	39
P9	Delhi	Female	Service	32
P10	Gujarat	Male	Service	29
P11	Gujarat	Male	Business	25
P12	Bihar	Female	Service	30
P13	Uttar Pradesh	Female	Service	35
P14	West Bengal	Female	Self-employed	26
P15	Kerala	Male	Student	27
P16	Uttarakhand	Female	Service	39
P17	West Bengal	Female	Self-employed	25
P18	Ladakh	Male	Student	22
P19	Maharashtra	Male	Service	37
P20	Madhya Pradesh	Female	Homemaker	49
P21	Maharashtra	Female	Service	33
	Averages			**34.6**

Source: Prepared by authors

Table B. Cognitive dimension of RCE

Representative codes	Category	Sub-theme	Theme
Regional soil, water, and terroir shape product quality; geography creates irreplaceable characteristics	Regional geography as a quality determinant	Geographically based regional beliefs (21)	**Cognitive**
Consumers distinguish regional from non-regional products; prior experience strengthens evaluation	Regional experience and product recognition		
Regional origin signals authenticity; regional reputation serves as a quality cue	Regional reputation as an authenticity signal	Provenance and authenticity beliefs (21)	
Place of production confirms authenticity; traditional methods preserve genuineness	Authenticity verification through regional origin		
Regional products embody local traditions and heritage; products symbolise cultural identity	Regional cultural representation	Cultural ownership beliefs (20)	
Regional products belong to the community; absence of cultural markers weakens ownership	Collective cultural ownership		
Supporting regional producers benefits artisans; direct sourcing supports livelihoods	Regional producer support	Normative regional advancement beliefs (17)	
Regional products deserve promotion; regional advancement is a collective responsibility	Regional advancement orientation		

Source: Prepared by authors, (N): Number of occurrences

Table C. Affective dimension of RCE

Representative codes	Category	Sub-theme	Theme
Pride in regional craftsmanship; appreciation by outsiders strengthens pride	Pride in regional products and heritage	Collective regional pride and vicarious emotion (21)	**Affective**
Regional achievements feel like personal achievements; feeling represented through regional symbols	Vicarious and shared regional pride		
Love for regional products; happiness; awe arising from aesthetics, warmth during consumption	Emotional attachment to regional products	Emotional belonging, comfort and rootedness (21)	
Regional products create a feeling of home; reinforce a sense of belonging	Comfort and rootedness through regional products		
Concern over declining regional traditions; anxious/worry that regional products may vanish	Protective emotional concern for regional heritage		

Source: Prepared by authors, (N): Number of occurrences

Table D. Conative dimension of RCE

Representative codes	Category	Sub-theme	Theme
Inclination to continue sourcing regional products after relocating; tendency to prioritize regional products in everyday consumption	Tendency to prioritize regional products	Regional First Behavioural Tendency (16)	Conative
Tendency to purchase through trusted regional sellers; preference for regional packaging over identical alternatives	Tendency to seek out authentic regional sources		
Prioritizing regional products when comparable alternatives exist	Tendency to choose regional over comparable alternatives		
Tendency to gift regional specialties to introduce others to one's culture, tendency to promote due to legacy	Inclination to advocate regional products to others	Selective Regional Support Tendency (19)	
Willingness to travel for authentic regional products; sourcing through trusted regional networks	Willingness to invest effort for authentic regional products		
Tendency to restrict regional preference to culturally embedded categories	Selective inclination toward culturally meaningful products		

Source: Prepared by authors, (N): Number of occurrences

Table E. Emergent themes

Representative codes	Category	Sub-Theme	Theme
Promoting regional products without rejecting others; appreciating other regions' products alongside one's own; preference for own products stronger than rejection of others'	Predominant in-group support	**Non-exclusionary regional preference (19)**	Emergent Themes
Mild avoidance of non-regional products; paying a premium for regional products; limited avoidance in certain situations	Conditional out-group exclusion		
Regional food, handicrafts, handloom, textiles, GI products, art, music and theatre; cultural experiences of the region	Expanded regional product categories	**Expanded regional product domain (18)**	
Regional products as cultural symbols; products carry regional meaning beyond utilitarian value	Regional products as cultural expressions		
Regional identity rooted in childhood; identity naturally present in routine consumption	Embedded regional identity	**Chronic regional identity salience (18)**	
National identity activated during crises or rivalry; regional and national identities coexist	Context-dependent identity activation		

Source: Prepared by authors, (N): Number of occurrences

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Prof. (Dr.) Kartik Dave is Professor and Dean, School of Management, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi. With over 25 years of industry and academic experience, his expertise spans marketing strategy, services, branding, and inclusive marketing. He has published extensively and serves on the editorial boards of reputed international journals.



Ms. Bharti Sharma is a full-time Ph.D. scholar in Marketing at the School of Management, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi. Her research interests include consumer behaviour, international marketing, regional-rural marketing and sustainable consumption behaviour.

COPYRIGHT AND LICENSE

[© 2027 **Bharti Sharma & Kartik Dave**] This is an Open Access article published in **Transformational Management Review** *(Transform. Manag. Rev.)*, a Platinum Open Access Journal by IILM Lodhi Road, New Delhi. It is published with a Creative Commons Attribution - CC-BY4.0 International License. This license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

HOW TO CITE?

Bharti Sharma & Kartik Dave. (2027). Beyond National Ethnocentrism: A Qualitative Exploration of Regional Consumer Ethnocentrism. *Transformational Management Review*, 02(01), 14-52.