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ATTITUDES AND PURCHASE DECISIONS OF YOUNG CONSUMERS TOWARDS DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN PRODUCTS ON THE MODERN MARKET

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Purpose: The theoretical aim of the article is to present the essence and types of consumer attitudes and purchase decisions in the context of the phenomenon of consumer ethnocentrism. The practical goal is to determine the role and importance of the country of origin of the product as a factor determining the product purchase by young consumers, to determine the level of their consumer ethnocentrism, as well as to learn about the differences occurring in the above issues between the groups of young consumers which were distinguished for the purposes of the research.
Design/methodology/approach: The theoretical part uses the method of critical analysis of the literature, while the empirical part contains the results of own research using an online survey conducted among representatives of the young generation.
Findings: The research results indicate that the product country of origin does not belong to the most important factors that decide what purchase decisions are made by young consumers. The most decisive are the product price and quality. When it comes to the product identification, young consumers mainly point to the "made in" label and the bar code. Other factors that, in the context of market globalisation, are becoming more and more difficult to relate unequivocally to the country of origin of the product are much less important. The level of consumer ethnocentrism among young consumers, which was determined using the CEESCALE, is at an average level. According to the respondents, it is affected mainly by the threats resulting from excessive imports of foreign products and their negative impact on the domestic economy.
Research limitations/implications: The results of the research are a valuable source of information on the role and importance of the country of origin of the product as a factor affecting purchases by young consumers, as well as the determinants and level of consumer ethnocentrism among them. The limitations of the study are due to the use of the online survey method. The aim of the acquired knowledge, both methodological and empirical, is to improve the methodology of nationwide representative surveys planned in the future.
Practical implications: The results of the research can provide an information basis for companies developing product strategies on the modern market, which is subject to processes of the globalisation of consumption. They enable a better understanding of the reasons behind the choices made by young consumers in relation to products, and optimisation of market strategies of companies.

Social implications: The survey of young consumers' attitudes towards domestic and foreign products makes it possible to learn about and predict market trends and changes in consumer behaviour, which are an element of the social and economic life.
Originality/value: The research provides a new perspective on the issue of consumer attitudes towards domestic and foreign products in the context of the behaviour of a special group – young consumers. Originality refers to the results of empirical research presenting the diversity of attitudes among young consumers in the conditions of the processes of market and consumption globalisation.
Keywords: consumer, consumer behaviour, consumer ethnocentrism, product strategy, international management.
Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Consumer attitudes are one of the internal determinants of the market behaviour of consumers, including their decisions on a product purchase (Bylok, 2013; Bywalec, 2010, 2017; Zalega, 2012). They may concern, among others, a positive, neutral or negative attitude not only to a specific product, but also to the country of its origin. The country of origin can be treated as one of the product attributes, in addition to its price, quality or brand, which are taken into consideration in the process of making consumer decisions (Al-Sulaiti, Baker, 1998; Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, 2008; Boguszewicz-Kreft, Magier-Łakomy, 2016; Bose, Ponnam, 2011; Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, Jedynak, 2014; Dinnie, 2004; Kaynak, Kara, 2002; Kuźmińska-Haberla, 2013; Liczmańska-Kopcewicz, Wiśniewska, 2018; Saran, Gupta, 2012; Sikora, 2008; Witek-Hajduk, Grudecka, 2020). In view of the national and cultural differences between consumers on different markets, as well as the stereotypes and opinions rooted in their minds and concerning individual countries, the issue now gaining in importance in the activity of a company, including both the aspect of serving the home market only and the area of its international operation, is determination of the level of the so-called consumer ethnocentrism (Albaum, Duerr, Josiassen, 2016; Cavusgil, Knight, Riesenberger, 2017; Clarke, Wilson, 2009; Czinkota, Ronkainen, 2007; Czinkota, Ronkainen, Moffett, 2005; Duliniec, 2007; Duliniec, 2009; Ghauri, Cateora, 2005; Hamilton, Webster, 2015; Peng, Meyer, 2019; Steenkamp, 2001).

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism, understood as a sense of obligation to buy products of national origin, derives from the general concept of ethnocentrism which emerged in the social sciences at the beginning of the 20th century as a result of an analysis of the interactions between social group members and their environment. The American ethnologist and sociologist W. G. Sumner, in his paper "Folkways", published in 1906, described ethnocentrism as "the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (Szromnik, 1998a, p. 9).

The concept of ethnocentrism was introduced by S. Sharma, T.A. Shimp and J. Shin in 1987, characterising its most important features and carrying out the first broader empirical research in the United States According to these authors, consumer ethnocentrism is “a belief shared by consumers about not buying products of foreign origin in the context of duty and morality” (Figiel, 2004, p. 33). As they emphasised, this phenomenon corresponds to economic patriotism in the sphere of consumption (Balabanis et al., 2001; Carvalho, Luna, Goldsmith, 2019; Kowalczyk, 2013; Krzemień, 2019; Romanowski, 2013; Skoczylas, 2013; Spielmann, Smith Maguire, Charters, 2020; Włodarczyk, 2015; Wolanin-Jarosz, 2015). At the same time, they proposed a scale to measure the level of consumer ethnocentrism referred to as the CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentrism Tendency Scale), which was first used to study the attitudes of American consumers towards purchasing domestic and foreign products. The scale, which is a 17-point questionnaire using the Likert scale, was successfully used in surveys of consumers coming from selected regions of the USA and then – after some modifications at times – became the starting point for research on ethnocentric attitudes in other countries (Chaudhry et al., 2011; Chryssochoidis, Krystallis, Perreas, 2006; Duliniec, 2007; Evanschitzky et al., 2008; Figiel, 2004; Hamelin, Ellouzi, Canterbury, 2011; Hamin, Elliott, 2006; Jiménez-Guerrero, Gázquez-Abad, Linares-Agüera, 2014; Lebiejko, 2012; Maison et al., 2018; Urbaniec, Kosała, Czaja, 2021; Wolanin-Jarosz, 2015). An example of an alternative tool is the CEESCALE (Consumer Ethnocentrism Extended Scale), proposed by Siamagka and Balabanis (2015). CEESCALE – the tool used in Great Britain first – also consists of 17 items, which are further divided into five basic dimensions, defined as: “prosociality”, “cognition”, “insecurity”, “reflexiveness” and “habituation” (Jiménez-Guerrero, 2025; Jiménez-Guerrero, Pérez-Mesa, Galdeano-Gómez, 2020).

In the Polish literature, the issue of consumer ethnocentrism appeared only in the mid- and late-1990s, i.e., after the political changes in our country, in publications such as: A. Falkowski, B. Rożnowski and T.H. Witkowski (1996a, 1996b); A. Szromnik (1998a, 1998b); K. Karcz and Z. Kędzior (1999); A. Ryttel (1999). Later on, the issue of ethnocentric attitudes was the subject of research in Poland, taking into account the behaviour of Polish consumers (Baran, Marciniak, Taranko, 2017; Miłota, 2006; Nowak, Glinka, 2018; Szromnik, Wolanin-Jarosz, 2013; Urbaniec, Kosała, Czaja, 2021), including empirical research conducted most frequently in relation to the food market (Awdziej, Tkaczyk, Włodarek, 2014; Bombol, 2001; Grześ, 2014; Gutkowska, Sajdakowska, 2001; Jąder, 2018; Kaczmarek, Wieja, 2021; Nestorowicz, Kaniewska-Sęba, 2014; Nestorowicz et al., 2016; Sajdakowska, 2003; Wróblewska, Kwiatkowska, 2014; Wróblewska, Kwiatkowska, 2015). Moreover, studies were carried out on the ethnocentrism of Polish consumers on the market of household chemicals (Falkowski, Rożnowski, Witkowski, 1996b), clothing (Górski, Metricki, 2018) and financial services (Hat, Smyczek, 2016). Research was undertaken on the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on the creation of advertising messages (Nowacki, 2014), shaping the assortment and image of retail chains (Bilińska-Reformat, 2014; Bilińska-Reformat, Dewalska-Opitek, 2014), as well as other marketing activities undertaken by retail chains in Poland (Lubańska, Żak, 2014). Results can also be found of international comparative studies on consumer ethnocentrism, including Polish consumers (Wolanin-Jarosz, 2015), and recently even on consumer ethnocentrism of Poles in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic (Szabuniewicz, Majkut, 2021). Considering the above background, in-depth studies on ethnocentric attitudes devoted exclusively to young consumers in Poland are very scarce (Ertmańska, 2011; Ertmańska, Ertmański, 2011; Jąder, 2018; Zalega, 2019).

2. Consumer attitudes and purchase decisions in the context of consumer ethnocentrism

The concept of "attitude" is fundamental in social sciences, which is due, among others, to its importance in the context of the impact on human behaviour, including consumer behaviour on the market. Generally, an attitude is crucial both for the action taken in various areas of one's own activities, as well as for the activity of others. Attitudes can be used to predict human behaviour, including the behaviours of consumers (Juchnowicz, 2014; Juchnowicz, Mazurek-Kucharska, Turek, 2018).

According to the classical definition of S. Nowak (1973, p. 23) "the attitude of a person towards an object is the whole of relatively permanent dispositions to assess the object and react to it emotionally and the possible relatively permanent beliefs about the nature and properties of the object and the relatively permanent dispositions to behave towards it that accompany those emotional and evaluative dispositions". M. Juchnowicz (2014, p. 100) defines attitude as "a state of mental readiness, resulting from knowledge and life experience, that conditions the reactions of an individual or a group towards objects and situations they encounter, as a degree of a positive or negative feeling".

Attitude consists of three basic components: cognitive, i.e. the knowledge about the object of the attitude, behavioural – the tendency to behave in a certain way towards the object of the attitude, and emotional (also referred to as emotional and evaluative, or affective), which expresses positive or negative feelings towards the object of the attitude (Juchnowicz, 2014). Here, it is about consumer attitudes towards the country of origin of the product and its impact on making purchase decisions by consumers. The cognitive component includes the acquisition and use of the consumer's knowledge about the product country of origin, the behavioural component describes the consumer's tendency to buy domestic or foreign products, and the emotional component decides about the preference of purchasing certain products over others (e.g. domestic over foreign ones or vice versa), taking into account reasons with a certain level of emotion.

The ethnocentric attitude of consumers, unlike international or cosmopolitan attitudes, which are collectively referred to as non-ethnocentric, or less often as xenocentric, is manifested in practice by a consistent and conscious preference for domestic products over foreign ones. The ethnocentric consumer, perceiving the country of origin of the product as its significant feature, actively seeks information that makes it possible to distinguish whether the product is domestic or foreign. The product country of origin can be identified, among others, based on the "made in" label, the product name and brand, the bar code, the language of the product description, as well as the colours and symbols. Having a choice, the ethnocentric consumer prefers domestic products, regardless of whether they are better than foreign ones and whether they are more suited to his/her needs. The consumer's conduct is directed not so much by rational (economic) reasons but by emotional and even moral considerations (Wolanin-Jarosz, 2015).

From the ethnocentric point of view, buying foreign products is inappropriate because it weakens the domestic economy and thus directly or indirectly harms consumers. If the consumer sees the relationship between his/her market behaviour and the condition of the entire economy and society, and links the fact of purchasing foreign products to a certain disadvantageous series of events affecting the well-being of the country (lower demand for domestic products, dismissal of workers producing these products, unemployment, lower income to the budget, higher taxes, lower living standards, lower social security), then the ethnocentric attitude is strengthened. The ethnocentric consumer, guided by social considerations, is able to accept the fact that by choosing domestic products, including products of a quality inferior to the quality of foreign products, he/she will not be able to maximise own benefits (Acharya, Elliot, 2003; Alsughayir, 2013; Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, 2004; Balabanis, Siamagka, 2017; Chen, Wang, 2004; Karoui, Khemakhem, 2019; Khan, Rizvi, 2008; Luthy, 2007; Sharma, 2015).

The ethnocentric attitude is in contrast to consumer internationalism. Like ethnocentric consumers, internationalist consumers, seek information about the origin of the product, but they consciously and consistently prefer foreign products to domestic ones. The belief about the superiority of foreign products may originate from two complementary sources. Firstly, it may result from a comparison of characteristic features of domestic and foreign products in the process of use based on objective criteria. Due to that, foreign products turn out to be of better quality and they are found to better satisfy the consumer's needs, even though they are usually more expensive. Secondly, the internationalist attitude can be the result of a belief that by having and using foreign products, an individual demonstrates his/her potential, status, prestige and the fact of belonging to a particular group (the effect of demonstration and mimicry), especially if access to such goods is limited.

A different category of attitudes is found in the case of cosmopolitan consumers (consumer cosmopolitanism), who – unlike ethnocentric or internationalist consumers – do not attach great importance to the product country of origin while making their purchase decisions. They first of all take account of rational reasons from their individual point of view, where there are no references to the emotional or moral aspects related to the product country of origin, which are characteristic of consumer ethnocentrism. The cosmopolitan consumer objectively compares all the products available on the market and selects the one that, in his/her opinion, offers the largest combined balance of benefits. This is a manifestation of the focus on own benefits resulting from the use of a product, and crucial in terms of satisfying a specific need without paying attention to the country of origin (Riefler, Diamantopoulos, 2009).

3. Results of empirical research

The aim of the primary quantitative research was to identify and characterise the attitudes and the purchase decisions of young consumers concerning domestic and foreign products, as well as the differences in this respect between two groups of this generation distinguished according to the criterion of age. The research used an online survey method consisting of closed questions and a metric. The research was carried out in January and February 2025. The respondents were 262 students and graduates of the University of the Commission for National Education in Krakow, who were divided into two groups: people aged 18-24 (48.9% of the respondents) and those aged 25-30 (51.1%).

Women accounted for 67.9% of all the respondents, while men accounted for 32.1%. The majority of the respondents were people who defined their financial situation as average (47.3%). 14.5% of them described their material situation as very good, 20.2% as good, 10.7% as bad, and 7.3% as very bad. Slightly more than every fifth respondent came from a city of over 500 thousand inhabitants (22.1%). The rest came from villages (16.7%), towns and cities of less than 10 thousand inhabitants (13.2%), 11-50 thousand inhabitants (16.3%), 51-100 thousand inhabitants (14.3%) and 101-500 thousand inhabitants (17.4%).

The survey covered the attitudes and purchase decisions of young consumers in relation to domestic and foreign products, including issues such as the importance of the country of origin of the product in making purchase decisions, the importance of factors enabling the identification of the country of origin of the product, and the level of consumer ethnocentrism using the CEESCALE.

The following research hypotheses were adopted:

1. The issue of the product country of origin does not belong to the most important factors that decide what purchase decisions are made by young consumers. The most decisive are the product price and quality. However, with age and increasing consumer awareness, this factor becomes more and more important.

2. When it comes to the possibility of identifying the country of origin of the product, young consumers first of all point to factors facilitating such identification, such as the "made in" label and the bar code. They give much less importance to factors that, in the conditions of globalisation, are becoming more and more difficult to relate to a given country, such as the name and brand of the product, or the used colours and symbols.
3. The level of consumer ethnocentrism among young consumers is generally at an average level, but – as in the case of the product country of origin being a decisive factor in making purchase decisions – it rises with age.
4. The most influential in the formation of an ethnocentric attitude among young consumers is the dimension referred to as "prosociality", which is related to treating the purchase of domestic products as a form of supporting Polish producers, protecting local workers, and building up and maintaining national identity.

3.1. The importance of the product country of origin and the factors enabling its identification in making purchase decisions

In the first place, the importance of the country of origin of the product in making purchase decisions by young consumers was determined in comparison with factors such as the product price, quality and brand. The respondents were asked to rate the significance of these factors on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is only slightly important and 5 is very important. The results of the survey indicate that the country of origin of the product is the least significant compared to other factors. Almost three quarters of the respondents gave high and very high importance to the product quality and price in the decision-making process (73.6% and 72.6%, respectively). The product brand was rated lower – 64.5% of the respondents said it was important or very important. The product country of origin was ranked the lowest (42.4%) and it took the last place. Taking into account the average ratings, the product quality and price were rated at the level of 4.1, the product brand – 3.8, and the product country of origin – 3.2 (Table 1).

Table 1.
Assessment of the importance of factors decisive in purchase decisions on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important, 5 is very important)

Item	Assessment of the factor importance					Average	Place
	1	2	3	4	5		
Total							
Price	2.3%	5.7%	19.5%	26.0%	46.6%	4.1	1-2
Quality	3.4%	5.0%	17.9%	24.0%	49.6%	4.1	1-2
Brand	6.1%	9.9%	19.5%	26.7%	37.8%	3.8	3
Country of origin of the product	11.5%	15.3%	30.9%	29.8%	12.6%	3.2	4
Age of respondents: 18-24							
Price	2.3%	5.5%	9.0%	24.2%	53.1%	4.2	1
Quality	5.5%	7.0%	15.6%	25.8%	46.1%	4.0	2
Brand	8.6%	11.7%	19.5%	33.6%	26.6%	3.6	3
Country of origin of the product	14.8%	19.5%	29.7%	26.6%	9.4%	3.0	4

Cont. table 1.

Age of respondents: 25-30							
Price	2.2%	6.0%	23.9%	27.6%	40.3%	4.0	2-3
Quality	1.5%	3.0%	20.1%	22.4%	53.0%	4.2	1
Brand	3.7%	8.2%	19.4%	20.1%	48.5%	4.0	2-3
Country of origin of the product	8.2%	11.2%	32.1%	32.8%	15.7%	3.4	4

Source: Own research.

There are differences in the assessment of the importance of factors decisive in making purchase decisions between the two main groups of respondents, i.e. people aged 18-24 and 25-30. The younger respondents (aged 18-24) ranked the highest the product price (4.2), then quality (4.0), brand (3.6) and the product country of origin (3.0). Among the older consumers (aged 25-30), the product quality turned out to be the most important (4.2), followed by the product price and brand (4.0 each). As the respondents' age grows, the importance of the product quality and brand increases, while the product price becomes less significant, which can be explained by the fact that older respondents have already started work and have their own growing financial resources, while the younger ones in many cases are still dependent on their parents. In both groups of the respondents the product country of origin turned out to be the least significant, but in the older group – similar to quality and brand – it was rated higher than in the younger group (score: 3.4 in the older group and 3.0 in the younger one). It may therefore be concluded that with the respondents' age and growing consumer awareness, the country of origin of the product gains importance as a factor in making purchase decisions, but it remains the least significant compared to other factors.

Another issue was to assess the importance of factors enabling identification of the product country of origin. By far the highest importance was given to the relatively easy-to-identify factor, i.e. the "made in" label, which was assessed as important or very important by 88.6% of the respondents (overall score: 4.6). The bar code can also be described as potentially facilitating identification, but it was indicated as important or very important only by 38.2% of the respondents (score: 3.2). This is probably due to the fact that the respondents' knowledge of the markings used in bar codes was not good enough to identify the country where the product was made. The product name and brand (indicated by 22.1% of the respondents with the score 2.9) and the colours and symbols (18.3%, 2.4) turn out to be the least important (Table 2).

Table 2.
Assessment of the importance of factors enabling identification of the product country of origin on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important, and 5 is very important)

Item	Assessment of the factor importance					Average	Place
	1	2	3	4	5		
Total							
Product name, brand	9.5 %	21.8 %	46.6 %	13.4 %	8.8 %	2.9	3
"Made in" label	1.5 %	2.3 %	7.6 %	14.9 %	73.7 %	4.6	1
Bar code	7.3 %	26.7 %	27.9 %	14.9 %	23.3 %	3.2	2
Colours, symbols	24.0 %	37.0 %	20.6 %	10.3 %	8.0 %	2.4	4

Cont. table 2.

Age of respondents: 18-24							
Product name, brand	8.6 %	21.9 %	46.1 %	14.1 %	9.4 %	2.9	2
“Made in” label	1.6 %	2.3 %	8.6 %	16.4 %	71.1 %	4.5	1
Bar code	6.3 %	35.9 %	34.4 %	14.1 %	9.4 %	2.8	3
Colours, symbols	24.2 %	39.1 %	19.5 %	9.4 %	7.8 %	2.4	4
Age of respondents: 25-30							
Product name, brand	10.4 %	21.6 %	47.0 %	12.7 %	8.2 %	2.9	3
“Made in” label	1.5 %	2.2 %	6.7 %	13.4 %	76.1 %	4.6	1
Bar code	8.2 %	17.9 %	21.6 %	15.7 %	36.6 %	3.5	2
Colours, symbols	23.9 %	35.1 %	21.6 %	11.2 %	8.2 %	2.4	4

Source: Own research.

The relatively small significance of the product name and brand in identifying the country of origin may be due to the fact that the wording of the name and the origin of the brand as a domestic one can be confusing in the conditions of globalisation, when domestic brands are taken over by foreign companies. For example, the owner of a product brand, which due to its original domestic origin has traditionally been identified with Poland, may be a foreign entity, and the production itself may also be located outside Poland. On the other hand, domestic producers may label their products with foreign-sounding brands suggesting their foreign origin, which works when dealing with internationalist customers. The minor significance of the product name and brand as identifiers of the product origin found in the survey proves the awareness of the above problem among young consumers.

The assessment of the importance of different factors enabling identification of the country of origin of the product was very similar in both groups of the respondents, distinguished using the age criterion. In the group of the younger respondents aged 18-24 the “made in” label scored 4.5, while among the older group aged 25-30 it was ranked slightly higher at 4.6. The product name and brand scored 2.9 in both groups, while the colours and symbols were rated at 2.4. The exception was the bar code, which was assessed differently in the two groups. It scored 3.5 in the older group and only 2.8 in the younger one. This can be explained by the higher level of knowledge and the greater market experience of older consumers, who are able to identify the product country of origin by the bar code, as opposed to younger consumers who have not yet acquired this skill.

3.2. Assessment of the level of consumer ethnocentrism using CEESCALE

In order to determine the level of consumer ethnocentrism of young consumers, the CEESCALE questionnaire, proposed by Siamagka and Balabanis (2015), was used. The questionnaire takes into account 17 items that are part of the following five main dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism: (1) “prosociality” – care for the welfare of other members of the ethnic group; (2) “cognition” – the impact of the knowledge about the country of origin of a product on the opinion about it; (3) “insecurity” – treating excessive imports and foreign products in terms of threats; (4) “reflexiveness” – unconscious and automatic acceptance of domestic products taking account of information in making purchase decisions; (5) "habituation" – copying established purchase patterns.

The survey results indicate that the overall level of consumer ethnocentrism among young consumers is at an average level. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents a very low level of ethnocentrism and 5 represents a very high level of ethnocentrism, the average rating of the seventeen detailed issues analysed within the five main dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism was 3.3. The older consumers aged 25-30 show a higher overall level of consumer ethnocentrism (3.4) compared to younger consumers aged 18-24 (3.1), with the ratings varying in relation to the five dimensions of ethnocentrism (Table 3).

Table 3.
Assessment of the importance of individual dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important and 5 is very important)

Item	Total		Groups of respondents			
			Age of respondents: 18-24		Age of respondents: 25-30	
	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place	Assessment	Place
Level of consumer ethnocentrism, including:	3.3	-	3.1	-	3.4	-
Prosociality	3.1	4	3.0	3	3.3	3
Cognition	3.2	2-3	3.1	2	3.2	4
Insecurity	4.0	1	3.9	1	4.2	1
Reflexiveness	3.2	2-3	2.8	4	3.6	2
Habituation	2.8	5	2.5	5	3.0	5

Source: Own research.

Among the analysed dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism, the respondents considered "insecurity" as the most important (average score: 4.0), which is related to the fact that they pointed to the risks posed by excessive imports of foreign products and their negative impact on the domestic economy. The respondents indicated that the increase in imports caused higher unemployment in the country (4.3), reduced the number of jobs (4.0) and posed a threat to the domestic economy (3.8). It is worth noting that these three issues in the "insecurity" dimension were rated the highest of all the seventeen factors covered by the survey, both in the younger and older group of the respondents. It should be acknowledged that it is the issues that are related to the negative aspects of the appearance of foreign products on the domestic market that have the biggest impact on creating ethnocentric attitudes among the surveyed representatives of the young generation (Table 4).

Table 4.
Assessment of the importance of "insecurity" as a dimension of consumer ethnocentrism on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important and 5 is very important)

Item	Assessment of the factor importance					Average	Place
	1	2	3	4	5		
Total							
Increased imports result in greater levels of unemployment in Poland	1.9%	3.1%	13.7%	26.3%	55.0%	4.3	1
Buying foreign products is a threat to the domestic economy	6.5%	8.4%	20.2%	26.7%	38.2%	3.8	3
Job losses in Poland are the result of increased importation of foreign goods	3.8%	5.7%	21.4%	26.3%	42.7%	4.0	2
Age of respondents: 18-24							
Increased imports result in greater levels of unemployment in Poland	2.3%	3.1%	14.8%	30.5%	49.2%	4.2	1
Buying foreign products is a threat to the domestic economy	7.0%	8.6%	25.0%	32.0%	27.3%	3.6	3
Job losses in Poland are the result of increased importation of foreign goods	3.9%	6.3%	26.6%	28.1%	35.2%	3.8	2
Age of respondents: 25-30							
Increased imports result in greater levels of unemployment in Poland	1.5%	3.0%	12.7%	22.4%	60.4%	4.4	1
Buying foreign products is a threat to the domestic economy	6.0%	8.2%	15.7%	21.6%	48.5%	4.0	3
Job losses in Poland are the result of increased importation of foreign goods	3.7%	5.2%	16.4%	24.6%	50.0%	4.1	2

Source: Own research.

As already mentioned, "insecurity" was ranked the highest in both the younger (aged 18-24) and the older (aged 25-30) group, with scores higher in the latter than in the former (4.2 and 3.9, respectively). Each of the three partial issues in the "insecurity" dimension was also rated higher by the older respondents. The hierarchy of the importance of the issues was identical in both groups. Both the younger and older respondents considered the growing unemployment in Poland in the conditions of increased imports as the most important (younger group: 4.2, older group: 4.4).

The next two dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism, i.e. "cognition" and "reflexiveness", received identical average ratings (3.2) in the general population of the respondents, which indicates that they have an identical impact on shaping ethnocentric attitudes. Moreover, the individual issues in the "cognition" dimension were also assessed in a similar way (scores ranging from 3.1 to 3.2). The respondents stated that when buying Polish products, they did not need any additional information to assess their quality, and the product country of origin was a sufficient guarantee of the quality being high (3.2). They also stated that Polish goods were better than imported ones (3.2), and some even claimed that they were of the best quality impossible to exceed by any other country (3.1) (Table 5).

Table 5.
Assessment of the importance of "cognition" as a dimension of consumer ethnocentrism on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important and 5 is very important)

Item	Assessment of the factor importance					Average	Place
	1	2	3	4	5		
Total							
When it comes to Polish products, I do not need further information to assess their quality; the country of origin is a sufficient signal of high quality for me	10.7%	12.6%	34.0%	32.4%	10.3%	3.2	1-2
Polish goods are better than imported goods	14.1%	17.6%	21.0%	25.2%	22.1%	3.2	1-2
Polish products are made to high standards and no other country can exceed them	14.5%	17.2%	26.7%	22.5%	19.1%	3.1	3
Age of respondents: 18-24							
When it comes to Polish products, I do not need further information to assess their quality; the country of origin is a sufficient signal of high quality for me	16.4%	9.4%	35.9%	34.4%	3.9%	3.0	3
Polish goods are better than imported goods	10.9%	21.9%	20.3%	24.2%	22.7%	3.3	1
Polish products are made to high standards and no other country can exceed them	13.3%	17.2%	27.3%	24.2%	18.0%	3.2	2
Age of respondents: 25-30							
When it comes to Polish products, I do not need further information to assess their quality; the country of origin is a sufficient signal of high quality for me	5.2%	15.7%	32.1%	30.6%	16.4%	3.4	1
Polish goods are better than imported goods	17.2%	13.4%	21.6%	26.1%	21.6%	3.2	2
Polish products are made to high standards and no other country can exceed them	15.7%	17.2%	26.1%	20.9%	20.1%	3.1	3

Source: Own research.

The assessment of "cognition" was only slightly higher in the older group of the respondents (3.2) compared to the younger group (3.1), but the hierarchy of importance of the analysed issues included in this dimension was different in the two groups. It is worth noting that only one of the three partial issues in the "cognition" dimension was rated higher in the older group compared to the younger one. The difference was clear enough to affect the overall assessment of the dimension in the surveyed groups and the hierarchy of importance of individual issues. This is the issue concerning no need for further information to assess quality in the case of Polish products because the country of origin is a sufficient signal of high quality for the respondents (score: 3.4 in the older group and 3.0 in the younger one). The other two partial issues were rated slightly higher in the group of younger respondents.

As for the next dimension of consumer ethnocentrism mentioned above, i.e. "reflexiveness" (average score: 3.2), the respondents' conviction that they would stop buying foreign products if the Polish government launched campaigns to make people aware of the positive impact of the consumption of domestic goods on the Polish economy was indicated the most often (score: 3.4). Second came the opinion that if the Polish people were effectively made aware of the negative impact of the consumption of foreign products on the economy, they would be more willing to purchase domestic goods (score: 3.3). At the same time, the respondents were the least likely to say that a media campaign promoting Polish products would convince them to buy domestic goods (score: 3.0) (Table 6).

Table 6.
Assessment of the importance of "reflexiveness" as a dimension of consumer ethnocentrism on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important and 5 is very important)

Item	Assessment of the factor importance					Average	Place
	1	2	3	4	5		
Total							
I would be convinced to buy domestic goods if a campaign was launched in the mass media promoting Polish goods	23.7%	12.6%	20.6%	30.2%	13.0%	3.0	3
If Polish people are made aware of the impact of the consumption of foreign products on the economy, they will be more willing to purchase domestic goods	19.1%	10.7%	16.8%	32.4%	21.0%	3.3	2
I would stop buying foreign products if the Polish government launched campaigns to make people aware of the positive impact of the consumption of domestic goods on the Polish economy	13.7%	10.3%	16.0%	40.5%	19.5%	3.4	1
Age of respondents: 18-24							
I would be convinced to buy domestic goods if a campaign was launched in the mass media promoting Polish goods	34.4%	16.4%	25.8%	18.8%	4.7%	2.4	3
If Polish people are made aware of the impact of the consumption of foreign products on the economy, they will be more willing to purchase domestic goods	29.7%	14.8%	19.5%	24.2%	11.7%	2.7	2
I would stop buying foreign products if the Polish government launched campaigns to make people aware of the positive impact of the consumption of domestic goods on the Polish economy	16.4%	11.7%	16.4%	33.6%	21.9%	3.3	1
Age of respondents: 25-30							
I would be convinced to buy domestic goods if a campaign was launched in the mass media promoting Polish goods	13.4%	9.0%	15.7%	41.0%	20.9%	3.5	2-3
If Polish people are made aware of the impact of the consumption of foreign products on the economy, they will be more willing to purchase domestic goods	9.0%	6.7%	14.2%	40.3%	29.9%	3.8	1
I would stop buying foreign products if the Polish government launched campaigns to make people aware of the positive impact of the consumption of domestic goods on the Polish economy	11.2%	9.0%	15.7%	47.0%	17.2%	3.5	2-3

Source: Own research.

"Reflexiveness" was rated much higher among the older respondents (3.6) compared to the younger group (2.8), with each of the three partial issues receiving higher scores. This also showed the biggest difference in the assessment of the analysed dimensions between the two basic groups of respondents – the older and the younger. At the same time, the hierarchy of the importance of the partial issues was different in the two groups. For example, among the older respondents the first place was taken by the conviction that if the Polish people were effectively made aware of the impact of the consumption of foreign products, they would be more willing to purchase domestic goods (3.8). In turn, the younger respondents most often agreed with the statement that they would stop buying foreign products if the Polish government launched campaigns to make people aware of the positive impact of the consumption of domestic goods on the Polish economy (3.3).

The fourth dimension of consumer ethnocentrism – "prosociality" was ranked only slightly lower (score: 3.1) compared to "cognition" and "reflexiveness", which, for the record, both received an overall score of 3.2). In this case, the respondents emphasised the care for the Polish labour market, stressing that the Polish people should always consider Polish workers when making their purchase decisions (3.7). They also stated that it made them feel good to support domestic products (3.4). Lower in the hierarchy are statements in which they refer to maintaining Polish identity and, especially, issues related to a moral obligation to purchase Polish goods. The point is that buying Polish products helps the respondents maintain their Polish identity (3.1), a true Pole should always back Polish producers" (2.7), buying Polish goods should be a moral duty of every Polish citizen (2.7) (Table 7).

Table 7.
Assessment of the importance of "prosociality" as a dimension of consumer ethnocentrism on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important and 5 is very important)

Item	Assessment of the factor importance					Average	Place
	1	2	3	4	5		
Total							
Buying Polish goods helps me maintain my Polish identity	11.1%	20.2%	36.3%	12.2%	20.2%	3.1	3
Purchasing domestic goods should be a moral duty of every Polish citizen	14.5%	35.9%	28.6%	11.1%	9.9%	2.7	5
It always makes me feel good to support our products	8.8%	11.1%	29.8%	29.0%	21.4%	3.4	2
A true Pole should always back Polish products	14.5%	23.3%	42.4%	12.6%	7.3%	2.7	4
Polish people should always consider Polish workers when making their purchase decisions	6.1%	7.6%	24.4%	30.9%	30.9%	3.7	1
Age of respondents: 18-24							
Buying Polish goods helps me maintain my Polish identity	14.8%	26.6%	43.0%	9.4%	6.3%	2.7	3
Purchasing domestic goods should be a moral duty of every Polish citizen	16.4%	37.5%	26.6%	11.7%	7.8%	2.6	4-5
It always makes me feel good to support our products	9.4%	11.7%	32.0%	28.9%	18.0%	3.3	2
A true Pole should always back Polish products	15.6%	25.0%	43.8%	10.2%	5.5%	2.6	4-5
Polish people should always consider Polish workers when making their purchase decisions	7.8%	9.4%	25.0%	32.8%	25.0%	3.6	1

Cont. table 7.

Age of respondents: 25-30							
Buying Polish goods helps me maintain my Polish identity	7.5%	14.2%	29.9%	14.9%	33.6%	3.5	2-3
Purchasing domestic goods should be a moral duty of every Polish citizen	12.7%	34.3%	30.6%	10.4%	11.9%	2.7	5
It always makes me feel good to support our products	8.2%	10.4%	27.6%	29.1%	24.6%	3.5	2-3
A true Pole should always back Polish products	13.4%	21.6%	41.0%	14.9%	9.0%	2.8	4
Polish people should always consider Polish workers when making their purchase decisions	4.5%	6.0%	23.9%	29.1%	36.6%	3.9	1

Source: Own research.

"Prosociality" was generally rated higher among the older respondents compared to the younger group (3.3 and 3.0, respectively). The hierarchy of the importance of individual issues was almost identical in the two groups and corresponded to that of the entire population of the respondents. Both the older and the younger respondents emphasised the need to take account of Polish workers when making product purchase decisions (score: 3.9 and 3.6, respectively), the well-being that accompanies them when purchasing Polish products (3.5 and 3.3), the impact of buying Polish products on maintaining identity (3.5 and 2.7). At this point it is worth noting that while in the case of the first two specific issues, the differences between the older and the younger respondents were not very large, the assessments regarding the issue of maintaining identity were significantly different. As it turns out, the reference to identity was much less often indicated in the group of the younger respondents. At the same time, both groups of the respondents considered the obligation of true Poles to support domestic producers (score among the older consumers: 2.8, younger consumers: 2.6), and buying domestic products as a moral duty of every Polish citizen (2.7 and 2.6, respectively) as the least important factors.

The survey results indicate that the respondents consider the "habituation" dimension as the least important in shaping ethnocentric attitudes (average score: 2.8), which should not be surprising taking account of the respondents' young age. The issue of fundamental importance is the familiarity with Polish products, which affects the respondents' product preferences and purchase decisions (3.5). Despite the generally lowest ratings of "habituation" in comparison to the other dimensions, the issue of the familiarity of Polish products as a factor of consumer ethnocentrism received a relatively high assessment against the background of all the issues analysed in the other dimensions. The respondents' direct reference to habit as a reason for buying Polish products (2.6) and buying Polish products as a repetition of the consumption patterns passed on to them by older family members (2.2) are of much less importance. The finding about the latter reason proves that in Polish families there is no tradition of passing on to the younger generation consumption patterns that would favour the creation of an ethnocentric attitude, and the experience in this area is gained by young consumers on their own (Table 8).

Table 8.
Assessment of the importance of "habituation" as a dimension of consumer ethnocentrism on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is only slightly important and 5 is very important)

Item	Assessment of the factor importance					Average	Place
	1	2	3	4	5		
Total							
I buy Polish products out of habit	27.1%	20.6%	23.7%	18.7%	9.9 %	2.6	2
I prefer buying Polish products because I am more familiar with them	6.1%	18.3%	24.8%	21.4%	29.4%	3.5	1
I buy Polish products because I follow the consumption patterns passed on to me by my older family members	41.2%	24.8%	15.6%	12.2%	6.1%	2.2	3
Age of respondents: 18-24							
I buy Polish products out of habit	37.5%	25.8%	20.3%	12.5%	3.9%	2.2	2
I prefer buying Polish products because I am more familiar with them	7.0%	25.0%	22.7%	17.2%	28.1%	3.3	1
I buy Polish products because I follow the consumption patterns passed on to me by my older family members	44.5%	25.8%	14.8%	9.4%	5.5%	2.1	3
Age of respondents: 25-30							
I buy Polish products out of habit	17.2%	15.7%	26.9%	24.6%	15.7%	3.1	2
I prefer buying Polish products because I am more familiar with them	5.2%	11.9%	26.9%	25.4%	30.6%	3.6	1
I buy Polish products because I follow the consumption patterns passed on to me by my older family members	38.1%	23.9%	16.4%	14.9%	6.7%	2.3	3

Source: Own research.

Like in the case of all the previous dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism, "habituation" was rated higher by the older respondents (3.0) than by the younger group (2.5). At the same time, the hierarchies of the importance of individual factors were identical in both groups and corresponded to the overall hierarchy of the entire population that was surveyed. The factor that was indicated the most often was the positive impact of the familiarity with Polish products on the respondents' product purchase decisions (score among the older group: 3.6, younger consumers: 3.3), next was buying products out of habit (3.1 and 2.2 respectively), which means that the importance of habit, compared to other factors, increases greatly with age. Little importance was given to consumption patterns passed on by older family members (2.3 and 2.1, respectively).

4. Summary and conclusions

The development of international trade makes it possible for consumers to purchase products from various, often distant regions of the world. Making their purchase decisions, they are guided by diverse reasons, including the country of origin of the product. In practice, the consumer identification of the product country of origin is often involuntary, subjective and not always accurate. This is because in the current global economy conditions, the enterprises and brands related to them are often acquired by foreign companies. Manufacturing plants are delocated across borders and individual phases of production often take place in different parts of the world. This may make it difficult to unequivocally identify the product country of origin, which is still considered a factor affecting consumer attitudes and purchase decisions.

Since the very emergence of the concept of ethnocentrism in the social sciences, it has caused rather conflicting opinions. Some authors perceive ethnocentrism as an attitude characterised by aversion to foreign cultures and by superiority, which can manifest itself in xenophobia, nationalism or even chauvinism. The issues stressed in the concept of consumer ethnocentrism are overestimation of domestic products, a lack of trust in foreign capital and an unjustified depreciation of imports, which may have negative effects on international cooperation and exchange. On the other hand, the ethnocentric attitude can be seen as the awareness of being a member of a specific ethnic group and nation, national pride, patriotism, respect for tradition, and readiness to sacrifice. Treating the phenomenon of consumer ethnocentrism as something positive should not be equated with aversion to representatives of other countries and foreign products made therein, but with concern and care for one's own country and the domestic economy (Radkiewicz, 2019).

The survey results confirmed hypothesis 1, according to which the country of origin of the product does not belong to the most important factors that decide what purchase decisions are made by young consumers. The most decisive are the product price and quality. At the same time, it was found that with the respondents' age and growing consumer awareness, the product country of origin gained significance, but it still remained much less important compared to price and quality.

Hypothesis 2, concerning the factors enabling identification of the product country of origin by young consumers, was also confirmed. As assumed, the respondents indicated the easy-to-identify "made in" label as one of the most important factors. The second place, but with a much smaller number of indications, was taken by the bar code, which also makes such identification easy. The least important turned out to be the factors that in the conditions of globalisation are becoming more and more difficult to relate to a given country, such as the name and brand of the product, the product colours and symbols. It is worth noting that while the "made in" label, which is of primary importance to all the respondents, as well as the less significant product name and brand, or the product colours and symbols, were similarly rated in both the younger and the older group, the importance of the bar code is higher in the latter. This may be an effect of better knowledge and greater market experience, which means that compared to the younger group, the older respondents are more often able to identify the product country of origin by the bar code.

The survey results also confirmed hypothesis 3 , which concerns the level of consumer ethnocentrism among young people. The average rating of the seventeen detailed issues included in the survey, covering five main dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism using the CEESCALE, was 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 5, which proves that the level of consumer ethnocentrism among young consumers is generally at an average level. It was also found that this indicator was on an average level in both the younger and the older group of the respondents.

However, the survey results did not confirm hypothesis 4, according to which the formation of the ethnocentric attitude among young consumers is most affected by issues related to treating purchases of domestic products as a form of supporting Polish producers, protecting local workers, or building up and maintaining national identity (the dimension referred to as "prosociality"). Among the five dimensions of consumer ethnocentrism under analysis, the respondents indicated "insecurity" as the most important. Within this dimension, they pointed out that increased imports resulted in "greater levels of unemployment", "job losses" and posed "a threat to the domestic economy". It should be emphasised that the "insecurity" dimension was given the highest importance in both the younger and the older group of the respondents.

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