Some Factors Influence the Willingness to Buy Thai Products – A Case Study in Vietnam

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Abstract

As a predominant trend, the globalisation of markets continuously imposed opportunities and challenges on international firms competing in the huge global market. Due to the predominant trend facilitating foreign purchasing by consumers across national borders, consumers' sentiments are emerging as essential and prevailing elements to investigate when explaining consumption behaviours. This research aims to empirically test the effect of consumer ethnocentrism, consumer cosmopolitanism, consumer affinity, and consumer xenocentrism on foreign product judgements and willingness to buy. In the context of Thai product purchasing, data analysis was performed based on 687 valid responses from Vietnamese consumers, which were gathered via an online survey. The result indicated that 45.3% of the variance in the willingness to buy construct and 9% of the variance in the product judgement construct were explained by related independent variables. Accordingly, the research empirically confirmed the positive impacts of consumer affinity and the negative influence of consumer ethnocentrism on willingness to buy Thai products. Empirical evidence supports the positive relationship between consumer cosmopolitanism and foreign product judgements. Notably, based on prior scholars' recommendations and scant empirical evidence, this research examined and confirmed a significant positive impact of consumer xenocentrism on both willingness to buy and judgements towards foreign products. Constructive managerial implications were hence discussed.

Keywords*: consumer affinity; consumer cosmopolitanism; consumer ethnocentrism; consumer xenocentrism; product judgements; willingness to buy.
JEL Classifications: D22, M30, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

The globalisation of markets as a predominant trend, although facilitating the foreign purchasing of consumers across national borders, continuously imposed opportunities and challenges on firms competing in the huge global market. At the same time, globalisation increases competition between domestic and imported goods (Netemeyer et al., 1991). Globalisation forces countries to open up, gradually removing barriers to integration. The process of integration into Vietnam's AEC has been occurring; a series of trade policies and barriers must be removed according to a particular roadmap. As a result, there is no longer a distinction between the economic spheres in each country and region.

Domestic enterprises are under competitive pressure from many foreign competitors when integrating into the international market. According to Wang & Chen (2004), easing trade barriers will give consumers more opportunities to choose imported goods. In 2015, Vietnam officially joined the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Vietnam market became a common market for countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Vietnamese consumers have a wide selection of goods originating from ASEAN countries. Therefore, Vietnamese businesses, foreign enterprises, and even researchers on consumer behaviour want to understand consumer buying behaviour to propose attraction policies.

Exploring and understanding consumer buying behaviour in a particular country has been of interest to researchers for years in both developed, emerging, and developing markets. However, the results of these studies are still under debate because they vary from market to market and product to product. Although Social Identity Theory has emerged as a dominant theory to understand consumer behaviours based on the countries associated with the products, there are still deviations from the explanatory and predictive power of the theory as mentioned above, especially for the phenomenon of low-status groups favouring higher-status outgroups. As an illustration, either Social Identity Theory or Personal Identity Theory falls short of explaining the phenomenon of out-group favouritism coupled with negative self-stereotyping, eventually culminating in a rejection of local choices (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). Consequently, prior studies also used other theoretical foundations to explain biases toward domestic and foreign brands. As applied to international marketing, each theory drew distinct inferences and proposed various mechanisms for explaining consumer favouritism.

Ethnocentrism is among the factors that directly influence purchasing behaviours, and this factor has been studied by numerous authors, such as Netemeyer et al. (1991); Klein & Ettenson (1999); Nguyen et al. (2008); and Shimp & Sharma (1987). In recent years, affinity, cosmopolitanism, and xenocentrism have been involved as prevailing factors in the pattern of explaining consumer behaviours; specifically, these factors are formerly mentioned by Audi (2009); Cannon & Yaprak (2002); Riefler et al. (2012) and Rybina et al. (2010). Our study investigates the influences of consumer affinity, consumer cosmopolitanism, consumer xenocentrism, and consumer ethnocentrism on willingness to buy Thai products and product judgements.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Purchasing Thai products as foreign consumption: Willingness to buy and product judgements

For domestic and international marketers, the globalisation of markets poses significant opportunities and obstacles. One noteworthy trend is that target customers are now more exposed to a greater variety of international brand choices than ever (Klein et al., 1998). According to Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2016), a significant portion of customers in several nations progressively choose imported goods despite their higher prices but occasionally even worse quality. Numerous scholars have thoroughly studied the propensities of customers to purchase products based on the countries associated with the products. Generally, there are at least two ways in which the perspectives of a certain nation attached to specific products influence the consumption behaviours of consumers (Josiassen, 2011). First, a halo effect—which refers to the behaviour of applying the nation's image or a total of experiences with similar items from the same country—may occur and affect customers' inferring product characteristics. Second, Herche (1992) observed that even if consumers have favourable opinions about French wine, they may still choose not to purchase it if they believe it will harm the domestic economy. This phenomenon implies that favouritism or prejudice against a country is independent of information about product quality but based on their perceptions of the focal country (Shankarmahesh, 2006).

Instead of directly investigating actual purchasing behaviours or the ownership of products, prevailing studies placed more emphasis on the aspect of intention to perform the behaviours, particularly purchase intention towards foreign products in this research topic. The theoretical foundations of this approach can be traced back to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), in which the individual's intention to perform a given behaviour is a central factor. As defined by Ajzen (1991), intention is the willingness held in human memory to result in an actual action at the ideal time. The motivating elements that drive action are argued to be captured by intentions (Ajzen, 1991), which reflect how much effort someone is prepared to put forth to perform the behaviour. In general, the strength of the intention will enhance the chance of engaging in behaviour; however, the degree will decrease if there is a longer lag between the two. In the extant literature on consumption behaviours, this aspect was reflected in either the construct of purchase intention (e.g., Diamantopoulos et al., 2019; Pham & Nguyen, 2020; Mahmoud et al.,2021) or willingness to buy (e.g., Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Shoham et al., 2017; Guo et al., 2018). This research adopts the term "willingness to buy" when investigating Vietnam's consumers purchasing Thai products as a sort of foreign product.

Earlier studies employed the concept of product judgements in the consumption behaviours domain as overall perceptions regarding foreign products in terms of product features (Han & Terpstra, 1988; Suh & Kwon, 2002), thereby providing a construct for judging a country's overall product quality (Netemeyer et al., 1991; Durvasula et al., 1997). Consumers' judgements on a certain product, whether domestic or imported, reflect how they perceive and evaluate its features, including design, workmanship, and prestige. According to research on the judgements of foreign goods, assumptions about the focal nation that produced a product significantly impact how consumers perceive the product's characteristics (Klein et al., 1998). The positive relationship between foreign product judgements and willingness to buy or purchase

intention towards foreign-made products was well documented by various scholars, such as Klein et al. (1988); Suh and Kwon (2002); Cheah et al. (2016); and Camacho et al. (2020).

2.2 Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET)

Applying social identity theory to the marketing domain, Shimp & Sharma (1987) developed the notion of consumer ethnocentrism in investigating local versus non-local consumption behaviours. The concept of consumer ethnocentrism was defined as a "unique economic form of ethnocentrism that captures the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness and morality of purchasing foreign-made products." (Shimp & Sharma, 1987, p. 280). For further understanding of the foundations of the idea, consumer ethnocentrism could be traced back to the more generic concept of ethnocentrism, which was grounded in the sociological discipline.

Social identity theory serves as an intellectual basis for developing the consumer ethnocentrism concept (Balabanis et al., 2019). Shimp & Sharma (1987) posited that purchasing foreign products is perceived as unpatriotic and detrimental to the domestic economy in the mindset of typical ethnocentrism. Ethnocentric consumers resist culturally diverse characteristics, values, norms, and beliefs (Herche, 1994). Highly ethnocentric consumers discriminate between domestic and international products and avoid purchasing foreign products for nationalistic causes (Shankarmahesh, 2006); expressed differently, purchasing foreign products is viewed as a nationalistic issue involving economic and moral concerns (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). The extant literature consistently confirms inverse relationships between consumers' willingness to buy foreign-made products (Olsen et al., 1993; Herche, 1994; Sharma et al., 1995) and their judgements on imported products (Klein et al., 1998; Klein, 2002).

2.3 Consumer Affinity (C.A.)

The term 'consumer affinity' was initially mentioned by Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2001), who did not empirically validate their segmentation model or offer a rigorous definition. In order to establish a conceptual description of consumer affinity and specify the construct's domain, Oberecker et al. (2008) explored the idea in a qualitative study, and they contended that consumer affinity can be either idiosyncratic or normative by nature and can be founded in direct ways, like experiences from overseas vacations, or in indirect ways, such as experiences from mass media. Lifestyle, landscape, and tourism influence customer affinity; however, the previous study has indicated that negative emotions are typically triggered by war, economic, or political events (Klein et al., 1998; Oberecker et al., 2008). Based on the intellectual basis, the conceptual definition of consumer affinity was offered:

> A feeling of liking, sympathy, and even attachment toward a specific foreign country that has become an in-group as a result of the consumer's direct personal experience and/or normative exposure and that positively affects the consumer's decision-making associated with products and services originating from the affinity country (Oberecker et al., 2008, p. 26)

According to Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2001), consumer affinity is a favourable attitude toward a foreign country that may directly or indirectly impact conations and behavioural outcomes, such as intentions to purchase products and services related to the affinity country. Oberecker et al. (2008) posited that consumer affinity is purely affect-based and hence distinct from   cognitive-based factors such as country image; nevertheless, they did not statistically examine their mentioned construct. Consumer affinity stems from language, culture, political and economic positional similarities, and personal experience

with the nation (Oberecker et al., 2008; Josiassen, 2011). Oberecker & Diamantopoulos (2011) conducted an empirical study on consumer affinity and analysed the impact of the construct on perceived risk and willingness to buy products from the affinity nation. Their research, the first empirical study on consumer affinity, revealed that customer affinity is stronger than ethnocentrism in predicting consumers' perceived risk and willingness to buy. According to Nes et al. (2014), while several academics in the international business and marketing domain have emphasised concepts relative to restricting foreign purchasing (such as animosity and consumer ethnocentrism), the influence of fondness for foreign countries and favouritism towards international brands has received far less attention.

2.4 Consumer Xenocentrism (CXE)

Xenocentrism has lately risen to prominence as a construct for understanding consumption behaviours toward domestic and foreign-made products (Camacho et al., 2020), as well as a concept that accommodates both out-group favouritism and in-group derogation (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). Originally developed and discussed in sociology literature, the notion of xenocentrism —the conceptual ancestor of consumer xenocentrism —was first mentioned by Kent & Burnight (1951). According to the prior work, xenocentrism was formerly conceptualised as the opposite of Sumner's (1906) ethnocentrism concept, defined as "individuals who prefer a society other than their own and who rate and scale everything about it and not to their own" (Kent & Burnight, 1951, p. 256). The concept alluded to a stereotyped perspective in which the outgroup is given a superior and more favourable evaluation. Mueller & Broderick (2010, p. 6) characterised a xenocentric consumer as "a person who prefers products from a country (or region) other than their own and who rates and scales products about the foreign country and not their own" and subsequently outlined the potential relevance of the construct when investigating consumption behaviours. As argued by Diamantopoulos et al. (2019), whilst Kent & Burnight (1951) and Mueller & Broderick (2010) both comprehend xenocentrism as being targeted directly towards a specific outgroup such as a particular foreign nation, Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2016) offered a more recent conceptualisation of xenocentrism from a broader perspective, with system justification theory serving as the theoretical basis.

The recently developed definition of consumer xenocentrism, which is not merely the polar opposite of well-established consumer ethnocentrism, was proposed to clarify preferences for foreign products over domestic brands (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). According to Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2016), the consumer xenocentrism construct refers to xenocentric idolisation in which a consumer's internal perception of the inferiority of domestic goods and their tendency to favour foreign goods as a sign of ascension to a higher social status. Notably, the notion of consumer xenocentrism proposed by Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2016) permits the construct to predict strong favouritism toward outgroups directly. Accordingly, consumers' sense of internalised inferiority concerning the relative standing of their nation would cause a derogation of domestic products, accompanied by a general inclination to seek foreign-made goods and services as signs of higher status (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Mahmoud et al., 2021). In line with these arguments, a qualitative study conducted in China using focus group discussion concluded that consumer xenocentrism is "the underlying mechanism that biases Chinese consumers to foreign products even when domestic products are qualitatively similar or better" (Mueller et al., 2016, p. 85). Balabanis et al. (2019) subsequently confirmed a negative

relationship between xenocentrism and loyalty to domestic brands, which is even stronger for prominent brands.

2.5 Consumer Cosmopolitanism (COS)

Cosmopolitanism, which derives from the Greek word kosmopolitês (which means "citizen of the globe"), is a prevailing concept employed in the management and marketing disciplines and rooted in the realms of anthropology and social psychology (Cleveland et al., 2011). The earliest reference to cosmopolitanism was made in the late 1950s by Merton (1957, as cited in Cannon & Yaprak, 2002), which defined cosmopolitans as people who orient themselves beyond their local community, as opposed to those who perceive themselves as   citizens of a particular nation. In recent years, cosmopolitanism has become a crucial consumer identity for market segmentation on a global scale. Consumer cosmopolitanism is a widely used concept explaining consumers' lack of preference for local brands over international ones (Balabanis et al., 2019). Nevertheless, Riefler et al. (2012) remarked that extant literature employed the cosmopolitanism concept rather unsystematically, generally omitting to offer a theoretical explanation of its underlying notion in the specific situation. The research also argued that the absence of a widely acknowledged definition rendered cosmopolitanism a vague notion with various discrete implications, emphasising the significance of explicitly defining cosmopolitanism under certain circumstances related to the subject of study. The current research adopts a perspective consistent with that of Riefler et al. (2012), wherein the concept of consumer cosmopolitanism refers to an orientation that encapsulates (1) how open-minded a consumer is toward other nations and cultures, (2) how much they esteem the diversity that comes from the availability of goods from various national and cultural backgrounds, and (3) how favourable they are toward buying goods from other nations.

Cosmopolitanism entails being receptive to diverse cultures and willing to experience unfamiliar products from other nations (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). According to Riefler et al. (2012), a cosmopolitan mindset is distinguished by several affiliations regardless of domestic or international orientation rather than a homogeneous attachment similar to an ethnocentric or xenocentric identity. A typical cosmopolitan, in the position of a consumer, evaluates products based on their inherent characteristics rather than their origin as a means to express the identity of global citizens rather than be recognised as a citizen of a particular country; thus, the cosmopolitan consumer is more inclined to respond positively to foreign purchases (Cleveland et al., 2009). Furthermore, the advancements in information transmission technology considerably foster cosmopolitanism. Revolutionised global communications and advancements in satellite television, fibre optic, wireless technologies, and the Internet now facilitate a broader range of individuals to evoke cosmopolitan perspectives and demonstrate COS traits, even without leaving their own country or being a part of "archetypal cosmopolitan populations," such as business elite, refugees, and expatriates (Cleveland et al., 2009, p. 935). The manner in which cosmopolitanism affects customers' behaviours was conceptually noted in earlier studies. According to the literature, consuming foreign products and searching for global standards was considered an instrument for enacting a cosmopolitan identity (Cannon & Yaprak, 2002), because foreign products represent diversity and authenticity as a means to eschew parochial culture (Holt, 1997). However, the literature on consumer cosmopolitanism has been primarily theoretical, with scant empirical research on the antecedents or outcomes of the construct, especially consumption behaviours (Cleveland et al., 2009).

2.6 Fundamental Theories

Although social identity theory was noticeably a prevailing conceptual framework to explicate how biases for local products occur, prior researchers employed various theoretical foundations when investigating bias toward domestic and foreign businesses. When adopted in international marketing, each theory proposed diverse mechanisms to explain consumer favouritism.

2.6.4 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was originally derived from research on social categorisation, intergroup relations, and prejudice. The central philosophy of SIT is that people feel a desire and inclination to shape a positive identity for themselves, which can be demonstrated by their identification in various groups wherein they feel a strong sense of attachment, sympathy, and admiration (Tajfel, 1981). The notion was subsequently showcased with the discussion on "ethnocentrism" (Tajfel, 1982), which served as the starting point to explain conflicts between various groups due to scarcity of goods or resources. Regarding the consumer behaviour domain, SIT was typically employed as the theoretical foundation for the statistical inference of hypothesised relationships when investigating the phenomenon of country bias in consumer ethnocentrism (e.g., Cleveland & Laroche, 2012; Nes et al., 2014; Guo et al., 2018) and consumer affinity (e.g., Oberecker et al., 2008; Nes et al., 2014).

2.6.2 Personal Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory concentrates on classifications and in-group facets of behaviours, but Personal Identity Theory (PIT) concerns roles and how they determine identities and conducts (Balabanis et al., 2019). The fundamental tenet of the theory is that people frequently attempt to match their behaviours with their role identities to minimise contradiction with how others regard them, as well as with their internalised orientations (Hogg et al., 1995). In our current research, PIT serves as the intellectual basis for investigating the impact of consumer cosmopolitanism on consumption behaviours. According to a critical literature review on cosmopolitanism, Riefler et al. (2012) postulated that the construct can best encapsulate the central and fundamental notion of a personal identity concept; in a similar vein, consumer cosmopolitanism is, in turn, a prevailing construct employed to predict consumers' preference for local rather than international businesses.

2.6.3 System Justification Theory

Either Consumer Ethnocentrism (anchored to SIT) or Consumer Cosmopolitanism (anchored to PIT) falls short of explaining the phenomenon of out-group favouritism accompanied by negative self-stereotyping, culminating in a rejection of domestic offerings (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). System Justification Theory (SJT) explains why underprivileged groups show in-group derogation and out-group favouritism in harmony with an inferiority complex, especially for people within low-status communities.

System Justification Theory (SJT), as a social psychological theory, explains why society opposes social change but supports contemporary social order and stability (Mahmoud et al., 2021). System justification, particularly in consumption behaviours, occurs when consumers accept and internalise national distinctions to the point where they believe associating with a foreign country or consuming foreign-made goods is a sign of higher social status (Mahmoud et al., 2021). The core tenets of the SJT are captured directly by the dimensions of consumer xenocentrism, which

Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2016) developed to predict favouritism toward foreign brands rather than a local one. The study, therefore, adopts SJT as the conceptual framework of the consumer xenocentrism construct.

The three theories mentioned above constitute the theoretical framework (Figure 1) for investigating the hypothesised relationships in our research.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework and Proposed Research Model
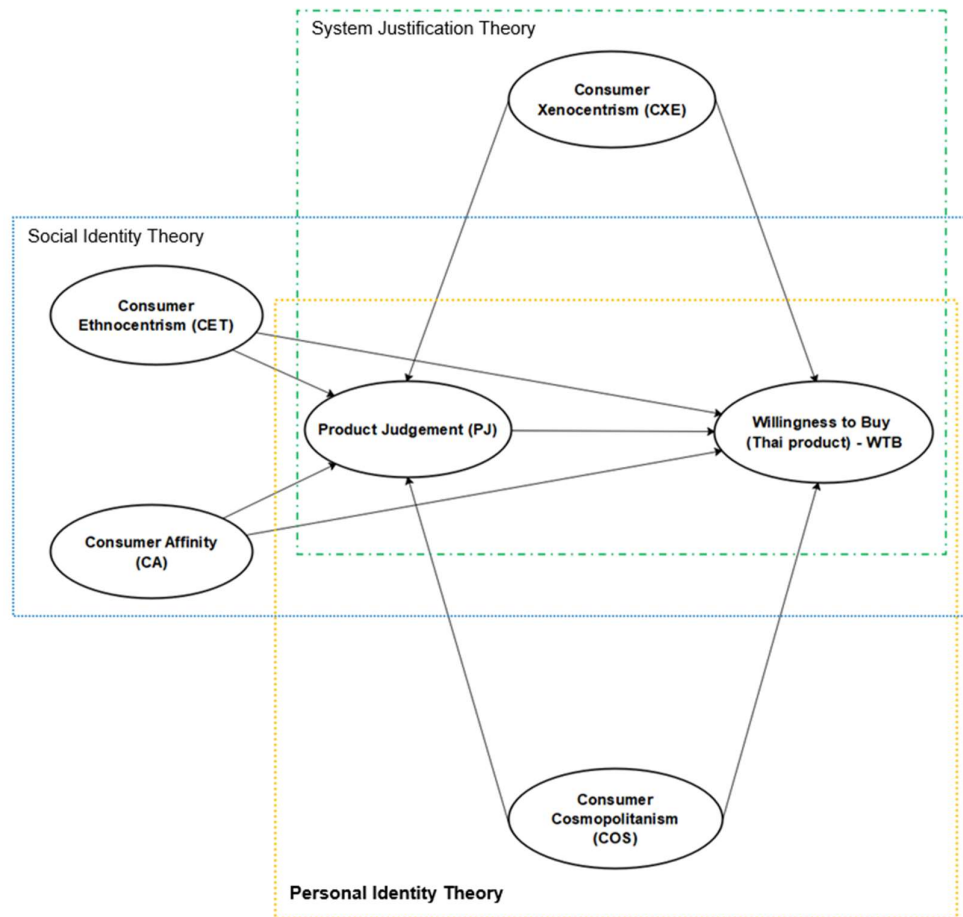
Source: from the synthesis of author

2.7 Hypotheses and proposed research model
Consumer Ethnocentrism, Willingness to buy, and Product judgements

Ethnocentric consumers esteem what belongs to their group and devalue things that do not belong to their group, resulting in a bias in their assessments of products related to the focal countries (Klein et al., 1998) and eventually affecting their intention to purchase domestic and foreign-made products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Early studies such as those of Klein et al. (1998) and Suh & Kwon (2002), as well as a recent meta-analysis of consumer ethnocentrism conducted in 60 studies by Guo & Zhou (2017), exhibited statistical evidence for the direct inverse relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and willingness to buy foreign products. Studies, including those by Klein et al. (1998) and Klein (2002), provided empirical evidence for the mediating role of negative foreign product judgements. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2008) confirmed a significant negative relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and imported product judgment when conducting research in Vietnam.

Although well investigated over time, the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on consumption outcomes still yields inconsistent empirical evidence. Guo & Zhou's (2017) meta-analysis recently indicated a negative effect on foreign product judgment but no impact on willingness to purchase foreign products. When investigating Vietnam's customers, research conducted by Pham & Nguyen (2020) did not indicate any significant influence of consumer ethnocentrism on the intention to purchase foreign products. They further implied that consumer ethnocentrism is a valid predictor of favouritism towards domestic products but not necessarily a consistent determinant of the disapproval of foreign-made products. The finding did not align with the argument proposed by Shimp & Sharma (1987). They theoretically argued that non-ethnocentric consumers judge products based on their merits (including price, quality, and other important attributes). Ethnocentric consumers typically believe buying imported products is unacceptable since doing so will hurt the domestic economy, implying that ethnocentric perspectives would significantly impact foreign product judgements and consumers' purchasing behaviours. Studies by Kim & Pysarchik (2000), Suh & Kwon (2002), and Josiassen (2011) likewise revealed inconsistent empirical evidence.

According to Guo & Zhou (2017), existing studies produced various results, which were occasionally inconsistent when addressing the impact of consumer ethnocentrism regarding various degrees of economic development, cultural contexts, and sampling techniques. For Vietnamese consumers, buying Thai products is regarded as purchasing foreign-made products. Therefore, this research proposes that:

H1a: Consumer Ethnocentrism negatively influences willingness to buy Thai products
H1b: Consumer Ethnocentrism negatively influences foreign product judgements

Consumer Affinity, Willingness to buy, and Product judgements

Oberecker et al. (2008) proposed that affinity conception was grounded in social identity theory and the dichotomy between in-groups and out-groups. According to Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2001), consumer affinity is characterised as a favourable attitude toward a particular foreign nation, which culminates in a purchase intention or willingness to buy products, brands, and services associated with the affinity country. Regarding the impacts that consumer affinity has on consumption-related outcomes, through in-depth interviews and a focus group study in Belgium and Austria, insights derived from the qualitative studies drew attention to a strong tendency of specific consumer segments to purchase goods from the focal country for which they had a special affinity (Oberecker et al., 2008). According to Oberecker et al. (2008), consumers' propensity to purchase products from their affinity countries appears to be motivated by either alleviating perceived risk due to consumers' high trust in their affinity countries or a desire to maintain attachments with a country via consumption. Subsequently, Josiassen (2011) proposed that more studies be conducted to determine whether consumer affinity is a significant determinant of purchasing behaviour for foreign-made products. Thus, we propose empirically testing the relationships:

H2a: Consumer Affinity positively influences willingness to buy Thai products.

Earlier studies did draw inconsistent inferences. Notably, Oberecker et al. (2008) noticed that the inclination to purchase products from the affinity country was independent of judgements about that country's products, which indicated that affinity feelings do not necessarily translate into favourable perceptions. However, regardless of product attributes such as quality and price considerations, Oberecker et al. (2008) did not reveal any other explanation for favouring products from affinity countries.

Notwithstanding Oberecker et al. (2008), who concluded affinity does not affect product judgements, Wongtada et al. (2012) noticed affinity was associated positively with product judgements. According to the study, Thai consumers' affinity for the United States substantially influences product judgment and moderately influences their willingness to buy U.S. products. Guo et al. (2018) provided empirical evidence supporting the above findings, confirming consumers are more inclined to trust products from their affinity nation. This trust will enhance consumers' desire to strengthen their association with the focal country by purchasing its products. Based on these inconsistent implications, we, therefore, propose investigating the effect of consumer affinity on product judgements, especially in the context of Vietnam's consumers purchasing Thai products:

H2b: Consumer Affinity positively influences foreign product judgements

Consumer Xenocentrism, Willingness to buy and Product judgements

Balabanis et al. (2019) contended that consumer xenocentrism, a concept rooted in system justification theory, offers more solid explanations for domestic and foreign brand bias. Specifically, consumer xenocentrism was proposed to be a reliable predictor for both in-group derogations as negative attitudes towards local products and out-group favouritism as positive preferences for foreign-made products (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). In line with the key tenets of system justification theory, favourable bias leads to perceptions of out-group favouritism, as evidenced in positive judgements of foreign country images, which correspondingly impact positive brand attitudes and culminate in purchase intentions (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). System justification theory was, therefore, adopted as the theoretical foundation for investigating the influence of consumer xenocentrism on product judgements and willingness to buy products.

Country of origin and manufacture significantly impact the perception of product qualities; in turn, these criteria lead customers in developing countries to favourably judge foreign goods (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Studies by Mahmoud et al. (2021), collecting data from a cross-section of consumers in Ghana, have revealed a positive impact of consumer xenocentrism on purchasing foreign-made products. In the research context of Vietnam, Pham & Nguyen (2020) noted that those who exhibit out-group favouritism, such as xenocentric consumers, will unquestionably exhibit favourable desires toward purchasing foreign products. This study provided empirical evidence that consumer xenocentrism and the intention to purchase foreign products have a positive relationship. After highlighting the predictive validity of the C-XENSCALE and correlating it with consumers' willingness to buy domestic and foreign products, Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2016) proposed that future research concentrate on the impact of consumer xenocentrism on other essential outcome variables, such as product judgements and risk perceptions. However, in current research, a thorough examination of the relevant literature has yielded no related article that empirically investigates the relationship between customer xenocentrism and product judgements since the recommendation of Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2016). Based on the arguments, we propose investigating the xenocentrism of Vietnam's consumers when purchasing Thai products:

H3a: Consumer xenocentrism positively influences willingness to buy Thai products
H3b: Consumer xenocentrism positively influences foreign product judgements

Consumer Cosmopolitanism, Willingness to buy, and Product judgements

According to the literature, acquiring and pursuing international standards through the consumption of foreign products helps one express their cosmopolitan identity (Cannon & Yaprak, 2002), since these products stand for authenticity and diversity as a mechanism of eschewing local culture (Holt, 1997). Nevertheless, the understanding of cosmopolitanism in the literature has mainly been theoretical, with little empirical research on its antecedents or consequences, particularly on consumption behaviours (Cleveland et al. 2009).

Since cosmopolitans believe they are less bigoted and backward than others (Cleveland et al., 2009), they should first be receptive to global branding, which suggests that consumer cosmopolitanism positively affects their willingness to buy foreign goods (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2009). Subsequently, as expected, the results revealed that consumer cosmopolitanism positively affects willingness to purchase foreign goods, explaining a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable (Riefler et al., 2012). Based on the empirical evidence from 231 Chinese cross-border e-commerce consumers, a study by Liu & Hong (2020) found that consumer cosmopolitanism is more positively related to foreign cross-border e-commerce than local cross-border e-commerce in terms of purchase intention. Especially in the Vietnam context, the positive influence of cosmopolitan attitudes on consumer purchase intentions toward foreign products was confirmed (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Thus, we expected consumer cosmopolitanism to positively influence the willingness of Vietnam's consumers to buy Thai products as foreign products:

H4a: Consumer cosmopolitanism positively influences the willingness to buy Thai products

Cannon & Yaprak (2002) contended that cosmopolitan perspectives are even more prevalent in emerging nations, where imported goods are perceived as being of higher quality than domestic goods; nevertheless, there is still conflicting evidence. The link between consumer cosmopolitanism and foreign product judgements in the study by Riefler & Diamantopoulos (2009) was found to be non-significant, demonstrating the lack of either positive or negative bias in consumer assessments. The results were in line with the explanation put forth by Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2001), who contended that cosmopolitan consumers would adopt an unbiased or neutral approach toward goods and services from domestic and international sources and assess each product according to its merits. This argument implied that consumer cosmopolitanism should not influence judgements of either local or international products. However, there was a scant attempt to prove this theoretical perspective and to empirically investigate the relationship between consumer cosmopolitanism and judgements towards foreign products. Placing Thai products in an emerging market like Vietnam, we propose:

H4b: Consumer cosmopolitanism positively influences foreign product judgements

Product judgements and willingness to buy

Product quality is a key aspect for consumers in developing nations such as Vietnam because those consumers have previously encountered various low-quality products produced by local companies (Nguyen et al., 2008). According to Camacho et al. (2020), before making a purchase decision, customers consider a variety of views regarding the features of products, entailing quality, style , and price. However, evaluating the quality of a product to predict consumers' behaviour is not necessarily a

simple process since people frequently judge the product based on their perceptions, which are driven by a variety of environmental factors regardless of the product's inherent attributes (Nguyen et al., 2008). For example, research on evaluations of foreign products indicated that assumptions about a certain country attached to a specific product significantly affect perceptions of this product's attributes (Klein et al., 1988), which culminates in a willingness to buy products made in a certain country. Camacho et al. (2020) noted a direct positive relationship between perceived product quality and purchase intention for imported products. In addition, Cheah et al. (2016) provided empirical evidence supporting the positive influence that product judgements have on willingness to buy foreign products, especially Japanese products in this case. These recent findings align with the extant literature, where the positive impact of product judgements on willingness to buy foreign products was consistently confirmed in prior studies, such as those of Klein et al. (1998) and Suh & Kwon (2002). Thus, we propose the hypothesised relationship:

H5: Foreign product judgements positively influence willingness to buy Thai products

Prior studies used a system of theoretical foundations to explain bias toward domestic and foreign brands, wherein each theory, as applied to international marketing, drew distinct inferences and proposed various mechanisms in explaining consumer favouritism; but, commonly, five prevailing theories were encountered in the literature: social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), personal identity theory (Stryker, 1968), cultural identity theory (Jensen, 2003), system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994), and categorical cognition theory (Balabanis et al., 2019). In this study, we applied three out of the five theories as the theoretical foundations for the proposed research model (Figure 2), along with their attendant constructs (consumer ethnocentrism, consumer affinity, consumer xenocentrism and consumer cosmopolitanism).

Figure 2: Research Model
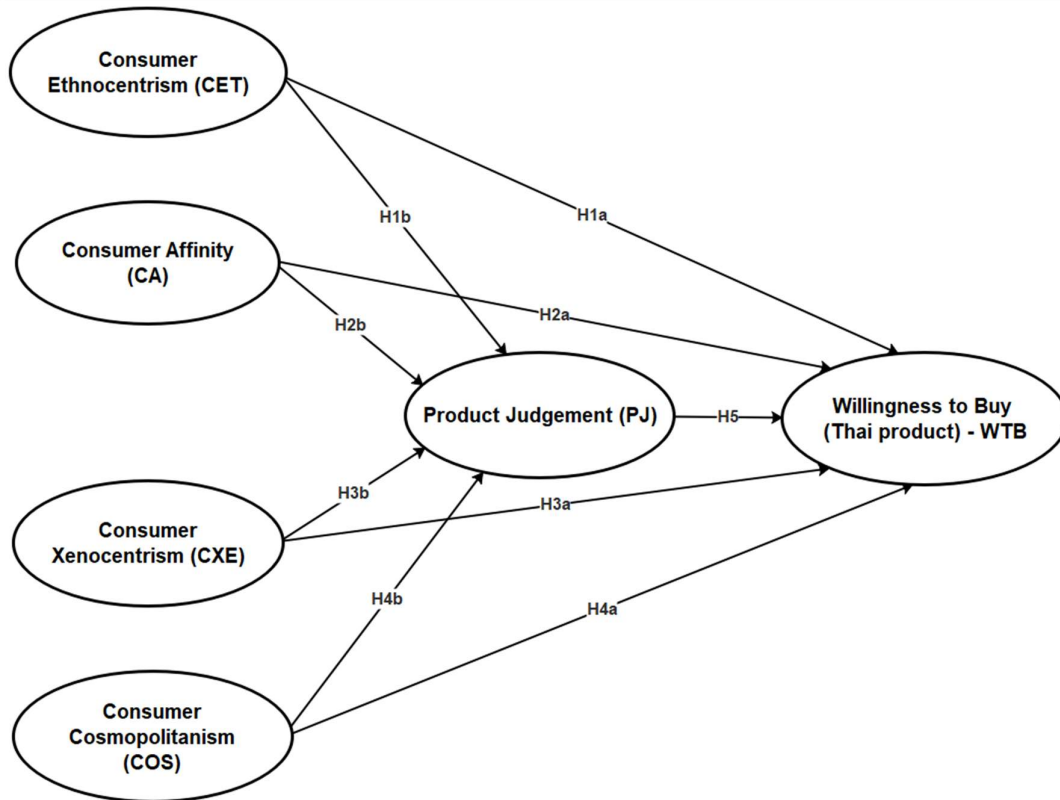
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3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Country selection

To empirically examine the proposed conceptual model, we selected Vietnamese consumers to represent the domestic market under investigation and considered Thai goods as a sort of foreign product when investigating purchasing behaviours. Since 2015, Vietnam has officially joined the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the Vietnam market has become a common market for countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. From a practical perspective, it is undeniable that Vietnamese consumers prefer Thai goods, which is attributed to factors such as attractive design, good quality, and reasonable pricing relative to the income of Vietnamese individuals. Thai products also hold a favourable position in the domestic market, being more affordable than equivalent-quality Japanese and Korean products and offering better quality than Chinese products in the Vietnamese market.

The nature of the economic, political, and commercial relations between Vietnam and Thailand substantiates this context. No armed conflicts, intricate historical disputes, or geopolitical rivalries have been documented. From a theoretical perspective, the context thus provides an opportunity to examine the role of consumers' sentiments towards a specific nation from a holistic standpoint, encompassing both fondness for foreign countries and favoritism towards international brands rather than solely restricting foreign purchasing (such as animosity and consumer ethnocentrism). This

study did not focus on any specific type of commodity to enhance the generalizability of the theory. In other words, all the terms used in the research and the formal survey refer to Thai products in general.

3.2 Measurement

For all constructs in the proposed research model, the measures were obtained from a review of relevant literature. In contrast to adapting measures with significant alterations (adding or removing items), adopting pre-existing instruments refers to implementing minor modifications to better reflect the specific situation under scrutiny. Thus, all measurement items for each construct were adopted from previously validated instruments with slight modifications when used to investigate Vietnam's consumers purchasing Thai products as foreign products.

Adopted from Klein et al. (1998), the willingness to buy (WTB) and product judgment (P.J.) scales were modified based on the context related to Vietnamese consumers, with 6 indicators for each construct. Similarly, measures for the consumer ethnocentrism construct (CET) were based on a 5-item scale employed by Nguyen et al. (2008). The construct of consumer affinity (C.A.) was measured by 7 items adopted from Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011). Adopted from Diamantopoulos et al. (2019), the second-order construct of consumer xenocentrism, which includes two first-order components, was measured by 10 indicators (5 items for each dimension). Consumer cosmopolitanism was measured with a 3-item scale adopted by Yoon et al. (1996).

The questionnaire for the full-scale survey was divided into two main sections: one for the respondent's basic information and one for their opinions on study constructs. The basic data section included the demographic characteristics, which recorded the gender, age, highest education, and income of participants. The second section, items for each latent variable, captured the subject's perception of constructs in the research model. 37 items were measured on 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3 Participants and procedures

The survey data were gathered via a cross-sectional research design with convenience sampling methods. Our questionnaire was scripted in Google Forms, a widely used cloud-based survey software that enables automated data recording and reduces coding errors. An online survey was conducted to recruit respondents through a link to the questionnaire posted on the two dominant social media platforms in Vietnam: Facebook and Zalo. Respondents were also encouraged to distribute the survey link within their own social networks.

While prevalent in social science research, cross-sectional study design and self-administered surveys carry the risk of common method bias, potentially impacting the reliability and validity of empirical findings (Kock et al., 2021). Following the related guidelines, we cautiously execute procedural controls for CMB in survey design. First, the sequencing of questionnaire sections was rotated. Additionally, reversed questions prevented suspicious response patterns (straight-lining or inconsistent answers). Finally, and most importantly, respondents were assured of their responses' strict anonymity and confidentiality.

After collecting the data, a preliminary process was conducted to check for unengaged responses, missing values, outliers, or straight lines. As a result, 687 valid responses provided empirical data for further analysis. Regarding gender, the sample distribution showed that 35.1% were male (n=241) and 64.9% were female (n=446). Most participants were 20–29 years old, constituting 72.5% (n=498) of the sample,

followed by the 30-39 age group at 12.1% (n=83). This skewed age distribution was attributed to recruiting participants through social media, reflecting the common usage patterns in Vietnam. Consistent with the age distribution, the data also revealed that a significant proportion of respondents (87.3%) had a monthly income below 15 million VND. This finding aligns well with the income distribution in a developing country like Vietnam. Additionally, the proportion of participants who held at least an undergraduate degree (69.0%) or higher (9.2%) dominated other groups. Table 1 demonstrates detailed information for a description of the sample characteristics.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

PLS-SEM is gradually becoming widespread among academic fields, especially in social science. The major strength of PLS-SEM is that the algorithm enables scholars to analyse complicated models without violating certain distributional assumptions (Hair et al., 2017). This research applied PLS-SEM as the key technique to test the research model, in which data analysis was performed with SmartPLS version 3.0 to assess the measurement model and structural model. The assessment criteria adopted in this study followed the recommended threshold values by Hair et al. (2019).

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Sample Characterisation		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	241	35.10%
	Female	446	64.90%
	Total	**687**	**100.00%**
Age	20-29	498	72.50%
	30-39	83	12.10%
	40- 49	67	9.80%
	50-59	32	4.70%
	> 60	7	1.00%
	Total	**687**	**100.00%**
Education	Below high school	14	2.00%
	High school	63	9.20%
	Intermediate College	73	10.60%
	Undergraduate	474	69.00%
	Postgraduate	63	9.20%
	Total	**687**	**100.00%**
Income	Below 5 million VND	284	41.30%
	5-10 million VND	215	31.30%
	10-15 million VND	101	14.70%
	15-20 million VND	44	6.40%
	Above 20 million VND	43	6.30%
	Total	**687**	**100.00%**

Source: from the data analysis of author

4.1 Measurement model assessment

4.1.1 Item Reliability

Examining the indicator loadings is the first step in evaluating a reflective measurement model (Hair et al., 2019),wherein loadings greater than 0.708 are recommended because they exhibit that a construct accounts for more than 50 per cent of the variance of the indicator. Only nine items failed to meet the recommended criteria and were eliminated, which are WTB2, WTB5, WTB6, PJ5, PJ6, CXEa5, CXEb5, CA1, and CA2. The remaining items are above 0.708, indicating acceptable item reliability (Table 2).

Table 2: Measurement Model Assessment–Item Reliability, Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (C.R.)	AVE	Source
Willingness to Buy Thai products	WTB1	0.806	0.760	0.862	0.676	Klein et al. (1998)
	WTB3	0.861				
	WTB4	0.798				
Product judgements	PJ1	0.778	0.841	0.893	0.675	Klein et al. (1998)
	PJ2	0.813				
	PJ3	0.880				
	PJ4	0.813				
Consumer Ethnocentrism	CET1	0.721	0.816	0.871	0.576	Nguyen et al. (2008)
	CET2	0.741				
	CET3	0.769				
	CET4	0.816				
	CET5	0.744				
Consumer Affinity	CA3	0.750	0.866	0.903	0.651	Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011)
	CA4	0.780				
	CA5	0.842				
	CA6	0.813				
	CA7	0.846				
Consumer Xenocentrism (CXEa)	CXEa1	0.808	0.829	0.885	0.659	Diamantopoulos et al. (2019)
	CXEa2	0.761				
	CXEa3	0.859				
	CXEa4	0.816				
Consumer Xenocentrism (CXEb)	CXEb1	0.903	0.938	0.956	0.843	Diamantopoulos et al. (2019)
	CXEb2	0.930				
	CXEb3	0.920				
	CXEb4	0.920				
Consumer Cosmopolitanism	COS1	0.871	0.813	0.890	0.729	Yoon et al. (1996)
	COS2	0.873				
	COS3	0.816				

Source: from the data analysis of author

4.1.2 Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

The reliability of measurement is typically evaluated based on internal consistency reliability by assessing Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability C.R. For a study that is more confirmative rather than exploratory in character , the values between 0.7 and 0.9 for both metrics are considered satisfactory by Hair et al. (2019). The results, presented in Table 2, demonstrated that construct WTB (Cronbach's Alpha=0.760, CR=0.862) has the lowest level of reliability, while construct CXEb (Cronbach's Alpha=0.938, CR=0.956) has the highest internal consistency reliability,

indicating all construct measures are above the 0.70 thresholds, hence the reliability of the measurement model is at a sufficient level.

The values of the average variance extracted (AVE) for all items on each construct were assessed to test the convergent validity. Hair et al. (2019) recommended that the minimum acceptable AVE is 0.50 or higher, which indicates that the construct explains 50 per cent or more of the variance of the items that make up the construct. All constructs' AVE values met the minimum requirements (Table 2), ranging from 0.576 (for CET) to 0.843 (for CXEb). Thus, the measurement of all constructs yields satisfactory levels of convergent validity.

4.1.3 Discriminant Validity

In the path model, discriminant validity is the extent to which a construct is distinct from other constructs based on empirical standards (Hair et al., 2019), wherein examining the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations was proposed as an alternative and a more reliable criterion when compared to traditional approaches. Henseler et al. (2015), who suggested a threshold value of 0.85, argued that an HTMT ratio above the cut-off point would indicate a lack of discriminant validity for conceptually distinct constructs based on the theoretical foundations. Data analysis indicated that HTMT values for all pairs of constructs are lower than the relevant threshold level (Table 3). Thus, discriminant validity was established.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity – HTMT ratio

	CA	CET	COS	CXEa	CXEb	PJ	WTB
CA							
CET	0.497						
COS	0.121	0.136					
CXEa	0.051	0.110	0.179				
CXEb	0.479	0.754	0.229	0.103			
PJ	0.072	0.071	0.310	0.425	0.097		
WTB	0.653	0.608	0.232	0.097	0.703	0.115	

Source: from the data analysis of author

4.2 Structural model assessment

The threshold value for VIF is recommended to be, ideally, below 3 (Hair et al., 2019). Analysis showed that the VIF values of all combinations of endogenous constructs and corresponding exogenous constructs are below the recommended cut-off point, even lower than the value of 2 for all constructs (Table 3). Hence, collinearity is not a critical problem in the structural model. If the data indicated significant levels of collinearity problems in the structural model, the estimation of path coefficients could be biased (Hair et al., 2017); thus, the collinearity issue must first be investigated before evaluating the structural relationships.

The R^2 coefficient was widely interpreted as an estimate to evaluate the predictive power, particularly the in-sample explanatory power of the model (Hair et al., 2019). The results (Table 4) showed that the model explained 45.3 per cent of the variance in the WTB construct ($R^2 = 0,453$; R^2adj.$=0,449$) and 9 per cent of the variance in the P.J. construct ($R^2=0,09$; R^2adj.$= 0,084$) was explained by all exogenous constructs linked to it.

Table 4: Structural Model Assessment—R²/R²adj. Coefficients and VIF Values

Dependent Variable	Product Judgements	
	R² = 0,09	**R²ₐdj.= 0,084**
Independent Variables	**VIF**	
CA	1.264	
CET	1.838	
COS	1.058	
CXE	1.888	
Dependent Variable	**Willingness to Buy**	
	R² = 0,453	**R²ₐdj.= 0,449**
Independent Variables	**VIF**	
CA	1.267	
CET	1.849	
COS	1.112	
CXE	1.938	
PJ	1.099	

Source: from the data analysis of author

Path coefficients are among the estimates obtained from the PLS-SEM algorithm, representing the hypothesised relationships among the constructs. We test the hypotheses with a bootstrapping procedure conducted with 5000 sub-samples, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017); from which estimated parameters are used to calculate standard errors for the coefficients and yield *p* values to determine whether each coefficient is statistically significant (significantly different from zero in the population). Assuming a significance level of 5%, a *p*-value lower than 0.05 implies that the hypothesised relationship under consideration is significant. The results of hypotheses testing are demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	Standard Error	P-values	Conclusions
H1a	CET → WTB	-0.088	0.043	0.042*	Supported
H1b	CET → PJ	0.098	0.059	0.1	Not supported
H2a	CA → WTB	0.34	0.035	0.000***	Supported
H2b	C.A. → PJ	-0.059	0.056	0.296	Not supported
H3a	CXE → WTB	0.376	0.046	0.000***	Supported
H3b	CXE → PJ	0.212	0.081	0.009**	Supported
H4a	COS → WTB	0.054	0.031	0.083	Not supported
H4b	COS → PJ	0.224	0.053	0.000***	Supported
H5	P.J. → WTB	-0.007	0.029	0.808	Not supported

Note: $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$
Source: from the data analysis of author

4.3 Discussion

Hypothesis H1a gained empirical support (β= -0.088, p-value=0.042). Thus, the result is in line with the extant literature, which consistently confirmed inverse relationships between consumer ethnocentrism and consumers' willingness to buy foreign-made products (Herche 1994; Olsen et al., 1993; Sharma et al., 1995). However,

hypothesis H1b was not supported by the statistical evidence (β=0.098, p-value=0.100); which is inconsistent with results obtained by Klein et al. (1998) and Klein (2002). However, this finding is consistent with the evidence provided by Pham & Nguyen (2020), which is, interestingly, also in the context of Vietnam.

Hypothesis H2a gained empirical support (β=0.340, p-value<0.001). This result supports those obtained by Oberecker et al. (2008) and Oberecker & Diamantopoulos (2011), who found a strong tendency for specific consumer segments to purchase goods from the focal country for which they had a special affinity. However, hypothesis H2b was not supported (β=-0.059, p-value=0.296), indicating a non-significant positive impact of consumer affinity on foreign product judgements. This finding is inconsistent with the previous study of Guo et al. (2018), as well as the notion of Wongtada et al. (2012): certain consumers are more inclined to trust products from their affinity nation, and this trust will enhance consumers' desire to strengthen their association with the focal country.

Both hypotheses, H3a (β=0.376, p-value<0.001) and H3b (β=0.212, p-value=0.009), were supported. The statistical results not only support the arguments of prior research that people who exhibit out-group favouritism, such as xenocentric consumers, will unquestionably exhibit favourable desires toward purchasing foreign products (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019; Pham and Nguyen, 2020), but also confirm the positive impact of consumer xenocentrism on foreign product judgements. Although there is scant evidence to draw a consistent conclusion, the findings in this research align with the key tenets of system justification theory. Moreover, it can serve as empirical evidence supporting Balabanis & Diamantopoulos' (2016) recommendation for future research to explore consumer xenocentrism's impact on various other essential outcome variables, such as product judgements and risk perceptions.

Hypothesis H4a was not supported (β=0.054, p-value=0.083), indicating a non-significant relationship between consumer cosmopolitanism and Vietnamese consumers' willingness to buy Thai products. This finding failed to support previous researchers, who consistently provided empirical evidence for the positive effect that consumer cosmopolitanism has on the willingness to buy foreign goods (Riefler et al., 2012; Liu & Hong, 2020; Pham & Nguyen, 2020). The results of testing hypothesis H4b (β=0.224, p-value<0.001) provide statistical support to the hypothesised relationship but contradict the prior study of Riefler& Diamantopoulos (2009), which demonstrated the lack of either positive or negative bias in consumer assessments. A possible explanation for the non-significant relationship proposed by Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2001) was that cosmopolitan consumers would adopt an unbiased or neutral approach toward goods and services from domestic and international sources and assess each product regarding its inherent characteristics. Nevertheless, our research notably found a significant positive influence that consumer cosmopolitanism has on foreign product judgements, particularly in the context of Vietnam's consumers purchasing Thai products as a sort of foreign-made product.

Hypothesis H5 was not supported (β=-0.007, p-value=0.808), which indicates there is no empirical evidence to support the impact of foreign product judgements on the willingness to buy products of Vietnamese consumers, contrary to prior studies in other contexts,such as those of Klein et al. (1988), Suh and Kwon (2002) and Cheah et al. (2016).

5. CONCLUSION

The globalisation of markets as a predominant trend, although facilitating the foreign purchasing of consumers across national borders, continuously imposed opportunities and challenges on firms competing in the huge global market. Consumers' sentiments about a certain nation are emerging as essential and prevailing elements to investigate when explaining consumption behaviours, progressively piquing the interest of scholars in both management and marketing disciplines. This research aims to empirically test the effect of consumer ethnocentrism, consumer cosmopolitanism, consumer affinity, and consumer xenocentrism on foreign product judgements and willingness to buy. In the context of Thai product purchasing, this research applied the PLS-SEM method to analyse the data from 687 valid questionnaires through a cross-sectional survey distributed to Vietnamese consumers. In this sense, the current effort has enriched the extant literature by conveying significant theoretical contributions and discussing important managerial implications for businesses to thrive in international markets.

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

First, based on a critical review of the relevant literature, our research was the first effort to simultaneously apply all three underlying theories as a comprehensive system of theoretical foundations to explain bias toward foreign brands. Whilst the most prevailing Social Identity Theory concentrates on classifications and in-group facets of behaviours, Personal Identity Theory (PIT) is concerned with roles and how they determine identities and conducts to minimise contradiction with how others regard them (Balabanis et al., 2019). However, neither SIT nor PIT offers a rationale behind the phenomenon of out-group favouritism accompanied by negative self-stereotyping, culminating in a rejection of domestic offerings (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). As simultaneously adapted to international marketing, each theory drew distinct inferences and proposed various mechanisms for explaining consumer favouritism and derogation.

Second, exploring and understanding the effects of consumers' perceptions towards a particular country on buying behaviours has been of interest to researchers for years in developed, emerging, and developing markets. However, the results of these studies are still in debate because they vary from market to market and product to product. The results provided statistical evidence to support the inverse relationships between consumers and their willingness to buy foreign-made products, consistent with the extant literature (Olsen et al., 1993; Herche, 1994; Sharma et al., 1995). In addition, the non-significant relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and foreign product judgements was consistent with the empirical data from the research of Pham & Nguyen (2020), which was also, interestingly, conducted in the context of consumers in Vietnam.

Third, Nes et al. (2014) posited that whilst several academics in the international business and marketing domain have emphasised concepts relative to restricting foreign purchasing (such as animosity and consumer ethnocentrism), the influence of fondness for foreign countries and favoritism towards international brands received far less attention. This research enriches the literature by empirically confirming the positive impact of consumer affinity on willingness to buy foreign-made products and the positive influence that consumer cosmopolitanism has on foreign product judgements.

Similarly, Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2016) proposed that future research concentrate on the impact of consumer xenocentrism on other essential outcome

variables, such as product judgements. Notably, based on prior scholars' recommendations and scant empirical evidence, this research examined and confirmed a significant positive impact of consumer xenocentrism on both willingness to buy and judgements towards foreign products, consistent with the System Justification Theory serving as the theoretical basis. These findings considerably served as empirical evidence supporting Balabanis & Diamantopoulos' (2016) recommendation for future research to explore the impact of consumer xenocentrism on various other essential outcome variables.

5.2 Managerial Implications

For businesses to succeed in international markets, they must assess consumer affinity, cosmopolitanism, and xenocentrism for the products and services they provide and then adjust their marketing mix following these findings to achieve the desired results for their operations. It would be helpful for the marketers of the brand since it would allow them to better grasp the customers' peculiarities in each foreign market. This research, data, and analysis take on greater significance in the setting of highly competitive global marketplaces since the idea of a global brand is evolving from a uniform product to a more personalised offering. Firms will be able to make better and more informed choices, appropriately alter their offers, and accomplish their goals and objectives in every new market if they consider the effect of the factors that drive customer behaviour toward goods and how they interact with each other.

According to our findings, the presence of a foreign nation whose inhabitants are warm and approachable would encourage customers in Vietnam to have more faith in the reliability of the goods produced in their country and boost their propensity to purchase such goods. Affiliation is a sense of belonging that may be shared between individuals and a nation. The attitude of a particular person may have a bigger impact on purchasing choices than the attitude of a specific nation does.

The discovery that consumer affinity plays a significant role in understanding why consumers would choose purposefully to purchase foreign goods, invest in other nations, or visit these countries has apparent repercussions for international marketing. Instead of only emphasising their production and technical know-how and supremacy, we encourage policymakers and marketers to make an effort in their communications to generate and enhance sentiments of loyalty for their nation. The decision-makers in each nation's government should pursue purely emotive topics that purposefully focus on building and strengthening consumer affiliation sentiments for their nations. For example, the "Discover Thai Products" marketing, which stresses the nation of origin as a label for high-quality, standard and value items, starkly contrasts these methods. The "Discover Thai Products" campaign is more sensible and conventional. Thai companies can capitalise on customer affinity sentiments, strengthen their marketing communications, and improve their own and their goods' images if they link the items they sell with national themes designed to strengthen such feelings. To be more precise, businesses may emotionally use testimonials to appeal to customers in other countries.

An obvious implication of our research is that international businesses headquartered in nations with a relatively higher status than the nation they are trying to break into should capitalise on xenocentric tendencies by emphasising information regarding the origin of their brands and the social and symbolic value of those brands. In contrast, assuming that the xenocentric consumer segment is substantial in the domestic market (and is therefore worth targeting), local firms should not emphasise the brand origin in their marketing communication but instead opt for foreign consumers' cultural positioning and foreign branding strategies. This is because the xenocentric consumer

segment is substantial in the domestic market. Alternatively, domestic companies could concentrate their communication efforts on educating and persuading local xenocentrics that domestic goods and brands are of equivalent (or even higher) quality than foreign companies' offers and may represent greater value for money. Engaging well-known international celebrities to advocate for local goods might aid these marketing efforts. It would help combat the belief of xenocentric that domestic items and brands are of lower quality.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

Although this research represents a careful and systemic effort to incorporate consumers' sentiments about a certain nation from a holistic viewpoint, the research has limitations. Firstly, the reliance on data from a single country raises concerns regarding the generalizability of findings to other nations due to inherent sociocultural variations. Future research may engage in cross-country comparisons to enhance generalizability, enabling a better understanding of potential differences in the proposed model. Secondly, implementing a cross-sectional research design limits inferential conclusions for cause-and-effect relationships; studies should consider field or laboratory experiments to validate the observed phenomenon. Thirdly, although proposing an integrated model with various factors influencing consumers' purchasing behaviours, the current study might not be able to address all variables due to time and resource limitations. Future studies might empirically explore the influence of factors including economic inequalities, past experiences, customer demographics, boycott behaviours, and switching costs. These factors may operate as covariates to increase the accuracy of determining how customer ethnocentrism, xenocentrism, and cosmopolitanism affect purchasing behaviours.

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