

Consumer Ethnocentrism and the Rise of Halloumi Buy-in

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Abstract

Purpose – This product, brand, brand image and the basic concept of the brand, the brand image may be appropriate, the goods to be purchased and the purchase plan can be planned. This article combines brand identity literature from marketing and local food movement literature to explore the experience and reaction to the intentions of people who come to buy halloumi in Northern Cyprus.

Design/methodology/approach – The article is intended for a number of uses; convenience sampling, one of the stand-alone sampling methods and the face-to-face convenient method to evaluate the Pay-to-Pay trial for authenticity claims of test (non-global) brands.

Findings – Findings show that perceptions of authenticity lead to higher brand equity independent of brand globality; By actively validating their brand image, global brands can reduce competitive disadvantages in localized consumer markets.

Authenticity/value – This article demonstrates the usefulness of authentic brand positioning for global halloumi brands when competing with local halloumi brands to overcome the responsibility of globality. To benefit sustainably from the local food movement, local brands will need to build brand images beyond mere connotations of authenticity.

Keywords Halloumi, brand, brand image, brand concept

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to the opinions and evaluations of consumers about how appropriate or ethical it is to purchase foreign goods. The first empirical research on consumer ethnocentrism was conducted by Shimp and Sharma in 1987.

It is a combination of the Greek words "ethnos" meaning "nation, race" and "kentron" meaning "centre" and corresponds to the English "Ethnocentrism". The first use of the concept of ethnocentrism is in William Graham Sumner's studies in the field of sociology in 1906, and it is defined as putting the ethnic group at the centre and making evaluations accordingly (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). In the understanding of ethnocentrism, there is solidarity, harmony, loyalty and a tendency to maintain the continuity of the group by acting jointly within the group (Lantz and Loeb, 1996: 375). According to this understanding, while the individual is proud of the values and symbols of the group he belongs to, he considers the values and symbols of other groups as unimportant (Arı & Madran, 2011).

It is possible to list the features of the ethnocentrism tendency as follows (cited from LeVine and Campbell, 1972, Balıkcıoğlu et al., 2019:166).

- Do not discriminate between groups,
- Interpreting events in line with the interests of their group,
- Putting one's group in the centre and seeing the lifestyle of his/her group as superior to other groups,
- Contempt, belittle, and be suspicious of out-groups,

They tend to see the group to which they belong as the strongest, honest and superior.

Ethnocentrism was first studied by Levine and Campbell (1972) in the field of consumer behaviour (Cited by Shimp, 1984:285), and then conceptualized with the work performed by Shimp (1984). Starting from the concept of ethnocentrism, Shimp (1984) introduced the concept of consumer ethnocentrism in order to explain the attitude towards foreign products. Shimp (1984) introduced the concept of "consumer ethnocentrism" in his study "Consumer Ethnocentrism: the Concept and a Preliminary Empirical Test" in 1984.

In the study, the cognitive, emotional and normative tendencies of American consumers regarding foreign cars were evaluated within the framework of the concept of consumer ethnocentrism, and it was emphasized that the concept is a versatile and complex structure that includes these tendencies. The ethnocentrism tendency scale developed by Adorno (1950) was used in the study and the need for a consumer ethnocentrism scale was emphasized in this study. In the framework of consumer ethnocentrism, the ingroup represents the country of which the person is a member (Balabanis, Dimantopoulos, Mueller, & Melewar, 2001: 159), and the outgroup represents foreign countries. From this point of view, domestic products constitute the inner group, and foreign products form the outer group.

Consumer ethnocentrism is related to consumers' beliefs about the morality of purchasing foreign products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). In this case, there is a structure that favours the ingroup and rejects the outgroup (Zeugner-Roth, Zabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015). In consumer ethnocentrism, there is a normative belief that the local economy should be supported by purchasing domestic products, and therefore it is not ethical to buy foreign products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). From this point of view, it is possible to define consumer ethnocentrism as the tendency to support and prefer domestic products and to be against foreign products.

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to the use of ethnic identity as an input in the process of creating individual identity, the formation of a sense of belonging to an ethnic group, and how the group affects the consumption decisions of the individual (Öztürk and Nart, 2021). Consumers with an ethnocentric tendency prefer domestic products to protect their own country's assets from possible competition from foreigners, to increase the employment of citizens of the country, and to make the country's economy stronger (Aydoğan, 2019).

Sharma, Shimp and Shin (1995:27) stated that consumer ethnocentrism has the following features;

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- Consumer ethnocentrism arises from the fear that imported products may cause harm to the economic interests of the individual and other citizens of the country due to the love and interest of the individual for his country, and the possibility of losing control over this.

- Consumer ethnocentrism includes the intention not to purchase foreign products. For consumers with a high degree of ethnocentric inclination, purchasing foreign products is not only an economic issue, but also a moral issue. Evaluating whether buying foreign products is ethical or not encourages consumers to buy domestic products.

Atak (2018: 10-11) summarized the characteristics of consumer ethnocentrism as follows;

- Consumer ethnocentrism is not an attitude toward a specific product, but a tendency toward foreign products in general,

- There are two moral and economic issues, which are the morality of buying foreign products and the belief that buying foreign products will harm the local economy,

- Ethnocentric tendencies of consumers in the quality, price and etc. of foreign products. - Ethnocentric tendencies originate from the social environment to which the individual belongs, basically, they develop later on by being influenced by the judgments of the individual's family, then by the social environment, the media, ethnic origin and race, and by various opinion leaders.

The fact that individuals with a consumer ethnocentrism tendency have negative attitudes towards foreign products causes the concept to play a role as a non-tariff barrier in international trade (Shimp and Sharma, 1987).

To learn what, why, when, how, how, in what quantity and where consumers buy; It is extremely important to be able to determine the underlying causes of consumer purchasing decisions and the factors that affect these decisions.

Any useful information about consumers gives businesses an opportunity to stay one step ahead of their competitors. In this context, it is important in terms of the marketing communication programs that the businesses will implement, to what extent the positive image of the brands that the businesses try to create in the minds of the consumers affects the purchasing preferences.

Brand

Kotler and Armstrong define a brand as “a name, term, symbol, design, or combination of these, which distinguishes the goods or services of a single seller or a group of sellers from those of competitors and identifies their goods and services”. According to them, consumers think that the brand is an important part of the product and adds value to the product, which means that their perfume in the “White Linen” bottle is of high quality and expensive; This is explained by their perception of the same perfume in an unbranded bottle as a low quality and cheap commodity (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008).

Why is brand image important to businesses?

It is the consumers who reveal and carry the brand image. When compared to competing brands, it is seen that it differentiates the brand from other brands and that some consumers consider the brand.

The consumer's brand image shapes the general perception of the information obtained from various sources about the brand. Knowing the consumers and knowing how they perceive their brands is important for the brand marketing methods of the businesses. Businesses often use the reflection of the brand identity they are trying to create in the field of marketing as the perception of brand image in the mind of the consumer. Brand image and brand identity are similar. In terms of communication, image and identity are separate. The image perceived by the consumer about the brand and identity, the message the operator wants to give to the brand and the behaviours desired to be aroused in the consumer. Brand image enables the consumer to afford the price they would normally pay for a quality product.

Brand identity

Unlike brand image, which expresses how consumers define or perceive the brand, brand identity reveals how businesses define brands. Figure 1. shows the relationship between brand identity and brand image. Here the image is placed on the “receiver” side and the ID on the “sender” side; The contribution of identity to image formation as a strategic planning tool is emphasized. From this perspective, David A. Aaker defines brand identity as “the unique set of brand associations that brand strategists want to create and maintain” (Aaker, 1996).

According to another definition, "brand identity is expressed as the building blocks of the brand's most general recognition and understanding promises", defines the brand and creates the brand image (Elitok, 2003).

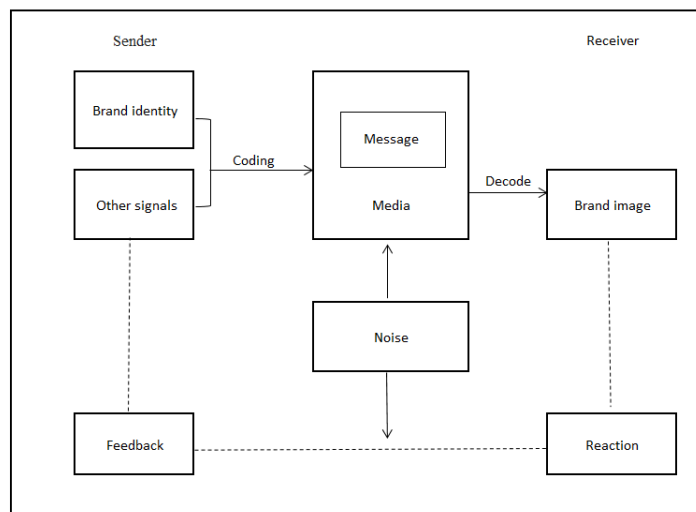


Figure 1. Brand identity and brand image relationship

Brand personality

Brand personality exhibits the main characteristics of the brand that are displayed in human terms and experiences (Gordon & Restall, 1993).

From this point of view, the concept, which is based on the assumption that brands have personality traits and certain feelings or impressions like people, is defined as "human characteristics associated with a brand"; It is explained as the transfer of adjectives such as contemporary, young, intellectual, conservative and old to brands (Uztuğ, 2003).

Joan C. Henderson described Singapore's brand personality with six characteristics in her country branding research, in which she tried to determine Singapore's brand personality traits. Characteristics listed as “cosmopolitan”, “young”, “vibrant”, “modern Asian”, “safe” and “comfortable” exemplify brand personality from the perspective of country branding (Henderson, 2007).

The concept of brand personality, which reveals the human characteristics of the brand, differentiates the brand from its competitors; It gives consumers a sense of habit, friendship and kinship. The brand personality should be reliable and in line with the competitive positioning of the brand and the expectations and perceptions of consumers towards the brand. Brand personality gives the brand life and spirit that the consumer can easily recognize. Nike, Bloomingdale's store, Marlboro man, Jack Daniels whiskey and Energizer battery are among excellent examples of distinctive brand personalities (Schultz et al. 1993).

Brand personality emerges as a concept independent of the physical characteristics of brands such as colour, price and content. The concept does not coincide with the functional features of the brands. Because while physical and functional characteristics of brands are objective, brand personality is subjective. For example, the powder consistency of a certain brand of detergent and the use of a rectangular box to remove the dirt from the laundry show the objective properties of the product; Subjective features such as being a modern and young brand express brand personality (Karalar et al. 2009).

Bianca Grohmann, in her research on the subjective characteristics of brand personality, concluded that marketers can shape gender dimensions of brand personality depending on the masculine or feminine spokespersons they choose in advertisements. According to the same research, when the gender dimensions of the brand personality are compatible with the gender role identities of the consumers, they positively affect the attitudinal, behavioural and emotional consumer reactions. In the case of a brand extension, the harmony between the gender dimensions of the main brand personality and the gender perceptions of the extension category increases purchase intentions (Grohmann, 2009).

The importance of creating brand personality; It arises from the satisfaction of emotional reasons, mostly depending on the personality, depending on the subjective characteristics that arise in the purchase of the goods or services offered. Establishing brand relationships with consumers on an emotional basis helps ensure brand loyalty against the intense efforts of competitors. For example, Virginia Slims, "woman"; Marlboro, "male"; Apple, "young"; IBM are perceived as "adult" brands (Moser, 2003).

Brand Advantages

The brands created by the businesses provide various benefits both to themselves as profit-oriented organizations and to the consumers they are trying to please. For this reason, we have discussed the benefits of the brand under two separate headings for businesses and consumers.

Benefits of the Brand for Businesses

The main benefits of the brand to the businesses that bear high costs to create a brand and carry out intensive integrated marketing communication activities can be listed as follows:

The brand is more effective in generating demand than the business name and the technical characteristics of the goods. Especially in the sell-choose-buy method, the advertised brand is easily remembered and the goods bearing the brand are easily recognized and purchased (Cemalcılar, 2005). For example, Chunky Soup by Campbell, without the Campbell name, achieved faster consumer acceptance with fewer advertisements (Kinnear, Bernhardt, 1995).

The use of the brand attracts the goods to the intermediary enterprises (Çoroğlu, 2002). Today, intermediaries, whose importance is increasing rapidly in the distribution channel, want to keep the branded products preferred by the consumers on their shelves.

The sales of the brand and the manufacturer are regulated. The producer provides the opportunity to control the market to some extent and can monitor the sales efforts of the intermediaries (Cemalcılar, 1999).

Consumers' perceptions of the qualities and price of a particular branded product developers and consumers evaluate new products of the same brand from this perspective. However, if the qualities and price of the new good are not in the expected dimensions, the failure of this good also affects the sales of other goods negatively (Cemalcılar, 1999). The brand positively affects price stability; It helps the brand owner business to ensure that intermediary institutions do not make frequent price changes and that different intermediaries do not sell goods at different prices (Cemalcılar, 1999).

Brands give identity to products. Product “identity” and “personality” are shaped around the brand name (Karataş, 1996).

Brand Benefits for Consumers

For consumers willing to pay more for branded products than for non-branded products, there are many benefits that the brand provides. The main benefits can be listed as follows:

The brand ensures consumer protection. The consumer knows the manufacturer behind the branded product. When the goods need spare parts for repair, they can easily reach this demand if the goods are branded (Cemalcılar, 1999). However, the return of branded products is easier for the consumer (Çoroğlu, 2002).

Brands provide consumers with shopping convenience, labour and time savings; However, it gives the opportunity to purchase the goods they prefer again and again (Kapferer, 2004). While it helps the consumer to recognize the goods they buy, it also prevents them from being confused with other goods (Dereli and Baykasoğlu, 2007).

The brand provides information about the product, summarizes the functional and emotional features of the product, helps to remember the information in the memory and to make purchasing decisions. The brand name is revived in the memory in a short time and reduces the tensions that consumers may experience, especially under time pressure (Uztuğ, 2003).

The brand provides consumers with the status advantage of owning a famous brand product. Like Rolex, Mercedes (Pride, Ferrell, 2003).

In this sense, Jeremy Bullmore, the leading British theorist on brand building, said, "The great thing about owning a BMW is that other people who don't have it know what it's like to own it" (Pringle, 2000).). However, the status expressed by a brand may differ according to the standard of living in that country. BMW, for example, represents a higher prestige than Volkswagen all over the world; however, eating at Pizza Hut is considered "meaningful" in Moscow, while it is perceived as a very ordinary consumption in Washington (Kozanoğlu, 1993/1997).

The results of Harvard University faculty member George A. Miller's research on the human brain also reveal the importance of brand awareness. According to Miller's research, the average intelligent person is not interested in more than seven elements on the same topic. In this context, a brand operating in a certain product group should try to be one of the first seven brands to be remembered in that group. However, high awareness alone is not enough for the brand to be preferred. Awareness, although primary and necessary, is not sufficient to lead to repeated purchase and experience (Konecnik, Gartner, 2007).

Brand loyalty

An emotional bond that can be created between consumers and the brand is of great importance for the life course of the brand. The difficulty of the consumer in making decisions due to inflation of the same, similar and substitute goods/brands that emerged as a result of the economic, technological, cultural and social changes brought about by today's conditions; In addition to rapidly changing its decision, advertising message pollution has made it a necessity for businesses to create brand loyalty and loyalty that expresses this bond. (Tosun, 2020).

Brand loyalty is manifested by positive behaviours, such as repeatedly purchasing a good or service or recommending it to others.

Richard L. Oliver, on the other hand, describes brand loyalty as "repetitive purchasing of the same brand despite marketing efforts and situational effects that cause potential behavioural changes" (Richard L. Oliver, 1999, p. 34.). This definition refers to two different aspects of brand loyalty as "behavioural" and "attitudinal". Behavioural or purchase loyalty involves repeated purchases of the brand. Attitudinal brand loyalty includes the degree of regular commitment as part of the value associated with the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Behavioral loyalty is based on purchasing behaviour and occurs when a person buys the same brand in a particular category for more than a proportional period of time. Attitudinal loyalty is expressed not by what people do, but by what they say; in other words, it includes the person's positive speech towards the brand even if he or she does not make a purchase (Farr, Hollis, 1997).

Figure 1.2 shows the effect of behavioural and attitudinal loyalty on brand performance.

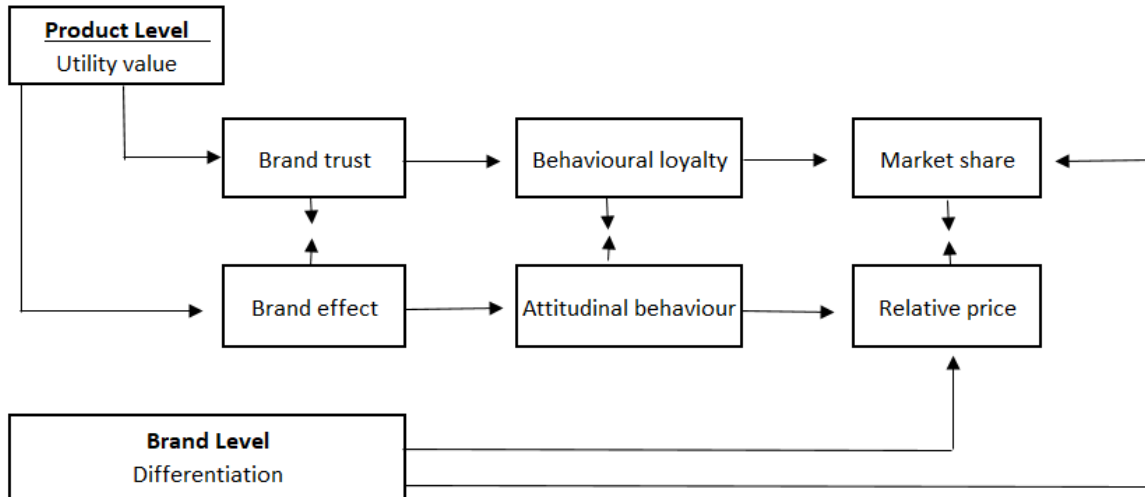


Figure 1.2. Brand Loyalty and Brand Performance Model

Source: (Chaudhuri, Holbrook, 2001).

Baldinger and Rubinson also suggest that brand loyalty should be defined with both behavioural and attitudinal elements. According to them, the probability of highly loyal consumers to stay with the same brand in the next year is related to their brand attitudes. The ability of low-loyalty or non-purchasing consumers to be returned to that brand is largely dependent on positive attitudes towards the brand. In summary, positive brand loyalty tends to increase market share, while negative brand loyalty tends to decrease market share. (Baldinger, Rubinson, 1996, pp. 33-34.)

Like brand awareness, there are various levels of brand loyalty; each level represents a different marketing challenge. According to D. Aaker, if a brand loyalty pyramid is considered awareness, the first level at the bottom includes disloyal buyers who are completely indifferent to the brand. For consumers in this group, every brand is perceived as appropriate and the brand name plays little role in purchases. The second level includes buyers who are satisfied or at least dissatisfied with the product; they basically do not have the dissatisfaction dimension sufficient to encourage a change. At the third level, there are buyers who are also satisfied and think it would be costly to replace. To attract these buyers, competitors must offer an incentive to change and enough interest to cover the cost. The fourth level consists of buyers who truly love the brand. They are defined as friends of the brand. Because they establish an emotional connection with the brand. Finally, at the fifth highest level, there are buyers who are committed to the brand. They are proud to be users of the relevant brand. (Aaker, 2009, op.cit., pp. 59-60.)

Brand loyalty, which occurs at the upper levels of the said loyalty pyramid, provides important benefits such as making the loyal customers the customers of different products sold under the same brand umbrella and gaining new customers through these customers, as well as ensuring the continuity of the consumer's purchase. (Tosun, loc.cit.)

Loyal customers give less credit to rebranding due to price incentives and need greater price reductions to switch brands than less loyal customers. (Baldinger, Rubinson, op. cit., p. 22.)

According to research conducted on the halloumi sector in our country, brand value components are; It is expressed in five categories as "brand loyalty", "perceived quality", "brand credibility", "brand image", "brand awareness and associations". Among them, it has been determined that brand loyalty is the most important determinant of brand value. The reason for this is explained with the idea that creating loyal customers and maintaining this loyalty is only possible with having a high-value brand.

The Origin of Cheese Culture

Cheese is a food with a very ancient origin. The earliest available archaeological evidence of cheese production dates back to 5000 BC and was unearthed in present-day Poland. Its origins are estimated to be in Central Asia, the Middle East or Europe. It is thought to have become widespread during the Roman Empire.

The proposed date for its initial production ranges from the 8th millennium BC (the date when sheep were domesticated) to the 9th millennium BC. At that time, the skin or internal organs of the animal were used because of its nutritional preservative properties. One of the theories about the first formation of cheese is that the milk stored in the stomach (rumen), which is one of these internal organs, turns into clot as a result of fermentation with the enzymes (culture) there. There are different versions of a similar story about an Arab merchant hiding cheese. Another theory is that cheese making came about as a result of salting and pressurizing milk. Yeast may have been intentionally added to this mixture upon replacing the milk retained in the animal's stomach. The first written source on cheese-making dates back to 2000 BC, the tomb inscriptions in Egypt. It is estimated that the cheese made in ancient times was sour and salty and resembled today's white and white cheese. Due to the climate, less salt is used in cheese production in Europe. These cheeses contain distinctive and interesting flavours due to their ability to grow a wider variety of beneficial microbes and enzymes in less salty environments.

Making cheese

Every country, every region or every culture has different types of cheese. Although their productions are close to each other, their tastes are very different. In general, cheese is a fermented milk product obtained by coagulating the milk protein casein with rennet and cheese culture and separating the whey from this clot. On the other hand, there are cheeses such as ricotta and curd, which consist of whey protein instead of casein, and cheeses such as quark, which do not contain rennet. The cheese culture used to lower the pH of milk is not necessary for cheese production and can be substituted with acid-containing substances such as citric acid and vinegar.

After the whey is separated, the salting stage is started for salted cheeses. Salting can be done by dry salting the surface of the cheese or by dipping the cheese in brine. Coagulum is obtained by boiling the whey to 90°C again. The next step is maturation; Cheese can be consumed fresh or after a certain ripening period.

Depending on the technical parameters of these production stages, a wide variety of cheeses are obtained.

Like other fermented milk products, cheese may contain living organisms. Various changes can be seen in the sensory, structural and chemical properties of cheese during its shelf life. To keep these changes to a minimum, cheeses should generally be kept at 6-8°C.

For those living in cold climates, cellars with a temperature around 6-8 °C, humidity constant and airy are ideal for storing cheese. But the city has no such opportunity. For this reason, cheeses should be kept closed at home and on the lower shelves of the refrigerator.

As a result of the legal regulations made in Cyprus, it was decided that halloumi cheese can be produced from cow's milk, provided that the type of milk used in cheese production is stated on the label.

Since boiling and processing are involved in making halloumi cheese, the structure of the curd is extremely important. The most important factor affecting the clot structure is the amount of yeast added to the mixture. Too much or too little yeast causes syneresis (filtration) to become difficult or the curd structure hardens. In the production of halloumi cheese; Quality raw milk is fermented and cut into small pieces the size of chickpeas. At this stage, the pH value of the clot is between 6.40-6.45.

Hellim cheese

Halloumi (Greek: *χαλούμι*; Arabic: *حَلوم*, hallem) is a fresh, dense, yellowish white cheese originating from Cyprus. It is usually eaten after grilling or pan-fried without oil. However, halloumi is an important export item of the Republic of Cyprus and Northern Cyprus.

Halloumi primarily contains goat's milk, milk, salt, and sometimes mint. The milk in it can be goat, sheep or cow's milk. Those made from goat and sheep milk are more durable and delicious and can last up to a year. Halloumi made from cow's milk, on the other hand, spoils within a few months and is less tasty. Sometimes the milk of these three different animals is mixed and used to make halloumi. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellim>)

Halloumi cheese is the most preferred and popular among Cypriot dishes. When Cyprus is mentioned, halloumi comes to mind. Cyprus cannot be without halloumi. Halloumi cheese, which every person who goes to Cyprus does not return without buying and tasting, has started to be produced in many countries in the last ten years.

Halloumi made with sheep's and goat's milk gives a different taste than that made from cow's milk. Halloumi made from sheep and goat milk is the most preferred. Halloumi is served as an appetizer in many Cypriot restaurants.

1 Slice (Medium) Halloumi cheese consists of approximately 95.34 calories. Halloumi cheese contains approximately 0.26 Carbohydrate (g), 6.98 Protein (g), 7.38 fat (g), 175.00 Calcium (mg) (Diatek, 2010).

"Like all other cheeses, halloumi too; It contains many important nutrients such as protein, vitamin A, vitamin B12, riboflavin, phosphorus and zinc. Cheese is one of the most important sources of calcium. Calcium is especially important for dental and bone health. One of the most important benefits of eating cheese, especially a cheese with a dominant flavour like halloumi, is that even a small amount

is enough to add flavour to the dish. Halloumi also has a flavour intensity that will help you feel full longer, especially when choosing full-fat halloumi." (Author, 2020).

What Should Be Considered While Buying Halloumi?

Some brands contain high amounts of salt for longevity. Some can also be prepared with low-fat milk or high sugar and carbohydrate content. That's why you need to check the nutrition label on the product you choose to see if it meets your nutritional expectations. There is a variety for every taste. Halloumi according to your taste; It can vary depending on whether it is low-carb, high-protein, low-fat, or has a lower or higher salt content.

Halloumi has a great place in the culinary culture of Northern Cyprus. It is used in many kinds of pastries and dishes. In the production of halloumi cheese, differences are not tried to create a lot of diversity, and originality and durability are not compromised. Thanks to the developing technology, Halloumi cheese has been stored in freezers for the last 50-60 years. Thus, it can maintain its freshness in the long term. If we go back even further, it was possible to store halloumi cheese in the long term until the time when there was no refrigerator, but it was losing its freshness. Thanks to the thick salt, it could be stored for up to 1 or 1.5 years in containers called halloumi pots. Halloumi would spoil if not stored well. During this preservation, it should be ensured that the jugs are tightly closed and that no water leaks into them.

The Approach of Those Living Abroad to Buy Halloumi from Cyprus:

People/consumers living abroad in Northern Cyprus are less likely to buy halloumi cheese compared to Southern Cyprus. This is because Northern Cyprus is not a recognized country. Since Southern Cyprus is a European Union country, both recognition and accessibility are easier than Northern Cyprus. It is seen that people who have the opportunity to buy halloumi cheese from Northern Cyprus are more profitable than Southern Cyprus. This is because of the currency used. In the framework of the economic crisis we are in, quality, brand and economic budget have started to take place in the foreground rather than accessibility in line with the needs.

In the halloumi cheese culture, which has taken root in the island of Cyprus for centuries, the division of the island into two with a green line did not cause any loss of value. Although people live in different languages and religions all over the island, making halloumi cheese is exactly the same.

Consumers' Intentions to Buy Domestic and Foreign Brands

With the phenomenon of globalization, the borders of countries are disappearing. At this point, ethnocentrism and consumer ethnocentrism are invisible barriers for international markets. The high ethnocentric tendency in the society can pose a great threat to foreign companies that will enter that market, and it can also provide an advantage to domestic companies.

The concept of ethnocentrism, which is generally explained as the tendency of individuals to see their own culture or society as superior to other communities, has given birth to the concept of consumer ethnocentrism. Individuals with ethnocentric tendencies consider their own countries, societies, cultures and products produced within the borders of the country superior to others. Consumers with this tendency refuse to buy foreign products and prefer domestic products in order to protect their

national assets from foreign competition, to increase employment in their country and to help strengthen the country's economy.

Therefore, it is possible to say that consumer ethnocentrism is one of the important and determining factors in consumers' domestic or foreign brand preferences and purchase intentions. When it comes to ethnocentric tendencies, it is important for consumers to know whether the product was produced in their home country. In other words, whether it is domestic or foreign is the most important criterion in product selection. Consumers with ethnocentric tendencies prefer a domestic product or service that has meaning for them by looking at the origin of the product at the purchasing stage.

The concept of country of origin and the role of the country of origin in consumer perception and purchasing behaviour are sometimes objective and sometimes subjective with the effect of psychological factors, this concept is called "country of origin" in international marketing literature (Nart, 2008). Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993) summarized the country of origin effect with the term "made in".

For consumers, the country of origin is the country that a business, product or service matches in their minds of its homeland or business marketing the brand. (Han and Terpstra, 1988). However, with the increase in the diversity of global purchasing and production sites, it becomes difficult to make definite judgments about country of origin information. For example, while Toshiba televisions are made in Mexico, Japanese, Mexican and American items may be found in it. At the same time, the Toshiba brand evokes Japan. According to Zhang, the concept of country of origin is "information about the place where the product is produced" (Chattalos, Kramer, & Takada, 2008).

In the last forty years, with the increase in international trade, the change in its dimensions, the disappearance of borders between countries and the development of global markets, the nature of competition has also changed and the country of origin effect has become one. It is one of the most important factors affecting competition and purchasing preferences (Al-Sulaiti and Baker, 1998).

Researchers tried to measure consumer ethnocentrism tendency by developing a 17-variable scale called CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentrism Scale) and made its first application in America. The person with this disposition puts the interests of his country before his own personal interests, desires and happiness. As it can be understood from here, the main purpose of consumer ethnocentrism is "product". The consumer considers the domestic/foreign distinction as the only determining criterion when evaluating the product. Even if there are no products with the same feature, price and quality, the person exhibits the behaviour of buying domestic goods by paying a higher price. The concept of consumer ethnocentrism is a concept that reflects the consumption tendencies of consumers or their feelings towards domestic and foreign products rather than their purchasing behavior (Sharma and Shimp, 1987). In fact, this tendency may contradict one's true intentions, consumers may not want to buy products of their own country, but they see it as a duty to choose these products (Ha, 1998).

In addition, it has been determined that consumers with high ethnocentrism levels have more positive attitudes towards brands in the local language. In line with the available information, consumer ethnocentrism has a direct and positive effect on foreign brand halloumi/cheese purchase intention.

With the globalization of markets, consumers can encounter a large number and variety of domestic and foreign products. In this case, it is important for marketers to determine the attitudes and

preferences of consumers towards domestic and foreign products. The country of origin effect and consumer nationalism are among the factors that positively or negatively affect consumers' choice of foreign products (Nakos and Hajidimitriou, 2007).

Another reason why foreign branded products are preferred is that the preferred country identifies with that product group, that is, it specializes in that product group. Some countries have become famous for certain product groups and have become the reason for consumers' preference.

Many people think of England when it comes to tea, Sweden when it comes to watches, France when it comes to perfume and wine, Germany when it comes to engineering, Russia when it comes to vodka, and Japan when it comes to electronics. The fact that a product group is a product of a country famous for that product creates a positive image in the minds of consumers for the product and the country and causes them to buy the product of that country. For this reason, consumers may prefer a foreign product instead of buying a domestic product. While the products of underdeveloped and developing countries are perceived as poor quality, the products of developed and industrialized countries are considered to be of high quality.

Another reason why foreign branded products are preferred over domestic products is prestige. Consumers think that having these products gives them prestige (Ettenson & Gaeth, 1991).

In this study, it has been tried to determine the ethnocentrism tendencies of consumers, how much they pay attention to the country of origin information when purchasing halloumi cheese, how they make their domestic or foreign brand preferences, and what is effective in their purchasing decisions. The research is important in terms of trying to explain the effect of consumer ethnocentrism and country of origin on the purchasing preferences of domestic and foreign branded products of consumers who buy products from the tea industry.

Consumer ethnocentrism is the basis of positive or negative attitudes of consumers towards foreign products. For this reason, companies should know the ethnocentrism tendencies of consumers in that market and the importance they attach to country origin information in order to gain competitive advantage in the national market and determine their strategies for entering foreign markets, and they should direct these trends. marketing activities accordingly. The main purpose of the research is to determine whether the consumers in the sample of Istanbul show an ethnocentric tendency and to reveal how the effect of ethnocentrism and country of origin affect consumers' purchase intentions for foreign branded products.

Research gap

Overall, the conceptual and empirical literature on brand authenticity has grown steadily in the marketing literature over the past decade. It is well documented that consumers value brand authenticity and therefore a valuable source of differentiation for brands. However, the literature has not yet addressed two critical aspects.

First, the role of brand global versus brand locality appears to be relevant to the effectiveness of brand authentication. As will be detailed below, scarcity is a factor that shapes brand authenticity, which corresponds to local rather than global brands. Yet many global brands are making significant efforts to validate themselves to counter the perceptions of soullessness caused by their global presence, and

this has proven successful in many cases. Against this background, this article will explore whether the effectiveness of brand authenticity is contextualized by brand globality.

Second, despite frequent debates on brand authenticity, the context of local and global brand nature has not yet been addressed by this literature stream, as it represents a means to differentiate brands in the marketplace. Given that local brands are inherently tied to one place and reach is limited, it can be seen that they represent prototypes of authentic brands that can help them compete with global brands. To better understand the role of brand authenticity in the competition of local and global brands, the article will examine how brand authenticity affects consumers' choice between global and local market offerings.

Data Collection Method in Research

The main population of the research consists of all consumers living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods, was used as the sampling method. Only those who purchased halloumi cheese from the participants were included in the study. A total of 583 questionnaires were distributed to be used in the research, and only 420 of them were found suitable for evaluation. Of the 90 unanalyzed questionnaires, 49 were not returned, and 24 were excluded due to lack of answers, inconsistency, and "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" with all questions. The data of the research were collected using the survey method. Of the 583 questionnaires obtained as a result of the fieldwork, 583 were conducted with the face-to-face questionnaire method.

Preparing the Questionnaire Form

The questionnaire form was prepared according to the purpose and model of the research. A country of origin scale with 13 questions used by Zain and Yasin (1997) was used to measure the country of origin effect. In this part of the research, the statistical methods used in the analysis of the data, the validity and reliability of the research, the frequency distributions regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants and the analysis of the research data are included.

Recommendations

The sample of the research consists of the consumer group living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and shopping in the Southern Greek part. In this direction, it can be recommended to apply the relevant questionnaire applied in different geographical regions and to make comparisons. In this sense, it is important to examine intercultural differences and to reach more comprehensive results with applications to be made in different geographies both at home and abroad. Although each culture has its own taste, their approach to halloumi cheese and suggestions about where it is produced provide a point open to development and interpretation. In addition, the findings obtained as a result of the analyzes only cover a certain time interval. Therefore, it can be said that it has a cross-sectional structure. In this context, considering the time factor in future studies on the subject will enable the findings of the same sample group to be compared and presented in different periods. With the research, an application was made on the brands of halloumi cheese with the highest market share in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. It should not be forgotten that the concept of ethnocentrism is a parameter that should be analyzed before entering an international market, with the spread of halloumi cheese production on a regional basis and the increasing competition in the world. It would

be beneficial to examine the intention to repurchase Halloumi Cheese under the influence of different variable groups.

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