

## INFLUENCE OF ETHNOCENTRIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEQUILA ATTRIBUTES RELATED TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN EFFECT

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**Purpose:** The aim of the article is to determine the impact of ethnocentrism on the assessment of product attributes in consumer purchase decision-making. The reason for undertaking the work was interest in the topic of ethnocentrism and determining the impact of product attributes unrelated to functionality on consumer preferences.

**Design/methodology/approach:** In order to achieve the objective, a questionnaire was conducted using the Internet survey method (CAWI) on a sample of 650 respondents from the USA. Respondents were asked to choose the tequila that looked the same in the photos, in relation to which 6 attributes of the product's country of origin were changed: (raw) materials, place of production, nationality of the company employees and owner, company headquarters and country to which taxes are paid. The use of the conjoint method made it possible to determine the significance of factors when assessing the origin of the product. Moreover, to determine ethnocentric attitude, respondents were asked to answer 20 questions on a modified CET scale.

**Findings:** The most significant product attribute associated with the country of origin was the place of production, followed by the place of paying taxes and the source of (raw) materials. The least important attribute was the origin of the employees. However, differences in the assessment regarding the attributes of the country of origin were determined with regard to the level of ethnocentrism represented by the respondents. For highly ethnocentric consumers, the most important attribute was where the tequila company paid its taxes. On the other hand, for consumers demonstrating a low level of ethnocentrism, the place of production was the most significant.

**Research limitations/implications:** The study was conducted among US citizens, which means that it would be worth conducting such a study on other continents, especially in countries with a high consumption of alcoholic products. The conducted empirical study, its results and methodology, may be inspiration for further scientific research in the analysed field. Due to the range and complexity of the studied issues as well as the research area, this work does not fully exhaust such an extensive subject. In further research, the respondents should represent different age groups, as well as levels of education and ethnocentrism.

Consumers could also be distinguished by the number of people in the household and their annual household income.

**Practical implications:** The publication can be used by both owners and marketing departments of companies producing alcohol, but also other products with a diffuse country of origin effect. The information contained in the research could be applied in shaping campaigns among clients with different levels of ethnocentrism.

**Originality/value:** In the article, a comprehensive description has been given of the potential for displaying various product attributes related to the country of origin, important from the point of view of consumers' decisions about different levels of ethnocentrism. What may be considered innovative is the analysis, ranking attributes concerning the country of origin depending on the level of consumer ethnocentrism.

**Keywords:** county of origin effect, consumer ethnocentrism, conjoint analysis, modified CETSCALE.

**Category of the paper:** Research paper.

## 1. Introduction

The topic of etocentricism has been discussed by numerous authors (Sumner, 1906; Shimp, Sharma, 1987; Herche, 1992; Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, 2004, 2008, 2011; Figiel, 2004; Chryssochoidis, Krystallis, Perreas, 2007; Evanschitzky, Wangenheim, Woisetschläger, Blut, 2008; Renko, Karanovic, Matic, 2012; Szromnik, Wolanin-Jarosz, 2013; Romanowski, 2013; Kaczmarek, Wieja, 2021 and others) since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the literature, the issue of attitudes towards “ours” and “foreign” has been highlighted (Sumner, 1906; Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, 2004; Barani, Maison, 2014 and others), various scales for measuring the level of ethnocentrism have been proposed (Shimp, Sharma, 1987; Szromnik, Wolanin-Jarosz, 2013; Rašković et al., 2017; Ma et al., 2019), and dimensions as well as forms of economic patriotism have been defined (Cliff, Woll, 2012; Kaczmarek, Wieja, 2021), describing the importance of ethnocentrism in creating social capital (Romanowski, 2013; Jokiel, Jokiel, Młodzinska-Granek, 2022).

In the field of research on the country of origin effect associated with ethnocentrism, occurring in relation to various aspects of the production process (Insch, McBride, 1998; Chao, 1993), various product groups have been studied (Ahmed, d'Astous, 2008 - in the area of the fashion market, Kaczmarek, Wieja, 2021 - in the area of food products and others). However, there are no studies in which various attributes of alcoholic products would be analysed in relation to country of origin effect.

The reason for undertaking this research was interest in the topic of ethnocentrism and learning about the impact of product attributes that are not related to their functionality on consumer preferences. An attempt was made to identify the importance of various product attributes in the process of making a purchase decision. In addition, it was attempted to answer

the question as to why consumers prefer one product over another, when the products are almost identical in functionality, but differ in attributes related to country of origin.

The aim of the work was to determine the influence of ethnocentric attitude on the assessment of product attributes when making decisions about purchasing tequila by consumers. To achieve this objective, an online survey method was used, in which questions were asked to interpret data using the CET scale and conjoint analysis.

## **2. Correlations between consumer ethnocentrism and the country of origin effect - a literature review**

The term ethnocentrism was first used in 1906 by the American sociologist and anthropologist William Graham Sumner in "Folkways: A Study of Mores, Manners, Customs and Morals", and has been described as "a way of looking at things where one's own group is the centre of everything and everything around is evaluated and prioritised in regarding it. Each group feeds on its pride and vanity, glorifies its superiority, exalts its own gods, and looks down on others" [transl. A.S.] (1906).

Another important publication in the field of consumer ethnocentrism was presented by Shimp and Sharma (1987, pp. 280-289). These authors claimed that consumer ethnocentrism is "a belief shared by consumers about the obligation and morality of buying goods of domestic origin". The authors stated that consumer ethnocentrism is a feeling that makes consumer decisions not be guided by economic rationality, but by morality and a sense of duty. The ethnocentric attitude of consumers is related to decisions regarding choices, purchases and the use of products of domestic origin. Ethnocentric customers are guided by the criterion of product origin and prefer those coming from a native source. According to the authors, for ethnocentric consumers, buying foreign products is a moral problem, not an economic one. Proponents of this approach suggest that it is moral reasons that make ethnocentric consumers buy domestic products, despite the fact that their quality may be lower and the price higher than imported ones (Szromnik, Wolanin-Jarosz, 2013, p. 99). Unlike them, for non-ethnocentric consumers, the country of origin is irrelevant, and they are guided by economic rationality in their purchasing decisions.

Herche (1992) showed that consumer ethnocentrism predicts consumer preferences to buy domestic rather than foreign goods and, at the same time, proved that ethnocentric tendencies are better predictors of purchasing behaviour than demographic or marketing variables. In many other studies it has been demonstrated that consumer ethnocentrism influences attitudes or purchase intentions towards domestic and foreign products (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, 2004; Chrysochoidis, Krystallis, Perreas, 2007; Evanschitzky, Wangenheim, Woisetschläger, Blut, 2008; Renko, Karanovic, Matic, 2012).

Among contemporary researchers, one can find a different point of view according to Shimp and Sharma regarding the motives that guide ethnocentric consumers. Baran and Maison (2014) argued that consumer ethnocentrism does not have to be a phenomenon conscious of the consumer with an ideological background. The authors stated that consumer ethnocentrism is not necessarily a phenomenon that should be analysed within the context of morality and obligations that guide the consumer. According to Baran and Maison (2014), the rationality of decision-making by ethnocentric consumers is modified by the influence of factors that have their source in the automatic mechanism associated with favouring one's own group. They assumed that one of the basic mechanisms explaining the operation of this phenomenon is the mechanism of preferring one's own group while depreciating others. This means that a product produced in one's own country is automatically more "domestic" and less "foreign", so it is automatically perceived better by native consumers. At the same time, the operation of this mechanism can be moderated by the reflective processing of information. When decision-making processes are more conscious, depending on the circumstances - the effect of favouring the products of one's own group can be strengthened, weakened or abolished. It may also happen that a rational analysis will lead to the recognition of the objective advantage of third-party products. In their works, the authors postulated that the phenomenon of consumer ethnocentrism does not have to result from a strong sense of duty and obligation (Baran, Maison, 2014, p. 5). Similar perspectives were also expressed by other authors (Kaczmarek, Wieja, 2021). This thread is often associated with consumer attitudes expected during crises.

Over the years, crises have led many companies to collapse, while others have developed and become strengthened on the market. Sometimes, the key factor was the product itself, while sometimes, the marketing narrative and image of the company. In the article entitled "Revision of consumer ethnocentrism" by Siamagka and Balabanis (2015), the authors discussed the 2008 crisis, during which the scale and power of ethnocentrism were revealed. The government, organisations and companies of all kinds use ethnocentrism to minimise the import and access of foreign competitors to the local market. In many countries, governments have chosen to sponsor "buy-local campaigns" to protect jobs, reduce import, improve trade and protect national identities. Examples of such activities have occurred, for example, in the United States, Australia, Indonesia and Vietnam. Multinationals were hit hard by these campaigns, so they decided to create their own "buy local" programmes, such as WalMart in the US and John Lewis in the UK. In previous research from the early 2000s, it has been shown that consumers do not associate the origin of brands, even if they are international and well-known companies. An example can be the study conducted in the United States in 2005 by the team: Samiee, Shimp and Sharma. They indicated that the average rate of correct brand identification is only 49% for 40 domestic brands and 22% for 44 brands from 7 other countries. In subsequent studies in which the correct assignment of the country of origin to the brand was checked, the results ranged from 17% to 54%, depending on the product category. Such research was carried out in Australia by Hennebichler (2007).

Ethnocentric attitudes of consumers prompted producers and people responsible for creating marketing narratives to properly adapt product attributes to the emerging phenomenon. Assigning various attributes of a product, or more broadly, an offer, to a place is called the Country-of-Origin effect (COO or made-in effect). The country of origin effect defines the impact of the product origin and the image of the country in which it was produced or with which it is associated, and how this influences consumers' decisions (Figiel, 2004). Proper determination of the country of origin is the basic condition for the conscious purchase of domestic or foreign products by consumers. When making decisions, consumers adhere to the use of specific identifiers (Szromnik, Wolanin-Jarosz, 2013). In such a division, the main identifier is information about the country of origin concerning the product brand, which makes it possible, with high probability, to indicate the country of origin of the product itself. One of such identifiers is a brand symbol - a specific graphic sign.

Research on the impact of COO on brand equity is limited (Samiee, 2010; Zeugner-Roth, Diamantopoulos, 2010) and in only a few studies was it examined how COO dimensions relate to different dimensions of brand equity, or how these relationships may change under the influence of other variables. In research on the subject, it has been suggested that breaking down COO into dimensions allows for a more complete understanding of how COO affects brand equity (Ahmed, D'Astous, 2008; Chao, 1993; Fetscherin, Toncar, 2010; Hamzaoui, Merunka, 2007; Thakor, Lavack, 2003). Consumers often know both where the brand comes from and where the product is made (Ahmed, d'Astous, 2008). For example, Nike is known in the United States, but factories that produce Nike running shoes are located in Asian countries such as China, Pakistan and Vietnam. As illustrated by this example, consumer perceptions of information on country of origin may differ from the reality. The perceived origin of a brand or country of production may vary from consumer to consumer and may differ from actual locations. In the study by Hamzaoui-Essoussi, Merunka and Bartikowski, the authors used a quasi-experimental method to account for these differences. Consumers can derive the meaning of the Nike brand from both its American origin and the Asian country of manufacturing. Brand Origin (BO - Brand Origin) is "the place, region or country to which the brand is perceived as belonging to by its target customers" [transl. A.S.] (Thakor, Kohli, 1996), i.e. the country from which the brand appears to originate, which reflects the "brand nationality". Country of Manufacture (COM) is the country (or region) that consumers believe produces a branded product. While BO exists in the minds of consumers and is a strong association with the brand (Keller, 1993), COM is factual information that can change in time and space. Therefore, BO and COM can affect brand equity differently. In their research, Mort and Duncan (2003) found that for Australian consumers, the "owned by" indication is slightly more important than the "made in" indication, which also shows varying consumer preferences.

The emergence of hybrid, bi- and multi-national products has made it necessary to reconsider the COO concept. In this context, various authors have redefined the COO and divided the country of origin into a number of sub-dimensions or sub-categories with regard to material products, such as: Country of Parts (COP), Country of Assembly (COA), Country of Design (COD), Country of Manufacture (COM) and Country of Brand (COB) (Chao, 1993; Insch, McBride, 1998; Hulland, 1999).

Originally, COO referred, on the one hand, to the country where the product was designed, and on the other, to the country where it was designed or manufactured. In the past, many companies that originated from one country designed and manufactured their products in their own country. Therefore, the country of origin was that where the product was designed and where it was finally assembled, i.e. the country that appeared on the "made-in" label. Given the fact that in recent decades the process of globalisation has led companies to relocate production to other countries, one product may have components manufactured in several countries, while the final assembly may take place in yet another country altogether. As such, there are currently several COO concepts that represent different product manufacturing situations in a larger number of countries:

- Country of Manufacture (COM) refers to the country where the product is manufactured up to the final stage, i.e. the country where the final product is received. It can be considered as the country where the final packaging takes place and where the final product is labelled (Insch, McBride, 1998).
- Country of Components (CPC) refers to the country where only parts of the product are produced. These may be components that are to be connected in the final product. This distinction is made especially in the case of products with a higher degree of technical complexity, where the role of individual components in the quality of the final product is perceived as high. Cars and computers are good examples of this. Many multinational companies, especially those whose production involves labour-intensive processes, outsource their components to decrease costs. When product components are outsourced to save costs, it is usually done in developing countries where labour costs are lower than in developed countries. This relocation process may have impact on the image of the final product. Therefore, the CPC is also taken into account by the consumer when evaluating products (Chao, 1993).
- Country of Assembly (COA) refers to the country where the product was assembled, taking into account that the parts were manufactured in other countries. This can be a country where the various parts are assembled, or a country where the product is partially or fully assembled and not necessarily always ready for sale to the final consumer (Insch, McBride, 1998).

- Country of Design (COD) means the country where the product is designed and developed (Nebenzahl, Jaffe, Kavak, 2001).
- Country of Brand (COB) is the country that consumers usually associate with a particular product or brand, regardless of where it was actually produced. According to consumers, this is the country to which the product belongs (Thakor, Kohli, 1996). On the other hand, Hulland (1999) believes that COB should be determined for each brand by specifying the country of origin of the companies that own the brand. In the literature, there is not agreement as to how different concepts should be defined, as many different descriptions are given.
- Country of Origin (COO) can be defined as "the country where the product or brand company is headquartered, which may also be inferred from the country where assembly or production takes place and the country where the product is designed" [transl. A.S.] (Ahmed, d' Astus, 1996).
- Country of (raw) materials; in a study from 2013 (Hustvedt, Carroll, Bernard), it was shown that Americans are willing to pay much more for a product if it is made of American rather than foreign raw materials. The higher the level of ethnocentrism in the respondent, the more s/he is willing to pay for this product. For respondents with a high level of ethnocentrism, the highest value for local products has been demonstrated (originating from the state in which they live).
- Country of employee origin; a variable taken from the CETSCALE, where the country of origin of the product is related to the origin of employees, and thus, if we buy a product from our country, we give employment to our compatriots. In various studies, this factor is more or less significant, but it always affects at least some consumers.
- Country of paying taxes; consumers influence companies to pursue a responsible corporate tax strategy (responsible CTS). In Johnson & Johnson's (2011) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) report, the company states: "We must be good citizens - support good works and charities and pay our fair share of taxes" [transl. A.S.]. When companies do not clearly state what tax policy they apply, the media come to the aid of consumers, trying to dispel doubts and expose the truth.

An additional factor is the policy that can very quickly negatively or positively influence consumer perception of a product. An example may be the deterioration of Russia's image by starting a war in the Ukraine or the improvement of the image of Poland. This country was considered anti-immigration before the war, but gained recognition in the eyes of the world public opinion by admitting over 8 million Ukrainian refugees and welcoming about 2 million Ukrainians into their homes.

### 3. Research methodology

As part of the work, an empirical study was carried out to check the impact of product attributes on the perception of the product as "made in the USA". In the first part of this chapter, the research methodology, characteristics of the respondents and graphic elements of the survey are presented. In the second part, the results obtained from the study are given, while in the third part, an analysis of the obtained results is conducted.

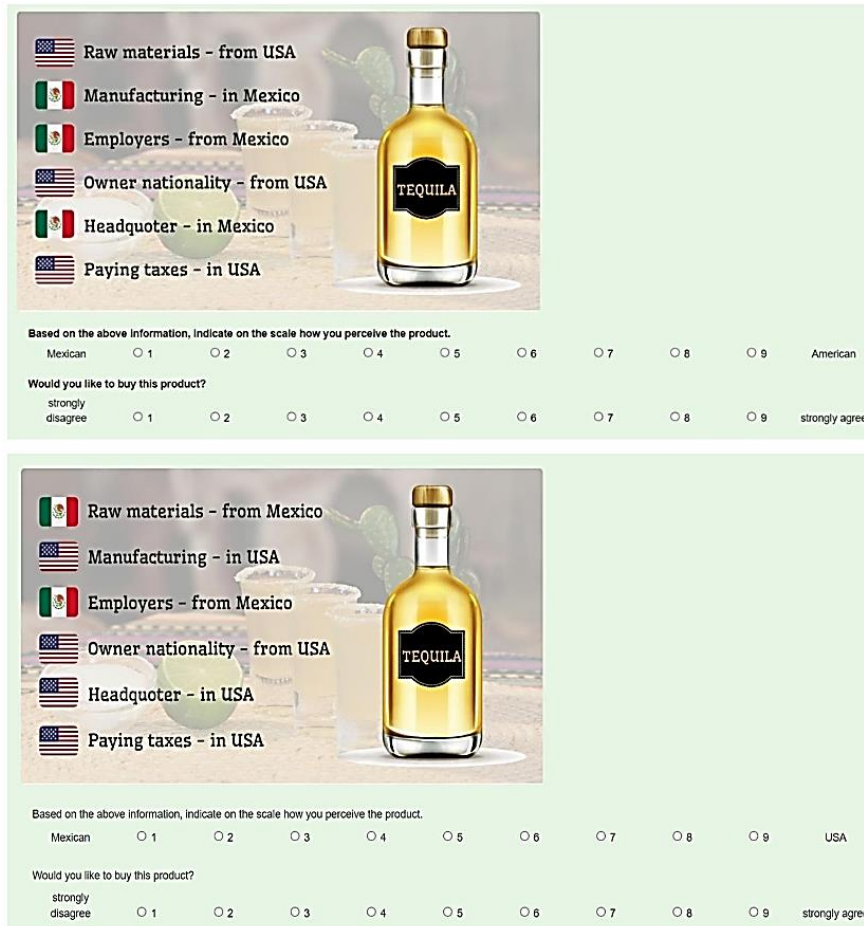
The questionnaire was conducted in the form of an online survey (CAWI) on March 9-20, 2022. The survey was sent out by ConsumerLab, operating at the Department of Commerce and Marketing at the Poznań University of Economics and Business, and the respondents were people living in the United States.

The form consisted of a set of questions that included combinations of product features, enabling the use of conjoint analysis. Due to this, it was possible to decompose the meaning of attributes related to the product, producer and production that have the greatest impact on the perception of the product's country of origin. The attributes in this study were: raw materials, place of production, employees, nationality of the owner, company headquarters and the country to which taxes are paid.

The study was designed to test the significance of tequila attributes related to the country of origin by assigning appropriate attributes to Mexico or the United States. Tequila is a Mexican spirit made from fermented agave juice. This product is mainly consumed in the United States (114 million litres per year) and Mexico (93 million litres per year). The combination of these two countries in one study is interesting because the nominal attribution of tequila production to Mexico was confronted with the ethnocentric attitudes of Americans, who consume the greatest amounts of tequila in the world. For comparison, the third country in terms of tequila consumption is Russia, with only 3.7 million litres in 2014. Tequila was selected for the study because, in addition to the popularity of the drink in both countries, it combines the ability to choose attributes for a potential producer. Thanks to this approach, each attribute can come from both countries and is a rational choice from a business point of view.

The entire study consisted of three parts. In the first one, there were 8 images. The questions related to the images were displayed beneath each one. Subsequent images were displayed in sequential mode (Figure 1).





**Figure 1.** Selected examples of forms of asking questions in the questionnaire.

Source: own research.

Each image contained a different combination of country of origin variables (US or Mexican - 2 variables) and 6 product and manufacturer attributes (materials, production, employees, owner, location and taxes). The set for each respondent was identical - the same images with the same flags shown in the same order. The second part of the questionnaire included questions about ethnocentrism and questions related to alcohol consumption (Table 1).

In the questions concerning ethnocentric attitude, the 9-point Likert scale was used. Among the questions, there were 3 checking the attention of the respondent (ACQ), which consisted in selecting a specific answer specified in the question.

**Table 1.***Set of questions regarding ethnocentric attitudes of the respondents – CET*

CET variable	Statement number	Statement content	Source
Customer Ethnocentrism (CET)	CET1	Purchasing foreign-made products is anti-American.	Rašković et al., 2017
	CET2	It is not right to purchase foreign-made products because it puts American people out of jobs.	
	CET3	A real American should always buy American products.	
	CET4	We should purchase products manufactured in the USA instead of letting other countries get rich from us.	
	CET5	Americans should not buy foreign products because this hurts American business and causes unemployment.	
	CET6	It may cost me in the long-run, but I prefer to buy American-made products.	
	CET7	American consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow American people out of work.	
	CET8	We should buy from foreign countries only those products which we cannot obtain within our own country.	
	CET9	I love products and services from the USA.	Ma et al., 2019
	CET10	I am proud of products and services from the USA.	
	CET11	I admire products and services from the USA.	
	CET12	I feel attached to products and services from the USA.	
	CET13	East or West, the products and services from the USA are the best.	
	CET14	Products from the USA are examples of best workmanship.	
	CET15	Service providers from the USA have the best work attitudes.	
	CET16	For me, it's always the products from the USA first, last and foremost.	
	CET17	If I have a choice, I would prefer buying products and services from the USA.	
	CET18	I prefer being served by service providers from the USA.	
	CET19	If only possible, I avoid buying products and services from foreign countries.	
	CET20	I often refuse to buy a product or service because it is from a foreign country.	

Source: own research based on Rašković et al., 2017 and Ma et al., 2019.

After completing the above questions, a transition to part 3 occurred, in which there were metric questions. The study involved 650 people between the age of 19 and 75, and all of them successfully passed the ACQ. The mean age was 38.86 years ( $SD = 11.57$ ). This group consisted of 321 men and 324 women, while 5 people did not wish to specify their gender. The vast majority of respondents had higher education - they constituted a total group of 516 people (79.38%), of which the majority had a bachelor's degree, as many as 399 people (61.38%), then 111 people (17.08%) had a master's degree, while only 6 of the respondents (0.92%) completed their doctorate. The third, largest group was represented by people with a secondary school certificate or equivalent, and there were 110 in total (16.92%). The last 2 groups were respondents with education lower than secondary or simply a different form of education. The number of people from these groups was 4 (0.62%) and 20 people (3.08%), respectively.

## 4. Findings

The subjects were divided into high (HIGH) and low ethnocentric (LOW) groups. The group with a high level of ethnocentrism included 348 people, of whom 193 were men and 155 were women. The group with a low level of ethnocentrism included 128 men, 169 women and 5 people who did not specify their gender. The HIGH group had a 31 higher average age (39.2 years) than the LOW group, with an average age of 38.46 years. The difference is very small, but in this case, there is a principle that people become more concerned with the origin of the product with age and prefer domestic rather than foreign ones. The results of ethnocentric orientations in relation to income are also very interesting (Table 2).

**Table 2.**

*Division of respondents according to annual household income in dollars broken down into the HIGH and LOW group*

Income in dollars	Percentage in group		Difference
	HIGH	LOW	
< 19,999	4.31	12.58	-8.27
20,000-29,999	11.21	8.61	2.60
30,000-39,999	8.05	11.26	-3.21
40,000-49,999	15.80	12.25	3.55
50,000-59,999	24.14	15.56	8.58
60,000-69,999	7.76	7.62	0.14
70,000-79,999	11.21	7.28	3.92
80,000-89,999	5.46	5.96	-0.50
90,000+	12.07	18.87	-6.81

Source: own research.

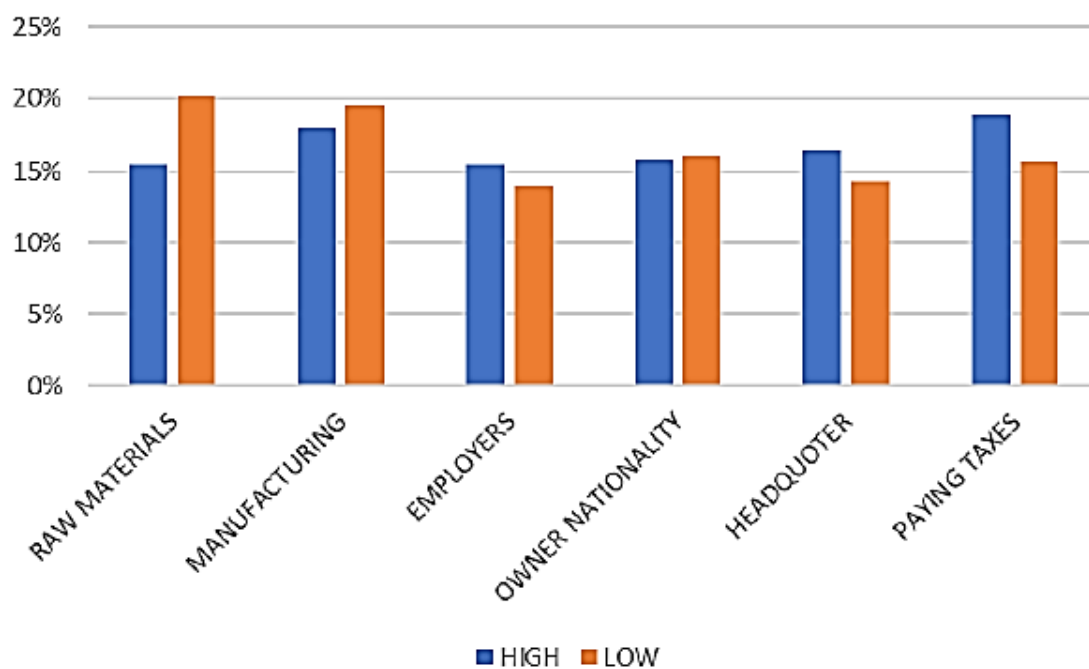
The HIGH group definitely outweighed the LOW group within the \$50,000-\$59,999 range. However, when we move towards people with the lowest income (range < 19,999) or the highest (range 90,000+), the LOW group constitutes an increasingly large group. Analysing these results, it can be said that a low level of ethnocentrism is observed in the group of people with the lowest and the highest annual household income. On the other hand, people with an average annual household income (\$50,000-\$59,999) are likely to be highly ethnocentric.

The data appears quite intriguing if we divide it into 3 income ranges: 0-39,999, 40,000-69,999 and 70,000+. In this case, the HIGH group was divided as follows: 23.56% in the lowest income group and, respectively, 47.70%, 28.74% in the middle and high income bracket. In turn, the LOW group is very evenly distributed in each of the ranges, and the results were 32.45%, 35.43% and 32.12% from the lowest to the highest range. This arrangement shows that almost half of the HIGH group is middle class, and the LOW group is represented more or less equally by each class.

Although in the LOW group there are more people in the highest income brackets, they do not describe their financial situation as very good. Only 15 people (4.97% LOW) marked the answer "very good financial situation", while in the HIGH group, the same answer was chosen

by 34 respondents (9.77% HIGH). In the 90,000+ income range, there were 57 people in the LOW group (18.87% of this group) and 42 people in the HIGH group (12.07% of this group). Most often, among highly ethnocentric respondents, a good financial situation was indicated (over 50% of this group). In the LOW group, the answer “average” was most often chosen (almost 50% of this group). In the HIGH group, as part of other assessments of their financial situation, the following were indicated: average - 31.61%, bad - 2.30% and very bad - 0.86%. In the LOW group, 33.77% of people described their financial situation as good, 8.61% as bad and 5.63% as very bad.

The division into 2 groups representing a high and a low level of ethnocentrism allowed for a better reflection of the differences in the perception of various attributes concerning country of origin in relation to the tested product, in this case - tequila (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Influence of product attributes on the perception of a product as "made in the USA", divided into LOW-ethnocentric and HIGH-ethnocentric groups.

Source: own research.

The figure reflects the differences in the preferences of the 2 groups. For the HIGH group, the country of tax payment by the company is the most important (18.5%) and the country of production is slightly less important (18%). For people from the LOW group, the country of production is also very significant (19%), but the origin of the materials is the most important (20%). Both groups are the least concerned about the background of employees (16% and 14% respectively, see Table 3).

**Table 3.**

*Ranking of tequila attributes associated with the country of origin effect among consumers with high and low levels of ethnocentrism*

Attribute	HIGH		LOW		Total	
	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
Raw materials	15.5	5.	20	<b>1.</b>	17.75	2.
Manufacturing	18	2.	19	2.	18.5	<b>1.</b>
Employees	15.5	5.	14	6.	14.75	6.
Owner nationality	16	4.	16.5	3.	16.25	4.
Headquarters	16.5	3.	14.5	5.	15.5	5.
Tax residence	18.5	<b>1.</b>	16	4.	17.25	3.
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>	

Source: own research.

With regard the nationality of the owner, both groups are practically in agreement. It is also worth noting that the spreads in the two groups are slightly different. In the LOW group, the spread between the most and least important attribute of the product's country of origin is over 6 percentage points. In the case of the HIGH group, the difference between the extreme attributes is almost twice smaller - 3 percentage points. In addition, the origin of materials and raw materials for production for the LOW group is the most important, while for the HIGH group it is the opposite, because the origin of materials is classified at the very end in the hierarchy of significance among all attributes.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

The aim of the work was to determine the impact of ethnocentrism on the assessment of product attributes in consumers' purchasing decisions. In the conducted study, tequila was selected for measurement, for which 6 attributes of the country of origin were altered, assigning them to either the USA or Mexico. The study covered mainly Americans and tried to check to what extent the information about the American origin of tequila can affect the change in the tendency towards its purchase, with the respondents' level of ethnocentrism differing.

The analysis allowed to show that there are relationships between low and high levels of ethnocentrism and various attributes of the country of origin assigned to the product. In the case of both groups, there are different assessments of the importance of the same attributes. Thanks to such information, producers and traders can prepare detailed marketing campaigns aimed at such target groups.

A characteristic feature of the HIGH group is a large share of the middle-class. If a given enterprise pursues a friendly tax policy and pays taxes locally, this fact should be clearly communicated to consumers with a high degree of ethnocentrism. A significant factor for both groups turned out to be the location of production, which ranked second in the hierarchy of significance in both groups. This information allows to suggest that it is worth emphasizing

where the product was produced, because it is a very important factor for the consumer. This should be communicated to, for example, Americans if the product is manufactured in the United States. If the product is manufactured in a country other than the country of consumers' residence, it is not advisable to display such information. For people with a high degree of ethnocentrism, it is better to show the place of tax payment if it is the country of origin of the consumer. However, in the case of people with a low degree of ethnocentrism, it is better to demonstrate the source of the raw materials. It is also advisable to emphasize not only individual benefits resulting from the purchase of a given product, but also activities supporting a given country.

However, the study is not without some research limitations. The first is the fact that the survey was conducted among respondents living in the United States. This limits the transfer of research results to the entire population or to the customs of other nationalities. The relationship between the United States and Mexico, which is very politically conditioned, cannot be overlooked either. Differences in the level of development of both countries may create varying attitudes of customers towards products manufactured in a more developed country than towards products manufactured in a less developed country.

The conducted empirical study, its results and methodology may be an inspiration for further scientific research in the analysed area. Due to the range and complexity of the issues and the field of study, the subject has not been fully exhausted in this work. It would be worth examining consumers from other countries, especially the Polish society, to check the extent to which the attributes of product origin are of importance. It is recommended that the respondents represent different age groups, as well as level of education and ethnocentrism. Consumers can also be distinguished by the number of people in the household and their annual household income.

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