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Article

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Social Dominance Orientation and Consumer Xenocentrism: Mediating Role of Status Consumption and Social Comparison

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Abstract

This research aims to create a model that elucidates the reasons why people exhibit xenocentric consumer tendencies. In this context, a theoretical framework describing the evolution of consumer xenocentrism (C-XEN) was constructed by integrating elements from diverse theories. Then developed model was analyzed with empirical research involving 534 participants using structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS. The findings indicate that individuals with high social dominance orientation are more prone to having C-XEN, and proposes that status consumption and social comparison mediates the relationship between the social dominance orientation and the emergence of C-XEN. The framework allows to grasp the psychological factors contributing to C-XEN. In conclusion, testable propositions that are verifiable are believed to promote additional researches on the matter going forward.

Keywords: Consumer xenocentrism, social dominance orientation, system justification, social comparison, status consumption.

1. Introduction

Statements like this one are widespread and represent the finding that, a large segment of consumers in many countries, consistently favors foreign products in spite of their higher prices and, in some cases, lower quality. Notably, the observed tendency to choose foreign products is not limited to a certain product category and extends beyond those that are prominently consumed (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Herein, Mueller et al. (2010, p. 8) stated that “the preference for a range of foreign goods are preferred over qualitatively similar or better domestic goods that are often less expensive such as processed food

formula, cereals, soaps, toothpaste, building materials, pharmaceutical, and clothing". In some cases, solid antagonistic vibe to a nation may not hamper consumers' craving for its merchandise (Mahmoud et al., 2021). According to Balabanis et al. (2019) there is no reason why people prefer to purchase products from other countries when their own country's products are equal or superior in quality. Moreover, consumer affinity, as depicted by Josiassen's (2011) "consumer attraction-repulsion matrix" is a positive feeling towards other countries. Nevertheless, it does not capture the consumers' general tendency to prefer foreign products. Since, the latter reflects "a feeling of liking, sympathy and even attachment toward a specific foreign country" (Oberecker et al., 2008, p. 26). Therefore, we are in need of a novel idea to clarify a recurring phenomenon that blatant preference for a foreign good outweighs its utilitarian superiority over domestic goods. Within this context, the consumer xenocentrism (C-XEN) should be taken into consideration as a structure that is thought to have an impact on foreign product preferences.

Recently, there has been an uptick in researches about consumer xenocentrism. However, the focus of these researches is primarily on the influence of C-XEN on their purchasing decisions (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019; Camacho et al., 2020; Rojas-Méndez & Kolotylo, 2021; Mahmoud et al., 2021). In addition, a recent conceptual research by Jiang and Christian (2022) aimed to develop a theoretical framework that identifies the antecedents of the emergence of C-XEN. The fact remains, however, that recognizing the context of C-XEN is essential. Since, considering the C-XEN as a passive variable will contribute to the understanding of the reasons leading to the tendency and the development of solution proposals. In a global marketplace, consumer preferences such as quality and price may be overshadowed by a concept called xenocentrism (Bozdağ & Durmuş, 2023). The significance of this research lies in this particular rationale. It is because to understand consumer inclination towards foreign products over local ones may aids the government and businesses in making more informed choices to promote local industries. This article therefore delves into the topic of why individuals tend to favor items from other countries rather than their own, and utilizes different theories to uncover the underlying reasons, given the lack of extensive research in this field. Within this context, the primary goal of this current research is twofold. In this sense, we begin by providing some context for the C-XEN literature. This serves as the basis for our hypotheses. The main framework of the research is to test the effect of social dominance orientation on C-XEN. Unlike previous researches, mediation analysis was designed to examine the mediation role of status consumption, social comparison and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence on the relationship between C-XEN and social dominance orientation. Insufficient research has been conducted on the topic. Thus, this research might be expected to verify if the existing scales on C-XEN are accurate. It will also advance managerial understanding of the idea of C-XEN in addition to the empirical literature.

2. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Consumer Xenocentrism (C-XEN)

Xenocentrism construct defined as “the view of things in which a group other than one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others, including one’s own group, are scaled and rated with reference to it” (Kent & Burnight, 1951, p. 256). Recently, Eshleman et al. (1993, p. 109) described xenocentrism as “the belief that what is foreign is best, that our own lifestyle, products, or ideas are inferior to those of others.” Xenocentrism refers to the tendency to elevate and prefer other groups (the out-group) at the expense of one’s own, while harboring negative attitudes towards one’s own group (the in-group) (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Even though the potential usefulness of xenocentrism in analyzing consumer behavior has been noticed by Mueller et al. (2010), consumers’ xenocentric tendencies have yet to be thoroughly empirically investigated. In many countries, a large segment of consumers generally tends to favor foreign products consistently, despite their higher prices and sometimes even lower quality (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Li and Agrawal (2014) as of late utilized system justification theory to clarify shopper behaviors such as reusing or utilize of dental floss. Shepherd et al. (2015) also utilized system justification theory to appear that shoppers with a social justification thought process are favorably one-sided toward brands that reflect control. Moreover, Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2016) embrace system justification theory as the conceptual foundation of the C-XEN build. The basis of the proposition that the C-XEN is triggered by significant differences in terms of socioeconomic status is the act of system justification defined as the “psychological process by which existing social arrangements are legitimized, even at the expense of personal and group interests” put forward by the system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994, p.2).

C-XEN defined as: “an individual’s preference for the products or services of a society other than their own. A propensity to rate and scale all products and services in reference to this foreign society and not their own.” (Lawrence, 2012, p.18). While C-XEN is a global phenomenon, it is more prevalent in developing societies such as Latin America. Researchers claimed that behind the customers’ xenocentric propensity is an endeavor to develop a positive image and gain self-esteem in such societies (Ger & Belk, 1996; Gaur et al., 2015). It is due to reasons like external dependency, cultural imperialism and a dominant inequality in socioeconomic status between classes in countries that are generally classified as underdeveloped or developing group/s (Montero, 1986). It is proposed that for some consumers, internalized differences in their home country’s relative standing versus other countries will result in a derogation of domestic goods, as well as a generalized tendency to seek foreign products as signals of perceived higher status (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Therefore, C-XEN is explicitly defined as a consumer’s internalized perception that domestic products are inferior and a related inclination to choose foreign items for social aggrandizement goals (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos,

2016). Based on the preceding information, it can be hypothesized that the C-XEN cycle operates as illustrated below.

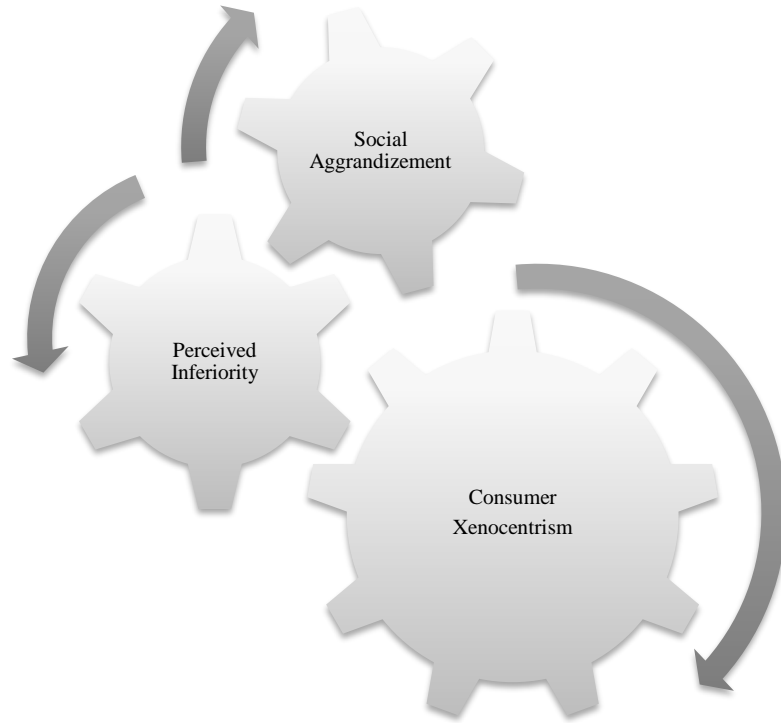


Figure 1: Causal Loop Diagram for C-XEN

Source: Authors' Own Illustration Based on the Literature

2.2. Social Dominance Orientation

Social dominance orientation incorporates a “general attitudinal orientation toward intergroup relations, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal, versus hierarchical, that is, ordered along a superior-inferior dimension” (Pratto et al., 1994, p. 742). “Among members of low status groups, an opposition to inequality may be viewed as a sign of internalized inferiority” (Jost & Thompson, 2000, p. 211–212), whereas opposition to equality is a manifestation of group self-interest for members of high-status groups (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Given that perceived inferiority is a defining feature of C-XEN, it is assumed that the C-XEN will be closely linked to social dominance orientation (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Social dominance orientation reflects the

extent of individuals' desire for group-based dominance and inequality. These aspirations are expressed through individual acts of discrimination and participation in intergroup and institutional processes that produce better outcomes for raids than subordinates. One way to justify the discriminatory actions of individuals with a high social dominance orientation is to support a wide variety of legitimating myths that hold the idea that dominant and subordinate groups deserve relative positions of superiority and inferiority in the social hierarchy (Pratto et al., 2006). In this context, individuals with high social dominance orientation generally accept and try to protect hierarchy or inequalities related to it. Individuals with low social dominance orientation, on the other hand, oppose the inequalities that arise in connection with hierarchy and support ideologies that reduce hierarchy (Pratto et al., 2006).

According to Jost (2001), the importance of devaluing the in group, belittling and valuing the out group, and raising it is primarily dependent on supporting the status. In a way, this implies supporting the hierarchy. As a result, persons with a strong social dominance orientation may accept policies that reinforce hierarchy by legitimizing beliefs that strengthen hierarchy, which may result in C-XEN. For high-status group members, opposition to equality or advocacy of hierarchy is viewed as a reflection of the group's self-interest. In contrast, opposition to inequality among members of low-status groups was seen as a sign of internalized feelings of inadequacy (Jost & Thompson, 2000). In this context, individuals with high social dominance orientation can be expected to have more C-XEN, since internalized inadequacy perception is also a determinant of C-XEN (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H1a. Social dominance orientation has a positive effect on C-XEN.

2.3. Status-Seeking and Status Consumption

According to Packard (1960) status seekers are individuals who constantly strive to flaunt their possessions and position themselves as superior to others. This explanation emphasizes the importance of material success and status goods in the pursuit of social status. In this manner, status seekers are not mainly concerned with the asking price of any given commodity, but rather with assurances that the status advantages from acquiring the goods would be substantial. Additionally, as status is directly related exhibit wealth in their eyes, it follows that when price increases, a product's social usefulness improves, giving the supplier of status products with a clear chance to extract considerable profits over production costs (Mason, 1985). Moreover, striving for status is intrinsically linked to the desire for power and monetary advantages like the wealthy leisure class's "conspicuous consumption" (Veblen, 1899). Eastman et al. (1999, p. 42) defined status consumption as "the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others." Moreover, as conspicuous consumption is purchasing a more expensive object to boost one's ego, a desire for status entails purchasing something that signifies status to both the individual

and those around them. Consumption of status products may thus help individuals in their attempt for self-esteem and social approval. As mentioned, C-XEN is a global phenomenon but it is more prevalent in developing societies. It is because the customers' xenocentric tendency stems from a desire to establish a positive image and gain self-esteem in such societies (Ger & Belk, 1996; Gaur et al., 2015). Thus, the hypothesis proffered is as follows:

- H2a. Social dominance orientation has a positive effect on status consumption.
- H2b. Status consumption has a positive effect on C-XEN.
- H2c. Status consumption mediates the relation between social dominance orientation and C-XEN.

2.4. Social Comparison and Consumption

The groups are socioeconomically unequal. For this reason, there is a tendency to compare between groups (own group; in-group) and (other groups; out-group) for individuals (Hornsey, 2008). Social comparisons are psychological mechanisms that influence people's judgments, experiences, and behaviors. During a social comparison process, the individual's self-evaluations, emotions, behaviors and interpersonal relationships are affected (Corcoran et al., 2011). Social comparison theory, which was originally proposed by Festinger (1954), asserted that individuals need to compare and contrast their own ideas and thoughts with others. Festinger (1954) presented a set of testable derivatives for interpersonal processes. Individuals usually prefer to compare with others considered to be better. This supports Festinger's (1954) "upward drive" hypothesis. However, upward social comparisons might be threatening to one's self (Morse & Gergen, 1970; Tesser, 1988; Zheng et al., 2022).

Previous researches also explained that social comparison performed over social networking platforms triggers emotion-based impulsive buying behavior, particularly in young and young adults (Ogden & Venkat, 2001; Liu et al., 2019). According to Hanus and Fox (2015) individuals compare their own material assets with their peers and/or media celebrities in order to obtain external satisfaction. Also, the primary drivers that lead people to compare themselves to others (peers and media celebrities) and how this compares to compulsive purchasing behavior were documented by researchers (Pham et al., 2012 & Reeves et al., 2012). Thus, it is estimated that the widespread use of social media and movie streaming sites among young and young adults will lead to social comparison. It can be expected that the tendency of C-XEN will increase as a result of social comparison, especially in such platforms where strong global brands are given more space. Considering that individuals generally prefer to compare with others who are thought to be better, it can be expected that social comparison will play a mediating role between social dominance orientation and C-XEN. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H3a. Social dominance orientation has a positive effect on social comparison.
- H3b. Social comparison has a positive effect on C-XEN.
- H3c. Social comparison mediates the relation between social dominance orientation and C-XEN.

2.5. Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence

People organize their preferences, attitudes and behaviors to conform to the norms of the group (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Moreover, people belong to one or more groups with social hierarchies and often pay attention to social hierarchies within the group to achieve success in social interaction, personal performance, and group adjustment (Chiao et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2021). Particularly, in societies where a collective lifestyle is adopted, the behavior of the individual is more sensitive to interpersonal influence. In this sense, consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence has been stated as the desire and expectation of others' approval of purchasing decisions through the products and brands purchased and used, as well as monitoring others and seeking information (Bearden et al., 1989). In this sense, Deutsch and Gerard (1955) proposed that interpersonal influence manifests itself through either normative or informational influences. As it is evident from the statement, consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence impacts product preferences in the form of a normative effect on one side and an information effect on the other.

Normative social influence has been defined as “an influence to conform to the positive expectations of another” this effect occurs depending on the reference group. An informational social influence can be defined as “an influence to accept information obtained from another as evidence about reality” (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955, p. 629). Individuals who are willing to build an image related to the group they refer to have a high level of conformity with the expectations of the group members they belong to. This situation is expected to be related to social aggrandizement, which is one of the components of the C-XEN (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Because there may be an exaggeration towards the reference group, in other words, the reference group may be idealized. As with the C-XEN tendency, there is the aim of obtaining status, creating an image and adapting to the expectations of the reference group. Hence the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H4a. Social dominance orientation has a positive effect on consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence.
- H4b. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence has a positive effect on C-XEN.
- H4c. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence mediates the relation between social dominance orientation and C-XEN.

2.6. Conceptual Model

The preceding discussion leads to the conceptual model depicted in Figure 1. The dashed lines, which represent the mediated effects in this model, examined by this research. The solid lines represent the relationships that have been validated by previous researches.

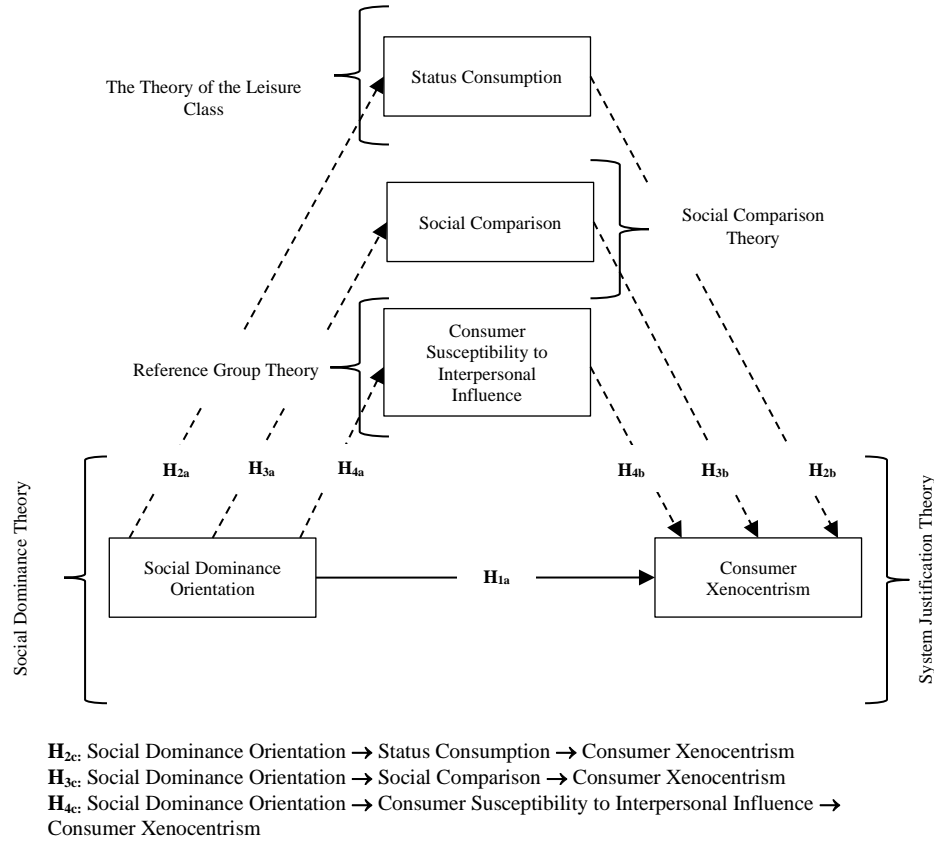


Figure 2: Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

This research was conducted to see the effects of social dominance orientation on C-XEN as a causal attribution of out-group bias in products preferences in terms of different samples. Unlike previous researches on the subject, the mediation effects of status consumption, consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence and social comparison were examined.

3.1. Survey Questionnaire and Design

All the constructs, in the scale, were adapted from the literature and are measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). The measures of social dominance orientation rely on sixteenth items each adapted from Pratto et al. (1994). Status consumption is operationalized as the degree to which the display of commodities augments the actual or ideal self in order to belong to a social group (Belk, 1988), and it is measured using the scale developed by Eastman et al. (1999). Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence has been defined by as the tendency to adapt one’s behavior to match that of others in society and is derived from Bearden et al. (1989). Social comparison scale was adapted from Chan and Prendergast (2007). C-XEN is conceptualized as a “person who likes a society or culture that is different from their own, and who evaluates and scales many things, such as ideas and products, to suit that society” by Kent and Burnight (1951, p. 256) and is measured using the scale developed by Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2016).

3.2. Sampling Procedure

The sample size for this research consists of consumers aged 18 and up living in Türkiye. The scales that were not available in Turkish were translated. For this the back translation method was used. This method which is a commonly used verification tool in international research including intercultural psychology and international marketing Tyupa (2011) was utilized in the translation of the scales relating to the variables included in the research into Turkish. The items on the scale were pre-tested with 100 samples in order to ensure the reliability of the scale. By rephrasing some of the questions in accordance with the context of the current research, item clarity was improved following the pre-test. Then, the survey application process was started in order to obtain the necessary data for the purpose of the research. The participants were given a brief explanation of the research and asked to complete a survey. During the COVID-19 pandemic, an online survey was used to collect data. In this regard, one of the non-random (non-probability) sampling methods, web-based convenience sampling, was chosen to determine the sample to represent the population. The fact that it effective in terms of both time and cost has been beneficial in selecting the convenience sampling approach in online survey applications (Malhotra, 2007).

A total of 577 people participated in the survey. 534 cases were used for data analysis after the non-pertinent responses were eliminated because of incomplete data. In total, 62.7 percent of the total sample comprises of Female respondents and 37.3 percent of male respondents, with 93.8 percent of the sample ranging between 18 and 45 years of age. In other words, the majority of the participants are young and young adult consumers. As a result, the purpose-appropriateness of the obtained data set is assumed in terms of age. As young people have been criticized for being more xenocentric than elderly (Bailey & Pineres, 1997; Prince et al., 2016). Regarding the educational level, 88.3 percent of the sample have a high school or higher education level. It has been emphasized that highly educated people may have more consumer xenocentric tendency than others (Mueller et

al., 2016). It is therefore, this data obtained about the level of education is sufficient. The monthly household income for 39.3 percent of the sample is below ₺2,324, for 49.8 percent of the sample between ₺2,325 and ₺7,000, and for 10.9 percent of the sample size it is above ₺7001. The Table 1. provides details of the sample demographic profile.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample

| Respondent Characteristics | Category | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Female | 335 | 62.7 |
| | Male | 199 | 37.3 |
| Age (in years) | 18 – 24 | 230 | 43.1 |
| | 25 – 31 | 141 | 26.4 |
| | 32 – 38 | 84 | 15.7 |
| | 39 – 45 | 46 | 8.6 |
| | 46 – 52 | 22 | 4.1 |
| | 53 – 59 | 8 | 1.5 |
| | Above 60 | 3 | 0.6 |
| Education | Elementary school | 63 | 11.8 |
| | High school | 206 | 38.6 |
| | Undergraduate | 84 | 15.7 |
| | Graduate | 144 | 27 |
| | Postgraduate | 19 | 3.6 |
| | Doctoral | 18 | 3.4 |
| Marital Status | Single | 304 | 56.9 |
| | Married | 218 | 40.8 |
| | Others (divorced/widower) | 12 | 2.2 |
| Income (monthly) | Below ₺2.324/- | 210 | 39.3 |
| | ₺2325/- to ₺3000/- | 67 | 12.5 |
| | ₺3001/- to ₺4000/- | 64 | 12 |
| | ₺4001/- to ₺5000/- | 56 | 10.5 |
| | ₺5001/- to ₺6000/- | 51 | 9.6 |
| | ₺6001/- to ₺7000/- | 28 | 5.2 |
| | Above ₺7001/- | 58 | 10.9 |
| | Total sample | 534 | 100 |

Note: ₺ – Turkish Liras

3.3. Instrument Purification

The statistical foundation of this research lies in the verification of the data through various tests including Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures and Bartlett's tests for factor analysis. The KMO values for the key constructs—Social Dominance Orientation (0.885), Status Consumption (0.822), Social Comparison (0.733), Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence (0.769), and C-XEN (0.881)—the results are not just above required level, but are also substantiated by the Bartlett's test Chi-Square values which are significant with $p < 0.001$. The reliability of the samples and the relationships between the different factors are confirmed by the high Cronbach's alpha coefficients. This shows that the scales used are consistent and reliable. Apart from these preliminary validations, anti-image matrices gave even more confidence by showing consistent values that were higher than 0.50 (Nunnally, 1978). Subsequent factor analyses uncovered evident classifications within each construct, all of which contribute to elucidating the total variance. For example, social dominance orientation manifested in two dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from 0.832 to 0.894. C-XEN was split into two sub-dimensions, accounting for 18.216% and 52.125% of the total variance, respectively. Status consumption, even though singular in dimension, explained an impressive 70.827% of the total variance. Social comparison also singular in dimension and explained an adequate 60.080% of the total variance. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence in two dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from 0.802 to 0.842. The research's credibility is bolstered by these robust findings, which validate the scales and align with previous research. To grasp the ideas presented in this research, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was utilized follow-up the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The CFA analysis was performed on 37 items identified throughout the EFA.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The proposed relationships in the conceptual model have been examined using structural equation modelling with a two-step approach, as proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The measurement model was used to test the psychometric properties of the underlying constructs, and the structural model was used to test the proposed hypothesis. The method chosen is contingent on what the research aims to accomplish. If the aim of the research is to validate a theory, then CB-SEM is the most effective approach to utilize. However, if the objective of the research is to make predictions and construct theories, then PLS-SEM is the suitable approach (Hair et al., 2017; Dash & Paul, 2021). This research therefore employed the CB-SEM technique to test and validate the research model that was created based on existing theory.

4.1. Measurement Model

The measurement model including five latent factors (social dominance orientation, status consumption, social comparison, susceptibility to interpersonal influence and consumer xenocentrism) and eight observed variables. The validity and reliability of the measurements were tested through a confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 24.0. The

results indicated an acceptable fit with the data (CMIN/DF = 1546.494/610 = 2.535; $p < 0.001$; comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.913; incremental fit index [IFI] = 0.913; Tucker–Lewis index [TLI] = 0.905; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = 0.054; Hair et al.,2010). Each construct in the measurement model is shown to have internal consistency in Table I, and the composite reliability values are higher than the minimum of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978; Cortina, 1993). Additionally, the scale’s convergent validity is demonstrated by a higher level of the average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

| Constructs and Scale Items | Standardized Factor Loading (λ) | Cronbach’s Alpha | CR | AVE |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------|-------|-------|
| Social Dominance Orientation | | | | |
| Authoritarian | | 0.832 | 0.834 | 0.505 |
| A1 | 0.732 | | | |
| A2 | 0.775 | | | |
| A3 | 0.585 | | | |
| A4 | 0.787 | | | |
| A5 | 0.654 | | | |
| Egalitarian | | 0.894 | 0.894 | 0.516 |
| E1 | 0.585 | | | |
| E2 | 0.664 | | | |
| E3 | 0.696 | | | |
| E4 | 0.813 | | | |
| E5 | 0.793 | | | |
| E6 | 0.669 | | | |
| E7 | 0.783 | | | |
| E8 | 0.717 | | | |
| Status Consumption | | | | |
| SC1 | 0.808 | | | |
| SC2 | 0.819 | | | |
| SC3 | 0.819 | | | |
| SC4 | 0.693 | | | |

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| | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Social Comparison | | 0.776 | 0.800 | 0.503 |
| SC1 | 0.640 | | | |
| SC2 | 0.725 | | | |
| SC3 | 0.827 | | | |
| SC4 | 0.628 | | | |
| Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence | | | | |
| Normative | | 0.842 | 0.846 | 0.582 |
| N1 | 0.639 | | | |
| N2 | 0.736 | | | |
| N3 | 0.865 | | | |
| N4 | 0.794 | | | |
| Informational | | 0.802 | 0.805 | 0.580 |
| I1 | 0.689 | | | |
| I2 | 0.836 | | | |
| I3 | 0.754 | | | |
| Consumer Xenocentrism | | | | |
| Perceived Inferiority | | 0.852 | 0.876 | 0.639 |
| PI1 | 0.728 | | | |
| PI2 | 0.876 | | | |
| PI3 | 0.798 | | | |
| PI4 | 0.791 | | | |
| Social Aggrandizement | | 0.890 | 0.871 | 0.577 |
| SA1 | 0.817 | | | |
| SA2 | 0.642 | | | |
| SA3 | 0.707 | | | |
| SA4 | 0.809 | | | |
| SA5 | 0.809 | | | |

4.2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

AMOS 24.0 was employed to construct a structural equation model as part of the hypothesis testing. The goodness-of-fit statistic of the structural model indicates that the model fits the data well (CMIN/DF (χ^2/df): 1507.484/595= 2.534; CFI= 0.920; IFI = 0.921; TLI = 0.911; RMSEA= 0.054. Hair et al., 2010). Table 3 summarizes the standardized path

coefficients and p-values for all direct effects hypothesized in the conceptual model. All the coefficients for the direct paths are significant. This indicates that consumers' interdependent and independent orientations have a significant effect on their xenocentric tendencies, which in might be turned affect their foreign made product consumption.

Table 3: Standardized Path Estimates and Hypothesis Testing

| Path | β | C.R. | p-value | Hypothesis Testing |
|---|---------|-------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Social Dominance Orientation → Consumer Xenocentrism | 0.271 | 2.385 | 0.017 | H _{1a} (Supported) |
| Social Dominance Orientation → Status Consumption | 1.167 | 6.776 | *** | H _{2a} (Supported) |
| Status Consumption → Consumer Xenocentrism | 0.276 | 4.001 | *** | H _{2b} (Supported) |
| Social Dominance Orientation → Social Comparison | 0.664 | 5.348 | *** | H _{3a} (Supported) |
| Social Comparison → Consumer Xenocentrism | 0.457 | 4.707 | *** | H _{3b} (Supported) |
| Social Dominance Orientation → Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence | 1.168 | 7.093 | *** | H _{4a} (Supported) |
| Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence → Consumer Xenocentrism | 0.203 | 2.511 | 0.012 | H _{4b} (Supported) |

Note: CMIN/DF = 2.534; CFI = 0.920; IFI = 0.921; TLI = 0.911; RMSEA = 0.054

4.3. Mediation Analysis

Employing bootstrapping and maximum likelihood estimation, the direct and indirect impacts have been measured. To test whether status consumption, social comparison and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence mediated the relationship between social dominance orientation and consumer xenocentrism, we used the Process macro for SPSS (Model 4) using bias-corrected bootstrapping for 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval (Hayes & Scharkow, 2013). The results presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of Social Dominance Orientation on Consumer Xenocentrism

| | Effect | (SE) | <i>t-value</i> | <i>p-value</i> | 95% CI |
|---|--------|-------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Total effect | 0.198 | 0.037 | 5.411 | 0.000 | [0.126, 0.269] |
| Status Consumption as mediator | | | | | |
| Direct effect | 0.035 | 0.029 | 1.204 | 0.229 | [-0.022, 0.093] |
| Indirect effect | 0.162 | 0.030 | | | [0.105, 0.225] |
| Social Comparison as mediator | | | | | |
| Direct effect | 0.114 | 0.029 | 3.883 | 0.000 | [0.056, 0.171] |
| Indirect effect | 0.084 | 0.025 | | | [0.036, 0.134] |
| Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence as mediator | | | | | |
| Direct effect | 0.161 | 0.032 | 5.107 | 0.000 | [0.099, 0.223] |
| Indirect effect | 0.037 | 0.020 | | | [0.000, 0.076] |

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research developed and tested a research model based on theoretical contributions describes the relationship between psycho-cultural phenomena and attitudinal tendencies affect C-XEN. The findings confirmed the basic research model [social dominance orientation → consumer xenocentrism], which is considered from the perspective of system justification theory and social dominance theory. It means that social dominance orientation positively affects C-XEN. It shows that the structural relationships and theoretical infrastructure in the research model developed and tested in line with the purpose of the research are consistent with the existing literature (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). Social dominance theory says that when higher status groups oppose equality, it is because they want to protect their own interests, and when lower-status groups oppose equality, it is because they feel inadequate (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Jost & Thompson, 2000). This scenario is similar to experiencing an inferiority complex compared to others, which is a contributing factor to C-XEN. Because perceived inferiority in members of socio economically low-status groups foster a strong desire to increase the individual's status. As a result, members of groups at lower levels in terms of socio-economic status prefer products that are status symbols that will signal that they are members of groups at higher levels. This situation generally turns into a tendency to purchase foreign products and brands. Thus, socioeconomic differences between individuals must be minimized as much as possible in order to tolerate the C-XEN, which can be expressed as a psycho-cultural obstacle to branding for local industries and as a means of maintaining the status quo for strong brands. Notwithstanding individuals with low social dominance orientation may be expected to have less C-XEN. However, it would be wrong to conclude that individuals with low social dominance orientation do not prefer

foreign products. Because C-XEN, a concept based on system justification theory, appears to provide more consistent predictions for both domestic and foreign brand bias (Balabanis et al., 2019), it cannot be considered as a determining factor alone. Besides that, other attitudinal variables such as consumer cosmopolitanism and world mindedness are also effective on attitudes toward foreign brands (Nguyen & Pham, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings indicated that the inclination to showcase one's status can lead to a greater C-XEN. Members of groups that are higher in socioeconomic status engage in status consumption as a way to differentiate themselves from other social groups, particularly members of groups that are lower in socioeconomic status. Consumption of imported products in order to gain status has become common in transition economies among many urban consumers (Mai & Smith, 2012). Because there is a dominant consumer belief that acquiring status symbols can help achieve the desired social status (Tambyah et al., 2009). The findings also revealed that social comparison has a positive effect on C-XEN. It means that the tendency for C-XEN is high in individuals who engage in social comparison. Social comparison theory says that individuals compare their material assets with the assets of their peers and/or celebrities whom they consider important in order to obtain their own external satisfaction (Hanus & Fox, 2015; Islam et al., 2018). On the other hand, individuals who rank higher in terms of socioeconomic status may be more vulnerable to social comparison and tend to compete more in a conspicuous consumption race with similarly high-ranked peers (Garcia et al., 2013). Comparing oneself to others is common among people in developing societies. The main factor is that individuals in these circles often desire a sense of inclusion and interpersonal relationships. These members compare groups by categorizing and defining in the social comparison process (Ho & McLeod, 2008). According to finding, consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence has a positive effect on C-XEN. At this point, the reference group effect can be considered as a determining factor. This effect is mainly based on the individual will take the group as a reference and comparison object in self-evaluation in order to make the results of his own behavior consistent with the reference group (Risselada et al., 2014; Ding et al., 2020). This situation can possibly be explained that if the group membership is linked to a norm that encourages the consumption of foreign products, consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence increases and, accordingly, C-XEN is triggered (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Rojas-Méndez & Chapa, 2020).

Unlike existing researches on C-XEN, mediator variables are included in research model. The findings revealed that status consumption and social comparison have a mediator effect in the relationship between social dominance orientation and C-XEN. Based on these findings, individuals with high social dominance orientation seek status and/or want to protect their current status may increase the tendency for C-XEN. Also, individuals with high social dominance orientation make upward social comparisons, which may trigger a C-XEN. Pelsier et al. (2023) explained that the development of influencers has raised

materialism and social comparison to a new level by utilizing celebrities and social media figures for marketing efforts. It is thus utilizing public figures and influencers on social media to promote products from local businesses may prove beneficial. Another finding is that the variable of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence does not have a mediator effect on the relationship between social dominance orientation and C-XEN. This finding can be interpreted as individuals with high consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence exhibiting a towards xenocentrism, but they attach more importance to equality between groups rather than the dominance of a particular group.

Research indicates that people with higher levels of education are inclined to favor goods from different countries (Camacho et al., 2022). According to the results, 88.3% of the sample has high school or higher education. Thus, the findings might be more focus on this educated group. One way to use these findings is for educators and policy makers in developing countries to encourage buying and using locally-made products. It is also important for local producers to understand the correlation between people's education and their willingness to purchase foreign goods. Because understanding this correlation can enable them to enhance their products to better align with international preferences. The another finding of this research is about income. Based on the results, 39% of the sample has below ₹2.324 monthly income. This indicates that even those with a low income may have xenocentric tendencies.

5.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The research's empirical findings make several key theoretical and practical implications. First, it deals with the subject with an interdisciplinary approach, based on existing theories, and contributes to an in-depth understanding of the subject. Second, most researches have predominantly examined C-XEN towards foreign products (Gaur et al., 2015; Camacho et al., 2020; Mahmoud et al., 2021; Venugopal et al., 2022), ignoring to explore other aspects that influence this tendency. This research aims to help understand the reasons behind the C-XEN by restructuring C-XEN according to some intermediary variables. Third, this research bridges the research gap between social dominance orientation and C-XEN. Whereas previous researches, this research also tested mediating role of status consumption, social comparison and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence based on different theories. The findings align with the principles of Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), Social Dominance Theory (Pratto et al., 2006) and System Justification Theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994). These concepts revolve around inequitable disparities. Because the findings showed that individuals with the mindset of superiority and who compare themselves to higher status groups are more predisposed to being xenocentric. Kent and Burnight (1951) previously noted that xenocentrism is often disregarded by researchers, and this remains the case today. It is therefore when consumers with stronger preferences for out-groups, exploring how the mechanisms affect the xenocentrism influence has theoretical significance. Marketers should concentrate on the perceived value of consumer and empathize with consumers' feelings to enhance their

connection with them, as indicated by the research. Put simply, researching approach must be modernized to consumer behavior to account for the preference for foreign or imported products.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are some limitations for this research. The first limitation is about gathering the required data set for this research. Because getting the necessary data for the research during the Covid-19 pandemic period was challenging due to time and space constraints. There are numerous factors that can lead consumers xenocentrism. Nevertheless, the research was unable to account for all the variables impacting consumer xenocentrism. This could be seen as a limitation for this research. Thus, future researches are recommended to extend research on C-XEN to other contexts. Also, a mix of numerical data and consumer perspectives could be employed by researchers to gain insight into the causes of conflicting emotions and decision-making in terms of consumer xenocentrism. Online communities and social media have a profound impact on shaping consumer preferences in today's digital landscape. It is thus recommended that Parasocial Theory can be utilized in future research. Moreover, examining the effects of C-XEN on product categories, service and industry types will be beneficial for marketers, product and brand managers in future. In addition, the socio-political and economic conditions that are effective in minimization of the C-XEN and their temporal and spatial variations are open to research.

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