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WHICH IS THE MODERATOR OF ETHNOCENTRISM: COUNTRY or PRODUCT IMAGE ?

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to test the effect of the ethnocentrism on country image and product image. Besides, it aims to determine from which one of these variables product or country image is the moderator for ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism known to have negative effects on the country and product image. Therefore, it is important to determine the variable that will decrease negative effect.

Quantitative methods were used in the research. The theoretical framework was established and the research model was developed. Scales were determined and a questionnaire was created for the model test. In terms of measurement, country image scale, country product image scale and the CETSCALE were used. Data was collected via developed questionnaire in Eskisehir city center with convenience sampling technique. Explanatory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis were performed on data collected from 400 people by face to face interviews. SPSS and AMOS programs were used for analysis. Hypotheses were tested with SPSS PROCESS software.

According to the findings, while ethnocentric tendency on consumer affects country image negatively, it doesn't affect the product image. In the effect of ethnocentrism on the image of the country, although the general image of the products of the country has a positive moderator effect, it is not statistically significant. Yet country image has a significant moderator between ethnocentrism and product image. It was determined that the level of education used as a control variable affected only the first model significantly and positively.

Keywords: Country image, Product image, Ethnocentrism, France, Tourism

Introduction

With the increase of international trade, competition between domestic and foreign products in the country's markets has increased. Initially it has been seen that in the flow of trade towards the developing countries and undeveloped countries from the developed countries, the consumers were affected by the

country image and preferred the goods of these developed countries (Schooler, 1965; Nagashima, 1970; Wang and Lamb, 1983; Han, 1990). In this aspect, the researches, on the preference of imported products have focused on the image of the country of origin and the product image. As a result of these researches, it has been determined that country of origin has a strong effect on the product image and changes the quality perception of the product (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009; Ahmed et al. 2002). Although the developed countries have a positive image, it is known that they cannot reflect this positive image to all of their products. Countries are more likely to have a positive effect on the products in the categories they are gifted; but in the categories in which, they are not gifted even the developed countries have not been able to influence their products' images positively (Rothand and Romeo, 1992; Koubaa, 2008). Therefore, the image of the country's product category has begun to come to the forefront much more than the level of the development of the country. In this aspect, an undeveloped country can have a very good image in a specific product category. While the researches are concentrating on country and product image in the undeveloped and developing countries, the concept of ethnocentrism has begun to appear in developed countries. Cause even in the developed countries such as USA, the consumers prefer imported products but it has also been reported that the number of customers who have an ethnocentric tendency have also been increased (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). With the entrance of Japanese automobiles in the market of America's advanced automobile industry, this situation has lost its effectiveness and damaged the American automobile industry (Wang and Lamb, 1983).

Therefore, since the developed countries have their alternatives to imported products, the main variable that affects the consumers' preference has been largely ethnocentrism than the image. In the places where ethnocentrism is dominant, the image of the trading country and the images of its products remain on the second place. Because the customers who have ethnocentric tendency find it more appropriate to choose their own products due to various concerns (economic reasons, job loss, etc.) (Shimp and Sharma, 1987).

The case of ethnocentric tendency is also valid for developing countries. In these countries, the customers mainly prefer their own products (Erdogan and Uzkurt, 2010; Han and Wang, 2014), domestic products against foreign products; and if there is no alternative domestic product, they prefer the products of the countries which are close to their own culture. (Watson and Wright, 2000). The customers are taking a positive attitude towards domestic products which are alternative to foreign products or for the products from countries with which they are culturally close, they have taken a negative attitude towards foreign products (Watson and Wright, 2000). The poor quality of domestic products versus foreign products can sometimes change this attitude in the opposite direction (Wang and Chen, 2004). However, products that fall into heavy industry category like automobiles seem far away for developing countries. Therefore developing countries have to choose brands from the developed countries even though they are not culturally close to them.

It is known that ethnocentrism have a negative affect on consumer and country image. For this reason, it will be useful to find the variables that will transform it into having a positive affect from negative. The country's image is intensively shaped by the prevalent product image. Therefore, it is crucial to determine whether general image of the country's products has a moderator effect to reduce the negative impact of ethnocentrism on country image or not.

As it is known that country image plays crucial role in tourism. The image is the key factor for preference of a country. In this respect positive perception of country's image also facilitates preference for the

country. Therefore, reducing the impact of ethnocentrism on the image of the country will also be reflected positively in tourism.

Thus, the researcher tried to determine whether the general image of products has transformed the negative impact of the ethnocentrism on the country image. In this context, two different models were created and tested. The research provides significant contributions both literature and practitioners.

Literature Analysis

Ethnocentrism
The concept of ethnocentrism is based on the fact that it sees its own groups in the center of the universe, interprets other social units in terms of their groups (Erdoğan and Uzkurt, 2010; Özçelik and Torlak, 2011) and defined as an attitude that evaluates other cultures according to their own cultural standards (Thomas and Hill, 1999). From a functional point of view, ethnocentrism allows the person to understand the acceptance or inadmissibility of purchasing behavior in the group in which the person is present (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). From the ethnocentric point of view, the purchase of imported goods is wrong because according to them, this causes damage to the local economy, causes job losses, contradicts patriotism and constitutes a sign of disrespect for the excessively ethnocentric consumers (Shimp and Sharma, 1987).

There are several reasons why consumers have ethnocentric considerations. These include: family, opinion leaders, friends circle and media (Shimp, 1984); the past events of the country: wars, trade borders, economical-political events (Herche, 1994) and sense of losing business due to foreign products (Usunier, 1996, pp. 285). Ethnocentric tendencies have a strong relationship with the demographic characteristics of consumers (Erdoğan and Uzkurt, 2010). Watson and Wright (2000) stated that women, old people, the people who have low education levels and low income levels are more ethnocentric than other demographic characteristics. Also, non-demographic factors such as belief, person's social environment and intentions affect the customer's ethnocentric tendencies (Martinez et al., 2000).

In general, consumers tend to prefer products produced in their own countries. In his study, Reierson (1966) asked American students about their thoughts on Swiss, German, Italian, American, French, Japanese and British products and the result of his research showed that American students prefer American products in comparison to the other countries' products. However, it is known that this situation differs for consumers in developed and developing countries. For example, while studies of American, French, and Scandinavian consumers have shown that consumers prefer their products to other countries' products, it has emerged that Iranian consumers have positively evaluated and preferred products when there is a foreign label involved (Usunier, 1996). It's stated that there is a similar situation for customers in Puerto Rico (Bilkey and Nes, 1982). However, regardless of how advanced the countries are, imported products can also be preferred depending on the product type. Losing effectiveness and the damage to the American automobile industy by the Japanese automobiles entries to America's advanced automobile industy may be an example of this situation (Wang and Lamb, 1983). It is also known that in countries where there are no local alternatives, consumers tend to prefer foreign products (Morello, 1983).

Ethnocentric tendencies can also affect consumers' perceptions of a foreign country and its products (Sharma, Shimp and Shin, 1995; Watson and Wright, 2000; Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Moon and Jain, 2002; Erdogan and Uzkurt, 2010; Fakharmanesh and Miyandehi, 2012). Especially in countries where there are no domestic alternatives, the ethnocentric tendency has been identified as an opportunity for countries

and products with cultural similarities (Watson and Wright, 2000). According to Erdogan and Uzkurt (2010), consumers with a high ethnocentric tendency perceive foreign products negatively while perceiving domestic products positively. But if the people are open to different cultures, this situation reduces the ethnocentric tendency (Sharma, Shimp and Shin, 1995). The quality issue related to the product also reduces the effect of ethnocentrism. Especially the quality of domestic products is also very influential in the preference over foreign products. When domestic products are perceived as of poor quality, consumers may prefer imported products (Elliott and Cameron, 1994). The quality perception of the consumers' may vary according to the level of need, product and country of origin (Huddleston and Stoel, 2001).

There are many variables that affect consumer preferences and attitudes in international markets and it is known that image of country, product and brand are the most important of those. But ethnocentrism reduces the positive effects of these variables. Ethnocentric tendencies can be more effective than country image, product and brand image. People believe that ethnocentric considerations may refuse to use imported products regardless of the origin of the products and the brand image (Herche, 1994). This situation may occur both in developed and developing countries consumers. Intensive researches have been conducted on ethnocentric tendencies of consumers in developed countries but developing countries were neglected. Thus there are some gaps in the literature about developing countries. In this respect, this study tried to determine the effects of ethnocentric tendencies by focusing on the consumers of a developing country. In this context, the following hypothesis developed was put to test.

> H1: Ethnocentrism affects negatively the product image.
> H2: Ethnocentrism affects negatively the country image.

Product Country Image (PCI)

It is known that the product and country image are used by consumers and affect consumers in various forms. Numerous studies have been carried out in this area in past and still researchers are deeply interested in exploring the said area more. According to studies carried out by (Nagashima, 1970; Han, 1990; Lee and Tse, 1993; Parameswaran and Pisharodi, 1994; Essoussi and Merunka, 2007; Maher and Carter, 2011) its stated that the consumers affect the product image (Schooler, 1965; Nagashima, 1970; Roth and Romeo, 1992; Parameswaran and Pisharodi, 1994; Dinnie, 2003; Felzensztein and Dinnie, 2005; Lin and Chen, 2006; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009) and brand image (Lee and Tse, 1993; Lee and Ganesh, 1999; Essoussi and Merunka, 2007; Koubaa, 2008). Therefore, products and brands can affect the country image positively or negatively as the image of the country affects the product image and brand image.

The country image can be considered by consumers before any product is preferred (Huddleston et al., 2001; Baker and Ballington, 2002; Hinner, 2010). It's stated that the consumers use the country image either as a halo effect or summary construct (Bruning, 1997). In the context of the cues, consumers use the country image as a single cue or multiple cues in product evaluations. In the case of single cue, the only information source that consumers have in product evaluations is where the product is produced. In the researches in which multiple cues are used, other information is shared with consumers along with country of origin (Bilkey nd Nes, 1982). Hence, it's stated that the country of origin effect is greater in the single cue research than multiple cues research (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Peterson and Jolibert, 1995). However, adding other cues such as brand name, demographic items, and familiarity with the product, decrease the country of origin effect (Maronick, 1995). The country of origin effect used as a halo effect

and summary construct (Han, 1989; Han, 1990; Martin and Eroglu, 1993; Al-Sulaiti and Baker, 1998; Lampert and Jaffe, 1998; Ahmed et al. 2002; Insch et al., 2015). According to Han (1990), consumers use the country image as a clue when they are not familiar with country's products as a quality sign and they generalize this knowledge to other products of the country when they know the country and its products. In other words, as a result of consumer experience the halo effect on the goods and services linked to the country become a summary construct (Nebenzahl et al., 1997). According to Lampert et al. (1998), the consistency of product images of a country and brand images similarity results in image crystallization leading to summary effect. Thus, there is a common image of the products produced in the country and the country image is perceived in the same way (Lampert, et al., 1998). Also, when the summarization effect is used, sensitivity to the country of origin is also evident (Johansson, 1989). Initially country image was measured by the product image on product country image researches but later it's stated that two concepts are different from each other (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 1993; Martin and Eroglu, 1993). When the first studies which were evaluating the product examined, the country image was reflected by its products and therefore, the quality of the products is seen as a country image (Schooler, 1965; Reierson, 1966; Nagashima, 1970; Nagashima, 1977). Thus, the products of economically developed countries are perceived as better quality products than the products of the developing countries Huddleston et al., 2001). However later on, the country image was started to be evaluated depending on the product groups regardless of how advanced the country economically was (Wang and Lamb, 1983; Roth and Romeo, 1992; Lampert and Jaffe, 1998; Koubaa, 2008).). In addition, acculturation level and the country of origin also positively affects the evaluation of the country and its products (Suh, Hur ve Davis, 2016). Thus, considering the above discussions it is understood that the image of the country's products can affect the image of country image. But, in this research the following hypotheses are developed to test which is the moderator effect. Product or country image?

H1a: Country image has a positive moderator affect between ethnocentrism and product image.
H2a: Product image has a positive moderator affect between ethnocentrism and country image.

Methodology

Sample and data collection
The research data was collected from 400 people in the city center of Eskişehir which is one of the cosmopolitan cities in Turkey through questionnaires. Eskişehir is located in the middle of Turkey and is one of the most diverse cities regarding demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics. The data was collected by the researchers face to face with 378 employees and 22 non-working people living in this city. The questionnaire to collect the data was applied in two ways. To measure whether participants were affected by the order effect of the survey sections, the questionnaires were divided into two groups of 200 pieces. The sequence of questions in the first format of questionnaire was; demographic characteristics, France image and the general image of French products and ethnocentrism. The sequence of questions in the second format of questionnaire was; Demographic characteristics, ethnocentrism, France image and general image of French products.

Measures
The survey used in the research consists of 4 parts. These parts are: statements containing demographic characteristic, country image scale and country product image scale (Lee and Ganesh, 1999) and the CETSCALE scale, which has been used in a wide variety of sources in the literature (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Good and Huddleston, 1995; Erdoğan and Uzkurt, 2010; Asil and Kaya, 2013) to measure consumer attitudes towards nationalistic values and has proven its reliability. CETSCALE was previously translated

into Turkish by Erdoğan and Uzkurt (2010) and Asil and Kaya (2013), so no translation was needed. However, other scales were translated into Turkish by a group of experts in English and Turkish languages. All scales used in this study were used before and have proven their validity and reliability. In the research, the effects of ethnocentric tendencies on France's general products, one of the best-products seller countries in Turkey, and on its image has been investigated. For the evaluation of attitudes of consumers 5 Likert- type measurement "I certainly do not agree- I strongly agree" was used.

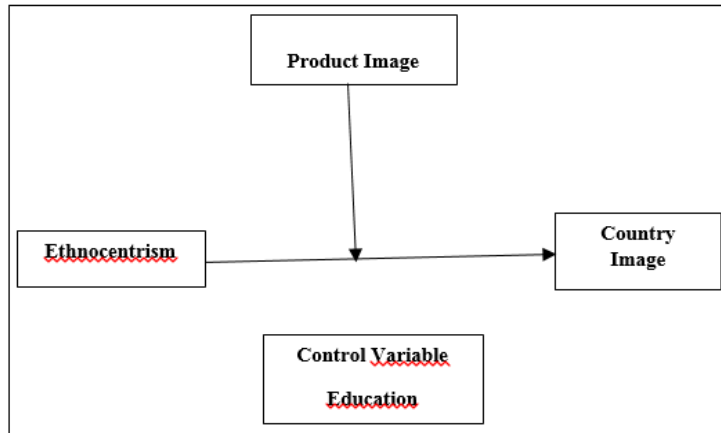The models for the current study were designed as follows.

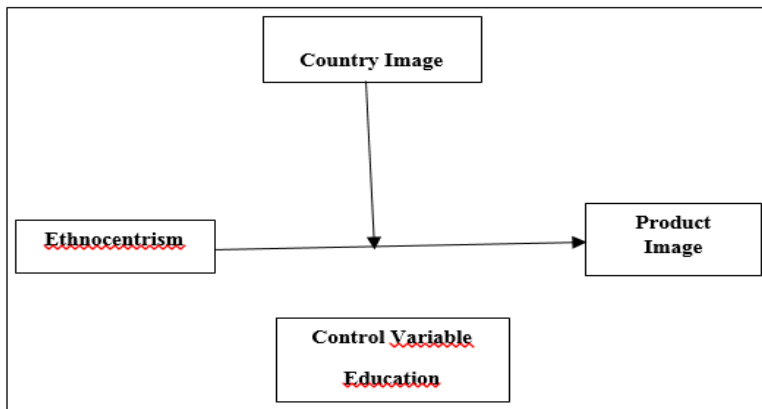**Figure 1. Model 1: Product as a moderator variable**

Figure 2. Model 2: Country as a moderator variable

Analysis

In the research, for construct validity, Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis were used with the help of SPSS and AMOS. Descriptive statistics (frequency, mean etc.) were calculated and to test the hypothese PROCESS software developed by Andrew F. Hayes (Hayes, 2013) was used. PROCESS is a tool for SPSS testing for mediation and moderation. Bootstrapping technique is used to measure the direct and indirect effect of variables (Hayes, 2013).

For normality test the values of "Skewness" and "Kurtosis" were checked. For normality values between +1.5 and -1.5 are accepted as normal (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2011), values between +2 and -2 are also accepted (Darren and Mallery, 2003).

Results

Profile of the Respondents
The descriptive statistics of the participants are presented in Table 1 below. It appears that the vast majority of participants consisted of employees who have at least bachelor's degree and were identified as white-collar employees.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	187	46,8
Female	213	53,3
Age		
19-25	64	16,0
26-30	115	28,8
31-35	70	17,5
36-40	57	14,3
41-45	40	10,0
46-50	21	5,3
51-73	33	8,3
Marital Status		
Single	169	42,3
Married	231	57,8
Education Level		
Primary	23	5,8
Secondary	118	29,5
University, Postgraduate	259	64,8
Occupation		
Doesn't work	20	5,0
Retired	22	5,5
Working	358	89,5
Working Place		
White Collar	222	55,5
Blue Collar	99	24,8
Entrepreneur	39	9,8
Monthly Income		
Less than 1500 TL	95	23,8
1500-3000 TL	158	39,5
3001-4500 TL	95	23,8
More than 4500 TL	52	13,0

Measurement Analysis

Firstly, for the validity of scales in terms of structure Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted. Once it is determined that the data set is suitable for factor analysis (Creation of correlation matrix, Barlett test and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests) (Kalaycı, 2006; Büyüköztürk, 2012) and as a result of factor analysis of the Promax Rotation key components on the data set, 3 factors above the value of 1 are determined. The three factors included in the research model, their statistical values and factor analysis results are shown in the table 2 below.

Table 2. Factors and Values

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance Exp.	KMO	Chi-square	Sig. p
Image of France	3,463	0,98	0,67	59	0,619	187,97	0,001
General Image of French Products	2,866	1,04	0,91	73,80	0,877	1341,89	0,001
Ethnocentrism	3,079	1,246	0,94	63,98	0,946	4952,71	0,001

Another process for the validity of the structure was the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in AMOS. Since the load values of the expressions in the DFA analysis are expected to be close to 0.60 (Kline, 2005, p.178), the items with low load values (s18, s16, s12) were recycled one by one. As a result the following values obtained were supported by the literature (Cole, 1987; Kline, 2005; Uğurlu, 2014; Meydan and Şeşen, 2015).

Table 3. CFA compliance values

Indices	Acceptable fit	Value
Cmin/DF	$\chi^2 \leq 5$	3,58
CFI	$0,90 \leq CFI \leq 0,97$	0,90
NFI	$0,80 \leq NFI \leq 0,95$	0,87
GFI	$0,80 \leq GFI \leq 0,95$	0,83
SRMR	$0,08 \geq SRMR \geq 0,05$	0,06
Rmsea	$0,08 \geq Rmsea \geq 0,05$	0,08

As a result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the path was continued with an acceptable structure of 3 factors and 24 expressions.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis testing was performed using the SPSS PROCESS program. As a result of the analysis on data collected from a total of 400 respondents H2 was supported but H1 was not supported. In other words, while ethnocentrism effects country image negatively, it doesn't affect product image negatively. Additionally, while ethnocentrism has significant affect on country image, it doesn't have on product image. It is crucial to note that, although H2a wasn't statistically significant, it was determined that H1a and H2a have a positive effect as a moderator variable. However, the country image has stronger

moderator effect than the product image. In addition, the educational status in the study used as a control variable and it has a positive and significant effect in the first model. But, it wasn't positive and significant in the second model. Moreover, although it was not hypothesized in the research, it was also found that France's general product image was not mediated between Ethnocentrism and France image.

Table 4. SPSS Process Moderator Model Data For Product Image

Antecedent	Country Image (Y)		
	Coeff.	SE	p
Ethnocentrism (X)	-,083[*]	,038	< .05
Product Image (W)	,379[*]	,042	< .001
X x W	,0354	,0408	,386
Education	,191[*]	,0833	< .05
Constant	3,308[*]	,0712	< .001
Model Summary	$R^2 = 0.210$; $F(4, 393) = 26,04$, $p = < .001$		
Conditional effect of X on Y = b1 + b3W; $Y = i_1 + b_1X + b_2W + b_3XW$			

Significant
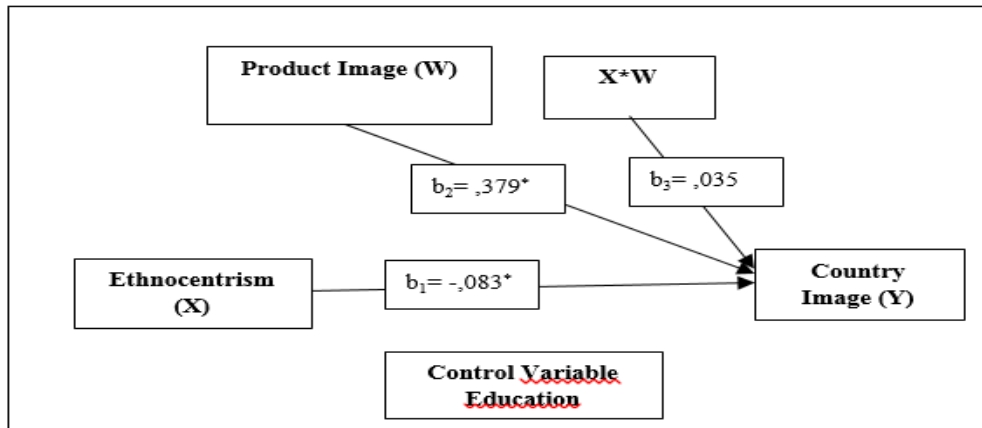
Figure 3. Model Coefficients For Product Image

Tablo 5. SPSS Process Moderator Model Data For Country Image

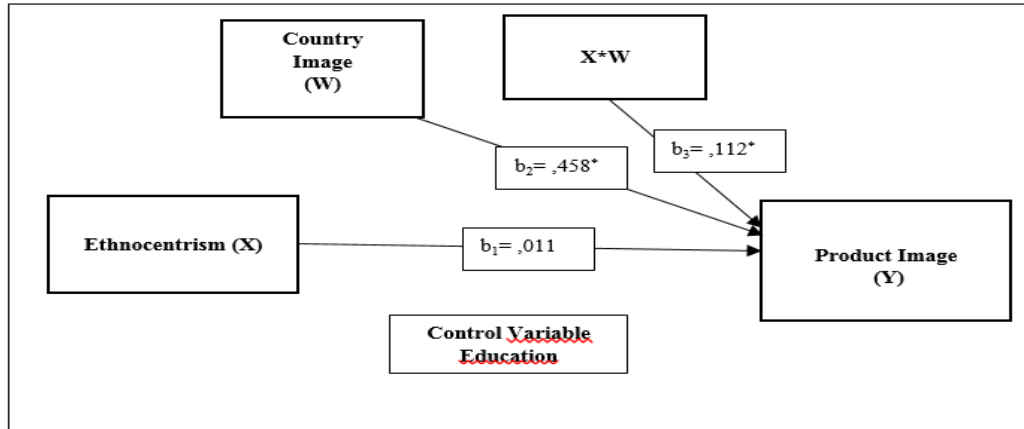| Antecedent	Product Image (Y)		
	Coeff.	SE	p
Ethnocentrism (X)	,011	,0420	,784
Country Image (W)	,458[*]	,049	< .001
X x W	,112[*]	,0475	< .05
Education	-,010	,097	,912
Constant	2,937	,162	< .001
Model Summary	$R^2 = 0.19$; $F(4, 393) = 23,50$, $p = < .001$		
Conditional effect of X on Y = b1 + b3W; $Y = i_1 + b_1X + b_2W + b_3XW$			

Significant

Figure 4. Model Coefficients For Country Image

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of current research was to determine how the ethnocentric tendencies of educated individuals in Turkish culture affect foreign country image and its products. It was also aimed to determine moderator variable for ethnocentrism. For this purpose, research has been carried out on France whose products widely sold in Turkey and also is a major tourism destination in the world. The appropriate scales in the literature have been determined for the study and the validity and reliability of these scales have been tested. Once the validity and reliability of these scales were determined and found to be acceptable, hypotheses testing was undertaken. In the context of H1 and H2 ethnocentric tendencies of Turkish consumers in France and its product image were tested and the moderator effect of country and product image tested within H1a and H2a. As a result, H1 ($\beta=$, 011, $p >0.05$) wasn't supported and H2 ($\beta= -.083$, $p<0.05$) was supported. It was determined that the moderator of product image on ethnocentrism (H2a) has positive but not significant affect (X x W =, 035, $p >0.05$). Yet the moderator of the country image on ethnocentrism (H1a) has positive and significant affect (X x W =, 112, $p<0.05$). Therefore, it can be said that it is possible to reduce the negative effect of the ethnocentrism on the product image by using the moderator effect of the country image. In addition, education was taken as a control variable in the models and its effect was controlled. Thus, while education affects the first model positively and statistically significant ($\beta=.191$, $p<0 .05$), it is not positively and statistically significant in the second model ($\beta=$, - 010, $p >0.05$). Smilarly other demographic variables were controlled and the following implications were defined. In the first model, while monthly income and marital status were statistically significant; working place, gender, age, occupation weren't significant. In the second model, while gender and occupation were statistically significant, monthly income, marital status, working place and age weren't statistically significant. Therefore, some variables which weren't significant in the first model were significant in the second, and the ones that were significant in the second model weren't significant in the first.

According to He and Wang (2014), the negative effect of consumer ethnocentrism decreases when the value and prestige of imported brand is high. Like the fact that the French products are not affected negatively by the ethnocentric tendencies of Turkish consumers, it's estimated that could be a reflection of its brand value. It is known that the perceived quality of the brand reduces the negative effect of

ethnocentrism (Elliott and Cameron, 1994). It can be a sign that it is one of the most preferred automobile brands, especially in Turkey. According to research by Kaynak and Kara (2000) on Turkish consumers, Turkish consumers have a very positive perception of products from Japan, USA and Western European countries. The fact that France, one of the western European countries, is likely to have produced such a result. This is also known halo effect in the literature (Han, 1989; Han, 1990; Lampert ve Jaffe, 1998). It is therefore possible to say that the general product image of France has a halo effect on the image of France.

According to the result of the research ethnocentric barriers may point to France but it is not toward to its products. One of the probabilities of these results is that most of the activities that Porter (1985) mentioned in the value chain model carried out in Turkey. In other words, some French cars manufacturing in Turkey is an indicator for value sharing. Through value sharing, while the business could make profit economically they can also socially benefits the country and the community.

In the context of tourism, the results of current study evaluated and it is likely to say the positive image of tourists' goods and services regarding to the country has also improved the image of the country. Likewise positive image of the country has improved the image of the country's products. Furthermore country image has a significant moderator between negative ethnocentrism and the image of countries' products. From this point of view, it is likely to regulate the negative effect of ethnocentrism and product by the positive image of the country. In this case, it is important to change the perceptions of individuals who have negative product perceptions in the tourism sector.

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