

Determination of Airline Preferences of Turkish Citizens Residing Abroad in the Context of Ethnocentrism

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Abstract

Consumer ethnocentrism is the preference of domestic products due to economic interest and nationalism instead of purchasing foreign products. Within this framework, the purpose of the study is to determine ethnocentric tendencies of the Turkish citizens coming for holiday to Antalya and the effect of this tendency on domestic airline preference. On the other hand, it is aimed to analysis whether Turkish citizens' ethnocentrism tendencies vary across demographic attributes or not. Survey was conducted on 425 Turkish citizens residing abroad and coming for holiday to Antalya. According to results, it was revealed that Turkish citizens' ethnocentric tendencies were medium level and their tendencies varied across demographic attributes. Within the frame of the main hypothesis of the study, it is ascertained that consumer ethnocentrism is a strong determinant of domestic airline preference.

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INTRODUCTION

Many domestic and foreign airlines organize international expeditions in addition to domestic expeditions. Moreover, airlines earn more than half of their income (Directorate General Civil Aviation Turkey, 2017). Accordingly, these airlines benefit from the opportunities of international services. Even though international businesses have some advantages, they should consider the concept of consumer ethnocentrism explained as preference of domestic goods and services instead of foreign ones because of national interests affecting the advantages. In the studies on this topic, it was ascertained that consumers had same attitude and behaviours towards local and foreign products, conversely, consumers had ethnocentric attitude and behaviours (Martinez, Zapata and Garcia, 1998). Consumers who have ethnocentric tendencies prefer to purchase domestic goods and services and exhibit negative attitudes and behaviours towards foreign products because they think that purchasing foreign goods and services conflicts with their country's interests and national feelings (Khare, 1998; Ruyter et al., 1998; Chang and Cheng, 2011).

Within this framework, purpose of the study is to determine ethnocentric tendencies of the Turkish citizens coming for holiday to Antalya and the effect of this tendency on domestic airline preference. On the other hand, it is aimed to analysis whether Turkish citizens' ethnocentrism tendencies vary across demographic attributes or not. For this purpose, data was collected from 425 Turkish citizens residing abroad and coming for holiday to Antalya via survey. Millions of Turkish citizens residing abroad come to Turkey by air and take a holiday in their country. Many domestic and foreign airlines organize expeditions to Antalya. These airlines should consider the ethnocentric levels of the target market. Thus domestic airlines can carry out activities for benefiting from the advantages of consumer ethnocentrism and foreign airlines can strategize for negative effects of ethnocentrism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Ethnocentrism

The concept of ethnocentrism is explained as "person sees ethnic group in which he involved as the center of the universe and even though he embraces the people with similar culture blindly, he rejects various ethnic group" (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Consumer ethnocentrism is the application of ethnocentrism concept in economics (Evanschitzky, Wangenheim, Woisetschlager and Bulut, 2008: 9). This concept is first used for expressing the opinions of american consumers about ethical dimension of imported products by Shimp and Sharma (1987). Consumer ethnocentrism is explained as consumers' tendencies of preference for domestic products instead of foreign ones. Consumer ethnocentrism constitutes sense of belonging by creating identity and it determines whether purchase behaviour is acceptable or not (Huddleston, Good, Stoel, 2001). Ethnocentric consumers support the purchase of domestic products. They emphasize that purchasing foreign products is harmful in terms of economic interest, causes unemployment and conflicts with national feelings (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). According to Rybina, Reardon and Humphrey (2010), patriotism affects consumer ethnocentrism positively and consumer ethnocentrism encourages to purchase of domestic products.

Ethnocentrism is negative condition especially for international marketing. So, it affects the concept of internationalization in a negative way (Altıntaş and Tokol, 2007). Consumer ethnocentrism has a direct negative impact on consumers about purchasing foreign products. High ethnocentric tendencies cause negative attitudes about purchasing foreign products (Renko, Karanovic and Matic, 2012). Shimp and Sharma (1987) ascertained that some consumers found more ethical to purchase domestic products. This situation acts as a stimulating effect for purchasing domestic products (Hamin, 2006). From this aspect, knowing the ethnocentric tendencies of the consumers can be helpful for marketing experts. Especially, considering the consumers' prejudices about purchasing domestic and foreign products contribute to the marketing experts (Orth and Firbasova, 2002).

The Relation Between Consumer Ethnocentrism and Demographic Attributes

Several remarkable results stand out in many studies associated consumer ethnocentrism to demographic attributes. It is seen that there is a negative relation between ethnocentric tendencies with educational level and income in the studies even though there is no agreement about the relation between consumer ethnocentrism with gender and age (Balabanis, Mueller, and Melewar, 2002; Kleine and Ettenson, 1999; Küçükemiroğlu, 1999; Mutlu, Çeviker and Çirkin, 2011) When examining the relation between consumer ethnocentrism and gender, some researchers revealed that women had more ethnocentric tendencies than men (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller and Melewar, 2001; Good and Huddleston, 1995; Sharma, Shimp and Shin, 1995); the others ascertained that men had more ethnocentric tendencies than women (Bannister and Saunders, 1978; Tayfun and Gürlek, 2014). Depending on these research results, the following hypothesis was developed.

H₁: Turkish citizens' ethnocentric tendencies coming for holiday vary across gender.

When examining the relations between the ages of consumers and consumer ethnocentrism, even though it was revealed that consumers show generally ethnocentric tendency (Bawa, 2004; Upadhyay and Singh, 2006; Arı, 2007; Asil ve Kaya, 2013; Tayfun and Gürlek, 2014), a negative relationship between age and ethnocentric tendency was revealed in some studies, too (Bannister and Saunders, 1978; Mittal and Tsiros, 1995; Javalgi et. al., 2005; Mutlu et al., 2011). Also, there is a relation between the educational levels of consumer and their ethnocentric tendency. In some studies, it was ascertained that there was a negative relation between educational level and consumer ethnocentrism; the levels of consumers' ethnocentric were low when they were well-educated (Lee, Hong and Lee, 2003; Shankarmahesh, 2004; Aysuna and Altuna, 2008; Asil et al., 2013; Örs, Catli and Sertoglu, 2017). Depending on these research results, the following hypotheses were developed.

H₂: Turkish citizens' ethnocentric tendencies coming for holiday vary across age.

H₃: Turkish citizens' ethnocentric tendencies coming for holiday vary across level of education.

In some studies, it was seen that there was a relation between income and consumer ethnocentrism. Even though some researchers state that there is a positive relation between income and consumer ethnocentrism (Tan and Farley, 1987; Balabanis et al., 2001), In most studies, it is suggested that when consumers' income levels increase, their ethnocentric tendencies decrease (Küçükemiroğlu, 1999; Mohamad, Ahmad, Honeycutt and Tyebkhan, 2000;

Supphellen and Rittenburg, 2001; Orth and Firbasova, 2002; Bawa, 2004; Mutlu et al., 2011; Asil et al., 2013). Depending on these research results, the following hypothesis was developed.

H₄: Turkish citizens' ethnocentric tendencies coming for holiday vary across level of income.

The Relation Between Consumer Ethnocentrism and Home Product Preference

In the studies related attitude and behaviours towards domestic and foreign products, it was revealed that consumers had ethnocentric attitude and behaviours in the international marketing literature (Martinez et al., 1998). Ethnocentric consumers consider national feelings about purchasing decision (Özer and Dovganiuc, 2013). So, ethnocentric consumers have negative attitudes towards foreign products. According to the study by Moon and Jain (2002), consumer ethnocentrism affects consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards foreign products negatively.

High ethnocentrism in target market is a big threat risk for foreign entities that will penetrate market. Ethnocentric consumers are prejudiced towards foreign products and they exhibit negative attitudes and behaviours because of threat perception. Consumers having ethnocentric tendencies prefer domestic products because they think that foreign products will damage economy and socio-cultural identity and cause unemployment. Even if the consumers want to purchase foreign products, they prefer to purchase domestic products as Turkish citizens (Wang and Chen, 2004). Consumer ethnocentrism doesn't always mean that it is the preference of domestic products. Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) ascertained that consumer ethnocentrism is a positive attitude towards the domestic products rather than a negative attitude towards the foreign products. Huang et al. (2010) got similar results in the study conducted on Chinese, Russian and Polish consumers.

In the literature, it is stated that there is a positive relation between ethnocentric tendencies of consumers and domestic products preferences, but there is a negative relation between ethnocentric tendencies of consumers and foreign products preferences (Han, 1988; Herche, 1992; Olsen, Granzin and Biswas, 1993; Klein, Ettenson and Morris, 1998; Supphellen and Rittenburg, 2001; Balıkcıoğlu, 2008; Armağan and Gürsoy, 2011; Mutlu et al., 2011; Kerse and Gelibolu, 2015; Ghani and Mat, 2017; Linh, 2017). When examining the studies conducted about tourism and travel sectors, there are limited number of studies in the national and international literatures (Pecotich, Pressley and Roth, 1996; Khare, 1998; Ruyter, Birgelen and Wetzels, 1998; Chang and Cheng, 2011; Tayfun and Gürlek, 2014; Halis and Halis, 2016).

In the study conducted on 320 Australian students' preferences about banks and airlines by Pecotich et al. (1996), it was ascertained that ethnocentric behaviours of the students had impact on quality perception and purchase intention. In the study conducted on Indian consumers and in 5 different service areas, Khare (1998) ascertained that consumer ethnocentrism affected intention to use the foreign services negatively in the fast food businesses, but it didn't affect the intention for airline, banking and insurance services. Similarly, Ruyter et al. (1998) ascertained that there was a negative relation between consumer ethnocentrism and service selection in the study conducted in 10 different service industries (travel agency, airlines, public buses, railway services, banking services, health services, postal services, courier services, telecommunication services and public services).

In the study conducted on Chinese and Taiwanese consumers by Chang and Cheng (2011), it was ascertained that consumer ethnocentrism affected foreign airline preferences negatively. Tayfun and Gürlek (2014) suggested that consumer ethnocentrism affected domestic airline preferences positively. Halis and Halis (2016) ascertained that ethnocentric levels of consumers were low and they had positive attitudes towards foreign touristic goods in the study on 400 Azerbaijani consumers. Depending on these research results, the following hypothesis was developed.

H₅: Turkish citizens' ethnocentric tendencies coming for holiday have positive impact on domestic airline preferences.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research method and survey technique were used in data gathering in this study. The purpose of this study is to reveal the effect of Turkish citizens' ethnocentric tendencies living abroad and coming for holiday to Antalya on domestic airline preference and the relation between their ethnocentric tendencies and demographic attributes.

The Preparation of Data Gathering Tool

Survey form was prepared by using CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendency Scale) consisting of 17 statements by Shimp and Sharma (1987). The reliability and validity of the scale were proved by many studies (Ari, 2007; Mutlu et al., 2011; Asil et al., 2013; Tayfun and Gürlek, 2014; Halis and Halis, 2016; Shin, 2001; Wang and Chen, 2004; Josiassen et al., 2011). The scale related domestic product preference was used by Klein et al. (1998) and consisting 5 statements for the preparation of the questionnaire form about domestic airline preference. The linguistic validity of the scale was proved because the original scale was English. Translation and back translation was conducted by Brislin (1986) and the scale was first translated from English into Turkish, then translated back into English. Scales were prepared to 5-point likert scale (1-Strongly disagree, 5-Strongly agree).

The Population and Sample

Population of the study constitutes Turkish citizens living abroad and coming for holiday to Antalya by air. Turkish citizens are appropriate for population because such tourists are attractive target market and they have ethnocentric tendencies. The reason of choosing Antalya as a destination is that the citizens residing abroad come to Antalya for holiday and many domestic and foreign airlines organize expeditions to the destination. Surveys were conducted to the Turkish citizens arriving Antalya Airport International Terminal between June and August 2018. According to the information received from Antalya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 360,000 Turkish citizens came to Antalya for holiday in 2017. Because many of the Turkish citizens didn't want to participate in the research, convenience sampling method, one of the non-random sampling methods was used as sampling method in the study. Sekaran (1992) suggests that sample size of 384 for 95% confidence intervals is sufficient in case of population size about one million and above. Sample of the study constitutes 425 tourists.

Research Model

Firstly, it will be analysed whether ethnocentric tendencies of consumers vary across demographic attributes (gender, age, education and income) or not (H₁-H₄). Afterwards the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on domestic airline preferences will be ascertained (H₅). It was benefited from the studies effective for developing the hypotheses for research model.

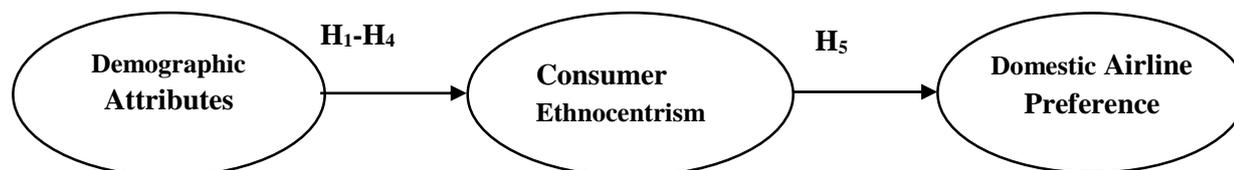


Figure 1: Research Model

FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Attributes of Tourists

Gender	Frequency	%	Level of Education	Frequency	%
Female	185	43,5	Secondary education	221	52,0
Male	240	56,5	Bachelor's degree	176	41,4
Total	425	100	Graduate education	28	6,6
Age	Frequency	%	Total	425	100
18-27	91	21,4	Income	Frequency	%
28-37	102	24,0	2000 € and below	93	21,9
38-47	115	27,1	2001-3000 €	226	53,2
48-57	74	17,4	3001-4000 €	73	17,2
58-67	43	10,1	4001 € and above	33	7,8
Total	425	100	Total	425	100

According to Table 1; more than half of the participants are men. 45 percent (189) of them are middle aged. 10 percent (43) are between 58-67 ages. About half of the participants are secondary school graduates. 7 percent (28) of them are graduate. About half of the participants (226) have 2001-3000 € income and 8 percent (33) of them have 4001 € and above.

Ethnocentric Tendencies Of Turkish Citizens Residing Abroad

The ethnocentric tendencies of the Turkish citizens residing abroad are separated into 3 groups. 5-point likert scale was used for grouping and 3 was accepted as the mid-value of the grouping; first interval (1-2,5) “low ethnocentric”, second interval (2,5-3,5) “medium ethnocentric”, third interval (3,5-5) “high ethnocentric”.

Table 2: Ethnocentric Levels of Turkish Citizens Residing Abroad

Ethnocentric Levels	Frequency	%
Low Ethnocentric	157	36,9
Medium Ethnocentric	92	21,6
High Ethnocentric	176	41,4
Toplam	425	100

When examining Table 2; 41 percent (176) of the Turkish citizens residing abroad are high ethnocentric; 37 percent (157) of them are low ethnocentric and 22 percent (92) of them are medium ethnocentric.

Explanatory Factor Analysis Related to Consumer Ethnocentrism and Domestic Airline Preference

Explanatory factor analysis was carried out for determining the dimensions of ethnocentrism scale and evaluating the validity and reliability of it. The reliability analyses were made for consumer ethnocentrism and domestic airlines preference scales. The Cronbach Alpha reliability, in turn, were 0,917 and 0,935. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994: 265), the scales have adequate reliability (above 0.70).

Table 3: Explanatory Factor Analysis Related to Consumer Ethnocentrism and Domestic Airline Preference

Statements	Comp.	Variance %	C.Alph. α
Consumer Ethnocentrism			
Turkish people should always use Turkish origin airlines instead of foreign airlines.	,903	67,93	,917
Foreign airlines should be used in case there are no Turkish origin airlines.	,894		
Using Turkish origin airlines guard Turkish workers.	,850		
Consumer using foreign airlines are responsible for becoming unemployed of their citizens.	,849		
Real Turks should always use Turkish origin airlines.	,844		
We should use Turkish origin airline instead of the other countries' ones.	,836		
Foreign airline should be used merely out of obligatory cases.	,832		
Using Turkish origin airline is of paramount importance.	,832		
Turkish shouldn't use foreign airlines because the airlines do disservice to the Turkish origin airlines and cause unemployment.	,831		
Using foreign airlines don't accord with Turkishness because it can cause unemployment.	,831		
Using Turkish origin airline is always the best.	,829		
All foreign airlines should be handicapped.	,800		
We should use foreign airlines instead of Turkish origin airlines, don't organize expeditions to the destination we want to go.	,792		
It shouldn't be allowed foreign airlines to operate in Turkey.	,778		
Using foreign airline is not suitable.	,771		
I prefer to support Turkish origin airlines even if it is costly in the long term.	,766		
The entry of foreign airlines to the country should be minimized by overtaxing.	,757		

Table 3: Explanatory Factor Analysis Related to Consumer Ethnocentrism and Domestic Airline Preference (Continuation)

Principal Component Analysis, Components Extracted, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy : ,967, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity χ^2 : 7147,74 Sig: ,000			
Explanatory Factor Analysis Related Domestic Airline Preference	Comp.	Variance %	C.Alph. α
Domestic Airline Preference			
When I use any foreign airline, I feel guilty.	,910	79,319	,935
I don't like the idea of using foreign airline.	,906		
I never prefer a foreign airline.	,901		
I use Turkish origin airline in every situation possible.	,888		
I consent to pay 10 percent more for Turkish one when I come up against foreign and Turkish origin airline.	,847		
Principal Component Analysis, Components Extracted, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy : ,842, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity χ^2 : 2010,50 Sig: ,000			

According to Kaiser Normalization in exploratory factor analysis regarding consumer ethnocentrism, factors with eigenvalue greater than 1.0 were considered and the scale consisted of one factor. The total variance percentage is 67,93. According to Scherer et al. (1988), the percentage is suggested more than 50%. In explanatory factor analysis, common variance (communality) values and values of scale statements aren't suggested less than 0,4 (Field, 2000: 434). All values are more than 0,4 in the study.

Also, the scale regarding domestic airlines preference consisted of one factor. The total variance percentage is 79,32. Common variance (communality) values and values of scale statements are more than 0,4 in the study.

Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Across Demographic Attributes

Difference test was used, whether consumers' ethnocentric tendencies varied across demographic attributes (gender, age, education and income) or not. Normality test was carried out by controlling the skewness and kurtosis values. Because of the values between -1.5 and +1.5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013), normal distribution was seen. T-test, variance analysis and Tukey's test were used for determining which variables cause differences.

Table 4: T-test and ANOVA For the Difference of Consumer Ethnocentrism Across Demographic Attributes

Variables	Groups	n	\bar{x}	t/F	p	Tukey
Gender	Female	185	2,97	2,866	0,004	
	Male	240	3,25			
Age	18-27 (a)	91	2,40	36,752	0,000	a-b, b-c a-c, b-d a-d, b-e a-e, c-d
	28-37 (b)	102	2,89			
	38-47 (c)	115	3,19			
	48-57 (d)	74	3,75			
	58-67 (e)	43	4,02			
Education	Secondary education (a)	221	3,48	33,632	0,000	a-b a-c b-c
	Bachelor's degree (b)	176	2,82			
	Graduate education (c)	28	2,31			
Monthly income	2000 EU and below (a)	93	3,43	4,497	0,004	a-b a-c a-d
	2001-3000 EU (b)	226	3,10			
	3001-4000 EU (c)	73	3,00			
	4001 EU and above (d)	33	2,77			

$p < 0,05$

As seen in Table 4; independent sample t-test, one-way anova and Tukey test were made for determining whether Turkish citizens' ethnocentrism tendencies vary across demographic attributes or not. It was ascertained that the participants' ethnocentric tendencies varied across gender ($p=0,004$). When examining the means, it was seen that men were more ethnocentric than women. According to one-way anova, it was seen that the participants' ethnocentric tendencies varied across age ($p= 0,000$), education ($p=0,000$) and income ($p=0,004$) variables. According to Tukey test, it was ascertained that there were significant differences between age and education groups within themselves. Also, as the participants grew older, they were more ethnocentric in terms of means and as their education levels increased, they were less ethnocentric. When examining Tuket test regarding income, there were significant differences between income groups with the exception of 3001-4000 EU and 4001 EU and above. As their income increased, they were less ethnocentric. Hence **H₁, H₂, H₃ and H₄** were accepted.

Regression Analysis Between Consumer Ethnocentrism and Domestic Airline Preference

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted for determining the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on domestic airline preference.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Between Consumer Ethnocentrism and Domestic Airline Preference

Independent Variables	Beta	t	P
Consumer Ethnocentrism	,901	42,84	,000
R=,901; R ² =,813; Adjusted R ² =,812; F=1835,16; p= ,000 Dependent Variable: Domestic Airline Preference			

According to Table 5; simple linear regression made for determining the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on domestic airline preference was found statistically significant, ($F=1835,16$; $p=0,000$). Consumer ethnocentrism explains 81,2 percent of domestic airline preference.

When examining t-tests regarding standardized regression coefficients and significance of regression coefficients, it was ascertained that consumer ethnocentrism had a significant positive effect on domestic airline preference (H_2 , $\beta=,901$; $p=0.000$). Because of the beta coefficient, it was seen that consumer ethnocentrism had a strong effect on domestic airline preference. Hence **H₅** was accepted.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study explains the effect of ethnocentric tendencies of Turkish citizens residing abroad on domestic airline preferences and whether ethnocentric tendencies vary across demographic attributes or not. The study was conducted on 425 Turkish citizens living abroad and coming for holiday to Antalya. When viewed from this aspect, it is thought that the study will make a significant contribution to the literature because any study hasn't been conducted using the same sample.

According to the study results, it was ascertained that participants showed medium level tendencies of ethnocentrism. Balabanis et al. (2001) and Asil and Kaya (2013) revealed that Turkish consumers generally showed medium levels of ethnocentrism. It was found that participants' ethnocentric tendencies varied across their genders;

men were more ethnocentric than women. Although it was seen that women were more ethnocentric in some studies (Good and Huddleston, 1995; Sharma et al., 1995; Asil and Kaya, 2013), it was ascertained that men were more ethnocentric in the other ones (Bannister and Saunders, 1978; Tayfun and Gürlek, 2014). According to the result of another study, the participants' ethnocentric tendencies varied across their ages. It was ascertained that the participants were more ethnocentric when they got older. Similar studies (Bawa, 2004; Upadhyay and Singh, 2006; Arı, 2007; Armağan and Gürsoy, 2011) achieved the same result. Also, the participants' ethnocentric tendencies varied across their educational levels and incomes; the participants' tendencies decreased when their education and income levels got higher. Lee et al. (2003); Shankarmahesh (2004); Aysuna and Altuna (2008); Örs et al. (2017) ascertained that the levels of consumers' ethnocentric were low when they were well-educated. There are some studies revealing that when consumers' income levels increase, their ethnocentric tendencies decrease (Küçükemiroğlu, 1999; Mohamad et al. 2000; Supphelen and Rittenburg, 2001; Orth and Firbasova, 2002; Bawa, 2004; Mutlu et al., 2011).

When examining the result regarding the base hypothesis of the study, it was revealed that consumer ethnocentrism had positive impact on domestic airline preferences and the impact was highly strong. Similarly, in the studies on tourism and travel industry, it is stated that there is a positive relation between consumer ethnocentrism and domestic touristic goods, but there is a negative relation between consumer ethnocentrism and foreign touristic goods (Pecotich et al., 1996; Khare, 1998; Ruyter et al., 1998; Chang and Cheng, 2011; Tayfun and Gürlek, 2014).

Aviation industry grows swiftly day by day in our country. According to The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), Turkey has achieved growth in the industry on average 10% over the past decade. So, many domestic and foreign airlines organize expeditions in our country. Within the context of the current study, some recommendations should be considered. Considering the fact that Turkish citizens residing abroad are medium ethnocentric and their ethnocentric tendencies vary across demographic attributes, domestic and foreign airlines should consider the ethnocentric levels of the target market and develop marketing strategies in terms of demographic attributes. From the fact that consumer ethnocentrism has a strong positive effect on domestic airline preference, domestic airlines should emphasize ethnocentrism in marketing and advertising activities and foreign airlines should develop strategies which are capable to remove possible negative effects of ethnocentrism. Javalgi et al. (2005) suggest that if the effect of consumer ethnocentrism is considered, success can be achieved.

The important limitation of this study is that it was only conducted on tourists residing abroad and coming for holiday to Antalya by air. Consumer ethnocentrism was examined in terms of demographic attributes and domestic airline preference. For future studies, it is suggested that different sample groups and variables should be used for researches.

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