

Explaining Sociocultural Factors behind Consumer Nationalism among the Citizens of Isfahan

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Nowadays, achieving economic, political and cultural independence is considered as a significant component of development; it also requires pervasive and institutionalized national zeal amongst different classes of the society. In this regard, many financial experts have paid attention to producers and consumers' supporting of the economy as well as the utilization of domestic capacities in various fields. Supporting the revival of domestic capacities to produce goods and services results in the formation of endogenous variables instead of exogenous ones, which would increase decision- and policy-making powers in economic, social, and cultural fields. The eighth clause on the general policies of the Resistive Economy asserts "the promotion of consuming domestic goods". Given the experience of many countries regarding their paths towards progress, the lower and middle classes' state of welfare and livelihood in the society, as agents who are at the service of manufacturing firms, are a function of national zeal and economic empowerment of the society; it is also manifested in the growth of domestic production and consumption of domestic products. Considering these discussions, the main problem examined in this study involves the status of consumer nationalism along with identifying the most important factors that affects it in Isfahan City.

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2. Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

In general, nationalism refers to the belonging of elements in a society to its geographical boundaries and extraordinary attachment to a nation; it is similar to an ideology that is focused on increasing national capabilities through independence, solidarity, and national identity. According to economic nationalists, improving the economic position of a country requires supporting domestic goods against imported products, utilizing domestic capacities rather than foreign ones, and restricting the activities of foreign companies; however, in its extreme form, this would become a barrier against having economic relations with other countries. Economic nationalism is related to two areas including the government's economic policies and individual and collective behavior of the people (Hadidi et al., 2016). Shimp and Sharma (1987) proposed the consumer nationalism scale which involves indices that demonstrate the status of consumer nationalism in a society; these indices include ratios such as the proportion of consumer goods import relative to the total imported goods (in each industrial sector, product class and service, or particular goods or services), imports of luxury items relative to consumer products, and the consumption of foreign goods with similar domestic ones to the total imported products (in both private and public sectors).

In theoretical foundations on consumer behavior, there are different approaches to consumer behavior. One approach asserts paying attention on motivations behind purchases. While motivations shape the consumer's behavior, this complex behavior is formed alongside a process. Human motivation is activated through satisfying one's needs and wishes. Every consumer is different in terms of mentality, emotions, decisions, etc. and these differences affect how they meet their needs. Consumers' actions are reflected through watching advertisements, purchase decisions, and the type of payment method (cash, credit), etc. In addition, in the literature on marketing, patriotism is a phenomenon that is considered as a type of motivation that guides the purchase of goods and services. There is a connection between consumer nationalism and patriotism.

3. Method

The present inquiry is an applied study in which data were collected using field studies and questionnaires. The total population of the study included the entire citizens of Isfahan over the age 15 in 2018. Sample population was indicated as 450 following the preliminary distribution of questionnaires and the estimation of variables' accurate variance according to Cochran's formula. Questionnaire data were entered into the SPSS 22 software; then, the EQS6.2 software was utilized to model the analysis path and fitness path. The mediating role of variable was also examined. Multiple regression statistical method was used to evaluate the variables alongside each other. To this aim, the stepwise regression method was employed.

To assess the model's extent of fitness, goodness of fit indices were used. Chi-squared to degrees of freedom ratio and RMSEA were used among the most famous fitness indicators.

4. Results and Discussion

The obtained coefficients show that part of the changes and fluctuations in consumer nationalism according to the respondents have been due to variables including patriotism, the viewing of foreign goods, awareness over product quality, consumption pattern, assessment of Iranian products, theatrical consumption, and customizability. All variables were assessed to be positively effective; however, the patriotism variable had the highest impact on consumer nationalism, being the only variable with direct effect. Analyses demonstrated that increased patriotism, consumption pattern, assessment of Iranian products and theatrical consumption results in a higher consumer nationalism from the people; and with increased viewing of foreign goods, awareness over product quality, and customizability, there would be a lower degree of consumer nationalism. The obtained model to predict consumer nationalism based on the viewing of foreign goods, awareness over product quality, consumption pattern, assessment of Iranian products, patriotism theatrical consumption, and customizability had an adequate fitness relative to the real settings.

5. Conclusion

Findings suggest that increased patriotism, consumption pattern, and assessment of Iranian products results in a higher consumer nationalism from the people; and with increased viewing of foreign goods, awareness over product quality, theatrical consumption, and customizability, there would be a lower degree of consumer nationalism. Given the results of this study, to empower the citizens' consumer nationalism, the cultural and economic policymakers in Isfahan can focus on the middle class, provide cultural investments, and attempt to improve men's nationalism more than women's.

Given the path analysis fitted pattern, the improvement of positive and significant factors requires empowering the people's patriotism by exhibiting the country's one-of-a-kind capacities. Furthermore, offering an optimistic and trustworthy space can also empower the citizens' national sense of belonging to the country and its products. The following strategies can be recommended in line with improving consumer patriotism: Demonstrating the degree and role of patriotism in developed countries using national media and artistic instruments; giving individual and social rewards to people or organizations that attempt to empower Iranian-related features; sensitization of the society towards the weakening of national language and literature; reinforcing ethnic and religious bonds; providing honest information

on the quality of products compared to similar goods along with their strengths and weaknesses; increasing national confidence and people's self-esteem; reducing political, economic, and social inadequacies; increasing exchange costs for those who import similar goods from overseas; increasing social respect through national and social media for people who use domestic products and chastising the ones who use imported goods; improving network mentality among various classes of the society, particularly among the wealthy and middle class to comprehend the impact of consuming domestic products on other economic activities.

Keywords: Consumer Nationalism, Theatrical Consumerism, Customizability, Iranian Goods, Economic Zeal, Patriotism, Path Analysis

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