

# Impact Assessment of Consumer Demographics on Rural Consumers' Ethnocentric Tendencies (CE) and Social Comparison Information (ATSCI) Habits

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## Abstract

Growth for firms in India requires more and more penetration into the rural markets as urban markets in India are witnessing stagnation. Generalizing urban consumer research findings to formulate rural market strategies may not pave way for rural penetration. Firms need more and more rural specific consumer research to formulate their strategies to excel in rural markets. The present paper is one of such kind and analyzed the role of demographics in shaping rural consumers' ethnocentric (CE) and social comparison (ATSCI) tendencies - two powerful consumer market segmentation variables. It also assessed the likelihood of accepting communication messages having joint and independent appeal of CE and ATSCI. By adhering to appropriate research mechanisms, the study collected and analyzed data from 153 rural consumers belonging to both tribe and non-tribe categories from Tripura, a land locked hilly state of North East India. Data analysis was carried out by using confirmatory factor analysis, one-way ANOVA, independent sample 't' test, and non - parametric Friedman test. The study confirmed ATSCI as one of the significant constructs in shaping rural purchase behaviour. It also highlighted age and education as the significant predictors of ethnocentric tendencies and gender for social comparison tendency. Older and less educated people were found to be more ethnocentric ; whereas, women were found to make greater social comparisons than men. The possible applications of these findings in the context of rural marketing were also discussed.

**Keywords :** attention to social comparison information (ATSCI), ATSCI scale, CETSCALE, consumer ethnocentrism (CE), rural consumers, Tripura

Paper Submission Date : May 23, 2017 ; Paper sent back for Revision : July 10 , 2018 ; Paper Acceptance Date : July 20, 2018

The economies of nations are facing unprecedented competition due to advancement in globalization. Forces of globalization like media, connectivity, marketing by MNCs, global investments, travelling frequency (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 2006) have increased the level of competition across domestic and foreign goods and services. The Indian economy is also not an exception and brands across sectors are also facing this unprecedented competition across urban and rural India. Increased competition across sectors as well as within sectors by multiple brands from different countries (Wong, Rexha, & Phau, 2008) has compelled businesses to devise new strategies to market their offerings. Thus, it is an interesting area to study the preferential bias of consumers towards home grown and imported products for researchers as well as for MNCs (Evanschitzky, Wangenheim, Woisetschläger, & Blut, 2008).

In determining consumer behaviour, be it rural or urban consumer behaviour, demographic, psychographic, cultural, and social factors play an important role. Marketers need to evaluate the impact of numerous variables

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under the above-mentioned factors in assessing consumer behaviour. The present research is one such attempt in assessing the impact of psychographic and demographic variables in shaping consumer behaviour confined to rural India. Psychographic variables assessed in this study are consumer ethnocentric tendencies (CE) and consumers' attention to social comparison information (ATSCI). The interrelations of these psychographic constructs with rural consumers' demographics and socioeconomic conditions are also evaluated through this study. It also assesses the role of CE & ATSCI in shaping consumer behaviour. The findings of this study will highlight the influence of CE & ATSCI in evaluating local and imported products by rural Indian consumers. This study is confined to the rural places of Tripura, one of the land-locked small states of North-Eastern India with the fourth highest rate of literacy (2011 census) in the country. Demographics selected for this study are : age, gender, education, category (tribe/non-tribe), and socioeconomic class of the consumers.

## Literature Review

**(1) Consumer Ethnocentrism :** Consumers have certain perceived feelings of inferiority and superiority towards local offerings. These feelings are articulated as ethnocentric feelings in the literature of consumer behaviour. It was first used in consumer behaviour research by Shimp and Sharma (1987), and they defined consumer ethnocentrism as “the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products and the loyalty of the consumers to the products manufactured in their home country” (p. 280).

Ethnocentrism as a concept initially originated in sociology, and the concept is attributed to William Sumner, who first coined the term in the year 1906. In sociology, the concept was interpreted as the measure of superiority towards inn-group and it is assumed that an ethnocentric person will assign highest status towards his/her associated inn-group and its culture over other groups (Rahman, Morshed, & Hossan, 2011). Shimp and Sharma (1987) used the concept first in consumer behaviour research by tagging it to the inappropriateness of purchasing foreign-made goods. Though in its conception, the construct is assumed to be more appropriate for developed economies (Vida & Fairhurst, 1999) due to their associated advancement in various economic and lifestyle fronts and tendency of the consumers to evaluate their domestic products as of superior quality (Ahmed, Johnson, Yang, Fatt, Teng, & Boon, 2004), subsequent research also accepted the applicability of the concept for developing countries (Klein, Ettenson, & Krishnan, 2006 ; Reardon, Miller, Vida, & Kim, 2005 ; Renko, Karanovic, & Matic, 2012). From the perspective of developing countries, the study on ethnocentrism also highlighted a significant impact in the purchase intention of imported products (Haque, Anwar, & Sarwar, 2015). Kaur and Kaur (2014) observed the relationship as negative in the Indian context, which means ethnocentric consumers in India prefer Indian products during purchase over the imported options.

For consumers with ethnocentric feelings, purchasing imported products and brands is not right. The underlying motivation behind such thinking is that it will hamper the domestic economy and will create joblessness. On the other hand, non ethnocentric consumers evaluate brands and products based on some other criteria like brand appeal, design, and functional and emotional quality. For them, imported products have nothing to do with unemployment and economic conditions of a nation. Thus, ethnocentric consumers judge their purchase correctness based on the country of origin of the product. For ethnocentric consumers, it is justifiable to involve in purchase of imported items only and only when there are no available domestic alternatives for the item (Watson & Wright, 1999). There are also studies to assess the impact of ethnocentric tendencies towards purchase of homemade items with varied results involving positive, negative, and indifferent associations (Chrysochoidis, Krystallis, & Perreas, 2007 ; Evanschitzky et al., 2008 ; Nguenyn, Nguyen, & Barret, 2008 ; Ranjbairan, Barari, & Zabihzade, 2011; Renko et al., 2012).

There are multiple research studies conducted across the globe with varied findings regarding the impact of demographic and socioeconomic antecedents on ethnocentric tendencies. For example, in the case of age, the

findings support the fact that ethnocentric tendency tends to increase with age, indicating that older consumers are comparatively more ethnocentric (Sutikno & Cheng, 2011). Regarding education's impact on ethnocentric tendencies, the most common finding is that ethnocentric tendency tends to decline with increase in level of educational attainment (Rahman et al., 2011). It means that the more people are exposed to multiple avenues of attaining higher education, the more the reduction in ethnocentric tendencies in them. Regarding the impact of gender in shaping consumer ethnocentric tendencies, majority of the studies concluded that women tend to be more ethnocentric than men (Cutura, 2006 ; Good & Huddleston, 1995; Rahman et al., 2011; Sharma, Terence, Shimp, & Shin, 1995).

Contrary to that, the study by McLain and Strenquist (1991) in the context of Russian consumers recorded no significant relationship between gender and ethnocentrism. In case of impact of income on ethnocentric tendencies, the study by Good and Huddleston (1995) for Polish consumers concluded an inverse relationship, that is, with increased income, ethnocentric tendency tended to decline, though the studies by Han (1988) and McLain and Strenquist (1991) did not find any linkage between income and ethnocentric tendency. The socioeconomic strata of consumers also has certain associations with ethnocentric tendency as Shimp and Sharma (1987) observed that consumers in the higher socioeconomic strata were less ethnocentric. Combining all the findings regarding the impact of demographics on ethnocentrism, a general profile of an ethnocentric consumer can be formulated as being an older consumer with lower level of educational attainment, having lower level of income, and preferably a woman.

For measuring the associated level of ethnocentric tendency in a consumer, Shimp and Sharma (1987) designed and validated one measuring instrument popularly known as the CETSCALE, a 17 item Likert scale. Multiple researchers across the world also revalidated the CETSCALE and some also reported shorter versions of the scale. Overall, the reliability and consistency of the scale in measuring CE is reported to be satisfactory.

**(2) Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI) :** Social comparison means comparing one self with others in the society. It is a psychological mechanism, and it influences people's attitude, opinions, and behavior towards certain objects. Whenever people are confronted with actual or perceptual conflicts arising out of competence, capability, achievements, superiority, etc., they engage in comparison (Dunning & Hayes, 1996). People do so in the way of comparing their strengths, weaknesses, and situational circumstances with others (Festinger, 1954). Social comparisons can be with such a person also who cannot provide appropriate information concerning the self (Gilbert, Giesler & Morris, 1995).

It is also done with imaginary characters that are not in existence (Mussweiler, Rüter, & Epstude, 2004 ; Stapel & Blanton, 2004). People basically involve in social comparison to obtain information regarding self image as the study by Khandelwal, Bajpai, Tripathi, and Yadav (2016) observed that self-image is one of the important factors in purchasing high involvement products. Darling and Wood (1990) identified the three most important reasons responsible for social comparison as self-evaluation, self-improvement, and self-enhancement. Some research has identified certain types of individuals, for whom the probability of inclining into social comparisons are more as compared to those for whom these traits are absent (Gilbert et al., 1995; Hemphill & Lehman, 1991). Individuals with a low sense of worth, unstable concept regarding self, and high level of depression (Swallow & Kuiper, 1990) are more inclined towards social comparisons (Wayment & Taylor, 1995). This phenomenon may be attributed to their uncertainty about themselves (Weary, Marsh, & McCormick, 1994). People with high uncertain mood states also exhibit high social comparison tendency (Marsh & Webb, 1996).

Research also tried to establish the relationship of increased level of social comparison tendency with personality traits like anxiety level (Hemphill & Lehman, 1991) and adaptive strategy with failure to attain any correlation amongst them. ATSCI refers to a person's degree of celerity towards collective assessment clues. ATSCI helps a person in presenting himself/herself in a social setting based on how others behave (Calder & Burnkrant, 1977). The need and requirement of social comparison differs from individual to individual (Lennox &

Wolfe, 1984). Social comparison has an association with gender. The study by Gibbons and Buunk (1999) concluded that women were more comparative than men. The same study also concluded that people having high concern for themselves tended to involve in social comparisons more as compared to others. For measuring ATSCI, Lennox and Wolfe (1984) conceptualized and validated a 12 item Likert scale popularly known as the ATSCI scale. The ATSCI scale attempts to measure how a person might pay attention to different social cues while behaving in the society. High ATSCI individuals are more likely to display themselves based on their purchases compared to low ATSCI consumers. High ATSCI customers put more importance on how others assess themselves in buying branded products and put additional emphasis on others' preferences in their product and brand selection compared to the low ATSCI customers. High ATSCI individuals are more open towards influence of social tolerability (Deval, Mantel, Kardes, & Posavac, 2013). People engaging in high attention to the social comparison information behaviour are comparatively more concentration and interest seekers than others.

Though, CE and ATSCI are basically two different concepts with less potential for any possible association ; still, an in-depth understanding of the two concepts indicates that there may be an association amongst them. Ethnocentric consumers will have a tendency to prefer locally made products over the imported ones (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and consumers with high level of ATSCI are more likely to be prejudiced by social acceptability appeal during purchases (Deval et al., 2013) and general perception is that foreign products command more social validation, and consumers with high ATSCI may have a tendency to prefer foreign brands as a symbol of their social validation appeal. Therefore, a negative association amongst CE and ATSCI may be drawn.

Though there exist studies regarding multiple aspects of CE and ATSCI, no significant study is yet commissioned involving these two constructs collectively in India in general and in rural India in particular. Hence, this study will be a pioneering one in determining the relation of CE and ATSCI for rural consumers in India.

## Objectives of the Study

This research has the following objectives :

- (1) To ascertain the impact of demographic and socioeconomic variables on rural consumers' ethnocentric tendency.
- (2) To ascertain the impact of demographic and socioeconomic variables on rural consumers' attention to social comparison tendency.
- (3) To ascertain the association and impact of CE and ATSCI in consumer behaviour in the context of rural consumers.

## Hypotheses

**(1) Ethnocentrism and Age :** Regarding the impact of age on ethnocentric tendency, there are conclusions on both no association as well as positive association indicating higher the age, higher is the ethnocentric tendency. For example, Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, and Melewar (2001) reported no significant association amongst age and ethnocentrism ; whereas, Josiassen, Assaf, and Karpen (2011); Ramsaran-Fowdar (2010); and Sutikno and Cheng (2011) concluded a positive association between age and ethnocentric tendency. Thus, the formulated hypothesis for this study is:

↪ **H1:** Ethnocentric tendency tends to increase with increase in age.

**(2) Ethnocentrism and Gender :** Though there are studies with both significant as well as non significant associations of ethnocentric tendency and gender in literature, majority of the studies (Balabanis, Mueller, & Melewar, 2002 ; Cutura, 2006 ; Josiassen et al., 2011 ; Othman, Ong, & Wong, 2008 ; Ramsaran - Fowdar, 2010 ; Sharma et al., 1995 ; Sutikno & Cheng, 2011 ; Yoo & Donthu, 2005) were of the opinion that women tend to be more ethnocentric than men. Thus, the hypothesis formed for this research is:

↪ **H2 :** Women consumers will exhibit higher ethnocentric tendencies than men consumers.

**(3) Ethnocentrism and Education :** Studies (Balabanis et al., 2001; Cutura, 2006; Orth & Firbasova, 2002; Piron, 2000) in relation to education's impact on ethnocentrism were of the opinion that ethnocentric tendency declines with increased educational qualifications. Thus, the proposed hypothesis for this research is :

↪ **H3 :** Educational attainment will have an inverse association with ethnocentric tendency.

**(4) Ethnocentrism and Ethnic Groups :** Since ethnocentric people treat their own cultural/ethnic group as superior to others (Rahman et al., 2011), it can be concluded that for different ethnic groups, the associated ethnocentric tendency will also be significantly different. Thus, the formulated hypothesis is:

↪ **H4 :** Tribe and non-tribe consumers will exhibit different levels of ethnocentric tendencies.

Taking the logic of negative association amongst CE and ATSCI discussed in the study, the conceptualized hypotheses for ATSCI are:

↪ **H5:** Older consumers will exhibit lower ATSCI tendencies compared to their younger counterparts.

↪ **H6:** Men consumers will be more inclined towards social comparison than women consumers.

↪ **H7:** Greater is the educational attainment, more is the comparison tendency.

↪ **H8:** For both tribes and non-tribes, there will not be any significant difference in the social comparison tendency.

The formulated hypotheses with respect to the two constructs CE and ATSCI are :

↪ **H9:** Collective appeal of CE and ATSCI will not have any significant gain in consumption likelihood compared to their individual appeal.

↪ **H10:** CE & ATSCI will have a negative association amongst themselves.

## **Research Methodology**

**(1) Research Description :** This study was executed in three sequential steps. In the first step, the validity and reliability of the CETSCALE (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and ATSCI scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984) was evaluated through a pilot study. A total of 100 respondents were approached. Both the scale items were evaluated on a 7 - point Likert format where one denoted *least* and seven denoted the *most*. The collected data were exposed to factor analysis and reliability analysis by following the mechanism of Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) calculation. After pilot, the final instrument was prepared. Second round of data were collected by the validated instrument, and the collected data were analyzed by appropriate statistical tools. The statistical tools used are confirmatory factor analysis, one way ANOVA, and *t* - test. The selected demographic variables were coded appropriately prior to the analysis. One



**Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Gender	Male		Female			Total
	96 (62%)		57 (38%)			153
	19 (12.41%)	29 (18.95%)	38(24.83%)	40(26.14%)	27(17.64%)	153
Education	10th & below	HSC	Graduate	Masters or above		Total
	37 (24.18%)	39 (25.49%)	50 (32.6%)	27 (17.64%)		153
Age Group	15-30	31-45	46-60			Total
	59 (38.56%)	59 (38.56%)	35 (22.87%)			153
Category	Tribe		Non-Tribe			Total
	79 (51.63%)		74 (48.37%)			153

hundred and fifty three respondents were approached for analysis purposes. In the third stage, the association of CE and ATSCI was evaluated along with the impact of these constructs in determining consumer behaviour. To determine the relation of these constructs, a correlation analysis amongst the total CE and ATSCI score of the respondents was carried out to assess whether the correlation value is significant or not. For assessing the individual and collective impact of CE and ATSCI in shaping consumer behaviour in the context of rural India, three different messages (see Appendices C, D, and E) were designed. The messages were designed in such a way that two of them appealed to individuals' CE and ATSCI tendencies (individually), and the third one was based on collective appeal of the two constructs. The liking of the messages' score was obtained from 35 respondents in an experimental setting. The marks were assigned by the respondents out of 10. Prior to collecting the score from the respondents, the procedure was explained to the respondents in a detailed manner. The respondents belonged to diverse social and economic stratas with exposure of both the genders. The collected scores were compared by applying Friedman's test to assess whether any significant difference in liking scores existed or not. The time period of the study was from June - December 2016.

**(2) Sampling Design :** For selection of the samples, the sampling method used was random sampling method. The demographic profile of the respondents is detailed in the Table 1.

**(3) Data Collection :** The CETSCALE (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and ATSCI scale (Lennox & Wofle, 1984) were used respectively to collect data regarding consumers' ethnocentric and social comparison tendencies. Both the instruments were used on a 7 - point Likert scale format of 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. The statements along with the codes used for data analysis are given in Appendices A and B.

## Data Analysis and Results

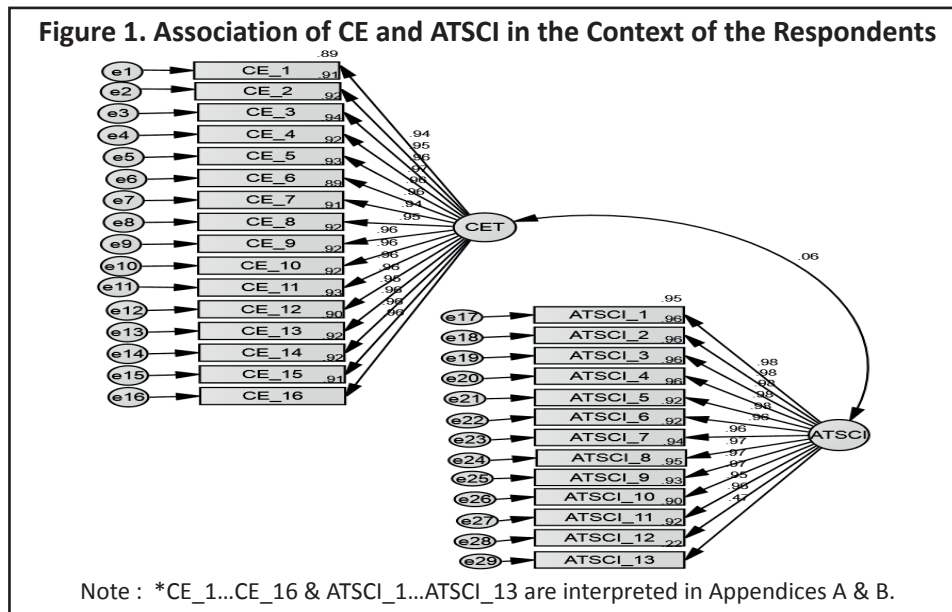
Reliability analysis of CETSCALE was carried out by assessing the Cronbach's alpha value for the overall instrument as well as for the individual items in the instrument. The values are observed to be satisfactory. The reliability score for the complete scale stands at .714 and further improves to .86 with 16 items. The reliability statistics are given in the Table 2. The overall reliability statistic for the ATSCI scale is also reported as .83 with all the 12 items of the instrument. The reliability statistics are given in the Table 3.

**Table 2. Reliability Statistics for the CETSCALE**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Reliability	.80	.79	.83	.81	.82	.86	.84	.8	.81	.84	.73	.79	.77	.74	.82	.79

**Table 3. Reliability Statistics for the ATSCI Scale**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Reliability	.77	.72	.7	.78	.71	.79	.81	.77	.71	.74	.72	.71	.81

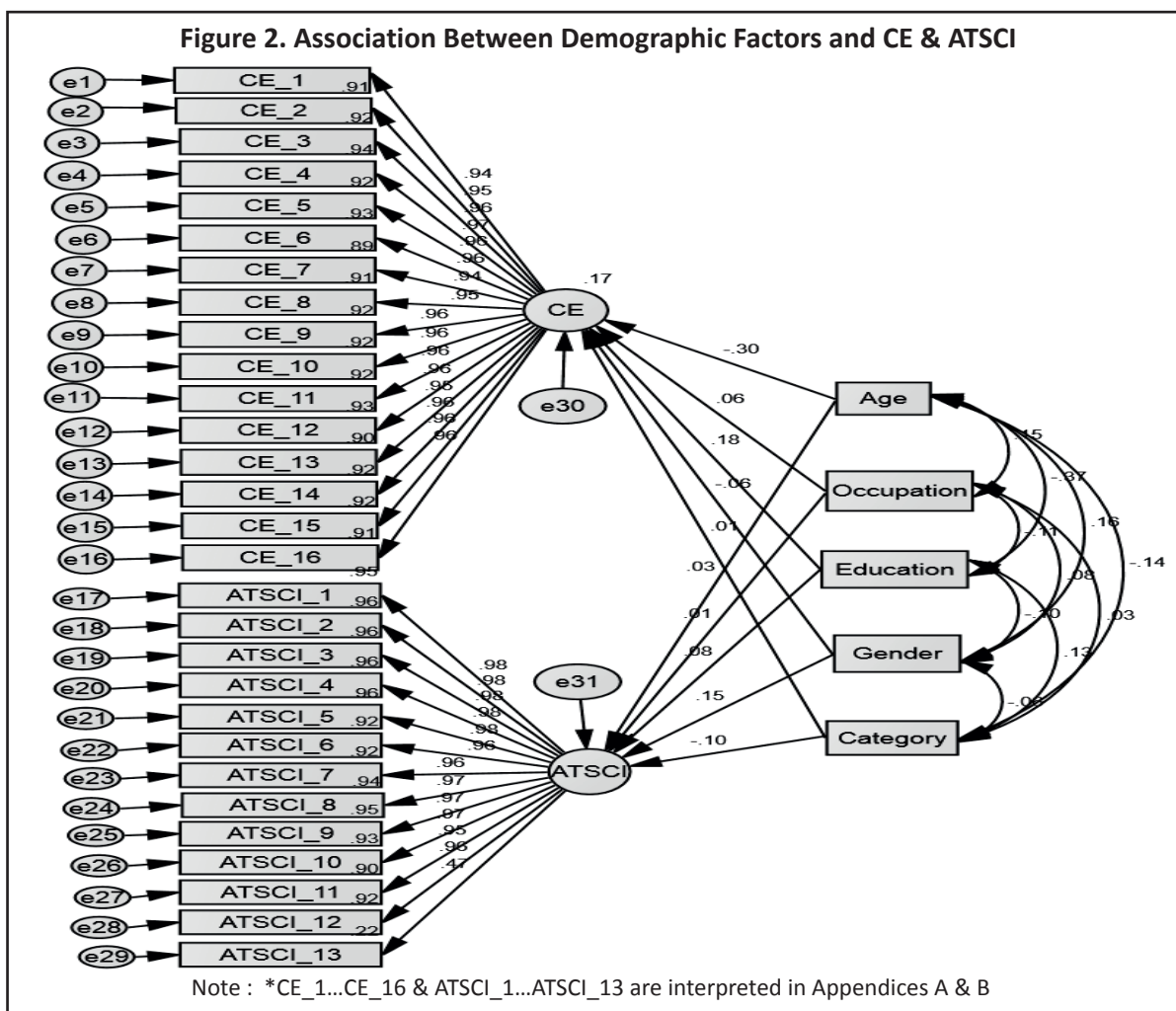


For calculating the association of CE and ATSCI in the context of rural consumers, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 22 was conducted. The analysis method employed is maximum likelihood estimation. The following model fit values emerge from the analysis : chi-square value of 1039 with 374 degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2_{374} = 2.7$ ), incremental fit index (IFI) = .91, normed fit index (NFI) = .89, comparative fit index (CFI) = .93, root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) = .71, parsimony comparative fit index (PCFI) = .78. The indices values are observed to be satisfactory as per the estimates given by Hu and Bentler (1995) ; Kline (1998) ; and Marsh, Balla, and McDonald (1988). The factor loadings and other values of the model are given in the Figure 1.

The observed association amongst CE and ATSCI is insignificant ( $r = .06, p > .1$ ). This indicates that ethnocentrism and social comparison are independent constructs without any significant correlation amongst them. Thus, the formulated hypothesis H10 is not accepted for this study.

Another CFA measurement model is employed for linking CE and ATSCI with the selected demographic predictors to assess the impact of the predictors in determining ethnocentric and social comparison tendency amongst the rural consumers. The demographic predictors assessed are age, gender, SEC class, category, and level of educational attainment. The model yields the following fit indices values : chi-square value of 1102 with 437 degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2_{437} = 2.52$ ), incremental fit index (IFI) = .93, normed fit index (NFI) = .9, comparative fit index (CFI) = .94, root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) = .061, parsimony comparative fit index (PCFI) = .823. The model fit values are in the satisfactory range as prescribed by various studies like Hu and Bentler (1995), Kline (1998), and Marsh et al. (1988). The factor loadings and other values of the model are given in the Figure 2.

Age and level of educational attainment are observed to be the two most significant demographic predictors in determining ethnocentric tendency of the rural consumers ; whereas, gender is the single most significant predictor for social comparison. Association of age with ethnocentric tendency is observed to be negative (CET- age :  $-.30, p = .001$ ) and for level of educational attainment, the association is positive (CET- education =  $.18, p = .02$ ). Since the codification is done in reverse order, it indicates that older respondents were more ethnocentric as compared to the younger ones. Gender of the respondents and category do not have any impact on determining the ethnocentric



**Table 4. ANOVA Analysis for Age Impact on Consumer Ethnocentrism**

Age of the Respondent (I)	Age of the Respondent (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Up to 30 years	31-45	-.75*	.37	.04
	46-60	-2.0*	.46	.00
31-45 years	15-30	.75*	.37	.04
	46-60	-1.2*	.46	.01
46-60 years	15-30	2.0*	.46	.00
	31-45	1.2*	.46	.01

Note : \*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

tendency. Thus, hypotheses H2 and H4 are not accepted for this study.

In case of ATSCI, the prediction is positive (ATSCI - gender: .15,  $p = .04$ ). Thus, for the impact of gender on ATSCI, it can be concluded that women tended to involve themselves more in social comparison compared to men as male is coded as '0' and female '1' for analysis. Thus, in case of demographic impact on social comparison, all the hypotheses (H5, H6, H7, and H8) are not accepted for this study.

To observe the tendency of ethnocentrism across different age groups, one-way ANOVA analysis was



**Table 5. ANOVA Analysis for Education's Impact on Ethnocentrism**

Education of the Respondents (I)	Education of the Respondents (J)	Mean Difference (I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.
10th or below	HSC	.05	.57	.90
	Graduate	-1.3*	.54	.01
	Masters	-1.3*	.57	.01
HSC	10th or below	-.05	.57	.91
	Graduate	-1.4*	.42	.001
	Masters	-1.4*	.47	.003
Graduate	10th or below	1.35985*	.54	.01
	HSC	1.41818*	.43	.001
	Masters	-.03259	.43	.92
Masters	10th or below	1.39244*	.57	.01
	HSC	1.45078*	.47	.003
	Graduate	.03259	.43	.92

Note : \*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 6. Independent Sample t - Test Statistics for Gender's Impact on ATSCI**

Mean ATSCI	Levene's Test		T	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	F	Sig.					
11.1	11.1	.001	-2.846	141	.036	-.69	.33

Note : The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 7. Mean Difference for CE & ATSCI and only ATSCI**

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Chi-sq.	df	Sig.
CE & ATSCI	35	7.1	1.37	1.53	.14	1	.87
Only ATSCI	35	7.2	1.44	1.47			

Note : The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

employed. The age group of 46-60 years has the highest mean CE score followed by age group of 31-45 years, and finally, the age group of upto 30 years. Thus, the formulated hypothesis H1 is accepted. The test statistics are given in the Table 4.

Another round of ANOVA was employed to assess the impact of different levels of educational attainment with ethnocentric tendency of the consumers. The analysis indicates a significant difference in mean ethnocentric score amongst respondents with up to 10<sup>th</sup> grade of education and graduation & masters as the level of educational qualification. The association of respondents educated upto graduation and masters levels with below 10<sup>th</sup> grade is observed to be negative. It indicates that with an increased level of educational qualification, ethnocentric tendency tends to decline. Thus, in relation to educational impact on ethnocentric tendency, hypothesis H3 is accepted. The test statistics are given in the Table 5.

In case of impact of gender on social comparison tendency, independent sample t-test was run. Test statistics confirm a higher mean score of comparison for women as compared to men, and the difference in the mean is significant. Thus, it is concluded that women tended to involve in social comparison more than men. The associated statistics are given in the Table 6.

In case of assessment of combined and individual appeal of the two constructs, the test statistics reveal the

**Table 8. Mean Difference for CE & ATSCI and only CE**

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Chi-sq.	<i>df</i>	Sig.
CE & ATSCI	35	7.1	1.37	1.53	4.67	1	.022
Only CE	35	6	1.51	1.32			

Note : The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 9. Mean Difference for ATSCI and CE**

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Chi-sq.	<i>df</i>	Sig.
ATSCI	35	7.2	1.44	1.70	5.66	1	.012
CE	35	6	1.51	1.30			

Note: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

following : the combined CE and ATSCI message appeal has a mean score of 7.1, only ATSCI appeal has a mean score of 7.2, and only CE appeal has a mean score of 6. No significant difference in mean score is observed for collective and only ATSCI appeal, but a significant mean difference is observed for only CE appeal score with both the scores. The Tables 7, 8, and 9 highlight the score statistics.

Thus, it can be concluded that appeal backed by social comparison is more effective, be it combined with ethnocentrism or without ethnocentrism. Ethnocentric appeal in isolation is not too much effective is another finding from the analysis. Thus, hypothesis H9 is not accepted for this study.

## Discussion

The study indicates that age and education are the two significant demographic predictors for rural consumers' ethnocentric tendency ; whereas, gender is a significant demographic predictor for rural consumers' social comparison tendency. Young consumers were found to be less ethnocentric ; whereas, older consumers were more ethnocentric. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies (Josiassen et al., 2011 ; Ramsaran - Fowdar, 2010 ; Sutikno & Cheng, 2011 ; Vida & Fairhurst, 1999). With increased educational attainment, ethnocentrism tends to decline, a result which was also obtained by previous studies (Balabanis et al., 2001 ; Cutura, 2006 ; Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998 ; Orth & Firbasova, 2002 ; Sharma et al., 1995). This indicates that older people with low educational qualifications were comparatively more ethnocentric irrespective of their gender and income level in rural India. Gender is observed to be the single demographic predictor for social comparison. Women respondents were found to compare more than men in rural India, which is in line with the findings of Gibbons and Buunk (1999). Association of CE and ATSCI is not significant in the context of rural India, and it will also not have any incremental impact in message appeal in case of rural India.

## Managerial Implications

The findings obtained from this study have some significant managerial implications also. Till date, in India, rural specific marketing strategy is not the order of the day, though there exists a clear difference in the aspiration levels of urban and rural consumers. Majority of rural marketing strategy and applications are based on the generalized findings of the urban areas which, in fact, create failed attempts in penetrating the rural markets from the perspectives of firms, especially the MNCs. Marketers are finding it difficult to expand their base in rural markets, though the next round of business and profit for firms is bound to come from rural establishments in India only. This work will be a handy support in this regard as the findings are purely based on the data collected from rural

Indian consumers. This study indicates that brands with older consumers as their target market can apply ethnocentric appeal to lure their target market, but for the youth, this may not be a worthy proposition ; rather, brands can apply through the social comparison route. If the target market segment are rural women, then social comparison is definitely the worthy marketing strategy to follow.

## Limitations of the Study and the Way Forward

This research has certain limitations. The findings obtained in this study are from rural consumers of a particular state (Tripura) only. Thus, generalization of the findings cannot be made for the pan - India level as generalization of the findings requires more empirical validation of such kind from other parts of rural India. The impact assessment on consumer behaviour is measured on an overall basis rather than being confined to specific product categories and items. Thus, a clearer assessment is possible if the study is applied in various product-specific contexts. These limitations can be overcome by researchers by conducting studies in the areas discussed above.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. CETSCALE

Statement Code	Statement
CE_1	People of India should always buy made in India products instead of imported goods.
CE_2	Only those products that are unavailable in India should be imported.
CE_3	Buy made in India products. Keep India working.
CE_4	Indian products, first, last, and foremost.
CE_5	Purchasing foreign-made products is un-Indian.
CE_6	It is not right to purchase foreign products because it puts Indians out of jobs.
CE_7	A real Indian should always buy made in India products.
CE_8	We should purchase products manufactured in India instead of letting other countries get rich off us.
CE_9	It is always best to purchase Indian products.
CE_10	There should be very little trading or purchasing of products from other countries unless it is out of necessity.
CE_11	Indians should not buy foreign products because this hurts Indian businesses and causes unemployment.
CE_12	Curbs should be put on all imports.
CE_13	It may cost me in the long-run, but I prefer to support Indian products.
CE_14	Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products/garments in our markets.
CE_15	Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into India.
CE_16	We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.

### Appendix B. ATSCI Scale

Statement Code	Statement
ATSCI_1	It is my feeling that if everyone else in a group is behaving in a certain manner, this must be the proper way to behave.
ATSCI_2	I actively avoid wearing clothes that are not in style.
ATSCI_3	At parties, I usually try to behave in a manner that makes me fit in.
ATSCI_4	When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look at the behaviour of others for cues.
ATSCI_5	I try to pay attention to the reactions of others to my behaviour in order to avoid being out of place.
ATSCI_6	I find that I tend to pick up slang expressions from others and use them as part of my own vocabulary.
ATSCI_7	I tend to pay attention to what others are wearing.
ATSCI_8	The slightest look of disapproval in the eyes of a person with whom I am interacting is enough to make me change my approach.
ATSCI_9	It is important for me to fit into the group I'm with.
ATSCI_10	My behaviour often depends on how I feel others wish me to behave.
ATSCI_11	If I am the least bit uncertain as to how to act in a social situation. I look to the behaviour of others for cues.
ATSCI_12	I usually keep up with clothing style changes by watching what others wear.
ATSCI_13	When in a social situation, I tend not to follow the crowd, but instead behave in a manner that suits my particular mood at the time.

### Appendix C. Message Based on CE Appeal

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INDIA NEEDS TO GROW  
INDIANS NEED TO GROW  
Use MADE IN INDIA  
Be a RESPONSIBLE INDIAN

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### Appendix D. Message Based on CE and ATSCI Appeal

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Hi...I am Rahul  
Hi....I am Pratik  
Hi...I am Aadesh  
Hi...I am Ayaan  
We are INDIAN  
We use INDIAN products  
Use MADE IN INDIA  
Help INDIA GROW

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### Appendix E. Message Based on ATSCI Appeal

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Hi...I am Rahul  
Hi....I am Pratik  
Hi...I am Aadesh  
Hi...I am Ayaan  
We use quality PRODUCTS  
Be it GLOBAL or INDIAN

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