

Influence of “buy national” campaigns on WTP for home-country food products

Background:

“Buy national” campaigns are tools periodically employed by different stakeholders to “address the general public and stipulate a relationship between a sense of national belonging and the act of purchase, exhorting consumers to prefer domestic products to imported goods” (KÜHSCHELM 2020, p. 79). Nevertheless, country of origin (COO) is one of many attributes consumers use in their evaluation of (food) products. There is a consensus on the general relevance of COO in product evaluation, which stems from cognitive (origin is a cue for product quality), affective (origin has symbolic and emotional value), and normative (origin is preferred because of social and personal norms) effects COO information has on consumers (VERLEGH AND STEENKAMP 1999). However, the relative importance of the COO as a product attribute seems to vary, depending on the product and consumer characteristics, as well as study design (NEWMAN ET AL. 2014; THØGERSEN ET AL. 2017). This variability of COO importance in conjunction with the use of “buy national” promotion strategies opens up the possibility of further exploring the effectiveness of such strategies to influence consumer decision-making.

Objective:

The proposed topic has two main objectives. The first objective is to investigate how the “buy national” campaign influence the consumer willingness to pay for a domestic food product using a discrete choice experiment (DCE). The second objective is to construct a “buy national” campaign with appropriate message characteristics. These message characteristics can be related to the format of the message (text, short video, poster), framing (how the narrative is constructed), message sender (retailer, consumers’ or farmers’ association, etc.), or similar. Independent work on identifying and reviewing the relevant literature for constructing the “buy national” message is strongly encouraged. To assure the practical relevance of the topic, the legislative aspect (i.e. what is legally allowed when it comes to this type of promotion) should also be considered.

An experimental study design with a control group and the group receiving a “buy national” message (experimental group) sets a basic framework for the study. Evaluating the results of the DCE for two groups would constitute the main findings of the study.

Suggested literature for getting started:

INSCH, A., MATHER, D., & KNIGHT, J. (2017). Buy-national campaigns: Congruence determines premiums for domestic products. *International Marketing Review*.

MTIGWE, B., & CHIKWECHE, T. (2008). Developing country perspectives on country-of-origin effects: The case of the Proudly South African campaign. *Journal of African Business*, 9(1), 77-92.

SAFFU, K., WALKER, J. H., & MAZUREK, M. (2010). The role of consumer ethnocentrism in a buy national campaign in a transitioning country: Some evidence from Slovakia. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*.

Sources quoted in the text:

KÜHSCHELM, O. (2020). Buy national campaigns: Patriotic shopping and the capitalist nation-state. *Journal of Modern European History*, 18(1), 79-95.

NEWMAN, C.L., TURRI, A.M., HOWLETT, E. AND STOKES, A. (2014): Twenty years of country-of-origin food labeling research: a review of the literature and implications for food marketing systems. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 34(4), pp.505-519.

THØGERSEN, J., PEDERSEN, S., PATERNOGA, M., SCHWENDEL, E., & ASCHEMANN-WITZEL, J. (2017): How important is country-of-origin for organic food consumers? A review of the literature and suggestions for future research. *British Food Journal*.

VERLEGH, P. W., & STEENKAMP, J. B. E. (1999). A review and meta-analysis of country-of-origin research. *Journal of economic psychology*, 20(5), 521-546.