

## Exploring the Use of Ethnocentrism in Sri Lankan Apparel Industry

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### Abstract

This study explores the influence of ethnocentrism on high-income consumers' intention to purchase domestically produced apparel in Sri Lanka. The research focuses on the textile market, particularly where both retailers and manufacturers own brands, to understand the role of consumer ethnocentric beliefs in shaping purchase behaviour. The main objective is to examine how ethnocentric ideas influence consumers' purchasing decisions rather than the formation of such ideologies. Utilizing an approach, a qualitative research design was employed, combining a review of relevant literature with primary data collection through in-depth interviews conducted via phone and face-to-face from June to July 2024. The population size of 52,000 refers to the estimated number of high-income professionals (including lawyers, doctors, and lecturers) in Sri Lanka who are potential consumers of domestically produced textiles. The sample size was 13 people. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns, attitudes, and themes related to ethnocentrism and purchasing intentions. Findings indicate that high-income consumers with strong ethnocentric tendencies show a significant preference for locally produced apparel, driven by perceptions of quality, national pride, and socio-economic benefits. The main themes identified include perceived superior quality of local textiles, national pride and cultural identity, economic contribution to the country, and trust in domestic production standards. The study highlights the importance of ethnocentric marketing strategies for the apparel industry, suggesting that emphasizing local heritage and craftsmanship can enhance market competitiveness. Finally, the study identified the influence of ethnocentrism on consumers' intention. These insights offer valuable implications for policymakers and marketers aiming to boost the domestic textile sector by leveraging ethnocentric consumer attitudes. The results, managerial implications, and limitations of the study are discussed in detail.

**Keywords:** apparel industry, consumer behaviour, ethnocentrism, high-income consumers, national pride