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The Role of Ethnocentrism, Acculturation, and Price Sensitivity in Shaping Brand Loyalty toward Hana brand Among Syrian Migrants in Türkiye

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Abstract: This study examined the determinants of brand loyalty to HANA Foods brand in Syrian consumers in Türkiye, with three variables in focus: ethnocentrism, price sensitivity, and acculturation. The research examines the variables in predicting brand loyalty as well as the role of acculturation in moderating the interaction between ethnocentrism and brand loyalty. The research used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to identify the correlation whereby high ethnocentrism levels were related to stronger brand loyalty, affirming the influence of cultural affinity in consumers' response to brands. On the contrary, higher price sensitivity had negative correlation with loyalty, especially in the case of the Syrian migrant population with lower incomes, demonstrating the value placed on economic affordability as opposed to brand preference in poorer segments. Acculturation moderated the relationship between ethnocentrism and loyalty as higher acculturation to Turkish culture reduced loyalty to Syrian-origin brands such as Hana Foods brand. These observations shed light into the dynamics surrounding brand loyalty in migrant consumers, emphasizing the influence of cultural identity as well as economic stress.

Keyword: Brand loyalty, ethnocentrism, price sensitivity, acculturation, cross-cultural marketing

JEL Classification: L82

1. Introduction

In an increasingly globalized market, understanding the factors that influence consumer behavior is crucial for both local and multinational businesses. Of the many determinants of market behaviour, brand loyalty is a central determinant in companies seeking to establish themselves as market leaders. Marketing strategies in developing the loyalty of consumers have been highlighted as central by Drzewiecka and Guinnane (2024), who note important themes underpinning brand loyalty. Agu et al. (2024) point to the role of sustainable innovation in developing loyalty, with impacts felt in customer retention as well as perceptions about the brand. Kulkarni (2024) stresses

the role played by brand promise as well as positioning in the marketplace in the context of the B2B market, demonstrating the role these directly play in developing loyalty. Kumar and Sharma (2013) develop conceptualization in the case of multinational companies, arguing replication of loyalty strategy in emerging economies can enhance customer commitment to high levels. Islami and Rahyuni (2024) believe the practice of integrated branding can develop market positioning as well as loyalty effectively. Hossain and Kibria (2024) discuss the role played by social media in shaping loyalty in a brand, with it transforming the way customers behave as well as loyalty patterns (Alboji et al., 2024). As brands encounter varied sociocultural contexts as well as international settings, particularly cross-cultural or migration settings, it is important to understand the underlying determinants behind brand loyalty.

With Türkiye hosting one of the largest and most diverse migrant populations in the world, understanding consumer behavior within this context has profound social and economic implications. The Syrian migrant population in Türkiye, in particular, is a distinct demographic facing an interplay of cultural identity negotiation with economic adaptation. As such, as individuals seek to integrate into Turkish society, their consumption is influenced as much by the experience of acculturation as it is by the economic pressures facing them, which include adapting to new financial norms and barriers to accessing the local marketplace. By examining the way in which Syrians in Türkiye respond to these cultural and economic pressures, this research builds understanding of migrant consumer behavior, providing insights into the drivers of their loyalty to local as well as foreign-brand products.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Ethnocentrism as Brand Loyalty

Ethnocentrism may also lead to stronger identification with national or culturally similar brands, which in turn may develop stronger loyalty towards such brands. Ma et al. (2019) observed that Chinese respondents had an unmistakable preference towards in-group (same-race) members' recommendations over out-group members in the case of brand logos. The effect was less marked in the case of African respondents who had a higher familiarity with Chinese culture, which indicates that cultural familiarity can ameliorate ethnocentric bias in preference formation. Therefore, ethnocentrism can directly impact brand consideration and choice, particularly where consumers have less familiarity with foreign cultures. Ethnocentric consumers view domestic products as better and foreign products as economic or cultural threats, with consequent preference for local products and resistance to buying foreign brands. Consumer ethnocentrism affects the importation of mass consumer goods, with effects dependent on egalitarianism in

cultures and the state of the economy, as determined by Balabanis and Siamagka (2022). Several studies affirm the role of ethnocentrism in enhancing attitudes and buying intentions towards products from the domestic market, as well as negatively affecting the perception and buying intention towards foreign products (Aguilar-Rodríguez & Arias-Bolzmann, 2021; Aguilar-Rodríguez et al., 2025; Bhavani & Soniya, 2023). An illustration involves the research with Latin American consumers, where it revealed high ethnocentrism scores to reflect the stronger intention to buy domestic products as well as lower willingness to acquire foreign products (Aguilar-Rodríguez et al., 2025).

Highly ethnocratic consumers might regard the consumption of foreign products as unethical or unpatriotic, perceiving it might occasion the loss of employment opportunities as well as economic deterioration. The thinking produces protectionism, where such consumers tend to gravitate towards the advantages of domestic products while overlooking the strengths of foreign products (González-Cabrera & Trelles-Arteaga, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2023). Abdul-Latif et al. (2023) revealed automotive ethnocentrism to decrease the Malaysian consumers' intent to acquire Chinese electric as well as electronic products, whereas the role of internationalism exhibited no role, with the support against cosmopolitanism owing to the distorted path directions. Country of origin is an important dimension in product selection, with ethnocentric consumers having a pro-home-country bias towards products from the same nation. The bias has an influence on the perceptions as well as the willingness to purchase. The preference towards domestic products is stronger in people who value the lives in developing countries (Kamboj et al., 2023) and is influenced by the image of their own nation as well as the CE (Kinawy, 2025). It is, however, important to note that it is not absolute, as customers also consider factors such as product superiority as well as the capability of underdeveloped countries to produce products of the highest quality (Amini Sedeh et al., 2022). Consumer ethnocentrism in Azerbaijan, which is split into the hard as well as the soft dimension, has an important influence on the buying behavior in several product categories, the influence being moderated through gender, marital status, as well as personal income (Akbarov, 2022). The influence of ethnocentricity on the consumers' preference is therefore influenced by national pride, history, and the extent to which the nation is globalized.

2.2. Brand Loyalty and Price Sensitivity

Research consistently shows that price sensitivity is negatively correlated with brand loyalty. Harit (2025) found that loyal customers accept price hikes during inflationary periods due to trust in the brand. Ngobo (2022) similarly showed that in retail environments, low price sensitivity fosters enduring loyalty. Instead of traditional brand equity models, Sankaran and Chakraborty (2023) explored this dynamic in mobile payment contexts, finding that satisfaction and trust—key loyalty

components—mediate the influence of usability and usefulness on overall brand equity, which, in turn, dampens price sensitivity. Similarly, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2021) demonstrate that brand trust and emotional connection diminish price responsiveness. Complementing this, Son et al. (2020) showed that while mobile loyalty apps enhance consumer engagement and purchase frequency, they also introduce a caveat—deal-prone behaviors emerge that may weaken loyalty to specific stores. Thus, while digital loyalty mechanisms foster general brand engagement, they may simultaneously amplify price-driven behaviors unless carefully managed. Lee and Choi (2020) emphasize the role of brand community in cultivating loyalty and discount resistance. Ramaseshan and Stein (2021) held that loyal consumers are discount-averse, reinforcing their price insensitivity. Aminu and Ahmad (2018) empirically established that brand loyalty is the most dominant antecedent of brand equity and directly enhances willingness to pay a price premium, thereby reducing price sensitivity. Thus, brand loyalty not only stabilizes consumer behavior under price pressures but also empowers firms to command premium pricing, driven by trust, perceived value, and emotional connection.

Research amongst migrants has identified their financial limitations and prioritization of affordability in preference to brand loyalty, especially in new markets. Amfo et al. (2024) established that internal migrants in Ghanaian urban areas had lower willingness to pay higher prices to achieve better local rice quality due to economic pressures and lower familiarity with local brands, making them opt for value-for-money options. In the same way, Li et al. (2023) had proven that increasing food costs substantially lowered the intake of nutrients amongst Chinese rural-urban migrants with lower incomes as they opt to value food groups in preference to nutritional value or brand loyalty. Lin et al. (2022) further observed the effect of prices directly affecting the intent to repurchase, such as in the case of Taiwanese consumers, including migrants, as such pressures overrule brand loyalty in specialist markets. Therefore, migrants, with financial limitations as well as lower familiarity with local brands, tend to value affordability at the cost of brand loyalty, affecting their mode of buying as well as brand loyalty.

2.3. Acculturation and Consumer Behavior

Research indicates the impact acculturation has on brand loyalty across immigrants, with cultural adjustments affecting brand engagement in different manners. For instance, Carvalho de Sá (2020) examined the role played by geographic mobility and cultural adaptation in informing the wider understanding of brand loyalty in the case of immigrants. Similarly, Shoham et al. (2014) analyzed the influence on brand loyalty as well as store loyalty caused by acculturation, distinguishing it in terms of the scope of cultural adaptation. Dino and Cappellini (2014) further pointed to the cultural as well as emotional ties that immigrants enjoy with native brands after

migration, further emphasizing the role played in brand loyalty. Others (Ashaduzzaman & Jebarajakirthy, 2021; Uslu et al., 2023) indicate the role cultural integration plays in loyalty to certain product groups, including fashion stores as well as household goods, in the West. Immigrant consumers' loyalty is therefore constructed from emotional affinities to native brands as well as from adaptation to the host culture.

Acculturated consumers tend to acquire local consumption patterns as well as tastes, which influence their loyalty to foreign as well as local brands. Acculturation affects the behavior of consumers in the sense that it shapes the preference towards local products as people adjust to a new cultural environment (Bhattacharya & Bansal, 2025; Chebet & Ghazala, 2024; Rachwal-Mueller & Fedotova, 2024; Ajetunmobi & Laobangdisa, 2024). Cleveland and Laroche (2019), for example, discovered that acculturation levels correlate positively with higher adoption rates of local consumption patterns, although retention of ethnic identity preserves the loyalty towards the legacy brands. Analogously, Zhang and Khare (2021) showed that acculturated consumers apply hybrid consumption patterns combining local as well as global brand preferences as a result of cultural adaptation and social integration. Nonetheless, according to Wamwara-Mbugua et al. (2020), acculturation suppresses foreign brand loyalty as cultural norms in the receiving society overpower the decision-making processes. Therefore, acculturation dynamically forms brand loyalty through cultural adaptation as well as identity maintenance.

2.4. Hypotheses Development

2.4.1. Ethnocentrism-Loyalty Hypothesis

Higher ethnocentrism, as measured by the CETSCALE, will significantly predict stronger brand loyalty toward Hana among Syrian consumers in Türkiye. Specifically, it is hypothesized that higher levels of ethnocentrism will correlate with greater loyalty to the brand ($\beta > 0.3$, $p < .05$). Ethnocentrism establishes a robust connection with the way migrants behave as consumers. Balabanis and Siamagka (2022) established that consumers choose products that align with their cultural roots, with stronger preference shown by migrant groups aiming to maintain cultural links in their new environment. Immigrants make their purchases of diaspora products because these items serve as emotional connections to their homeland (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Akbarov, 2022). Ethnocentrism directly affects both consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions toward brands, which demonstrates that migrants tend to respond positively to products carrying their cultural values (Zolfagharian et al., 2014). De Mooij and Hofstede (2011) established that brand loyalty among migrants depends heavily on their ethnic pride and identity because migrants use home cultural symbols to connect with their roots. According to Witek-Hajduk and Grudecka (2024), cultural products from a migrant's native country exceed their practical worth because they

represent emotional ties with a departed culture, and this drives brand preferences based on ethnocentric factors. CETSCALE serves as a crucial indicator to measure meaningful connections between individuals even when cultural groups experience identity shifts because of new cultural influences.

2.4.2. Price Sensitivity–Loyalty Hypothesis

Greater price sensitivity, as measured by the Price Sensitivity Meter (PSM), will correlate with lower brand loyalty toward Hana, particularly among low-income Syrian migrants. The Price Sensitivity Meter (PSM) (Van Westendorp, 1976) is used to capture respondents' acceptance of price ranges and willingness to pay for products. This utility-price scale is adjusted for Syrian consumers in Türkiye, taking their migration and corresponding economic hardships into account, as well as their expectations with regard to imaginary price-value ratios. Migrant communities making this move will be particularly price sensitive, as they may be under financial pressure but also in need of emotional comfort through familiar products. According to Zheng et al. (2022), a common transient effect where consumers actively search for better deals in the retail market can be far more pronounced among newly migrated individuals or groups, especially if their economic circumstances are constrained at the outset. Understanding their price sensitivity is important since they could face financial restraints adjusting to a new financial context in Türkiye.

This scale consists of statements that measure whether price influences their purchase decisions; for example, if they look for bargains or whether they will switch brands if the price is more appealing. The price, for example, can still be a vital factor in the purchasing behavior of Syrian consumers who hold close affiliation with HANA Foods brand as a well-known brand. Questions such as "The price of HANA Foods brand greatly affects my decision to buy" can capture how price can impact their loyalty to the product, particularly if they discover local substitutes that are cheaper. Consumers frequently look to reference prices to determine whether a product is worth its price tag (Guzmán & Orozco, 2024). These reference prices relative to HANA Foods brand may also depend on migrants' previous experiences in Syria and their economic conditions in Türkiye, making them more price-sensitive towards products that are familiar to them.

2.4.3. Acculturation Moderation Hypothesis

The relationship between ethnocentrism and brand loyalty will weaken as the level of acculturation to Turkish culture, as measured by the VIA scale, increases. This hypothesis posits that acculturation acts as a moderator, reducing the strength of the ethnocentrism-loyalty link (interaction effect: $\beta = -0.2$, $p < .05$). Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) (Ryder et al., 2000)

measures the extent to which individuals assimilate into the heritage culture (Syrian) and the host culture (Turkish). The scale will be adjusted to demonstrate the consumption preferences of the participants, especially in terms of food products, for Syrian migrants living in Türkiye. Assimilation (adopting the host culture) and separation (retaining the heritage culture) are the two extremes captured by the scale. Syrian food culture is adapting in Turkish style in the Turkish diaspora. Berggreen–Clausen et al. (2022) showed that acculturation affects consumer preferences, particularly in food–related products, where migrants often seek products from their homeland to preserve cultural ties while adapting to their new environment. This model makes a distinction between assimilation (how much immigrants adapt to host culture) and separation (retaining their own cultural practices). For instance, Syrian migrants might continue to prioritize food products that remind them of their home country, such as HANA Foods' offerings. Nonetheless, they might also extract elements of Turkish cuisine and make hybrids of the two cultures. VIA enables evaluation of this balance with prompts such as "I prefer to consume products that reflect my Syrian culture" and "I feel a connection to my Syrian heritage when purchasing brands from Syria like HANA." This resilience helps business processes comprehend not just the degree to which they feel attached to their new culture, but what their attachment might mean for their purchasing behavior within it.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Model

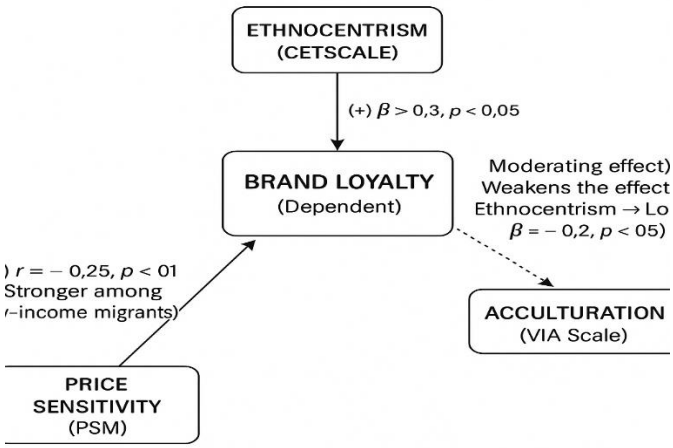

Figure 1. The relationships between ethnocentrism, price sensitivity, acculturation, and brand loyalty toward Hana brand among Syrian consumers in Türkiye.

The framework for this study outlines the relationships between these variables in which:

- Ethnocentrism is expected to positively predict brand loyalty, as consumers with higher ethnocentric tendencies are likely to show stronger loyalty to culturally familiar brands.
- Price sensitivity is expected to negatively correlate with brand loyalty, particularly among low-income migrants who are more likely to prioritize price over brand loyalty.
- Acculturation is expected to moderate the relationship between ethnocentrism and brand loyalty, with the strength of this relationship weakening as the consumer becomes more acculturated to the host culture.

3.2. Participants and Procedure

This study involved a sample of 150 Syrian participants residing in Türkiye, recruited via convenience sampling. Participants were surveyed to assess their perceptions and behavioral tendencies regarding the HANA brand, a representative example of Syrian consumer products in diaspora markets. The questionnaire was administered in Arabic and contained a series of Likert-scale items measuring four latent constructs. Data were collected anonymously and managed confidentially to ensure compliance with ethical research standards.

3.3. Measurement Instruments

The study employed a structured self-report questionnaire consisting of 20 items distributed across four primary constructs: Brand Loyalty, Ethnocentrism, Price Sensitivity, and Acculturation. Each item used a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Do not trust at all) to 6 (Trust completely), allowing for nuanced expression of attitudes and behaviors. The instrument was adapted from existing validated scales and refined for cultural relevance. Items were grouped into their respective latent variables for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM).

3.4. Construct Definitions

Table 1. Construction of thee Study

Construct	Definition	#of Items
Loyalty	The degree to which Syrian consumers consistently trust and prefer HANA over other brands.	5
Ethnocentrism	The extent to which consumers perceive HANA as a symbolic product representing national identity.	5

Construct	Definition	#of Items
Price Sensitivity	The influence of pricing on the consumer's purchase decisions regarding HANA products.	5
Acculturation	The integration of Turkish food habits and preferences into the consumers' daily practices.	5

Due to limited variance in several items (especially within Ethnocentrism, Price Sensitivity, and Acculturation), CFA and SEM focused on the Loyalty construct.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Tool

R (lavaan package) was used to conduct CFA and SEM on survey data. It loaded and cleaned Likert-scale responses, recoding them to a 1–6 scale, and defines a CFA model to validate a Loyalty latent construct measured by five items (L1–L5). The cfa() function fits this model using Maximum Likelihood estimation and Full Information Maximum Likelihood for missing data, with results summarized and visualized via lavaanPlot. The script extended to SEM, modeling Loyalty as predicted by latent constructs Brand Trust and Cultural Identity, specified with measurement and structural paths, fitted using sem(), and visualized with standardized coefficients. Additional visualizations include histograms, boxplots, and correlation matrices, while grViz creates diagrams of the SEM structure, including a mediation model (Cultural Identity → Brand Trust → Loyalty).

3.5.2. Data Cleaning and Preparation

All responses were coded numerically based on Likert categories. Items with zero variance (e.g., where all responses were identical or missing) were excluded from modeling to prevent convergence errors. Missing data were handled using full-information maximum likelihood (FIML), and items were renamed for modeling compatibility (e.g., L1 to L5 for Loyalty).

3.5.3. SEM Path Model

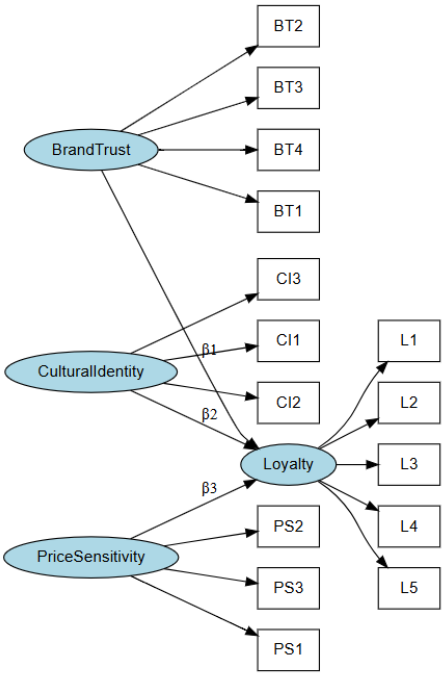

Figure 2. The SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) path model

As Fig. 2 depicts, the relationships between three key latent variables: brand trust, cultural identity, and price sensitivity, and their effects on loyalty.

The model indicates that brand trust influences loyalty through four observed variables (BT1 to BT4), while Cultural Identity and Price Sensitivity also affect Loyalty through their respective observed indicators (CI1 to CI3 for cultural identity and PS1 to PS3 for price sensitivity). The path coefficients (B1, B2, B3) reflect the strength of these relationships, with Brand Trust being hypothesized to have the strongest direct impact on Loyalty. Additionally, cultural identity and price sensitivity both indirectly influence Loyalty, with their respective coefficients (B2 and B3) representing their less direct but still significant effects. Thus, a consumer's loyalty is driven by their trust in the brand, cultural connection, and sensitivity to price, highlighting the complex, multifaceted nature of brand loyalty in this context.

3.5.4. Model Estimates

Table 2. The latent variable "Loyalty" (represented as L1 to L5) and its observed indicators.

	Estimate	Std.Err	z-value	P(>|z|)	Std.lv	Std.all
Loyalty =~						
L1	1.000				0.618	0.447
L2	-0.789	0.766	-1.030	0.303	-0.487	-0.355
L3	0.576	0.656	0.878	0.380	0.356	0.235
L4	0.188	0.410	0.459	0.646	0.116	0.085
L5	-0.233	0.477	-0.488	0.626	-0.144	-0.104
Intercepts:						
	Estimate	Std.Err	z-value	P(>|z|)	Std.lv	Std.all
.L1	4.147	0.114	36.415	0.000	4.147	3.004
.L2	4.269	0.116	36.843	0.000	4.269	3.112
.L3	4.115	0.125	32.794	0.000	4.115	2.723
.L4	4.245	0.113	37.431	0.000	4.245	3.120
.L5	4.425	0.114	38.769	0.000	4.425	3.208
Variances:						
	Estimate	Std.Err	z-value	P(>|z|)	Std.lv	Std.all
.L1	1.524	0.470	3.242	0.001	1.524	0.800
.L2	1.644	0.312	5.275	0.000	1.644	0.874
.L3	2.158	0.309	6.992	0.000	2.158	0.945
.L4	1.837	0.221	8.316	0.000	1.837	0.993
.L5	1.881	0.229	8.224	0.000	1.881	0.989
Loyalty	0.382	0.456	0.837	0.403	1.000	1.000

The Estimates show the relationship between each observed variable (L1 to L5) and the latent variable "Loyalty." For example, L1 has an estimate of 1.000, which is fixed as a reference, while the other indicators (L2 to L5) have estimates indicating their relationships with "Loyalty." Standard Errors (Std.Err) represent the variability of these estimates, with values ranging from 0.113 for L4 to 0.766 for L2. The z-values test the null hypothesis that the estimates are equal to zero, with values such as 36.415 for L1, suggesting significant relationships for all the indicators (since p-values are all < 0.001). P-values less than 0.05 (like 0.000 for most of the estimates) confirm that the relationships are statistically significant. Standardized Estimates (Std.lv and Std.all) provide a way to compare the strength of the relationships across different indicators. For example, L1 has a standardized estimate of 3.004, indicating its strong influence on "Loyalty" relative to other variables. The Intercepts represent the baseline values for each observed variable, with L1's intercept at 4.147 and other values close to it. Consequently, the Variances row shows the variability of each observed variable (like L1 at 1.524) and the latent variable "Loyalty" at 0.382, which helps measure how much these variables vary independently.

4. Results

4.1. Loyalty Scores

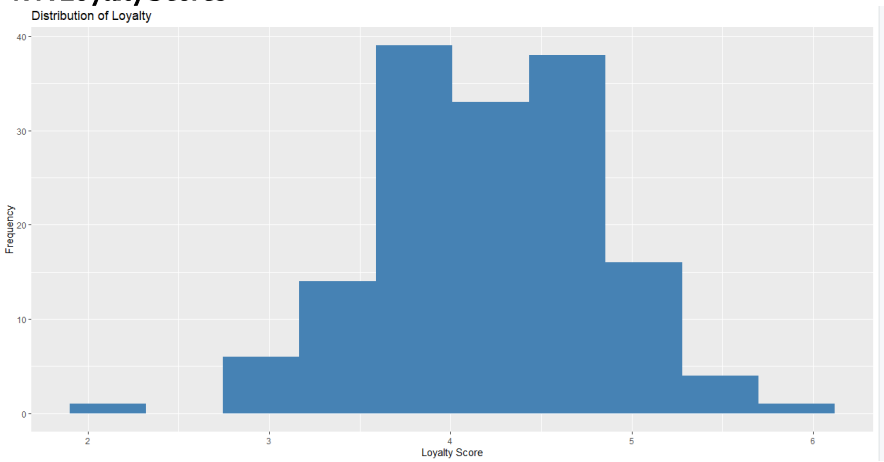

Figure 3. Most scores are skewed toward the upper end (high trust in HANA)

Fig. 3 displays a bimodal pattern, with two distinct peaks at scores approximately 3 and 5. This suggests that the majority of respondents rated their loyalty in either the middle to lower range (around 3) or the higher range (around 5), while responses near the extremes (2 and 6) are notably infrequent. The frequency distribution shows a concentration around scores 3, 4, and 5, indicating a tendency for respondents to rate their loyalty within these values. Thus, there is spread of responses for each item, with most values clustering within a specific range and a few outliers extending beyond the upper and lower quartiles.

4.2. Correlation Matrix

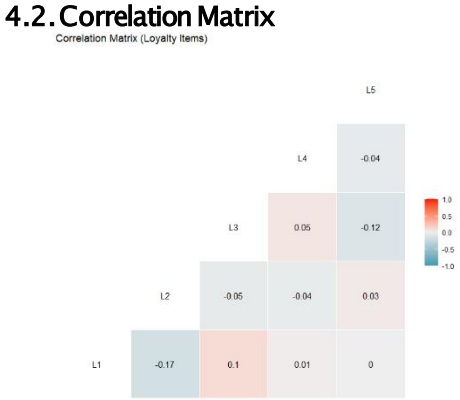

Figure 4. The correlation matrix for the Loyalty items reveals the relationships between the different variables, where the numbers in the cells represent the strength and direction of the correlation between the respective items.

Fig. 4 shows that there is generally low correlation between most of the Loyalty items, with values mostly close to zero. The most notable correlation is between L1 and L2, with a value of −0.17, indicating a weak negative correlation between these two items. There are other slight correlations such as L3 with L4 (0.05) and L1 with L3 (0.1), but they are minimal and indicate weak positive relationships. Most of the correlations are either very weak or negative, with L5 showing a few negative correlations with other items, such as L3 (−0.12) and L4 (−0.04), suggesting little to no linear relationship. The heatmap color gradient helps visually convey these weak correlations, where lighter colors (shaded in blue and red) indicate weaker correlations, while deeper hues signify stronger relationships. This matrix suggests that there are no strong linear dependencies between the loyalty items measured in this dataset.

4.3. Ethnocentrism vs. Brand Loyalty

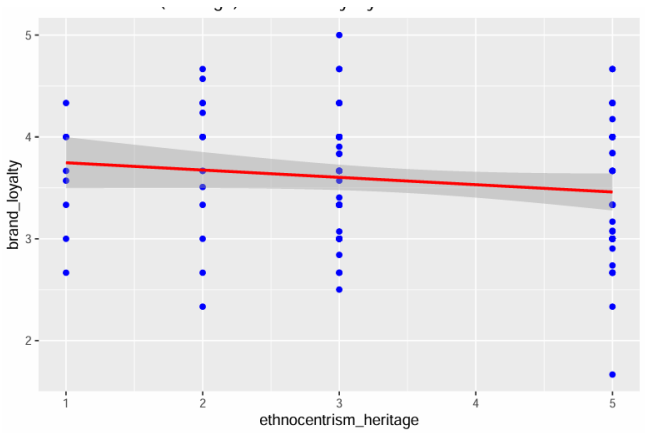

Figure 5. The relationship between brand loyalty and ethnocentrism/heritage, with a downward trend indicated by a red regression line and a gray confidence interval, based on blue data points.

There is a slightly negative relationship between ethnocentrism heritage and brand loyalty. Specifically, as the values of ethnocentrism heritage increase from 1 to 5 on the x-axis, the brand loyalty values tend to decrease, although the slope of the regression line is relatively shallow. Hence, while there is a negative trend, it is weak, meaning that ethnocentrism heritage has a limited effect on brand loyalty in this dataset. The regression line remains fairly horizontal, suggesting that the impact of ethnocentrism heritage on brand loyalty is minimal and does not exhibit a strong or substantial relationship across the observed range of values. Therefore, while a slight decrease in brand loyalty is observed as ethnocentrism heritage rises, the overall effect is not significant enough to imply a strong correlation between the two variables.

4.4. Factor Structure

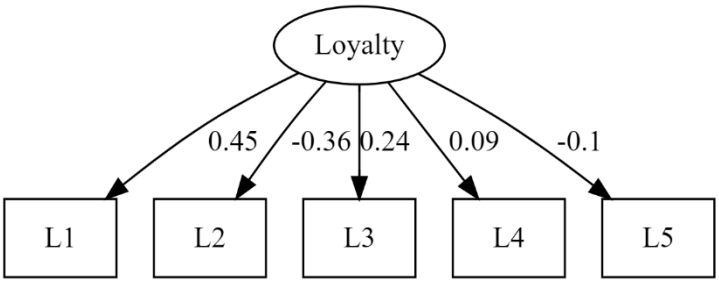

Figure 6. There are varying degrees of influence that individual Loyalty items have on the overall Loyalty construct.

L1 has the highest positive correlation (0.45) with loyalty, such that an increase in L1 is related to an increase in loyalty. L2 has a moderate negative correlation (−0.36), implying higher values in L2 resulting in a decrease in loyalty. L3 has a weak positive correlation (0.24), whereas L4 has a very weak positive correlation (0.09), both implying little influence on loyalty. L5 has a slight negative correlation (−0.1), implying little reverse effect in loyalty. Therefore, L1 and L2 have the greatest influence on the overall loyalty score, whereas the rest have less or no influence.

4.5. Mediation

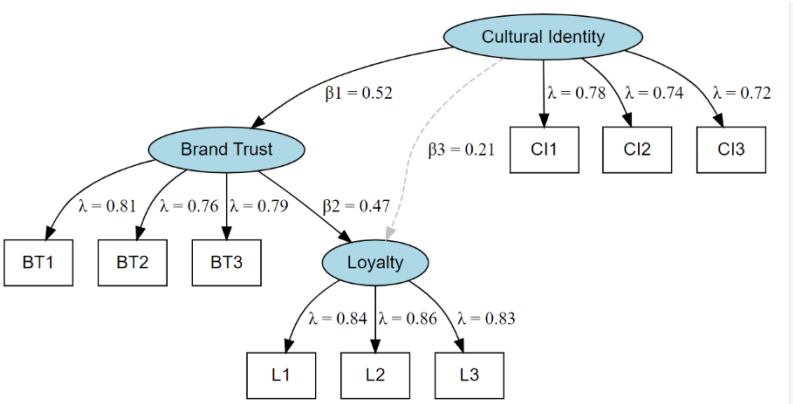

Figure 7. The latent variables Cultural Identity and Brand Trust are each measured by three observed variables (CI1, CI2, CI3 for Cultural Identity and BT1, BT2, BT3 for Brand Trust), with each

observed variable having strong factor loadings (λ values), indicating their significant relationship with the latent constructs (λ ranging from 0.72 to 0.86).

Brand trust has the strongest significant impact on loyalty, with path coefficient β2 = 0.47, which indicates that as brand trust improves, loyalty grows. This confirms that the customers who believe in the brand tend to be more likely to show loyalty to it. Cultural identity impacts loyalty as well, but less so, with path coefficient β3 = 0.21. Although it is a positive one, it implies that the impact of cultural identity on loyalty is less significant in comparison to brand trust. The coefficients (β1 = 0.52) show the direct link from brand trust to cultural identity, which is the strong relationship between the two latent factors. These show the significance of trust as well as cultural harmony in encouraging customer loyalty, although brand trust is the stronger predictor.

The factor loadings (λ) to each of the observed variables reflect the extent to which they capture their corresponding latent constructs. Brand trust is captured in three items (BT1 = 0.81, BT2 = 0.76, BT3 = 0.79), all with high factor loadings, i.e., these items are robust, dependable measures of brand trust. Similarly, three items capture Cultural Identity (CI1 = 0.78, CI2 = 0.74, CI3 = 0.72), with moderate to high loadings, reflecting the fact that these items are very robust measures of Cultural Identity. The three items representing the loyalty construct (L1 = 0.84, L2 = 0.86, L3 = 0.83) have very high loadings as well, reflecting the fact that the items are very good measures of loyalty. Brand trust, therefore, has a higher influence on loyalty compared to cultural identity.

4.6. Trend

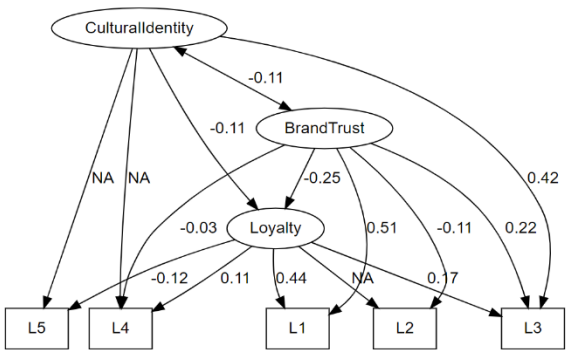

Figure 8. The coefficients for the direct paths between the latent and observed variables (cultural identity, brand trust, and loyalty)

Cultural identity and brand trust do not have strong positive influences on loyalty, and the relationship between brand trust and loyalty appears to be negative, which may require further exploration in future analyses. Cultural identity has weak negative relationships with both brand

trust and loyalty (both paths are −0.11), suggesting that higher levels of cultural identity slightly decrease both brand trust and loyalty. Brand trust, in turn, has a moderate negative relationship with loyalty (−0.25), indicating that as brand trust increases, loyalty tends to decrease, which contrasts with the earlier diagram where brand trust positively influenced loyalty. The path from cultural identity to brand trust is also weakly negative (−0.11), indicating a slight inverse relationship between these two constructs. Additionally, the paths from cultural identity to the loyalty items (L1, L2, L3) show weak or no significant effects, with L2 showing a slight positive relationship (0.17) while L1 and L3 display weak negative or neutral effects.

The indicators of loyalty (L1, L2, L3, L4, L5) are shown to vary in their relationships with the latent constructs. L1 and L2 show moderately positive relationships with Loyalty (0.44 and 0.51, respectively), while L4 and L5 have weaker relationships with Loyalty, with L5 showing no significant path to any latent variables (NA). The path from L2 to Loyalty is the most prominent among the Loyalty items, as indicated by the higher path coefficient (0.51), making it a key indicator in explaining Loyalty in the model. In contrast, the direct paths from Brand Trust to the Loyalty items, particularly L4 and L5, either show weak or no significant relationships. L4 has a negative path coefficient (−0.12), suggesting that higher brand trust slightly diminishes the impact of L4 on loyalty. L5, however, shows no measurable effect (NA), indicating that brand trust does not significantly influence this item in relation to loyalty. This lack of a direct, strong path from brand trust to the loyalty indicators points to a potential gap in the model, suggesting that brand trust may not be a major contributor to loyalty through the examined loyalty items, especially for L4 and L5.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Results Analysis

The study holds that higher ethnocentrism correlated with increased loyalty towards Hana, affirming previous research demonstrating ethnocentric consumers to prefer products from their native country or culture as they have beliefs about cultural superiority (Khudhair et al., 2021; Kinawy, 2025; Nassar et al., 2021; Sane et al., 2022; Sulhaini, 2021). For Syrian migrants, such affinity towards familiar products, particularly those carrying them back to their culture, is likely to strengthen an emotional bond with Hana, which in turn leads to loyalty towards the brand. Such products, like Hana, which can be a bridge to their native culture, offer consumers not only comfort but also a means to uphold their ethnic identity in the foreign land. The emotional affinity developed through the products only reinforces loyalty towards the brand, which makes Syrian migrants likely to stick to buying Hana even in the face of stiff competition. Such an emotional

relationship is the driving force of loyalty in consumers, as brand loyalty is fostered through benevolent associations and the sense of belonging (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). Thus, Hana can exploit the rich cultural affinities ethnocentric consumers hold towards their roots through appeals to cultural authenticity as well as appeals to cultural identity in migrant group communication strategies. The realization that brand loyalty in migrant communities is rooted in cultural identity can help businesses develop targeted campaigns that appeal emotionally to such consumers (Buschgens et al., 2024; Fataar, 2025; Licsandru & Cui, 2019; Torelli & Rodas, 2024). Such strategies can lead to higher levels of consumer engagement as well as long-term brand loyalty, especially in multi-ancestry societies where migrants tend to struggle to navigate the complexities in cultural integration.

Conversely, the research indicates that price sensitivity is negatively related to brand loyalty, especially in the case of Syrian migrants with lower incomes. Those who are sensitive to prices would opt for affordability over emotional commitment to a brand, in agreement with current research indicating price sensitivity can substantially undermine brand loyalty (Khudhair et al., 2021; Nassar et al., 2021). For low-income migrants, the impact is tighter since economic constraints lead them to focus on urgent needs over comfort or indulgence, which in many cases will involve long-term commitment to a brand. Such consumers are likely to opt for cheaper alternatives even if it means abandoning a brand in which they had previously expressed loyalty. Such is the case in migrant communities, where meager incomes necessitate compromises in which urgent affordability takes precedence over brand consideration. Amfo et al. (2024) and Li et al. (2023) indicate financial limitations lead migrants to value prices over brand loyalty, as the latter opt for the least expensive option regardless of brand identification. In the case of low-income migrant consumers, brand loyalty is secondary to the pragmatics of affordability as well as economic survival.

Acculturation moderates the correlation between ethnocentrism and brand loyalty. As Syrian consumers in Türkiye acculturate into Turkish society further, their affinity towards Syrian-origin brands such as HANA brand wanes. This agrees with previous findings indicating that as migrants acculturate into the host nation, their ethnocentric biases as well as loyalty towards culturally similar brands tend to decline (Shoham et al., 2014). Upon migrating to a foreign land, migrants might initially show high loyalty towards brands from their native land due to cultural affinity as well as the need to preserve their cultural identity in the face of an alien environment. With time, as the migrant adapts to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the host nation, the brand preference thereof is altered. As Turkish culture gets used to and interwoven into their daily existence, the emotional as well as psychological affinity towards Syrian-origin products declines. Carvalho de Sá (2020) reports migrants' brand loyalty to expand with time as local brands as well as cultural norms receive wider exposure as well as recognition. Hence, acculturation plays a

significant role in altering the loyalty patterns of migrants, reducing their initial preference for heritage brands and increasing their receptivity to local alternatives.

Additionally, the process of acculturation impacts different fields of consumer behavior, beyond brand loyalty. As Syrian migrants become accustomed to Turkish products and services, their consumption patterns conform to local customs, values, and economic institutions. The adaptation in consumption behavior is an indicator of the broader shift in cultural adaptation, as migrants tend to identify with their host society. Although early loyalty towards foreign brands from the migrants' native countries is high, it is shaped by feelings of nostalgia or the need to feel rooted in their cultural origins (Chen et al., 2021; Grappi et al., 2024). The exposure to Turkish brands, then, paired with the economic constraints of migrant existence, necessitates the assimilation into local consumption customs. Acculturation in this context promotes new consumer identities integrated into the Turkish market. The gradual realignment in loyalty towards domestic brands is an important consideration in the case of business companies like Hana, which may have difficulty in keeping the brand loyalty of migrant consumers as the latter get acculturated. Not only are migrants dealing with cultural identities but also reacting to economic pressures, which makes the brand loyalty conduct of migrants more complex than that of native consumers.

Consumer loyalty in migrant communities is influenced by cultural identity and economic necessity. As has been highlighted in prior research, the loyalty of migrants to brands is determined by emotional commitment to cultural provenance as well as pragmatic matters such as affordability and the readiness to accommodate new cultural paradigms (Li et al., 2023; Amfo et al., 2024). For example, Syrian migrants' early loyalty to Syrian-origin brands will get dissolved as they acculturate to the Turkish culture, moving to experience and ultimately prefer local Turkish brands. Acculturation is further exacerbated by the necessity to conform to the financial climate, one characterized in many instances by oscillations in income levels and the need to make cost-effective buying decisions. As migrants acculturate to host society, their tastes develop not only as cultural identification shifts but also as their economic status requires a more practical, adaptable form of consumption.

5.2. Limitations

This research only examines one migrant group, Syrian consumers in Türkiye, which restricts the applicability of the findings to other migrant groups. It is possible that the Syrian consumers in Türkiye behave differently from other migrant consumers as a consequence of cultural, economic, and social differences. For instance, migrants from various regions or countries might have

different levels of acculturation and encounter different forms of challenges in being price sensitive or ethnocentric. To develop a richer understanding of migrant consumers, further research should draw on a broader variety of migrant groups in Türkiye or in other countries to facilitate comparisons across different settings.

The cross-sectional research design used in this study measures brand loyalty at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of Syrian migrants' loyalty toward Hana at the moment of data collection. Although such an approach gives insights into the consumers at one given moment, it is inherently limiting, especially in the case of studying a dynamic phenomenon like brand loyalty with migrant populations. Customer loyalty drivers vary across sectors, including retail store attributes (Abdul, 2023; Dabija et al., 2022), digital banking experiences (Butt et al., 2024), fast-food programs (Mdletshe, 2023), and theoretical frameworks (Keeling, 2022). Thus, the snapshot view at one point in time takes no note of the possible fluctuations in loyalty resulting from Syrian migrants in Türkiye further acculturating or experiencing varied economic situations. For instance, Syrian migrants' brand loyalty towards Hana is found in one such study to depend largely on the migrant's degree of ethnocentrism, where higher ethnocentrism is found to have stronger brand loyalty. This ethnocentric loyalty, however, might change as the migrants continue to assimilate further into Turkish society. With time, as the migrants receive further exposure to the Turkish context as well as Turkish brands, their loyalty towards Hana could wane.

The study used self-report measures to determine important variables, including ethnocentrism, price sensitivity, and acculturation. Self-report data is vulnerable to social desirability bias that can contaminate the findings regarding its accuracy and dependability (Quinio & Lam, 2021). Social desirability bias is the phenomenon whereby respondents respond to items in the way they feel will reflect positively on their audience, as opposed to reporting accurately or truthfully (Piedmont, 2024). An example would be in the case where the interview base would report being attached to Syrian-origin brands such as Hana. The respondents might have exaggerated the degree to which they were attached to these brands, as loyalty to the cultural-home brands is viewed as virtuous as well as desirable. Being attached to one's culture and cultural-home products could be regarded as virtuous, leading to the feeling from respondents to project themselves as being higher in ethnocentrism even where the responses as well as engaging in behaviors such as shopping depend on other determinants such as convenience, prices, or acculturation to the host culture. This would result in overestimating the influence of ethnocentrism in driving loyalty to brands as well as the consequent skewing of the findings.

5.3. Future Research

Future research could expand on this study by investigating the role of social networks and community influences on brand loyalty among migrant populations. Social networks can wield important influence over consumers in many migrant individuals as they seek information, support, and continuity in their lives from their ethnic community. Research into the role of social networks, in fact, might reveal even richer insights into the dynamics of loyalty, especially in cross-national contexts where the influence of community trumps individual preference. The research might examine the role of social networks as mediators in loyalty to native-country as well as host-country brands.

Social media platforms and digital spaces increasingly play a key role in shaping cultural identity, particularly among younger migrants who are more engaged with online communities. The impact of digital engagement as well as online engagement on brand loyalty is a new field where much could be learned, particularly in terms of the role digital marketing can play in engaging migrant consumers. As digital spaces provide entry to both local and global brands, the purchasing decisions on the part of migrants might be swayed by not only the conventional loyalty drivers such as price sensitivity or ethnocentricity, but also the manner in which the brand is engaging them in the online world. Consequently, brands that comprehend the cultural dynamics of the migrant population as well as leverage social media to develop contextually relevant communication can build affectionate relationships with consumers, which results in higher loyalty rates. Studies might unveil the manner in which acculturation as well as digital engagement interact to determine buying behavior in the modern, digital world.

Furthermore, future studies could investigate how brand loyalty varies across different product categories among migrant consumers. Although this study examined the case of the food brands, loyalty to other product categories such as fashion, electronics, or personal care might be influenced by distinct drivers. For instance, loyalty to culturally affiliated products such as food or clothes might be higher in migrants, whereas loyalty to non-cultural products such as electronics might depend more on utilitarian drivers such as price sensitivity. Investigating the dynamics in loyalty across product categories would add to the understanding about the migrant consumers as well as their complexities.

Future studies can look at the different ways in which companies can strategically customize their own marketing to meet the particular needs of migrant consumers at particular stages in the acculturative process. As migrants progress through different stages in the process of adaptation, their brand loyalty and the brands with which they identify might also shift, so companies need to adjust their strategy accordingly. Research into the ways in which companies can develop culturally relevant advertising or product changes to appeal to migrants, while taking costs into

consideration, would be useful. Knowledge about these strategic requirements will enable companies to connect with migrant populations effectively and build long-term brand loyalty.

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