

A Longitudinal Reliability Study of a Consumer Disidentification Model

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Josiassen (2011) in a single cross-sectional survey investigated causal relations between consumer disidentification and domestic product judgments. The primary purpose of this replication paper is to evaluate the reliabilities of construct levels, as well as the significance, direction and magnitude of causal effects advanced in the original published structural model. The study measures relations between consumer disidentification (CDI) and domestic product judgments of American products over an extended 16 months period among second generation immigrants. In the present research the original CDI model fit was found to be longitudinally consistent and stable. Serendipitously, findings of the present study disclosed that over time baseline levels of consumer disidentification vary and actually declined significantly. Additionally, the negative effect of consumer disidentification on American product judgments significantly weakened over the course of the study. As an additional test of consumer predisposition reliability over time, the model in this study incorporated consumer xenocentrism (XEN) as a second predictor variable of domestic product judgments. Findings of this analysis were consistent with those found for CDI. These new phenomena have important theoretical and managerial implications.

Keywords: Consumer disidentification, ethnic identity and acculturation, xenocentrism

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Introduction

This study primarily involves the evolution of consumer disidentification levels of second-generation Americans. Consumer dispositions of these consumers are traced over sixteen months. Behavioral trends among immigrant generations may be attributed, in principle, to common and to differing acculturation experiences (Berry, 1990; Laroche et al., 2007; Shankarmahesh, 2006). Compared with first-generation immigrant Americans, second-generation Americans are much more likely to adopt the host country's vernacular and primary language (Zhou and Gonzales, 2019). Second-generation immigrants may assimilate to or reject mainstream Americans' cultural patterns. Lingering effects of immigration history may affect interactions with ethnic peers and active participation in ethnic communities. The primary focus of this study is on the concept of consumer disidentification and its aftermath among the general population of second-generation American immigrants.

Conceptual Background

Consumer Disidentification

Disidentification is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when individuals belong to groups they do not wish to belong to. Thus, disidentification relates to identities that are perceived to be threatening to the self (Dean, 2008). If individuals cannot physically escape from the group, they create a psychological distance between themselves and the group (Becker and Tausch, 2014). Consumer disidentification (CDI) is an offshoot of the concept of national disidentification. Josiassen (2011) explored antecedents of consumer disidentification in a study of second-generation Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. He found that ethnic identification and acculturation were predictors of CDI. He also found that CDI is distinct from general national disidentification.

Second-generation immigrants, in particular, combine their identities between their subgroups and the host country-related national identity. National identity involves a sense of belonging to their mainstream society. In existing ethnic groups, multiple cultural identities co-exist; these involve both ethnic and national identities, which do not necessarily conflict (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009). Ethnic and national identity are two dimensions of social identity that may exogenously vary. Social identity is a subjective sense of one's belonging either to an in-group, such as the home country or an out-group, such as a foreign country (Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015). Ethnic identity is associated with incorporation of one's ethnicity into the self-concept (Cleveland et al., 2011). The function of ethnic identification is to mitigate the detrimental psychological effects of perceived discrimination. Ethnic group engagement inhibits the sense of belonging and may engender disengagement and hostility towards a national out-group. National identity has been found to be associated with products traditionally linked to local culture (Sobol et al., 2018).

Consumer disidentification (CDI) involves an active rejection and distancing from prototypical domestic consumers (Josiassen, 2011). CDI, in principle, has a significant bearing on a wide range of purchase behaviors of domestic consumers (Ruppel and

Einwiller, 2021). The concept is especially relevant in the current study of second-generation US immigrants.

Perceived discrimination and the experiences of unfair treatment are precursors of CDI. A longitudinal study of immigrants who experienced high levels of discrimination revealed that, over time, those immigrants were more prone to increased negative attitudes toward the national out-group (Portes and Zhou, 1993). Feeling supported and accepted by one's own ethnic community was found to enhance well-being. The adaptation process may differ among second-generation immigrants, given segmentation criteria that involve social mobility.

Xenocentrism

Consistent attraction to foreign products in general is a marker of xenocentrist tendencies. This state is complemented by unfavorable perceptions of one's own in-group. Consumer xenocentrism (XEN) has been defined as a negative view of domestic products, combined with a preference for foreign products (Prince et al, 2016). Dimensions of consumer xenocentrism are: (a) an underappreciation of domestic products and brands, and (b) a favoritism proclivity for the symbolic value of foreign products (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016; Jost and Banaji, 1994). A status-signaling function of foreign products and consumer xenocentrism predisposition may be especially strong among second-generation immigrants because of a felt status differentiation.

The present research focuses on the impact of CDI and XEN on US second-generation immigrants' consumer predispositions towards domestic products. The study explains the dissociative reference group theoretical foundations of a new CDI model in the United States. Dissociation is the mirror image of the associative principle. When a positive reference group's stimuli are present, those stimuli, themselves, will be positively evaluated. Conversely, dissociation involves a predisposition to avoid stimuli associated with negative reference groups (Simpson et al., 2019).

The longitudinal study was conducted to unravel temporal relationships between CDI/XEN and product quality judgments. Effects of CDI and XEN on domestic product judgments might be constant or might change significantly between the two measurement waves. Dispositions of these consumers were studied during the COVID-19 pandemic's social and political climate. The more unpleasant contact experiences with the majority out-group, the more negative attitudes may be towards that majority, including their lifestyles and national identification.

Research Questions

The longitudinal technique underlying this replication of a cross-sectional study leads to a series of questions. This inquiry describes the reliabilities of the results obtained in Josiassen's (2011) ground-breaking study of consumer disidentification.

Q1: Is consumer disidentification (CDI) negatively associated with favorable domestic product judgment (PJ) at times t_1 and t_2 ?

Q2: Is Xenocentrism (XEN) negatively associated with favorable domestic product judgment (PJ) at times t_1 and t_2 ?

Q3: Does the negative effect of CDI on favorable domestic product judgment (PJ) weaken or strengthen between times t_1 and t_2 ?

Q4: Does the negative effect of XEN on favorable domestic product judgment (PJ) weaken or strengthen between times t_1 and t_2 ?

Q5: Do levels of CDI increase or decline significantly between times t_1 and t_2 ?

Q6: Do levels of XEN increase or decline significantly between times t_1 and t_2 ?

Q7: Do levels of domestic product judgment (PJ) increase or decline significantly between times t_1 and t_2 ?

The reliability of the CDI scale was calculated by coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951), reliability coefficient Rho, maximal weighted internal consistency, and highest non-extracted eigenvalue. The CDI scale exhibited good internal consistency on all measures, with an alpha value above .8. Reliability coefficient Rho was also above .8, as was the maximal weighted internal consistency. Finally, the highest non-extracted eigenvalue was over .9. In sum, reliability of the CDI scale exhibited good internal consistency. A test for common method bias involved the use of a marker variable and its correlation with CDI scale scores, expected to be uncorrelated. The marker variable asked respondents about their level of confidence in the American economy. The correlation between the marker variable was, in fact, low and non-significant (.08). The pre-study results supported that consumer disidentification (CDI) has a negative effect on product judgment of domestic products ($p < .05$). Based on findings from the study, we concluded that the CDI concept is cross-culturally viable.

Participants and Procedure

For both timeline 1 and timeline 2, US adult consumers were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), and they were second-generation immigrants (i.e., Hispanics, Asians, African Americans, Europeans, and others) aged between 18 and 65. Participants were from MTurk workers and the quality of the data was ensured. Two hundred thirty-six (236) second-generation US adult consumers were recruited for timeline 1. Forty-four percent of the participants were female and their mean age was 33. Eighty-five percent of participants had at least some college education. Their ethnicities were as follows: Asian (34.7%), Hispanic (29.7%), European (28.8%), African-American (3.4%), and Other (3.4%). Median household income was \$50,000.

Two hundred twenty-three (223) second-generation participants were recruited for timeline 2. The demographic characteristics were similar to the ones from timeline 1. Forty-seven percent of the participants were female with a mean age of 34. Eighty percent of participants had at least some college education. Their ethnicities were also similar to timeline 1: Asian (38.8%), European (29%), Hispanic (27.7%), and Other (4.4%). Median household income was \$50,000.

For the data analysis, partial least squares (Hair et al., 2014; SmartPLS 3.4) was used. Longitudinal exogenous samples from two interviewing waves were examined for changes in construct relations as well as in construct levels over time, as prescribed by Roemer (2016). A single PLS structural model was developed and estimated for each of the two interviewing waves. Estimations involved a maximum of 1,000 iterations of model

parameters. The fit of the model for each wave was examined for sufficiency and quality criteria. In order to test for changes in path coefficients over time, multi-group analysis was used. Changes in construct levels were estimated by tests of mean differences for exogenous samples

Measures

The consumer disidentification scale (CDI) was developed by Josiassen (2011). It consists of six items that reflect negative attitudes about domestic consumers and their perceived behaviors. The product judgment scale used in this study (see the Appendix) was adopted from Klein, Ettenson, and Morris (1998); and Ouellet (2007). The scale measures product judgment along a three-item (good/bad, favorable/unfavorable, and satisfactory/unsatisfactory) five-point semantic differential scale ($\alpha = .797$). The xenocentrism (XEN) indicators were adapted from Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2016).

Results

In our main study, we expanded the CDI model to include a measure of consumer xenocentrism (XEN). A longitudinal analysis was conducted to examine the reliabilities relationships between CDI, XEN and product quality judgments (PJ). The magnitude of effects of CDI and XEN on domestic PJ were tested to detect possible significant changes between the two measurement waves.

The evaluation models of relations between endogenous variables, consumer identification, XEN, and exogeneous product judgment (PJ) was based on separate PLS models with the same constructs measured at different times. Distinct PLS models prohibited measurement of carryover effects, or the impact of changes in exogenous variables between time periods. Models were estimated with settings involving 1,000 iterations and a stop criterion of 10^{-7} . Measurement models tested composite reliability, as well as convergent and discriminant validity. Fornell-Larcker testing disclosed that for each model, loadings always exceeded cross-loadings. Thus, discriminant reliability was established (see Table 1).

Table 1. Composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity

Time	Constructs	No. of items	Composite Reliability	AVE	1	2	
T1	CDI t1	4	0.761	0.519	0.721		
T1	PJ t1	3	0.893	0.736	-0.382	0.858	
T2	CDI t2	4	0.787	0.484	0.696		
T2	PJ t2	3	0.895	0.740	-0.482	0.860	
T1	XEN t1	4	0.926	0.806	0.860		
T1	PJ t1	3	0.896	0.742	-0.499	0.859	
T2	XEN t2	4	0.918	0.738	0.859		
T2	PJ t2	3	0.895	0.740	-0.499	0.860	

R² or the coefficient of determination was measured to evaluate the effect on product judgment (PJ) for the structural models. It can be seen from Table 2 that the impacts of CDI on PJs were both modest at time 1. Xenocentrism (XEN) had a strong impact at time 1, while CDI had a minimal impact. The out of sample model of predictive relevance is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the tests of significance of direct effects of CDI and XEN on PJs

Time	Effect	n	Path Coefficient	t-Values	p-Values	Significance
T1	CDI→PJ	236	-0.467	9.296	0.000	Yes
T2	CDI→PJ	224	-0.291	5.146	0.000	Yes
T1	XEN→PJ	236	-0.647	18.862	0.000	Yes
T2	XEN→PJ	224	-0.484	10.781	0.000	Yes

Table 3. Results of the test of significance of the changes in path coefficients (multigroup analysis)

Effects	Orig Wave 1 path coefficient	Orig Wave 2 path coefficient	Difference between orig paths	Confidence interval lower limit (2.50%)	Confidence interval upper limit (97.5%)	Permutation model p-value
CDI → PJ	-0.467	-0.275	-0.192	-0.152	0.141	0.01
XEN → PJ	-0.647	-0.489	-0.158	-0.094	0.101	0.001

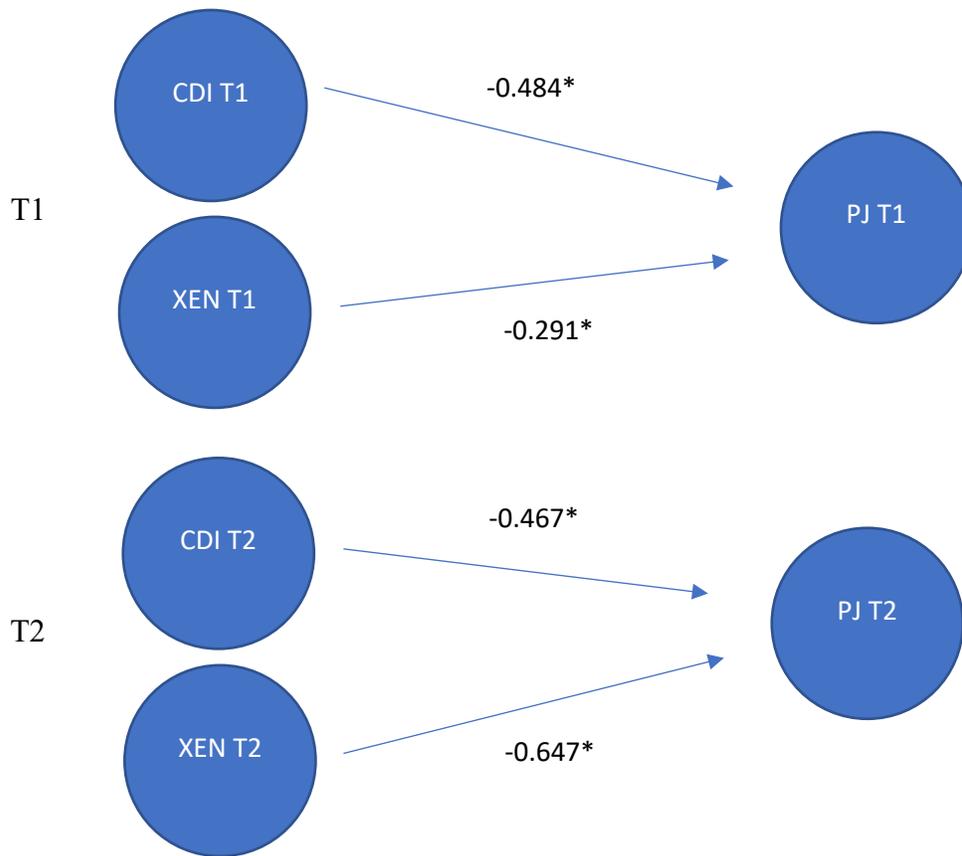
CDI had only small relevance for PJ at times 1 and 2. Xenocentrism (XEN) was associated with medium relevance at times 1 and 2. In sum, the models exhibited some level of predictive relevance. However, XEN at time 2 clearly had the most predictive power. Thus, the measurement models are consistent with acceptable standards.

The evaluation of effects for CDI and XEN were analyzed at two points in time by multi-group analysis. All path coefficients to PJs were negative and significant. Therefore, Q1 and Q2 are answered affirmatively in Figure 1 and Table 3. Differences between the original paths and those of later waves are negative for CDI and XEN. Regarding Q3 and Q4 it was found that the predictive power of these two exogenous variables diminishes significantly over time. For both exogenous variables, differences from their original paths to PJs are reasonably equivalent (see Table 4).

Mean levels of exogenous variables diminished significantly between waves. At the same time, mean levels of PJs have increased. All three of the afore-mentioned latent variables have changed significantly. Thus, answers to Q5, Q6, and Q7 show significant trends among respondent levels for each variable in the model. (see Table 4).

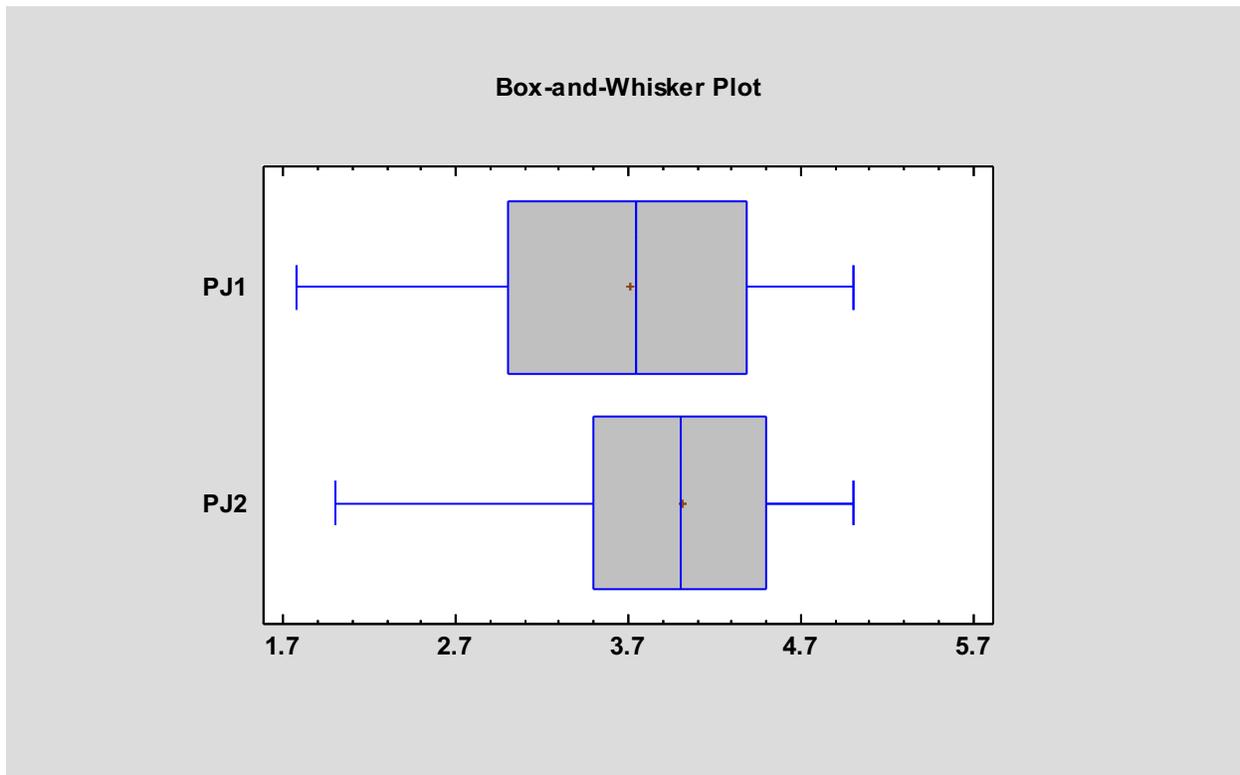
Table 4. Results of the test of significance of the changes in levels of the constructs

Construct	Time	N	M	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Significance
CDI	T1	236	3.114	1.055	-0.250	2.732	0.007	Yes
	T2	224	2.864	0.951				
XEN	T1	236	2.842	1.128	-0.380	4.016	0.000	Yes
	T2	224	2.462	0.877				
PJ	T1	236	3.701	0.838	0.318	-4.113	0.000	Yes
	T2	224	4.013	0.741				

Figure 1. Evolution of the effects with repeated cross-sectional data

T1: $n = 224$, T2: $n = 236$

Note: * $p < .001$

Figure 2. Plot of PJ Means for Time 1 and Time 2

Discussion

Among its unique contributions, this longitudinal study examined relationships over time between consumer disidentification (CDI) and product quality judgments for American products. Causal inferences about latent constructs from cross-sectional survey data were systematically tested in this replication study. The current research expanded the consumer attraction-repulsion matrix model to further explain the spectrum of consumer dispositions toward domestic and foreign products. Xenocentrism incorporates attitudes toward both domestic and foreign products, and extends consumer product judgment perspectives beyond individual countries.

The longitudinal study found that negative effects of CDI on domestic product judgments were unchanged between the two measurement waves – i.e., there was a temporal reliability of the relationship. In contradistinction, xenocentrism (XEN) was more impactful negatively as time went on. While CDI was pre-eminent over XEN as a driving force at the outset, XEN became the major negative factor in product judgments later in time. Another major contribution of this study is the measurement of the impact of consumer xenocentrism on product judgments among second-generation immigrants. The present study also established the relative independence of CDI and XEN measures, as well as the joint effects on domestic product judgments.

Managerial Implications

The managerial implications of our study are the cross-cultural robustness of the measurement model, as well as the importance of the consumer disidentification concept as an additive pressure to xenocentrism in the purchase of domestic goods. Marketers may be assured that the CDI model presented is reliable and accurate. That is to say, attitudes for both concepts predict consumers' dispositional favoritism toward foreign products.

The present study corroborates other empirical research which conclude that consumer disidentification and xenocentrism are key factors in foreign product preference (Josiassen 2011; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016; Balabanis, Stathopoulou and Qiao 2019). As a result, foreign marketers should consider both CDI and XEN as important measurements to segment and define target markets, as well as develop brand positions.

Consumer perceptions of dissociative reference groups trigger avoidance of products linked to those groups. Factors that relate to consumer responses involving dissociative reference groups include (a) the desire to present a positive self-image to others, (b) whether the consumption takes place in public or private, (c) whether positioning of the group image is threatened, and (d) when aspects of one's social identity are at risk.

Consistency threat involves protection of self-identity. Thus, product choices associated with American brands will be negatively evaluated among high CDI and XEN population segments. Another process that explains CDI and XEN domestic product judgments is the avoidance of negative identity feedback. Compensatory buying behavior may result from distancing oneself from identities that are personally rejected. An example of such product avoidance behavior would be products that are positioned for other minority groups that are unfavorably perceived. A third dissociative process that explains CDI and XEN behavior is the motive of misidentification avoidance. Pride in one's own ethnic group might be at stake when products fail to signify an individual's identity.

Consumer disidentification and xenocentrism have important implications for marketing in localities with sizable populations possessing these predispositions. In such circumstances, appeals based on consumer domestic support themes are likely to backfire. A more productive approach would be to adopt a "chameleon strategy" by which a domestic product is positioned to acquire a foreign brand look (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016). A prime example of this effect is seen in the introduction of Mon Triomphe, a men's cologne and aftershave lotion. The product name, labeling with the Arc de Triomphe logo, advertising spokesman bearing a French accent, and merchandising with point of purchase communications that signaled the product's "foreignness."

Future Research

Foreign or domestic product preferences are not only affected by dissociative reference group orientations. Cosmopolitan consumers will minimize domestic and foreign product biases and exhibit a sense of openness in their purchase orientations (Riefler et al., 2012).

CDI research of the future should include cosmopolitanism, as well as moderating variables that test outcomes revealed in this study. This may involve variations in multi-faceted descriptive measures of self-concept (Simpson et al., 2019). Experimental activation of selected facets of self-concepts would be central to this research approach. Finally, research can explore CDI under conditions that specify acceptance or rejection by types of reference groups. Note that different ethnic immigrant groups from different countries of origin have different consumer predispositions that will moderate or mediate relationships.

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Appendix 1: Survey items used as indicators of concepts

Product Judgments (modified from Ouellet 2007)

- American products seem good.
- I am favorable toward products made in the United States.
- American-made products seem to be unsatisfactory.

Consumer Disidentification (CDI) (newly developed scale by Josiassen 2011)

- I object to being seen as just another American consumer
- I always tend to not shop in the same places as the Americans.
- Generally, I do not want to consume like the Americans.
- I sometimes feel uncomfortable if people think I buy the same as the Americans do.

Xenocentrism

- There are very few domestic products that are of equal quality to foreign products.
- I cannot think of any domestic brands that are as good as the foreign ones I purchase.
- I trust more foreign than domestic companies, because they are more experienced and have more resources.
- In most product categories, foreign brands outperform domestic ones.