



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The role of Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) in moderating the influence of the marketing mix on the purchase decisions of MSME packaged ground coffee in Ruteng

Noventius Herlan Ferrano Dugis* and I Gusti Ngurah Jaya Agung Widagda K.

Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University, Jalan P.B. Sudirman, Kampus Sudirman Denpasar, Bali.

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Abstract

Intense competition between local coffee products and external brands remains a major problem, eroding the market share of local Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Ruteng. This study aims to examine the effect of the marketing mix (4P) on purchase decisions and the role of consumer ethnocentrism as a moderating variable in the packaged ground coffee industry. Using a PLS-SEM analysis of 249 participants in Ruteng City, this causal-associative study identifies the key factors influencing purchase decisions for local MSME coffee. The research findings confirm that product, price, and place provide significant positive contributions. Conversely, promotional efforts were found to have no statistically significant impact on purchase decisions within the context of this study. Additionally, it was demonstrated that consumer ethnocentrism (CE) acts as a predictor moderator for most marketing stimuli and as a quasi-moderator that specifically strengthens the relationship between price and purchase decisions. These findings indicate that a strong sense of local identity creates a synergistic effect, where price is perceived as a quality-value cue that ultimately reinforces the consumer's moral commitment to local brands. This study yields valuable theoretical insights and actionable recommendations for MSME owners and regional policymakers looking to leverage cultural identity and value-based pricing to enhance market engagement in the regional coffee industry.

Keywords: Marketing Mix; Consumer Ethnocentrism; Purchase Decision; Coffee; MSMEs; SOR Theory; SIT

1. Introduction

The escalating demands for regional economic advancement and the enduring viability of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) require local coffee products to reach optimal thresholds in consumer purchasing decisions. Purchase decisions are central to consumer behavior, reflecting individuals' overall choices regarding the acquisition, use, and post-consumption handling of market offerings [1]. High levels of purchase decisions toward local brands are essential for the growth of the 54 coffee-processing MSMEs in Manggarai [2, 3]. However, data indicate that purchase decisions for local packaged ground coffee in Ruteng have declined significantly, with market share falling from 45.43% to 27.99% over the 2023–2025 period [4, 5].

The components of the marketing mix exert a significant influence on the outcome of purchase decisions [6]. In the context of local MSMEs facing intense competition from external brands, the strategic implementation of product, price, place, and promotion becomes increasingly important. An effective marketing mix is seen as a set of controllable tools used to generate a desired response from the target market [6, 7]. Scholarly inquiries have validated the constructive influence of the marketing mix on purchase decisions [8, 9]. Other studies have shown inconsistent findings, where certain elements such as place or product features do not significantly impact consumer choices in specific regional

* Corresponding author: Noventius Herlan Ferrano Dugis

contexts [10, 11]. Existing studies exhibit empirical inconsistencies concerning how marketing stimuli affect purchase decisions, highlighting the need for more targeted research within the local ground coffee segment.

Consumer ethnocentrism serves as a pivotal psychological mechanism in elucidating the dynamics of this underlying relationship. Consumer ethnocentrism is a psychological driver that encourages the purchase of local products based on a sense of moral obligation and regional identity [12]. Ethnocentric tendencies have a significant impact on purchase decisions, as they can act as a crucial determinant for consumers in choosing products from local MSMEs [12]. Consumer ethnocentrism is posited to function as a moderating variable that conditions the strength and direction of the relationship between marketing mix stimuli and purchasing decisions. Strong local pride is believed to strengthen the impact of marketing efforts, which in turn increases the likelihood of choosing local brands. Despite its potential significance, there is a dearth of research exploring consumer ethnocentrism as a moderating factor in the packaged ground coffee industry, particularly within unique regional settings like Ruteng. Therefore, this study investigates the potential of consumer ethnocentrism to moderate the influence of the marketing mix on the decision-making processes of consumers within the local coffee market. The findings of this inquiry are anticipated to enhance the existing body of literature by integrating the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework into the domain of regional MSME marketing [13]. Furthermore, this research provides an empirical foundation for the formulation of marketing strategies that capitalize on regional identity to enhance the competitive advantage of local coffee products [14].

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory explains that consumer behavior is formed through the psychological processing of external cues [13]. When consumers are exposed to external stimuli in the form of marketing efforts, they process these through their internal cognitive and affective states (organism) before exhibiting a final behavioral response [13, 15]. In this study, the marketing mix (4Ps) represents the external stimuli that trigger internal psychological evaluations, which ultimately lead to purchase decisions [7,13]. This process confirms the principle of response to marketing stimuli, where product quality, pricing strategies, accessibility, and promotional efforts act as environmental inputs that shape consumer behavior [16]. Furthermore, Social Identity Theory (SIT) suggests that consumers categorize themselves into social groups, leading to a preference for local products as a manifestation of regional identity and moral obligation [13, 17]. Consumer ethnocentrism serves as an internal psychological filter (organism) that influences how marketing stimuli are perceived and acted upon.

The product is the core element of the marketing mix that provides value and satisfies consumer needs. High product quality, attractive packaging, and distinct flavors are essential for influencing consumer choice [7]. Previous studies indicate that superior product attributes directly lead to positive purchase decisions in the food and beverage industry [8, 9, 18].

2.1. Hypothesis 1 (H1): Product has a positive effect on purchase decisions.

Price is conceptualized as the economic sacrifice incurred by consumers, representing the financial resources surrendered to obtain a specific product. For MSME products, a competitive and fair price that aligns with perceived quality is a significant driver of consumer behavior [7]. Empirical evidence suggests that pricing strategy significantly affects the likelihood of consumers selecting local coffee brands [16, 19].

2.2. Hypothesis 2 (H2): Price has a positive effect on purchase decisions.

Promotion encompasses a strategic set of communicative activities designed to articulate a product's value proposition and incentivize acquisition among the target demographic. Effective promotional tools like social media advertising and sales incentives create awareness and desire [6, 7]. Consistent with previous findings, promotion serves as a vital stimulus that triggers the purchase of regional specialty products [9, 18].

2.3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Promotion has a positive effect on purchase decisions.

Place, or distribution, encompasses the strategic logistical activities executed by a firm to ensure optimal product accessibility for the intended market segment. High accessibility and strategic locations reduce the effort required for purchase, thereby increasing the probability of a positive response [1, 16]. Studies have confirmed that place significantly influences consumer decisions in local retail contexts [2, 10].

2.4. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Place has a positive effect on purchase decisions.

Consumer ethnocentrism (CE) is posited to function as a critical boundary condition that modulates the strength and direction of the relationship between the marketing mix components specifically product, price, promotion, and place

and consumer purchasing outcomes. For consumers with high regional pride, the influence of these marketing elements is perceived through the lens of local identity, where CE specifically functions as a quasi-moderator that strengthens the impact of price as a quality-value cue [19, 25]. This dispositional orientation ensures that the marketing mix is not merely evaluated as a functional attribute but is reinforced by a sense of moral obligation, thereby intensifying the consumer's commitment to local MSME brands [21, 22].

- Hypothesis 5 (H5): Consumer Ethnocentrism moderates the effect of product on purchase decisions.
- Hypothesis 6 (H6): Consumer Ethnocentrism moderates the effect of price on purchase decisions.
- Hypothesis 7 (H7): Consumer Ethnocentrism moderates the effect of promotion on purchase decisions.
- Hypothesis 8 (H8): Consumer Ethnocentrism moderates the effect of place on purchase decisions.

3. Methods

The research was conducted in Ruteng City, Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, for about two months following the research academic schedule. This study employs a quantitative, causal-associative research design to evaluate the impact of the marketing mix conceptualized as exogenous variables comprising product (X1), price (X2), promotion (X3), and place (X4) on purchase decisions (Y) as the endogenous construct. Furthermore, consumer ethnocentrism (M) is integrated into the model as a moderating variable. The target population encompasses the total consumer base in Ruteng City who have engaged in the purchase and consumption of local packaged ground coffee. This study utilized a purposive sampling approach within a non-probability sampling design, resulting in a final sample size of 249 participants who were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives [23,24]. The survey employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" within a structured questionnaire to quantify the variables under investigation. The instruments in this study were then tested for validity and reliability to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the data.

The marketing mix was measured through four dimensions: product, price, promotion, and place [7, 20]. Consumer ethnocentrism was measured through indicators reflecting moral obligation and preference for local products [21, 26]. Purchase decision was measured through dimensions including preference for local MSME coffee, purchase conviction, and word-of-mouth intentions [1, 27]. The empirical data were analyzed utilizing Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) [25, 28], following a comprehensive two-stage evaluation that encompassed both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

The evaluation of the measurement model demonstrated that all indicators satisfied the established criteria for validity and reliability. Specifically, all outer loadings exceeded the 0.70 threshold, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for both first-order dimensions and higher-order constructs surpassed 0.50, substantiating convergent validity. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) scores consistently remained above 0.70, evidencing robust internal consistency. Consequently, the measurement instrument is deemed statistically sound and reliable for further analysis.

4.2. Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model outcomes, as detailed in Table 1, demonstrate that Product exerts a statistically significant positive influence on Purchase Decisions (a path coefficient = 0.157 and a p-value <0.05). Consequently, these findings provide sufficient empirical evidence to support the acceptance of H1. As illustrated in the structural model, Price was identified as a significant positive predictor of Purchase Decisions, yielding a path coefficient of 0.114 and a p-value <0.05. This finding substantiates the relationship hypothesized in H2. The structural analysis reveals that Promotion does not significantly predict Purchase Decisions (a path coefficient = -0.054 and a p-value >0.05). The negative nature of this relationship, coupled with its lack of statistical significance, necessitates the rejection of H3. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that place significantly and positively influenced Purchase Decisions because a path coefficient 0.091 and a p-value <0.05, therefore H4 was accepted.

Table 1 Hypothesis Testing Result

hypothesis	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values	Remarks
Product (X1) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	0.157	2.528	0.006	Significant
Price (X2) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	0.114	1.677	0.047	Significant
Promotion (X3) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	-0.054	0.841	0.200	Not Significant
Place (X4) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	0.091	1.679	0.047	Significant

(Primary Data, 2025)

Furthermore, based on the interaction effect analysis using the bootstrapping technique, this study discovered that Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) plays a dual role as a moderating variable. For the relationships between product, promotion, and place toward purchase decisions, the interaction effects yielded product (p-value = 0.142), promotion (p-value = 0.172), place (p-value = 0.095), respectively, which exceed the 0.05 threshold, thus categorizing CE as a predictor moderation in these contexts (Table 2). Conversely, the interaction between CE and price yielded a path coefficient of 0.155 with a p-value of 0.013, identifying it as quasi-moderator because both the direct effect of the moderator and the interaction effect are significant. This finding suggests that while CE serves as an independent intrinsic motivator for most marketing stimuli, it specifically creates a synergistic effect that strengthens the influence of price perceptions on the consumer's decision to purchase local coffee in Ruteng.

Table 2 Moderating Testing Result (Specific Indirect Effect)

hypothesis	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values	Remarks
CE x Product (M) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	-0.060	1.073	0.142	Not Significant
CE x Price (M) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	0.155	2.217	0.013	Significant
CE x Promotion (M) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	-0.074	0.947	0.172	Not Significant
CE x Place (M) -> Purchase Decisions (Y)	-0.083	1.309	0.095	Not Significant

(Primary Data, 2025)

5. Discussion

Empirical evidence from this study suggests that the quality of product offerings significantly enhances consumer acquisition intent for locally processed coffee produced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Ruteng. Products that offer superior taste, professional packaging, and a strong brand identity create a compelling external stimulus that triggers consumer interest. This finding reinforces the theoretical foundation of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, which states that the quality of external marketing stimuli is a key driver of the consumer's cognitive and affective processing, ultimately leading to a purchase response in the marketplace.

The current findings corroborate the research of [29], affirming that quality remains a fundamental precursor to consumer acquisition in the context of local products. This is further supported by the theoretical framework of [30], which suggests that superior performance and distinctive attributes act as catalysts in cultivating consumer confidence. Such consistent results validate the premise that product quality serves as a pivotal driver for the competitive standing of regional firms. Consequently, this investigation provides a robust theoretical anchoring for understanding the dynamics of consumer decision-making in the context of local commodities.

For UMKMs in Manggarai, owners need to maintain and enhance the quality of their coffee products, particularly in terms of packaging aesthetics and brand storytelling, which are vital extrinsic cues. This can be achieved by more consistently highlighting the "fine robusta" or "specialty" status of Manggarai coffee and using local identity in design

to differentiate from national brands. The fortification of these elements is projected to amplify consumer trust, particularly within the local community that identifies coffee as a premium cultural legacy. This alignment is essential for ensuring the long-term viability and growth of the regional coffee sector.

The positive impact of price on purchase decisions implies that fair and value-aligned pricing can foster a sense of consumer satisfaction and perceived worth. This encourages consumers to perceive the coffee as a high-value item rather than just a monetary sacrifice, allowing them to feel a sense of pride in purchasing a premium local product. This allows consumers to feel greater alignment between the price paid and the cultural value received, which in turn increases the likelihood of repeat purchases.

This study corroborates the research of [31], affirming that in developing markets, price serves as a crucial signal for predicting product quality. These results are consistent with the arguments put forward by [32], suggesting that consumers are willing to pay higher prices if the perceived benefits and cultural prestige are significant. Therefore, this study confirms that in the Manggarai Region, price constitutes a significant determinant that can effectively stimulate purchasing behavior among local consumers who place greater emphasis on value relative to mere affordability.

The findings of this inquiry demonstrate that place, specifically in terms of distribution accessibility, serves as a pivotal determinant in augmenting purchase decisions for packaged coffee offerings within the MSME sector in Ruteng. Strategic locations, ease of access to retail points, and consistent product availability create an environmental stimulus that effectively attracts consumer attention. This finding reinforces the theoretical foundation of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, which positions "place" as a critical environmental stimulus (S) that reduces search costs and facilitates the consumer's transition from intention to an actual purchase response (R).

These findings correspond with the investigation conducted by [33], which contends that distribution channel effectiveness directly strengthens the probability of consumers choosing a specific brand due to minimal logistical barriers. Moreover, these results correspond with the assertions posited by [34], who stated that location is often the most determinant marketing mix element in driving actual transaction behavior in retail environments. The consistency of these results demonstrates that physical presence and visibility are key factors in capturing the local market, strengthening the theoretical anchoring and relevance of this research within the broader regional marketing landscape.

For UMKMs in Manggarai, owners need to maintain and enhance their distribution networks, particularly in ensuring product visibility on retail shelves and availability in various local outlets. This can be achieved by more consistently partnering with local retailers and optimizing placement in high-traffic areas to ensure that the product is always within the consumer's reach. Fortifying these logistical elements is projected to enhance repeat purchase behavior, specifically for individuals who evaluate service accessibility and product quality as intertwined determinants of their consumption choices.

Conversely, the study identifies that promotion does not play a significant role in increasing purchase decisions and in fact, demonstrates a negative relationship. This indicates that current promotional tactics, such as excessive discounting, may fail to trigger the desired response in the consumer's "black box." When consumers perceive deep discounts on a culturally significant product like Manggarai coffee, they may interpret this as a signal of declining quality or nearing expiration, which creates a cognitive barrier to purchase.

These findings confirm that social exchange in the Ruteng coffee market occurs not only through economic transactions but also through the preservation of product prestige. Despite the growing use of digital advertising, conventional promotional practices remain less effective when they do not incorporate the "storytelling" element consumers seek. Consumers in Ruteng respond more favorably to narratives about the dedication of local farmers than to transactional incentives, which strengthens the emotional connection between the consumer and the local brand.

The quasi-moderator role of consumer ethnocentrism (CE) in the relationship between price and purchase decisions indicates that while price can directly influence decisions, high levels of regional pride significantly strengthen this mechanism. In other words, a premium pricing strategy will be more effective if accompanied by a strong sense of local identity among consumers. CE acts as a psychological amplifier that validates the price as a moral contribution to the local economy, explaining the underlying mechanisms by which consumer ethnocentrism amplifies the impact of price on purchase decisions.

These results support the findings of [35], who stated that consumer ethnocentrism is an important internal filter explaining how marketing stimuli influence consumer responses. Furthermore, the findings regarding predictor

moderation in the paths of product, promotion, and place suggest that regional pride is not just a supporting factor but a primary driver of behavior. This consistency suggests that in a culturally rooted environment like Manggarai, coffee is viewed as a "life anchor", making cultural identity a crucial bridge between local products and high levels of market engagement.

Practically, the results of this study imply that UMKMs and local governments need to encourage the development of value-based pricing while simultaneously creating marketing narratives that emphasize cultural heritage. This approach is believed to be able to sustainably increase consumer loyalty and positively impact regional economic performance. By focusing on "sacred" rather than "profane" marketing, local enterprises can leverage consumer ethnocentrism to overcome physical and promotional barriers in a competitive market.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that product, price, and place have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions for MSME packaged ground coffee in Ruteng. Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) acts as a predictor moderation for product, promotion, and place, serving as an independent driver of purchase decisions without a significant interaction effect. Conversely, CE functions as a quasi-moderator that specifically strengthens the influence of price perceptions on purchase decisions. This suggests that a strong sense of local identity creates a synergistic effect, where price is increasingly perceived as a cue for quality and premium value, further reinforcing the consumer's decision to support local products.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the empirical strengthening of Social Identity Theory by integrating moral obligation and cultural identity as determinants of local consumption behavior. Practically, MSME actors are encouraged to integrate local identity symbols into packaging and utilize digital storytelling to build deeper emotional engagement with consumers. The Local Government is advised to reorient marketing facilitation from simple physical distribution to the creation of an "experiential identity space". This can be achieved through coffee festivals that emphasize historical narratives, the struggle of farmers, and collective pride to transform coffee consumption from a basic need into a manifestation of moral responsibility toward the Manggarai region.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of ethical approval

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee

Statement of Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study

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