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## **Effect of Consumer Economic Nationalism on Consumer Attitudinal and Behavioral Response to the Marketing of Locally Produced Foods**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research is to empirically test a research model on the effect of consumer economic nationalism on consumers' attitudinal and behavioral responses to the marketing of locally produced foods. Data was collected from a sample of Ghanaians through an online survey using a structured questionnaire. Using structural equation modelling to analyse the data, the study revealed that cognitive and affective involvement influences product familiarity. Also, product familiarity and economic nationalism influence consumers' overall attitude towards locally produced foods. Finally, the overall attitude towards the product and economic nationalism both influence consumer buying intention of locally produced foods. This study was limited to the Ghanaian geographical context, thus, for a broader assessment of the robustness of the research model, future studies should undertake a cross-national comparison. The findings provide practitioners with the strategies for influencing consumer attitudes and intentions towards locally produced foods. For policymakers, the findings provide input on strategies for altering consumers' attitudes and intentions to patronize locally produced foods. Considering the paucity of research in understanding the role of economic nationalism in influencing consumer attitude and intention towards locally produced foods, this study makes a compelling contribution to the literature by incorporating the economic nationalism theory into the theory of planned behavior.

**Keywords:** Locally produced foods; Economic nationalism; Cognitive involvement; Affective involvement; overall attitude towards the product.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

A local food system refers to the integration of a collaboration network on the harvesting, processing, distribution, marketing, consumption, and waste management of food products to enhance the economic, environmental and social wealth of a specific geographical area (Hendrickson *et al.*, 2008; Eneyo *et al.*, 2021; Community-Wealth 2021). Food products emerging from it are considered as fresh, high quality, palatable, nutritious and sustainable as well as safeguarding the recirculating of wealth within a geographical area (Feenstra 2002; Conner *et al.*,

2010; Aprile *et al.*, 2016; Edward & Eneyo 2018). Also, the patronage of local food products has been associated with a direct and indirect effect on employment, GDP, inflation, exchange rate, and the economy at large (Eja & Violet 2015; Ghanaweb 2018). The aforementioned benefit of the local food system has in recent years resulted in the call for the production, patronage, and consumption of locally produced food products by government and other consumers' interest groups (Hinrichs & Allen 2008; Madaleno *et al.*, 2018).

Despite this, the increasing consumption of foreign food products is still dominant. For instance, in Ghana, about 76% of the rice consumed between 2017 and 2018 was foreign (Global Agriculture Information Network 2019) and it is estimated that the nation spends almost \$1.1 billion importing rice (Ghanaweb 2018). Also, all food imports as a share of merchandise imports in Ghana in 2017, 2018 and 2019 were 18.3%, 20.1% and 17.4 % respectively (Statista 2021) and Ghana's top three food imports include rice, wheat and poultry (Ghana Trade 2021). To address the challenge, several initiatives have been undertaken including the National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS); the "The Planting for Food and Jobs" in providing subsidy and support for farmers in boosting local food production and becoming self-sufficient on food (Omari *et al.*, 2018; Global Agriculture Information Network 2019; Mordor Intelligence 2021). Other initiatives through fiscal policies have also been taken to limit the importation of foreign food and to encourage the patronage of locally produced foods (Angelucci *et al.*, 2013).

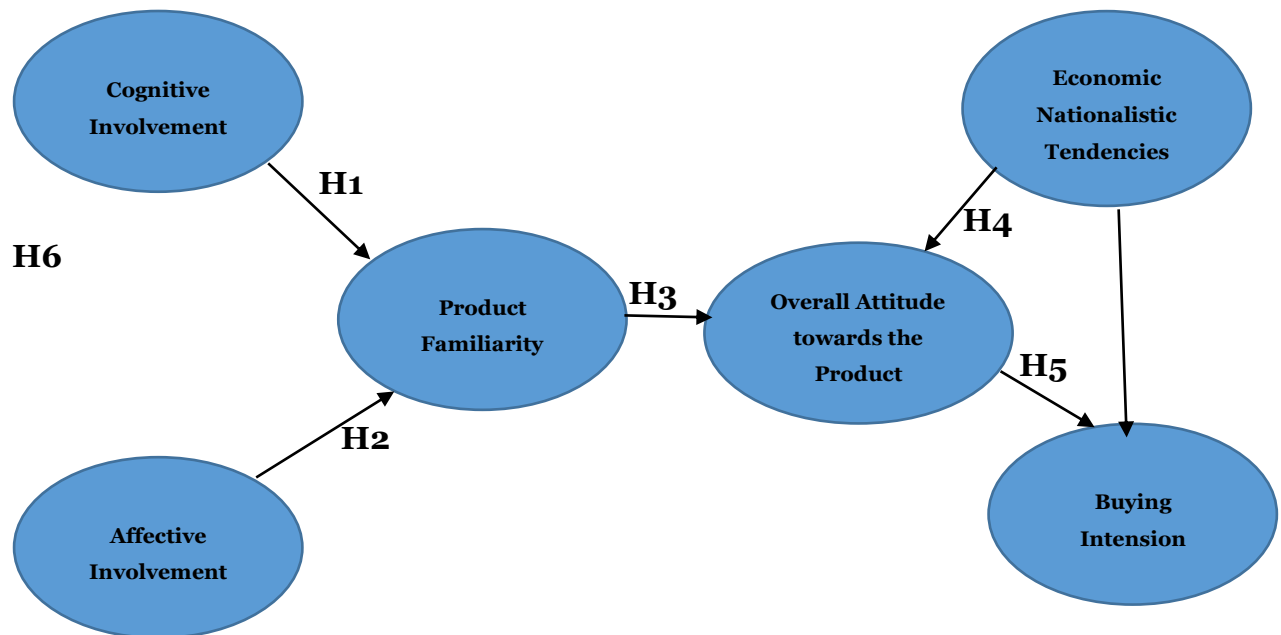
Despite the aforementioned initiatives, the patronage and consumption of local food products remain low, thus, leading to the domination of foreign food brands particularly from countries such as China, Pakistan, India, the USA, and the European Union in the Ghanaian food market. This situation has been attributed to consumers' negative perceived quality of local food products and the inadequate marketing of locally produced products (Emana & Gebremedhin 2007; USAID 2012). Subsequently, successive governments have taken further initiatives through marketing in promoting the patronage and consumption of locally produced food products. For instance, between 2020 and 2023, the government of Ghana planned to invest almost GH¢100bn to promote the consumption of locally-produced products (Abbey 2020). Other private initiatives by local food manufacturers have also taken shape in Ghana including the branding of locally produced food products such as Dada Ba, Oman Pa, and Gold Star, Aduanehene, Champion, Copa, Royal Farmers, and DUQ and the use of different marketing strategies and promotions.

Notwithstanding these marketing initiatives, it is reported that the patronage of locally produced foods still remains low. For instance, about 70% of rice, which is the most popular food product consumed in Ghana, is foreign and this is on an upward trend (Index Mundi 2020). This is a dilemma for governments, practitioners of locally produced foods and scholars in trying to understand why despite the increased effort towards the production and marketing of locally produced foods, consumers still prefer foreign food products. This also raises concerns for scholars on the implications of the theory of planned behavior and the economic nationalistic theory in influencing consumers' patronage of local food products within the context of developing economies as most scholarly work has been overshadowed by developed economies (e.g., Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Akhter 2007; Cheah *et al.*, 2015). In this respect, several researchers have championed the need for a better understanding of this phenomenon within the developing country context particularly in Ghana (Bamfo 2012; Domie 2013).

It is against this background that this work set out to explore and empirically test a research model on consumer's attitudinal and behavioral response to the

marketing of locally produced foods in Ghana using the theory of planned behavior and the economic nationalism theory (See Figure 1). In addressing the objectives of this paper, this research paper is organized as follows: first, the literature review including our conceptual model and hypotheses are presented and discussed, followed by a discussion on the methodology for empirically testing our conceptual model. Following that, our empirical result, conclusions and implications will be discussed.

**Figure 1- Research Model**



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior has been used extensively in marketing particularly in predicting human/consumer behavior through behavioral intentions and it has been applied extensively in understanding consumer attitude and intension towards organic food, halal food, novel food, and local food in both developing and developed economies. The theory postulate that attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms shape a person's behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Solomon 2015). Amongst them, attitude is the most important factor in influencing consumer behavioral intention (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibanez 2012; Laryea *et al.*, 2016; Yeo *et al.*, 2017). Attitude as a construct is influenced by a person's familiarity with a product and familiarity with a product is also influenced by a person's cognitive and affective involvement with the marketing communication of the product. These are discussed below in formulating our hypotheses:

### Cognitive and Affective Involvement

Although researchers have not yet converged at a core definition of involvement, the concept, however, could be traced back to the work of Krugman, who first related its application in marketing as concerning the totality of connections and/or experiences that a person makes on a persuasive marketing communication content

(Krugman 1966). Others have subsequently related it to customers' reaction to exposure of advertising messages in ways that lead to changes in their involvement, attitude and behavior (Greenwald & Leavitt 1984; Zaichkowsky 1986; Zaichkowsky 1994; Sood 2002; Fu *et al.*, 2016).

Involvement, in general, is related to message-processing motivation (Mitchell 1979), which can be cognitive or affective (Berg *et al.*, 2006). Scholars have argued and dealt with involvement and its effect on consumer behavior as involving cognitive and affective dimensions (e.g., Zaichkowsky 1994; Kim *et al.*, 1997; Morris *et al.*, 2002; Cabanero 2006) with others demonstrating its effect on food consumption (Lee & Yun 2015; Tsai 2016). Cognitive involvement is concerned with the level at which consumers engage in information processing activities and captures an individual's thought-related and functional behavior (Lee & Thorson 2009). Affective involvement, on the other hand, relates the extent to which a person is emotionally evoked by a product or advertisement (Wirth 2006; Mouet *et al.*, 2019) and it relates to consumers' mood, feeling and emotional reactions (Smith *et al.*, 2013).

Also, some scholars have debated the relationship between affective and cognitive involvement in influencing consumer behavior. For instance, some scholars have treated them as related and inseparable concepts (e.g., Lazarus *et al.*, 1980; Frijda 1986; Jiang *et al.*, 2010; Drossos *et al.*, 2014; Mou *et al.*, 2019); whilst others have considered these concepts as unrelated (e.g., Zajonc 1980; Kim & Sung 2009). Tung and colleagues, on the other hand, argue that both concepts are requisite in influencing consumer behavior but, further argue that any one of them may play a dominant role in influencing consumer behavior under different circumstances (Tung *et al.*, 2017).

### **Product Familiarity**

Familiarity research has gained momentum over the last five decades with most scholars relating it to information acquisition and reaction to a brand or product marketing communications (Bettman & Park 1980; Kent & Allen 1994; Yalley 2021). Product familiarity refers to a consumer's knowledge of a product class or brand (Johnson & Russo 1984). A product/brand marketing communication may trigger consumers to react cognitively or affectively or both to develop familiarity with the product or brand. Yalley (2021) asserted that the nature of marketing communications could trigger a consumer's cognitive or affective response in developing familiarity with a product. In line with the work of Leow (2012) on awareness, learners nature of involvement with a product's marketing communication may influence their level of familiarity and awareness with a product and once consumers are exposed to a marketing communication of a product, it creates a cognitive or/and affective associations in their memory, thus, acting as consumers product/brand knowledge (Fazio 2007; Yalley 2021; De Luca & Botelho 2019). Several other scholars have concluded that product familiarity is influenced by the consumer's level of involvement, which can be cognitive or/and affective (Zajonc & Markus 1982; Savinovic *et al.*, 2012), whilst others have identified involvement with the marketing of local food on product familiarity (Campbell *et al.*, 2014; Borgogno *et al.*, 2015).

Also, in line with the behavioral analytic approach, consumers' cognitive involvement with a product's marketing communications influences their product familiarity, particularly on the product's key attributes. Cognitive involvement has been described as entailing attention, recognition, and elaboration as mental processes that influence consumer's product familiarity (Greenwald & Leavitt 1984; D'Amico 2001). The nonanalytic approach, on the other hand, proposed that

consumers' affective involvement with a product's marketing communications influences their product familiarity by holistically matching the advertised brand/product to the consumer's emotionally induced "prototype or ideal brand/product" (Cohen 1982; Gill *et al.* 1988). This aligns with the identification of nostalgic involvement/memories, which is emotionally fussed and influences consumers' familiarity with a product (Kim *et al.*, 2019).

Based on the aforementioned argument on the relationship between cognitive and affective involvement in influencing consumer's product familiarity, we propose the following hypotheses:

**H1:** *Cognitive involvement positively influences familiarity with locally produced food products.*

**H2:** *Affective involvement positively influences familiarity with locally produced food products.*

### **Overall Attitude towards Locally Produced Product**

Attitude represents consumers' likes and dislikes and in the opinion of Ajzen, attitude is a mental state of one's readiness, which is learned and organized through experience and exerts a specific stimulus on a person's response to products and situations (Ajzen 1991). This view emphasizes the effect of favorable attitudes towards a product/brand and one's willingness to undertake a specific action (Ali *et al.*, 2019).

The overall attitude towards a product relates to a customer's complete assessment of a product's ability of stimulating an action or behavior (Spears & Singh 2004; Lin & Dong 2021). Overall attitudes concerning pro-social behaviors/products including environmental and buy-local concerns are deep-seated in a consumer's perception and the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as an integral part of society (Zelezny & Schultz 2000). Laryea *et al.*, (2016) argue that consumers' knowledge of the product influences their attitude towards the product. Various scholars has identified a positive relationship between product familiarity and overall attitude towards the product (Laroche *et al.* 1996; Verhellen *et al.*, 2016; Yalley 2021). Thus, we argue that familiarity with locally produced food products influences consumers' overall attitude towards the product, thus, suggesting that:

**H3:** *Familiarity with locally produced food products positively influences overall attitude towards the product.*

### **Consumer Economic Nationalistic Tendencies**

Consumer Economic Nationalistic Tendencies (hereafter, CENT) have received a growing concern from marketing researchers and are linked to the ethnocentric consumption motives that mediate the relationship between nationalism and capitalism (Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Cheah *et al.*, 2015; Lekaki 2017). It differs from the Country-Of-Origin concept in the sense that the latter refers to consumer's preference for certain products based on its producing country (e.g., wine from France, and cocoa from Ghana), whilst the former refers to a customer's prejudice or bias towards foreign products in preference for his/her own country's products (Bilkey & Nes 1982; Macesich 1985; Papadopoulos & Heslop 2003).

Several scholars have identified consumers' nationalism, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism tendencies as influencing consumer's overall attitude towards foreign and local products (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2011; Maheswaran *et al.*, 2013; Pekkanen

& Penttilä 2020), and some scholars have demonstrated the effect of country branding and stereotyping on citizens emotions, attitude and intentions (Vecchiet *al.*, 2021). Drawing implications of the concept from political, economic, and security factors, researchers (e.g., Papadopoulos *et al.*, 1990; Akhter 2007; Lee *et al.*, 2014; Cheah *et al.*, 2015) have postulated that consumers are now showing more interest in domestic products than imported products. From the perspective of early researchers (e.g., Macesich 1985; Baughn&Yaprak 1996), economic nationalism encompasses the discrimination in favor of one's own nation's products, Thus, consumers who have such economic nationalistic tendencies or mindset will not only prefer locally made products but also believe that patronizing domestic product will help promote the dominance of domestic companies. Lee *et al.*, (2014) in their studies in Korea and Taiwan observed that consumers with higher economic nationalistic tendencies tend to have a stronger preference for locally-made products. This is in line with the assertion that consumers' value-set on the political-economic system overshadows the formation of attitudes towards their country-made goods (Wall & Heslop 1986). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H4:** *CENT positively influences consumer's overall attitude towards locally produced food products.*

### **Buying Intention**

Behavioral intention as a concept reflects a consumer's decision to perform a behavior and is founded on the principle that a consumer's decision to engage in a particular behavior is dependent on whether he/she has absolute control in performing that behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Solomon 2015).

Purchase or buying intention refers to consumers' conscious determination to purchase a product or brand and it's an effective concept for predicting consumers' actual behavior (Schlosser *et al.* 1999; Spears & Singh 2004; Goyal 2014). The extant empirical literature has identified consumers' overall attitude towards a product as a crucial concept in predicting buying intention (e.g., Warshaw 1980; Franzen & Bouwman 2001; Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibanez 2012; Yeo *et al.*, 2017). As explained, attitude towards a product provides information shortcuts in facilitating buying intention (Popkins *et al.*, 1976). Laryea *et al.*, (2016) argue that consumers' attitude towards a product influences their buying intention. In addition, several scholars have identified consumers' xenophobic, ethnocentric and economic nationalism tendencies as influencing consumer intention and preference in buying locally produced products as opposed to foreign products (e.g., Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2011; Maheswaran *et al.*, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2014). Based on the foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H5:** *Consumer's overall attitude towards locally produced products positively influences the intention to buy locally produced food products.*

**H6:** *CENT positively influences consumers' intention to buy locally produced food products.*

## METHODOLOGY

### ***Development of Measurement Instruments***

Using the aforementioned hypotheses and the research model presented in Figure 1, the following constructs and their respective items were identified through existing scales:

***Consumer Economic Nationalistic Tendencies*** refer to a consumer's prejudice or bias towards foreign products in preference for his/her own country's products (Macesich 1985). This measured the extent to which consumers prefer locally produced food products and opposed foreign food products and was measured using the ten statement items from the CENT scale with a Cronbach alpha of  $\alpha = 0.81$  (Cheah *et al.*, 2015).

***Product Familiarity*** refers to a consumer's knowledge of a product class or brand (Howard 1977; Johnson and Russo 1984). This measured consumers' knowledge, experience, and familiarity with locally produced food products and was measured using the three-item statement by Shehryar and Hunt (2005) with a Cronbach alpha of  $\alpha = 0.79$ .

***Affective Involvement*** refers to the degree to which a consumer's emotional state is evoked by an object, such as a product (Wirth 2006; Mouet *et al.*, 2019). This measured the extent to which the marketing of locally produced food products through marketing communication evokes emotional responses from consumers and was measured using Perse's (1990) three-item statement with a Cronbach alpha of  $\alpha = .85$ .

***Cognitive Involvement*** refers to the level at which a consumer engages in information processing activities and captures a person's rational thinking (Lee & Thorson 2009). This measured the extent to which the marketing of locally produced food products through marketing communication engages consumers through rational information processing and was measured using Perse's (1990) three-item statement with a Cronbach alpha of  $\alpha = .81$ .

***Overall Attitudes towards Locally Produced Food Product*** relates to a customer's complete assessment of a product with the possibility of stimulating an action or behavior (Spears & Singh 2004). This measured consumers' overall evaluation of locally produced food products in terms of being wise/foolish, unfavorable or favorable, bad or good and was measured using the three-item statement scale from MacKenzie *et al.*, (1986) with a Cronbach alpha of  $\alpha = 0.85$ .

***Buying Intentions*** refer to consumers' conscious effort to purchase a product or brand (Spears & Singh 2004). This measured the likelihood of consumers' conscious effort to patronize locally produced food products and was measured using the three-item statement from Hung *et al.* (2016) with a Cronbach alpha of  $\alpha = 0.91$ .

## SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

The collection of data for the study was facilitated by a structured questionnaire consisting of 25 statement items discussed above and on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree and 5 other questions soliciting respondents' demographic information. To minimize common method

bias, items were randomly placed on the questionnaire and some items were also reversed scored. Respondents who were 18 years and above, as well as Ghanaians, were selected to capture the nationalistic perspective of this research. As a Covid-19 protocol, the online survey platform “allcounted.com” was used in collecting data through a web link. Using an initial contact list of Email, Facebook and WhatsApp accounts consisting of 85 Ghanaians and 18 years and above and from different demographic backgrounds, a snowball sampling technique was adopted by entreating the initial 85 respondents to distribute the link of the survey website to their social media networks. This resulted in 216 respondents and out of this, 187 usable questionnaires were used for the final studies due to some 29 (13%) respondents not completing the questionnaire fully. Appropriate ethical and Covid-19 protocols were adhered to and Table 1 presents respondents’ demographic information.

**Table 1: Respondents Demographic Information**

SEX	%	AGE	%	Educational Level	%	Income Level	%	Previous purchase of local food products	%
Male	53	18-29	48	Secondary Education	41	Below GHC 3000	42	Yes	37
Female	47	30-49	33	Tertiary Education	57	Between GHC 3000-4999	23	No	63
		50-64	12	Prefer not to say	2	Between GHC 5000-10000	21		
		64+	7			Above GHC 10000	14		

## DATA ANALYSIS

To empirically assess, validate and test the proposed research hypotheses, the data analysis was facilitated by Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and AMOS 22 software. The two-step approach as proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was adopted and Hu & Bentler’s (1999) recommended fit indices for reporting measurement and structural model fit ( $X^2$ , df, and  $X^2/df$ , CFI, TLI, and RMSEA) were used in evaluating the measurement and structural model.

Finally, the proposed hypotheses presented in Figure 1 were validated using the structural model’s standardized path coefficients.

## EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The sections that follow present the empirical results of the assessment of both the goodness-of-fit, reliability, and validity of the measurement and structural model along with the testing of our proposed hypotheses.

### Data Normality and the Measurement Model Fit

In ensuring data normality, 29 (13%) respondents were deleted out of the 216 returned questionnaires as missing cases. Inspection of the data demonstrated the absence of outliers with mean and standard deviations ranging from 3.81-4.35 and .75-1.14 respectively and Mahalanobis distance values were within the acceptable

range. Also, no respondents were identified as an outlier, and skewness and kurtosis were acceptable (1.80 - .39) and (.48 - 2.70) respectively. Having ensured data normality, we further assessed the measurement model fit. The initial measurement model with 6 constructs and 25 items was subjected to SEM analysis and resulted in an adequate fit, however, an item relating to affective involvement (*EI1 Advertises on locally produced food products always make me happy*) and 2 other items relating to CENT (*CENT8 I only buy locally produced food products; CENT9 Its wrong to buy foreign food products*) were below the cut-off criteria of the standardized regression weight and squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ )  $\geq .7$  and  $.5$  respectively, thus, a decision was made to delete these items. We undertook a second and final SEM analysis with the 6 constructs and the 22 remaining items, and it resulted in a very good fit with ( $X^2 = 319.07$ ,  $df = 194$  and  $X^2 / df = 1.64$ ,  $CFI = .96$ ;  $TLI = .95$  and  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ), thus, demonstrating the robustness of our model. Standardized regression weight and  $R^2$  were acceptable and ranges between  $.72$ -. $95$  (significant at  $0.001$ ) and  $.52$ -. $90$  respectively (See Table 2).

Also, from Table 3, all AVE's values were  $> .50$  but  $< .85$  thus, demonstrating a very strong convergent and discriminate validity (Kline 2005; Hair *et al.* 2006). Further, a reliability test indicated that all 22 items had an overall high Cronbach alpha of  $.93$  with each construct having Cronbach alphas between  $.84$ -. $94$ . The Collinearity test also identified tolerance values greater than  $.2$  and VIF values less than  $5$  between the independent variables (See Table 3). Our reliability and co-linearity test results demonstrate our proposed model's reliability and internal consistency as well as demonstrating the absence of multi-collinearity. Finally, common method bias was evaluated using Harman's single factor test and this resulted in a one-factor solution accounting for ( $41.14\%$ )  $< 50\%$  of the variance, thus, demonstrating the absence of common method bias in the study.

### **Structural Model Fit and Hypothesis Testing**

The transition of our measurement model to the structural model requires that the model should be stable enough to avoid interpretational confounding. To achieve this, we compared the standardized loading between the measurement model and structural model and the fluctuations were  $< .05$ , thus, indicating the absence of interpretational confounding and giving us the green light in testing our structural model fitness (Hair *et al.* 2006). To establish the reliability and validity of our structural model, we tested its fitness and this resulted in ( $X^2 = 339.85$ ,  $df = 199$  and  $X^2 / df = 1.71$ ,  $CFI = .95$ ;  $TLI = .94$  and  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ), thus, demonstrating the robustness of our model.

We further evaluated the explanatory power of our structural model and all endogenous variables (product familiarity, the overall attitude towards the product, and buying intention) were having  $R^2 > 0.50$ , meaning a substantial part of the variance in our theoretical model is explained by the model itself, thus, indicating the reliability and validity of the structure model and allowing us to further test our proposed hypothesis. From Table 4, all our hypothesis were supported and significant at  $.001$  and  $.05$

**Table 2: Final Items Loadings**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Standardised Factor Loading</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Cognitive involvement</b>	CI1 - I pay attention to adverts on local food products	.79	.62
	CI2 - I recognise adverts on local food products	.83	.69
	CI3 - I reflects on adverts on local food products	.83	.66
		.81	
<b>Affective involvement</b>	EI2- Adverts on local food products always make me angry	.87	.76
	EI3 - Adverts on local food products always make me sad	.86	.74
<b>Product familiarity</b>	PF1 - I am familiar with the different brands of local food products	.89	.80
	PF2 I am knowledgeable about the different brands of local food products	.85	.73
	PF3 I have an understanding of the different brands of local foodProducts	.85	.73
		.88	
<b>Overall Attitude towards the product</b>	OAB1 - Overall, I have a favourable feeling towards local food products	.79	.63
	OAB2 - Overall, I have a good feeling towards local food products	.79	.62
	OAB3 - Overall, I have a sensible feeling towards local food products	.80	.63
<b>Consumer Economic Nationalistic Tendencies (CENT)</b>	CENT1- Buying foreign food products creates unemployment for local food products manufactures in Ghana	.82	.67
	CENT2 - Buying foreign food products presents a perceived threat tolocalfood products	.72	.52
	CENT3- Buying foreign food products will lead to unfavourable economicconditions in Ghana	.72	.63
	CENT4 - Buying foreign food products will results in lower economic growth in Ghana	.79	.69
	CENT5 - Buying foreign food products will lead to economic imbalance inGhana	.79	.68
	CENT6 - Buying foreign food products will affect employment in Ghana	.83	.61
	ENT7 -Buying foreign food products will puts fellow Ghanaians ofwork	.83	.59
	CENT10 - Buying foreign food products will ship jobs overseas	.78	.60
		.77	
		.77	
<b>Buying intension</b>	BI1 - There is a strong possibility I will buy local food products	.94	.88
	B12 - It's likely I will buy local food products	.95	.90
	BI3 - I will probably buy local food products	.88	.77

**Table 3: Reliability Indicators**

CONSTRUCT	Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ )	AVE	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY	COLLINEARITY STATISTICS	
				Tolerance	VIF
<b>Cognitive Involvement</b>	.85	.66	.85	.43	2.33
<b>Affective Involvement</b>	.86	.75	.86	.47	2.13
<b>Product Familiarity</b>	.90	.76	.91	N/A	
<b>Overall Attitude towards the Product</b>	.84	.63	.84	N/A	
<b>Economic Nationalism</b>	.83	.62	.93	.73	1.37
<b>Buying Intension</b>	.94	.85	.95	N/A	

**Table 4: Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	Significance	Supported
H1: Cognitive involvement positively influence familiarity with locally produced food products.	.69	.001	Yes
H2: Affective involvement positively influence familiarity with locally produced food products.	.28	.05	Yes
H3: Familiarity with locally produced food products positively influences the overall attitude towards the product.	.61	.05	Yes
H4: CENT positively influences consumers' overall attitude towards locally produced food products.	.76	.001	Yes
H5: Consumer's overall attitude towards locally produced products positively influences the intention to buy locally produced food products.	.59	.05	Yes
H6: CENT positively influences consumers' intention to buy locally produced food products.	.82	.001	Yes

## DISCUSSIONS OF HYPOTHESES

The result of the study, as evidenced in Table 4, suggests that all the hypotheses proposed in this study were supported. From the findings, the part linking cognitive involvement and product familiarity (H1) was positive and significant, thus, indicating that cognitive involvement with the marketing of locally produced food products influences consumers' familiarity with locally produced food products. This confirms the view of Fu and colleagues that customers' cognitive involvement with an advertising message tends to expose them to a product, thus, enhancing their familiarity with the product (Fu *et al.*, 2016). This, thus, lend support to the behavioral analytic approach theory, which elucidates that a consumer's cognitive

involvement as a mental process influences a consumer's product familiarity particularly the product's key attributes (Greenwald & Leavitt 1984; Srivastava & Kamda 2009). Empirically, it also lends support to the findings of other scholars on the relationship between cognitive involvement and product awareness (Lee & Thorson 2009; Kim & Sung 2009).

On the nexus between affective involvement and product familiarity (H2), a positive and significant relationship was identified, thus, demonstrating that an increase in affective involvement with the marketing of locally produced food products would correspond to an improvement in consumer's familiarity with locally produced food products. This is in line with the assertion averred by some scholars that consumers' emotional feelings, reactions, and moods provide an avenue for consumers in developing product knowledge (e.g., Wirth 2006; Mou *et al.*, 2019). This is also in support of the findings of Kim and colleagues on the effect of nostalgic involvement/memories on consumers' product familiarity (Kim *et al.*, 2019). It further lends support to the behavioral nonanalytic approach theory, which proposes that a consumer's affective involvement with a product's marketing communication influences the product's familiarity by holistically matching the advertised product to a consumer's emotionally induced prototype or ideal product (Cohen 1982; Gill *et al.*, 1988). Considering that some scholars have argued that depending on the context, cognitive and emotional involvement each have varying influence on consumer behavior (e.g., Tung *et al.*, 2017), the variation in the effect of these variables on product familiarity (H1 & H2) was not surprising but demonstrating that when it comes to the marketing of locally produced food products, consumers product familiarity is largely influenced by the cognitive aspect of its marketing communication.

In examining the influence of product familiarity on consumers' overall attitude towards locally produced food products (H3), the result was positive and significant, thus, demonstrating that consumers' possession of product knowledge on locally produced food products positively influences their attitude towards the product. The findings although is in discord with the common saying that "familiarity breeds contempt"; concur with the empirical findings of other scholars on the nexus between product familiarity and overall attitude towards the product (e.g., Laroche *et al.*, 1996; Savinovic *et al.*, 2012; Verhellen *et al.*, 2016).

Turning the attention to the relationship between consumer economic nationalistic tendencies and overall attitude towards locally produced food products (H4), a positive and significant influence was identified, implying that consumers who are economically nationalistic tend to have a positive attitude towards products from their own country than other countries. The findings concur with the work of other scholars who identified that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century developing countries consumers tend to show more interest in products produced from the country of nationality than foreign products (e.g., Akhter 2007; Lee *et al.*, 2014; Cheah *et al.*, 2015). For instance, Lee, and colleagues in their studies in Korea and Taiwan observed that consumers with higher economic nationalistic tendencies tend to have a stronger preference for locally made products than imported products (Lee *et al.*, 2014).

Focusing on the influence of overall attitude towards locally produced food products on buying intention (H5), a positive and significant influence was identified. This implies that when consumers have a positive attitude towards food products produced locally, they are more likely to buy the product. As expected, the findings concur with the theory of reasoned action as well as the empirical findings of

several scholars on the relationship between attitude and intention (Warshaw 1980; Franzen & Bouwman 2001; Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibanez 2012; Ali *et al.*, 2019).

Finally, on the influences of consumer economic nationalistic tendencies on buying intention (H6), a positive and significant influence was identified indicating that when a consumer has prejudice towards foreign products in preference for his/her own country's product, that influences his/her intention to buy locally produced products. The findings accord with the conclusions reached by Bamfo (2012) that ethnocentrism amongst some Ghanaians influences their buying intention of the locally produced food product. It is also consistent with the findings of earlier studies (e.g., Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2011; Maheswaran *et al.*, 2013; Han & Guo 2018) on the influence of nationalism, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism tendencies on consumers' intention to buy locally produced products.

### **Managerial and Policy Implications**

For managers and marketers of locally produced food products, their success is dependent on the development of creative marketing communications techniques and other brand-related experiences in influencing consumers' awareness and familiarity with local food products. This requires that the content of their marketing communications is cognitively and emotionally infused, with greater emphasis on the cognitive aspect of their marketing communications. This requires developing messages that inform and educate consumers on the availability of locally produced food products, their superiority over foreign food products in terms of nutrient, taste, appeal as well as the economic and social implications of patronizing locally produced food products. This may entail emphasizing product ingredients and their sources, sustainability rating, corporate social responsibilities of local firms, and their contribution to the local economy. It may also entail the sponsorship of local events and programs and product placement in local movies, films, and television programs in communicating key information to consumers on locally produced food products. Further, local food managers and marketers may utilize local and national names, symbols, songs, and flags as brand imagery in creating brand awareness and familiarity with the local food products in the minds of their targeted consumers.

Affectively, marketing managers may engage with consumers through the use of fear and patriotic appeals and nostalgic marketing in influencing consumers' products and brand awareness and familiarity of locally produced food products. In using fear appeals, firms may use product-level communication emphasizing the long-term implications of not patronizing locally produced food products on individuals, firms, and the economy. Patriotism appeals may involve the use of local or national symbols, songs, anthems, patriotic songs, and flags in influencing consumers' products and brand awareness and familiarity of locally produced food products as well as economic nationalistic attitudes and behaviors. Further, nostalgic marketing may take the form of linking consumers' autobiographical memory and emotions to the good old days before the invasion of foreign food products when their parents and grandparents patronized local food products.

For policymakers, in addition to increasing the production of local food products and developing import policies through duties, tariffs, embargos, it may also require civic educational policies and marketing communication strategies through country branding and positive country stereotyping in altering consumers economic nationalistic tendencies and influencing their attitudes and behavior towards locally produced food products. By doing so, consumers may patronize locally produced food products, thus, impacting employment, exchange rate, GDP, GNP and ultimately economic growth.

## CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the contribution of this paper, there are some limitations. First, the use of an online survey comes with the limitation that it will not capture Ghana's 19% illiteracy population and those who are technophobic. Future research should utilize both online and paper-based surveys to capture a wider audience. Second, this study was limited to the Ghanaian geographical context only; future studies should undertake a cross-national comparison of different developing countries. Third, this work recognized the role of CENT on overall attitude toward and buying intention, however, future research should evaluate the moderating role of CENT in the relationship between attitude and intention to buy locally produced food products.

Finally, from the findings, although, a positive and significant relationship exists between overall attitude towards locally produced food products and buying intention (H<sub>5</sub>), nevertheless, the relationship between buying intention and actual buying of locally produced food products has not been established in this work and existing empirical work. Researchers need to establish the relationship between intentions and actual buying of local food products taking into consideration the normative influences when it comes to ethnocentric and nationalistic behaviors on consumer behavior as well as the marketing mix effect of foreign food products.

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