

# Attitudes Towards The Foreign Products From Animosity, Boycott And Ethnocentrism Perspectives: The Case Of Turkish Students

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## Abstract

The purposes of this study are to determine Turkish students' attitudes towards products imported from countries that Turkey has political and economic crisis, and understand their buying behavior from animosity, boycott and ethnocentrism perspectives. Analyzing these concepts and determining their attitudes towards foreign products will provide useful information about Turkish students markets and help international/global marketing manager to develop their marketing mix, especially for promotion mix strategies. The survey was conducted at Pamukkale University, Denizli-Turkey with 394 students. The relationship between attitudes towards importing foreign products and purchase intention are high, and Turkish student animosity and ethnocentrism are considered to have an influence on the perception of foreign products. Crisis and ethnocentrism are found as the most two important determinants to buy international products imported from countries that Turkey has politic/economic problems. Foreign companies that export their products or manufactured in Turkey should use adaptation strategies in order to decrease Turkish students' ethnocentrism.

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**Keywords:** Animosity, Ethnocentrism, Consumer Behavior

## Introduction

Due to globalization of markets, all kind of products and services are able to bought and sold in different countries easily to meet international customers' demands. These possibilities give various opportunities for international marketers with new many challenges. As the choices available to consumers become more numerous, the consumer buying process is becoming more complex, and the product choices are influenced by a variety of reasons like image, quality, package, brand, and price of products.

Moreover, especially in global markets, country of origin and conflicts among countries affect to purchase intention and decision, and evolve new marketing concepts like consumer animosity, boycott and ethnocentrism. Therefore, these concepts are very important in international/global marketing, because they affect consumer behavior of foreign product/service, the multinational firms' investment decisions and foreign capital flows. "Purchase Turkish products" is an example of the ethnocentric purchasing behavior of the Turkish consumers. "Do not Purchase (Country/Countries) products" is an example of the animosity or boycott for the purchasing behavior of them. Turkish consumers can choose some options like just not to buy, to attend boycott or to buy domestic products from animosity, boycott and ethnocentrism perspectives. Recognition of this decision will help marketing manager select the right marketing strategies. Therefore, in this study, animosity, boycott and ethnocentrism concepts are reviewed, and survey results about Turkish students' attitudes towards foreign countries/products that Turkey has political and economic crisis are given.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Though animosity, ethnocentrism and boycott are distinct concepts, they have been found to be important antecedents of the unwillingness to buy, in other words, and a direct negative influence on consumers' willingness to buy foreign products (Friedman, 1985; Klein et al., 1998; Nes et al., 2012). Consumer ethnocentrism and animosity provide marketing with two useful concepts to understand the reasons behind consumers' buying decision process relating to domestic versus imported products and the factors that influence consumer attitudes toward foreign products (Klein & Ettenson, 1999; Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2015).

### **Animosity and Boycott**

Today's global world, which includes civil and economic wars, regime change, political crises and military conflicts presents an ongoing challenge for international business (Nes et al., 2012), creates international animosity and boycott among countries, and explains why customers are driven to reject buying products from a target country/company. The concept and theory development of animosity has drawn from sociology and started in marketing, but the impact of animosity has not limited to marketing, because animosity affects consumers' purchase behavior, international direct investments, problems, communications, and trust and presents an informal but significant barrier to trade (Klein et al., 1998; Nes et al., 2012).

Animosity is (1) defined as the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events, (2) referred to strong emotions of dislike based on beliefs arising from military, political, or

economic hostility between nations and peoples that are perceived to have violated social norms that will affect consumers' purchase behavior, (3) affect a consumer's emotional attachment to the geographic origin of product, and (4) comprised of consumer attitudes toward a specific country (Averill, 1982; Klein et al., 1998; Jimenez & Martin, 2010). There are some types of animosity. For example, Klein et al., (1998) theorized (1) war-based animosity and (2) economic-based animosity. Ang et al., (2004) categorized (1) stable versus situational, and (2) personal versus national animosity. Riefler & Diamantopoulos (2007) analyzed (1) religious or (2) personal mentality animosity and explored alternative theoretical models of the workings of animosity concluding that consumers may feel animosity towards several other countries. Nes et al., (2012) carried out researches in two countries as a four-dimensional structure: (1) war/military animosity, (2) economic animosity, (3) politics animosity and (4) people animosity to test a model of the relationship between the four animosity dimensions and buying intentions with affect as the mediating variable.

Consumers may hold feelings of animosity or boycott resulted of animosity toward a particular country or company, based on memories of how that they have treated their home country/company so as to express plain displeasure with a country's policy. For example, Jewish consumers avoided the purchase of German-made products because of anti-Semitism during World War II, and Australian and New Zealand consumers boycotted French products by because of the nuclear tests made by France in the South Pacific (Varlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Klein & Ettenson 1998; Klein et al., 1998). Coca-Cola was boycotted because of anti-American sentiments in the Middle East, (The Muslim Cola Wars, 2003). American boycotted French food and wines (Ebenkamp, 2003), German boycotted American products over Iraq War (Kirschbaum, 2003), and McDonald's was boycotted because of America's support for Israel (McDoland's to pull out of Middle East, 2002). Ghandi called Indians to boycott British Salt (Klein et al., 2004). Kuwaiti and other Middle East countries boycotted Danish producers of consumer products because of depiction of the Prophet Mohammed in the Danish press that Middle Eastern consumers considered unpleasant (Munter, 2006; Maher & Mady, 2010). Chinese consumers boycotted Japanese products (Ishii, 2009). Iranian consumer has animosity towards to American products (Bahae & Pisani, 2009). Moreover, Cheah et al., (2016) examined the Chinese consumers' animosity towards the Japanese in terms of willingness to buy hybrid products branded in Japan but made in China, although animosity studies have focused mainly on foreign products. Tabassi et al., (2012) indicated that the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have provoked anti-American and anti-European sentiments in many countries to the point of inciting a rejection of American or European products. Nes et al.,

(2012) categorized some published studies so as to determine the impacts of animosity on buying intentions in terms of products categories, hybrid products, product ownership, cultural subgroups and summarized that national animosities caused by war, economic policies, and other conflicts may have a profound impact on consumer buying behavior. A consistent finding across each of these studies is that animosity and boycott were negatively and significantly impacts on consumers' willingness to buy products from the target country (Klein & Ettenson, 1999:7).

### **Ethnocentrism**

The World has become a big village because of globalization's effect. Nowadays every information and technology is reachable. Because of this, cultures, consumer behavior and of marketing are evolved. This indicates that the perceived morality of purchasing foreign versus domestic products indeed has a substantial impact on consumers' product attitudes (Verleng & Steenkamp, 1999: 527). Consumers buying behavior are under the influence of lots of internal and external factors. Besides animosity and boycott, one of the internal factors is ethnocentrism.

Ethnocentrism comes from Ethnic. "Ethnic" is a term derived from the Greek noun *ethnos*, meaning nation or people, and it is still maintains this basic meaning. "Ethnicity" is derived from the Greek word *ethnikos*, the adjective of *ethnos*, meaning the condition of belonging to a particular ethnic group (Rossiter & Chan, 1998: 127). From the ethnocentric perspective, purchasing imported products is wrong because, it hurts the domestic economy, causes loss of jobs and hurts the society itself (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Ethnocentrism is proven when consumers choose to buy domestic over foreign products despite the later superior attributes. The higher of the ethnocentrism, the more consumers will prefer domestic products than foreign products. There are some consumers with medium ethnocentrism who will have certain tendency to buy foreign products (Alsughayir, 2013; Rahmawati & Muslikhati, 2016).

In the literature, it is possible to find studies related with high, middle and low ethnocentrism. In the high ethnocentrism example, the tendency of Indonesian consumers is to buy more products from abroad, and it is realized by domestic producers, so the manufacturers of domestic products must rebrand and label their products which sound like foreign products so that the resale value becomes higher (Kompas 2008). Rahmawati & Muslikhati (2016: 10) examined the effect of consumer ethnocentrism and quality perception of product on buying behavior of both domestic and foreign food products. The results showed that quality of food products must be good and consumers perceived that the quality of domestic products higher level than foreign products. In the middle ethnocentrism example, Singaporean young

people have low level of ethnocentrism (Lim, 2002). Varma (1998 inside Ari & Madran, 2011:18) found that Indian consumers had very high demand to foreign products and showed low level of ethnocentrism. In the same study, the reasons why Indian consumers had low ethnocentrism listed as the status symbol of using foreign products, increase of relations with the West, the increase in consumer income, the changes in consumer expectations and open to international brands in terms of their cultural background. Garmatjuk & Parts (2015: 614) found relatively low consumer ethnocentrism for skin care products in Estonia. They did not consider purchasing locally manufactured products. Thus buying foreign products was not wrong or irresponsible for them, apart from respondents with high level of ethnocentrism who favors locally produced skin care products.

### **Animosity, Boycott and Ethnocentrism in Turkey**

The animosity countries recognized by Turkish consumers were changed times to times. For example, France was animosity country in 2012, Israel was animosity country from 2009-2015, and Russia has been animosity country since November 23, 2015 because Russia violated Turkish airspace near Syria border.

There are limited studies about animosity, boycott and ethnocentrism in Turkey. For example, Candan et al., (2008) examined the just consumer ethnocentrism and its impact on product evaluation and preferences among young Turkish consumers, and found that ethnocentrism is not included in the purchasing behaviors of the students of Kocaeli University. Armağan & Gürsoy (2011: 68) analyzed the different levels of ethnocentric levels the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and these levels. The tendency of consumers to have a moderate ethnocentrism (60.6%) was calculated. Akdogan et al., (2012) investigated the moderating role of customer loyalty on the relationships between consumer animosity - consumer ethnocentrism, and repurchase intent toward U.S. products. The findings of this study show that customer loyalty has a moderator effect on the interaction of consumer ethnocentrism and repurchase intent toward U.S. products, and the overall results show that animosity and consumer ethnocentrism significantly affect the willingness to purchase U.S. products. Eren (2013) concluded that both economic animosity and historical animosity reduce consumers' intention to buy the products originating from USA and ethnocentrism significantly decreased young Turkish consumers' willingness to buy American products. Hacıoğlu et al., (2013) studied on Turkish consumers' attitudes towards French products framework consumer animosity, ethnocentrism and willingness to buy foreign products. Therefore, apart from Candan et al., (2008) study, consumer animosity and

ethnocentrism have a negative effect on Turkish consumers purchase intent to foreign products, and boycott has a limited effect.

### **Research Methodology, Questionnaire Design and Sampling**

The purposes of this research were to determine attitudes towards products imported from some countries that Turkey has political/economic problems and measure the effects of Turkish students' buying intention. It has been used survey methodology.

The survey questions about animosity and ethnocentrism were adopted from Klein et al., (1998) and Shimp & Sharma (1987). In the structured questionnaire, there were twenty-seven questions in two sections. In the first section, six questions, nominal scales, were asked for the characteristics of respondents. In the second section, twenty-one questions, interval scales, are related to determine the attitudes towards buying foreign products from animosity, boycott and ethnocentrism perspectives.

The questionnaire was pre-tested by five students in order to construct the validity of the measurement scale.

The survey sample frame was Turkish students and conducted in Pamukkale University, Denizli. Data with a sample size of 385 were determined among 55.000 students. 400 questionnaires were distributed and filled 394 by students. The students selected by convenience sampling method, a non-probability sampling method. 6 questionnaires were not evaluated because of some missing answers and 394 completely answered questionnaires used for analysis.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed by the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. Reliability value was calculated as 0,892 for 21 interval scale questions and exceeded the suggested value of 0,70. SPSS 15.0 for Windows was used to analyze data with descriptive statistics, factor and regression analysis.

### **Findings**

Descriptive statistics are given in Table 1 with regard to age, gender, education, personal income, family income and the rate of follow current news. 394 questionnaires were answered by Turkish students in the survey. As seen Table 1, among the 394 respondents, 54,3% were females, 43,4% of the respondents were ages 21-23, 91,4% of the respondents were undergraduate students, 43,1% of the respondent's monthly income was below 500 TL, 40,1% of their family income was 2000-4000 TL, and 81% of the respondent follow daily news from the Internet, televisions and newspapers.

Table 1. Respondents' profile

Gender	N	%	Monthly Student Income	N	%
Female	214	54,3	≤ 500 TL	170	43,1
Male	180	45,7	501-1000 TL	145	36,8
Total	394	100,0	1001-1500 TL	43	10,9
Age	N	%	≥ 1501 TL	36	9,1
≤ 18	14	3,6	Total	394	100,0
19-20	127	32,2	Monthly Family Income	N	%
21-23	171	43,4	≤ 2000 TL	133	33,8
≥ 24	82	20,8	2001-4000 TL	158	40,1
Total	394	100,0	4001-6000 TL	68	17,3
Education Level	N	%	≥ 6001 TL	35	8,9
Graduate Degree	15	3,8	Total	394	100,0
Undergraduate Degree	360	91,4	Follow the daily news		
Associate Degree	19	4,8	Yes	319	81,0
Total	394	100,0	No	75	19,0
			Total	394	100,0

As seen in Table 2, according to the descriptive statistics of interval scale questions about attitudes towards buying foreign products, results showed that respondents would feel guilty, if they bought a products from countries that Turkey has politic/economic crisis ( $\bar{x} = 3,23$ ; Std. Dev.=1,23). However, they can buy products imported from the countries that Turkey has problems and they show that low animosity towards those countries products ( $\bar{x} = 2,70$ ; Std. Dev.=1,04). Respondents' rate who tried to avoid buying foreign products from those countries was medium ( $\bar{x} = 2,95$ ; Std. Dev.=1,06), and they would not prefer to buy products from those countries ( $\bar{x} = 3,23$ ; Std. Dev.=1,23).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Attitude statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
I would feel guilty if I bought a products from countries that we have politic/economic crisis.	3,2310	1,23970
I never buy products belong to countries that we have politic/economic crisis.	2,7056	1,04095
Whenever possible, I avoid buying products from countries that we have politic/economic crisis.	2,9569	1,06562
Whenever available, I would prefer to buy products made in country that we have politic/economic crisis	2,2360	1,03997
I don't like the idea of owing country that we have politic /economic crisis.	3,2589	1,08376
If two products were equal in quality, but one was from Turkey an done was from foreign crisis country, I would pay %10 more for the products from Turkey.	3,8401	1,14466
I dislike countries that have politic and /or economic crisis.	3,1142	1,22304
I feel angry toward countries that have politic and /or economic crisis	3,2005	1,19707
I will never forgive these countries' behavior versus Turkey through political/economic crisis.	3,5787	1,10753
The countries that we have political/economic crisis should pay for what	3,7183	1,10715

it has done.		
The countries that we have political/economic crisis are not a reliable trading partners.	3,7792	1,02363
The countries that we have political/economic crisis wants to gain economic power over Turkey.	3,9162	1,02914
The countries that we have political and/or economic crisis are taking advantage of Turkey.	3,9264	1,01247
The countries that we have political and/or economic crisis have too much economic influence in Turkey	3,4315	,97376
The countries that we have political/economic crisis are doing business unfairly with Turkey.	3,6371	,95056
Turkish products, first, last, and foremost.	3,9695	1,06007
It is not right to purchase foreign products, because in Turkey out of jobs.	3,2665	1,05933
We should purchase products manufactured in Turkey instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	3,7919	1,02505
We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.	3,3350	1,12091
Turkish consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Turks out of work.	3,0406	1,16714
Politic/economic crisis, it is effect to buying intention to these countries products.	3,5533	1,05254

Respondents didn't like the idea of owing products that Turkey has politic/economic crisis ( $\bar{x} = 3,25$ ; Std. Dev.=1,08). Respondents would be ready to pay premium price to domestic products, If domestic and foreign products were equal in quality ( $\bar{x} = 3,84$ ; Std. Dev.=1,14). Respondents disliked countries that Turkey had politic/economic crisis and felt angry them ( $\bar{x} = 3,22$ ; Std. Dev.=1,11). In addition to, they were not ready to forgive those countries ( $\bar{x} = 3,57$ ; Std. Dev.=1,10).

Respondents believed that the countries wanted to gain economic power and took advantage of Turkey with crisis ( $\bar{x} = 3,22$ ; Std. Dev.=1,11). They though that Turkish economy was influenced very much with these crises ( $\bar{x} = 3,43$ ; Std. Dev.=0,97). According to respondents, they had priority for Turkish products ( $\bar{x} = 3,96$ ; Std. Dev.=1,06), and though to buy products manufactured in Turkey ( $\bar{x} = 3,79$ ; Std. Dev.=1,02). Finally, in terms of buying intention, Turkey's politic/economic crisis with other countries affect Turkish buyer behavior and intention for foreign products ( $\bar{x} = 3,55$ ; Std. Dev.=1,05).

In factor analysis, Bartlett's test of sphericity (Sig=0,000) indicates the statistical probability that the correlation matrix has significant correlations among willingness to buy and crisis, commercial relation, ethnocentrism variables and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index was 0,907. Therefore, the construct validity of the survey results was clear and KMO index showed middling sampling adequacy.

The factor analysis of the questions contained attitudes towards foreign products were shown in Table 3. The 21 questions were analyzed.



Eigenvalues that had more than 1 were used to determine the number of factors, and 3 variables were excluded in factor analysis. 18 variables were loaded and four factors that exceeded 0,5 were generated, and reliability values surpassed the suggested value of 0,70.

Table 3. Factor analysis of questions

Questions	Factor Loading				Crb. Alpha	Exp. Variance
	I	II	III	IV		
I. Crisis (Eigenvalue= 6,898)					0,858	38,324
Ques.14	,841					
Ques.13	,805					
Ques.15	,687					
Ques.16	,574					
Ques.17	,531					
II. Willingness to Buy (Eigenvalue = 1,730)					0,805	9,611
Ques. 9		,794				
Ques. 8		,763				
Ques. 7		,692				
Ques.10		,591				
Ques.11		,581				
III. Commercial Relations (Eigenvalue=1,371)					0,767	7,618
Ques.19			,796			
Ques.18			,756			
Ques.21			,651			
IV. Ethnocentrism (Eigenvalue=1,073)					0,763	5,963
Ques.23				,676		
Ques.24				,673		
Ques.26				,650		
Ques.25				,613		
Ques.22				,543		

As shown in Table 3, the four derived factors were named as crises, willingness to buy, commercial relationship and ethnocentrism. Four factors accounted for 61,516% of the total explained variance. The first factor (crisis) consisted of 5 questions and explained 38,324% of the variance.

The relationships among variables were tested using the multiple regression analysis of SPSS for Windows.

Table 4. Regression analysis

Dependent	Independent	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Beta*	T	Sig.
Willingness to Buy	Crisis	,383	,379	80,852	,356	,815	,000
	Commercial Relations				-,032	,323	,530
	Ethnocentrism				,356	-,032	,000

\*β, standardized path coefficients

As can be seen from Table 4, the R<sup>2</sup> value of 0,383 indicated that 38,3% of the variance for willingness to buy was explained by the independent variables, with a significant F value of 80,852 (p < 0,000). The

regression analysis results indicated that just two factors are significant. Crisis and ethnocentrism had the strongest effect on willingness to buy using with beta weights ( $\beta$ ) of 0,356, with all being significant at  $p < 0,000$ . Nevertheless, commercial relations had the negative effects on willingness to buy foreign products using beta weights of -0,032 ( $p > 0,530$ ).

## **Conclusion**

This study investigated to determine attitudes towards products imported from some countries that Turkey has political/economic problems and measure the effects of Turkish students' buying intention the using 394 questionnaires. According to research results, a sampled Turkish student gives a significant importance and priority to domestic products and is ready to premium price. Apart from commercial relationship with countries, animosity came from political/economic crisis and ethnocentrism significantly affects the willingness to purchase foreign products. Thus, as seen Table 2, Turkish students show consumer ethnocentrism and consumer animosity, and have negative attitudes towards foreign products. These results are also supported by Hacıoğlu et al., (2012) and Eren (2013) studies. However, these results are different in Candan et al., (2008) study conducted in Kocaeli University. In that study, Turkish students had low ethnocentrism for foreign products. This change may be due to the different economic and political environments between 2008 and 2016, current political problems of Turkey with Israel, Russia and Syria, and our student's sample who regularly follow daily news from the Internet, televisions and newspapers. The political crisis is therefore determined to strengthen the ethnocentric tendencies and animosity in Turkey and create more negative attitudes and impacts on purchase intent against foreign products.

International/Global marketing activities is a complex process affected by many variables and followed them carefully by international/global marketing managers. Any variables ignored by them create serious problems in achieving the global goals, and political/economic problems with target countries affect host consumer buying behaviors and purchasing intents. Finally, these conflicts and problems create risk for exporter companies. Consequently, ethnocentric tendency of consumers in the target market and thoughts and feelings about the country of origin must be analyzed so as to select most efficient marketing strategies and/or adapt them to local conditions. There are some limitations of our study from the sampled university and time. In further studies, with different sampling group, in different university or different countries should be analyzed in a long time period.

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