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**An examination of the effects of consumer racism and consumer ethnocentrism on
willingness to buy products associated with ethnic Chinese**

Samshul-Amry Abdul-Latif (samshul.amry@yahoo.com)

Asmat-Nizam Abdul-Talib

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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Abstract

Purpose –This paper attempts to investigate the effects of consumer racism and ethnic-level consumer ethnocentrism on Malay consumers' willingness to buy toward products associated with Malaysian ethnic Chinese.

Design/methodology/approach – Potential respondents were obtained through social media platform and were directed to an online survey questionnaire. The total respondents were 210. The hypothesized relationships between the constructs were analyzed using the partial least squares approach.

Findings – Consumer racism was found to have negative effect on product judgment but not willingness to buy. The results also suggest that consumer ethnocentrism did not have any negative effects on both product judgment and willingness to buy. However, three of the unsupported hypotheses have significant t-values which suggest rather interesting findings.

Research limitations/implications – This study did not incorporate specific products and/or brands to predict consumers' reaction, but rather, used a collection of familiar products to elicit generalized response. Future studies can use specific brands or products associated with a particular ethnic group.

Originality/value – This study utilized a modified consumer racism scale to suit the Malaysian marketplace and as according to the country's historical aspects. Similar scale can be utilized in countries with similar historical background and/or multiethnic societies.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, it is imperative for international businesses to align their business decision and strategies in tandem with their targeted consumers' needs and preferences to remain relevant. Consumer behavior is indeed dynamic and fascinating. Consumers do not always purchase products or engage services of higher quality and value, suggesting that in-depth understanding and knowledge about targeted market segments are essential (Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Klein, Ettenson, & Krishnan, 2006; Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998). Consumers of different socio-demographic background tend to behave and consume differently (Klein et al., 1998), what more when significant factors such as cues on country-of-origin, branding, packaging and others can influence consumers' purchasing behavior (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008).

Among many others, consumer ethnocentrism appeared to be quite prominent within the country-of-origin and cross-cultural studies which could provide some useful insights on how consumers behave towards products with foreign origins (Bahae & Pisani, 2009a, 2009b; Klein et al., 2006, 1998; Smith & Li, 2010). In the same light, perhaps more detrimental to consumers' purchasing decision of 'foreign' products, is consumer racism (Ouellet, 2005, 2007).

Previous researches have included racism in their studies which covered many interrelated areas including marketing and advertising (Waller, Fam, & Erdogan, 2005), public health (Harris, Cormack, & Stanley, 2013), and human resource (Fox & Stallworth, 2005) to name a few. However, the impact of racism on consumer behavior received less attention. By conceptualizing consumer racism, Ouellet (2005, 2007) addressed and bridged the gaps between racism and consumer behavior. The effects of consumer racism is evidently 'thriving' in certain marketplaces (Hill & Paphitis, 2011; Ouellet, 2005, 2007).

Since most South East Asian countries are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, perhaps there is a need to study the combined effects of both consumer racism and consumer ethnocentrism on consumer behavior. However, the importance and significance of the historical background of a country needs to be carefully examined in order to understand the underlying cause(s) and the impact it has on both constructs. Previous studies done on consumer racism focused on USA, Canada, France and Australia (Hill & Paphitis, 2011; Ouellet, 2007) which obviously have different historical background leading to their current demographic profiles. Similarly, the underlying causes of consumer ethnocentrism may vary (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, & Melewar, 2001; Josiassen, Assaf, & Karpen, 2011).

Regardless of the possible damaging impacts of both constructs on consumer behavior, researchers have yet to study many areas surrounding these constructs especially under the business environment and unique marketplace conditions of Malaysia. In multi-ethnic Malaysia, ethnic Chinese¹ are largely dominant compared to other ethnic groups in terms of business and commerce participation (Idris, 2008; Wan Husin, 2013), while making up only 24.6% of the country's population (Census, 2011). Although there is yet a study to demonstrate racism between the Malays and Chinese, perhaps the results from two surveys on ethnic relations (Merdeka Center for Opinion Research, 2006, 2011) could provide some clues on how both ethnics groups perceived each other. According to these surveys, racial stereotypes between the two ethnic groups are prevalent and increasing, which could suggest the occurrence of racism.

¹ The term 'ethnic Chinese' in this study refers to Malaysian Chinese residing in the Peninsular Malaysia, while ethnic Malays refer to Semenanjung Malays (or Malays of Peninsular Malaysia). The usage of statements such as 'products/brands owned by Chinese' or 'products/brands associated with Chinese' – meant that the products/brands are either being majority controlled or wholly-owned by Malaysian Chinese.

Besides, several studies expressed the need to focus researches on other regions and countries to increase the body of knowledge and remain relevant to market practitioners (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, & Melewar, 2001; Batra, Alden, Steenkamp, & Ramachander, 2000). Hence, the research objective is to study the possible impacts of consumer racism and consumer ethnocentrism on product judgment and willingness to buy of ethnic Malay majority towards products that are perceived to be from ethnic Chinese minority.

2. Theoretical background

Over a few decades, the studies on racism evolved and many different types of racism were conceptualized including symbolic and subtle racism (McConahay & Hough, 1976; Saucier & Miller, 2003), modern racism (McConahay, 1986), color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), and aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000) to name a few. These varieties of racism were applied in scenarios and issues concerning “blacks and whites” (Saucier & Miller, 2003), immigrants (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Araya, 2000; Mak & Nesdale, 2001) and workplace (Huria, Cuddy, Lacey, & Pitama, 2014; Kwok & Lin, 2014) among many others.

The racism phenomenon can manifest when ethnic minority(s) exist alongside the ethnic majority, and cannot or would not assimilate (Ouellet, 2005). Racism can be defined as “an ideology of racial domination or exploitation that incorporates beliefs in a particular race’s cultural and/or inherent biological inferiority, and uses such beliefs to justify and prescribe inferior or unequal treatment for that group” (Wilson, 1973, cited from Ouellet, 2007, p. 114; Hill & Paphitis, 2011).

While many researchers agreed that traditional/skin-colored-based racism has been replaced by symbolic racism where the differences in culture including the customs, languages and lifestyles of ethnic groups (Taguieff, 1988 cited from Ouellet, 2007) matter instead of

biological and physical differences, there are evidences suggesting that traditional racism still exist (Yoo, Steger, & Lee, 2010).

Seen as a differentialist approach (Garner, 2010) symbolic racism considers the target group as an out-group and is fundamentally different. This suggest that a particular ethnic person or group(s) “have no place in [the] society, that he/she is a danger, an invader, who should be kept at some distance, expelled or possibly destroyed” (Wieviorka, 2010, p. 352). In contrast to the traditional approach, a target may be considered as inferior and be at the lowest level, but at least the target group still have its ‘place’ in society; whereas symbolic racism do not. Based on issues surrounding African Americans or blacks in 1970s America, symbolic racism is described as “the expression in terms of abstract ideological symbols and symbolic behaviors of the feeling that blacks are violating cherished values and making illegitimate demands for changes in the racial status quo” (McConahay & Hough, 1976, p. 38). Over the years, Asians and Hispanics were then included.

Racism, hatred and acts of aggression towards an out-group may be justified through the concept of ‘kin altruism’ where one’s love for his/her own people or group are too overwhelming (Garner, 2010), which perhaps are quite similar to the concept of consumer ethnocentrism.

Consumer ethnocentrism describes ones preference on domestic product disliking or aversion of non-domestic (i.e. foreign) products. Ethnocentrics tend “to view their own group as the center of the universe while interpreting others from their perspective” (Shimp & Sharma, 1987, p. 280), hence they are inclined to reject culturally different but accept those alike (Watson & Wright, 2000). Their tendencies to reject foreign products often imply the

overestimation of the overall quality of domestic products, and underestimation of foreign products (Hamin & Elliott, 2006; Muhammad & Razak, 2004; Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Sharma, Shimp and Shin, 1995; Watson & Wright, 2000)

In supporting domestic product purchases, ethnocentric consumers believe that they are being supportive, patriotic, nationalistic and above all, morally right (Klein et al., 1998). While purchasing imported products may cause harm to the local economy, cause job-loss and unemployment in their country (Klein & Ettenson, 1999; Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Ethnocentric consumers feel that the national interest and economic well-being are being threaten by product imports and such the country deserve their 'help'. With higher occurrence in developed countries rather than underdeveloped or developing countries (Wang & Chen, 2004; Yagci, 2001), the consumers' preference to choose 'home' over foreign products implies the 'in-group and out-group' (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1982) or 'us versus them' concepts (Klein, 2002; Shimp & Sharma, 1987) at many different levels including national ethnocentrism, regional ethnocentrism (Siemieniako, Kubacki, Glinska, & Krot, 2011) domestic or within-country ethnocentrism (Ouellet, 2007). In other words, consumer ethnocentrism can be operationalized at ethnic or sub-national level (Ouellet, 2007).

Previous studies suggested that consumers may have difficulties in linking the correct brands and country of origin (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008; Samiee, Shimp, & Sharma, 2005), especially when products and services are either globalized or localized (Winit, Gregory, Cleveland, & Verlegh, 2014). Similarly, within a country, consumers may face similar problems identifying the ethnicity behind products/services (Ouellet, 2005). Certain cues on the products or services can provide clues to consumers in deducing and guessing their ethnic origins. This may include company addresses, telephone numbers and/or brand

names (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dube, 1994; Ouellet, 2005, 2007) but simultaneously, this can also be confusing to consumers as these cues may also lessen (or enhanced) ethnic embeddedness of the products (Grier, Brumbaugh, & Thornton, 2006). As an example, a brand name could be strongly associated with ethnic Chinese but the product packaging does not have any Chinese characters.

Consumers' individual preferences and beliefs on certain ethnic group may also influence consumers' behavior towards the referent ethnic-oriented products, nevertheless there are minority ethnic products which 'crossed-over' unintentionally but appeared to be appealing to the mainstream ethnic group (Grier et al., 2006).

The act of product consumption can be considered as an extension of the self and is symbolic, which allows consumers to express feelings (Wattanasuwan, 2005). These expressions may include happiness, ethnocentric, nationalistic and others. However, negative feelings can also be evoked when products and services are offered by certain ethnic group (Hill & Paphitis, 2011; Ouellet, 2005, 2007). Negative feelings of antipathy, hatred and racism may be concealed within individual consumers, but can be expressed towards a particular ethnic group through non-purchasing behavior (Hill & Paphitis, 2011).

Hence consumers who degrade products or services perceived to be from other ethnic groups, while justifying their unwillingness to buy based on racial antipathy, aversion and/or hatred, can be labeled as racists. Thus based on the arguments above, the following hypotheses are forwarded:

H₁ (Y13): Consumer racism and product judgment are negatively related. Ethnic Malay consumers with higher level of racism tend to have lower judgment level of products and/or services perceived to be from ethnic Chinese;

H₂ (Y14): Consumer racism and willingness to buy are negatively related. Ethnic Malay majority consumers with higher level of racism tend to have lower level of willingness to buy products and/or services perceived to be from ethnic Chinese minority.

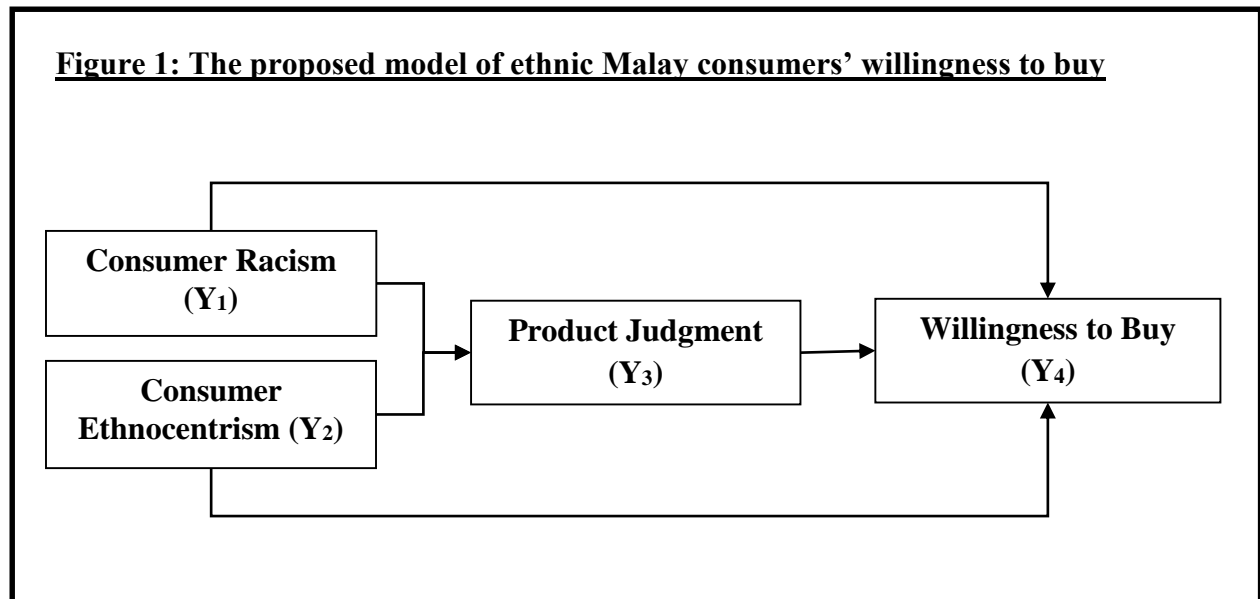
Based on the argument above, similarly, ethnocentric consumers tend to have the tendencies to degrade the quality and influence decision to reject non-domestic including products that are outside their ethnic group. Thus the following hypotheses:

H₃ (Y23): Ethnic level consumer ethnocentrism predicts product judgment negatively. Ethnocentric Malays tend to have lower judgment level of products and/or services perceived to be from ethnic Chinese minority;

H₄ (Y24): Ethnic level consumer ethnocentrism predicts willingness to buy negatively. Ethnocentric Malays tend to have lower levels of willingness to buy products and/or services perceived to be from ethnic Chinese minority;

H₅ (Y34): Product judgment and willingness to buy is positively related. Ethnic Malay consumers with lower levels of judgment of products and/or services perceived to be from ethnic Chinese minority will tend to have lower level of willingness to buy.

Figure 1 below is the overview of the proposed model.



3. Methods

The center of this study will be on the ethnic majority of Malaysia; the Malays, in an environment where the ethnic minority specifically the Chinese, has better business presence and perhaps economic stature in the country.

3.1 Instrument and respondents

Internet surveys are increasingly preferred by marketing researchers for its benefits and advantages (Brick, 2011; Ramo & Prochaska, 2012; Roster, Albaum, & Smith, 2014; Sue & Ritter, 2007). This study employed an online self-administered questionnaire (Gabrielson & Holston, 2014; Li, Tsai, & Soruco, 2013) utilizing a combination of convenient and snowballing sampling approach.

The questionnaire is structured into four sections namely; a brief cover letter, a diagram displaying 30 local Chinese-owned products/brands, the constructs' measurement scales and the demographic questions. The products/brands used in this study include several product categories from the food and beverages industry (homegrown fast-food restaurant chains, bread, snacks, flavored drinks, cooking oils, and flour), convenience stores and auto accessories stores. The rationale behind these selections based on the products' market

presence, consumers' brand familiarity, product affordability and accessibility to most consumers specifically to the Malays (Abdul-Talib & Abdul-Latif, 2015; Li et al., 2013).

Among many other reasons, the potential respondents were sought from the largest social networking website, Facebook due to the sensitivity and explicit nature of this study (Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Ramo & Prochaska, 2012). Through this platform, with minimum or no face-to-face interaction, a certain degree of anonymity (Fang, Wen, & Prybutok, 2014) can be achieved which could decrease social desirability and common method biases (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Essentially, it can also increase cooperation, especially when dealing with sensitive subject (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007).

Two approaches were used in obtaining potential respondents. First, the author approached the acquaintances of his network of friends through private messaging and asked for their participation. A standardized brief explanation of the study and the link to the online survey questionnaire was provided. If the potential respondent agreed, s/he shall click on the provided internet link leading to the online questionnaire. The tone used was casual and non-intrusive. The potential respondents were free to ignore the request made. The author then requested that the participation request post to be shared further (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). Second, participation request posts were also made in several Facebook groups where members have common interests or built around a specific topic (Baltar & Brunet, 2012).

The researchers targeted samples aged 18 years, and of Malay descendants. This segment represents a large key market with fair if not strong influence and purchasing power to purchase the products/brands shown (Abdul-Talib & Abdul-Latif, 2015).

All respondents answered the measurement scales for product judgment (Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Klein et al., 1998), willingness to buy (Klein et al., 1998; Wang & Chen, 2004), consumer ethnocentrism (Klein et al., 2006; Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and a modified version

of consumer racism (Hill & Paphitis, 2011; Ouellet, 2007) which were presented in Bahasa Malaysia or the Malaysian language to suit the target group. The translation was done using back translation approach (Li et al., 2013) whereby the authors being bilingual first translated the constructs' items to Bahasa Malaysia. This is then followed by another round of translation of the items from Bahasa Malaysia to English by a certified external translator². The two results were then compared. Small adjustments on both results were made.

All scales were measured with a 7-point Likert-type scale; where 1 indicates "Strongly disagree", 4 as "Neutral" and 7 as "Strongly agree". Point 2, 3, 5 and 6 were labeled as "Disagree", "More or less disagree", "More or less agree" and "Agree", respectively. Previous studies may have used other than the 7-point Likert-type scale, but the rationale and justification to apply the said scale in this study was that to avoid respondents' potential confusion, to ease and facilitate respondents in answering the questionnaire and for standardization purposes.

In order to suit and "determine whether the constructs accurately reflect domestic realities, as opposed to international realities" (Ouellet, 2007, pg. 126), the items of the constructs were modified accordingly. Modification was done with caution in order to maintain the original essence of the construct. The seven (7) new items introduced and/or modified into the consumer racism construct were based on interviews and literatures of inter-ethnic and socio-political relationships between ethnic groups, and history (Abdullah, 2005; Baharuddin, 2012; Idris, 2008; Tan, 2002; Thock, 2007; Wan Husin & Tee, 2012; Wan Husin, 2012a, 2012b) for example "*After dominating the economy and business world in Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese tend to look down on the Malays*"[CR7]. New items expressed in quotation marks in the questionnaire such as "*Malaysian Chinese do not like Malays. If*

² The external translator engaged is a certified Bahasa/English translator with certification from Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia (Malaysian Institute of Translation & Books). She is also fluent in Mandarin.

possible, they would not buy Malay products/services. Why should we buy and support their products?'[CR3] is among the new items introduced which were sourced from interviews. Subsequently, the respondents were required to provide their demographic details which include their gender, age group, employment type, income group, religion and education level.

3.2 Data Analysis and Approach

PLS-SEM has gained momentum in various area of business related research including consumer behavior, marketing, and international business (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009) especially when causal-predictive analysis is required (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2011). This approach proved to be useful for exploratory purposes and also able to accommodate confirmatory theory testing and theory building with high statistical power compared to its 'cousin' – the co-variance based approach (Hair, Sarstedt, et al., 2011; Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012). For this study, IBM SPSS Statistics version 19.0 will be used to provide descriptive analysis results. To complete the PLS-SEM procedure, SmartPLS version 2.0 (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) will be utilized to analyze the results.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Profile

A total of 210 respondents responded to the online questionnaire after a duration of 20 days. Three non-Malaysians and 31 (15%) non-Malays were removed from the sample, giving a total usable sample of 176 (85%). The total sample is sufficient number of observations to reach a statistical power of 80% for detecting R^2 values of at least 0.10 with 1% probability of error (Cohen, 1992; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014).

The number of female respondents (63%) appeared to be bigger than the males (37%) with all but one respondent are Muslims. 43% of the respondents are working professionals; 15.9% are at management level and 11.5% are at executive level. While the unemployed, students and retirees are 4.5%, 22.2% and 1.1%, respectively. Overall, 77% of the respondents are employed or self-employed.

42% of the respondents are Master degree holders; 30.7% holds bachelor degrees; and 10.2% are doctorate degree holders. 83% of the respondents have at least a bachelor degree while 17% do not. 34% of the respondents earned a monthly household income between RM 3,001 and RM 6,000, while those earned more than RM 10,000 made up 19% of the respondents.

Table 1 below summarizes the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1 : Respondents' Profile

	Age Group (years)									
	Under 21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	Above 55	Total
1) Gender										
a) Male	0	2 (1.1%)	13 (7.4%)	14 (8%)	26 (14.8%)	6 (3.4%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	65 (36.9%)
b) Female	3 (1.7%)	8 (4.5%)	23 (13.1%)	27 (15.3%)	33 (18.8%)	13 (7.4%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.1%)	111 (63.1%)
Total	3 (1.7%)	10 (5.7%)	36 (20.5%)	41 (23.3%)	59 (33.5%)	19 (10.8%)	3 (1.7%)	2 (1.1%)	3 (1.7%)	176 (100%)
2) Household Income										
a) Less than RM 1,000	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.7%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	0	0	0	0	0	6 (3.4%)
b) RM 1,001 - 3,000	0	3 (1.7%)	12 (6.8%)	3 (1.7%)	3 (1.7%)	2 (1.1%)	0	1 (0.6%)	0	24 (13.6%)
c) RM 3,001 - 6,000	0	1 (0.6%)	17 (9.7%)	20 (11.4%)	14 (8%)	6 (3.4%)	0	0	1 (0.6%)	59 (33.5%)
d) RM 6,001 - 10,000	2 (1.1%)	2 (1.1%)	4 (2.3%)	14 (8%)	21 (11.9%)	8 (4.5%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)	0	54 (30.7%)
e) Above RM 10,000	0	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.1%)	3 (1.7%)	21 (11.9%)	3 (1.7%)	1 (0.6%)	0	2 (1.1%)	33 (18.8%)
Total	3 (1.7%)	10 (5.7%)	36 (20.5%)	41 (23.3%)	59 (33.5%)	19 (10.8%)	3 (1.7%)	2 (1.1%)	3 (1.7%)	176 (100%)
3) Education										
a) PhD	0	0	5 (2.8%)	4 (2.2%)	4 (2.3%)	5 (2.8%)	0	0	0	18 (10.2%)
b) Masters	0	1 (0.6%)	19 (10.8%)	17 (9.7%)	29 (16.5%)	4 (2.3%)	3 (1.7%)	0	1 (0.6%)	74 (42.1%)
c) Degree	0	6 (3.4%)	8 (4.5%)	13 (7.4%)	19 (10.8%)	7 (3.9%)	0	0	1 (0.6%)	54 (30.7%)
d) SPM/MCE/HSE	2 (1.1%)	3 (1.7%)	4 (2.3%)	5 (2.8%)	3 (1.7%)	3 (1.7%)	0	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	22 (12.5%)
e) PMR/SRP/LCE	1 (0.6%)	0	0	2 (1.1%)	4 (2.3%)	0	0	1 (0.6%)	0	8 (4.5%)
Total	3 (1.7%)	10 (5.7%)	36 (20.5%)	41 (23.3%)	59 (33.5%)	19 (10.8%)	3 (1.7%)	2 (1.1%)	3 (1.7%)	176 (100%)
4) Employment										
a) Student	3 (1.7%)	8 (4.5%)	20 (11.4%)	5 (2.8%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)	0	0	0	39 (22.2%)
b) Executive Level	0	1 (0.6%)	4 (2.3%)	4 (2.3%)	5 (2.8%)	5 (2.8%)	0	1 (0.6%)	0	20 (11.4%)
c) Management Level	0	0	3 (1.7%)	6 (3.4%)	13 (7.4%)	4 (2.3%)	1 (0.6%)	0	1 (0.6%)	28 (15.9%)
d) Entrepreneur	0	0	0	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)	0	0	0	4 (2.3%)
e) Unemployed	0	0	2 (1.1%)	4 (2.3%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	0	0	0	8 (4.5%)
f) Professional	0	1 (0.6%)	7 (4%)	21 (11.9%)	36 (20.5%)	7 (4%)	2 (1.1%)	0	1 (0.6%)	75 (42.6%)
g) Retiree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.1%)
Total	3 (1.7%)	10 (5.7%)	36 (20.5%)	41 (23.3%)	59 (33.5%)	19 (10.8%)	3 (1.7%)	2 (1.1%)	3 (1.7%)	176 (100%)

4.2 Measurement Validity

There are five essential evaluations for reflective measurement model; the assessment of the composite reliability for internal consistency; the examination of indicators' loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) for the convergent validity; the evaluation of the indicators' cross loadings and observing Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014).

4.2.1 Reliability and Validity

In Table 2, all constructs scored well above the recommended value of 0.700 for composite reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) while the indicators' loadings ranged between 0.747 and 0.936. The constructs also scored above the minimum value of 0.500 for AVE (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 2 : Loadings Significance, Composite Reliability and AVE

Constructs	Items	Loadings	P-Values	CR	AVE
Consumer Ethnocentrism					
Malays should always buy Malay-made products	CET1	0.778	0.000***	0.955	0.704
A good Malay does not buy local / domestic products made by any other ethnic except for Malay	CET2	0.811	0.000***		
We should purchase domestic/local products manufactured by Malay instead of letting other ethnics in this country get rich off us	CET4	0.848	0.000***		
We should only buy local/domestic products from other ethnics, if we cannot obtain the products from our own people	CET5	0.834	0.000***		
Buy Malay made products. Keep Malays working, in business and rich	CET6	0.864	0.000***		
Malay products, first, last and foremost	CET7	0.890	0.000***		
A real Malay should always buy Malay made products	CET8	0.835	0.000***		
It is always best to purchase Malay products	CET9	0.866	0.000***		
It may cost me more but I prefer to support Malay products	CET10	0.822	0.000***		
Consumer Racism					
“Malaysian Chinese do not like Malays. If possible, they would not buy Malay products/services. Why should we buy and support their products?”	CR3	0.889	0.000***	0.950	0.731
Generations of economic domination and discrimination have created conditions that make it easy for the Chinese Malaysians to create businesses and get the consumers to purchase their products	CR4	0.809	0.000***		
“Malaysian Chinese are cheaters and liars. Why should we buy and support their businesses?”	CR5	0.896	0.000***		
Generally, Malaysian Chinese business owners do not value and respect their Malay customers. They are only interested in our money	CR6	0.871	0.000***		
After dominating the economy and business world in Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese tend to look down on the Malays	CR7	0.916	0.000***		
I feel that most Malaysian Chinese business owners are dirty and unhygienic	CR8	0.837	0.000***		
Malaysian Chinese business owners tend to give lower pay and commissions to Malays workers compared to their Malaysian Chinese workers	CR11	0.756	0.000***		
Product Judgment					
Malaysian Chinese products are carefully produced and have fine workmanship	PJ1	0.851	0.000***	0.924	0.710
Malaysian Chinese products show a very high degree of technological advancement	PJ2	0.786	0.000***		
Malaysian Chinese products show a very clever use of color and design	PJ3	0.747	0.000***		
Malaysian Chinese products usually are quite reliable and seem to last the desired length of time	PJ4	0.919	0.000***		
Malaysian Chinese products are usually a good value for the money	PJ5	0.896	0.000***		
Willingness to Buy					
I would feel guilty if I bought Malaysian Chinese products	WTB1	0.925	0.000***	0.952	0.831

I would never buy Malaysian Chinese products	WTB2	0.915	0.000***		
Whenever possible, I avoid Malaysian Chinese products	WTB3	0.869	0.000***		
I do not like the idea of owning Malaysian Chinese products	WTB4	0.936	0.000***		

*** p<0.01 (99%), **p<0.05 (95%), *p<0.1 (90%)

Table 3 exhibits the constructs' cross loadings to assess discriminant validity from a rather liberal approach. The indicators which were intended to measure a specific construct appeared to have higher values compared to when measuring other constructs; suggesting the validity is achieved (Chin, 1998; Grégoire & Fisher, 2006).

Table 3 : Cross Loadings of Indicators

Constructs	Consumer Ethnocentrism	Consumer Racism	Product Judgment	Willingness to Buy
CET1	0.778	0.485	-0.207	0.563
CET2	0.811	0.574	-0.214	0.659
CET4	0.848	0.558	-0.063	0.672
CET5	0.834	0.493	-0.129	0.642
CET6	0.864	0.520	-0.082	0.591
CET7	0.890	0.562	-0.179	0.637
CET8	0.835	0.500	-0.159	0.554
CET9	0.866	0.587	-0.161	0.601
CET10	0.822	0.491	-0.120	0.538
CR3	0.577	0.889	-0.167	0.554
CR4	0.521	0.809	-0.198	0.495
CR5	0.601	0.896	-0.223	0.581
CR6	0.538	0.871	-0.214	0.554
CR7	0.585	0.916	-0.235	0.551
CR8	0.511	0.837	-0.257	0.579
CR11	0.451	0.756	-0.242	0.441
PJ1	-0.160	-0.255	0.851	-0.228
PJ2	-0.028	-0.065	0.786	-0.091
PJ3	0.012	-0.076	0.747	-0.033
PJ4	-0.188	-0.274	0.919	-0.247
PJ5	-0.182	-0.221	0.896	-0.264
WTB1	0.701	0.622	-0.220	0.925
WTB2	0.628	0.568	-0.237	0.915
WTB3	0.623	0.502	-0.191	0.869
WTB4	0.691	0.598	-0.269	0.936

To assess the discriminant validity in a more conservative approach, the square root of the AVE score of each latent constructs must score higher than the construct's highest squared

correlation with any other latent constructs (Bagozzi, 1975; Hair et al., 2014). The scores in Table 4 satisfied this condition.

Table 4 : Discriminant Analysis Results

Constructs	CET	CR	PJ	WTB
1) Consumer Ethnocentrism	0.839			
2) Consumer Racism	0.634	0.855		
3) Product Judgment	-0.175	-0.257	0.842	
4) Willingness to Buy	0.726	0.630	-0.252	0.911

As all of the pre-requisites were satisfied, evaluation of the structural model can be performed.

4.4 Assessment of the Structural Model

4.4.1 Collinearity Assessment

It is also recommended that a reflective measurement model to be assessed for any collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2014). There are two indications of collinearity; when the tolerance level is below 0.20 and the variance inflation factor (VIF) is above 5.00. Table 5 demonstrates that all constructs' values were as accordance to the guidelines, indicating no collinearity issue.

Table 5 : Collinearity Assessment

<i>First Set</i>		
<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
a) Consumer Ethnocentrism	0.602	1.661
b) Consumer Racism	0.602	1.661

<i>Second Set</i>		
<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
a) Product Judgment	0.958	1.044
b) Willingness to Buy	0.958	1.044

<i>Third Set</i>		
<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
a) Consumer Ethnocentrism	0.602	1.661
b) Consumer Racism	0.584	1.711
c) Product Judgment	0.955	1.048

4.4.2 Structural Model Path Coefficient

The path coefficient explains the relationships between the constructs. Values which are closer to zero indicate weak construct relationships. The significance of the coefficients depends on the t-values and the critical value comparison analysis. Hypotheses will be rejected if the coefficients are insignificant or have conflicting directional relationship as hypothesized earlier (Hair et al., 2011).

H_{1a} predicted that consumer racism will have negative relationship with consumers' product judgment. It is shown that consumer racism have strong negative relationship with PJ (path = -0.236, $t = 2.291$, $p < 0.05$), providing support for H_{1a}.

H_{1b} postulated that consumer racism will negatively predict consumers' willingness to buy. The t-values indicated significant score, but the direction of path coefficient was not as hypothesized (path = 0.253, $t = 3.160$, $p < 0.01$). H_{1b} is rejected.

H_{2a} predicted that consumer ethnocentrism and product judgment to be negatively related but no significant relationship was found (path = -0.032, $t = 0.476$, $p > 0.10$). H_{2a} is rejected.

H_{2b} predicted that consumer ethnocentrism and willingness to buy have negative relationship however, the direction of the path coefficient was not as predicted (path = 0.558, $t = 7.730$, $p < 0.01$). H_{2b} is rejected.

Finally, H₃ predicted that consumers' product judgment will positively predict consumers' willingness to buy. It was found that the direction of the path coefficient also did not match as predicted (path = -0.086, $t = 1.699$, $p < 0.05$). H₃ is rejected. Refer to Table 6 below.

Table 6: Hypotheses Testing

No	Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Values	P-Values	Decisions
H1a	Consumer racism negatively predicts product judgment.	-0.236**	0.103	2.291	0.012	Supported
H1b	Consumer racism negatively predicts willingness to buy	0.253	0.080	3.160	0.001	Not supported
H2a	Consumer ethnocentrism negatively predicts product judgment	-0.032	0.068	0.476	0.317	Not supported
H2b	Consumer ethnocentrism negatively predicts willingness to buy	0.558	0.072	7.730	0.000	Not supported
H3	Product judgment positively predicts willingness to buy	-0.086	0.050	1.699	0.046	Not supported

*** $p < 0.01$ (99%), ** $p < 0.05$ (95%), * $p < 0.1$ (90%)

4.4.3 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

To measure predictive accuracy of the model, the coefficient of determination (R²) is the most common method used as it “represents the amount of explained variance of the endogenous constructs in the structural model” (Hair, et al, 2014, pg. 198). There are three categorizations; substantial, moderate or weak, with R² values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25, respectively.

Table 7 exhibits the constructs product judgment (0.067) as weak, and willingness to buy (0.591) as moderate. Certain research area such as consumer behavior, low R² score can be quite impactful even as low as 0.20 (Hair et al., 2014). The R² score of 0.591 indicate that all of the constructs explained 59.1% of the consumers' willingness to buy.

4.4.4 Effect Size f^2

The f^2 effect size analysis can be used to analyze the impact of a specific construct on a selected endogenous construct's R^2 score (Cohen, 1988). With values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35, the f^2 effect can be interpreted as small, medium or large effect sizes, respectively. In Table 8 below, it is shown that most constructs have minute or small f^2 effects on both endogenous constructs, with exception of consumer ethnocentrism on willingness to buy ($f^2 = 0.451$).

The Q^2 values (Chin, 1998; Geisser, 1974; Henseler et al., 2009; Stone, 1974) can be used to examine the model's predictive relevance. Q^2 values which are larger than zero indicates predictive relevance of the exogenous to the endogenous construct. The q^2 effect size is interpreted similarly to previously mentioned f^2 effect size. In Table 8, all exogenous constructs have minute or small predictive relevance except for product judgment to willingness to buy which have no predictive relevance at all ($q^2 = 0.00$). Exogenous construct consumer ethnocentrism have moderate effect on willingness to buy ($q^2 = 0.256$).

Table 7: Results of Q^2 and R^2

Endogenous Constructs	R^2	Q^2
a) Product Judgment	0.066	0.034
b) Willingness to Buy	0.583	0.473

Table 8 : Results on Effect Sizes f^2 and q^2

	Product Judgment			Willingness to Buy		
	Path Coefficient	f^2 Effect Size	q^2 Effect Size	Path Coefficient	f^2 Effect Size	q^2 Effect Size
a) Consumer Racism	-0.244	0.029	0.020	0.262	0.093	0.058
b) Consumer Ethnocentrism	-0.020	0.002	0.004	0.544	0.424	0.256
c) Product Judgment				-0.090	0.018	-0.006

Figure 1 : Algorithm Results

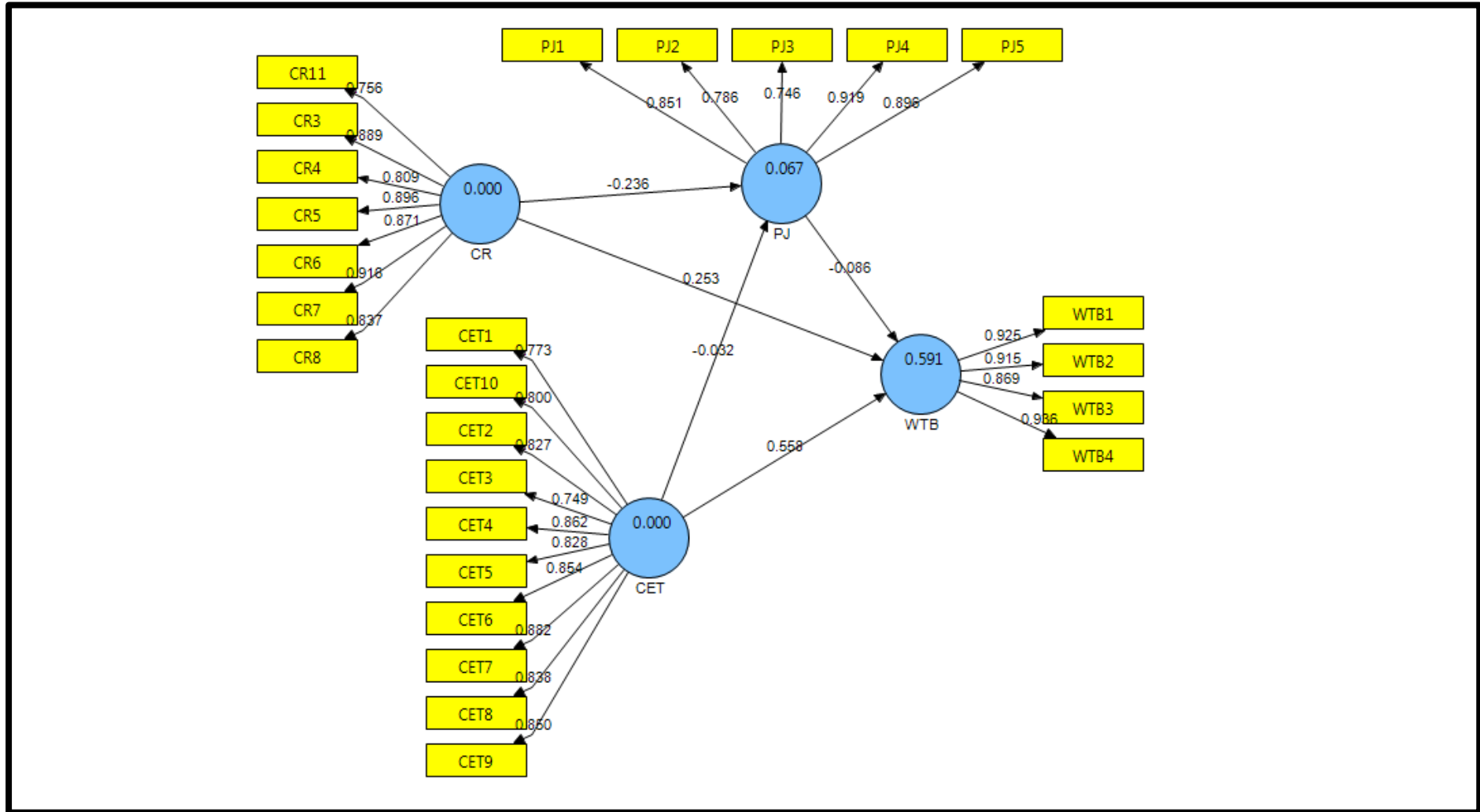
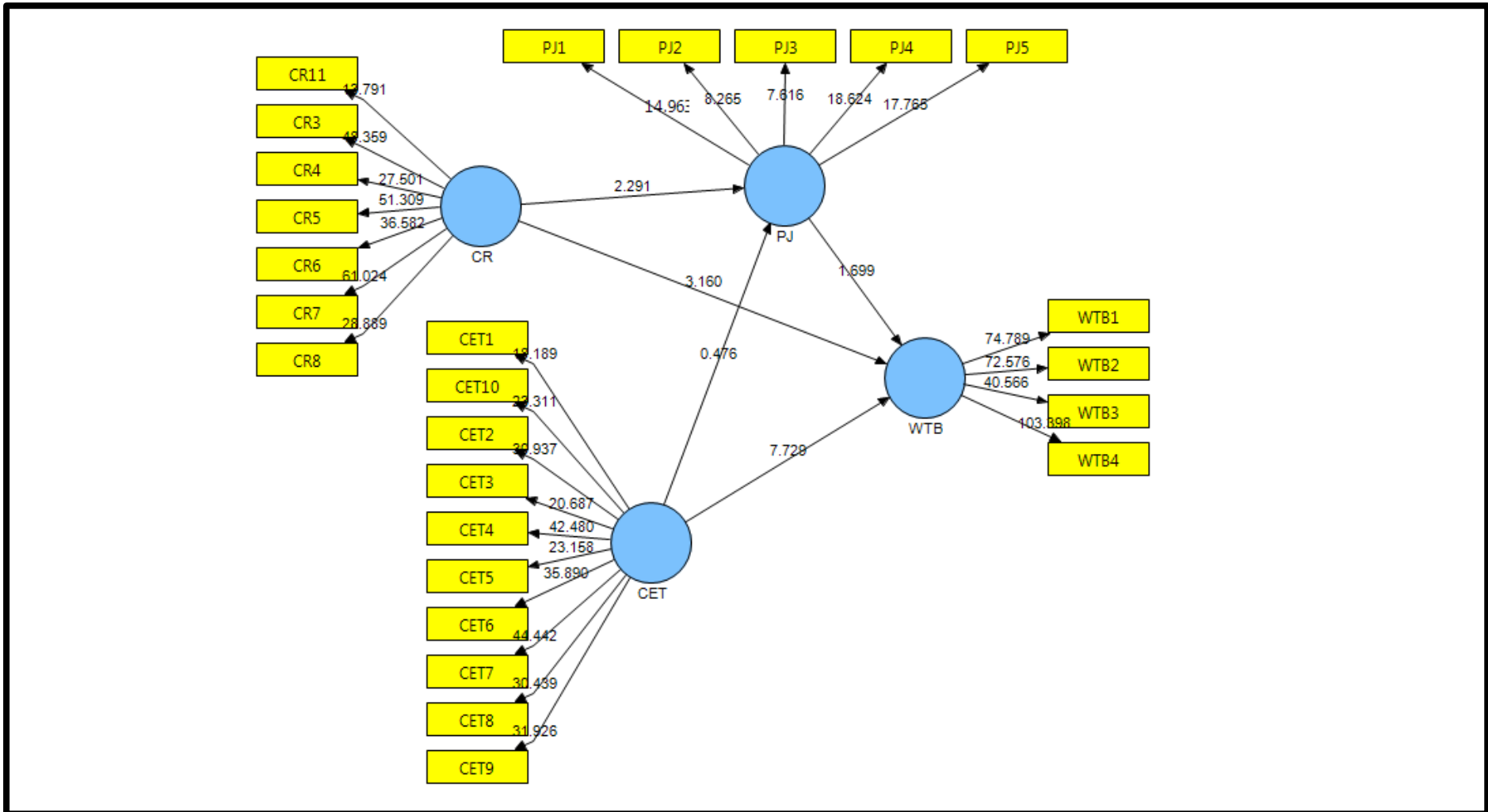


Figure 2 : Bootstrapping Results



5. Discussion

The results showed that consumer racism and product judgment are negatively related whilst supporting some parts of previous studies (Hill & Paphitis, 2011; Ouellet, 2007). Meanwhile, all hypotheses pertaining to consumer ethnocentrism are unsupported. However, it is perhaps worthwhile to discuss and examine the potentials of the unsupported hypotheses (H_{1b} , H_{2b} , and H_3) with substantial t-values and significant p-values.

The first unsupported hypothesis (H_{1b}) showed that consumer racism and willingness to buy is positively related ($P = 0.253$, $t = 3.160$, $p < 0.01$) contradicting previous studies (Hill & Paphitis, 2011; Ouellet, 2005, 2007). This may suggest that Malay consumers albeit being racists, would not entirely reject products offered from ethnic Chinese. This is quite logical since racist consumers also consume certain products associated or originated from the targeted ethnic group(s) (Ouellet, 2007). On the other hand, it could also suggest that Malay consumers may not be racists, but nevertheless are still unwilling to buy products offered by ethnic Chinese.

For unsupported hypothesis H_3 , the results showed that there is a negative relationship between product judgment and willingness to buy ($P = -0.086$, $t = 1.699$, $p < 0.05$) which may suggest that Malay consumers may have favorable judgments of Chinese products but are not willing to purchase. Alternatively, it could also suggest that Malay consumers may have limited choices of products in the market, so much so any products originating from ethnic Chinese would suffice, despite low product judgment. Adding further, the results of the predictive relevance and accuracy analysis may suggest that the product judgments of Chinese products have low importance in Malay consumers' purchase decision. This could also be implied to another related

issue concerning the lack of ethnic Malays' involvement in entrepreneurship and business compared to ethnic Chinese in general (Wan Husin, 2013).

The third unsupported hypothesis H_{2b} indicated that the constructs consumer ethnocentrism and willingness to buy are positively related ($P = 0.558$, $t = 7.730$, $p < 0.01$) and the relationship is quite strong. Consistent with Kamaruddin, Mokhlis, & Othman (2002) this result suggests that Malay consumers are ethnocentric, but perhaps due to limited product offerings by Malay entrepreneurs and businesses, Malay consumers have little choice but to purchase Chinese-owned products. Similarly although at a different level, Kaynak & Kara (2002) noted that Turkish consumers are ethnocentric but at the same time have limited domestic products to purchase. Likewise, Batra et al. (2000) and Klein et al. (2006) suggested that a person may forgo or trade-off the morality dilemma of purchasing foreign products when faced with limited and/or inferior domestic products.

Overall, based on all of the above analyses, it may be summed that the purchase decision of Malay consumers are strongly influenced by consumer ethnocentrism, coupled with little hints of consumer racism. Although both of these constructs are usually associated with having negative effects on consumers' purchase decision, but the results of this study suggest quite the opposite. Perhaps given certain circumstances and situation, consumers may behave differently unlike the way researchers expected. In a marketplace where most products and businesses are well dominated by non-ethnic Malays, this study's results may be quite logical and reasonable. As when limited choices are available to consumers, prior product judgment seems unimportant in purchase decision, as evidenced in the effect sizes analysis results (very small f^2 and q^2 values).

6. Implications and conclusion

Perhaps in general, consumer racism and consumer ethnocentrism can be a threat to the stability of a plural society and can be to a certain extent, damaging to the local economy. While it is difficult to eradicate racism and heal ethnocentrism in a short period of time, there are initiatives and actions which can be considered by marketing practitioners to overcome these threats, or perhaps if deemed strategic, socially beneficial and morally right, could be used to marketers' advantage.

The results suggest that marketers and practitioners may need to re-examine whether their products and brands personify certain ethnicity unintentionally and examine whether this may cause negative effects on the purchase behavior of intended target markets. Additionally, marketers intending to enter new markets either domestic or internationally, should investigate the possible existence of both consumer racism and consumer ethnocentrism. Having to identify these constructs in potential markets may be beneficial to marketers in terms of strategizing and positioning the products and brands.

Similarly, minority-owned businesses might consider to re-evaluate their marketing communication strategies, and reposition or rebranding themselves to be more appealing to the general consumers regardless of ethnic group. However, proper investigation on the possible gain/loss needs to be performed thoroughly, as there are risks of losing current loyal customers in exchange for new ones. This is also applicable to majority-owned businesses seeking to target minority groups.

Policy makers may consider continuous long term nation-wide ‘unity in diversity’ and ‘inclusion’ campaigns in order to combat racism and unhealthy ethnic-level ethnocentrism, as both may take generations to overcome.

This study also has provided early foundation for future consumer racism studies in Malaysia as well as the ASEAN region. Apart from introducing several items for the consumer racism construct, this study also validates both consumer racism and consumer ethnocentrism in the Malaysian context.

However, as consumer racism and consumer ethnocentrism have the reverse of known effects on willingness to buy, perhaps minority-owned companies should further expand their market and effectively compete with new entrants and competitors. Also, marketers can adjust the general marketing and communication strategies used accordingly to overcome negative product country image.

7. Limitations and Future Research Direction

This research has several limitations. First, even if some measures were taken into account to minimize social desirability or common method bias (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) in this study, to claim that the results are free from biases is unfair. As an example, even though anonymity and confidentiality were assured, respondents may still not report truthfully especially involving sensitive, controversial, intrusive and/or embarrassing subject matters (Roster et al., 2014; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Future research could consider other approaches when dealing with sensitive research areas (such as Imai, 2011; Lyall, Blair, & Imai, 2013).

Second, the results may be biased due to consumer preferences and product/brand familiarity, or confusion in identifying products with either ethnic or national identity i.e. the differences between Chinese-owned products and Malaysian-owned products (Li et al., 2013). The use of assorted products and services together could be ‘double barreled’ (Sharma, 2014), but nevertheless it provided a generalized response towards the target group. Perhaps future researches could first establish the linkage between brands, product categories and ethnic groups through focus groups (Li et al., 2013) to overcome such shortcomings. Also the samples appeared to be slightly skewed towards the middle class segment.

Third, researchers could consider the settings of multi-cultural, multi-religion and developing country (such as Indonesia), and the effects and interaction of constructs such as consumer animosity (Klein et al., 1998), consumer religiosity or religious affiliation (Tabassi, Esmailzadeh, & Sambasivan, 2012) and consumer cosmopolitan (Caldwell, Blackwell, & Tulloch, 2006) among many others in future studies. The model could also be extended to other ethnic groups and perhaps examine at regional level (i.e. East Malaysia and West Malaysia). Future researchers could incorporate the latest measurement for consumer ethnocentrism (Sharma, 2014) into the present model, while examining consumer racism between countries of distinct cultures and ethnic groups (e.g. between Africa and Asia).

Fourth, the unobserved heterogeneity was not examined, of which future research could investigate as noted by Hair et al (2014) that parameter differences related to unobserved heterogeneity may prevent a model from being estimated accurately.

Finally, the items within the consumer racism construct has historical and economic arguments relevant to Malaysia, possibly future researchers could identify or incorporate other various

influences and dimensions as according to their target country where deemed fit. This study focused on behavioral intentions or willingness; therefore it does not necessarily represent actual behavior.

Appendix 1

Product Judgment

- 1.1 Produk orang Cina Malaysia diperbuat dengan teliti serta mempunyai kemahiran kerja yang halus
(*Malaysian Chinese products are carefully produced and have fine workmanship*)
- 1.2 Produk orang Cina Malaysia mempamerkan kemajuan teknologi yang tinggi
(*Malaysian Chinese products show a very high degree of technological advancement*)
- 1.3 Produk orang Cina Malaysia mempamerkan penggunaan warna dan disain/rekabentuk yang baik
(*Malaysian Chinese products show a very clever use of color and design*)
- 1.4 Produk orang Cina Malaysia selalunya tahan dan boleh dipercayai
(*Malaysian Chinese products usually are quite reliable and seem to last the desired length of time*)
- 1.5 Produk Cina Malaysia mempunyai nilai yang baik bagi wang anda
(*Malaysian Chinese products are usually a good value for the money*)

Willingness to buy

- 2.1 Saya rasa bersalah sekiranya membeli produk orang Cina Malaysia
(*I would feel guilty if I bought Malaysian Chinese products*)
- 2.2 Saya tidak akan membeli produk orang Cina Malaysia
(*I would never buy Malaysian Chinese products*)
- 2.3 Apabila mungkin, saya elak membeli produk orang Cina Malaysia
(*Whenever possible, I avoid Malaysian Chinese products*)
- 2.4 Saya tidak suka memiliki produk orang Cina Malaysia
(*I do not like the idea of owning Malaysian Chinese products*)
- 2.5 Sekiranya terdapat dua produk yang sama, dan salah satu nya adalah produk Melayu, saya sanggup membayar 10% ekstra untuk produk Melayu
(*If two products were equal in quality, but one was from a Malay, I would pay 10% more for the Malay product*)

Consumer Ethnocentrism

- 3.1 Orang Melayu sepatutnya membeli produk buatan orang Melayu
(*Malays should always buy Malay-made products*)
- 3.2 Orang Melayu yang sejati tidak akan membeli produk buatan orang lain, selain daripada orang Melayu
(*A good Malay does not buy local / domestic products made by any other ethnic except for Malay*)
- 3.3 Adalah tidak betul untuk membeli produk buatan bukan orang Melayu kerana ia menyebabkan pekerja Melayu kehilangan pekerjaan mereka
(*It is not right to purchase domestic / local products made by non- Malay because it puts Malay out of job*)
- 3.4 Kita sepatutnya membeli produk buatan orang Melayu, kerana kaum lain menjadi kaya atas pembelian kita
(*We should purchase domestic/local products manufactured by Malay instead of letting other ethnics in this*)

country get rich off us)

- 3.5 Kita akan beli produk daripada kaum lain, hanya apabila kita tidak dapat membeli daripada kaum kita sendiri
(We should only buy local/domestic products from other ethnics, if we cannot obtain the products from our own people)
- 3.6 Beli produk orang Melayu. Agar orang Melayu terus bekerja, terus berniaga dan kaya
(Buy Malay made products. Keep Malays working, in business and rich)
- 3.7 Produk orang Melayu pilihan pertama, terakhir dan terutama
(Malay products, first, last and foremost)
- 3.8 Orang Melayu yang sejati selalu membeli produk buatan orang Melayu
(A real Malay should always buy Malay made products)
- 3.9 Membeli produk orang Melayu adalah langkah terbaik
(It is always best to purchase Malay products)
- 3.10 Saya memilih untuk menyokong produk orang Melayu walaupun ia mungkin lebih mahal
(It may cost me more but I prefer to support Malay products)

Consumer Racism

- 4.1 Kita patut sokong usaha orang Cina Malaysia dalam membina kejayaan perniagaan mereka dengan membeli barangan dan perkhidmatan mereka
(We should support the Malaysian Chinese in their struggle to build their own successful businesses in Malaysia by consuming their goods and services).
- 4.2 Peniaga Cina Malaysia sentiasa memberi diskaun yang banyak kepada pelanggan Cina mereka, tetapi kepada pelanggan Melayu hanya sedikit diskaun sahaja diberi.
(Malaysian Chinese business owners tend to give hefty discounts to their Chinese customers; while their Malay customers only get small discounts)
- 4.3 “Orang Cina Malaysia tak suka orang Melayu. Kalau boleh, mereka tak akan beli produk/servis orang Melayu. Kenapa kita nak sokong produk mereka?”
(“Malaysian Chinese do not like Malays. If possible, they would not buy Malay products/services. Why should we buy and support their products?”)
- 4.4 Akibat penguasaan ekonomik dan diskriminasi, ia membentuk keadaan yang mudah untuk orang Cina Malaysia memulakan perniagaan, mendapat sokongan dan pembelian produk daripada pelanggan
(Generations of economic domination and discrimination have created conditions that make it easy for the Chinese Malaysians to create businesses and get the consumers to purchase their products)
- 4.5 “Orang Cina Malaysia memang suka menipu. Kenapa kita nak beli barangan dan sokong perniagaan mereka?”
(“Malaysian Chinese are cheaters and liars. Why should we buy and support their businesses?”)
- 4.6 Kebanyakan peniaga Cina tidak hormat dan tidak hargai pelanggan Melayu. Mereka hanya mahukan wang kita.
(Generally, Malaysian Chinese business owners do not value and respect their Malay customers. They are only interested in our money)

- 4.7 Setelah menguasai ekonomi dan dunia peniagaan di Malaysia, orang Cina Malaysia memandang hina kepada orang Melayu
(After dominating the economy and business world in Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese tend to look down on the Malays)
- 4.8 Saya berasa peniaga Cina Malaysia kebanyakannya pengotor dan tidak bersih
(I feel that most Malaysian Chinese business owners are dirty and unhygienic)
- 4.9 Sejak kebelakangan ini, kedai dan syarikat milik orang Cina Malaysia kurang mendapat sambutan daripada apa yang sepatutnya
(Over the past few years, Malaysian Chinese-owned shops and companies have gotten less business than they deserve from customers)
- 4.10 Sejak kebelakangan ini, syarikat milik orang Cina Malaysia mendapat sambutan melebihi daripada apa yang sepatutnya
(Over the past few years, Malaysian Chinese-owned businesses have been shopped at more than they deserve by consumers)
- 4.11 Peniaga/Usahawan Cina Malaysia beri gaji dan komisen kepada pekerja Melayu lebih rendah berbanding dengan pekerja Cina
(Malaysian Chinese business owners tend to give lower pay and commissions to Malays workers compared to their Malaysian Chinese workers)

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