Is Consumer Animosity a Two-Way Street? a Story of Three Countries

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Much research has been done examining why consumers buy certain products; less attention has been devoted to investigations on why consumers avoid certain purchases. A recent stream of studies on consumer animosity focuses on what makes consumers shun products from foreign countries in spite of high product quality. These studies examined consumer animosity as a one-directional construct in a single-country setting. The present study represents a first inquiry into the reciprocal nature of consumer animosity, as well as its impact on consumers’ willingness to purchase foreign products in a cross-country setting (i.e., the U.S., China and Japan).

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Consumer Animosity a Two-Way Street? A Story of Three Countries

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Much research has been done examining why consumers buy; less attention has been given to investigations of why consumers do not buy. Studies in consumer animosity, representing one of the latter streams, focus on what makes consumers shun products from certain countries in spite of high product quality. This study represents a first inquiry into the reciprocal nature of consumer animosity, as well as its impact on consumers’ willingness to purchase foreign products in a cross-country setting (i.e., the U.S., China and Japan).

The objective of this study is twofold. First of all, this study examines whether the construct of consumer animosity is reciprocal in nature. Most of the studies that addressed the topic of animosity (e.g., Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998, Klein 2002, Kalliny and Lemaster 2005, Hong and Kang 2006, Russell and Russell 2006, Shoham et al. 2005, Hinck 2004) studied consumer animosity as a one-directional construct in a single-country setting. The present study represents a first attempt to examine consumer animosity as a two-way street, namely, consumers’ animosity attitude toward a foreign country should influence consumers from this foreign country and affect their purchase decisions as well. Studying consumer animosity in the U.S., China and Japan and its impact of on consumers’ willingness to buy foreign products, this study contributes to the literature by examining the dynamics of consumer animosity in a cross-country setting.

Secondly, this study investigates the relationship between consumer animosity, product evaluation, consumer ethnocentrism and consumers’ purchase intentions (i.e., willingness to buy). We want to extend the current literature on consumer animosity to examine if consumer animosity, product evaluation, consumer ethnocentrism and purchase intentions interact differently under different levels of animosity (e.g., high vs. low). Since consumers may hold different levels of animosity toward two different countries and toward the