

DOES CONSUMER ANIMOSITY MATTERS ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE YOUNG MUSLIM CONSUMERS IN MALAYSIA? A STUDY ON USA BRANDS

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aimed to determine young Muslims' animosity towards USA. This study also examined the impacts of socio demographic characteristics on their level of consumer animosity, and their perceptions towards USA brands' attributes.

Design/methodology/approach – Data collection method was self-administered survey, and the sampling method was convenience sampling.

Findings – Results found young Muslims were high in consumer animosity. Socio demographic characteristics such as gender and socio economic status was found to have significant influences on consumer animosity, and perceptions towards USA brands.

Practical implications – Marketers of new USA brands can try to mask the brand origin image and associate their brand with a country with favourable image. Whilst, marketers of established brands need to focus on product attributes-related information when targeting this segment. Furthermore, marketers shall consider the influence of socio demographic characteristics of their target, particularly in the design and formulation of their marketing strategy and communication.

Originality/value – This study explores young Muslim consumers' animosity towards USA. The influences of socio demographic characteristics on consumer animosity, and perceptions towards USA brands' attributes were also tested.

Keywords – Consumer animosity, Country of origin, Muslim consumers, Brand perception, USA brands

Paper type – Research paper

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has accelerated the development of international supply chain system, which makes wider brand and product choices available to consumers worldwide as the trade activities between countries are getting active from time to time. As a result, the concept of country of origin (COO) has then continuously receiving greater attention from academic researchers and market practitioners.

Trade relations between Malaysia and the USA has been good and Malaysia values Americans' investment (Ang et al., 2004). Both countries are parties to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a proposed trade agreement among 12 countries comprising nearly 40% of the global economy (Ian, 2015). Overall, foreign franchising has flooded the Malaysian marketplace, whereby United States of America (USA) has been the top origin country of foreign franchising brands that dominating the market (Adhuna, 2018).

The United States and Malaysia are major trade and investment partners. USA and Malaysia engage actively and closely on trade and investment issues, particularly under the 2004 Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, whereby they achieved goods and service trade with a total estimated \$60.1 billion in 2020 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2021). In 2020, Malaysia is the 18th largest goods trading partner of USA, while Malaysia was the USA's 22nd largest goods export market, as per reported by the Office. In addition, Malaysia received \$13.5 billion of foreign direct investment (FDI) from the USA, and sales of service by majority USA-owned affiliates recorded \$8.2 billion 2018.

However, anti-USA sentiments exist in Malaysia. YouGov's Brand Boycotters Report revealed that 30% of Malaysian consumers have boycotted a brand and half (48%) of those who boycotted a brand say they still do not want to use brands originated from USA. At a pro-Palestinian rally in Kuala Lumpur on August 8, 2014, there were calls for a boycott of a range of products and companies, including McDonald's, and similar calls circulated on social media. There were also two protests outside McDonald's outlets in Malaysia. On May 19, 2021, according to Yahoo News, Malaysia's Halal Activists against the attack of Israeli forces have launched a boycott of products from the USA, starting with Coca-Cola.

Additionally, there were also some issues that led to unpleasant feeling of Malaysian against the USA, namely the USA's imposition of unreasonable restriction on the issuance of VISA for visitors from the Muslim countries after the incident of 911, and the U.S. involvement in other countries' internal affairs and economics. The USA was blamed for the Asian economic crisis in 1998, where the USA was perceived to be behind the IMF's strict rescue condition (Ang et al., 2004).

In addition, the USA was seen as interfering in Malaysia's internal affairs. For instance, the Vice President of the USA, Al Gore, called for democracy in Malaysia (Ang et al., 2004), where he and the USA senate called for the release of the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, from prison. In August, the USA officially expressed the concern over the forced charges against Anwar Ibrahim (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Also, in the early of 1990s, the USA discouraged a Malaysian government's proposal, which was the formation of the East Asian Economic Group (EAEG), an East Asian forum on international trade issues (Mohamad, 2011). The USA had great leverage with Japan and South Korea, as well as encouraged some ASEAN nations to go against the idea, he said.

Furthermore, the USA has summoned the charge' d'affaire at the Malaysian Embassy, Washington, District of Columbia, Ilango Karuppanan, to protest Malaysia's 'crackdown on dissent' when the opposition was trying to form a new government (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Additionally, the US Senator Lugar expressed concern over the report on human trafficking of Burmese at the Thai-Malay border (Human Rights Watch, 2010). In 2009, Malaysia was blacklisted in the U.S. State Department annual "Trafficking in Persons Report 2009," where Malaysia was downgraded to Tier 3, which indicated Malaysia has just not done enough to combat human trafficking (The Star, 2009). Thus this study intends to measure and examine young Muslims' animosity towards the USA and the influence of its on consumer s' perceptions. This is in response to the concern highlighted by Teo and Mohamad (2017), where the researchers critically pointed out that different ethnic groups exhibits significant different level of consumer animosity and preferences towards various product categories-brands' countries of origin matches.

Many evidence has proven consumers tend to have favourable attitude and behaviour towards product from western and developed countries, however, there are also some studies that found consumers have a tendency to reject foreign product, especially product from particular countries even though they evaluate the product favorably. This consumer boycott phenomenon has existed for more than a century as activism against foreign goods (Smith & Li, 2010).

Previous researchers explained this situation as consumer animosity where consumer might avoid product from the offending nation, where the negative feelings are shaped by historical events, recent or ancient, that influence the choices that a consumer will make (Nakos & Hajidimitriou, 2007). Consumer animosity is a subset of country of origin research stream, which measures consumers' attitudes towards imported goods with particularly regard to the impact and legacy of bi-national relations as a product judgment and purchase decision attribute (Bahae & Pisani, 2009). This study aims:

1. To measure young Muslims' consumer animosity towards the USA;
2. To test the level of consumers animosity towards USA based on the differences in relation to socio demographic characteristics; and
3. To test the differences of socio-demographic characteristics on perceptions towards the USA brands' attributes.

2. Literature Review

Consumer animosity is defined as "the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events- will affect consumers' purchase behavior in the international marketplace" (Klein et al., 1998). Animosity comprised consumer attitudes toward a specific country (Klein & Ettenson, 1999), where consumers from a country might show favourable evaluation towards product from particular countries, but will reject to buy it. Scholars have interpreted consumer animosity as a normative influence that affects consumer purchase behavior (Huang et al 2010a, 2010b; Wang et al. 2013). This hostility is a factor in consumers' reluctance to buy products from some countries because of "social pressure or fear of psychosocial consequences". (Amine 2008; Fong et al. 2014). Many other studies confirm the credibility of this argument (Huang et al. 2010a; Shoham et al., 2006; Shoham et al. 2016).

Animosity was categorized into two categories, situational animosity and stable animosity, as shown in Table 1. Situational animosity refers to a specific circumstance where based on beliefs that arise from previous or ongoing hostility that driven by a specific event; where stable animosity is long lasting and deep rooted that can evolve over time through a series of events (Leong et al., 2008). Furthermore, these two categories resulted to four types of consumer animosity, based on the level of animosity. Table 1 discusses the classification of consumer animosity. Empirical study conducted by Leong et al. (2008) proves that situational animosity has direct and indirect effect on consumer willingness to purchase, while the impact of stable animosity is mediated by situational animosity.

Table 1

Animosity Classification

	Stable	Situational
National	-Arises from general historical background. -For example, the USA is an unreliable trading partner.	-Arises temporarily by specific circumstances. -For example, the USA is trying to take advantage of my country through Malaysian-US Free Trade Agreement.
Personal	-General negative feeling due to personal experience. -For example, I feel angry towards the USA.	-Temporarily negative sentiments caused by specific circumstances. -For example, I feel angry towards the USA for supporting the Zionist regime in Israel.

Notes. Adopted from Leong et al. (2007), and updated by the authors.

In terms of the antecedents of consumer animosity, Bahae and Pisanis (2009) found that social identities of Iranians such as education, age and foreign travel experience are negatively related to consumer animosity. Interestingly, they found that women and students demonstrated greater animosity towards the US as compared with men and nonstudent samples. Further, age was found to have positive relationship with consumer animosity. Klein and Ettenson (1999) found older people, and white American who hold unfavourable attitude about Asians tend to display animosity toward Japan. Klein and Ettenson (1999) demonstrated old, white, patriotic and union members tended to hold animosity against Japan.

Previous research demonstrates that consumer animosity may stem from an array of factors including past and ongoing political tensions between countries, past wars, and trade discords (Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Klein et al., 1998). Consumer animosity, in turn, is likely to result in anger which negatively affects consumers' judgments of product quality (Rose, Rose and Shoham, 2009) as well as their willingness to buy products made in the offending country (Fernández-Ferrin et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2013).

In emerging Asia, the growth of individualism and the decline of collectivism may affect consumer behavior towards foreign brands. As young consumers in emerging Asian markets increasingly accept Western and individualistic values, they may show changes in values, such as cosmopolitanism and consumer hatred, which will affect their buying behavior, especially foreign brands (Han, 2017a, b).

This finding could be explained by consumer in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination that can be influenced by their group identification level. This is because some members display higher

identification as an individual may be part of a member of groups, such as ethnicity, religion or occupational groups, that which might vary with respect to their importance and value to this person (Verlegh, 2007). Other than socio demographic attributes, the study of Leong et al. (2008) revealed that external attribution (external party is blamed for the occurrence) and external control (the entity perceived to be responsible for an outcome has the power to change the course of events) presented significant positive relationship with situational animosity.

High animosity consumer may purchase imported product, but they tend to reject products from certain countries, even though they evaluate products from those countries favourably. Consumers might avoid products from disliked nation maybe the nation was involved in military, political or economic activities that consumers find both grievous and difficult to forgive, but not because of their concern about product quality (Klein et al., 1998).

For example, Turkish consumers prefer to buy Turkish products in order to support Turkish enterprises and economy (Acikdilli et al., 2018). French support for the Armenian genocide caused a backlash among Turkish consumers (Balikçioğlu and Kocak, 2018), and consumer hatred led to a boycott of French products in Turkey. The United States escalated its trade protectionism policy by imposing tariffs on foreign goods, leading to a boycott of American products by Canadian consumers (Li & Liu, 2019). The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has affected the purchase of Ukrainian and Russian products by consumers in their respective countries by disrupting business transactions (Makarin & Korovkin, 2018).

In addition, consumers from developing countries have been shown to have more stereotyped perceptions. A study on 319 Americans that was carried out by Funk et al. (2010) revealed that consumers' willingness to purchase a hybrid product is negatively affected by partial production shifts to an animosity-evoked nation. In Asia, South Korea's deployment of the US missile defense system has led to tensions with China, which has led to a decline in Chinese consumers' willingness to buy South Korean products. This in turn affected the business of Korean companies (Kang et al., 2018).

Empirical evidence on Malaysian consumers' animosity is rather limited. During the boycott of Israeli products, it was found that Malaysia's intention to participate in the boycott was moderate (Hamzah & Mustafa, 2019). The willingness of Malaysian consumers to boycott Israeli products is mainly due to three factors: hostility, subjective norms and product judgment (Abdul Talib and Mohd Adnan, 2017).

The literature search revealed that Malaysians were high in consumer animosity towards Americans (Ang et al., 2004; Lwin & Stanaland, 2010), particularly they possessed greater situational animosity towards the USA than Japan (Jung et al., 2002). This study hopes to fill contribute to the literature by focusing only on young Muslim Malays' animosity towards the USA, and also examined their socio demographic characteristics. Besides, respondents' perceptions towards the USA brands' attributes based on socio demographic characteristics were also examined.

3. Methodology

The data collection method was self-administered survey. Questionnaires were distributed to young consumers in Malaysia. Respondents whose age ranged from 16 to 30 years old were selected to be the sample of this study. This is in line with previous studies which categorized consumers in this age range as young consumer (e.g., O’Cass & Lim, 2002; Goi, 2009). Furthermore, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2021) reported that the median age of Malaysia is approximately 29.3 years old in 2021, and this age group comprises almost 30% of total Malaysia’s population (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). The data collection activity was done in Pulau Pinang, Perak, and Kuala Lumpur. A total 138 responses were usable in this study.

The questionnaire consisted three parts. First part was developed to collect respondents’ socio demographic information, such as age, gender, marital status, education, household income, and vocation. Secondly, 7 items were developed to measure consumer animosity level towards the USA. Lecturers in marketing, economics, and political sciences were consulted to validate the measures. Responses to items were solicited on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

Lastly, the questionnaire was designed to measure respondent s’ perceptions towards the USA brands’ attributes. There were 10 items designed to measure subjects’ perceptions towards USA brand’s attribute. These items were adopted from previous research (Leonidou et al., 1999; Jin et al., 2006; Kinra, 2006; Yeong et al., 2007). A 5-point semantic scale, ranging from 1 = *poor/cheap* to 5 = *excellent/expensive*, was used to measure respondents’ perceptions.

4. Results and Findings

Table 2 demonstrates the information about respondents’ socio demographic background. Majority of the respondents fall into age group of 21 to 25 years old (65 respondents or 47.1%), followed by 26 to 30 years old (46 respondents or 33.3%) and 16 to 20 years old (27 respondents or 19.6%). The samples were quite balanced in terms of gender, where females (81 respondents or 58.7%) were slightly more than males (57 respondents or 41.3%). Most of the respondents were singles (78.3%).

In terms of education, majority was university degree holders (70 respondents or 50.7%), followed by postgraduate (37 respondents or 26.8%) and secondary (31 respondents or 22.5%) degree holders. More than half of the respondents were student (56.5%). For monthly household income, 62 respondents (44.9%) fall into the category of RM 3000 and above, followed by more than RM1000 but less than RM3000 and RM1000 and below, which were 31.2% and 23.9%, accordingly.

Table 2

Sample Characteristics

Socio demographic	Categories	Frequency (n=138)	Percentage (%)
Age	16-20	27	19.6
	21-35	65	47.1
	26-30	46	33.3
Gender	Male	57	41.3
	Female	81	58.7
Marital status	Single	108	78.3
	Married	30	21.7
Education	Secondary	31	22.5
	Tertiary	70	50.7
	Postgraduate	37	26.8
Vacation	Working adult	60	43.5
	Student	78	56.5
Monthly household income	RM1000 and below	33	23.9
	RM1001 but less than RM3000	43	31.2
	RM 3000 and above	62	44.9

Subsequently, descriptive analysis and reliability test were conducted to measure the mean value, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha of the measure. The results presented in Table 3 showed that the reliability coefficient of this set of measure was good, where the Cronbach's alpha was .88. According to Sekaran (2003), Cronbach's alpha above .80 is considered good.

Among these 7 items, animosity score ranged from 4.23 (1.20) to 3.58 (1.12). Item "I feel angry towards the USA for supporting the Zionist regime in Israel" received the highest mean score, which was 4.23. Overall, respondents were reasonably high in consumer animosity, where the overall mean value was 4.00 and the standard deviation was .88.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Consumer Animosity towards the USA

No.	Item	Mean value	Standard deviation
1	I feel angry towards the USA for supporting the Zionist regime in Israel.	4.23	1.20
2	I am unhappy with the Americans as they are responsible for a lot of the world economic problems.	4.11	1.13
3	I resent the USA for imposing unreasonable restriction on the issuance of VISA for visitors from the Muslim countries.	4.12	1.17
4	I feel angry whenever the USA gets involved with other countries' internal affairs.	4.07	1.10
5	I resent the USA for accusing Malaysia as a transit of human trafficking.	3.96	1.12
6	I am unhappy with the USA wanting to control Malaysian economy with their unfair terms through Malaysian-United States Free Trade Agreement (MUSFTA).	3.96	1.22
7	I feel upset that the Americans are exporting American culture to other countries through television, movie, music, etc..	3.58	1.12
Overall		4.00	.88
Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)		7 items	.88

Note. All items used a 5-point Likert scale with (1 = *Strongly disagree* and 5 = *Strongly agree*)

Analysis of independent samples *t*-test and One-way ANOVA were run to test the influences of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics on their consumer animosity. Results were presented in Table 4. Gender were found significantly different in their consumer animosity towards the USA. Moreover, the results of one-way ANOVA demonstrated that in terms of education, all three groups were significantly different, where the *F*-value was 10.58. The results of post-hoc analysis, namely Duncan's range test showed that respondents with postgraduate degree (4.27) and tertiary degree (4.12) possessed significantly high consumer animosity towards the USA, as compared with those who have secondary degree (3.41). The mean values revealed that the higher the education levels the higher their consumer animosity towards the USA.

In addition, significant result was also found on household income, where the group of RM1000 and below (3.58) had significantly low consumer animosity towards the USA, compared with the group RM 1001 but less than RM3000 (3.96) and the group RM3000 and above (4.26). The *F*-value was 7.14. The mean values also showed that respondents with higher household income had higher consumer animosity towards the USA. However, results of analysis found no significant results on marital status and vocation.

Further, tests of difference were carried out to test the significant differences between groups on their perceptions towards the USA brands' attributes. A 5-point semantic scale was used to measure respondents' perceptions towards the USA brands. Independent sample *t*-test was first run to test

the significant differences between males and females on their perceptions towards the USA brands. Subsequently, one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the significant differences between groups based on education level, and monthly household income. Analysis results were illustrated in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3, accordingly.

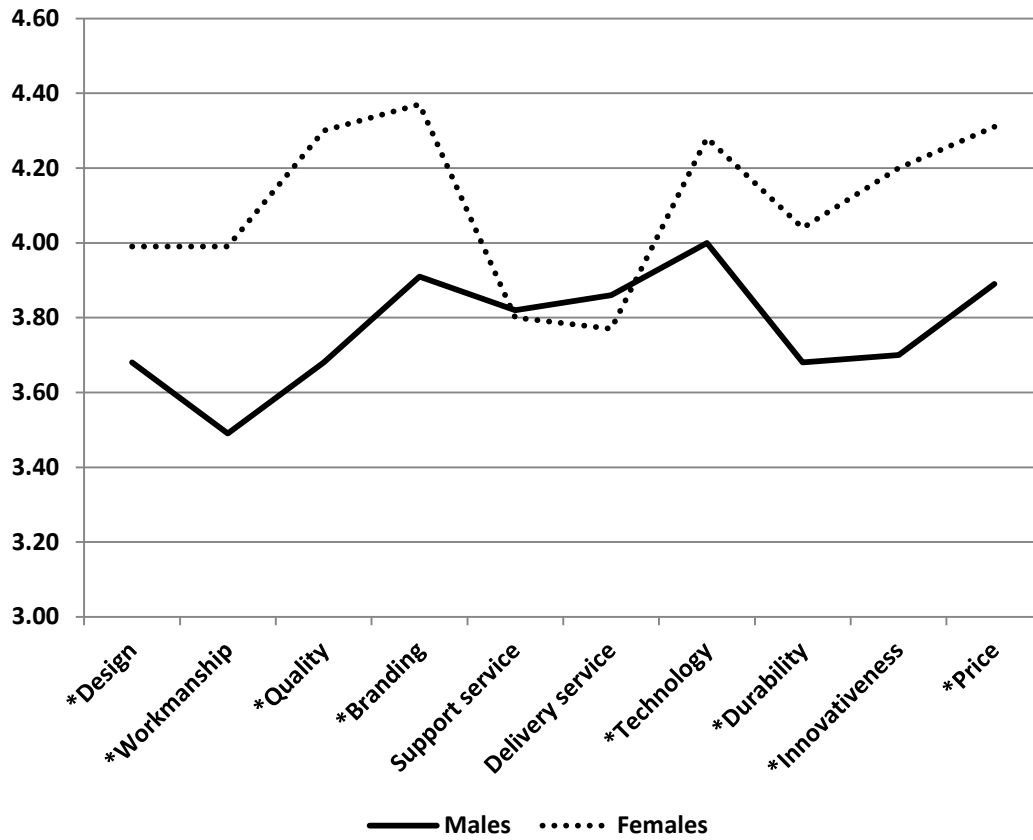
Table 4

Socio demographic Characteristics and Consumer Animosity against the USA

	Consumer animosity (Mean value)	t-value/ F-value	Duncan's range test
Gender			
Male	3.83	-1.99*	
Female	4.13		
Marital status			
Single	3.97	-.88	
Married	4.13		
Education			
Secondary (G1)(n=31)	3.41	10.58*	G1 vs. G2 & G3
Tertiary (G2)(n=70)	4.12		
Postgraduate (G3)(n=37)	4.27		
Vocation			
Working adult	4.07	.77	
Student	3.95		
Monthly household income			
RM1000 and below (G1)(n=33)	3.58	7.14*	G1 vs. G2 & G3
RM1001 but less than RM3000 (G2)(n=43)	3.96		
RM3000 and above (G3)(n=62)	4.26		

Note. G1 = Group 1; G2 = Group 2; G3 = Group 3

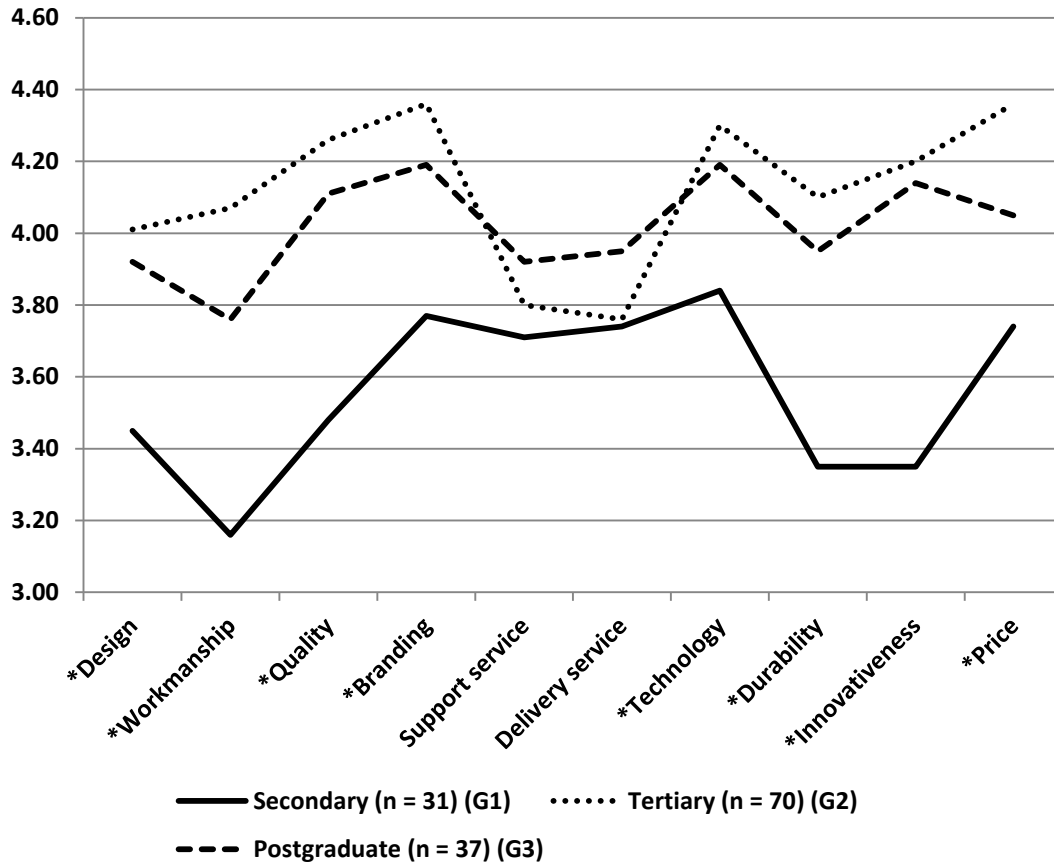
As shown in Figure 1, males and females were found to be significantly different on their perceptions of the design, workmanship, durability, branding, technology, durability, innovativeness, and price of the USA brands, where the t-value were -1.86, -3.07, -4.19, -3.16, -1.84, -2.16, -2.88, and -2.44, accordingly. Males evaluated technology (4.00) the highest, followed by branding (3.91), and price (3.89). Besides, females evaluated branding (4.37) the highest, continued by price (4.31), and durability (4.30). However, there were no significant differences between high and low animosity groups about their perceptions on support service and delivery service of the USA brands. Overall, females perceived USA brands more favourable than males, with the exception on items support service, and delivery service.



Note. All items used a 5-point semantic scale with (1 = *Poor/cheap* and 5 = *excellent/expensive*); * = significant

Figure 1 Gender vs. Perceptions on the USA Brands' Attributes

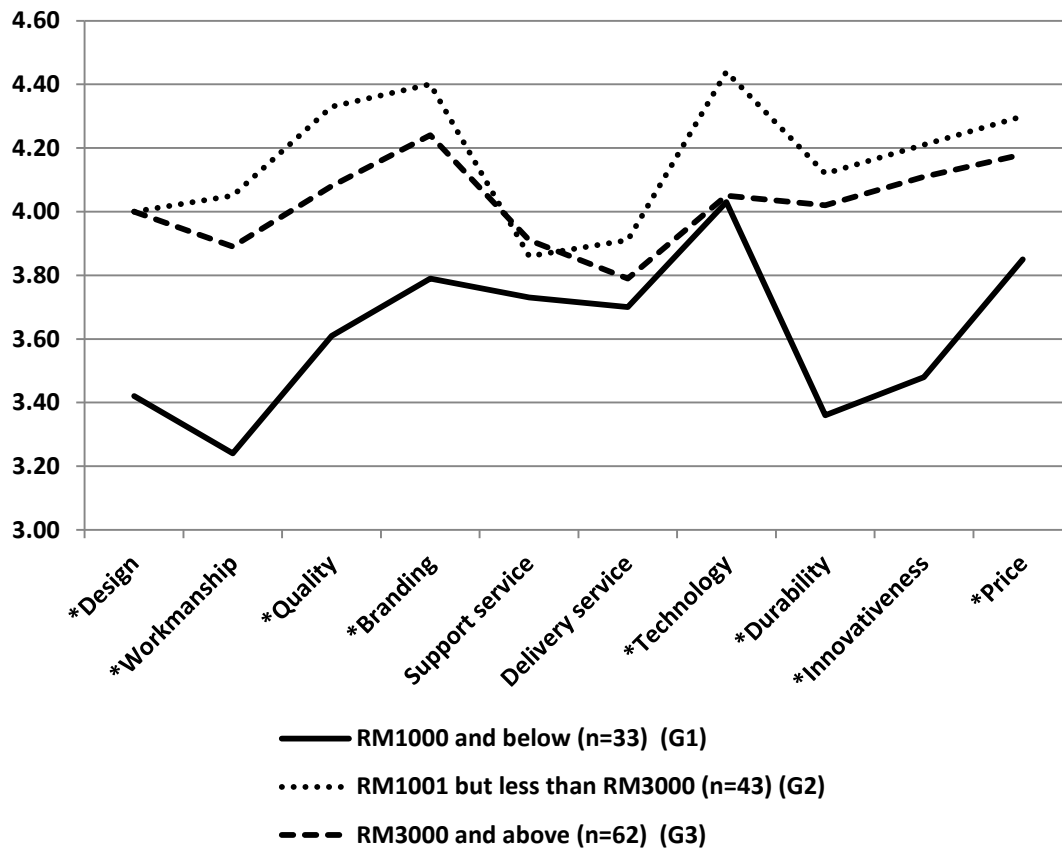
As showed in Figure 2, respondents in different education group perceived USA brands significantly different. Significant results were found on item design, workmanship, durability, branding, technology, durability, innovativeness, and price of the USA brands, where the *F*-value were 4.00, 10.98, 9.12, 5.18, 2.91, 7.20, 8.73, and 4.48, accordingly. Further, Group 1 (Secondary) was found significantly different from Group 2 (Tertiary), and Group 3 (Postgraduate), where Group 1 perceived USA brands less favourable than Group 2 and Group 3. Basically, Group 2 evaluated USA brands' attributes greater than Group 1 and Group 3, with the exception of support service and delivery service.



Note. All items used a 5-point semantic scale with (1 = Poor/cheap and 5 = excellent/expensive); * = significant

Figure 2 Education vs. Perceptions on the USA Brands' Attributes

The results of analysis based on monthly household income were illustrated in Figure 3. Respondents were found to be significantly different on their perceptions of the design, workmanship, durability, branding, technology, durability, innovativeness, and price of the USA brands, where the *F*-value were 4.84, 7.86, 6.64, 5.18, 3.01, 7.36, 5.86, and 2.05, accordingly. Amongst these, Group 1 (RM1000 and below) was significantly different from Group 2 (RM1001 but less than RM3000), and Group 3 (RM3000 and above), with the exception on item technology whereby Group 2 was significantly different with Group 1 and Group 3. Comparatively, Group 1 perceived USA brands less favourable than Group 2 and Group 3. In the similar vein with the findings on education, Group 2 perceived USA brands' attributes greater than Group 1 and Group 3, except support service and delivery service



Note. All items used a 5-point semantic scale with (1 = Poor/cheap and 5 = Excellent/expensive); * = significant

Figure 3 Household Income vs. Perceptions on the USA Brands' Attributes

5. Discussions and Implications

The results of analysis showed that young Muslims demonstrated high consumer animosity towards the USA. This result implies that marketers of USA brands who are targeting or intending to target young Muslims must be aware about their consumer animosity towards their brands' countries of origin when marketing their brands. This is because animosity consumers tend to accept foreign products from a variety of foreign countries but refuse to buy product from particular countries, which are the targets of animosity feelings (Riefler & Dianantopoulos, 2007).

Marketers of new USA brands are encouraged to mask their brands' countries of origin but associate their brands with a favourable country of origin, particularly when targeting young Muslims, as brands associated with the USA may lead to unfavourable purchase behaviour of young Muslims. For established USA brand, marketers are encouraged to mask the brands' countries of origin information, and focus on product attribute-related information in their marketing communication.

Specifically, young Muslims tended to demonstrate higher animosity towards the USA, on the issues related to religion, which are item "I feel angry towards the USA for supporting the Zionist regime in Israel," and item "I resent the USA for imposing unreasonable restriction on the issuance of VISA for visitors from the Muslim countries".

This finding brought some insights to the marketers of USA brand, where they are encouraged to avoid their brands to be associated with any issues or activities that show negative attitude towards Islam. It is believed that these will bring unwanted outcome, as Muslim consumers might boycott the brand from the USA. Klein et al. (1998) pointed out the nation-specific phenomenon (macro-level) are likely to have direct and determinant micro-level implication for exporting firms from the offending country.

Subsequently, young Muslims' animosity towards the USA was found significantly related to their socio demographic characteristics, which are gender, education level, and household income. Males and females demonstrate significant difference on their consumer animosity towards the USA. This is relating the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political, or economic events that will affect consumers' purchase behaviour in international marketplace (Klein et al., 1998). In other word, males and females have different levels of awareness about these previous or ongoing military, political, or economic events. Thus they tended to demonstrate different level of animosity.

Education and household income, which are the measures of consumers' socio economic status, were found to influence young Muslims' consumer animosity level, significantly. These findings differed with that previous studies which found no relationship between consumer socio economic status and consumers' animosity (Klein & Ettenson, 1999). The potential explanation could be that high and low socio economic groups tend to have different international exposure, which it is believed that their international exposure will influence their awareness towards international issues. Moreover, high educated consumers tend to follow everyday political developments. So that might influence their animosity level (Nakos & Hajidimitriou, 2007). Thus, consumers in different socio economic groups tended to demonstrate different consumer animosity.

Lastly, the significant differences between group, based on gender, education level, and monthly household income, were found to have statistically significant influence on young Muslim's perception towards the USA brand. Surprisingly, males, lower educated group, and lower income group were found to perceive USA brands less favourable, as compared to females, higher educated subjects, and higher monthly household income group. This is because males, lower educated group, and lower income group possessed lower level of consumer animosity as compared to females, higher educated subjects, and higher monthly household income group. In other word, those who have higher consumer animosity tend to possessed more favourable attitude towards USA brands' attributes, and vice versa. Thus marketer of the brand from the USA should take caution of the effect of these findings in their marketing strategy when targeting this segment.

The overall evaluation towards the USA brands is positive and favourable, as animosity consumers acknowledged the quality of product from the disliked nation (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). Nevertheless, the USA brand's marketers also have to take this into account, as consumer might refuse the product from offending country not because of the quality of products, but because of

the disliked country has engaged in military, political or economic acts that the consumer find hard to forgive (Klein et al., 1998).

6. Contributions, Limitations and Recommendations

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by introducing the measure of consumer animosity, specifically consumer animosity towards the USA that fit it into Malaysia context. This measure is highly reliable. Moreover, this study examined the impact of consumer animosity based on segmentation by focusing on a specific segment, which are young Muslim consumers. Thus the understanding of consumer animosity on consumer behaviour is clearer, but not solely based on the nationality.

Nevertheless, this study is not without limitations. This study focused only on consumer animosity, and the difference based on socio demographic characteristics on young Muslims' level of consumer animosity and perception towards the USA brands' attributed. However, this limitation becomes the suggestion for future researchers who intend to extend this study by investigating the interaction effect of consumer animosity and their socio demographic characteristics on the USA brands, with different brand equity, such as new brand versus well-established brand. Moreover, future researchers are also encouraged to investigate the influences of strategic alliance of a USA brand with a local brand on consumer perception towards the particular USA brand. It is believed consumers' animosity towards the particular USA brand might be reduced by this strategy.

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