

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research that has been carried out. First, a brief review of the research is presented. In this part, all the issues such as the research objectives, the framework and research methodology are briefly discussed. Subsequently, the major findings of the study will be discussed. In this section, the findings from the test of hypotheses derived from data analysis are presented. The discussion includes the role of mediation of the product judgment construct. The possible reasons for the diverse findings of the study are also considered. It will be followed by the summary of the hypotheses testing. Then, the marketing implications of the current study are discussed. Next, the contributions of the study, in terms of theoretical, methodological and practical contributions are presented. Finally, the discussion on the limitations and direction for future research are presented.

5.1 Overview of the Study

Generally, the main objective of the current study is to investigate the attitudes of Malaysian Muslim consumers towards products made in the US. In particular, how negative attitudes arising from consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism affect the judgment concerning US made products by consumers and,

consequently, how it will affect the purchase willingness and the purchase action of US made products. This study also seeks to investigate the influence of religiosity on consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. In addition, the current study seeks to identify the mediating role of product judgment in the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism on purchase willingness as well as purchase action.

In more detail, the theory employed to develop the framework of the current study was adapted from local consumer attitudes towards foreign made products, which have been widely used in the context of consumer behaviour and international marketing. Specifically, the animosity model of foreign product purchase developed by Klein et al. (1998) was employed to operationalise the constructs in the perspective of Malaysian Muslim consumers. Furthermore, based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), two major factors will influence a person's intention, i.e., personal and social influence. The personal factor refers to the person's judgment of whether performing the behaviour is good or bad. Whereas, the social factor is the person's perception of the social pressures put on him/her to perform or not to perform the behaviour.

In this study, the animosity, the ethnocentric tendencies and the patriotic sentiment among consumers are the constructs used to determine the attitudes of local consumers towards foreign made products. Generally, the animosity, ethnocentric and patriotic attitude are influenced by two factors, i.e., the personal and social influences, as suggested by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). When these two factors are taken into consideration by consumers, it will directly influence their behaviour in

terms of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism, which, consequently, will affect their attitudes towards foreign made products.

The element of religiosity is included because the animosity construct used for the current study is based on the indirect relationship between one nation and another. Previously, all the consumer animosity studies used the direct relationship between two nations, e.g., Klein et al. (1998) – China versus Japan; Shin (2001) – Korea versus Japan; Nijssen and Douglas (2004) – the Netherlands versus Germany and Ettenson and Klein (2005) – Australia versus France. However, the animosity examined in the current study is not due to any direct dispute between Malaysia and the US but from the war involving the US government in other Muslim countries, i.e., in Iraq and Afghanistan. During and after the war, Muslims worldwide were urged to boycott US made products in order to show their support for their “brothers” in Iraq and Afghanistan. So, based on the “Muslims are brothers” concept, it is expected that the devoutness will influence the animosity attitudes towards the US, i.e., the more religious the person, the more sensitive they are, the more they believe the “Muslims are brothers” concept the greater their feelings of animosity towards the US.

The animosity model by Klein et al (1998) suggests that the outcome variables of consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism are product judgment, purchase willingness and product ownership. For the current study, the same outcome has been used. How consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism will affect product judgment and, consequently, purchase willingness and purchase action are examined. As proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the attitude will

lead to behaviour, which is for the current study, the behavioural response used are purchase willingness and purchase action. Additionally, product judgment was chosen as the mediating variable for the current study. Surprisingly, although most consumer animosity studies include the product judgment construct, none of them try using it as a mediating variable in the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism on purchase willingness and purchase action. However, a few studies in consumer ethnocentrism background used product judgment as a mediator, for example, Olsen et al. (1993); Yu and Albaum (2002) and Wang and Chen (2004).

In the original animosity model of foreign product purchase, only consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism constructs are used as sources of negative attitudes towards foreign made products. However, the current study includes patriotism as one of the sources of negative attitudes. Previous literature suggests that patriotism among consumers will affect the selection of products between local and foreign made products (Han, 1988). For example, Papadopoulos et al. (1990); Kucukemiroglu (1999); Nielsen and Spence (1997); Vida and Dmitrovic (2001); and Javalgi et al. (2005) suggest that consumers from a wide range of countries have been found to evaluate their own domestic products more favourably than they do foreign ones. Therefore, negative effects of patriotic emotions, the same as consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism, are expected. Thus, the construct was included in the proposed research framework.

Figure 5.1 shows the final research model of the current study.

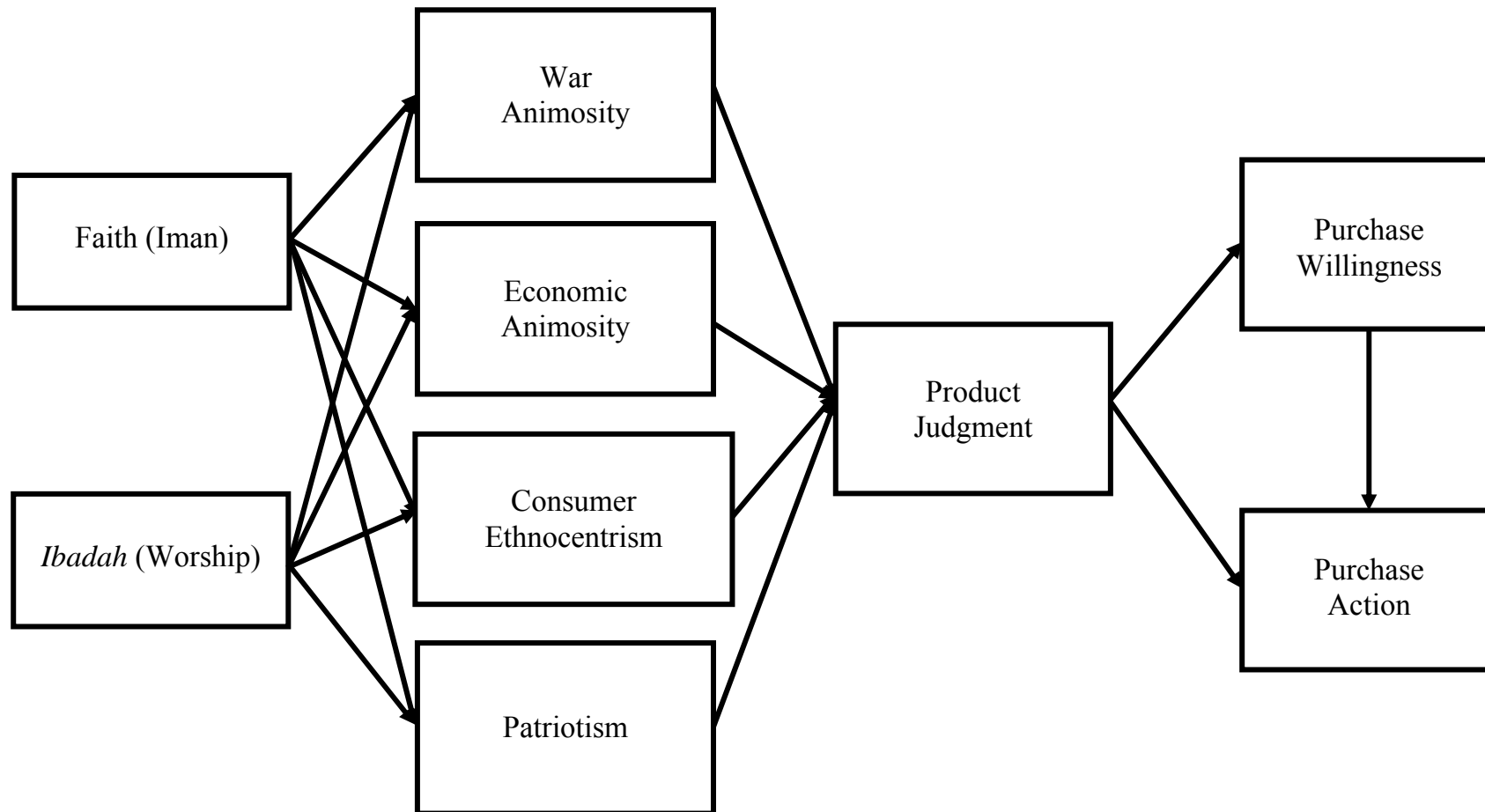


Figure 5.1: Final Framework of the Current Study

Based on the exploratory factor analysis, the Muslim religiosity construct was split into two factors, i.e., Faith (*iman*) and *Ibadah* (worship). Similarly, the consumer animosity construct was also split into two factors, i.e., war animosity and economic animosity. This final framework served as a basic guideline for the statistical testing of the hypotheses. Generally, the final framework used was similar to the initial framework. However, minor modifications and re-design was needed based on the factors extracted in the exploratory factor analysis, which contributed to the difference between the final and initial framework used for the current study.

The survey design used in this study and multi-item scales were constructed to measure Muslim religiosity, consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, patriotism, product judgment, purchase willingness and purchase action. In the process of developing the measurement for the constructs of this study, the scales were adapted to suit the requirement of this study. However, some of the scales were modified to match the current study context. Furthermore, there were also newly developed scales based on related conceptual studies to fulfil the current study requirement.

The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of all close-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, i.e. Section 1, to measure the Muslim religiosity, consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, patriotism, product judgment, purchase willingness and purchase action, and, Section 2, to investigate the demographic profile of the respondents. The reason why all the questions were jumbled up in one section was to prevent bias from the respondents

when answering the questions. The questions in the questionnaire were asked using the two main languages used by Malaysians, i.e., English and Malay.

The current study used a non-probability sampling technique using a quota sampling method. Area sampling was also chosen for the current research. The quota sampling was chosen to ensure that the country samples were reasonably representative of their respective populations. Three criteria were selected as the basis of the quota, i.e., gender, income and geographical location/area. In addition, the questionnaire was only distributed to Muslim respondents as the target population was Muslim consumers. A total of 1,000 questionnaires were distributed, from which 710 were returned within a period of twelve weeks, making the response rate about 71 percent. However, only 663 of the respondents completed all the questions and, thus, usable. Structural equation modelling was conducted to test the hypotheses of this study.

5.2 Major Findings

This section summarises the findings of this study regarding the descriptive analysis of the respondents. The analysis will be based on the data of demographic profiles. It will then be followed by a discussion on the testing of the data including the normality of data, skewness and kurtosis, multicollinearity, outliers, linearity and homoscedasticity. Finally, the results of the hypotheses testing are discussed. All the results of the hypotheses testing are summarized in the table provided in this section.

5.2.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

Gender was divided almost equally in this study. Slightly over half of them, i.e., 51.9% (n=344) reported they were male, while 48.1% (n=319) were female. In terms of age, most of the respondents were in the 25 to 39 age bracket. More than 60% of them fell into this category. Approximately 11% of the respondents were above 50 years old. In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents were married, either with or without children. More than 71% of them were married and approximately only 28% were single or divorced.

For the education level, the majority of the respondents were either college diploma or bachelor degree holders. There were a total of 26.5% college diploma holders and 28.5% of the respondents were bachelor degree holders, followed by the MCE/SPM/SPMV group with 23.1%. In terms of occupation, 22.2% were working in the government sector either in a professional group or support group. The majority of them worked in the private sector, as officer/executive or clerical staff. A high number of the respondents were school teachers. In terms of monthly household income, the study found that approximately half of the total respondents earned less than RM3,000 and half of them earned more than RM3,000 per month. Concerning the size of the respondents' household, the majority had 3 – 6 persons in their family; slightly more than 71% of them came from these groups.

The final categorical demographic variable was the region or geographical location of the respondents. A total of 31.2% of the respondents were from the Central region, followed by Southern region (24.1%), East Coast (23.5%), and lastly,

Northern region with 21.1% of the respondents. The number of respondents from the Central region was slightly more than the other regions simply because this area was more highly populated. For the South and East Coast the proportion of the respondents were approximately the same. However, the Northern region was less populated compared to other regions in Peninsular Malaysia.

5.2.2 Relationship between Demographic Variables and Study Constructs

This section tries to examine the statistical relationship between the demographic variables with the entire constructs used in the current study. The techniques used were independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results derived from the analysis would be used to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of Muslim religiosity, consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, patriotism, product judgment, purchase willingness and purchase action of US made products.

For Muslim religiosity, it was found that gender, age, marital status, occupation, income level, number of household members and geographical region had a significant statistical relationship. Only level of education did not have a relationship with Muslim religiosity. In Malaysia, religious persons tended to be male, older, married, working in government sector, middle income group, had more members in household and lived either in Northern or East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The profile of consumer animosity respondents showed that they were male, older generation, married, government staff, more household members and came from East Coast and Northern Peninsular Malaysia. However, level of education and level

of income was not a significant indicator for consumer animosity. Furthermore, in terms of consumer ethnocentrism, it was found that highly ethnocentric consumers were female, older, married, lower level of education, government staff, lower level of income and lived in East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

In addition, the respondents tended to be more patriotic if they were older and married. Other variables such as gender, level of education and level of income had no significant effect on patriotic attitudes. For the judgment of products made in the US, it was found that younger consumers tended to have a more positive judgment of products made in the US compared to older consumers. Other demographic variables had no significant relationship with US product judgment. Furthermore, for the purchase willingness of US made products, this study revealed that young respondents, single, highly educated, higher level of income consumers and lived in the Klang Valley or central of Peninsular Malaysia would have a higher willingness to purchase products from the US. Finally, no demographic variable had a significant effect on the actual purchase of US made products.

5.2.3 Test of Data

Before the data analysis can be proceeded using statistical techniques such as correlational analysis, multiple regression or structural equation modelling, it is important to ensure that the data used is free from violating the assumptions needed to carry out certain analysis. Pallant (2001) suggests that it is important to check that the data is not violating any of the assumptions made by the individual test. First, the normal distributions of data were examined using the skewness and kurtosis of each

variable. The function of these two tools is to check on the shape of the scores of the distribution. Skewness is used to describe the balance of the distribution; that is, is it unbalanced and shifted to one side (right or left) or is it centred and symmetrical with about the same shape on both sides (Hair et al., 2006). The results show that none of the variables used in this study violated the normality distribution. Therefore, the data for the current study was considered as normal in terms of its skewness and kurtosis.

Then, the assumptions for the multivariate analysis were performed. In this procedure, several tests including multicollinearity, normality, outliers, linearity and homoscedasticity were examined. Generally, data from the analysis output was analysed to test for the assumptions. For example, in order to check on the multicollinearity, the value of VIF and tolerance were assessed. Furthermore, the assumptions were also tested using scatter plots and Normal P-P plots. After performing and examining the VIF and tolerance value, scatter plot as well as Normal P-P plots, the results showed that none of the assumptions were violated.

Besides, the validity and reliability analysis were also performed for all the constructs used in the current study. Using the software that is widely used in social science studies, SPSS and AMOS, these procedures were conducted. By using SPSS, exploratory factor analysis was performed and the reliability analysis using Cronbach's coefficient alpha was conducted. Using AMOS, confirmatory factor analysis was assessed and the reliability of the factors was calculated by using a formula. Generally, these factor analyses were used to measure the construct validity, in terms of convergent and discriminant validity.

The exploratory factor analysis was conducted with the Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation. All the factors extracted from the exploratory factor analysis were then assessed for internal consistency using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. It was found that all the variables recorded excellent reliability and above the minimum value suggested by previous researchers. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis was also conducted to test the convergent and discriminant validity of the model during the measurement model process. The results of all the criteria, i.e., GFI, AGFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA show evidence of convergent validity. Furthermore, the magnitude, direction and statistical significance of the estimated parameters between latent variables and their indicators were assessed. The assessment proved that the convergent validity exists for all the constructs used in the model. After that, the construct reliability was calculated and the results showed that all the constructs in this study produced high reliability values with no indication of internal inconsistency. Furthermore, the convergent validity was also assessed during the confirmatory factor analysis procedure. It was tested using the Chi-square difference test. The results of the Chi-square tests showed that it supports the distinctiveness of all the constructs, and, thus, discriminant validity exists.

5.2.4 Hypotheses Testing

For the hypotheses testing, all the hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling. After performing the confirmatory factor analysis and all the requirements have been fulfilled, the next step in the structural equation modelling is to perform the structural model. As suggested by Hoyle and Panter (1995), Anderson and Gerbing (1988), Medsker et al. (1994), Garver and Mentzer (1999)

and Novak et al. (2000), the current study adopted a two-step approach, i.e., measurement model and structural model. Therefore, all the hypotheses were tested using the second step approach, i.e., the structural model.

a. Relationship between Muslim Religiosity and Consumer Animosity, Consumer Ethnocentrism and Patriotism

Generally, Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 were conducted to examine the relationship of Muslim religiosity on consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. Previous studies argued that the influence of religiosity in consumer behaviour remains under-researched (Cutler, 1991; and Hamza et al., 1999). From the review of literature, only consumer ethnocentrism had empirical evidence that claimed it was significantly related to religiosity. A study conducted by Kaynak and Kara (2002) found that religiosity among Muslims in Turkey was positively related to consumer ethnocentrism. No empirical studies had examined the relationship between religiosity and consumer animosity as well as patriotism.

However, based on the argument in the literature review chapter, it is expected that Muslim religiosity will have a significant effect on consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. Previous literature argued that religion, being an aspect of culture, has considerable influence on people's values, habits and attitudes (e.g. Hirschman, 1982; and Delener, 1990 and 1994). Specifically, in Islam, religion plays a significant role in the lives of Malaysian Muslims (Amber and Khairol, 2002). Thus, the actions and behaviour among the believers must be governed by

Islamic regulations. In the early history of Islam, the task of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was to establish the spirit of brotherhood among Muslims. The Quran said “*Muslims are brothers, therefore make peace between the two brothers and fear Allah that the mercy may be shown to you*” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:10). Therefore, it is expected that whatever happens to the Muslim community, no matter where they are, will influence the attitude of Muslims in Malaysia. In this study, the animosity towards the US is due to the war involving the US and various Muslim countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Besides, the involvement of the US in Palestine – Israel conflict also contributed to the feeling of hatred among Muslim communities.

These hypotheses (H1, H2 and H3) were divided into eight sub-hypotheses, i.e., H1a (i), H1a (ii), H1b (i), H1b (ii), H2a, H2b, H3a and H3b. Specifically, H1 focused on the relationship between Muslim religiosity and consumer animosity, H2 focused on the relationship between Muslim religiosity and consumer ethnocentrism and finally, H3 focused on the relationship between Muslim religiosity and patriotism. All the sub-hypotheses were expected to have a positive relationship. In order to test all these hypotheses, structural equation modelling was used. The study found that for war animosity, only faith [H1a (i)] was significant but H1b (i), from *ibadah* to war animosity was not significant. Similarly, for economic animosity, only faith produced a significant relationship but not for *ibadah*. These results show that the hypothesis of relationship between Muslim religiosity and consumer animosity is partially supported. Only the first factor of Muslim religiosity, i.e., faith significantly influenced both war and economic animosity but not the second factor, i.e., the *ibadah* construct.

Hypothesis 2a, examined the relationship between faith and consumer ethnocentrism, and Hypothesis 2b focused on the relationship between *ibadah* and consumer ethnocentrism. The results showed that only relationship between *ibadah* and consumer ethnocentrism is significant but the relationship between faith and consumer ethnocentrism is not significant. Again, the results suggest that it was partially supported. This is quite consistent with a study conducted by Kaynak and Kara (2002) who found that religiosity positively influenced consumer ethnocentrism.

Furthermore, for Hypothesis 3, it was hypothesized that Muslim religiosity will positively influence patriotism among consumers in Malaysia. It was found that both the Muslim religiosity factor, i.e., faith and *ibadah* have significant positive effects on patriotism. It can be concluded that the more religious the person, the more patriotic they are. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported. More religious people are known to have a thoroughly positive attitude, good behaviour, excellent religious practices, honest dealing and dependable personalities (Syed Nisar and Eatzaz, 2002). On the other hand, Pullman et al. (1997) and Zarkada-Fraser and Fraser (2002), have characterized patriotism as a value that provides the basis for the development of personal norms such as the willingness to love, support and defend one's own country. So, as these values (willingness to love, support and defend own country) can be considered as the good attitude and behaviour, indirectly, those who tend to be more religious will exhibit more love for their own country and tend to be more patriotic. Hence, it can be concluded that for Malaysian Muslim consumers, the higher their devoutness, the higher will be their patriotic attitude. As a conclusion for these relationships, in general, it was found that Muslim religiosity

has a significant relationship with consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism.

b. Relationship between Consumer Animosity, Consumer Ethnocentrism and Patriotism on Product Judgment

These discussions will examine the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism on the judgment of US made products. In this study, the country used was the US and there was no specific brand, type of product or product categories that needed to be evaluated by consumers. In order to reduce the favourableness or un-favourableness of consumers towards certain products made in the US, e.g. McDonalds, which is quite famous in Malaysia, or electrical appliances such as the GE brand which is not a very familiar in the Malaysia market, general terms of products were used. Besides, for the judgment of foreign made products, researchers commonly use products in general terms. For example, none of the studies conducted by Kaynak et al. (2000), Leonidou et al. (1999), Suh and Kwon, (2002), Balabanis et al. (2002), Shin (2001), Laroche et al. (2005) and Kinra (2006), gave specific products or brands for respondents to evaluate.

In Hypothesis 4a, it was hypothesized that war animosity will have a negative relationship on the judgment of US made products, based on the findings of the studies conducted by Ettenson and Klein (2005) and Shoham et al. (2006). The results suggested that war animosity will not have a significant relationship with the judgment of US made products. Therefore, this hypothesis was rejected. However, a

non-significant relationship between consumer animosity and products judgment is commonly found. For example, Klein et al (1998), Klein (2002), Nijssen and Douglas (2004), Hinck (2005) and Nakos and Hajidimitriou (2007) found that the consumer animosity construct does not influence the judgment of foreign made products.

In terms of economic animosity, it was hypothesized that economic animosity will negatively influence the judgment of US made products (Hypothesis 4b). Surprisingly, economic animosity has a significant positive effect on US product judgment. It shows that the economic issue between the Muslim world and the US does not influence the attitude among Muslim consumers in Malaysia. Perhaps, the availability of substitute products for certain product categories may influence the results. Furthermore, the economic issues are complex, therefore, it will possibly influence the results. With the respondents coming from multiple educational backgrounds, their understanding of the economic issues will be rather limited. Additionally, the reputation of the US as one of the most developed countries in the world and the biggest economic power might demolish the negative effect of animosity towards them. Even though the consumers perceive that the US is unfair towards Muslim countries in terms of economic issues, they still positively value products from the US.

Hypothesis 5 examined the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and the US product judgment. It was hypothesized that highly ethnocentric consumers will negatively judge US made products. Generally, from previous literature, consumer ethnocentrism will have a significant negative effect on the judgment of foreign

made products (e.g. Herche, 1994; Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Kim and Pysarchik, 2000; Moon, 1996; Sharma et al., 1995; Supphellen and Rittenburg, 2001; Watson and Wright, 2000; Klein et al., 1998; Shin, 2001; and Nijssen and Douglas, 2004). From the results, it was found that consumer ethnocentrism negatively influences the judgment of US made products by Malaysian Muslim consumers. This finding is consistent with previous literature; therefore, the hypothesis was supported.

For patriotism, a negative relationship between patriotism and the US product judgment was hypothesized in Hypothesis 6. Previous studies revealed that consumers tend to judge foreign products less favourably (e.g. Nielsen and Spence, 1997; Johansson et al., 1985; Kucukemiroglu, 1999; Wall and Heslop, 1986; Vida and Dmitrovic, 2001; and Javalgi et al., 2005). However, the result of the current study showed that Hypothesis 6 was not significant and thus Hypothesis 6 was rejected. As explained in the literature review chapter, several researchers noted that there is a difference between "healthy patriotism" (love of country), which is not related with bias against out-groups and "ethnocentric patriotism" which is accompanied by such bias (Balabanis et. al., 2001). Ethnocentric patriotism is one's "blind attachment to certain national cultural values, uncritical conformity with the prevailing group ways, and rejection of other nations as out-groups". From the Malaysian Muslim consumers' point of view, the results suggest that they are more likely to be the "healthy patriotism" than "ethnocentric patriotism". This might be the reason why they were not rejecting the products coming from out-groups. Furthermore, Daser and Meric (1987), Lim and Darley (1997), Han and Terpstra (1988) and Wang and Chen (2004) argued that consumers will prefer locally made products if they are comparable to the foreign made. In this case, the consumers

possibly perceived that the quality of Malaysian made products are still not as good as the US made products, so that patriotism does not have a significant effect on the US product judgment.

c. Relationship between Product Judgment and Purchase Willingness and Purchase Action

The judgment of foreign made products will also bring further consequences. This study attempts to examine how the judgment of US made products can influence the purchase willingness of products from the US. From previous literature, researchers predict that a positive judgment of products will positively affect their overall attitude towards the products and, subsequently, higher purchase willingness and intention (e.g. Klein et al., 1998; Kim and Pysarchik, 2000; Javalgi et al., 2005; Nijssen and Douglas, 2004; Shoham et al., 2006; Cai, Cude and Swagler, 2004; Hui and Zhou, 2003; and Laroche et al., 2005). In Hypothesis 7, it was expected that product judgment will be positively related to purchase willingness.

Most of the previous studies revealed that a positive judgment of foreign made products will significantly increase the willingness of consumers to purchase that particular product. Similarly, the results of the current study show that the judgment of US made products is significantly related to purchase willingness. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 is supported. For Malaysian Muslim consumers, product judgment could be a significant indicator of purchase willingness.

Hypothesis 8 studied the relationship between product judgment and actual purchase action of US made products. Previous studies asserted that product judgment is an important factor in determining actual purchase action (Ulgado and Lee, 1998 and Yu and Albaum, 2002). Similarly, from consumer animosity studies, Klein et al. (1998), Shin (2001) and Klein (2002) examined the relationship between product judgment and purchase action or product ownership of consumers. They found that actual ownership of the products was predicted by the judgment of foreign made products. In other words, positive judgments represent higher actual purchase action. The results in this study indicate that product judgment of US made products by Malaysian Muslim consumers is a significant indicator of purchase action. This result is consistent with previous findings. Therefore, Hypothesis 8 is supported. It can be concluded that product judgment is positively related to actual purchase behaviour.

d. Relationship between Purchase Willingness and Purchase Action

Hypothesis 9 stated that there is a positive relationship between purchase willingness and purchase action of US made products. When the purchase willingness is high the actual purchase behaviour is also high. Practically, when the purchase willingness of certain products is high, the possibility of consumers buying the products will directly increase. Previous studies revealed that purchase willingness is a statistically significant estimator of actual purchase of foreign made products (Klein et al., 1998; Shin, 2001; and Shoham et al., 2006). The result of the current study found that purchase willingness was a strong indicator of actual purchase of US made products among Malaysian Muslim consumers and is

consistent with the findings of previous studies. Thus, the study concluded that Hypothesis 9 is supported. It can be concluded that the actual purchase behaviour among Malaysian Muslims will be enormously influenced by their willingness in the first place.

e. Product Judgment as a Mediator in the Relationship between Consumer Animosity, Consumer Ethnocentrism and Patriotism with Purchase Willingness and Purchase Action

Hypothesis 10 and its sub-hypotheses were developed to study the mediating role of product judgment in the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism with purchase willingness. The results of the mediation test in the structural equation modelling were used to test these hypotheses. In Hypothesis 10a (i) product judgment was expected to play a mediator role between war animosity and purchase willingness of US made products. Previous research revealed that consumer animosity will negatively influence the willingness of consumers to purchase the products from enemy nations (Klein et al., 1998; Shin, 2001; Klein, 2002; Shimp et al, 2004; Hinck, 2005; Ettenson and Klein, 2005; Shoham et al., 2006; and Nakos and Hajidimitriou, 2007). However, generally no previous study has investigated the mediating role of foreign product judgment. Shin (2001) suggests that the role of mediating and moderating effects should be included in consumer animosity studies. It will contribute to the deeper understanding of the construct since the potential areas for further research are considerable (Klein et al., 1998).

In this study, war animosity is negatively related with purchase willingness. However, the result of the mediation test suggested that product judgment does not mediate this relationship. Therefore, Hypothesis 10a (i) is rejected. For Hypothesis 10a (ii), in the relationship between economic animosity and purchase willingness, the result shows that the mediating role of product judgment is significant for this relationship. This indicates that product judgment mediates the relationship of economic animosity and purchase willingness. Thus, Hypothesis 10a (ii) is supported. It can be concluded that Hypothesis 10a is partially supported.

For the effects of consumer ethnocentrism on the purchase willingness of foreign made products, most previous studies suggest that the willingness to purchase foreign made products for highly ethnocentric consumers tends to be negatively influenced (e.g. Herche, 1994; Kaynak and Kara, 2002; Kim and Pysarchik, 2000; Moon, 1996; Sharma et al., 1995; Supphellen and Rittenburg, 2001; Watson and Wright, 2000). In this study, it was found that consumer ethnocentrism negatively influences purchase willingness. It was hypothesized that product judgment will mediate this relationship as given in Hypothesis 10b. Consistent with a study by Olsen et al. (1993), this study found that product judgment mediates the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase willingness and, therefore, Hypothesis 10b is supported.

In Hypothesis 10c, the role of product judgment was expected in the relationship between patriotism and purchase willingness. However, this hypothesis was rejected and it shows no mediating role of product judgment with regards to this relationship.

No previous studies examined this issue; therefore, a comparison cannot be performed with the current study.

For Hypothesis 11a (i) and 11a (ii), product judgment is a significant mediator in the relationship between economic animosity and purchase action but not for the relationship between war animosity and purchase action. In this case, it can be concluded that product judgment is a mediator between economic animosity and purchase action but not in the relationship between war animosity and purchase action, which is quite similar to Hypothesis 10a. Therefore, Hypothesis 11a (i) is rejected and Hypothesis 11a (ii) is accepted. In conclusion, hypothesis 11a is partially supported.

For consumer ethnocentrism, the result of the mediating role of product judgment is significant. It was suggested that product judgment was a mediator in the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase action. The result was statistically supported and Hypothesis 11b is accepted. This finding implies that product judgment is a significant mediator in this relationship.

Finally, for patriotism, the results suggest that product judgment is not a mediator in the relationship between patriotism and purchase action. Thus, Hypothesis 11c is not supported. As a conclusion from the findings, the current study found that product judgment mediates the relationships between economic animosity and purchase willingness, between economic animosity and purchase action, between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase willingness as well as between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase action.

f. Purchase Willingness as a Mediator between Product Judgment and Purchase Action

The last hypothesis in this study was a mediating role of purchase willingness in the relationship between product judgment and purchase action. In Hypothesis 12, it was hypothesized that purchase willingness mediates the relationship between US product judgment and purchase action of US made products. Granzin and Olsen (1998) found that the decision to purchase a product is influenced by product judgment; however, other constructs may have an influence on the relationship. The output obtained from the structural equation modelling provides the result of this relationship. Based on the results of the mediation test, this study found that purchase willingness is a mediator in the relationship between product judgment and purchase action. Hence, Hypothesis 12 is supported and accepted.

The summary of the hypotheses testing, as discussed above, is presented in Table 5.1. Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 focused on the relationship of Muslim religiosity and consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 studied the relationship of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism with product judgment, and Hypotheses 7 and 8 examined the effect of product judgment on purchase willingness and purchase action. Hypothesis 9 examined the relationship of purchase willingness and purchase action. Furthermore, Hypotheses 10 and 11 focused on the mediating role of product judgment. Finally, Hypothesis 12 examined the mediating role of purchase willingness.

Table 5.1
Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses		Result
H 1a (i)	The higher the faith of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the war animosity towards the US.	Supported
H 1a (ii)	The higher the faith of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the economic animosity towards the US.	Supported
H 1b (i)	The higher the <i>ibadah</i> (worship) of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the war animosity towards the US.	Not Supported
H 1b (i)	The higher the <i>ibadah</i> (worship) of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the economic animosity towards the US.	Not Supported
H 2a	The higher the faith of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the consumer ethnocentrism.	Not Supported
H 2b	The higher the <i>ibadah</i> (worship) of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the consumer ethnocentrism.	Supported
H 3a	The higher the faith of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the patriotism.	Supported
H 3b	The higher the <i>ibadah</i> (worship) of Malaysian Muslims, the higher will be the patriotism.	Supported
H 4a	There is a negative relationship between war animosity and US product judgment.	Not Supported
H 4b	There is a negative relationship between economic animosity and US product judgment.	Not Supported
H 5	There is a negative relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and US product judgment.	Supported
H 6	There is a negative relationship between patriotism and US product judgment.	Not Supported
H 7	There is a positive relationship between US product judgment and purchase willingness of US made product.	Supported
H 8	There is a positive relationship between US product judgment and purchase action of US made product.	Supported
H 9	There is a positive relationship between purchase willingness and purchase action of US made product.	Supported
H 10a (i)	US product judgment mediates the relationship between war animosity and purchase willingness of US made products.	Not Supported
H 10a (ii)	US product judgment mediates the relationship between economic animosity and purchase willingness of US made products.	Supported

Table 5.1 (Continued)

H 10b	US product judgment mediates the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase willingness of US made products.	Supported
H 10c	US product judgment mediates the relationship between patriotism and purchase willingness of US made products.	Not Supported
H 11a (i)	US product judgment mediates the relationship between war animosity and purchase action of US made products.	Not Supported
H 11a (ii)	US product judgment mediates the relationship between economic animosity and purchase action of US made products.	Supported
H 11b	US product judgment mediates the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase action of US made products.	Supported
H 11c	US product judgment mediates the relationship between patriotism and purchase action of US made products.	Not Supported
H 12	Purchase willingness mediates the relationship between US product judgment and purchase action of US made products.	Supported

5.3 Marketing Implications of the Study

In general, the main objective of this study is to investigate the attitudes of Malaysian Muslim consumers towards products made in the US. It attempts to examine the effects of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism towards the judgment of US made products by the consumers and, consequently, how it will affect the purchase willingness and the purchase action of US made products. Furthermore, Muslim religiosity influence on consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism is also one of the major issues in this study. Therefore, understanding the underlying factors influencing consumer attitudes towards foreign made products can help marketers formulate strategies to overcome or minimize the negative effects. In this sense, the results of this study have several

marketing implications. As a consequence of the unstable world economic condition coupled with the current relationship between the Muslim world and the US, negative attitudes of Muslim consumers towards the US will surely have an impact on the market of the US made products.

First, the main implication of this study is related to the influence of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism on US product judgment among Muslim consumers due to the recent relationship between the US government and the Muslim world. Previous studies revealed that consumer animosity can negatively influence the judgment of foreign made products (Ettenson and Klein, 2005 and Shoham et al., 2006). However, this study found that consumer animosity, generally, had no effects on US product judgment. But, it is not impossible to change, because in Ettenson and Klein (2005), the study found that in the early stage, animosity did not influence product judgment but after some time, animosity effects began to take place and the consumers denigrated the products from the “enemy nation”. Therefore, in future, if animosity among Malaysian Muslim consumers towards the US increases, it will possibly negatively influence the judgment of US made products.

Additionally, if the US government does not improve the relationship between the US and the Muslim world, with the availability of substitute products from other countries as well as locally made products, consumers might continue to boycott the US made products and change to competitors’ products. Perhaps, the easiest way to express their dissatisfaction is by boycotting products from the US. Practically, this measure creates a lot of trouble for the organizations. Klein, Smith and John (2002)

suggest that the consumers' participation in boycotting activities affected the performance of the organizations. Global retailers, local retailers and importing firms should be alert to the threat of increasingly frequent and sophisticated consumer protest. The sign of the threat will provide alternative ways for firms to react towards the action.

For consumer ethnocentrism, obviously highly ethnocentric consumers will negatively judge foreign made products. From the results of this study, for Malaysian Muslim consumers, highly ethnocentric tendencies will affect the US product judgment, which is consistent with most of the previous studies. Therefore, retailers and marketers should find an alternative solution to eradicate the effect of consumer ethnocentrism. For example, they may localize the products. Besides, market segmentation might also help them to market the products to the right segment. Marketers must carefully identify which market segment has the highest ethnocentric tendencies, for example, from the consumers' demographic profile. Therefore, it is easier for them to formulate the strategy based on the market segment.

In terms of patriotism, the current study found that Malaysian Muslim consumers have a more "healthy patriotism" than "ethnocentric patriotism". As suggested by Adorno et al. (1950) and Balabanis et al. (2001), there is a difference between "healthy patriotism" (love of country), which is not related with bias against out-groups and "ethnocentric patriotism", which is accompanied by such bias. This may give an advantage for the marketers. As long as they can provide products or services that can fulfil and satisfy local consumers' expectations and needs,

patriotism among consumers will not negatively affect their behaviours. Even though they love their country, in the selection of products and services, it is not a big matter. Provided that they are satisfied with it, they will continue using and consuming such products. For local manufacturers, as suggested in previous literature (e.g. Han and Terpstar, 1988; Wall and Heslop, 1986), if local producers can provide at least equal customer value compared to foreign producers, then they can manipulate the patriotic feeling to attract consumers to buy and use their products. Without the improvement and the change of quality perception, patriotic consumers will remain using foreign made products.

The second implication of the study is related to the influence of religiosity on consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. As explained in the literature review, religion, the most important part of human belief, will shape the way people think, it is a key element of culture and greatly influences behaviour, which in turn affects purchasing behaviour (Hirschmann 1981, Delenar 1990 and Essoo and Dibb, 2004). From the results, the hypothesis between Muslim religiosity and consumer animosity is partially supported, the hypothesis between Muslim religiosity and consumer ethnocentrism is also partially supported and the hypothesis between Muslim religiosity and patriotism is supported. It shows that there is an effect of religiosity in shaping the behaviour of consumers.

For consumer animosity, it was found that the concept of “Muslims are brothers” has an influence on consumers in Malaysia. The more religious the persons, the more they will show animosity towards the US and, consequently, it will affect their behaviour. The idea is that when a Muslim community in other country, for

example, in this study, Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan or Palestine are in trouble, other Muslims, in this case, from Malaysia, will also feel the anguish. In order to show their support, they might boycott products made in the US. Similarly, religiosity also has a significant effect on consumers' ethnocentric tendencies and patriotism. The results show that religiosity is positively related to consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. Therefore, the effects of religiosity on consumer behaviour must be taken into account by the marketers, producers, importers and manufacturers.

Third, the implication of this study relates to the influence of product judgment and purchase willingness as well as the purchase action. The study found that product judgment had a significant positive relationship with purchase willingness and purchase action of US made products by Malaysian Muslim consumers. This implies that consumers will have a high willingness to purchase a product if they believe and perceive that the product is good and it can satisfy their needs and requirements. Similarly, if consumers positively judge a product, it indicates that the actual purchase action is high. It can be concluded that product judgment can be a good predictor of purchase willingness and purchase action. Product judgment can play an important role in predicting consumer behaviour in terms of willingness and actual purchase. This scenario has provided an opportunity for foreign manufacturers, retailers and marketers to capture this market segment. If they can convince consumers of the advantages of their products compared to the competitors and consumers' perception of their products is always positive, it will increase the purchase willingness of the consumers and, consequently, lead to actual purchase behaviour. In order to attract the consumers, they need to highlight the quality of

their products because product judgment is related to the perception of consumers of products attributes such as quality, workmanship and technological advancement.

In addition, purchase willingness will also positively relate to the purchase action. The result of this study found that purchase willingness is a significant positive indicator of purchase action. In this study context, when the purchase willingness among Malaysian Muslim consumers is high, their actual purchase is also high, showing that purchase willingness can be an indicator of actual purchase behaviour. Therefore, foreign manufacturers, retailers and marketers need to formulate a strategy that will increase willingness to purchase their products, which is also related to the product judgment.

The fourth implication is the role of product judgment as a mediator in the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism with purchase willingness and purchase action. Previous research revealed that these three constructs can negatively influence the purchase willingness and actual purchase behaviour among consumers of foreign made products. The results of this study found that product judgment can mediate the negative attitudes, especially consumer ethnocentric tendencies and economic animosity. So, the marketers need to focus on the judgment of their products to at least reduce the negative attitudes arising from consumer ethnocentrism.

Finally, the implication of this study is related to the effect of demographic variables on consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. From the results, several demographic variables such as gender, age, level of education, level of

income and geographical location of consumers can significantly affect their attitude in terms of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. The knowledge can help marketers understand which group of consumers actually has high animosity towards the US, which group has highly ethnocentric tendencies and which group are patriotic. This information will provide them with a better understanding of segmenting the markets based on demographic profiles and how their products can be served to different segments of Malaysian consumers as well as to strategically target and position their products accordingly.

In brief, in terms of the practical contribution, several issues are covered. The first practical contribution of this study is the demographic profile of animosity consumers, ethnocentric consumers and patriotic consumers. The knowledge of the demographic profiles will help retailers and marketers to segment the market and focus on the right segments to sell their products and to formulate appropriate marketing strategies.

The second practical contribution of this study is the knowledge concerning consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism among consumers. With this knowledge, retailers and marketers might be able to understand the reason consumers avoid their products due to animosity, ethnocentric tendencies and patriotism. Hence, they can formulate strategies to reduce the negative effects. Klein et al. (1998) suggest that on a broader scale, knowledge of the sources of negative attitudes towards foreign countries and products and its effect on product purchase can guide the development of strategic marketing and manufacturing alliances.

Besides, the implementation of the planning and executing the communication strategy is also essential in overcoming the effects of animosities, ethnocentrism and patriotism. The advertising campaign design might include some characteristics or elements based on the cultural values that can possibly reduce the effects. Furthermore, the inclusion of rational arguments is also a helpful tool to further decrease negative attitudes towards such countries. With that measure, therefore, international marketers (retailers, manufacturers, importers and exporters) may provide and come up with an effective means to overcome or avoid the negative effects of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism on foreign products.

Finally, the last practical contribution is based on the mediating role of product judgment. The current study revealed that at some point, product judgment will mediate the negative effects of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism on the purchase willingness and purchase action. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that retailers and marketers should use product judgment as one of their strengths to attract consumers to purchase their products. In their marketing strategies, they should stress the positive attributes of their products. When consumers positively judge the products, it will possibly reduce the negative effects arising from consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism.

As for the local manufacturers, the negative attitudes towards foreign made products provide an opportunity for them to capture the local market. The negative tendency towards the foreign country will influence the attitude of consumers. The negative attitudes will probably be followed by negative action such as boycotting products

from that country. This consequence indirectly provides an opportunity for local producers to fulfil the needs of local consumers. It is up to them as to how they manipulate the situation, for example, communication and engagement in public relations is perhaps an effective means to attract consumers' attention.

In conclusion, the knowledge about consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism will provide marketers with a useful concept for understanding consumers' motivation for buying domestic versus imported products, especially why certain segments of consumers prefer domestic goods while others are not concerned about the distinction between local and imported products.

5.4 Contributions of the Study

The contributions of this research are significant in terms of theoretical and methodological perspectives. The practical contributions of this research have been discussed in previous subsection, i.e., marketing implication of the study. Each of these contributions is discussed in the following subsections.

5.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

For theoretical contributions, the present study adds to the literature on existing attitudes of local consumers towards foreign made products in several ways.

First, this study develops and tests a comprehensive model of the negative attitudes among local consumers towards products from a foreign country. The conceptual

framework proposed incorporates an antecedent, independent variables, a mediating variable and the dependent variables in a single model. In other words, the current study provided multiple elements that are examined in a single model for the background of research on attitudes of local consumers towards foreign made products. In the animosity model developed by Klein et al. (1998), they used consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism among Chinese consumers in Nanjing to predict the product judgment and purchase willingness of Japanese products due to their war history. For the current study, it was based on the relationship between the US government and Muslim world and how it will affect Muslims consumers in Malaysia. As discussed in earlier chapter on this relationship, Muslims always believed that the US government are always unfair and prejudice towards Muslim world. Most of Muslims have negative perception on the US and the favourable opinion of the US among Muslims were also low (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2004). It shows that animosity feelings are exists.

Beside, the concept of “all Muslims are Brothers” was also presented in an earlier chapter. This brotherhood concept is very important in Islam to show the equality among Muslims no matter what are their skin colours and ethnics background. Based on this concept, it was believed that the level of religiosity among Muslims will influence their feelings (in this case, animosity feelings, ethnocentric feeling and patriotic feelings) towards the US. Although the “events” (war or economic dispute) did not happen in their country, because of the Muslim brotherhood concept, they are joining together to face the “enemy nation”. Therefore, the Muslim religiosity construct is very important for the current study background and used as a predictor of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. Thus, the

current study significantly contributes to improve the knowledge of Consumer Animosity Model.

Furthermore, this study contributes to improve the knowledge as well as understanding the importance of examining the negative attitudes arising from animosities, ethnocentric tendencies and patriotic emotions among consumers that can affect their judgment of foreign made products. Additionally, the study can also improve understanding of how negative attitudes can reflect consumers' willingness to purchase foreign made products as well as the ownership of foreign made products.

Second, the integration of patriotism in this model is also one of the contributions of this study. Basically, the research framework developed in this study was based on the Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase developed by Klein et al. (1998). In that model, they used consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism as the independent variables to predict the judgment and purchase willingness of foreign made products. Based on studies conducted by previous researchers, it was found that patriotism is also commonly used by researchers in examining the negative attitudes of local consumers towards foreign made products. For example, Han (1988) and Okechuku (1994), study on how patriotic sentiments can affect the judgment and selection of imported products. In a more recent study, Wang and Chen (2004) conducted a study to examine the effect of patriotism on consumer behaviour in the Republic of China. It was found that all of these constructs are related but distinctive. It is suspected that patriotism will also have a relationship with foreign product judgment as well as the purchase willingness of foreign made

products, similar to the effects of consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism. Thus, it was integrated into the animosity model in order to examine the effects simultaneously.

Third, the current study also includes the religiosity construct as a predictor or antecedent of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. In the animosity model, no predictor was included. However, Klein and Ettenson (1999) examined the possible antecedent of consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism but no religiosity construct was included. Therefore, the current study incorporated the Muslim religiosity as an antecedent of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism in the animosity model. Based on the discussion of the relationship between these constructs provided in the literature review chapter, Muslim religiosity is expected to have a significant relationship with consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. Thus, the construct is integrated into the conceptual framework.

Fourth, the role of product judgment as a mediator in the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism with purchase willingness and purchase action is also considered as a contribution of this study. Previous literature on consumer animosity does not examine the role of product judgment as a mediating variable for the relationship between the construct. As suggested by Shin (2001), consumer animosity studies should include constructs that will possibly mediate the negative effects of consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism. Therefore, this study tested the role of product judgment as a mediator in the relationships between the independent and dependent constructs. By

examining this issue, the current study has given a significant contribution because no past research studied product judgment as a mediator in the consumer animosity model.

Furthermore, the use of purchase action as an outcome variable is also one of the contributions of this study. Most of the research in this area used purchase willingness as an outcome variable (e.g. Lim and Darley, 1997; Grewal et al., 1998; and Javalgi et al., 2005). This study also used purchase willingness as an outcome variable. In addition, it also examined the role of purchase action as an outcome variable. Therefore, the use of purchase action has also contributed to the body of knowledge in this area of research.

Finally, in terms of adding to the body of knowledge, another significant theoretical contribution of this study involves the source of animosity used in this study, which is not based on the direct dispute between two countries, but the indirect effect of animosity. All previous studies, studied the animosity effects based on the direct relationship between two nations, for example, Klein et al. (1998) – China versus Japan, and Ettenson and Klein (2005) – Australia versus France. For the current study, the source of animosity among Malaysian Muslim consumers is not the relationship between Malaysia and the US, but the involvement of the US in other Muslim countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. A study conducted by Hinck (2005) suggested domestic animosity and a study conducted by Shimp et al. (2004) suggested a regional animosity (Shimp, et al., 2004). For the current study, it suggested indirect animosity, which is applicable for the animosity feelings arose among consumers in one country (country A) because of the dispute or “events”

involved between other countries (country B and C). Possibly, indirect animosity could be used to examine the negative effects of consumer animosity in country A towards products from country C because of country C's dispute with country B.

5.4.2 Methodological Contributions

This section will discuss the methodological contribution of this study. The only significant methodological contribution of this study is the development of some measurement scales. Most of the measurement scales used in the current study were adapted from previous literature. For example, consumer ethnocentrism was measured using the CETSCALE, developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987). The measurement issue was discussed in the research methodology chapter. However, some of the measurement scales were developed in this study, i.e., for the constructs of consumer animosity and Muslim religiosity. Specifically, in the consumer animosity construct, two additional items were developed to match the measurement of the construct with the current study. Furthermore, for the Muslim religiosity construct, seven newly developed items were included in the measurement scale. Thus, this also provides a significant methodological contribution in terms of the scale development for consumer animosity and the Muslim religiosity construct.

Secondly, the integrated model was tested using structural equation modelling, which allows researchers to examine the relationship between latent constructs simultaneously (Hair et al., 2006). In other words, SEM basically estimates a series of separate, but interdependent, multiple regression equations simultaneously. Therefore, this is the second contribution of the study as no previous studies had

conducted research in this background that examines all these constructs at one time. Therefore, the current research is expected to be relevant for other researchers in this area. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the overall body of knowledge in this field. In the view of Gill and Johnson (1997), it would add value to the findings if they were to – at least in part – challenge current beliefs; be surprising; and also affect public policy as well as management.

In conclusion, this study contributes significantly to the field of knowledge in areas such as methodological discussions, and the hypotheses testing as well as the final results with the discussion presented. It also contributes to scholarly knowledge as well as to policy and practice in the background of local consumers' attitudes towards foreign products as well as providing some indicators for foreign and local suppliers, manufacturers and distribution organizations. Additionally, no previous literature has comprehensively discussed the subject matter and it can also be said that no comparable study has been undertaken so far. Therefore, in general, this study has contributed to the body of knowledge in terms of theoretical, methodological and practical contributions.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Although this study significantly contributes to the body of research, there are a number of limitations associated with the research. In this section, several limitations will be briefly outlined. These limitations provide opportunities for future research. Avenues for future research will be discussed in the following section. The limitations will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, the limitation of the study lays in the use of selected variables, especially for antecedents, independent and mediating variables. The current study examines the effects of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism as the source of negative attitudes towards foreign made products. There are some other variables that could be interesting to study in future research in order to examine the source of negative attitudes for foreign made products. For example, Laroche et al. (2005) used the country image construct to examine the attitude of consumers towards foreign made products, Bruning (1997) used the national loyalty construct, and Rawwas et al. (1996) used worldmindedness and nationalism to examine consumers' judgment of foreign versus locally made products. Therefore, these variables can be integrated in the animosity model and should be scrutinized in detail. Additionally, antecedents and mediating as well as moderating variables can also be explored further. This study only used Muslim religiosity as the antecedent and product judgment as a mediating variable.

Secondly, the ability to generalize the findings from this study is limited for a number of reasons. This research focused on products in general and not specifically categorized products such as durable or non durables, low and high involvement products, and so on. Previous research found that the attitudes of consumers were influenced by the type of products (e.g., Safiek et al., 2001; Abdul Razak et al., 2002; Yu and Albaum, 2002 and Nijssen and Douglas, 2004). Furthermore, if this study used a specific type of product, the availability of substitutes – locally made products – will influence the outcome. For example, a study conducted by Nijssen and Douglas (2004) revealed that animosity and ethnocentric effects play a major

role when a domestic brand is available on the market. If not, the negative effects are not so obvious.

In terms of ethnic groups, Malaysia has three major ethnic groups, i.e., Malay, Chinese and Indian. This study only focused on Muslim consumers, essentially the Malays. Therefore, this study employed Malay consumers as the respondents. The generalization of the findings to Malaysian consumers in general cannot be made because other ethnic groups might behave differently from the Malay consumers. Furthermore, the exclusion of the respondents from East Malaysia (Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan) might also affect the generalizability of the findings.

In addition, data was only collected from major towns in selected states in Peninsular Malaysia. For example, in Kedah, residences in Alor Setar were employed as respondents. In Kelantan and Terengganu, the data was only collected from Kota Bahru and the Kuala Terengganu areas. Therefore, the differences between rural and urban consumers cannot be identified. One explanation for the selection of respondents from the urban areas is because of the availability of foreign made products. Besides, it is believed that urban consumers have more knowledge of foreign made products because retail centres are only located in the major towns. Thus, it was decided that data would only be collected in the major towns.

Finally, the limitation is in terms of the measurement of the construct, specifically, the construct measurement of Muslim Religiosity. The measurement of the Muslim religiosity construct only focuses on various aspects of Islam, i.e., the compulsory *ibadah* (e.g. pray five times a day and fasting for the whole month of *Ramadhan*)

and supplementary *ibadah* (e.g. optional fasting and reading the Quran everyday) act as well as faith towards Islam (e.g. Islam helps to lead a better life). In fact, much more consideration needs to be included on the measures for Muslim religiosity.

As suggested by Khairul Anwar (2001), 15 major domains or indications have been extracted to measure Muslim religiosity. Among them are prayer (*solat*), *muamalah* (relation to others), fasting, Al-Quran, *akhlak*, thinking, knowledge, parental relationship, *Sunnah*, hajj and eating. To improve the measurement scale of Muslim religiosity, the construct validation for all possible items needs to be performed. However, in this study, even though several domains have not been included, the reliability test (internal consistency) and validity test (discriminant and convergent) were conducted and show that the items used were sufficient enough to measure the Muslim Religiosity construct.

Other considerations for the measurement issue are the measurement of patriotism. In the current study, the measurement of patriotism was adapted from Kosterman and Feshbach (1989), which does not directly measure the construct in the consumer behaviour context. The items used focus on patriotic emotion from the psychology and political background. For example, Shimp and Sharma (1987) developed the CETSCALE which focuses on consumer ethnocentrism and it is different with ethnocentrism in general. Therefore, the development of the measurement for “Consumer Patriotism” is essential in consumer behaviour, international business and international marketing studies. With that measurement, it can directly measure the patriotism construct from a consumer behavioural perspective.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research that builds on the findings of this study and overcomes the limitations of the research is recommended. These suggestions will also provide a direction for research in this area.

First, future research should also investigate other moderating and mediating variables that can possibly affect the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism with purchase willingness and purchase action of foreign made products. In this study, the mediating effects of foreign product judgment were examined. In future, other variables such as perceived products necessity, local products availability, perceived economic threat, as well as the price of local and foreign made products and products' perceived quality can be used to see the roles of these variables as mediators. By understanding the mediating and moderating variables, foreign product marketers, distributors and retailers will have more information about how to address and subsequently reduce the negative effects among local consumers towards foreign products. This could better equip them with the knowledge needed to implement their marketing programmes and strategies as well as to perform their jobs with more effective mechanisms.

Second, it was suggested that future research could use specific products or brand to study consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism effects towards foreign made products. As explained earlier, this study used products in general terms. For example, the comparison between high and low involvement products, durable

products, automotive products, electrical appliances and so on. Furthermore, the services industry such as banking and airlines can also be considered.

Third, extend the study to include other ethnic groups in Malaysia. Reports show that during the US invasion and war in Iraq and Afghanistan, animosity towards the US was not only expressed by Muslim countries but also non-Muslim countries. Additionally, future study should also consider the inclusion of population from East Malaysia. Most studies in Malaysia, including the current study, always focus on Peninsular Malaysia. In future, the inclusion of respondents from East Malaysia (Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan) could further improve the generalization of the study.

Fourth, another important issue in this study is the measurement for Muslim religiosity. In future the inclusion of other items that focus on other important things such as *muamalah* (relation to others), *akhlak*, knowledge, parental relationship, *Sunnah*, and eating could be essential in measuring Muslim religiosity. Besides, for the measurement of the patriotism construct, it was suggested that the items should be developed to focus directly on patriotism in the sense of consumer behaviour. The results might produce a different outcome.

Fifth, concept of domestic (internal) animosity can also be implemented in this type of research from the Malaysian consumers' context, between Malays and Chinese, as suggested by Hinck (2005). In this case, the economic animosity might be more appropriate because at the moment, the Malaysian economy is controlled by the Chinese more than the Malays. Therefore, future studies might examine this issue.

Finally, the relationship between Malaysia and other countries such as Japan (due to the World War 2 occupation), Singapore (the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore is always intense) and Thailand (in the Tak Bai case, where hundreds of Muslims were killed by the State Army in Southern Thailand) can also be studied in this research context to see how animosity will influence consumers to purchase products from such countries.

5.7 Conclusion

This study examines the issue that has recently come to the forefront in the area of international marketing and consumer behavioural research, i.e., the negative attitude of local consumers concerning foreign made products. This study focuses on the attitudes of Malaysian Muslim consumers towards US made products and the sources of negative attitudes arising from animosity, ethnocentric tendencies and patriotic emotions. The conceptual framework was adapted from Klein et al. (1998). This research concerns the effects of these negatives attitudes on the judgment of US made products. Consequently, the purchase willingness and purchase action of US made products among consumers is also examined. The influence of Muslim religiosity on consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism is also explored to see how the religiousness of Muslims can contribute to these three constructs.

Generally, this study found that consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism among consumers will affect their judgment of US made products. Furthermore, product judgment can mediate the relationship of consumer animosity, consumer

ethnocentrism and patriotism on purchase willingness and purchase action. This finding can provide a better understanding of how the negative attitudes towards foreign made products can possibly mediate the other factors, which, in turn, affect the consumers' purchase willingness and purchase action. In addition, Muslim religiosity is found to be a good predictor of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism.

This study has made important contributions to marketers and retailers by filling the gaps in the study of examining the attitudes of consumers towards foreign made products. It specifically contributes to the existing practical business applications in terms of marketing strategies and tactics concerning customers' usage of foreign made products. By understanding the sources of negative attitudes and the profile of consumers that show these negative attitudes, it will help marketers and retailers to segment their market and formulate effective strategies to capture their target market. Furthermore, it may also help marketers to formulate a strategy to reduce the negative effects of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and patriotism. Additionally, the findings have drawn attention to the need for a more comprehensive model of the attitudes towards foreign made products to improve the understanding on this subject. Deeper understanding of this concept could be one of the key success factors for the foreign products marketers and retailers.