Consumer Animosity and Affective Country Image

Sara Campo and Maria Dolores Alvarez

Abstract Studies have established in different contexts the effect of consumer animosity on buying intentions of the products originating from the country towards which this hostility is directed. Despite the increasing number of investigations dealing with this topic within the international marketing literature, there is a lack of research concerning the influence of animosity on the purchase of tourism products. The current study aims to provide a greater understanding on this issue and propose a scale to measure the animosity construct in connection to the purchase of tourism products. While the findings support the idea that consumer animosity towards a country has a significant influence in the individual's decision to visit the place for tourism purposes, it determines that this effect is mediated by affective country evaluations. The study also contributes to a better understanding on how perceptions of places are constructed by individuals based on individual or national experiences, and how these in turn affect behavioural intentions.

1 Introduction

Globalization and an increased interconnection worldwide have rendered tourism highly dependent on both internal and external forces. Economic, political and other situational factors have a strong influence on tourism activities, whether they originate in the immediate vicinity of the destination or not (Ritchie 2004). In particular, the literature has determined the effect of specific events on tourism, establishing that political conflicts, terrorism acts or diseases and epidemics have a direct and negative impact on travel and visitation (Clements and Georgiou 1998; Hall 2010; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty 2009). Especially, the impact of such

S. Campo

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

e-mail: sara.campo@uam.es

M.D. Alvarez (⊠)

Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey

e-mail: alvarezm@boun.edu.tr

incidents on the image of a country has been the subject of numerous studies. According to previous research, specific events may provide additional information that influences perceptions regarding a place (Heslop et al. 2008).

In the international marketing literature, the effect of specific events on the image of a country has also been studied in connection to consumer animosity and its influence on the purchase of products originating from a specific country. Consumer animosity, introduced by Klein, Ettenson and Morris in 1998, refers to "the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events" (Klein et al. 1998, p. 90) that affect the consumers' purchase behaviour. Indeed, several studies (Bahaee and Pisani 2009; Ettenson and Klein 2005; Huang et al. 2010; Nijssen and Douglas 2004) have established in different contexts the effect of animosity on buying intentions of the products originating from the country towards which this hostility is directed. Despite the increasing number of investigations dealing with this topic within the international marketing literature, there is a lack of research concerning the influence of animosity on the purchase of tourism products. While some studies (Alvarez and Campo 2014; Moufakkir 2014; Podoshen and Hunt 2009) have suggested that animosity affects the decision to visit a particular country, to date there is a lack of research that thoroughly examines this impact.

Therefore, the current study aims to contribute to the literature by investigating the consumer animosity construct in a tourism context. In this analysis, two streams of research are combined: the area of study concerning the influence of specific events on the image of the place and intention to visit it, and the consumer animosity field of investigation. Thus, the research attempts to determine the effect of animosity on the image of a particular country, and on the intention to visit it. Since recent investigations have also distinguished between the impact of a particular incident on cognitive versus affective perceptions, confirming the greater weight of the event on affective evaluations (Alvarez and Campo 2014), the current study also focuses on affective country evaluations and how they relate to the animosity construct.

2 Literature Review

Consumer animosity is a concept that has obtained an increasing attention in the marketing literature since its introduction by Klein et al. in 1998. Although the term animosity had already been used in previous research (for example Averill 1982) to signify feelings of enmity towards a country due to economic or political troubles, it was Klein et al. (1998) who first introduced this concept as affecting consumer behaviour. Several studies (Amine et al. 2005; Ang et al. 2004; Bahaee and Pisani 2009; Ettenson and Klein 2005; Huang et al. 2010; Nijssen and Douglas 2004; Shimp et al. 2004; Shoham et al. 2006) have confirmed the effect of animosity on the consumer's intention to purchase products from the country towards which such hostility is felt.

In the international marketing literature, the concept of consumer animosity has developed tied to that of the country-of-origin research. Studies under the country-of-origin field of inquiry have stressed the impact of the image that a country holds on the perceptions that consumers have of the products produced there, and on their subsequent purchase choices (Agarwal and Sikri 1996; Laroche et al. 2005; Lee and Ganesh 1999; Nebenzahl and Jaffe 1996; Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999). However, contrarily to the consumer animosity research, the effect of country-of-origin beliefs is on the product evaluation, and through it, on the ensuing buying decision. In contrast, under the consumer animosity stream of investigation, the perceived hostility towards the country does not necessarily result on a negative evaluation of the products produced in that country (Klein et al. 1998). Thus, in the words of Klein et al. (1998, p. 90), "a product's origin can affect consumer buying decisions independent of product judgements".

Nes et al. (2012) use affect to explain the impact of animosity on purchase decisions, despite cognitive product evaluations remaining the same. These authors follow earlier findings from Leong et al. (2008) concerning the greater impact of animosity on affective product evaluations, and confirm the mediating influence of affect in the relationship between country animosity and behavioural intentions. Nes et al. (2012) explain this influence of affect through congruity and cognitive dissonance theories, following research in social psychology that determines that feelings and emotions have a significant influence in the creation of stereotypes and attitudes (Macrae et al. 1996). In the tourism field, research has also confirmed that the affective component of image is more important than the cognitive one in determining the overall image of a place (Alvarez and Campo 2014; Campo and Alvarez 2010; Kim and Yoon 2003).

While consumer animosity has been the subject of numerous studies since its introduction as a new field of research, these investigations have mainly focused on the characteristics of the construct, in an attempt to measure it. In particular, the reasons behind this animosity are listed in the literature as including wars and military conflicts (Klein et al. 1998; Nijssen and Douglas 2004), political incidents (Ettenson and Klein 2005; Witkowski 2000), historical events (Nakos and Hajidimitriou 2007), economic disputes (Klein and Ettenson 1999) and interaction with the people from the country (Moufakkir 2014; Nes et al. 2012). Jung et al. (2002) also distinguish between different types of animosity based on two dimensions: stable—situational and personal—national. These authors stated that animosity could be due to a particular event (situational) or to the accumulation of incidents over time (stable). Furthermore, when the cause of the transgression is perceived as coming from an individual, animosity is not generated toward the country (personal); only when it is interpreted that a country has participated in the offense does this lead to a feeling of animosity (national) (Leong et al. 2008). Thus, country evaluations are based on personal or national experiences that may go back to the past or may be rooted in the present. However, authors such as Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) have criticized the one-size-fits-all manner in which measuring instruments of animosity have been used. According to these authors, the construct is context-specific and requires an understanding of the motives inspiring animosity, based on prior exploratory qualitative research. In addition, Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) also suggest that the reasons underlying animosity judgements need to be distinguished from the feelings per se. Thus, they call for the inclusion of additional items that encompass a more general affective-based evaluation of animosity in the scales used to measure this construct.

Following Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007), other more recent studies (Nes et al. 2012) have also remarked on the need to continue the study of animosity in order to obtain a more thorough comprehension of the construct. Animosity needs to be investigated particularly within the context of tourism, since there is no research that has examined its influence on the evaluation and purchase of tourism products. In contrast, the tourism literature has concerned itself for several decades with the study of how particular events, including terrorist attacks, wars and international disputes, political conflicts, natural disasters and economic crises, may impact the image and tourism activities of the destination in which the incident occurs (see the literature review by Sönmez (1998) and Hall (2010). Some examples of studies in this field include the research from Clements and Georgiou (1998) that analyzes the effect of political instability on tourism; Coshall (2003) who considers the influence of various political and military events on airline passenger flows in the United Kingdom; Gartner and Shen (1992) who discuss the impact of internal political conflicts such as that of Tiananmen Square on the image of the country; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2009) who investigate the effect of terrorism and endemic diseases on Thailand's tourism; and Steiner (2007) who studies the impact of the tourism industry in Tunisia Egypt and United Arab Emirates after the 9/11 terrorist attacks). Thus, the consumer animosity field of investigation within the international marketing literature needs to be combined with the existing knowledge in tourism research concerning conflicts and crises situations. This is the starting point for the current study, which attempts to understand the influence of animosity in tourism, drawing from existing research in and outside the tourism literature. In particular, the influence that animosity has on affective image evaluations and on the decision to visit a country is studied. Furthermore, the investigation seeks to provide a new measuring instrument of the animosity construct that addresses some of the issues raised by Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) and is based on a greater understanding of the underlying reasons for animosity judgements.

3 Method

The current research is part of an ongoing investigation to create and test a comprehensive measure of consumer animosity in the tourism context, and to determine the effect of the construct on the image of the place and on the decision to visit the destination. First, an in-depth review of the literature was used to generate items for the animosity scale. This phase was supplemented with an initial structured interview to a convenience sample of 36 Turkish respondents who were asked to

provide three countries towards which they feel a greater animosity and the reasons behind it. Following this stage, an online survey to a convenience sample of 163 Turkish consumers was used to quantitatively pre-test the animosity scale for Israel, identified as one of the countries suffering from a greater animosity among the Turks. The study also aimed to investigate the influence of the animosity construct on the affective image of Israel and on the intention to visit this country. Following Nes et al. (2012), the investigation also examines in a tourism setting the mediating influence of affect in the relationship between consumer animosity and intention to visit a particular country.

The respondents were solicited by posting an invitation to participate in the research via social media networks and discussion forums on topics related to entertainment and leisure. The sample obtained in this fashion includes a high percentage of young people, with 59% of the respondents between the ages of 18 and 25, and 25% between 26 and 35 years old. While most of the participants are single (83%), there is a balanced distribution of males (53%) and females (47%). The average net income is high, since 39% of the sample earns more than 5000 TL per month, with 22% falling within the second highest category (between 3500 and 5000 TL per month).

In this study the animosity construct was measured based on five dimensions formed by the underlying causes of hostility—economic, people, political, religious, historical and military—followed by a general animosity component based on feelings towards the country. As explained above, this measure of animosity was created by generating items from the literature, and from the initial structured interviews, which shed information on additional causes of animosity towards a particular country. All the measures used in this research are shown in Table 1.

The items included in the questionnaire to reflect the different dimensions of animosity identified are measured using a 5-point Likert scale that includes 4 items for the economic dimension (Ang et al. 2004; Klein et al. 1998; Shin 2001), 4 items for the people dimension (Nes et al. 2012), 5 items for the political dimension (Russel 2004), 2 items for the religious dimension (Riefler and Diamantopoulos 2007), 2 items for the historical dimension (Cai et al. 2012) and 3 items for the military dimension (Klein et al. 1998; Nijssen and Douglas 2004). Following the recommendation from Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007), a dimension to measure the overall degree of animosity was also included in the scale.

Affective country image and intention to visit were evaluated using the scales utilized in Alvarez and Campo's (2014) research. Affective country image includes 6 items, measured using a 5-point semantic differential scale, while intention to visit is measured through 3 items using a 5-point Likert scale. The results obtained from this survey are discussed in this chapter and are used in order to support the subsequent stage of the research, a larger-scale online questionnaire-based study, which is still ongoing.

Table 1 Scale items

Dimensions	Items		
Economic animosity	 This country is out to exploit the economy of my country and other countries This country is taking advantage of my country and other countries This country has too much economic influence on my country and other countries I dislike this country because it is a low cost/low quality producer 		
People animosity	 I dislike the mentality of the people of this country I feel that people in this country are hostile towards my country I dislike that people from this country criticize my country's policies My experiences with people from this country are negative 		
Political animosity	 I dislike the policies of the government from this country I dislike the political system in this country I dislike the corruption in this country I dislike this country because it does not respect human rights I dislike this country because it does not respect women's rights 		
Religious animosity	This country does not respect other religions I dislike the religious system in this country		
Historical animosity	I. I dislike this country because of past historical events I. I dislike this country because of its historic oppressing other countries		
Military animosity	I. I believe that this country poses a huge military threat I. I dislike this county's involvement in wars and conflicts I. I dislike the military operations in this country		
Overall animosity	Overall, I dislike this country Overall, I feel annoyed by this country		
Affective country image	Like—dislike Trust—distrust Gives me confidence—does not give me confidence Admire—do not admire Does not annoy me—annoys me Arouses good feelings—bad feelings		
Intention to visit	I. I intend to visit this country in the future I would choose this country for my next holiday I would prefer to visit this country rather than other similar destinations		

4 Results

The descriptive statistics further provide information on the animosity of the Turks towards Israel. According to the findings, the Turkish respondents exhibit a high level of animosity towards Israel (refer to Table 2). Items related to political, military and religious animosity show higher means, indicating a greater level of animosity in relation to these aspects. In addition, the means for the affective country image and the intention to visit the destination are extremely low (lower than 2.0 on a 5-point Likert scale for all items).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the animosity, affective country image and intention to visit

Items	Means	SD
Animosity		
Economic animosity		
Israel is out to exploit the economy of my country and other countries (EA1)	3.85	1.36
Israel is taking advantage of my country and other countries (EA2)	3.99	1.20
Israel has too much economic influence in my country and other countries (EA3)	3.83	1.22
People animosity	•	
I dislike the mentality of the people of Israel (PEA1)	3.83	1.37
I feel that the people in Israel are hostile towards my country (PEA2)	3.77	1.42
I dislike that people from Israel criticize my country's policies (PEA3)	3.63	1.46
My experiences with people from Israel are negative (PEA4)	2.36	1.56
Political animosity		
I dislike the policies of the government from Israel (POA1)	4.17	1.15
I dislike the political system in Israel (POA2)	3.75	1.27
I dislike the corruption in Israel (POA3)	3.25	1.30
I dislike Israel because it does not respect human rights (POA4)	3.96	1.25
I dislike Israel because it does not respect women's rights (POA5)	2.73	1.35
Religious animosity		
Israel does not respect other religions (RA1)	4.24	1.03
I dislike the religious system in Israel (RA2)	3.87	1.25
Historical animosity		
I dislike Israel because of past historical events (HA1)	3.91	1.29
I dislike Israel because of its history of oppressing other countries (HA2)	3.83	1.30
Military animosity		
I believe that Israel poses a huge military threat (MA1)	4.14	1.12
I dislike Israel's involvement in wars and conflicts (MA2)	4.45	0.94
I dislike the military operations in Israel (MA3)	4.50	0.90
Overall animosity		
Overall, I dislike Israel (A1)	3.71	1.42
Overall, I have negative feelings towards Israel (A2)	3.59	1.45
Affective country image		
Like—dislike (ACI1)	1.96	1.09
Trust—distrust (ACI2)	1.68	1.03
Gives me confidence—does not give me confidence (ACI3)	1.77	1.02
Admire—do not admire (ACI4)	1.77	1.11
Does not annoy me—annoys me (ACI5)	2.10	1.24
Arouses good feelings—bad feelings (ACI6)	1.68	0.97

(continued)

Items	Meansa	SD
Intention to visit		
I intend to visit Israel in the future (I1)	1.95	1.23
I would choose Israel for my next holiday (I2)	1.98	1.27
I would prefer to visit Israel rather than other similar destinations (I3)	2.00	1.27

Table 2 (continued)

Exploratory factor analysis was first applied to refine the scale, resulting in the item "I dislike this country because it is a low cost/low quality produce" being eliminated from subsequent analyses because of its lack of fit with the rest of the animosity scale in the case of Israel. The reliability and validity of the scale is confirmed since the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability indicators are greater than 0.70 for all variables and dimensions, and all the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are close to or greater than the recommended standards of 0.50 (see Table 3).

Following this analysis, structural equation modelling (AMOS 22.0) was also used in order to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the dimensionality of the animosity scale and the relative weights of the various components on the overall construct (Chi-square = 588.05: df = 395; p = 0.00; CFI = 0.93; AGFI = 0.77; RMSEA = 0.05). According to the research, in the case of Israel a variety of underlying reasons determine the high level of animosity that the Turks suffer against this country. In particular, political (0.92), people (0.91), and historical animosity (0.91) have a greater weight in the overall animosity component. The model of estimated relationships and the relative weights of the various animosity components on the overall animosity construct are shown in Table 3 and Fig. 1.

The findings also support the influencing role of animosity towards a country such as Israel on the individual's intention to visit the place, as seen in Fig. 1. However, this influence is found to be indirect, mediated by affective country evaluations. Thus, this research confirms the importance of the affective country image on the intention to visit a place that had already emerged in previous investigations (Alvarez and Campo 2014; Campo and Alvarez 2010). The present research determines that the affective country image has a strong, significant and positive effect (0.61) on the intention to visit the destination. In addition, the influence of animosity on the affective country image of Israel is found to be strong and negative (-0.71), and therefore the impact of animosity on the intention to visit is negative, albeit indirect, mediated by the affective country image component (total effect = -0.43). Thus, this study confirms in the tourism context Nes et al.'s (2012) model of the influence of animosity on purchase intentions through the mediating role of affective country evaluations.

SD Standard Deviation

^a1 = Lowest level of animosity, most positive feelings and highest intention to visit 5 = Highest level of animosity, most negative feelings and lowest intention to visit

Table 3 Estimation of the relationship model

	•		
Item		Construct	Standardized coefficient
EA1	<	Economic animosity	0.88*
EA2	<	Economic animosity	0.78*
EA3	<	Economic animosity	0.69*
PEA1	<	People animosity	0.79*
PEA2	<	People animosity	0.74*
PEA3	<	People animosity	0.65*
PEA4	<	People animosity	0.47*
POA1	<	Political animosity	0.74*
POA2	<	Political animosity	0.71*
POA3	<	Political animosity	0.51*
POA4	<	Political animosity	0.74*
POA5	<	Political animosity	0.45*
RA1	<	Religious animosity	0.83*
RA2	<	Religious animosity	0.72*
MA1	<	Military animosity	0.69*
MA2	<	Military animosity	0.60*
MA3	<	Military animosity	0.79*
OA1	<	Overall animosity	0.72*
OA2	<	Overall animosity	0.69*
HA1	<	Historical animosity	0.76*
HA2	<	Historical animosity	0.80*
ACI1	<	Affective country	0.81*
ACI2	<	Affective country	0.70*
ACI3	<	Affective country	0.79*
ACI4	<	Affective country	0.76*
ACI5	<	Affective country	0.66*
ACI6	<	Affective country	0.81*
I1	<	Intention to visit	0.78*
12	<	Intention to visit	0.93*
I3	<	Intention to visit	0.92*
Dimensions	Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Economic animosity	0.80	0.83	0.62
People animosity	0.76	0.76	0.46
Political animosity	0.76	0.77	0.41
Religious animosity	0.74	0.75	0.61
Historical animosity	0.76	0.76	0.61
Military animosity	0.72	0.74	0.49
Overall animosity	0.88	0.67	0.50
Affective country image	0.89	0.86	0.56
Intention to visit	0.91	0.91	0.78
	1	1	1

AVE Average variance extracted

 $p^* < 0.001$

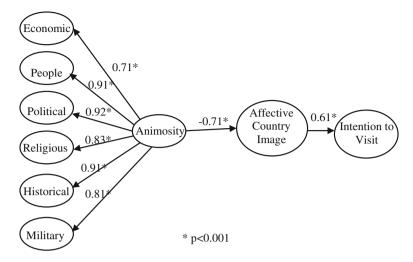


Fig. 1 Model of estimated relationships (standardized coefficients)

5 Conclusion

The study confirms the multidimensionality of the animosity construct and provides a greater understanding of its underlying components. In particular, in the case of Israel, the people, political and historical dimensions appear to have the highest weight in the formation of the overall animosity of the Turks towards this country. Thus, the investigation contributes to a better grasp on how perceptions of places are constructed based on individual or national experiences. In addition, the research may provide practical implications, helping national decision makers better comprehend the reasons for hostility towards the country, thus allowing these issues to be addressed within a comprehensive national strategy. Within this context, the animosity construct also needs to be better understood as it may provide a useful basis for tourism segmentation, determining those individuals that are likely to be more receptive of the country's marketing and promotional campaigns.

The research also determines the impact of animosity on behavioural intentions to purchase tourism products. While the results support the idea that consumer animosity towards a country has a significant influence in the individual's decision to visit the place for tourism purposes, it determines that the effect of animosity on the intention to visit is indirect, mediated by affective country image evaluations. Thus, the investigation extends the application of existing animosity related findings to tourism, confirming the importance of the construct for subsequent analyses in destination and place research. The study also confirms the applicability of Nes et al.'s (2012) model to tourism, highlighting the need to better identify through further studies the mediating influence of affect in the relationship between animosity and intention to visit a destination. Therefore, the vital role of affective

country evaluations is also highlighted in this research, in support of previous tourism studies on the topic (Alvarez and Campo 2014; Campo and Alvarez 2010; Kim and Yoon 2003).

Despite the interest of the results obtained in this research, this still remains a preliminary study based on a convenience sample and a relatively low sample size. The findings obtained need to be further assessed through subsequent studies that will provide a thorough understanding of the dimensions of animosity for various countries. These future investigations may also examine to what extent different components of animosity may have diverse impacts on the evaluation of destinations and visitation intentions. In addition, while the research addressed some of the concerns regarding the measurement of animosity expressed in previous studies (Riefler and Diamantopoulos 2007), such as the need for preliminary research to provide context specific data on the reasons inspiring animosity and the need to separate these motives from the feelings of animosity per se, clearly more comprehensive investigations are warranted. In this regard, several questions that may lead future research emerge. To what extents do the various dimensions of animosity play different roles in determining overall animosity? Is the influence of economic animosity different to that of political animosity? Is the effect of animosity on intention to visit a destination always mediated by affect, or does this mediating influence vary for diverse countries with different characteristics? These and other questions corroborate the fact that consumer animosity is still a largely unknown construct, not only in tourism, but also in international marketing.

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