Kenan Mahmutović
University of Bihać
Faculty of Economics
77000 Bihać, Bosnia
and Herzegovina
kenan.mahmutovic@unbi.ba

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CONSUMER ANIMOSITY AND CROSS-BORDER MARKET DYNAMICS: EVIDENCE FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to investigate the influence of perceived threat/injustice against Croatia and media exposure to negative content on consumer animosity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in turn impacts the intention to boycott/purchase products from Croatia in the context of cross-border markets.

Methodology: Primary data are collected using a cross-sectional survey, and an integrated model incorporating perceived threat/injustice and media exposure to negative content, consumer animosity, and boycott and purchase intentions is validated. CFA is used to test the measurement model, whereas covariance-based SEM is employed to test the relationships. Moderation by pragmatic cross-border mechanisms is tested using factor score regression with robust standard errors.

Results: Perceived threat/injustice and media exposure to negative content are antecedents of consumer animosity. Consumer animosity has a significant positive impact on boycott intention and a negative impact on purchase intention. Cross-border market availability, and travel frequency and stay intensity positively affect purchase intention. Cross-border market availability acts as a moderator that amplifies the negative impact of consumer animosity on purchase intention. The moderating effect of travel frequency and stay intensity, and perceived reciprocal crossborder consumption is not significant.

Conclusion: Structural market exposure has positive effects on purchase intentions, and at the same time, it can have negative consequences for affective resistance in the form of animosity. Therefore, there is a need to develop more nuanced theories of consumer behavior in politically sensitive cross-border settings.

Keywords: Consumer animosity, cross-border market dynamics, intergroup threat, boycott intention, purchase intention, Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. Introduction

Regional conflicts stemming from unresolved political issues also affect the economy. Consumer animosity is a factor for consumers' avoidance of products from specific nations even when they meet product and price criteria. According to Klein et al. (1998), consumer animosity is an affective response rooted in political, historical, and social conflict, which acts

largely independently of cognitive product evaluations and has a strong influence on both purchase intention and boycott intention (Klein et al., 1998; Ettenson and Klein, 2005; Shoham et al., 2006).

Although many studies indicate that animosity decreases consumer purchase intentions, recent research suggests that this is not always the case. In fact, some research suggests that, even when consumers exhibit animosity toward a country, they may still purchase products from that country, particularly if there is economic interdependence and a high level of product involvement between consumers and a country (Nijssen & Douglas, 2004; Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007; Abosag & Farah, 2014; Jiménez & San Martín, 2010). These findings indicate that affective animosity does not always reduce consumer purchase intentions.

Insights from the literature on cross-border consumption and consumer mobility can help address this limitation. Previous literature has shown the effects of pragmatic market conditions, such as the physical availability of products, regular exposure to neighboring markets, and observable consumption patterns, on the behavioral impact of negative affective attitudes. According to the literature, such pragmatic market conditions can mitigate the effects of negative affective attitudes on consumer behavior (Spierings & van der Velde, 2008; Verhoef et al., 2007; Timothy & Butler, 1995). In this case, the national origin of the product will not play a critical role in consumers' minds. Instead, market convenience and accessibility will play a critical role.

Despite such contributions, the field remains theoretically and empirically fragmented. Most research has been biased toward either affective factors (animosity, ethnocentrism) or pragmatic market factors (availability, mobility), with few attempts at integrative research (Klein et al., 1998; Nijssen & Douglas, 2004; Spierings & van der Velde, 2008; Abosag et al., 2012). Social normative dimensions such as perceived reciprocity and normalization of crossborder consumption remain under-theorized and underresearched despite their potential for explaining animosity effects in politically sensitive contexts (Cialdini et al., 1990; Spierings & van der Velde, 2008).

The present research study proposes that the impact of animosity on market behavior is moderated by pragmatic and socially mediated market mechanisms. Specifically, this research aims to examine how (1) the cross-border availability of products from neighboring countries, (2) the frequency of traveling and length of stay in another country (exposure), and (3) perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (consumers' perceptions of socially normalized cross-border consumption) condition the impact of animosity on market behavior.

The setting for the study is the Una-Sana Canton (USC), Bosnia and Herzegovina, a region bordering Croatia. The region features a wide range of Croatian products and a high level of cross-border market activity. Historical and political factors may perpetuate negative consumer attitudes toward Croatia. Animosity and consumption would thus be expected to coexist.

The study proposes and tests a holistic model of consumer behavior that integrates cognitive and emotional antecedents of consumer animosity. The study focuses on:

1. The impact of consumer animosity on boycott and purchase intentions;
2. The influence and moderating effect of pragmatic market mechanisms—cross-border market availability (CBMA), travel frequency and stay intensity (TFSI), and perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (PRCBC).

The study integrates emotional animosity and pragmatic market mechanisms to extend consumer animosity theory and provide a new explanation for why negative consumer attitudes do not always result in market avoidance in border regions and integrated markets.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 develops the theoretical framework and hypotheses by integrating consumer animosity theory, intergroup threat theory, and cross-border consumption research. Building on this, Section 3 describes the research design, data collection, and measurement instruments implemented to test these hypotheses. Section 4 presents the empirical results, including measurement model assessment, structural relationships, and moderation analyses, which inform the subsequent discussion. Section 5 discusses findings in relation to prior literature and theory, setting the stage for Section 6, which details the theoretical, managerial, and policy implications. Finally, Section 7 concludes by summarizing contributions, noting limitations, and outlining future research directions.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

2.1 Consumer animosity in international consumer behavior

Consumer animosity is a country-specific affective reaction to political, historical, or economic hostilities between two or more nations. It is typically manifested through a decrease in purchase intentions and an increase in boycott intentions for products made in the hostile nation. Since the pioneering study by Klein et al. (1998), consumer animosity has been conceptualized as an affective construct that is relatively independent of consumers' cognitive judgments of products and has a direct impact on consumer behavior (Klein et al., 1998; Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Shoham et al., 2006).

In the realm of international marketing research, consumer animosity has been theoretically distinguished from related but conceptually different constructs such as consumer ethnocentrism and country-of-origin image (COI). Ethnocentrism has been defined as a normative preference for acquiring domestic products compared to foreign products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). COI is defined as the beliefs that consumers hold regarding the production capacity and quality of a certain nation (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Kaynak & Kara, 2002). On the other hand, consumer animosity is defined as a differentiated emotion-driven construct targeting a certain nation, which may lead to reduced probability of purchasing the product from that country, despite the positive cognitive evaluation of the product (Klein et al., 1998).

Previous research has focused on the various aspects of consumer animosity, including war, political, and economic animosity. It has also been acknowledged that accumulated animosity may differ from recent consumer animosity (Hoon et al., 2004; Leonidou et al., 2019). It has also been acknowledged that consumer animosity may be intergenerational in the context of war, implying that individuals who did not experience the war may also display consumer animosity (Volčič, 2007). The significance of consumer animosity, ethnocentrism, and COI has been acknowledged in the Southeastern European region. The research carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia has shown the independent effect of consumer animosity with regards to purchase intentions and boycotts (Brkić et al., 2011; Matić, 2013; Marinković, 2017).

2.2 Perceived injustice, media exposure, and consumer animosity

Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) is a prominent framework for understanding the development of intergroup antagonism and consumer antagonism. Following the tenets of ITT, prejudice toward outgroup members is driven by realistic and symbolic threats posed by out-groups to members from different groups (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan et al., 2002). Realistic threats involve political, economic, and security risks, whereas symbolic threats involve threats to identity, values, and history.

In international settings and post-conflict societies, emotions of injustice and threat are not solely personal experiences of the individual; rather, they are socially constructed through the political narratives and discourses on intergroup relationships in these settings (Volčič, 2007; Jusić, 2009). In politically stable settings, the media can maintain emotions of injustice through agenda-setting and framing effects (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2019). In accordance with these theoretical assumptions, international marketing research established that perceived injustice and perceived threats are significant cognitive antecedents of CA (Klein et al., 1998; Marinković, 2017). Feelings of injustice and threats against other countries can lead to CA, which can further affect consumer behavior.

Exposure to negative media content can also affect CA. In political communication research, incidental exposure to negative political content can lead to higher emotional responses and affect social norms among people who do not intentionally look for negative political content (Ahmadi & Wohn, 2018; Lecheler & de Vreese, 2019). In other words, media can be considered instruments of affective mobilization that can link political evaluations and consumer behavior.

Based on these considerations, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Perceived injustice and threat (PT) positively affect consumer animosity (AN).

H2: Media exposure to negative content (ME) positively affects consumer animosity (AN).

2.3 Behavioral outcomes of consumer animosity

Consumer animosity has been found to impact consumer behavior through two closely related but conceptually distinct outcomes: boycott intention

and purchase intention (Sen et al., 2001; Spears & Singh, 2004).

Considerable research has confirmed that animosity has a positive impact on consumer boycott intentions for products from the country of origin, regardless of product quality (Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Klein et al., 1998). In post-conflict settings, such consumer behaviors have been found to serve an expressional function that demonstrates group affiliation, group loyalty, and moral consistency (Brkić et al., 2011; Marinković, 2017).

On the other hand, animosity has been found to negatively impact purchase intentions through increased psychological costs of consumption and through serving as an affective deterrent for market interactions (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). Although boycott intentions and purchase intentions should not be equated, they are arguably among the most significant behavioral outcomes of consumer animosity.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Consumer animosity (AN) positively affects boycott intention (BI).

H4: Consumer animosity (AN) negatively affects purchase intention (PI).

2.4 Pragmatic market mechanisms: availability, mobility, and reciprocity

Research on cross-border consumption shows that consumer behavior is not only influenced by affective/normative dispositions but also by pragmatic factors such as product availability and consumer mobility (Timothy & Butler, 1995; Spierings & van der Velde, 2008).

Cross-border market availability (CBMA) refers to the structural presence of neighboringcountry products in the domestic market, including ease of access and product variety. The higher the CBMA, the lower the constraints to consumption and the higher the normalizing influence on purchasing behavior (Berry et al., 2002; Verhoef et al., 2007).

Travel frequency and stay intensity (TFSI) represent the experiential dimension of cross-border consumption. Frequent physical interactions with the neighboring-country retail environments reduce perceived risk and psychological distance, which, in turn, reduces the importance of national origin information in consumption decisions (Timothy & Butler, 1995; Verlegh, 2007).

Perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (PRCBC) refers to the extent to which consumers believe that cross-border consumption is a reciprocal process. Observing neighboring-country consumers consuming products from the domestic market normalizes their own cross-border consumption behavior through descriptive social norms (Cialdini et al., 1990; Spierings & van der Velde, 2008).

Based on these considerations, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

H5: Cross-border market availability (CBMA) positively affects purchase intention (PI).

H6: Travel frequency and stay intensity (TFSI) positively affect purchase intention (PI).

H7: Perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (PRCBC) positively affects purchase intention (PI).

2.5 Moderating role of pragmatic market mechanisms

Apart from direct market implications, market mechanisms may also affect the nature and strength of the relationship between consumer animosity and actual purchasing behavior. Under conditions of high product availability, high-frequency cross-border movement of people, and the presence of the perception of reciprocal consumption, these factors can restrict, modify, and/or reorient the nature of the relationship between negative affective consumer attitudes and actual purchasing behavior (Verhoef et al., 2007; Spierings & van der Velde, 2008).

Based on the above understanding of market mechanisms, the moderation hypotheses are as follows:

H8a: Cross-border market availability (CBMA) moderates the relationship between consumer animosity (AN) and purchase intention (PI).

H8b: Travel frequency and stay intensity (TFSI) moderate the relationship between consumer animosity (AN) and purchase intention (PI).

H8c: Perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (PRCBC) moderates the relationship between consumer animosity (AN) and purchase intention (PI).

2.6 Conceptual model overview

The present research study attempts to develop an integrated conceptual model that can account for consumer behavior in a cross-border context, which is highly sensitive in political and historical terms. A key assumption is made in the current research, which is based on the idea that consumer animosity (AN) is not a standalone variable, and its effects on the market are mediated by market configuration and the social normalization of cross-border consumption.

At its core, this conceptual model features consumer animosity (AN), which is conceptualized as a country-specific affective reaction toward the origin of products. Animosity is conceived as a mediating factor through which perceptions of injustice and threats are channeled to influence consumer intentions. In line with Intergroup Threat Theory, animosity is conceived as being driven by perceptions of injustice and threats (PT) and negative media content (ME), which act as antecedents for affective animosity toward a target country:

$$AN = f(PT, ME).$$

At the behavioral level, the model distinguishes between boycott intention (BI) and purchase intention (PI). The former is an engaged and norm-based resistance behavior, whereas the latter is a positive orientation toward buying in the future. Consumer animosity increases BI and decreases PI.

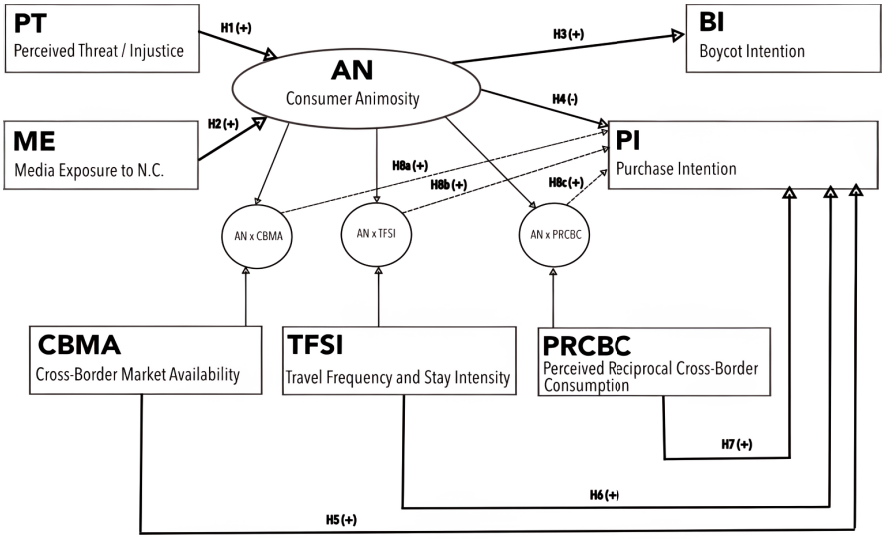
The main contribution of this research is the extension of the traditional animosity concept by including pragmatic market mechanisms that influence consumer purchasing behavior in the cross-border setting. The framework proposes that there are three types of mechanisms that affect cross-border purchasing: cross-border market availability of products from the neighboring country (CBMA), which is structural; travel frequency and stay intensity (TFSI), which is experiential; and perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption behavior (PRCBC), which is social-normative.

These mechanisms have a direct positive effect on PI and modify the effect of animosity on purchase behavior. The mechanisms do not eliminate animosity in cross-border consumption but modify it:

$$PI = f(AN, CBMA, TFSI, PRCBC, AN \times CBMA, AN \times TFSI, AN \times PRCBC).$$

In summary, the model combines affective, cognitive, market structure, and social normative factors that explain the coexistence of negative intergroup attitudes and consumption of products from a country toward which consumers have negative attitudes. The model is suitable for border regions and highly integrated countries where availability and exposure are part of consumers' daily lives.

Figure 1 Conceptual model and hypothesized relationships



Source: Author

3. Method

3.1 Research design and sample

The research design adopted for this study was cross-sectional in nature, using a survey-based approach for testing the integrated model of perceived threat/injustice, exposure to negative political media content, consumer animosity, and behavioral intentions toward products of a neighboring country.

Data were collected for this research between December 2025 and January 2026 in the UnaSana Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The data were collected using a face-to-face intercept survey at the exits of major shopping centers.

The intercept sampling method was used for this research to ensure that the participants were actively engaged in product consumption at the time of data collection. The survey questions used for this research were validated through a two-stage validation process. Initially, a 10person pretest was conducted for assessing the clarity of the questions, after which minor modifications in the survey questions related to linguistic aspects were undertaken. The results of the 30-person pilot test indicated satisfactory reliability and structure of the questions for this research; therefore, data collection was undertaken. A total of 426 residents of the Una-Sana Canton were included in the final sample for this research. This sample size is well above the minimum sample size required for covariance-based SEM research, including research with latent interaction terms.

3.2 Measurement instruments and construct operationalization

All of the major constructs included in this research, such as consumer animosity (AN), perceived threat/injustice (PT), exposure to negative content in the media (ME), boycott intention (BI), purchase intention (PI), cross-border market availability (CBMA), and perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (PRCBC), were defined as reflective constructs. The measurement items for each construct were adapted or derived from well-established scales in international marketing, consumer behavior, and political communication research traditions, in accordance with the special relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in terms of politics and economy. The survey was conducted in Bosnian, the native language of the survey participants. All of the constructs included in this research were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale with values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Travel frequency and stay intensity was conceptualized as a behavioral exposure construct measuring direct experiential exposure of the respondent to the neighboring country. Travel frequency and stay intensity was measured using two ordinal-type items: (1) frequency of traveling to the neighboring country, and (2) an average number of days spent in the neighboring country per year. To ensure equal weights of the two items included in this construct, z-standardization of each item was applied to create a composite index of TFSI.

3.3 Analytical strategy

All the analyses were carried out in the R statistical environment. The analytical process followed a two-stage approach. Prior to confirmatory factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the dimensionality of the adapted and contextspecific measurement scales and to identify potentially problematic items. First, for assessing internal consistency reliability as well as convergent and discriminant validity, a measurement model was estimated using confirmatory factor analysis. After that, a structural model was estimated. Internal consistency reliability was checked using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. When the reliability coefficient is above 0.70, it is acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). Convergent validity was checked using standardized factor loadings and average variance extracted. Factor loadings above 0.60 and AVE above 0.50 are considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant validity was assessed based on latent factor correlations obtained from the CFA model. Following conventional guidelines, discriminant validity was considered acceptable when inter-construct correlations remained below the .85 threshold (Henseler et al., 2015).

For model fit, the study employed multiple goodness-of-fit measures. The CFI and TLI should fall above 0.90, and RMSEA and SRMR should fall below 0.08 in order to establish adequate model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The adequacy of the model will be determined on the combined interpretation of these indices.

3.4 Structural model estimation

The structural model was estimated using covariance-based structural equation modeling. Consumer animosity was included as an endogenous

mediator of perceived threat/injustice and media exposure. Boycott intention and purchase intention were included as behavioral consequences of consumer animosity.

Direct effects were examined for: (a) perceived threat/injustice and media exposure on consumer animosity, (b) consumer animosity on boycott intention and purchase intention, and (c) cross-border market availability, travel frequency and stay intensity, and perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption on purchase intention.

Moderation hypotheses were tested using a factor-score regression approach. Latent factor scores were extracted from the validated CFA model and used to compute interaction terms between consumer animosity and each pragmatic market mechanism (CBMA, TFSI, PRCBC). These interaction terms were then included in regression models predicting purchase intention. The moderation effects were interpreted based on the magnitude, direction, and statistical significance of the interaction terms.

4. Results

4.1 Sample description

This study aims to analyze the data collected from 426 participants. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in the section below. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants by their age and gender.

Table 1 Age category by gender (N = 426)

Age category	Male	Female	Row total
18–24	62 (35.0%)	115 (65.0%)	177 (42.9%)
25–34	30 (46.2%)	35 (53.8%)	65 (15.7%)
35–44	13 (27.7%)	34 (72.3%)	47 (11.4%)
45–54	33 (45.8%)	39 (54.2%)	72 (17.4%)
55+	19 (36.5%)	33 (63.5%)	52 (12.6%)
Total	157 (36.9%)	269 (63.1%)	426 (100%)

Source: Author

Table 2 shows the educational level of the participants. Most of the participants had secondary education, followed by those with a university degree.

Table 2 Education level by gender (N = 426)

Educational level	Male	Female	Row total
Primary school	4 (12.9%)	27 (87.1%)	31 (7.5%)
Secondary school	94 (39.3%)	145 (60.7%)	239 (57.9%)
College (short cycle)	7 (46.7%)	8 (53.3%)	15 (3.6%)
University degree	47 (42.0%)	65 (58.0%)	112 (27.1%)
Master's degree	3 (25.0%)	9 (75.0%)	12 (2.9%)
Doctorate	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)	4 (1.0%)
Total	157 (36.9%)	269 (63.1%)	426 (100%)

Source: Author

Table 3 shows the employment status of the participants. Most of the participants were employed, followed by those who were students.

Table 3 Employment status by gender (N = 426)

Employment status	Male	Female	Row total
Employed	96 (43.0%)	127 (57.0%)	223 (54.0%)
Unemployed	11 (21.2%)	41 (78.8%)	52 (12.6%)
Student	34 (33.3%)	68 (66.7%)	102 (24.7%)
Retired	16 (48.5%)	17 (51.5%)	33 (8.0%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	3 (100.0%)	3 (0.7%)
Total	157 (36.9%)	269 (63.1%)	426 (100%)

Source: Author

In general, the sample shows that there is diversity in the group of active consumers based on their age, educational level, and employment status. This diversity offers a good empirical ground for exploring the ways in which affective, cognitive, and pragmatic factors influence consumer behavior in a politically and historically sensitive cross-border context.

4.2 Measurement model evaluation and scale refinement

Before proceeding with the estimation of the structural model, the psychometric properties of all multi-item constructs were examined via a two-step approach that combined exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. The results of the EFA and CFA are presented in the following paragraphs.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

EFA was performed separately on each latent variable, i.e., PT, ME, AN, BI, PI, CBMA, and PRCBC, to examine their dimensional structure. For the constructs of Perceived Threat/Injustice (PT), Media Exposure (ME), Boycott Intentions (BI), Purchase Intentions (PI), Cross-border Market Availability (CBMA), and Perceived Reciprocal Cross-border Consumption (PRCBC), the results supported the hypothesized one-factor structure. For all these constructs, the items loaded adequately on their respective constructs, and no crossloadings were detected.

For the Consumer Animosity scale, the results of the EFA indicated that two items (AN1 and AN2) exhibited weak psychometric properties, including low factor loadings and communalities, and were therefore excluded prior to the final EFA. The refined five-item scale (AN3–AN7) demonstrated a clear unidimensional structure with moderate to strong factor loadings and an explained variance of 53.8%, indicating satisfactory construct coherence. Consequently, AN1 and AN2 were excluded from further analysis.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and measurement model fit

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the measurement model was performed following the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) procedure. Two measurement models were examined: (a) the entire consumer animosity scale (all seven items, AN1–AN7), and (b) the refined measurement model with items AN1 and AN2 excluded. Model fit comparison indicated that the full AN model (AN1–AN7) fitted the data less adequately (CFI = .894, TLI = .880, RMSEA = .062, SRMR = .059) than the refined AN model (AN3–AN7), which showed excellent fit (CFI = .991, TLI = .990, RMSEA = .049, SRMR = .052). Therefore, the refined measurement model was retained for subsequent analyses. As these items were adapted from the general animosity dimension of Hoffmann et al. (2011), their exclusion indicates that general animosity was not empirically supported in this context.

Reliability and construct validity

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, ordinal alpha (appropriate for categorical/ordinal indicators), and McDonald's omega. The results indicated acceptable to good reliability across all constructs, with all coefficients exceeding the .70 threshold (α = .72–.86; α_{ord} = .77–.89; ω = .72–.87). Convergent validity was supported for all constructs, as average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded the recommended .50 cutoff. Discriminant validity was evaluated based on latent factor correlations from the CFA model. The correlations were moderate and below conventional concern thresholds (e.g., < .85), supporting discriminant validity.

Table 4 CFA loadings and construct reliability and validity indicators

Item	Std. loading	Theoretical grounding
Perceived Threat (PT) ω = 0.87; AVE = 0.62		
PT1 - I believe that the decisions and actions of the Croatian authorities are often unfair toward B&H.	0.781	(Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan et al., 2002)
PT2 - I feel that Croatia often protects its own interests at the expense of B&H.	0.812	
PT3 - B&H is often treated unfairly by Croatia.	0.793	
PT4 - I believe that Croatian policies and actions threaten the identity of B&H.	0.801	
PT5 - Political relations between Croatia and B&H cause me concern or discomfort.	0.748	
Media Exposure (ME) ω = 0.86; AVE = 0.65		
ME1 - I often encounter news or content about political disputes between Croatia and B&H.	0.788	(Lecheler & de Vreese, 2019; Ahmadi & Wohn, 2018)
ME2 - Media content I encounter often portrays relations between Croatia and B&H in a negative tone.	0.823	
ME3 - I often "accidentally" come across negative news about Croatia in relation to B&H, even when I am not actively seeking it.	0.805	
ME4 - While following the media, I am often exposed to repeated negative information about relations between Croatia and B&H.	0.814	
Consumer Animosity (AN) ω = 0.86; AVE = 0.614		
AN1 - I do not hold positive feelings toward Croatia.	removed	(Klein et al., 1998; Shoham et al., 2006; Park & Yoon, 2017; Hoffmann et al., 2011)
AN2 - I feel anger when I think about Croatia's relationship with B&H.	removed	
AN3 - I believe that Croatia has never fully taken responsibility for its role in events related to B&H during the 1990s.	0.791	
AN4 - Croatia should show greater understanding and responsibility toward B&H due to past political and wartime events.	0.762	
AN5 - I believe that Croatia is not always a fair economic partner to B&H.	0.816	
AN6 - I feel that Croatia often gains economic benefits at the expense of B&H.	0.880	
AN7 - I believe that Croatia has excessive economic influence in B&H.	0.651	
Boycott Intention (BI) ω = 0.84; AVE = 0.63		
BI1 - I intend to avoid purchasing Croatian products whenever possible.	0.826	(Sen et al., 2001)
BI2 - I am willing to consciously boycott Croatian products as a form of disagreement.	0.864	
BI3 - If given a choice, I would choose a product from another country rather than a Croatian product.	0.727	
BI4 - I am willing to recommend to others that they avoid Croatian products.	0.761	
Purchase Intention (PI) ω = 0.86; AVE = 0.73		
PI1 - I am likely to purchase Croatian products in the near future.	0.789	(Spears & Singh, 2004)
PI2 - I intend to purchase Croatian products when the opportunity arises.	0.835	
PI3 - I would consider purchasing Croatian products.	0.931	

Item	Std. loading	Theoretical grounding
Cross-Border Market Availability (CBMA) ω = 0.82; AVE = 0.68		
CBMA1 - Croatian products are widely available in stores in my local area or surroundings.	0.870	(Spierings & van der Velde, 2008; Berry et al., 2002; Reimers & Clulow, 2009; Timothy & Butler, 1995)
CBMA2 - It is easy for me to find Croatian products when purchasing basic groceries or household goods.	0.829	
CBMA3 - In most stores where I shop, there is a wide selection of Croatian brands or labels.	0.764	
Perceived Reciprocal Cross-Border Consumption (PRCBC) ω = 0.72; AVE = 0.54		
PRCBC1 - I often notice consumers from Croatia shopping in B&H.	0.656	(Spierings & van der Velde, 2008; Timothy & Butler, 1995; Cialdini et al., 1990)
PRCBC2 - When I see consumers from Croatia shopping in B&H, I perceive market exchange between the two countries as reciprocal.	0.741	
PRCBC3 - Observing consumers from Croatia shopping in B&H signals to me that purchasing products on both sides of the border is normal.	0.792	

Source: Author

4.3 Structural model results

The hypothesized structural model was estimated using the refined measurement model. Overall model fit was acceptable to good (CFI = .980; TLI = .980; RMSEA = .068; SRMR = .064), supporting the model's suitability for hypothesis testing. As reported in Table 5, perceived threat/injustice (H1) and media exposure to negative content (H2) exerted significant positive effects on consumer animosity. Consumer animosity, in turn, positively predicted boycott intention (H3) and negatively predicted purchase intention (H4). Among the pragmatic market mechanisms, cross-border market availability (H5), travel frequency and stay intensity (H6), and perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (H7) had significant positive effects on purchase intention. The model explained 60.9% of the variance in consumer animosity, 38.7% in boycott intention, and 39.5% in purchase intention, indicating substantial explanatory power for the key endogenous constructs.

Table 5 Direct effects and hypothesis testing results

Relationship	Std. β	p	Decision
H1: Perceived Threat/Injustice → Consumer Animosity	0.570	< .001	Supported
H2: Media Exposure to negative content → Consumer Animosity	0.308	< .001	Supported
H3: Consumer Animosity → Boycott Intention	0.622	< .001	Supported
H4: Consumer Animosity → Purchase Intention	–0.377	< .001	Supported
H5: Cross-border Market Availability (CBMA) → Purchase Intention	0.373	< .001	Supported
H6: Travel Frequency and Stay Intensity (TFSI) → Purchase Intention	0.217	< .001	Supported
H7: Perceived Reciprocal Cross-border Consumption (PRCBC) → Purchase Intention	0.169	< .001	Supported

Source: Author

4.4 Moderation analysis

To examine whether pragmatic cross-border mechanisms condition the relationship between consumer animosity and purchase intention, moderation was tested using a factor-score regression approach. First, latent factor scores for the validated CFA constructs (PT, ME, AN, BI, PI, CBMA, and PRCBC) were extracted using the lavPredict func-

tion in lavaan. Travel frequency and stay intensity (TFSI) was included as an observed composite index constructed from standardized indicators.

Prior to estimating interaction effects, the focal predictor (consumer animosity) and all moderators (CBMA, TFSI, and PRCBC) were standardized (z-scored). This procedure allows direct interpretation of coefficients as standardized effects (Std. β), facilitates comparability across predictors, and reduces potential multicollinearity in models with interaction terms. Interaction terms were then computed as products of standardized scores: AN × CBMA, AN × TFSI, and AN × PRCBC.

Purchase intention (latent factor score) was subsequently regressed on the main effects and interaction terms using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. To ensure robust statistical inference and account for potential heteroskedasticity, heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors (HC3) were employed. Multicollinearity diagnostics indicated no concerns (VIFs within acceptable thresholds). Overall, the moderation model explained a substantial proportion of variance in purchase intention (R^2 = .508).

The results indicate that the interaction between consumer animosity and cross-border market availability is statistically significant and negative (H8a: Std. β = −0.124, p(HC3) = .002), suggesting that higher structural availability of neighboring-country products strengthens (intensifies) the negative association between animosity and purchase intention. In contrast, the interaction effects involving travel frequency/stay intensity (H8b) and perceived reciprocal cross-border consumption (H8c) were not statistically significant, indicating that experiential exposure and perceived reciprocity do not meaningfully condition the animosity–purchase relationship in the present sample.

Table 6 Moderation effects on purchase intention

Relationship	Std. β	p (HC3)	Decision
H8a: Consumer Animosity × Cross-border Market Availability → Purchase Intention	−0.124	.002	Supported
H8b: Consumer Animosity × Travel Frequency and Stay Intensity → Purchase Intention	0.015	.743	Not supported
H8c: Consumer Animosity × Perceived Reciprocal Cross-border Consumption → Purchase Intention	0.033	.418	Not supported

Note: p-values are based on heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors (HC3).
Source: Author

The moderation analysis results show that the dominant boundary condition for the animosity effect is the structural market availability. This means that the relationship between the animosity effect and the consumers is not as straightforward as the models based on the animosity effect suggest, and the impact of the animosity effect on the consumers' purchasing intention is related to the extent of the products' market availability.

5. Discussion

This study contributes to the understanding of consumer animosity by examining its antecedents and behavioral consequences with reference to highly integrated cross-border relations. Perceived threat and perceived injustice, as well as negative media content, are key factors in formation of consumer animosity. According to Intergroup Threat Theory, consumer animosity is primarily cognitively based, as opposed to an emotional construct. Therefore, it can be argued that the general animosity dimension may not be applicable in highly integrated cross-border relations where perceived threat and perceived injustice are critical.

In terms of its behavioral consequences, consumer animosity has a twofold effect on consumer boycott intention and purchase intention. Animosity increases boycott intention while decreasing purchase intention. Besides animosity, other market mechanisms may affect purchase intention. Market availability of cross-border products, travel frequency, and stay intensity positively affect purchase intention. However, moderation analyses revealed that market availability of cross-border products magnifies the negative effect of animosity on purchase intention. Instead of alleviating hostil-

ity-driven consumer resistance, the availability of cross-border products may heighten consumer reluctance toward purchasing cross-border products.

Travel frequency and perceived cross-border consumption do not moderate the animosity–purchase intention relationship. Therefore, it can be argued that while travel frequency and perceived cross-border consumption may positively affect consumption in general, market availability of cross-border products serves as a boundary condition that intensifies consumer animosity-driven reluctance.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical implications

The present study makes several notable contributions to the existing body of research concerning consumer animosity and cross-border consumption. First, it extends existing research by demonstrating the twofold effect of consumer animosity, as it not only increases the intention to boycott a product, but also decreases the intention to purchase a product. Second, the research contributes to Intergroup Threat Theory, as it shows that perceived threat and injustice are the most important cognitive factors influencing the occurrence of consumer animosity, while negative media exposure serves as a reinforcement factor. This shows that the occurrence of consumer animosity is socially constructed and cognitively mediated, as opposed to being merely an emotional construct. Most importantly, the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge concerning cross-border consumption, as it shows that market availability of cross-border products and consumer movement have a positive direct effect on the intention to purchase a product, and at the same time, product market availability intensifies the negative effect of consumer animosity on the intention to purchase a product. This shows that the market can act as a facilitator or amplifier of the effect of consumer animosity, depending upon its structural nature.

6.2 Managerial and policy implications

From the managerial standpoint, the findings suggest that the enhancement of product availability in politically sensitive markets should be implemented with caution. Although the enhancement of availability might increase purchase intentions, it might also increase resistance based upon negative intergroup attitudes among consumers. Therefore, managers in crossborder contexts should implement enhancement of availability with communication interventions targeting perceptions of fairness and historical sensitivities.

From the policy standpoint, the positive direct effect of travel frequency and stay intensity implies that policies facilitating cross-border mobility might encourage pragmatic consumption. Therefore, policies facilitating cross-border mobility might increase resistance based upon everyday interactions without exacerbating animosity-based resistance. However, policymakers should take into account the possibility that enhancing structural market dominance without targeting perceptions might actually exacerbate underlying tensions rather than alleviate them.

7. Conclusion

The current study contributes to the animosity construct by examining the impact of animosity toward a rival country on consumer boycott and purchasing intentions in highly integrated cross-border markets. Based on Intergroup Threat Theory and cross-border consumption literature, an integrated conceptual model is developed that includes cognitive antecedents, media exposure, animosity, behavioral outcomes, and pragmatic market mechanisms. The integrated conceptual model is tested using data collected from consumers in highly integrated cross-border markets.

Key findings of this study are presented as follows. First, perceptions of injustice and threat, accompanied by negative media content, were found to be significant antecedents of animosity, thereby providing support for the cognitive nature of animosity. Second, this study found that animosity has dual effects on consumer behavior, as it was found to increase boycott intentions while decreasing purchasing intentions. This finding provides support for the argument that various forms of consumer behavior need to be considered when examining animosity. Finally, this study found that market mechanisms in cross-border contexts operate in complex ways. Specifically, cross-border market availability, travel frequency/intensity of stay, and perceived cross-border consumption directly influenced purchasing intentions. These findings indicate that pragmatic market mechanisms can indeed be beneficial in cross-border markets characterized by animos-

ity. However, structural market availability was found to uniquely amplify the relationship between animosity and purchasing intention. Therefore, it seems that this particular market mechanism may tap into underlying intergroup tensions.

Collectively, these findings indicate that consumer animosity is a highly context-dependent construct. Market effects arise through the interplay of affective evaluations and everyday experiences of cross-border economic realities. Moreover, these findings contradict the assumption that higher levels of cross-border market integration will result in lower levels of animosity-driven resistance in the marketplace. Instead, it seems that higher levels of cross-border market integration may, in fact, contribute to higher levels of animosity-driven resistance.

Limitations of this study are acknowledged. Specifically, this study is based on a cross-sectional design, which limits causality. Second, this study is based on a specific cross-border region. Future studies could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs and examining various product categories and brand origins. Furthermore, various potential moderators of animosity, such as positive intergroup contact, trust, and fairness, may also be considered. Further research may also consider examining how changing media narratives over time may impact market structures and animosity.

This research has also served to demonstrate that animosity must be considered as a phenomenon inextricably linked to the marketplace in which it is expressed. The behavioral effects of animosity are subject to its interplay with attitudes toward a rival country as well as its everyday experience of cross-border economic presence.

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