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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Muslim Consumers' Perceptions Of The Boycott Of Israeli Products

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Abstract: This article discusses Muslim consumers' perceptions of the boycott of Israeli products. The boycott of Israeli products is a significant global issue, particularly for Muslim consumers. This boycott is a form of global protest Israel's military invasion of the Palestinian people. This protest movement is commonly known as the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. In line with this, the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) has issued a halal fatwa regarding products affiliated with Israel. According to MUI Fatwa No. 83 of 2023 on the Legal Status of Supporting the Palestinian Struggle, it is deemed forbidden (haram) to support Israel's aggression against Palestine, while supporting Palestine's struggle is considered obligatory. This research aims to understand Muslim consumers' perceptions of the boycott of Israeli products. In addition to surveys, literature reviews were conducted to identify the factors influencing consumer decisions. The findings of the study indicate that Muslim consumers tend to avoid Israeli products produced in occupied territories or those known to support Israeli government policies. Muslim consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by the following factors: cultural factors, social factors, personal factors, and psychological factors.

Keywords: Muslim consumer, Perception, Boycott, Israeli product, Palestine

1. Introduction

Recent Palestinian Hamas attacks on Israel in the southern Gaza Strip have rekindled the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Many believe that the attack is a reaction to years of Israeli pressure and attacks on the Palestinians. Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip often experience pressure from Israel, including an international aid blockade, cut-offs of electricity and water, and squalid living conditions (Vitry et al., 2023).

The escalation of this conflict has led to various public opinions, especially among Indonesians. Some of them expressed the urge to boycott products that are considered to support Israel. The Israeli invasion of Gaza has intensified, and the number of Palestinian casualties continues to rise. Calls to boycott Israeli products began to resurface, including



through the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which is Palestinian-led and aims to achieve freedom, justice, and equality. BDS calls for the boycott of Israeli and international companies involved in the violation of Palestinian rights. The boycott of Israeli products is an effort by Muslims endorsed by world scholars to fight injustice against Muslims, where there is a connection between the purchase of Israeli products and the suffering of Muslims in other countries currently experiencing imperialism. Consumer behavior refers to the actions directly involved in acquiring, consuming, and disposing of a product or service, including the decision-making process that occurs before and after these actions (Finkelstein, 2018).

Factors that influence boycott behavior towards a product include the level of religiosity and consumer knowledge about the product. Religiosity reflects a person's beliefs based on strong faith and encourages behavior and action in accordance with the teachings adopted. One of the challenges that Islamic countries are currently facing is the occurrence of attacks on their territories. These attacks can take various forms, such as the seizure of Muslim holy lands; the expulsion of the population; acts of violence; the deprivation of honor; the destruction of homes; and the burning of agricultural land. The Zionist Israelis are arbitrarily intimidating Muslims in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, Bosnia, and other parts of the world (Jaelani & Nursyifa, 2024; Septiazi & Yuliana, 2023).

2. Literature Review

Consumer perception is the process by which individuals organize, interpret, and give meaning to the information they receive in their surroundings, particularly in relation to products and services. A variety of factors, including prior experience, personal values, culture, and situational context, influence these perceptions (Schiffman & Lazar, 2010). In a marketing context, consumer perceptions are very important, as they can influence purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and attitudes toward products.

Consumer perceptions encompass not only the product itself, but also the brand, advertising, and shopping experience. For example, two consumers can see the same product but have different perceptions based on their experiences, the information they receive, and personal preferences.

Factors that influence consumer perception (Kotler et al., 2016).

1. **Prior Experience:** Positive or negative experiences with a particular product or brand can shape future consumer perceptions.
2. **Culture and Values:** An individual's cultural background and values influence how consumers perceive and value products.
3. **Advertising and Promotion:** The way products are promoted and the information conveyed through advertisements can shape consumer perceptions.
4. **Reviews and Recommendations:** The opinions of others, whether from friends, family, or online reviews, can influence consumers' perceptions of products.
5. **Situational Context:** The environment in which consumers interact with the product can also influence their perceptions, such as the atmosphere of the store or the shopping experience.

Individuals or groups collectively refrain from buying, using, or supporting a specific product or service as a form of protest policies, practices, or actions they consider unethical, unfair, or harmful. Social, political, environmental, or economic issues often trigger boycotts, which aim to pressure specific companies or entities to change their behaviors or policies.

Boycotts can be formal (where a specific group organizes a campaign) or informal (where individuals choose not to buy certain products based on their personal beliefs or reactions to events). Boycott actions can affect a company's reputation, sales, and even company policies if they are widespread (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Factors that Drive Product Boycotts.



- (1). Social Issues: Problems like racial injustice, human rights violations, or unfair treatment of workers frequently lead to boycotts.
- (2). Environmental Issues: Consumers may boycott products from companies that are considered environmentally damaging or unsustainable.
- (3). Political Issues: Political actions or controversial government policies may trigger a boycott of certain products.
- (4). Product Quality: Consumers may decide to boycott products if they believe they are dangerous or of poor quality.

3. Research Method and Materials

This research uses quantitative research methods. Quantitative research is a systematic scientific study of aspects, phenomena, and problems related to them. The purpose of quantitative research is to develop and apply mathematical models, theories, and hypotheses regarding the phenomenon under study. The quantitative research method is considered a scientific method because it fulfills the principles of science: rationality, objectivity, systematicity, and measurement. In addition, this method is also known as a discovery process, as it enables the discovery and development of new types of knowledge. Quantitative research emphasizes objective phenomena through quantitative assessment, aiming to achieve measurable objectivity using statistically processed numbers. The main purpose of quantitative research design with questionnaires is to test the extent to which several independent variables affect the dependent variable. Data collection in quantitative research is done using measuring instruments that have been tested for validity and reliability. Quantitative items like time are easy to measure, but abstract ones like thoughts and feelings are harder. For all types of measurements, similar criteria are applied to verify, calculate, and analyze the data (Babbie, 2020; Clark et al., 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Quantitative research can be defined as a way of measurement carried out by collecting data on people's opinions, using analysis, and then drawing conclusions. Respondents in this study are Muslim students and consumers, with a total number of respondents to be determined. The informants used in this research are Indonesian Muslim students with the following characteristics:

- (1). The age range is less than 15 years
- (2). Age 15-17 years old
- (3). 18-20 years old
- (4). Age 20 years and above

4. Results and Discussion

From Table 1, the number of questionnaires distributed was 140, of which 137 questionnaires were returned, 3 questionnaires did not return, 0 questionnaires could not be processed, and 137 questionnaires could be processed.

Table 1. Result of Questionnaire Distribution

Description	Number
Questionnaires distributed	140
Questionnaires that did not return	3
Returned questionnaires	137
Questionnaires that cannot be processed	0
Questionnaires that can be processed	137

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents by Gender

Characteristics	Number of people	Percentage (%)
Male	14	10.2
Female	123	89.8

Table 2 above, it is known that most respondents are female, with 123 people and a percentage of 89.8%. Meanwhile, male respondents totaled 14 people with a percentage of 10.2%.

Table 3. Characteristics of Respondents by Age

Characteristics	Number of people	Percentage (%)
Less than 15 years	0	0
15-17 years	9	6.6
18-20 years	121	88.3
20 years and above	7	5.1

Table 3 above shows that 121 respondents, or 88.3% of the total, are between the ages of 18 and 20. In addition, there are 9 people aged 15–17 with a percentage of 6.6%, and 7 people aged over 20 with a percentage of 5.1%.

Tables 4 and 5 contain the question items in this study.

Table 4. Result of Question Items on the Research Instrument (Closed Questionnaire)

No	Question
1	Do you know about the boycott of Israeli products?
2	Do you have knowledge/information about products made in Israel or countries/companies/brands that support Israel?
3	Do you agree with the boycott of Israeli products?
4	Does the boycott of Israeli products affect your decision to buy them?
5	Does the boycott of Israeli products impact the Israeli economy?

Table 5. Result of Question Items on the Research Instrument (Open Questionnaire)

No	Question
1	What are your reasons for supporting the boycott of Israeli products?
2	What are your reasons for not supporting the boycott of Israeli products? (For those who answered no to the three questions of the closed questionnaire.)
3	What impact does boycotting Israeli products have on consumers?

Table 6. Results of Closed-End Questionnaire Items

Questions	Respondents answered Yes		Respondents answered No	
	Total	Percentage (%)	Total	Percentage (%)
Do you know about the boycott of Israeli products?	129	94.16	8	5.48
Do you have knowledge/information about products made in Israel or countries/companies/brands that support Israel?	118	86.2	19	13.9
Do you agree with the boycott of Israeli products?	112	81.8	25	18.2
Does the boycott of Israeli products affect your decision to buy products?	110	80.3	27	19.7

Does the boycott of Israeli products affect the Israeli economy?	130	94.9	7	5.1
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The results presented in Table 6 indicate a significant awareness and consensus among Muslim students regarding the boycott of Israeli products. The high percentage of respondents (94.16%) who are aware of the boycott reflects a strong collective consciousness about the political and ethical implications of their purchasing decisions. 81.8% of respondents who agree with the boycott further support this awareness, indicating that a substantial majority of these students align their consumer behavior with their ethical beliefs.

Moreover, the data reveals that 80.3% of respondents believe the boycott influences their purchasing decisions, highlighting the practical implications of this awareness. It suggests that the boycott is not merely a theoretical stance but translates into actionable consumer behavior. The perception that the boycott significantly impacts the Israeli economy, as noted by 94.9% of respondents, reinforces the idea that these students believe their collective actions can lead to tangible economic consequences.

This phenomenon aligns with existing literature on consumer activism, which posits that consumers often engage in boycotts as a means of expressing their values and influencing corporate behavior. According to Friedman (Friedman, 2016) the social responsibility of consumers extends beyond mere purchasing choices; it encompasses the ethical implications of those choices, particularly in politically charged contexts. Additionally, Klein (Klein & Sawchuk, 2000) discusses how consumer awareness and activism can shape market dynamics, particularly in relation to political issues.

The questionnaire data reveals a diverse range of motivations among Muslim consumers, particularly students and female students, for supporting the boycott of Israeli products. The predominant reasons reflect a strong emotional and ethical response to the ongoing conflict and humanitarian issues faced by the Palestinian people.

55 respondents cite the desire to support Palestinian freedom as the most significant motivation, aligning with the broader narrative of solidarity among Muslim communities regarding the Palestinian cause. The responses of those who express sympathy for the Palestinian people (11 respondents) and those who specifically mention their disapproval of Israel's actions, such as genocide (6 respondents), echo this sentiment.

Additionally, the responses indicate an awareness of the economic implications of the boycott, with 32 respondents noting that products or countries affiliated with Israel have decreased turnover. This suggests that the boycott is not only a political statement but also a strategic economic action aimed at exerting pressure on companies and countries perceived to be complicit in the oppression of Palestinians.

The motivations for the boycott reflect a combination of ethical considerations, emotional responses, and social influences, such as the "fear of missing out" (1 respondent), which indicates the role of social dynamics in shaping consumer behavior.

The responses to the third question regarding the impact of the boycott of Israeli products on consumers reveal a range of experiences and perceptions that highlight both the challenges and adaptations faced by individuals in the context of ethical consumerism.

The finding that 29 respondents found it difficult to find replacement products underscores a significant challenge associated with boycotting, as consumers may struggle to identify alternatives that align with their ethical beliefs. This aligns with research by Harrison (Harrison, 2005) which discusses how consumer boycotts can lead to practical difficulties in sourcing products, particularly when the boycott targets widely used brands or products.

Additionally, the 28 respondents who noted a change in consumption patterns indicate that the boycott has prompted individuals to reconsider their purchasing habits, which is a common outcome of consumer activism. This shift can lead to increased awareness of local products, as evidenced by the 14 respondents who reported an increase in the purchase of

local goods. This finding reflects a broader trend in ethical consumerism where individuals seek to support local economies and reduce reliance on products from companies they oppose (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005).

Conversely, the 24 respondents who felt an economic decline due to the higher cost of replacement products highlight the financial implications of the boycott. This implies that ethical considerations may motivate consumers, but they also encounter economic trade-offs that can complicate their decision-making process. The 20 respondents who reported a decrease in public purchases further illustrate the potential economic impact of the boycott on local businesses and the community at large.

The varied responses, including those who felt unaffected (2 respondents) or experienced savings in spending (4 respondents), indicate that the impact of the boycott is not uniform and can vary significantly among individuals. The 14 respondents who chose not to answer may reflect ambivalence or uncertainty about the boycott's effects, suggesting that the topic remains complex and multifaceted.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results, data analysis, and discussion, the following general conclusions can be drawn about how Muslim university students perceive the boycott of Israeli products:

- (1). The knowledge and agreement of Muslim consumers with the boycott of Israeli products demonstrates their thorough understanding of the boycott and the products targeted for boycott.
- (2). Muslim consumers feel that the boycott greatly influences their decision in choosing which products to buy.
- (3). Consumers believe that the boycott of Israeli products has a significant impact on the Israeli economy.
- (4). Muslim consumers support the boycott of Israeli products out of a sense of kinship and humanity towards the Palestinian people, as they strive for Palestinian independence from years of Israeli violence.
- (5). Muslim consumers oppose the boycott of Israeli products because they believe it harms employees who work in companies affiliated with Israel. 6) The boycott of Israeli products impacts Muslim consumers by making it difficult for them to find replacement products from Israeli-affiliated brands.

Referring to the results of a study focused on Muslim consumers' perceptions of the boycott of Israeli products, the researcher offers several suggestions for improvement. Always read the latest news about the situation in Palestine to understand the developments taking place there and empathize more with our brothers and sisters in Palestine. In addition, it is important to look for information regarding the list of local products or affordable substitute products.

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