

Predicting boycott intention and participation among urban Muslim consumers in Indonesia

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Article history

Received : 2026-04-06

Revised : 2026-06-04

Accepted : 2026-07-05

Published : 2026-07-13

Keywords:

Boycott intention, Social media influence, Religiosity, Theory of planned behavior, Muslim consumers.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.20885/AJIM.vol8.iss1.art7>

JEL classification:

M31, Z12, F51, D12

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Paper type:

Research papers

Abstract

Purpose – This research aims to extend the classic theory of planned behavior (TPB) framework by incorporating social media influence and religiosity as key predictors, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of boycott intention and subsequent participation among Muslim consumers in a high-digital-penetration, Muslim-majority emerging market context.

Methodology – A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 250 Muslim consumers aged 18 years and above in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. Respondents were purposively selected based on their recent fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) purchases and awareness of ongoing boycott campaigns. Data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed using structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0.

Findings – The results show that attitudes towards boycotting, perceived behavioral control, and social media influence have a significant positive effect on boycott intention, and the latter has a strong predictive power for actual boycott participation. Social media influence was the most powerful predictor. Religiosity did not significantly moderate boycott intention.

Implications – Multinational FMCG companies operating in Muslim-majority emerging markets should prioritize digital reputation management, transparent ethical and halal communication, proactive engagement with social media influencers, and rapid response strategies to mitigate boycott risks. Local brands can leverage digital momentum to strengthen their market position.

Originality – This study pioneers the integration of social media influence as a distinct antecedent and religiosity as a moderator within an extended TPB framework in the context of geopolitically motivated boycotts in Indonesia's digitally advanced Muslim-majority market. The finding that social media influence outweighs religiosity challenges the prevailing assumptions in the Islamic marketing literature.

Cite this article:

Prananta, W., & Wijaya, A. P. (2026). Extending the theory of planned behavior: Predicting boycott intention and participation among urban Muslim consumers in Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Islamic Management*, 8(1), 119-135. <https://doi.org/10.20885/AJIM.vol8.iss1.art7>.



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Introduction

In an era defined by intensifying geopolitical conflicts and rising ethical awareness, consumer boycotts have solidified their position as a significant form of moral and political expression (Dalakas et al., 2023; Hockey, 2024). Particularly in Muslim-majority countries, boycotts are not merely economic actions but have become a form of religious and ethical resistance. Within Muslim-majority contexts, these boycotts frequently draw upon core Islamic principles such as justice (*adl*), communal solidarity (*ukhummah*), and opposition to perceived injustice, thereby elevating everyday consumption decisions to acts of religious and ethical commitment (Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023; Susanto, 2025).

Indonesia, which hosts the world's largest Muslim population of approximately 280 million—accounting for about 87% of the total populace—has experienced a pronounced escalation in boycott activities directed at multinational fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands believed to maintain indirect ties with entities implicated in the Israel-Palestine conflict (Babu et al., 2025; Yanti et al., 2025). This phenomenon has been particularly evident in campaigns targeting companies such as Unilever, where pro-Palestine advocacy groups, coupled with dedicated mobile applications for product scanning, have mobilized widespread calls to abstain from purchasing affiliated items (Syarif & Herman, 2024). These developments underscore how geopolitical events can profoundly reshape routine purchasing habits, especially among Muslim consumers, who increasingly link brand patronage to religious and moral alignment (Wisnuyah et al., 2025).

The theory of planned behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen, (1991) remains a foundational model for elucidating the cognitive determinants of intentional and volitional actions. The TPB posits that behavioral intention, the proximal precursor to actual conduct, is governed by three primary antecedents: attitude toward the behavior (personal evaluation of its desirability), subjective norms (perceived social pressures), and perceived behavioral control (belief in one's capability to execute the action) (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Kasri & Chaerunnisa, 2021). Over recent decades, scholars have successfully adapted and extended the TPB to domains involving ethical, sustainable, and politically oriented consumption, including environmentally friendly purchasing, halal certification adherence, and ideologically motivated boycotts (Amit Kumar, 2021; Babu et al., 2025; Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013; Delistavrou, 2022; Rozenkowska, 2023).

In the realm of Islamic marketing, TPB has demonstrated considerable explanatory power by illuminating how faith-based identities and moral imperatives guide consumer choice (Dorce et al., 2021; Memon et al., 2020; Nimri et al., 2020; Yeh et al., 2021). However, traditional formulations of the theory have typically positioned religiosity as an ancillary or moderating element rather than a deeply embedded driver. Emerging research highlights that religiosity, encompassing intrinsic devotion to religious tenets and extrinsic engagement in communal practices, exerts a profound, direct influence on boycott-related attitudes and intentions, particularly when corporate conduct is viewed as contravening Islamic ethical standards (Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023; Hwang & Kim, 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Ramkissoon et al., 2025; Susanto, 2025).

The explosive growth of social media has revolutionized boycott diffusion and participation mechanics. Digital platforms enable instantaneous information sharing, the cultivation of virtual communities bound by shared moral outrage, and the reinforcement of subjective norms through peer visibility, endorsements, and viral content (Dalakas et al., 2023; Evelyn & Sekarasih, 2025; Iacovitti et al., 2025; Nana & Surur, 2025; Yan et al., 2024). In Indonesia, social media has been instrumental in escalating isolated ethical concerns into nationwide movements, hashtags, and influencer narratives, significantly molding public perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions (Dwivedi, 2015; Syarif & Herman, 2024; Wisnuyah et al., 2025). Recent analyses indicate that exposure to negative digital campaigns not only heightens boycott motivation but also interacts with religiosity, producing compounded effects on consumer decisions (Zulkifli et al., 2025). Consistent with prior research on the Theory of Planned Behavior in green consumption (Prananta et al., 2024) and the role of digital factors in purchase decisions (Prananta et al., 2021), this study investigates the impact of social media influence on boycott intention among urban Muslim consumers.

The expanding scholarship on consumer boycotts reveals notable theoretical and empirical gaps. Although TPB has been applied across diverse cultural landscapes to account for boycott dynamics (Babu et al., 2025; Delistavrou, 2022; Rozenkowska, 2023), systematic integration of religiosity as a core predictor or moderator within predominantly Muslim samples remains limited (Huang et al., 2025; Sari & Games, 2024). Furthermore, while the facilitative role of social media in boycott propagation is increasingly recognized (Hockey, 2024; Syarif & Herman, 2024), few investigations have explicitly embedded social media influence within the TPB architecture, especially in high-digital-penetration, emerging Muslim-majority economies such as Indonesia.

The third critical shortcoming concerns the enduring intention-behavior gap observed in ethical and boycott-related consumption. Strong declarations of support, particularly when

amplified online, often fail to translate into consistent and long-term behavioral changes (Hassan et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2025; Lasarov et al., 2023). This inconsistency suggests that unexamined contextual and identity-oriented variables, including the depth of religious conviction and the intensity of digital social exposure, may serve as essential mediators or moderators that standard TPB applications have insufficiently captured (Evelyn & Sekarasih, 2025; Wisnuyah et al., 2025).

The current study addresses these gaps by extending the Theory of Planned Behavior by simultaneously incorporating religiosity and social media influence as additional antecedents of boycott intention. Unlike previous studies that often treat social media as a tool to strengthen subjective norms, this study positions social media influence as a distinct and powerful antecedent. In the context of digitally driven consumer activism, social media influence encompasses perceived social pressure, rapid information dissemination, emotional contagion, and moral framing. This extension is particularly relevant in Indonesia's high-digital-penetration environment, where social media plays a central role in mobilizing collective action aligned with ethical and sustainable development concerns, including justice and responsible consumption.

This study specifically examines how religiosity and social media influence boycott intentions and subsequent participation among urban Muslim consumers in Indonesia, a context characterized by strong religious identity, pervasive social media use, and active involvement in geopolitically driven boycott campaigns. By integrating these variables, this study aims to provide a more culturally attuned and digitally responsive framework for understanding morally infused consumer behavior in Islamic marketing. This extension not only enriches the theoretical application of the TPB in value-driven consumption but also offers practical implications for multinational enterprises operating in Muslim-majority emerging markets, where ethical controversies, religious sensitivities, and digital mobilization increasingly intersect.

Literature Review

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) as the core model

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), introduced by Ajzen (1991), offers a comprehensive psychological framework for predicting and understanding intentional behaviors across diverse contexts. At its essence, the TPB asserts that an individual's intention to engage in a specific behavior is the most direct determinant of whether that behavior will occur. This intention is shaped by three interrelated constructs: attitude toward the behavior, which reflects the individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of acting; subjective norms, representing the perceived social pressures or expectations from significant others; and perceived behavioral control, encapsulating the individual's assessment of their ability to execute the behavior given the available resources and opportunities (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Empirical validations of the TPB have spanned numerous domains, including ethical consumption, where it effectively elucidates decisions driven by moral considerations (Babu et al., 2025; Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013; Rozenkowska, 2023).

In the domain of consumer boycotts, the TPB has been remarkably insightful, as boycotting often involves deliberate choices influenced by personal values, social influences, and practical feasibility. For instance, positive attitudes toward boycotting stemming from moral outrage or ethical alignment have been shown to foster stronger intentions to avoid targeted brands (Delistavrou, 2022; Rozenkowska, 2023). Subjective norms, amplified by community expectations, further reinforce these intentions, especially in collectivist cultures, where peer and familial opinions hold sway (Babu et al., 2025; Yan et al., 2024). Perceived behavioral control bridges the gap between intention and action by addressing barriers such as product availability and economic constraints (Lasarov et al., 2023; Ramkissoon et al., 2025). Within Islamic marketing, TPB has been adapted to explore behaviors aligned with religious ethics, such as halal consumption and avoidance of non-compliant products, highlighting its flexibility in faith-oriented settings (Amit Kumar, 2021; Dorce et al., 2021; Memon et al., 2020; Nimri et al., 2020; Yeh et al., 2021).

However, despite its robustness, the standard TPB framework exhibits notable limitations when applied to boycott behavior in Muslim-majority emerging market countries. Traditional TPB often treats religiosity as a peripheral or moderating variable rather than a core driver, even though Islamic values significantly shape moral judgments and consumption decisions in such contexts

(Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023; Susanto, 2025). The theory was developed in the pre-digital era and insufficiently accounts for the transformative role of social media in shaping consumer attitudes, norms, and perceived control in contemporary boycott movements. In the digital landscape, social media does not merely reinforce subjective norms but functions as a distinct force through rapid information dissemination, emotional contagion, and moral framing—elements that are particularly powerful in geopolitically driven boycotts (Dalakas et al., 2023; Syarif & Herman, 2024; Wisnususyah et al., 2025).

These theoretical gaps lead to an incomplete understanding of boycott dynamics among urban Muslim consumers in countries with high digital penetration, such as Indonesia. Although previous studies have applied the TPB to boycott behavior, systematic integrations of religiosity as a direct antecedent and social media influence as a separate construct within the TPB architecture remain limited, especially in the Indonesian context. To address these shortcomings, this study extends the original TPB model by incorporating religiosity and social media influence as additional key predictors of boycott intention. This extension aims to enhance the model's explanatory and predictive power in capturing both the cultural-religious and digital dimensions of morally motivated consumer behaviors.

Integrating Religiosity into TPB

Religiosity, defined as the degree to which individuals adhere to religious beliefs, practices, and values in their daily lives, serves as a pivotal extension of the TPB in contexts where faith profoundly shapes decision-making (Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023; Hwang & Kim, 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Memon et al., 2020; Monoarfa et al., 2024; Roswinanto & Suwanda, 2021; Wisnususyah et al., 2025). In Islamic frameworks, religiosity encompasses both intrinsic elements, such as personal devotion to tawhid (monotheism) and ethical conduct, and extrinsic aspects, such as participation in communal rituals and adherence to sharia principles (Susanto, 2025). Research indicates that higher religiosity levels intensify moral evaluations, leading to stronger attitudes against entities perceived as unjust or unethical, thereby elevating boycott intentions (Babu et al., 2025; Chiang & Muhammad Arif, 2024; Ramkissoon et al., 2025).

Within the TPB, Religiosity can function as a moderator or direct antecedent, amplifying the effects of core constructs. For example, religious convictions may strengthen subjective norms by framing boycotts as a collective religious duty (*fard kifayah*), particularly in response to geopolitical issues such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, where Islamic teachings on justice and solidarity come to the fore (Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023; Yanti et al., 2025). Similarly, Religiosity enhances perceived behavioral control by instilling a sense of divine empowerment and moral agency, making individuals more confident in sustaining boycott actions despite challenges (Evelyn & Sekarasih, 2025; Lasarov et al., 2023). Empirical studies in Muslim contexts, such as Bangladesh and Malaysia, have demonstrated that religiosity positively correlates with boycott participation, mediating the link between ethical perceptions and behavioral outcomes (Babu et al., 2025; Syarif & Herman, 2024).

In Indonesia, where Islam intersects with national identity, religiosity is likely to heighten sensitivity to brands associated with controversial policies, fostering intentions to boycott as an expression of faith-based resistance (Susanto, 2025; Wisnususyah et al., 2025). Thus, integrating Religiosity into TPB provides a culturally attuned lens for examining how religious depth influences the formation of boycott intentions.

Incorporating social media influence into TPB

Social media influence, characterized by the persuasive power of digital platforms to shape opinions and behaviors through content dissemination, user interactions, and algorithmic amplification, represents another critical extension of the TPB (Dalakas et al., 2023; Iacovitti et al., 2025). In modern boycott scenarios, social media acts as a catalyst, enabling rapid mobilization through hashtags, viral posts, and influencer endorsements, which in turn mold attitudes and norms (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hockey, 2024; Yan et al., 2024). This influence operates through mechanisms such as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), in which negative narratives about brands spread swiftly, altering perceived social pressures and personal evaluations (Delistavrou, 2022; Syarif & Herman, 2024).

In the TPB structure, social media can be conceptualized as an enhancer of subjective norms, as exposure to online communities reinforces collective sentiments and creates a bandwagon effect (Chiang & Muhammad Arif, 2024; Ramkissoon et al., 2025). It also impacts attitudes by providing accessible information on ethical issues, potentially shifting neutral views toward boycott advocacy (Iacovitti et al., 2025; Rozenkowska, 2023). Furthermore, social media bolsters perceived behavioral control by offering tools such as boycott apps and alternative product recommendations, thereby reducing perceived barriers to participation (Lasarov et al., 2023; Wisnusyah et al., 2025). Studies in emerging markets show that high social media engagement correlates with increased boycott intentions, particularly among younger demographics influenced by digital activism (Syarif & Herman, 2024).

In Indonesia, with over 170 million social media users, platforms such as Twitter (now X) and Instagram have been instrumental in amplifying boycott calls, blending religious appeals with viral content to drive consumer actions (Dalakas et al., 2023; Susanto, 2025). Extending the TPB to account for social media influence captures the digital dimension of contemporary consumer behavior.

Hypotheses development

Attitude and boycott intention

Attitude toward behavior refers to the extent to which a person evaluates it positively or negatively (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This study defines attitude as a specific attitude toward boycotts, namely, how consumers evaluate a deliberate decision not to purchase fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands perceived as indirectly supporting unethical actions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. From a theoretical perspective, consumers have a positive attitude toward boycotts when they perceive the action as morally justified and consistent with their ethical and religious beliefs. Two important psychological mechanisms are identified: moral outrage, which increases the perceived desire to boycott, and value congruence, which reduces the cognitive dissonance between personal beliefs and consumption behavior. Thus, consumers have a stronger intention to participate in the boycott as a form of ethical resistance and religious solidarity (Babu et al., 2025; Delistavrou, 2022; Rozenkowska, 2023; Yen et al., 2024).

H₁: Attitude toward boycotting positively affects boycott intention.

Social media and boycott intention

In this study, social media influence is conceptualized as the overall persuasive impact of digital platforms on consumers' perceptions and behaviors. It encompasses multiple dimensions, including information exposure, influencer endorsements, emotional contagion through viral content and digital activism (Dalakas et al., 2023; Syarif & Herman, 2024). In the context of this research, social media influence is positioned as a distinct antecedent within the extended TPB framework because, in highly digitalized societies such as Indonesia, it operates beyond merely reinforcing subjective norms. Social media provides real-time access to morally charged information, amplifies collective emotional responses, shapes the moral framing of the boycott issue, and creates a sense of widespread social consensus through algorithmic visibility and peer validation. These mechanisms directly foster boycott intentions by increasing awareness, emotional involvement, and perceived moral urgency, even before fully shaping general attitudes or perceived behavioral control (Evelyn & Sekarasih, 2025; Nana & Surur, 2025; Wisnusyah et al., 2025). This direct effect is particularly salient in geopolitically driven boycotts, where rapid information dissemination and emotional contagion play a central role in mobilizing consumer activism.

H₂: Social media influence has a positive effect on boycott intention.

Perceived behavioral control and boycott intention

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) in the theory of planned behavior refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behavior, reflecting internal self-efficacy and external enabling conditions (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In the context of consumer boycotts, PBC reflects consumers' confidence in their ability to participate successfully

despite potential barriers. This study identified three key dimensions of PBC in boycott behavior: (1) access to alternative products, including the availability of acceptable local or halal-certified substitutes; (2) financial constraints, namely, perceived affordability and minimal economic sacrifice when switching brands; and (3) information availability, including the ease of identifying boycott targets and substitutes through boycott lists, apps, or social media. When consumers perceive a high level of control across these dimensions, they feel empowered to translate their moral beliefs into concrete boycott actions, thereby strengthening their boycott intentions (Babu et al., 2025; Lasarov et al., 2023; Ramkissoo et al., 2025).

H₃: Perceived behavioral control positively affects boycott intention.

Boycott intention and boycott participation

According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), behavioral intention is the most immediate and direct predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Ethical consumption studies generally find an intention-behavior gap (Hassan et al., 2016; Lasarov et al., 2023); however, this gap is expected to be smaller among urban Muslim consumers in Indonesia who engage in consumer boycotts. Several contextual factors are likely to improve the translation of intention into actual behavior: (1) boycotting is a relatively low-cost and habitual behavior (it involves brand avoidance rather than complex behavior); (2) ongoing exposure to social media reminders and community pressure provides ongoing reinforcement and social accountability; (3) strong moral and religious motivations create internal commitment that sustains action over time; and (4) the availability of boycott applications and alternative product lists reduces practical barriers. The conditions of current geopolitically driven boycott campaigns allow for more powerful intention-behavior consistency (Babu et al., 2025; Syarif & Herman, 2024; Wisnuyah et al., 2025).

H₄: Boycott intention positively affects actual boycott participation.

Attitude toward boycotting and boycott participation through boycott intention.

This study proposes that boycott intention fully mediates the relationship between the antecedent variables (attitude, social media influence, and perceived behavioral control) and actual boycott participation. These antecedents are expected to influence boycott behavior primarily through their effects on intention rather than through strong direct effects. This full mediation is theoretically meaningful in the current context because boycott participation is a volitional, low-cost behavior that requires conscious decision-making, which is best captured by intention as the proximal determinant (Ajzen, 1991; Delistavrou, 2022; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Lasarov et al., 2023).

H₅: Attitude toward boycotting has a positive indirect effect on boycott participation through boycott intention.

Social media and boycott participation through intention to boycott

Social media influence is expected to indirectly affect boycott participation through boycott intention. In digitally driven boycott movements, exposure to boycott-related content on social media first builds strong intentions by increasing moral awareness and emotional involvement in the boycott. These intentions then translate into actual behavior. Positioning social media influence as operating through intention provides a unique contribution by highlighting how digital activism functions as a distal driver of modern consumer resistance, particularly in high social media penetration contexts such as Indonesia (Dalakas et al., 2023; Evelyn & Sekarasih, 2025; Nana & Surur, 2025; Syarif & Herman, 2024; Wisnuyah et al., 2025).

H₆: Social media influence has a positive indirect effect on boycott participation through intention to boycott.

Perceived behavioral control and boycott participation through boycott intention

Consistent with the TPB, perceived behavioral control is proposed to influence boycott participation primarily through its effect on boycott intention. Empowered consumers who perceive high control (through access to alternatives, manageable financial impact, and abundant information) develop

stronger intentions, which, in turn, drive actual participation. This mediation underscores the role of facilitating conditions in bridging motivational factors and real-world boycott actions in emerging market settings (Babu et al., 2025; Lasarov et al., 2023; Ramkissoon et al., 2025).

H₇: Perceived behavioral control has a positive indirect effect on boycott participation through boycott intention.

Religiosity, attitude, social media, perceived behavioral control and boycott intention

Religiosity is thought to moderate (strengthen) the positive relationships between attitudes toward boycotting, social media influence, perceived behavioral control, and boycott intentions. According to the TPB, individual difference variables such as values and personality traits can serve as boundary conditions that moderate the strength of the relationship between the theory's core constructs and behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In the context of Muslim consumers, religiosity—which encompasses intrinsic faith and adherence to Islamic teachings on justice (*'adl*) and solidarity (*ukhuwwah*)—serves as a powerful value system that influences how consumers process information and form intentions.

High levels of religiosity strengthen the influence of attitudes on boycott intentions by deepening the moral evaluations. Religious consumers are more likely to view boycotting as a religious and ethical obligation rather than simply a personal preference, thus strengthening the translation of positive attitudes into strong intentions to boycott. Religiosity enhances the impact of social media because highly religious individuals are more sensitive and responsive to content framed with Islamic values, justice narratives, and calls for solidarity. This leads to greater emotional and moral resonance with boycott messages circulating on digital platforms than in the past. Religiosity strengthens the PBC effect by instilling a sense of divine support and moral agency, making consumers feel more confident and empowered to overcome practical obstacles to boycotting products.

Religiosity was not hypothesized to moderate the relationship between boycott intentions and actual boycott participation. Once strong intentions are formed, their translation into behavior in this context is expected to be driven more by situational factors such as product availability, social reinforcement, and digital tools rather than solely by the intensity of religious belief. Therefore, higher levels of religiosity are expected to strengthen the effects of attitudes, social media influence, and perceived behavioral control on boycott intention.

H8a: Religiosity moderates the relationship between attitude toward boycotting and boycott intention.

H8b: Religiosity moderates the relationship between social media influence and boycott intention.

H8c: Religiosity moderates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and boycott intention.

From the explanation above, with reference to the TPB theory, the research model built in this study is shown in Figure 1

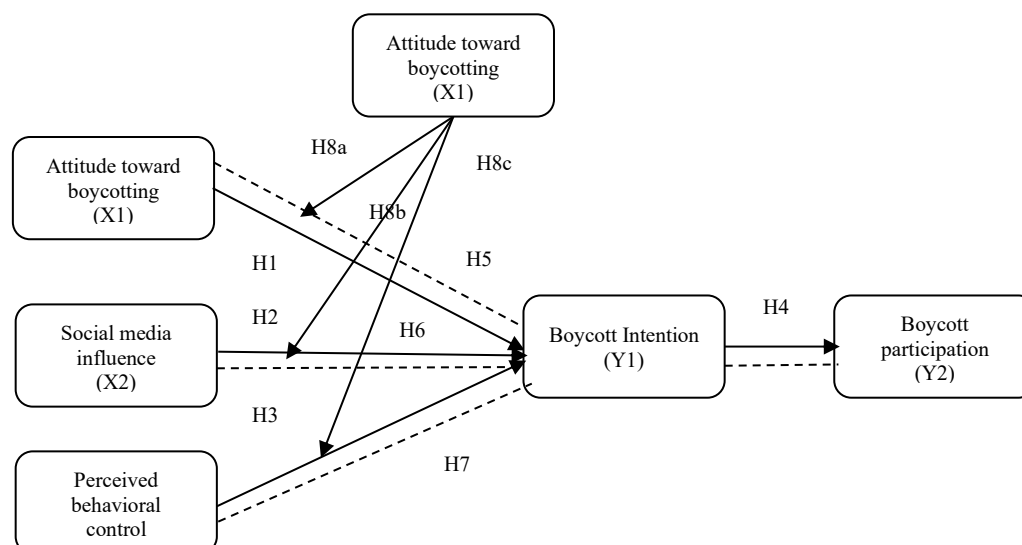


Figure 1. Research model
Source: Authors' own work.

Research Methods

This study adopted a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey approach to examine the extended theory of planned behavior (TPB) model in predicting boycott intention and participation among Muslim consumers in Indonesia. This study focuses on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands, particularly Unilever products, amid ongoing boycott campaigns linked to the Israel-Palestine geopolitical context in 2025. The methodology follows the established guidelines for PLS-SEM applications in consumer behavior and Islamic marketing studies (Hair, et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2016). The target population comprised urban Muslim consumers aged 18 years and above in Indonesia. However, owing to practical constraints related to time and resources, this study collected data from Muslim consumers residing in Semarang, Central Java. Semarang was deliberately chosen as a representative urban setting with high digital penetration and active participation in boycott campaigns. Although the findings are contextualized within one major Indonesian city, the study uses the broader term “urban Muslim consumers in Indonesia” in the title to reflect the intended theoretical generalization of the findings. The geographical limitation is acknowledged in the limitations section.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the respondents met the inclusion criteria: self-identified as Muslim, urban residents of Semarang, recent FMCG buyers (within the past six months), and awareness of ongoing boycott campaigns. This non-probability sampling technique is commonly used and considered appropriate for exploratory behavioral studies in specific cultural and contextual settings (Hair et al., 2019). A total of 250 valid responses were obtained after data cleaning (initial 278 collected, 28 excluded due to incomplete responses or failed attention checks). This sample size exceeds the recommended minimum for PLS-SEM, following the 5-10 times rule (Hair et al., 2010). Primary data were collected via an online self-administered questionnaire, with items adapted from validated scales in previous boycott and TPB studies to ensure cultural relevance. Key constructs included attitude toward boycotting (five items, adapted from (Delistavrou, 2022)), perceived behavioral control (five items, from Lasarov et al., (2023)), religiosity (intrinsic/extrinsic, eight items, adapted from (Memon et al., 2020)), social media influence (six items, from (Syarif & Herman, 2024)), boycott intention (five items, from Babu et al., (2025)), and boycott participation (four items, self-reported). All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Screening questions confirmed eligibility (Muslim identity, recent Unilever purchases, and Semarang residence). The survey link was disseminated through social media platforms (Instagram, WhatsApp groups, university networks, and local Muslim community forums), yielding a convenience sample with snowball sampling elements.

Data on boycott intention and participation were collected simultaneously using a cross-sectional design. Although this approach does not fully capture the temporal sequence between intention and actual behavior, as recommended by the TPB, it is a common practice in boycott studies when investigating ongoing campaigns (Babu et al., 2025; Delistavrou, 2022; Syarif & Herman, 2024). Respondents were asked to report their current level of boycott intention and their actual participation behavior regarding the targeted brands over the past few months. This retrospective self-reporting of behavior is widely accepted in cross-sectional boycott and ethical consumption studies. Data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0, which was chosen for its suitability for predictive theory extension models with complex relationships (moderation and mediation) and non-normal data (Hair et al., 2010).

Results and Discussion

This study collected 250 valid responses from Muslim consumers in Semarang, Central Java. The demographic profiles of the respondents are presented in Table 1. The sample predominantly consisted of young, educated, and digitally active urban Muslim consumers, aligning with high social media penetration and awareness of geopolitical issues, particularly boycott campaigns related to the Israel-Palestine conflict. This profile is well-suited for examining the extended Theory of Planned Behavior model, as it represents individuals who are most exposed to digital boycott narratives and capable of forming strong boycott intentions and behaviors.

Table 1. Description of respondent

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	95	38.0
	Female	155	62.0
Age	18 - 25 years	98	39.2
	26 - 35 years	82	32.8
	36 - 45 years	45	18.0
	> 45 years	25	10.0
Education Level	High school or below	28	11.2
	Bachelor's degree	168	67.2
	Master's degree	45	18.0
	Doctoral/others	9	3.6
Occupation	Student	85	34.0
	Private employee	92	36.8
	Government employee	28	11.2
	Entrepreneur/Self-employed	32	12.8
	Others	13	5.2
Social Media Usage	< 2 hours per day	35	14.0
	2 - 4 hours per day	98	39.2
	> 4 hours per day	117	46.8
Frequency of Boycott Participation	Never	12	4.8
	Rarely (1-2 times)	45	18.0
	Sometimes (3-5 times)	88	35.2
	Often (more than 5 times)	72	28.8
	Very Often/Consistently	33	13.2
Monthly Income	< IDR 3.000.000	72	28.8
	IDR 3.000.000 – 5.000.000	95	38.0
	IDR 5.000.000 - 8,000.000	58	23.2
	> IDR 8.000.000	25	10.0

Source: Authors'own work

After collecting the questionnaire data from the respondents, a validity test was conducted using the gathered data. Validity indicates how well and accurately a measurement tool performs the intended measurement task. Meanwhile, the reliability test was used to evaluate the measurement instrument's consistency and determine whether it can be trusted for future use. The research model criteria were processed using SmartPLS, and the results are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Convergence validity and construct reliability

Variable/Construct	Item Code	OL	CA	CR	AVE
Attitude toward Boycotting	ATB1	0.703	0.827	0.877	0.589
	ATB2	0.785			
	ATB3	0.752			
	ATB4	0.794			
	ATB5	0.799			
Social Media Influence	SMI1	0.799	0.812	0.870	0.532
	SMI2	0.717			
	SMI3	0.791			
	SMI4	0.751			
	SMI5	0.739			
	SMI6	0.740			
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	0.734	0.785	0.852	0.536
	PBC2	0.779			
	PBC3	0.703			
	PBC4	0.737			
	PBC5	0.746			
Boycott Intention	BI1	0.708	0.748	0.837	0.509
	BI2	0.709			
	BI3	0.715			

Variable/Construct	Item Code	OL	CA	CR	AVE
Boycott Participation	BI4	0.737	0.762	0.848	0.583
	BI5	0.730			
	BP1	0.758			
	BP2	0.705			
	BP3	0.707			
Religiosity	BP4	0.762	0.889	0.915	0.612
	REL1	0.812			
	REL2	0.835			
	REL3	0.768			
	REL4	0.791			
	REL5	0.847			
	REL6	0.779			
	REL7	0.823			
	REL8	0.756			

Note. OL= outer loading; CA= Cronbach's alpha; CR= composite reliability; AVE= average variance extracted

Source: Authors'own work

The measurement model was assessed through outer loadings, internal consistency, and convergent validity. As shown in Table 2, all indicator loadings ranged from 0.703 to 0.847, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair, et al., 2021). This indicates that each item is a strong and reliable measure of its construct. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. All constructs demonstrated excellent reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.748 to 0.889 and composite reliability values ranging from 0.837 to 0.915, which were well above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2016). Convergent validity was examined using the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE values for all constructs ranged from 0.509 to 0.612, surpassing the recommended cut-off value of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These results confirm that the constructs capture a substantial portion of the variance in their indicators. Overall, the measurement model exhibited strong psychometric properties. All constructs satisfied the established criteria for reliability and convergent validity, providing a solid foundation for subsequent structural model evaluation.

Table 3. Discriminant validity: Fornell–Larker criterion

Construct	ATB	SMI	PBC	BI	BP	REL
Attitude toward Boycotting (ATB)	0.768					
Social Media Influence (SMI)	0.512	0.730				
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	0.478	0.491	0.732			
Boycott Intention (BI)	0.623	0.685	0.612	0.713		
Boycott Participation (BP)	0.589	0.634	0.571	0.812	0.764	
Religiosity (REL)	0.456	0.398	0.421	0.502	0.477	0.782

Source: Authors'own work

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As presented in Table 3, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct (shown on the diagonal) was greater than its correlation with all other constructs (shown off the diagonal). Specifically, the square roots of AVE ranged from 0.713 to 0.782, while the highest inter-construct correlation was 0.812 (between Boycott Intention and Boycott Participation). All other correlations were substantially lower than the respective square roots of the AVE. These results confirm that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, thereby establishing adequate discriminant validity. Combined with previously established convergent validity and reliability, the measurement model demonstrated strong overall psychometric properties and was suitable for structural modeling.

The structural model was evaluated by testing the proposed hypotheses to examine the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. The regression results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis test

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H ₁	Attitude toward boycotting → Boycott intention	0.237	2.922	0.004	Supported
H ₂	Social media influence → Boycott intention	0.300	3.635	0.000	Supported
H ₃	Perceived behavioral control → Boycott intention	0.319	3.388	0.001	Supported
H ₄	Boycott intention → Boycott participation	0.981	11.091	0.000	Supported
H ₅	Attitude toward boycotting → Boycott intention → Boycott participation	0.233	2.831	0.005	Supported
H ₆	Social media influence → Boycott intention → Boycott participation	0.294	3.482	0.001	Supported
H ₇	Perceived behavioral control → Boycott intention → Boycott participation	0.313	3.256	0.001	Supported
H _{8a}	Religiosity × Attitude toward boycotting → Boycott intention	-0.185	1.872	0.062	Not Supported
H _{8b}	Religiosity × Social media influence → Boycott intention	0.011	0.116	0.908	Not Supported
H _{8c}	Religiosity × Perceived behavioral control → Boycott intention	0.055	0.127	0.066	Not Supported

Source: Authors' own work

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) results provide substantial support for the explanatory power of the extended theory of planned behavior (TPB) model in predicting boycott intention and subsequent participation among Muslim consumers in Semarang, Indonesia. The model accounted for significant variance in both endogenous constructs, and the core TPB relationships demonstrated strong, empirical validity.

Within the foundational TPB framework, attitude toward boycotting emerged as a significant positive predictor of boycott intention ($\beta = 0.237$, $t = 2.922$, $p = 0.004$), confirming that consumers' favorable moral and ethical evaluations of boycotting—driven by perceptions of corporate complicity in geopolitical injustice—serve as a primary motivational driver. This finding aligns with prior research on morally motivated consumption and politically oriented boycotts (Delistavrou, 2022; Rozenkowska, 2023). Furthermore, boycott intention exerted a robust direct effect on actual boycott participation ($\beta = 0.981$, $t = 11.091$, $p < 0.001$), with a significant full mediating effect from attitude through intention to participation (indirect effect = 0.233, $t = 2.831$, $p = 0.005$). These results underscore the central role of intention as the proximal determinant of behavior and help bridge the frequently observed intention–behavior gap in ethical and political consumption contexts (Babu et al., 2025; Hassan et al., 2016; Iacovitti et al., 2025).

Perceived behavioral control also had a significant positive influence on boycott intention ($\beta = 0.319$, $t = 3.388$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that consumers' confidence in their ability to boycott—facilitated by the availability of local product alternatives and access to boycott-related information—strengthens intention formation. The indirect effect of perceived behavioral control on participation via intention was likewise significant (indirect effect = 0.313, $t = 3.256$, $p = 0.001$), consistent with TPB applications in boycott and ethical consumption studies conducted in emerging markets (Lasarov et al., 2023; Ramkissoon et al., 2025).

Contrary to initial expectations and much of the existing literature on Islamic marketing and religiously motivated boycotts, religiosity did not emerge as a significant direct predictor or moderator in this study's model. Both religiosity Effect 1 ($\beta = -0.188$, $t = 1.874$, $p = 0.062$) and religiosity effect 2 ($\beta = 0.011$, $t = 0.116$, $p = 0.908$) and ($\beta = 0.055$, $t = 0.127$, $p = 0.066$) failed to reach statistical significance, and the corresponding indirect effects on participation were also non-significant. This unexpected result diverges from previous studies that have positioned religiosity as a key direct driver or moderator of boycott-related attitudes and intentions in Muslim-majority contexts (Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023; Memon et al., 2020; Susanto, 2025). The lack of significant moderating effects may be attributable to several contextual factors, including the relatively heterogeneous levels of religiosity within the urban Semarang sample, potential ceiling effects in self-reported religiosity among Muslim respondents, or the overshadowing influence of more

immediate situational and digital drivers in the current boycott wave. These findings suggest that the role of religiosity in boycott behavior may be more conditional and context-dependent than previously assumed, warranting further investigation into its specific dimensions (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) and potential boundary conditions.

In contrast, social media influence emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor in the extended model, exerting a significant direct positive effect on boycott intention ($\beta = 0.300$, $t = 3.635$, $p < 0.001$) and a significant indirect effect on participation through intention (indirect effect = 0.294, $t = 3.482$, $p = 0.001$). This result highlights the pivotal role of digital platforms in amplifying boycott mobilization through electronic word-of-mouth, viral hashtags, influencer endorsements, and the rapid dissemination of boycott-related content in Indonesia's highly digitally connected society (Dalakas et al., 2023; Syarif & Herman, 2024; Wisnusyah et al., 2025). The dominance of social media influence over religiosity in this sample underscores the increasing primacy of digital mechanisms in shaping contemporary consumer activism, particularly in urban settings with high social media penetration.

Taken together, the present study advances the theoretical understanding of boycott dynamics in Muslim-majority emerging markets by demonstrating the enduring relevance of core TPB constructs while revealing the preeminent role of social media as a contemporary driver of intentions and behaviors. The non-significant contribution of religiosity as either a direct predictor or moderator contrasts with much of the prior literature and invites future research to explore potential moderating variables (e.g., issue-specific animosity, perceived boycott efficacy, or generational differences) that may condition the influence of religious identity on boycott decisions.

From a managerial perspective, the findings offer actionable implications for multinational FMCG companies in Muslim-majority markets. Firms should prioritize proactive digital reputation management, transparent communication regarding ethical positioning, strengthened halal compliance, and strategic engagement with social media influencers to mitigate boycott risk. Concurrently, local brands can capitalize on the momentum created by digital campaigns to consolidate their market share gains.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to establish causality and capture temporal dynamics in boycott behavior. As geopolitical events evolve, consumer sentiment may shift, potentially leading to boycott fatigue, desensitization, or renewed intensity—phenomena that cannot be tracked with single-point data collection. Second, reliance on self-reported measures collected via an online questionnaire from a purposive convenience sample in urban Semarang introduces the risk of social desirability bias and standard method variance. Although procedural techniques (such as anonymity assurance, randomized item order, and attention checks) were employed to minimize these issues, self-reported data remain inherently subjective and may not fully reflect actual purchasing behavior. Third, the geographical and demographic scope is limited to urban Muslim consumers in one city in Central Java, Indonesia. This restricts the generalizability of the findings to rural populations, other regions of Indonesia with different sociocultural dynamics, and less digitally connected consumer segments. The urban sample may also over-represent individuals with higher digital literacy and exposure to boycott campaigns.

Conclusion

This study successfully achieved its primary research objective by extending the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by integrating social media influence and religiosity as additional antecedents to predict boycott intention and actual participation among urban Muslim consumers in Indonesia. The empirical results demonstrate that the proposed extended TPB model effectively explains boycott behavior in a digitally advanced and geopolitically sensitive Muslim-majority country. Attitude toward boycotting, perceived behavioral control, and social media influence were significant predictors of boycott intention, which exerted a strong positive influence on actual boycott participation. Notably, social media influence emerged as the most dominant antecedent, underscoring the pivotal role of digital platforms in translating online moral sentiments into real-world consumer action.

Contrary to initial expectations, religiosity did not have a significant direct or moderating effect on boycott intention. This suggests that in urban and digitally saturated environments, technology-mediated and situational factors may outweigh traditional religious drivers in the short- to medium-term. Theoretically, this study reinforces the applicability of TPB to ethically and politically motivated consumption while highlighting the growing prominence of social media influence over conventional religious factors. Practically, the findings suggest that multinational FMCG firms should prioritize digital reputation management, transparent ethical and halal communication, influencer engagement, and rapid crisis response to mitigate boycott risks, whereas local brands can leverage digital momentum for market advantage. Notwithstanding these contributions, this study has some limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, and the sample was limited to urban consumers in Semarang, thus limiting the generalizability to rural areas or other regions in Indonesia. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and broader geographical coverage while exploring additional variables, such as perceived boycott efficacy and generational differences.

Several promising directions for future research emerge from the present findings and their limitations. First, longitudinal designs are essential for examining the temporal stability and evolution of boycott intention and participation. Tracking the same respondents over multiple time points would allow researchers to investigate whether the dominant influence of social media persists, diminishes due to campaign fatigue, or fluctuates in response to changes in geopolitical developments, media coverage, or conflict resolution. Second, expanding the geographical and demographic scope of the study would enhance its external validity. Comparative studies across different regions of Indonesia (urban vs. rural) and cross-national comparisons with other Muslim-majority countries (such as Malaysia, Bangladesh, or Pakistan) could reveal whether the primacy of social media influence over religiosity is context-specific or a broader trend in digitally connected Muslim societies.

Abbreviations

TPB : Theory of planned behavior

FMCG : Fast-moving consumer goods

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Funding statement

This research did not receive any specific grants from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Widya Prananta, upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions regarding the participants' information.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing of this article. All content was written and edited by the authors.

Conflict of interest statement

Competing interest declaration: The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper. The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest in the publication of this manuscript.

Ethic approval and consent to participate

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Although formal institutional ethics approval was not obtained at the time of data collection, all procedures followed the standard ethical guidelines for social science research involving human participants. All respondents were informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Electronic informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the completion of the questionnaire. The anonymity and confidentiality of the responses were assured and maintained throughout the research process.

Acknowledgements

The authors also extend their appreciation to the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Semarang, for providing the necessary support and facilities during the research process.

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