



## When Halal is not Enough: The Paradox of Moral Activism Beyond Ethnocentrism and Religious Commitment

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### ABSTRACT

Muslim consumers increasingly consider factors beyond halal compliance when evaluating brands, particularly when brands are perceived to be associated with humanitarian issues; halal status alone may no longer be sufficient to sustain favourable consumer responses, creating a critical dilemma in Muslim markets. While prior studies have highlighted consumer animosity and ethnocentrism as drivers of brand avoidance, limited attention has been paid to the psychological mechanisms through which these factors translate into unwillingness to buy. Specifically, the mediating role of brand attitude, the behavioral relevance of perceived boycott efficacy, and the moderating influence of religious commitment remain underexplored. Addressing this gap, the present study examines unwillingness to buy among Muslim consumers by investigating how brand attitude mediates, and religious commitment moderates, the effects of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, and perceived boycott efficacy. Using a quantitative design, survey data were collected from Muslim respondents through purposive and snowball sampling and analyzed using the PROCESS Macro in SPSS. The findings demonstrate that brand attitude serves as a central mediating mechanism, particularly for consumer animosity and perceived boycott efficacy, translating moral emotions and beliefs into avoidance behavior. In contrast, consumer ethnocentrism and religious commitment show no significant direct or moderating effects, indicating that purchase resistance in humanitarian conflict contexts is driven less by nationalistic ideology or religiosity and more by negative moral evaluations of brands and perceptions of collective action effectiveness. These results reinforce the view that contemporary Muslim consumer boycotts function as value-driven, brand-specific moral responses rather than expressions of ethnocentric or purely religious consumption.

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## Introduction

Halal compliance has long been considered a fundamental criterion for guiding consumer decision-making in Muslim markets. Brands that obtain halal certification are generally perceived as meeting religious requirements (Khan et al., 2025; Mansour et al., 2021) and, consequently, are expected to enjoy higher levels of trust (Al-Ansi et al., 2019; Giada & Riccardo, 2018; Suhartanto et al., 2023), acceptance (Bachtiar et al., 2025; Baehaqi et al., 2022; Farhan & Sutikno, 2024), and purchase intent (Ali et al., 2018; Aslan, 2023; Aziz & Chok, 2013; Irfany et al., 2024) among Muslim consumers. However, recent studies indicate that halal compliance alone is no longer sufficient to retain consumers. Muslim consumers are increasingly critical and evaluate brands not only based on formal religious certifications (such as halal labels) but also on broader value considerations, particularly when the brand is perceived as being associated with practices that conflict with religious, moral, or humanitarian principles (Aji et al., 2025; Herani & Angela, 2025; Nasir, 2016).

Previous studies have shown that religious considerations play an important role in motivating boycott-related behavior, which often involves the avoidance or rejection of specific products or brands as a form of protest against perceived political actions or humanitarian violations. Within the consumer behavior literature, such actions are closely related to the concept of brand avoidance, defined as a phenomenon in which consumers intentionally choose to engage in the deliberate and active rejection of a brand they can afford due to unfavorable meanings or perceptions associated with it (Bryson &

Atwal, 2019; Efendi & Alfansi, 2025; Yang et al., 2018). Prior research identifies several factors that contribute to brand avoidance, including ideological incompatibility between consumers and brands (Gani et al., 2025; C. Rodrigues et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021), undesired self-congruence ( Khan & Lee, 2014), and social influence (Do et al., 2024; Efendi & Alfansi, 2025; Wang et al., 2021). Boycott-related brand avoidance can be differentiated based on whether consumer actions are directed toward the producing brand itself or toward intermediaries that distribute the brand's products, reflecting either direct or indirect forms of boycott behavior (Friedman, 1995). In the former case, consumers react to actions attributed to the focal brand (Dekhil et al., 2017; Hamzah & Mustafa, 2019), whereas in the latter, consumers target intermediaries in the expectation that they will sever ties with the brand or exert pressure to induce changes in the brand's policies or practices (Dekhil et al., 2017; Tyran & Engelmann, 2005).

Furthermore, for Muslim consumers who participate in these boycotts, collective action is often driven by two main objectives. First, consumers expect that coordinated avoidance of targeted products will exert economic pressure on firms, encouraging corporate responses and public engagement with the underlying concerns. Second, even when a tangible economic impact is perceived as unlikely, consumers may still refrain from purchasing these products to avoid personal involvement in activities they believe conflict with Muslim interests or values (Nasir, 2016). Empirical evidence from past boycott movements illustrates how these motivations translate into large-scale consumer action. For example, boycott campaigns targeting Coca-

Cola in Muslim-majority markets have been linked to significant shifts in consumption, and alternative cola brands such as Mecca Cola, Qibla Cola, ZamZam Cola, and Evoca Cola gained prominence by aligning their brand narratives with religious and humanitarian values (Dekhil et al., 2017). Similarly, boycotts of Danish products in the mid-2000s resulted in substantial financial losses for affected firms, including approximately €54 million in losses for a major dairy company (Al-Hyari et al., 2012; Knight et al., 2009). In Indonesia, boycott calls have periodically emerged in response to perceived humanitarian and moral concerns, leading to widespread brand avoidance and shifts toward alternative products (Amalia et al., 2025).

While prior studies have provided valuable insights into why consumers engage in boycott-related brand avoidance, less attention has been given to how these motivations are translated into actual purchase resistance. Existing research has largely treated boycott participation and brand avoidance as direct outcomes of consumer animosity (Cao et al., 2025; Krüger et al., 2025; Kuanr et al., 2022), ideological conflict (Gani et al., 2025; C. Rodrigues et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021), or social influence (Do et al., 2024; Efendi & Alfansi, 2025; Wang et al., 2021), without sufficiently examining the underlying evaluative processes that shape consumers' final decisions. At the same time, studies on moral and humanitarian framing demonstrate that consumers' perceptions of morally charged information significantly influence brand-related evaluations, which subsequently affect boycott intention and unwillingness to buy (Bravo & Chapa, 2024). In this context, brand attitude emerges as a central

psychological mechanism that translates moral awareness, perceived moral intensity, moral judgment, and animosity into behavioral responses, while also mediating the influence of religious values in Muslim consumer contexts. Empirical evidence consistently shows that unfavourable brand attitudes increase purchase resistance and may deteriorate brand-country image (Akhtar et al., 2024). However, the strength of this relationship varies depending on boundary conditions such as perceived intrusiveness, altruistic tendencies, and individual value orientations (Nur & Adialita, 2025).

Moreover, consumers' responses to boycott calls may vary depending on both value-based drivers and individual differences. Prior research indicates that consumer animosity (Kim et al., 2022; Kocaman et al., 2025; Puji & Jazil, 2024; Xie et al., 2023) and consumer ethnocentrism (Awaludin et al., 2023; Kocaman et al., 2025; Puji & Jazil, 2024; Sadiq & Ahmad, 2023) play important roles in shaping negative perceptions toward brands, particularly when brands are perceived to conflict with moral, religious, or humanitarian values. However, the extent to which these negative orientations translate into actual purchase resistance depends on consumers' evaluative processes and contextual beliefs. Religious commitment, for example, may strengthen or weaken the influence of animosity and ethnocentric tendencies on brand evaluations and subsequent behavioral responses (Al-Hyari et al., 2012; Dekhil et al., 2017; Herman & Salehudin, 2025). Similarly, perceived boycott efficacy—the belief that collective consumer action can produce meaningful outcomes—may reinforce consumers' willingness to convert unfavourable brand attitudes into active

purchase resistance (Herani, 2025; Hoffmann, 2013). Despite their relevance, the interactive roles of consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, brand attitude, religious commitment, and perceived boycott efficacy have not been sufficiently integrated into a single explanatory framework, particularly in the context of Muslim consumers and humanitarian-related brand avoidance. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how value-based concerns are transformed into purchase resistance in Muslim markets.

## **Literature Review**

### **Consumer Animosity, Brand Attitude and Unwillingness to Buy**

Consumer animosity refers to hostility or antipathy toward a specific country—referred to as the target country—arising from past or ongoing military, political, or economic events, regardless of consumers' evaluations of the target country's products (Barbarossa et al., 2018). Consumer animosity can extend beyond hostility toward a specific country to encompass brands perceived as associated with it, shaping consumers' overall brand evaluations. Prior empirical studies consistently demonstrate that animosity evokes negative emotions and moral judgments that weaken brand evaluations and lead to unfavourable brand attitudes, even when product quality or functional attributes are viewed positively (Akhtar et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2020). From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, such negative evaluations represent the attitudinal component that precedes behavioral intention, suggesting that animosity-driven beliefs and emotions are cognitively translated into unfavourable attitudes toward the brand.

Accordingly, when consumers hold strong animosity toward a target country, they are more likely to form negative brand attitudes toward brands associated with that country, providing theoretical and empirical support for the following hypothesis:

$H_1$ : Consumer animosity influences brand attitude.

This animosity can also have significant negative consequences for the target country, often manifesting in consumer-led boycotts of its products and services (Kim et al., 2022; Kocaman et al., 2025). Boycotts, a form of anti-consumption behavior, are frequently employed by consumers to oppose and retaliate against actions or behaviors they deem unacceptable (Pöyry & Laaksonen, 2022; Wilson et al., 2022). Previous studies have found a positive relationship between consumer animosity and boycott intentions or purchase resistance (unwillingness to buy), as heightened hostility motivates consumers to avoid products from the target country. When such animosity is rooted in perceived religious crimes associated with the target country, consumers are even more likely to boycott goods and services from organizations connected to that state (Aji et al., 2025; Mirza et al., 2020).

$H_2$ : Consumer animosity influences unwillingness to buy.

### **Consumer Ethnocentrism, Brand Attitude and Unwillingness to Buy**

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to individuals' tendency to favour domestically produced goods and services based on the belief that purchasing foreign products is inappropriate, morally questionable, or potentially harmful to the economic and social well-being of their own country (Avunduk &

Karadas, 2023; Sobolev & Nelson, 2020). This orientation reflects a broader ethnocentric mindset in which individuals perceive their own culture or ethnic group as superior to others, leading to biased evaluations of foreign brands and preferential attitudes toward domestic alternatives (García-Gallego & Chamorro Mera, 2016; Kara et al., 2024). Prior studies show that ethnocentrism shapes brand image and brand attitude, thereby indirectly affecting consumers' willingness to purchase foreign brands through evaluative judgments. Research in e-WOM (electronic word of mouth) and brand equity contexts further indicates that ethnocentric tendencies bias how consumers process brand-related information, strengthening favourable attitudes toward domestic brands while weakening evaluations of foreign brands depending on brand origin (Sun et al., 2021). From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, consumer ethnocentrism represents a value-based belief system that informs the attitudinal component of decision-making, shaping consumers' overall evaluations of brands before behavioral intentions are formed. Accordingly, ethnocentric beliefs are expected to influence brand attitude, providing a theoretical and empirical basis for examining consumer ethnocentrism as an antecedent of brand attitude in value-sensitive and cross-national consumption contexts.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Consumer ethnocentrism influences brand attitude.

Additionally, previous studies have found a positive relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and buying resistance, particularly when foreign products are associated with actions that contradict consumers' moral values (Awaludin et al., 2023; Puji & Jazil, 2024; Sadiq & Ahmad,

2023). For instance, Israeli products that are perceived as supporting the genocide in Gaza may evoke strong moral opposition among ethnocentric consumers (Halimi, 2017; Halimi et al., 2017; Shoham et al., 2006). These individuals view the purchase of such products not only as economically harmful but also as a violation of their ethical and national values, thereby strengthening their resolve to boycott them as a moral obligation (Puji & Jazil, 2024).

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Consumer ethnocentrism influences unwillingness to buy.

#### **Perceived Efficacy of Boycott, Brand Attitude and Unwillingness to Buy**

The concept of perceived efficacy is rooted in subjective judgment and cognitive processes, referring to an individual's belief in their ability to address specific risks effectively. It comprises two dimensions: self-efficacy, which reflects confidence in executing actions, and response efficacy, which reflects the belief that those actions will lead to desired outcomes (Meng et al., 2023). In boycott contexts, perceived efficacy is widely recognized as a key driver of consumer response, as individuals are more willing to incur personal sacrifice when they believe their actions can meaningfully influence a company's behavior or policies (M. Park & Jang, 2024; Sen et al., 2001; Wiener & Doescher, 1994). Xygalatas et al. (2021) further illustrate this concept through religious rituals, performed as symbolic acts of devotion, in which perceived efficacy is tied to the belief that achieving the ritual's symbolic goals is possible. In the context of boycotts, perceived efficacy can be understood as an individual's belief in the impact of their participation, such as influencing corporate behavior, promoting social justice, or addressing moral and ethical issues (Awaludin

et al., 2023). Prior research distinguishes between instrumental motivations, which are goal-oriented and focused on producing tangible change or punishing a target, and expressive motivations, which stem from psychological and moral considerations such as acting in accordance with personal values (John & Klein, 2003; Klein et al., 2004). Both motivations depend on consumers' assessment of the boycott's likelihood of success, which is shaped by beliefs about expected participation, overall effectiveness, and exposure to pro-boycott communications. When consumers believe that their collective actions can directly influence corporate behavior or address moral concerns, perceived efficacy strengthens negative brand evaluations and increases unwillingness to buy as a rational and value-driven response (Awaludin et al., 2023; James, 2010).

H<sub>5</sub>: Perceived efficacy of boycott influences brand attitude.

H<sub>6</sub>: Perceived efficacy of boycott influences unwillingness to buy.

### **Brand Attitude and Unwillingness to Buy**

Brand attitude refers to customers' overall positive or negative evaluations of a product, service, or brand, which influence their psychological tendencies and behaviors (Kusumawati & Rahayu, 2022; Manosuthi et al., 2020). This concept reflects how consumers perceive and emotionally connect with a brand, directly impacting their willingness to engage with or avoid it. In the context of consumer boycotts, Wang et al. (2021) noted that when a brand takes a stance on controversial issues, it risks its sustainability, as some consumers may boycott it due to ideological differences. Additionally, individuals with high Attention to Social

Comparison Information (ATSCI) are likely to be influenced by others' opinions, potentially altering their boycott intentions in response to social dynamics and external influences. Hong (2018) and Suhud et al. (2024) offer important insights into how consumers decide to support or boycott brands. Hong's study shows that when consumers have a positive attitude toward a brand, they are more likely to support it (buyout) and take action in its favor, while being less likely to avoid it (boycott). Additionally, having a general intention to act positively influences buyout behavior but reduces boycott intentions. On the other hand, Suhud's study focuses on the emotional dimension of boycotts, revealing that anger plays a significant role in shaping attitudes toward boycotts, product evaluations, and intentions to punish brands. Interestingly, although boycott attitudes are important, they do not strongly translate into boycott intentions, which challenges conventional expectations. While punitive actions toward brands strongly influence boycott intentions, evaluations of the product itself have little impact.

H<sub>7</sub>: Brand attitudes influences unwillingness to buy.

Taken together, prior studies indicate that brand attitude serves as a central evaluative mechanism linking value-based beliefs and emotions to behavioral responses. Consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, beliefs and value judgments—such as animosity toward a brand's perceived affiliations, ethnocentric bias, and beliefs about the effectiveness of collective action—shape consumers' attitudes, which subsequently guide behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Empirical evidence shows that negative

emotions and ideological disagreement influence boycott-related behavior primarily through unfavorable brand attitudes rather than through direct effects (Hong, 2018; Suhud et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021). Similarly, research on consumer animosity and ethnocentrism demonstrates that these orientations bias brand evaluations, which in turn increase avoidance and boycott tendencies (Barbarossa et al., 2018; C. Rodrigues et al., 2021). Accordingly, brand attitude is expected to mediate the relationships between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, perceived boycott efficacy, and unwillingness to buy.

$H_8$ : Brand attitudes mediate the relationship between consumer animosity and unwillingness to buy.

$H_9$ : Brand attitudes mediate the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and unwillingness to buy.

$H_{10}$ : Brand attitudes mediate the relationship between perceived boycott efficacy and unwillingness to buy.

### **The Moderation Role of Religious Commitment**

Religiosity, defined as the degree of an individual's commitment to a particular religious group, plays a vital role in shaping social identity and significantly influences consumer behavior. This influence arises from its ability to shape individual and collective beliefs and values, thereby influencing social and cultural orientations. Despite the importance of religious beliefs and values in driving consumer behavior, limited research has delved into the complex relationship between religiosity and consumption choices (Mathras et al., 2016).

Rodrigues et al. (2022) provide evidence that the impact of religious commitment extends beyond religious practices alone. Highly religious individuals often demonstrate commitment across various aspects of life, including family, relationships, and consumption behaviors. Religious commitment is described as the extent to which an individual adheres to their religious values, beliefs, and practices and integrates them into their daily lives (Worthington, 1988). Afendi & Ghofur (2021) suggest that religious commitment fosters a sense of life order guided by the principle of non-harming (*al-dhālim*), transcending differences in religion, ethnicity, and gender.

Further, studies highlight that religiosity can shape attitudes, values, character, happiness, and consumption choices (Iranmanesh et al., 2019; Wnuk, 2021). The level of religious commitment plays a critical role in decision-making and market behaviors. Religious commitment is often conceptualized in two dimensions: intrapersonal and interpersonal. Intrapersonal commitment refers to the cognitive adherence to religious values, beliefs, and practices in daily life, while interpersonal commitment focuses on the outward, behavioral expression of these commitments (Worthington, 1988). Additional dimensions used to measure religious commitment include frequency of attendance at places of worship, participation in religious activities, strength of religious beliefs, frequency of prayer (Afendi & Ghofur, 2021), attendance at religious gatherings, and the use of positive religious coping strategies (Wnuk, 2021).

From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, religious commitment functions as a value-based boundary condition that shapes how strongly attitudes and moral evaluations

translate into behavioral intentions (Mathras et al., 2016; Primanto & Rachma, 2023). Individuals with higher religious commitment are more likely to rely on religious values and moral principles when making consumption decisions, thereby strengthening the influence of brand-related evaluations on behavioral responses. In contrast, for individuals with lower religious commitment, attitudes may be more weakly linked to behavioral intentions and more influenced by situational or pragmatic considerations. Accordingly, religious commitment is expected to moderate the relationship between brand attitude and unwillingness to buy.

$H_{11}$ : The indirect effect of consumer animosity on unwillingness to buy via brand attitude is conditional on religious commitment.

$H_{12}$ : The indirect effect of consumer ethnocentrism on unwillingness to buy via brand attitude is conditional on religious commitment.

$H_{13}$ : The indirect effect of perceived boycott efficacy on unwillingness to buy via brand attitude is conditional on religious commitment.

## **Method, Data, and Analysis**

This study employed a quantitative survey approach to empirically test the proposed hypotheses related to consumer unwillingness to buy (boycott) behavior. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was selected as the most appropriate instrument for capturing latent psychological constructs and behavioral intentions. To ensure the collected data were relevant to the research context, this study employed a purposive sampling approach with clearly defined

inclusion criteria. Participants were required to self-identify as Muslim and belong to either Generation Z, defined as individuals aged between 14 and 24 years (Diez, 2021), or Generation Y, comprising individuals aged between 25 and 45 years (Tatian et al., 2024), and be familiar with a selected global fast-food fried chicken chain that has been publicly associated with Israel-related issues. These requirements were stated at the beginning of the questionnaire to help screen respondents before they completed the survey. Only individuals who met all criteria were allowed to continue, helping ensure responses came from participants who understood the issue being studied.

Following the initial screening, snowball sampling was used to broaden the study's reach and increase the number of eligible respondents. The survey link was shared through WhatsApp broadcast messages, allowing early participants to forward it to friends or contacts who met the same inclusion criteria. WhatsApp was selected because it is widely used among younger consumers and is commonly relied upon for everyday communication. Using existing social connections also helped reduce hesitation to participate, particularly given the sensitive nature of the topic. This approach proved useful in reaching respondents who might otherwise have been difficult to access through more formal sampling methods (Chenane & Hammond, 2022; Silva et al., 2022).

This study adapted measurement instruments from prior consumer behavior and boycott-related research to ensure content validity and conceptual consistency. Consumer animosity was measured using established multi-item scales drawn from previous studies (Kocaman et al., 2025; Pöyry & Laaksonen, 2022; Wilson

et al., 2022), while consumer ethnocentrism was operationalized based on scales developed and validated in earlier research (García-Gallego & Chamorro Mera, 2016; Kara et al., 2024; Sobolev & Nelson, 2020). Perceived boycott efficacy was measured using items adapted from prior studies examining consumers' beliefs about the effectiveness of boycott actions (John & Klein, 2003; Meng et al., 2023; Xygalatas et al., 2021). Brand attitude was assessed through multiple items capturing respondents' overall positive or negative evaluations of the focal brand (Hong, 2018; Manosuthi et al., 2020; Suhud et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021), whereas unwillingness to buy was measured using items reflecting respondents' intentions to avoid purchasing products from the brand. In addition, the moderating construct of religious commitment was adopted from established scales used in prior studies (Mathras et al., 2016; Primanto & Rachma, 2023). All constructs were measured using multi-item scales assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

In total, 319 questionnaires were distributed via an online survey, and 226 responses were collected and retained after completeness checks. The sample, as described in Table 1, included 105 male respondents (46.46%) and 121 female respondents (53.54%), showing no major gender imbalance. Most respondents were between 25 and 45 years old (Generation Y), accounting for 61.06%, while the remaining 38.94% were aged 17-24 years (Generation Z). In terms of education, more than half of the respondents had completed a Bachelor's degree, and a smaller proportion had completed a Master's degree. At the same

time, those with a Diploma or Senior High School background comprised the remaining part of the sample. Regarding monthly food spending, some respondents reported spending below IDR 1.5 million, others between IDR 1.5 and 2 million, and the rest above IDR 2 million, indicating variation in consumption levels among participants. Moreover, the validity and reliability test results (Table 2) for the research constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency and acceptable item correlations across all six variables. For example, the Unwillingness to Buy (UB) construct achieved a high Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.912, indicating excellent internal consistency among its five items. Each item was found to have a Pearson correlation (r-count) far above the critical value of 0.130 for a sample size of 226, confirming that all items are valid. Similarly, Brand Attitude (BA) showed robust reliability ( $\alpha = 0.886$ ), with all six items exceeding the threshold, indicating that respondents consistently perceived the brand as likeable.

Moreover, the results of the validity and reliability tests (Table 2) for the research constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency and acceptable item correlations across all six variables. For example, the Unwillingness to Buy (UB) construct achieved a high Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.912, indicating excellent internal consistency among its five items. Each item recorded a Pearson correlation (r-count) far above the critical value of 0.130 for a sample size of 226, confirming all items are valid. Similarly, Brand Attitude (BA) showed robust reliability ( $\alpha = 0.886$ ), with all six items surpassing the threshold, indicating that respondents consistently perceived likability.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Profiles*

<b>Profiles</b>		<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Gender	Male	105	46.46
	Female	121	53.54
Age	17-24 years old (Generation Z)	88	38.94
	25-45 years old (Generation Y)	138	61.06
Education	Senior High School	20	8.85
	Diploma	35	15.49
	Bachelor's	125	55.31
	Master's	46	20.35
Monthly	< IDR 1.5 million	85	37.61
Spending for	IDR 1.5 to 2 million	81	35.84
Food	> IDR 2 million	60	26.55

Source: Data processing result by Author (2025)

**Table 2**  
*Validity and Reliability*

	<b>Items</b>	<b>r-Count</b>	<b>r-Table</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Unwillingness to Buy (UB) – Cronbach's <math>\alpha = 0.919</math></b>				
UB1	If quality is equal, I would avoid choosing this brand.	0.952		
UB2	I would never buy food from this brand.	0.952		
UB3	I would feel guilty if I consume a food from this brand.	0.952	0.130	Valid, Reliable
UB4	I feel angry toward this brand due to its genocide association.	0.952		
UB5	Supporting this brand indirectly supports genocide in the conflict.	0.947		
<b>Religious Commitment (RC) – Cronbach's <math>\alpha = 0.796</math></b>				
RC1	My religious beliefs shape the way I live life.	0.698		
RC2	Religion influences all of my decisions.	0.770		
RC3	Religion helps me understand life's purpose.	0.722		
RC4	I actively join volunteer work in religious activities.	0.665	0.130	Valid, Reliable
RC5	I enjoy spending time with fellow religious members.	0.696		
RC6	I stay informed about my religious group.	0.671		
<b>Brand Attitude (BA) – Cronbach's <math>\alpha = 0.886</math></b>				
			0.130	Valid,

BA1	I have a favourable opinion of this fast-food brand.	0.804	Reliable
BA2	I think this fast-food brand provides good products and services.	0.829	
BA3	I feel this fast-food brand is pleasant to engage with.	0.756	
BA4	I have a positive impression of this fast-food brand.	0.818	
BA5	I find this fast-food brand to be likeable.	0.807	
BA6	I consider this fast-food brand to be desirable.	0.781	

**Consumer Animosity (AN) – Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.983$**

AN1	I dislike companies that are associated with Israel.	0.945	
AN2	I feel uncomfortable supporting brands linked to Israeli interests.	0.977	
AN3	I feel angry about Israel's military actions in Gaza.	0.945	
AN4	I will never forgive Israel for its actions against Palestinians.	0.895	0.130
AN5	Israeli-linked companies prioritize profit over human rights.	0.958	Valid, Reliable
AN6	Supporting Israeli-linked brands indirectly supports injustice.	0.973	
AN7	I do not trust companies associated with Israel to act ethically.	0.971	

**Consumer Ethnocentrism (ET) – Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.928$**

ET1	Buying Indonesian products is a moral duty for every citizen.	0.760	
ET2	I feel proud when I support local (Indonesian) products.	0.790	
ET3	Indonesian products are better than imported ones.	0.791	
ET4	Country of origin alone signals high quality for Indonesian products.	0.775	0.130
ET5	Buying foreign products threatens the Indonesian economy.	0.720	Valid, Reliable
ET6	Rising imports cause job losses in Indonesia.	0.790	
ET7	Government promotion would encourage me to buy local products.	0.784	
ET8	Government awareness campaigns would stop me buying imports.	0.768	

ET9	I prefer Indonesian products because I am more familiar with them.	0.804
ET10	I usually buy Indonesian products out of habit.	0.804

**Perceived Efficacy of Boycott (EF) - Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.691$**

EF1	Avoiding products from this brand helps express my support for the people affected by the conflict.	0.242		
EF2	I believe that boycotting this brand can influence global awareness about injustice.	0.143		
EF3	Choosing not to purchase from this brand is an effective way to take a stand.	0.255		
EF4	I feel that consumer boycotts are a powerful tool for social change	0.284		
EF5	My actions, like boycotting a brand, can contribute to a broader movement.	0.323	0.130	Valid, Reliable
EF6	I am confident that avoiding products from this brand can make a difference.	0.358		
EF7	I believe I can encourage others to avoid this brand as well.	0.378		
EF8	Compared to others, I believe I am doing my part by boycotting this brand.	0.245		
EF9	I am committed to avoiding this brand, even if it's inconvenient.	0.279		
EF10	I believe my choice to boycott can help spark discussion.	0.327		

Source: Data processing result by Author (2025)

**Table 3**  
*Hypothesis Testing*

Hypothesis	p-values	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
H <sub>1</sub> AN $\rightarrow$ BA	0.000	0.236	0.432	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub> AN $\rightarrow$ UB	0.255	-0.120	0.032	Rejected
H <sub>3</sub> ET $\rightarrow$ BA	0.151	-0.137	0.021	Rejected
H <sub>4</sub> ET $\rightarrow$ UB	0.964	-0.053	0.051	Rejected
H <sub>5</sub> EF $\rightarrow$ BA	0.000	0.929	1.444	Accepted
H <sub>6</sub> EF $\rightarrow$ UB	0.000	0.824	1.196	Accepted
H <sub>7</sub> BA $\rightarrow$ UB	0.000	0.205	0.393	Accepted
Hypothesis		BootLLCI	BootULCI	Decision
H <sub>8</sub> AN $\rightarrow$ BA $\rightarrow$ UB		0.056	0.155	Accepted
H <sub>9</sub> ET $\rightarrow$ BA $\rightarrow$ UB		-0.044	0.007	Rejected

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$H_{10}$	EF $\rightarrow$ BA $\rightarrow$ UB	-0.025	0.152	Rejected
$H_{11}$	AN $\rightarrow$ BA * RC $\rightarrow$ UB	-0.009	0.016	Rejected
$H_{12}$	ET $\rightarrow$ BA * RC $\rightarrow$ UB	-0.004	0.002	Rejected
$H_{13}$	EF $\rightarrow$ BA * RC $\rightarrow$ UB	-0.045	0.027	Rejected

Source: Data processing result by Author (2025)

The moderated mediation hypotheses were tested using Hayes' PROCESS macro, which extends the mediation framework originally proposed by Preacher and Hayes by allowing the inclusion of a moderator within the indirect effect (Hayes, 2015). Specifically, PROCESS Model 14 was employed to examine the mediating role of brand attitude in the relationship between consumer animosity, consumer ethnocentrism, and perceived boycott efficacy on unwillingness to buy, while simultaneously testing the moderating effect of religious commitment on the path between brand attitude and unwillingness to buy. This regression-based approach relies on non-parametric bootstrapping and does not assume normality of the sampling distribution, making it suitable for studies with relatively small to moderate sample sizes (Hayes et al., 2017).

The significance of direct effects was assessed using standardised regression coefficients, with  $p < 0.05$  as the threshold. Mediation and moderated mediation effects were evaluated using bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals obtained from resampling. An indirect or conditional indirect effect was considered statistically significant when the lower-level confidence interval (LLCI) and upper-level confidence interval (ULCI) did not include zero, indicating a meaningful effect. Hypotheses were therefore supported when both the direct effect met the significance threshold and the corresponding bootstrapped confidence intervals excluded

zero (Hayes, 2015; Primanto & Rachma, 2023).

## Result and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal several significant relationships that enhance our understanding of how young Muslim consumers form brand perceptions and behavioural responses in a conflict-driven context. Among the independent variables examined, consumer animosity and perceived efficacy of the boycott were found to have a statistically significant, positive effect on brand attitude, with both relationships significant at  $p < 0.001$  (Table 3). This suggests that emotional hatred toward the brand associated with the country that supports genocide issues in conflict areas, as well as consumers' belief in the effectiveness of boycott actions, play an important role in shaping evaluative judgments of the brand. A prior study explains that the agonistic emotion people experience after being exposed to conflict-related news is largely driven by the animosity they feel toward the brand's country of origin (Angell et al., 2021). Agonistic emotion is a strong emotional reaction, such as anger, resentment, or hostility, that arises in response to perceived injustice or conflict. As a result, this type of emotion tends to reduce careful thinking, as individuals react emotionally rather than analytically.

However, consumer animosity did not exhibit a significant direct effect on unwillingness to buy ( $p = 0.255$ ), suggesting that emotional

hostility alone is insufficient to immediately trigger avoidance behaviour. Instead, its influence operates indirectly through brand attitude, as evidenced by the significant mediation effect (BootLLCI = 0.056, BootULCI = 0.155). While animosity initially evokes agonistic emotions that reduce careful, analytical thinking, this does not imply an absence of evaluation altogether. Rather, emotional arousal shifts consumers away from deliberative processing toward moral and symbolic judgment (Cummins & Cummins, 2012; Li, 2023), where brands are assessed based on perceived alignment with values rather than functional attributes. In this sense, animosity serves as an emotional trigger that destabilizes existing brand perceptions, prompting consumers to reinterpret the brand's meaning through a moral lens. These affect-laden reinterpretations subsequently solidify into unfavourable brand attitudes, which then legitimize and sustain avoidance behaviour. Thus, boycott behaviour emerges not as a purely impulsive reaction, but as the outcome of an emotionally driven yet evaluative process in which reduced analytical reasoning is replaced by value-based judgment.

Furthermore, from a psychological perspective, believing that one's actions matter increases moral confidence and emotional involvement. When consumers perceive a boycott as effective, they are more likely to attribute moral responsibility to the targeted brand, viewing it not merely as a neutral market actor but as an active participant in perceived wrongdoing (Awaludin et al., 2023; John & Klein, 2003; Xygalatas et al., 2021). This process reinforces negative brand evaluations by legitimizing avoidance behaviour as a morally justified response rather than a temporary emotional reaction.

Empirical evidence further indicates that boycott movements can generate tangible consequences for firms, including declining sales, profit losses, outlet closures, and long-term erosion of consumer trust and brand loyalty, as observed in cases involving McDonald's and Starbucks (Elshaer et al., 2025). These observations are consistent with the findings of the present study, which demonstrate that perceived efficacy of boycott has a significant and direct effect on unwillingness to buy ( $p < 0.001$ , LLCI = 0.824, ULCI = 1.196). In addition, brand attitude also emerged as a strong and consistent predictor of unwillingness to buy ( $p < 0.001$ , LLCI = 0.205, ULCI = 0.393), highlighting the central role of evaluative judgments in shaping boycott-related behavior (Efendi & Alfansi, 2025; Mulyono & Rolando, 2025).

Interestingly, several relationships in the proposed hypotheses were found to be statistically insignificant, both in direct and indirect pathways. Consumer ethnocentrism did not exhibit a significant effect on brand attitude ( $p = 0.151$ ) or unwillingness to buy ( $p = 0.964$ ), nor did it demonstrate a meaningful indirect effect through brand attitude (BootLLCI = -0.044, BootULCI = 0.007). These findings suggest that boycott behaviour (unwillingness to buy) in the present context is not driven by nationalistic consumption ideology or preferences for domestic products, but rather by selective moral opposition toward specific brands perceived to be implicated in the conflict. This reveals a paradox in which consumers actively engage in punitive consumer activism by avoiding targeted global brands that are associated with humanitarian issues (Dart, 2017; Hallward, 2022), yet do not simultaneously translate this resistance into ethnocentric consumption or

increased support for local brands. One possible explanation is that consumer activism in this context is largely symbolic and expressive, serving to communicate ethical stance and group belonging rather than to reorganize overall consumption patterns. Such symbolic resistance allows consumers to boycott selectively while maintaining habitual preferences in other consumption domains. A further explanation lies in the diminished salience of ethnocentric cues in shaping brand evaluations, as global brands increasingly downplay their foreign origins and instead emphasize intrinsic attributes such as quality, reliability, and brand personality. Prior research suggests that even in contexts where ethnocentric or animosity-based sentiments exist, consumers may rely less on country-of-origin considerations when brands successfully localize their identity and embed themselves within the host market (Park & Yoon, 2017; Souiden et al., 2018). As a result, ethnocentrism may fail to translate into negative brand attitudes or avoidance behaviour when the brand is perceived as operationally and symbolically "local," thereby weakening the link between ethnocentric ideology and unwillingness to buy.

The findings of this study indicate that boycott behaviour in conflict-related contexts is driven primarily by brand-specific moral evaluations rather than nationalistic preferences or automatic support for local products, which carries important implications for marketing practice. Global brands cannot rely solely on localization strategies or economic contribution narratives when they are perceived as morally implicated in humanitarian issues; instead, they must actively manage ethical legitimacy through clear moral positioning, visible humanitarian

concern, and transparent communication, as silence may be interpreted as complicity. At the same time, the weak role of ethnocentrism helps explain why local brands do not automatically benefit from boycotts of global brands. Although consumers disengage from targeted brands, this resistance does not translate into increased support for local alternatives because many local firms fail to present themselves as morally meaningful substitutes. In highly sensitive conflict contexts, consumers seek brands that demonstrate moral courage and tangible commitment, not merely domestic origin. Local brands that remain neutral or avoid sensitive issues miss the opportunity to convert moral outrage into positive brand attachment. By contrast, local firms that engage in credible ethical actions—such as transparently allocating a portion of sales to humanitarian causes or publicly affirming value-based solidarity—may capture displaced demand by aligning themselves with consumers' moral expectations. However, such positioning must be authentic and supported by real practices, as opportunistic or symbolic gestures risk backlash and reputational damage (Hong, 2018; Islam et al., 2025; Sansome et al., 2025).

Lastly, the study also examined the moderating role of religious commitment, but the results showed that none of the moderated mediation effects were significant. In particular, the interaction between brand attitude and religious commitment on unwillingness to buy was not significant for any of the predictors (for consumer animosity, BootLLCI = -0.009, BootULCI = 0.016, for consumer ethnocentrism, BootLLCI = -0.004, BootULCI = 0.002, and for perceived boycott efficacy, BootLLCI = -0.045, BootULCI = 0.027). This result is theoretically paradoxical,

as higher religious commitment is typically assumed to strengthen moral norms and, consequently, increase ethically motivated avoidance behaviours such as boycotts.

From a Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) perspective, this finding suggests that religious commitment does not function as an independent behavioural amplifier once attitudes toward the behaviour are firmly established. TRA and TPB posit that behaviour is primarily driven by behaviour-specific attitudes and subjective norms, rather than by distal personal values or identity traits. In the present context, brand attitude already captures the moral evaluation of the boycott target, while conflict-related discourse and collective activism likely generate strong injunctive and descriptive norms that prescribe avoidance behaviour. Under such conditions, religious commitment becomes behaviourally redundant: both highly and less religious consumers form similarly negative attitudes and perceive comparable social pressure to boycott. Thus, boycott behaviour is governed less by individual religiosity and more by a convergence of shared moral attitudes and social norms, explaining why increased religious commitment does not further strengthen unwillingness to buy.

Another possible explanation is that religious commitment becomes less important when moral judgments are widely shared within society. When a boycott is commonly framed as a moral response to humanitarian issues, consumers may feel obligated to participate regardless of their level of religiosity. Moreover, religious commitment tends to have a stronger influence in consumption domains that are directly governed by religious rules, such as halal food or financial practices.

In contrast, humanitarian or political boycotts are often understood as universal moral actions rather than strictly religious duties. Therefore, boycott behaviour in this study appears to be shaped more by shared moral attitudes and social norms than by individual differences in religious commitment.

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## Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that boycott-related behaviour among young Muslim consumers in a conflict-driven context is primarily shaped by moral evaluation processes rather than nationalistic ideology or individual religiosity. Consumer animosity and perceived boycott efficacy emerge as critical antecedents of brand attitude, confirming that exposure to humanitarian conflicts activates strong emotional and moral responses that reframe how brands are evaluated. However, animosity alone does not directly translate into unwillingness to buy; instead, its influence is fully channelled through brand attitude. This highlights that boycott behaviour is not a purely impulsive emotional reaction but the outcome of an affectively triggered yet cognitively evaluative process, where moral judgment replaces functional assessment. In contrast, perceived boycott efficacy exerts both direct and indirect effects on unwillingness to buy, underscoring the importance of perceived collective impact in transforming moral concern into concrete avoidance behaviour. These results collectively affirm the central role of brand attitude as the key psychological mechanism linking moral emotions and beliefs to boycott outcomes.

At the same time, the non-significant effects of consumer ethnocentrism and religious commitment reveal two important paradoxes that extend existing boycott and ethical

consumption theories. First, consumers actively punish brands perceived to be morally implicated in humanitarian issues without simultaneously engaging in ethnocentric consumption or increased support for local brands. This suggests that contemporary boycotts function as selective, symbolic, and punitive acts, rather than as expressions of economic nationalism. Second, despite strong theoretical expectations, religious commitment does not strengthen the attitude-behaviour relationship. From a TRA and TPB perspective, this indicates that once brand attitudes and social norms surrounding boycott behaviour are firmly established, distal identity-based factors such as religiosity become behaviourally redundant. In highly salient moral contexts, boycott decisions appear to be governed by shared moral consensus and normative pressure, rather than by individual differences in religious intensity. Taken together, these findings position boycott behaviour as a value-driven, normatively embedded form of consumer activism, where moral meaning, perceived efficacy, and collective judgment outweigh national identity and personal religiosity in shaping unwillingness to buy.

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## **Recommendation**

This study has several limitations that open important avenues for future research. First, the findings are based on young Muslim consumers and a conflict-specific boycott context, which may limit generalisability across age groups, religious backgrounds, and geopolitical settings; future studies should employ cross-cultural and multi-religious samples to examine whether the observed dominance of moral evaluations over ethnocentrism and religiosity persists in other

contexts. Second, this study focuses on unwillingness to buy a targeted brand rather than on actual substitution behaviour, leaving open the question of whether and under what conditions consumers shift toward morally aligned alternatives; experimental and longitudinal designs could test how concrete ethical actions, such as transparent donation programs or public humanitarian commitments, influence sustained consumption patterns. Third, religiosity and ethnocentrism were treated as relatively stable traits, yet their effects may be conditional on issue salience, social norms, and media framing; future research should model these constructs as dynamic or antecedent variables and examine their interaction with moral identity and perceived injustice severity. Finally, the cross-sectional design does not capture the evolving nature of moral discourse and collective activism; incorporating social media analytics, netnography, or qualitative interviews would provide deeper insight into how moral narratives, brand legitimacy, and consumer activism co-evolve over time. Together, these directions would strengthen theoretical understanding of moralized consumption and offer more nuanced guidance for brands operating in humanitarian-sensitive markets.

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