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# The Effect of Boycott Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control on Participation with Intention as Mediator Variable

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## Abstract

This study is motivated by the increasing consumer boycott movement against brands associated with the Israel Palestinian conflict, particularly unilever products, and the gap between publicly expressed boycott intentions and actual consumer behavior. The study aims to analyze the effects of boycott attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on boycott participation, with boycott intention as a mediating variable within the theory of planned behavior framework. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey-based questionnaire administered to 120 respondents in Semarang City who had boycotted Unilever products within the past month. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling, and data were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that boycott attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control do not have a significant direct effect on boycott participation. However, these variables have a positive and significant effect on boycott intention, which subsequently has a significant effect on boycott participation and mediates the relationship between psychological factors and actual boycott behavior. This study concludes that boycott intention plays a crucial mediating role in explaining consumer boycott participation and confirms the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior in understanding moral and political boycott behavior toward fast moving consumer goods brands in developing countries.

## Keywords

Boycott Attitude, Boycott Intention, Boycott Participation, Perceived Behavioral Control, Subjective Norms, Unilever.

## 1. Introduction

Consumer boycotts have emerged as alternative forms of individual expression beyond traditional political participation, allowing consumers to convey moral outrage and demand corporate accountability (Dalakas et al., 2023). In the digital era, social media has accelerated boycott movements, enabling rapid and large-scale mobilization of participants (Iacovitti et al., 2022; Ulfah et al., 2025). Such movements have been reintensified amid global conflicts, including the Israel–Palestine issue, where hashtags, petitions, and online campaigns symbolize collective resistance and moral identity (Hockey, 2024). Consequently, multinational corporations like Unilever, Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, and Starbucks have faced boycott calls linked to their sociopolitical positions (Babu et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, boycott movements have gained strong public attention, particularly toward brands perceived to be affiliated with Israel, reflecting increasing consumer awareness of ethical and religious values in consumption decisions (Susanto, 2025). Public engagement in boycott campaigns, especially following escalations in the Israel–Palestine conflict, is often framed as an expression of moral solidarity and collective identity rather than purely economic resistance (Yanti et al., 2025). However, several studies reveal inconsistencies between boycott intentions expressed on social media and actual purchasing behavior. Hassan et al. (2016) and Huang et al. (2025) identify a persistent intention-behavior gap in ethical consumption, while Babu et al. (2025) report that, despite strong online boycott sentiment, Starbucks Corporation’s 2025 annual report indicates a relatively stable sales performance. These findings suggest that moral intention alone does not necessarily translate into actual boycott participation and is influenced by complex psychological and social dynamics.

Previous studies by Delistavrou (2022) have examined key psychological determinants of boycott behavior, namely attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude toward boycotts reflects individuals’ evaluations of boycott actions and has been shown to significantly influence intention and participation in various contexts, although some studies report insignificant effects on boycott intention (Pratiwi et al., 2021; Rozenkowska, 2023). Subjective norms, representing perceived social pressure from one’s immediate environment, have produced mixed findings, with both significant and insignificant effects reported (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013; Ramkissoon et al., 2025). Similarly, perceived behavioral control has yielded inconsistent results, with some studies finding significant effects on intention, while others report no significant influence on either intention or behavior (Syarif & Herman, 2024; Yan et al., 2024). These inconsistencies indicate that the effects of psychological factors on boycott behavior are highly contextual and shaped by sociocultural environments.

To clarify these inconsistent findings, this study employs the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991) as its main theoretical framework. TPB posits that behavior is primarily determined by behavioral intention, which is jointly shaped by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Recent studies demonstrate that TPB remains relevant and effective in explaining boycott behavior, particularly in morally charged contexts such as the Israel–Palestine conflict (Babu et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the persistence of the intention-behavior gap identified in prior research highlights the need to re-examine the mediating role of intention in translating psychological antecedents into actual boycott participation (Hassan et al., 2016). This study focuses on the boycott of Unilever products in Semarang City, Indonesia, as a relevant empirical context. According to PT Unilever Indonesia’s 2024 annual report, the company’s net revenue declined from IDR 42.9 trillion in 2020 to IDR 35.1 trillion in 2024, representing an approximately 18% decrease over five years. This trend contrasts with the relatively

stable sales performance of other multinational brands facing similar global boycott calls, such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's, suggesting that boycott impacts are shaped by local psychological, moral, and sociocultural factors (Ulfah et al., 2025).

Based on these phenomena and research gaps, this study aims to analyze the effects of psychological factors within the TPB framework on boycott participation, with boycott intention serving as a mediating variable, in the context of boycotting Unilever products in Semarang City. This research is expected to contribute theoretically by extending the application of TPB to morally and socially driven consumption behavior, and empirically by providing deeper insights into the psychological and social determinants of boycott participation. The findings are also expected to offer practical implications for companies in responding to consumer reactions to sociopolitical and moral issues.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### **2.1. The Effect on Boycott Participation**

Boycott attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of boycotting a particular brand or company (Ajzen, 1991). According to the TPB, a more favorable attitude toward a behavior increases the likelihood of performing it (Rozenkowska, 2023). Studies on political and ethical boycotts show that pro-boycott attitudes strongly correlate with both intention and actual participation, whether in the Israel-Palestine conflict or morally and religiously motivated boycotts in Indonesia (Sari & Games, 2024). Subjective norms describe perceived social support or pressure from significant others. When family, friends, or reference figures approve of a boycott, consumers' intentions to participate increase significantly (Delistavrou, 2022; Chiang & Muhammad Arif, 2024). TPB-based studies confirm that subjective norms positively influence boycott intention in both politically and morally motivated contexts (Babu et al., 2025; Delistavrou et al., 2020; Yu, 2024), consistent with findings among Muslim consumers in Indonesia (Evelyn & Sekarasih, 2025).

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) reflects perceived ability, resources, and opportunities to participate in boycott actions (Lasarov et al., 2023). High PBC increases the likelihood of participation by enhancing control over consumption choices by Kim et al. (2022) and Yan et al. (2024) and distinguishes mere intention from actual behavior by Susanto (2025). Boycott intention represents psychological readiness to respond to a company's moral violation by refusing its products or services (Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023). Evidence from Bangladesh and other studies shows that intention positively predicts actual participation (Abdullah et al., 2021; Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021), indicating that stronger intentions increase the likelihood of engaging in boycott actions.

H1: Boycott attitude has a positive and significant effect on boycott participation.

H2: Subjective norms have a positive and significant effect on boycott participation.

H3: Perceived behavioral control has a positive and significant effect on boycott participation.

H4: Boycott intention has a positive and significant effect on boycott participation.

### **2.2. The Effect on Boycott Intention**

Boycott attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of boycotting a brand, including the perception of it as morally justifiable and beneficial within the TPB framework (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude is a key predictor of boycott intention. Evelyn and Sekarasih (2025) find that attitude strongly predicts intention to boycott products affiliated with Israel among Muslim consumers in Indonesia, while Babu et al. (2025) report a similar positive effect in Bangladesh's Israel-

Palestine conflict context. Chiang and Arif (2024) also show that students' favorable attitudes significantly increase their intention to participate in boycott movements in Malaysia. Subjective norms refer to perceived social pressure from family, friends, religious leaders, or communities. Studies indicate that subjective norms strongly shape boycott intention, as consumers seek to align with expectations of important reference groups (Delistavrou et al., 2020; Delistavrou, 2022). In Indonesia, official calls from religious and civil society organizations reinforce social approval for boycotts, further strengthening the influence of norms on intention (Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023).

PBC represents individuals' perception of their ability, resources, and opportunities to participate in boycotts, including access to substitutes and ease of avoiding targeted brands (Yan et al., 2024). When individuals perceive boycotting as feasible without sacrificing essential needs, their intention to boycott increases. Cross-country evidence from Japan and South Korea confirms that PBC is strongly related to boycott intention, particularly when consumers have sufficient alternatives and feel capable of controlling their behavior (Yan et al., 2024). Therefore, higher perceived behavioral control enhances consumers' tendency to form boycott intentions, indicating that attitude, subjective norms, and PBC jointly shape the motivational antecedents of boycott behavior.

H5: Boycott attitude has a positive and significant effect on boycott intention.

H6: Subjective norms have a positive and significant effect on boycott intention.

H7: Perceived behavioral control has a positive and significant effect on boycott intention.

### **2.3. Boycott Intention as a Mediator**

Attitude toward boycotts reflects the extent to which individuals perceive boycott actions as good, fair, and morally meaningful, forming the basis of motivation to participate. Within the TPB framework, positive attitudes influence actual behavior indirectly through the formation of strong intentions (Rozenkowska, 2023). Boycott attitude significantly affects boycott intention, which subsequently predicts actual participation. For example, Babu et al. (2025) find that in boycotts of brands affiliated with Israel, attitude positively impacts intention, leading to participation. Similarly, Evelyn and Sekarasih (2025) report that attitude is the strongest predictor of boycott intention among Muslim consumers in Indonesia, with intention significantly affecting actual participation. TPB-based research consistently demonstrates that actual behavior is better explained when attitudes are internalized into intention. Subjective norms, defined as perceived social pressure from significant others, also operate primarily through intention. Studies show that norms positively affect boycott intention, which then drives participation (Delistavrou et al., 2020). Intention thus functions as the main psychological mechanism linking norms with behavior.

PBC reflects individuals' perceived ability, resources, and opportunities to participate in boycott actions (Ajzen, 1991). Within TPB, PBC influences behavior indirectly through intention, as individuals who feel capable are more prepared to translate moral convictions into action (Kumar, 2021; Rozenkowska, 2023). Empirical evidence from boycotts of brands affiliated with Israel and among Muslim consumers in Indonesia shows that PBC strengthens boycott intention, which in turn predicts actual participation (Babu et al., 2025). Across consumer behavior studies, intention consistently mediates the relationship between PBC and behavior, indicating that higher perceived control promotes boycott participation indirectly by fostering stronger intentions.

- H8: Boycott intention mediates the effect of boycott attitude on boycott participation.  
 H9: Boycott intention mediates the effect of subjective norms on boycott participation.  
 H10: Boycott intention mediates the effect of perceived behavioral control on boycott participation.

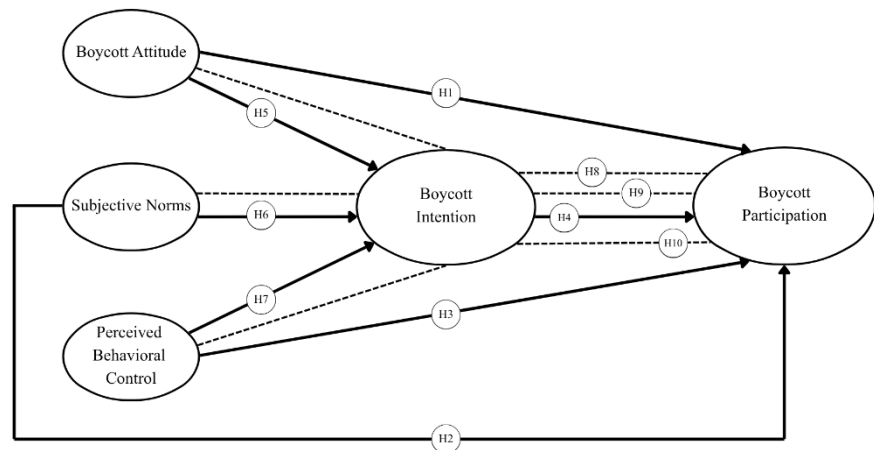


Figure 1. Research Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows how the main determinants of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), namely boycott attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, interact to influence intention and participation in a boycott of Unilever products linked to Israel. These three TPB constructs are identified as the main predictors of Boycott Intention. This intention then acts as a connector between the predictors and actual Boycott Participation, representing real consumer involvement. Additionally, the model underscores the mediating role of boycott intention in connecting attitude, social norms, and perceived control with participation. Consequently, the intention to act functions as the psychological process that translates attitudes, social influences, and perceived control into behavior. This model broadens the TPB framework to include morally and politically motivated boycotts, highlighting that consumer actions are influenced not only by individual reasoning but also by social norms and collective moral values. Therefore, beyond assessing causal links among variables, the study aims to explore how psychological and social factors interact to shape consumer engagement in ethical boycott participation.

### 3. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a questionnaire method to analyze the consumer boycott participation of Unilever products in Semarang City. The analysis is carried out using the PLS-SEM method. The research procedure include problem formulation and hypothesis development, questionnaire construction and pilot testing, data collection, data analysis, and results interpretation. Purposive sampling is used, with a total of 120 respondents based on the sample size recommended by Hair et al. (2017). Boycott attitude refers to aspects of liking, enjoyment, and moral evaluation. Subjective norms refer to expectations, approval, support, and the role of reference figures. Perceived behavioral control refers to control, ease, and freedom. Boycott intention refers to prevention, intention, and encouragement. Boycott participation refers to rejection, consistency, dislike, and unwillingness to purchase.

The measurement method in this study uses a questionnaire instrument with statements measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Data are collected through an online survey distributed via social media, university networks, and community forums from 21 to 29 November 2025. Before answering the main questions, respondents must go through screening questions to ensure that they reside in Semarang, are at least 18 years old, and have participated in boycotting Unilever products for at least the last month. In addition, demographic data such as age, gender, and education level are collected to provide a more comprehensive profile of the respondents. The data collection process is carried out in accordance with research ethics principles through the application of informed consent. Respondents are informed of the research objectives, potential benefits, and guarantees of data confidentiality. Participation is voluntary, with no pressure from any party, and respondents may stop completing the questionnaire at any time. This research does not request direct personal identifying information, and all data are stored and reported anonymously to protect participants' confidentiality.

This study's data analysis follows the standard PLS-SEM procedure. It starts with evaluating the measurement outer model to check convergent validity and reliability. Convergent validity is assessed using outer loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with indicator loadings above 0.70 and AVE over 0.50 indicating sufficient validity. Reliability is confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, both above 0.70. Once the measurement model satisfies these standards, the inner structural model is examined by analyzing the R-square values for the explanatory power of endogenous variables and the f-square effect size to gauge each exogenous variable's contribution. Finally, hypothesis testing is performed via bootstrapping to determine the significance of direct and indirect relationships. The path coefficients' significance is checked using t-statistics and p-values, allowing evaluation of direct effects and the mediating role of boycott intention.

#### 4. Results

This section presents the analysis results based on the data collected from 120 respondents in Semarang City who participated in the boycott of Unilever products. The analysis begins with a descriptive overview of respondent demographics to provide context for the sample characteristics. Subsequently, the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs, including convergent validity through outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as well as internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Following the confirmation of the measurement model, the structural model (inner model) is evaluated through R-square, F-square, and path coefficient analysis to test the hypothesized relationships. Hypothesis testing is performed using bootstrapping procedures to determine the significance of direct and indirect effects, including the mediating role of boycott intention in the relationship between psychological factors and boycott participation.

Table 1 provides a detailed profile of the 120 respondents, highlighting key demographic features. A large proportion of respondents are female (79.2%), while males make up 20.8%. The age distribution is heavily skewed toward the 18-25 age group, which represents 96.7% of all respondents. Small percentages fall into the 26-35 (0.8%) and 36-45 (2.5%) categories, with no respondents over 45 years old. Regarding education, most participants (86.7%) have a bachelor's degree, followed by 12.5% with a high school diploma or lower, and only 0.8% with a master's degree. Concerning occupation, students are the largest group, making up 92.5% of respondents. Very small proportions are self-employed (0.8%), civil servants (0.8%), and private-sector employees (1.7%), while 4.2% fall into other occupational categories.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	95	79.2%
	Male	25	20.8%
Age	18-25	116	96.7%
	26-35	1	0.8%
	36-45	3	2.5%
	>45	0	0.0%
Education	High School or below	15	12.5%
	S1	104	86.7%
	S2	1	0.8%
Occupation	Students	111	92.5%
	Self-employed	1	0.8%
	Civil servant	1	0.8%
	Private-sector employee	2	1.7%
	Other	5	4.2%

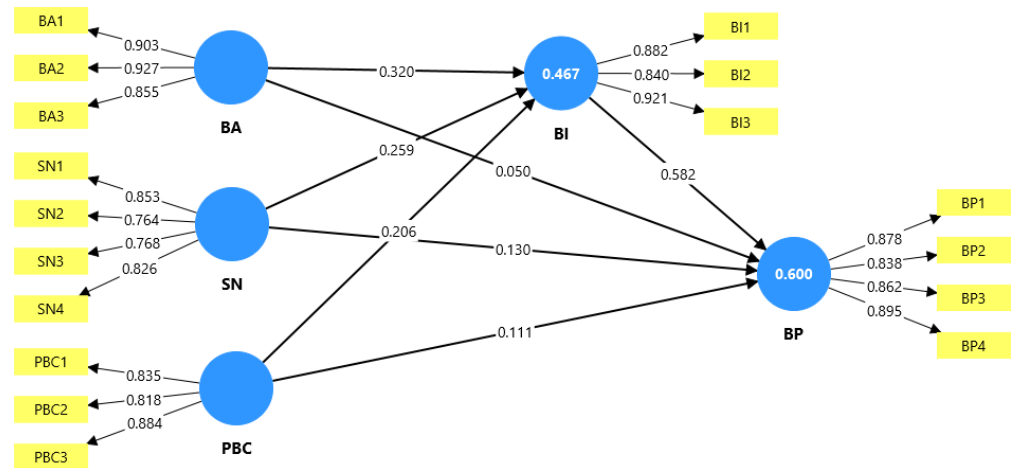


Figure 2. Path Diagram

Figure 2 shows the PLS-SEM model that depicts the relationships among three exogenous constructs, Boycott Attitude (BA), Subjective Norms (SN), and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), the mediator Boycott Intention (BI), and the endogenous construct Boycott Participation (BP). Each latent variable is measured by multiple indicators (BA1-BA3, SN1-SN4, PBC1-PBC3, BI1-BI3, BP1-BP4), with standardized loadings mostly above 0.80, indicating strong contributions of each item to its underlying factor. The model demonstrates that BA, SN, and PBC have positive path coefficients to BI (0.320; 0.259; 0.206), while BI has the most substantial direct impact on BP (0.582), compared to the weaker direct paths from BA, SN, and PBC to BP (0.050; 0.130; 0.111), which are not statistically significant. The R-square values (0.467 for BI and 0.600 for BP) suggest that the model explains a moderate portion of the variance in boycott intention and a mild to substantial portion of the variance in boycott participation, respectively. The diagram emphasizes the key mediating role of boycott intention as the main link through which attitudes, social pressures, and perceived behavioral control influence actual boycott participation.

**Table 2.** Outer Model Test

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Description
Boycott Attitude	BA1	0.903	0.802	Valid
	BA2	0.927		
	BA3	0.855		
Boycott Intention	BI1	0.882	0.777	Valid
	BI2	0.840		
	BI3	0.921		
Boycott Participation	BP1	0.878	0.754	Valid
	BP2	0.838		
	BP3	0.862		
	BP4	0.895		
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	0.835	0.716	Valid
	PBC2	0.818		
	PBC3	0.884		
Subjective Norms	SN1	0.853	0.646	Valid
	SN2	0.764		
	SN3	0.768		
	SN4	0.826		

Table 2 presents the results of the convergent validity test, including outer loadings and AVE values. All indicators within each variable show outer loadings above 0.70, satisfying validity criteria. The AVE for each construct exceeds the 0.50 threshold, demonstrating that these indicators effectively capture the construct’s variance. Therefore, it can be concluded that metrics such as boycott attitude, boycott participation, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and boycott intention possess adequate convergent validity.

**Table 3.** Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability
Boycott Attitude	0.876	0.876
Boycott Intention	0.856	0.858
Boycott Participation	0.891	0.892
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.801	0.802
Subjective Norms	0.82	0.831

Table 3 presents the Cronbach’s Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) values for each construct. All variables score above 0.70, indicating that the measurement instrument has excellent internal consistency. Specifically, boycott attitude demonstrates a CA and CR of 0.876, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Boycott intention also shows strong reliability, with values of 0.856 and 0.858, respectively. The highest reliability is observed in boycott participation, with CA of 0.891 and CR of 0.892, reflecting excellent consistency among its measurement items. Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control records values of 0.801 and 0.802, and subjective norms show values of 0.820 and 0.831, both of which remain above the acceptable threshold.

**Table 4.** R-Square Test

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Boycott Intention	0.467	0.453
Boycott Participation	0.6	0.586

Table 4 shows the R-squared and adjusted R-squared values for two endogenous constructs, boycott intention and boycott participation, based on 120 respondents. The R-squared of 0.467 (adjusted 0.453) for boycott intention and 0.600 (adjusted 0.586) for boycott participation indicates that the predictors in the model explain

about 46.7% of the variance in boycott intention and 60.0% of the variance in boycott participation. According to common PLS-SEM guidelines, R-squared values between approximately 0.25 and 0.50 are generally considered weak to moderate explanatory power, while values around or above 0.50 suggest a moderate to substantial model fit. This implies that the model provides an adequate explanation of both boycott intention and, particularly, boycott participation, although there is still room for further refinement to enhance its predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 5.** F-Square Test

Variable	Boycott Intention	Boycott Participation
Boycott Attitude	0.086	0.003
Boycott Intention		0.452
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.047	0.017
Subjective Norms	0.063	0.020

Table 5 presents the f-square values illustrating each predictor’s contribution to the endogenous variable in the PLS-SEM model. The f-square for boycott intention on boycott participation, at 0.452, is classified as a large effect, showing that the intention to boycott strongly influences actual participation. In contrast, the effects of boycott attitude on boycott intention (0.086), perceived behavioral control (0.047), and subjective norm on boycott intention (0.063) are small, while boycott attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norm’s direct impacts on boycott participation (0.003; 0.017; 0.020) are very small or nearly negligible. According to Cohen’s criteria, an f-square of about 0.02 indicates a small effect, around 0.15 a medium effect, and 0.35 or higher a large effect. These results suggest that the decision to participate in a boycott is mainly driven by boycott intention, with attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms exerting weaker, more indirect influences. Therefore, it is crucial to bolster boycott intention, such as by using messages that increase respondents’ confidence and commitment, since this factor has the most significant impact on actual boycott behavior.

**Table 6.** Hypothesis Test

Path direction	Sample	Mean	Std. Dev	t-statistics	p-values
H <sub>1</sub> : BA → BP	0.050	0.045	0.096	0.520	0.302
H <sub>2</sub> : SN → BP	0.130	0.132	0.091	1.436	0.075
H <sub>3</sub> : PBC → BP	0.111	0.110	0.093	1.199	0.115
H <sub>4</sub> : BI → BP	0.582	0.587	0.090	6.492	0.000
H <sub>5</sub> : BA → BI	0.320	0.315	0.098	3.274	0.001
H <sub>6</sub> : SN → BI	0.259	0.258	0.130	1.993	0.023
H <sub>7</sub> : PBC → BI	0.206	0.218	0.108	1.901	0.029
H <sub>8</sub> : BA → BI → BP	0.187	0.186	0.067	2.775	0.003
H <sub>9</sub> : SN → BI → BP	0.151	0.153	0.083	1.824	0.034
H <sub>10</sub> : PBC → BI → BP	0.120	0.127	0.065	1.847	0.032

*Note: BA = Boycott Attitude, BI = Boycott Intention, BP = Boycott Participation, PBC = Perceived Behavioral Control, SN = Subjective Norm.*

Table 6 displays the results from the path coefficient analysis using the PLS-SEM method. The results indicate that BA, SN, and PBC do not significantly affect BP directly (H1: p = 0.302; H2: p = 0.075; H3: p = 0.115). This suggests that attitude, social norms, and PBC alone are not enough to directly prompt participation. Conversely, BI strongly and significantly affects BP (H4: p < 0.001), indicating that intention is the primary predictor of boycott behavior, consistent with the TPB. Additionally, BA, SN, and PBC significantly influence BI (H5: p < 0.001; H6: p = 0.023; H7: p = 0.029), implying that positive attitudes, social influences, and

perceived control are important in forming boycott intentions. The mediation analysis reveals that BI mediates the relationship between BA and BP (H8:  $p = 0.003$ ) as well as SN and BP (H9:  $p = 0.034$ ). The indirect effect of PBC on BP via BI is significant (H10:  $p = 0.032$ ). Thus, these findings emphasize the key mediating role of boycott intention, showing that psychological factors influence participation mainly through shaping intention rather than through direct effects.

## 5. Discussion

The results of this study reaffirm the relevance of the TPB in explaining consumer boycott behavior, while also showing that the main roles of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on boycott participation occur primarily through the mechanism of intention. In general, these findings are consistent with the TPB framework, which positions intention as the proximal determinant of behavior, while attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control function as distal determinants that operate through intention (Ajzen, 1991; Flaseriu et al., 2020).

The results indicate that boycott attitude does not directly significantly influence boycott participation. However, it significantly affects boycott intention and indirectly impacts boycott participation through this intention. This pattern aligns with Babu et al. (2025), who show that pro-boycott attitudes boost the intention to boycott, and that this intention subsequently leads to actual boycott participation, both in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict and in boycotts of unethical brands. Subjective norms do not directly influence boycott participation significantly. However, they positively and significantly affect boycott intention and indirectly influence participation through this intention. These results align with studies by Delistavrou et al. (2020) and Andini and Indriany (2025) that show social pressure or support from family, friends, and religious communities typically boost consumers' intentions to boycott, though its impact on actual behavior is mostly mediated by intention.

Perceived behavioral control also does not have a significant impact on boycott participation. However, it has a positive and significant effect on boycott intention and has a significant indirect effect on boycott participation through boycott intention. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Yan et al. (2024), Babu et al. (2025), and Ramkissoon et al. (2025), which show that when consumers feel they have sufficient ability, resources, and product alternatives, they tend to develop stronger boycott intentions, and those intentions then turn into actual participation in boycott actions. In the context of the Unilever boycott in Semarang, this is seen in respondents who feel capable of avoiding Unilever products but only truly participate when that sense of control crystallizes into a specific and planned intention. The strongest finding in the model is the effect of boycott intention on boycott participation, with the largest path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.582$ ), which confirms that intention is the main predictor of boycott participation. This result is consistent with the study by Palacios-Florencio et al. (2021) and Babu et al. (2025) in Bangladesh, in the context of retail boycotts, and other studies on politically and religiously motivated boycotts, which find that the higher the boycott intention, the greater the probability that consumers will actually stop purchasing, avoid the brand, and encourage others to join the boycott (Abdullah et al., 2021; Arinta & Mutmainah, 2023; Evelyn & Sekarasih, 2025).

The pattern of no significant direct effect but significant through intention as mediator in boycott attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control indicates that boycott behavior toward Unilever in Semarang City is not a spontaneous reaction but rather a planned behavior that is highly dependent on the process of intention formation. These findings strengthen the view that in morally and politically charged consumption behavior, psychological factors such as attitude,

subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control must first be transformed into intention before resulting in actual actions.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study finds that participation in the consumer boycott against Unilever products in Semarang is primarily driven by boycott intention, confirming the central role of intention in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Although attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control do not directly influence participation, they significantly affect behavior indirectly through intention. This indicates that boycott behavior is deliberate rather than impulsive, requiring a strong psychological commitment before consumers engage in avoidance or refusal actions. In morally and politically motivated boycotts, internalizing moral evaluations, social pressures, and perceived capability into a clear intention is essential for mobilizing participation.

In practice, companies such as Unilever should focus on strategies that address all three TPB components. Rebuilding positive attitudes can be achieved through transparency, clarification of corporate positions, and consistent communication. Managing subjective norms requires collaboration with credible social figures to shape balanced narratives about corporate responsibility and socio-economic contributions. Regarding perceived behavioral control, strengthening brand loyalty and consumer engagement may reduce consumers' perceived ease of switching and boycotting. This study is limited by its focus on predominantly young student respondents in Semarang, restricting generalizability across age groups and regions. Additionally, the model only incorporates core TPB constructs. Future research should expand demographic coverage and integrate additional variables such as emotions, religiosity, and social identity to develop a more comprehensive explanation of consumer boycott behavior.

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### ***Ethical Approval and Originality Statement***

Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

### ***Data Disclosure Statement***

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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