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Boycott Decision of Starbucks Brand: Social Identity, Media Exposure, and Individual Moral

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of Media Exposure (ME), Social Identity (SI), and Individual Morality (IM) on Boycott Decisions (BD) in ethical campaigns in Indonesia. Using a quantitative explanatory design and PLS-SEM analysis with 205 respondents, the research reveals that ME has a significant impact on both IM and BD. Crucially, IM serves as a central mediator, bridging the relationships between ME and BD, as well as SI and BD. While Social Identity positively influences an individual's morality, it does not directly impact the decision to boycott. These findings highlight that moral conviction is the primary mechanism through which media narratives and social affiliations are translated into consumer activism. This study contributes to consumer behavior literature by clarifying these moral mediation processes and offers strategic insights for navigating boycott dynamics in the digital age.

KEYWORDS: Media Exposure (ME), Social Identity (SI), Individual Morality (IM), Boycott Decision (BD).

1. Introduction

Information has fundamentally transformed the relationship between consumers and brands. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of products and services; instead, they increasingly perceive themselves as social and political actors who express moral values, collective identities, and ideological positions through their consumption choices. Within this context, boycotting has emerged as a salient form of civic participation, where individuals deliberately withdraw from consumption as a means of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure on corporations perceived to violate ethical, political, or humanitarian norms (Wang & Zhou, 2025). Consequently, consumer decisions are no longer driven solely by functional considerations such as product quality or price competitiveness, but also by evaluations of corporate values, social responsibility, and political alignment.

Global brands are particularly vulnerable to boycott movements because of their high visibility and symbolic power. Starbucks, as one of the world's most prominent coffeehouse chains, has repeatedly become the target of consumer boycotts across different sociopolitical contexts. In Indonesia, boycott calls directed at Starbucks have been closely linked to political sentiment and expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian cause. These movements are largely amplified through social media platforms, which function as primary channels for disseminating narratives, framing moral arguments, and mobilizing collective action (Etter & Albu, 2021). Media narratives that associate a company with controversial political or humanitarian issues can significantly reshape public perception and encourage coordinated non-consumption behaviors.

Media exposure (ME) plays a crucial role in shaping how consumers perceive and interpret these issues, ultimately influencing their behavioral intentions. Through selective framing, repetition,

and emotional tone, media content can evoke moral emotions such as anger, guilt, or empathy, motivating individuals to engage in collective actions, including boycotts (Rubin et al., 2023). However, exposure to information alone does not automatically lead to action. Individuals interpret media messages through the lens of their social identity (SI), which reflects their perceived membership in social groups defined by shared values, beliefs, or causes. When an issue resonates strongly with group norms or collective identity, individuals are more likely to align their behavior with perceived group expectations, including participation in boycott movements (Hino, 2024).

In the Indonesian context, prior studies indicate that boycott behavior related to Starbucks is deeply intertwined with political sentiment and religious humanitarian solidarity, particularly concerning the Palestinian issue (Bot, 2019; Hamzah & Mustafa, 2019). These studies suggest that moral emotions triggered by value-laden media narratives and reinforced by social identity can serve as psychological mechanisms linking media exposure to boycott decisions. Recent literature further emphasizes that moral emotions and social identity often function as mediators, translating external stimuli into concrete consumer actions (Kıyak & Dora, 2025). Despite these insights, existing research tends to examine these factors in isolation or focuses primarily on Western consumer settings, resulting in a limited empirical understanding of how media exposure, social identity, and moral emotions interact simultaneously to shape boycott decisions in emerging economies, such as Indonesia.

This gap is particularly relevant given Indonesia's large Muslim population, high social media penetration, and strong tradition of collective action rooted in moral and religious values. A more integrated analytical framework is therefore needed to explain how media-driven narratives interact with social identity and moral
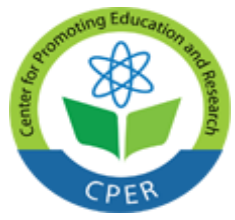
emotions to influence boycott decisions against global brands. Addressing this gap can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of ethical consumption, political consumerism, and media effects in non-Western contexts.

Accordingly, this study proposes an integrative approach that examines the relationships among media exposure, social identity, moral emotions, and boycott decisions in the case of Starbucks in Indonesia. The aims of this study are: (1) to analyze the influence of media exposure on consumers' decisions to boycott Starbucks; (2) to examine the mediating role of social identity in the relationship between media exposure and boycott decisions; (3) to explore the effects of moral emotions on boycott intention and boycott decisions; and (4) to test the mediating roles of moral emotions and social identity in shaping boycott decisions. By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to advance theoretical and empirical understanding of boycott behavior within the broader literature on ethical consumption and political participation through the marketplace.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Methodological

The study is positioned within a quantitative research design grounded in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that social phenomena—such as consumer boycott decisions can be objectively measured, analyzed, and explained through empirical data and statistical relationships. Under this paradigm, reality is treated as observable and quantifiable, allowing causal relationships among variables to be tested systematically. Accordingly, the study seeks to explain how Media Exposure (ME), Social Identity (SI), and Individual Morality (IM) influence Boycott Decisions (BD), rather than merely describing consumer attitudes.

Data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire survey with a 5-point Likert scale, which enables respondents to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with standardized statements. This approach ensures measurement consistency and facilitates statistical analysis of latent constructs. The research is explanatory in nature, aiming to test hypothesized relationships derived from theory. To analyze the data, the study employs Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM is particularly appropriate given its ability to handle complex models involving multiple latent variables, assess measurement validity and reliability, and estimate both direct and indirect (mediating) effects simultaneously. This aligns with the study's primary objective: to evaluate how ME, SI, and IM individually and collectively shape consumers' decisions to engage in boycotts.

Conceptually, the research is strengthened by the integration of three complementary theoretical assumption frameworks. First, the study adopts a statistical assumption-testing framework, which underpins the use of SEM to validate relationships between observed indicators and latent constructs, as well as to assess the strength and significance of causal paths (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022). This framework ensures methodological rigor by emphasizing reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and structural model evaluation, thereby enhancing the robustness of empirical findings.

Second, the study incorporates a framework that emphasizes the explicit clarification and testing of narrative and social assumptions, particularly those formed and transmitted through media discourse (Mirabella et al., 2025). This perspective is critical for understanding how media exposure frames moral narratives, shapes collective interpretations of corporate behavior, and influences consumers' perceptions of ethical responsibility. Within this context, ME does not merely provide information but actively constructs meanings that interact with consumers' social identities and moral judgments, ultimately affecting boycott intentions.

Third, the research draws on a framework that views assumptions as dynamic drivers of systemic and behavioral change, especially in collective actions such as consumer boycotts (Fernandes, 2020). From this perspective, boycott decisions are not static or purely individual choices; they evolve as moral evaluations, group identification, and social norms shift over time. Changes in IM and SI can therefore amplify or moderate the influence of media exposure, reflecting broader transformations in consumer consciousness and collective mobilization.

By integrating these three assumption frameworks, the study establishes a coherent conceptual and methodological foundation for examining boycott behavior. This integration enhances the study's internal validity and theoretical depth, allowing it to capture the multifaceted interaction between media narratives, social identity processes, and moral reasoning. Consequently, the research provides a comprehensive and empirically grounded explanation of how ME, SI, and IM influence boycott decisions toward the Starbucks brand, situating individual consumer responses within broader social and moral dynamics.

2.2 Population and Sampling

The population in this study consists of Starbucks consumers in Indonesia who are active on social media and possess awareness or involvement in social issues, particularly those related to the Palestinian conflict. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents based on the following criteria: active Starbucks consumers, individuals exposed to boycott- related issues through social media, and those who have either participated in or expressed an intention to boycott Starbucks products. A total of 204 respondents were selected using the Slovin formula, with a margin of error set at 7% and an estimated population size of 581,000 individuals. Accordingly, the ideal sample size was calculated as follows:

$$\eta = \frac{N}{1 + N\,(e^2)}$$

$$\eta = \frac{581.000}{1 + 581.000\,(0,07)^2} = \frac{581.000}{1 + 581.000\,(0,0049)} = \frac{581.000}{1 + 2.846,9} = \frac{581.000}{2.847,9} = 204,1$$

2.3 Data and Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM analysis. This method consists of Reliability and validity tests, which were performed first to ensure that the research instruments met the criteria for content and construct validity.

The analysis proceeded in two stages: the measurement model, which included validity and reliability testing, and the structural model, which examined the relationships among variables and the significance of mediation effects using the Sobel test. This model aims to explain both the direct and indirect relationships between Social Identity (SI) and Media Exposure (ME) toward Boycott Decision (BD), with Individual Morality (IM) serving as a mediator.

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Table 1 Sample Question

Variable	Question Indicators	Reference
Boycott Decision	I try to avoid buying Starbucks products related to Israel.	(Zejjari & Benhayoun, 2025)
	I would feel guilty if I bought Starbucks products related to Israel.	
	I would not buy Starbucks products related to Israel.	
	I do not like the idea of products related to Israel.	
	If two products have the same quality, and only one is related to Israel and the other is not, I am willing to pay 10% more for products not related to Israel.	
Social Identity	I feel that my decision to boycott Starbucks products is greatly influenced by my relationships with friends in virtual community through social media.	(Elsayed, 2021)
	I follow actions of boycotting Starbucks products taken by my friends on social media.	
	I tend to choose friends I meet on social media because I don't need to meet them directly.	
	Thoughts and beliefs about boycotting Starbucks products, and my lifestyle are influenced by my friends' views on social media.	
	I seek help from my friends on Facebook and Instagram in determining boycott decisions on Starbucks products.	
	A family member's social media account is something that affects me, and in fact I do not fully agree with it.	
	Satisfaction of virtual friends toward myself makes me comfortable taking boycott action on Starbucks products through social media.	
	I firmly hold the idea that the decision to boycott Starbucks products is a way to connect with people through social media.	
	I trust the views of my friends on social media about the decision to boycott Starbucks products.	
Media Exposure	The media provides meaning related to my social relationships with others via acceptance and interaction that influences my boycott decisions.	(Nuzulmia, 2024)
	I often spend time watching boycott campaign content on Starbucks products on social media.	
	In my opinion, the boycott campaign on Starbucks products provides information personalized to my needs.	
	I sometimes leave comments on boycott campaign content on Starbucks products on social media.	
	I exchange information with other users through comment columns on social media.	
Individual Moral	If I buy Starbucks products, people will assume I support Israel.	(Nilnal Muna et al., 2025)
	My friends believe that I do not buy Starbucks products.	
	People nearby say that I am not buying Starbucks products.	
	People around me encourage me to avoid buying Starbucks products.	

3. Result

3.1 Demographic Result

Based on the demographic data of the respondents, it was found that the majority were male, accounting for 60%, while female respondents made up the remaining 40%. In terms of age distribution, most respondents fell within the 17–22 age group (40%), followed by those aged 23–28 (30%), 29–34 (20%), and the remaining 10% were aged 35–39. There were no respondents over the age of 40. With regard to educational background, the majority of respondents were high school graduates or equivalent, comprising 60%, followed by bachelor's degree holders (30%), and master's degree holders (10%). There were no respondents with only primary education or those who had attained a doctoral degree. In terms of religion, 90% of respondents identified as Muslim, while the remaining 10% were Christian. No respondents identified as Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, or Confucian. Concerning Starbucks consumption habits, 65% of respondents reported having consumed Starbucks products, while 35% stated they had never done so.

Regarding social media usage, respondents were evenly distributed across three main platforms: Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, each with 30%. The remaining respondents used Facebook and Twitter, each at 5%. The boycott-related content encountered by respondents predominantly originated from TikTok (45%), followed by Instagram and YouTube (20% each), Facebook (10%), and Twitter (5%). These findings indicate that TikTok is the most influential platform in disseminating boycott-related issues among the respondents.

In addition, the demographic and media usage profile of the respondents suggests that the boycott phenomenon is predominantly driven by young, digitally active consumers, particularly those within the 17–28 age range who are highly engaged with visual and short-form social media content. This age group is generally characterized by higher exposure to socio-political discourse online, stronger emotional responsiveness to moral narratives, and a greater tendency to translate online information into symbolic actions such as boycotts. The dominance of Muslim respondents further contextualizes the findings, as religious and humanitarian values are likely to intensify moral sensitivity toward issues related to Palestine, thereby reinforcing boycott motivations. Moreover, the fact that a substantial proportion of respondents had previously consumed Starbucks products indicates that the boycott is not merely driven by non-users, but also involves consumers who consciously reconsider their consumption behavior due to ethical and political considerations. The central role of TikTok in disseminating boycott-related content highlights the importance of algorithm-driven platforms in amplifying emotionally charged narratives and accelerating collective responses, underscoring the relevance of media exposure as a critical antecedent of boycott decisions in this study.

3.2 Convergent Validity

Table 2: Convergent Validity Result

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Result
Boycott Decision	Y.1	0,774	Valid
Boycott Decision	Y.2	0,759	Valid
Boycott Decision	Y.3	0,766	Valid
Boycott Decision	Y.4	0,709	Valid
Boycott Decision	Y.5	0,757	Valid
Individual Morality	Z.1	0,884	Valid
Individual Morality	Z.2	0,895	Valid
Individual Morality	Z.3	0,948	Valid
Individual Morality	Z.4	0,897	Valid
Media Exposure	X2.1	0,789	Valid
Media Exposure	X2.2	0,73	Valid
Media Exposure	X2.3	0,845	Valid
Media Exposure	X2.4	0,787	Valid
Media Exposure	X2.5	0,838	Valid
Social Identity	X1.1	0,873	Valid
Social Identity	X1.2	0,818	Valid
Social Identity	X1.3	0,695	Valid
Social Identity	X1.4	0,791	Valid
Social Identity	X1.5	0,79	Valid
Social Identity	X1.6	0,693	Valid
Social Identity	X1.7	0,702	Valid
Social Identity	X1.8	0,827	Valid
Social Identity	X1.9	0,864	Valid
Social Identity	X1.10	0,862	Valid

The test of convergent validity can be seen from the value of the loading factor in the outer model of each research indicator that has been tested. The measurement scale of the loading value is > 0.6, which can be said to be valid or acceptable. Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that the value of outer loading is calculated for each variable > from 0.6, so that all question items used to measure the variables Social Identity, Media Exposure, Individual Moral, Boycott Decision, are declared valid and can be used for research.

Table 3 Average Variance Extracted

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Result
Boycott Decision	0,568	Valid
Individual Morality	0,821	Valid
Media Exposure	0,638	Valid
Social Identity	0,631	Valid

Also, a variable is said to be valid if the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each variable is > 0.50. The table below shows that all variables have an AVE value > 0.5, which means they meet the criteria.

3.3 reliability test

Reliability can be tested by implementing Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of the constructs were all well above the recommended levels of 0.70, which indicates that the model is internally reliable.

Table 4: Reliability Test Results

Variable	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Cronbach's alpha	Result
Boycott Decision	0,868	0,817	Reliable
Individual Morality	0,948	0,928	Reliable
Media Exposure	0,898	0,858	Reliable
Social Identity	0,944	0,934	Reliable

As presented in Table 4, all constructs demonstrate reliability values well above the recommended threshold. The Boycott Decision variable shows a Composite Reliability of 0.868 and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.817, indicating strong internal consistency among its indicators in capturing respondents' boycott-related behavior. The Individual Morality construct exhibits exceptionally high reliability, with a Composite Reliability of 0.948 and a Cronbach's Alpha of

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0.928, reflecting a very high degree of consistency in how moral considerations are measured across items. Similarly, Media Exposure achieves a Composite Reliability of 0.898 and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.858, suggesting that the indicators reliably represent respondents' exposure to boycott-related information through various media channels. The Social Identity construct also demonstrates excellent reliability, with Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.944 and 0.934, respectively, indicating that the items consistently capture respondents' sense of group identification and collective belonging.

Overall, the reliability test results confirm that all variables in this study meet and exceed the minimum reliability standards. This indicates that the measurement instruments used are stable, consistent, and dependable for further analysis. Consequently, all indicators are deemed appropriate for inclusion in the research model, and the data are considered suitable for subsequent validity testing and structural model evaluation.

3.4 Inner Model
3.4.1 R-Square Adjusted

Before conducting hypothesis testing, it is necessary to ensure that the developed model is a good fit. An evaluation can be performed to ensure that a model is a good fit by looking at the path coefficient value or the R^2 value. Evaluation of the inner model will begin by testing the R-squared value for each dependent (endogenous) variable. Changes from the R-square value can be used to see whether the independent variable has a substantive effect.

Table 5 Coefficient Determination (R2)

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Strength
Boycott Decision	0,807	0,804	Strong
Individual Morality	0,409	0,403	Moderate

Changes from the R-square value can be used to see whether the independent variable has a substantive effect. Results of $R^2 >= 0.67$ indicate that the model is strong, $R^2 >= 0.33$ indicates that the model is moderate, and $R^2 = 0.19$ indicates the model is weak. From the table above, it can be concluded that the model predicts 80.4% of the variance in Boycott Decision and 40.3% of the variance in Individual Morality. It means that the independent variable is able to explain 80.4% of the Boycott Decision, while the remainder is influenced by other variables outside the model. Then, the independent variable is able to explain 40.3% of the Individual Morality, while the remainder is influenced by other variables outside the model.

3.4.2 F Square (f2)

Variables can be determined by looking at the Effect Size or F-squared value. The f-squared value of 0.02 is small, 0.15 is medium, and 0.35 is large. Values less than 0.02 can be ignored or considered as having no effect (J. F. Hair et al., 2021).

From the table below, it can be concluded that the effect size (f2) of Media Exposure in relation to Boycott Decision suggests a large effect size at the structural level. Meanwhile, there is no effect of Social Identiy to Boycott Decision. And for the constructs of Individual Morality towards Boycott Decision and Social Identity towards Individual Morality, both have small effect sizes.

Table 6 Effect Size (f-square)

Construct	f2	Effect Size
IM -> BD	0,122	Small
ME -> BD	0,426	Large
ME -> IM	0,296	Medium
SI -> BD	0,016	No effect
SI -> IM	0,026	Small

3.4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis in this study was tested by looking at the coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value. In this study, there are direct and indirect effects because there are independent variables, dependent variables, and mediating variables.
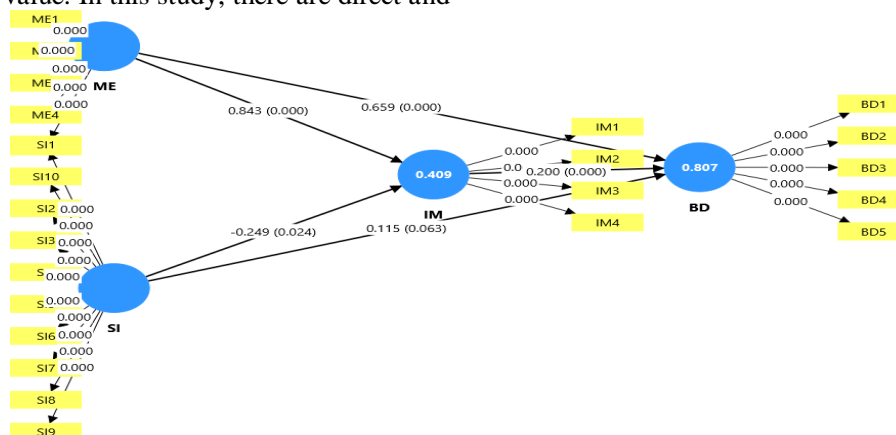

Figure 1 Structural Model

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The image above shows the coefficient values and hypothesis test results for each variable. The explanation of the hypothesis test is shown in the following table:

Table 7 Structural Model Result

Hypothesized Relationship	Proposed Effect	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P-value	Results
IM -> BD	Positive	0,200	4,546	0,000	H5 Supported
ME -> BD	Positive	0,659	8,778	0,000	H2 Supported
ME -> IM	Positive	0,843	7,649	0,000	H1 Supported
SI -> BD	Positive	0,115	1,856	0,063	H4 Not Supported
SI -> IM	Negative	-0,249	2,264	0,024	H3 Supported

After testing the goodness of fit, the hypothesis test was held to analyze the value obtained in determining whether the hypotheses are accepted or not accepted. The hypothesis testing is conducted by assessing the P-value, T-value, and the coefficient value. The Hypotheses are accepted if the t-value$\geq$ 1.96 for positive effects or t-value $\leq$ -1.96 for adverse effects. The P-value with a threshold of less than 5% also determines the significance of each relationship studied.

The result found that Individual Morality had a significant and positively influences on Boycott Decision (p-value: 0,000<0,05). Media Exposure had a significant and positively influences on the Boycott Decision (p-value: 0,000< 0,05). Media Exposure had a significant and positively influences on Individual Morality (p-value: 0,000<0,05). Social Identity had not significantly influences on Boycott Decision (p-value: 0,063>0,05). Social Identity had a significant and negatively influences on Individual Morality (p-value: 0,024 < 0,05).

Table 8 Results of the Indirect Effect

	Indirect Effect	T Statistics	P Values	Result
ME -> IM -> BD	0,168	3,764	0,000	H6 Supported
SI -> IM -> BD	-0,050	2,100	0,036	H7 Supported

Based on the table above, Media Exposure has a positive effect on Boycott Decision mediated by Individual Morality (p-value: 0.000 < 0.05). Social Identity has a positive effect on Boycott Decision mediated by Individual Morality (p-value: 0.036 < 0.05).

3.4.3.1 Hypothesis 1

It is proposed that Media Exposure (X1) has a positive effect on Individual Morality (Y). The significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05), which means it has a positive and significant effect. Therefore, H1 is accepted.

3.4.3.2 Hypothesis 2

It is proposed that Social Identity (X2) has a positive effect on Individual Morality (Y). The significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05), which means it has a positive and significant effect. Therefore, H2 is accepted.

3.4.3.3 Hypothesis 3

It is proposed that Media Exposure (X1) has a positive effect on Boycott Decision (Z). The significance level of 0.024 (< 0.05), which means it has a positive and significant effect. Therefore, H3 is accepted.

3.4.3.4 Hypothesis 4

It is proposed that Social Identity (X2) has no positive effect on Boycott Decision (Z). The analysis results show a coefficient value of -0.115 and a significance level of 0.063 (> 0.05), which means it does not have a significant effect. Therefore, H4 is rejected.

3.4.3.5 Hypothesis 5

It is proposed that Individual Morality (Y) has a positive effect on Boycott Decision (Z). The analysis results show a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05), which means it has a positive and significant effect. Therefore, H5 is accepted.

3.4.3.6 Hypothesis 6

It is proposed that Individual Morality (Y) mediates the effect of Media Exposure (X1) on Boycott Decision (Z). The analysis results show a significance level of 0.000 < 0.05. These results indicate that Individual Morality is a significant mediating variable in the relationship between Media Exposure and Boycott Decision. Therefore, H6 is accepted.

3.4.3.7 Hypothesis 7

It is proposed that Individual Morality (Y) mediates the effect of Social Identity (X2) on Boycott Decision (Z). The analysis results show a significance level significance level of significance level of 0.036 < 0.05. These results indicate that Individual Morality is a significant mediating variable in the relationship between Social Identity and Boycott Decision. Therefore, H7 is accepted.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Impact of Media Exposure (ME) on Individual Morality (IM)

The results of Hypothesis 1 testing indicate that Media Exposure (ME) has a positive and statistically significant effect on Individual Morality (IM), as evidenced by a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 significance threshold. This finding demonstrates that increased exposure to boycott-related media content significantly enhances individuals' moral awareness, ethical sensitivity, and evaluative judgments regarding social and humanitarian issues. Media platforms function not merely as sources of information but as moralizing agents that frame events in ethical terms, highlight

perceived injustices, and assign responsibility to corporate actors, thereby shaping how individuals morally interpret the issue at hand.

From a theoretical perspective, repeated exposure to morally charged narratives can activate cognitive and emotional processes that strengthen moral reflection and value-based reasoning. Media messages that emphasize themes such as injustice, solidarity, and moral responsibility encourage individuals to reassess their personal values and align them with broader ethical standards. This mechanism is particularly salient in boycott contexts, where media framing often links consumption choices to moral accountability, transforming individual morality into a socially meaningful construct. The findings of this study are consistent with the work of Fauzi et al. (2023), who argue that media exposure plays a central role in cultivating moral emotions and ethical awareness, which subsequently influence individuals' intentions to engage in socially responsible behavior.

4.2 The Impact of Media Exposure (ME) and Social Identity (SI) on Boycott Decisions (BD)

The results of Hypothesis 2 reveal that Media Exposure (ME) has a positive and significant effect on Boycott Decision (BD), with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This finding indicates that media exposure directly influences consumers' willingness to participate in boycott actions, beyond its indirect role in shaping moral awareness. Media not only informs consumers about controversial issues involving corporations but also mobilizes them by presenting boycotting as a legitimate, collective, and morally justified form of action.

Media coverage often constructs boycott participation as a socially endorsed response to ethical violations, thereby lowering psychological barriers to non-consumption behavior. By repeatedly highlighting narratives of corporate responsibility, social injustice, and collective resistance, media exposure strengthens consumers' perception that boycotting is both meaningful and impactful. This aligns with Zembylas (2024), who emphasizes that media play a critical role in emotional mobilization and collective action by transforming individual concerns into shared moral imperatives within social movements (Zembylas, 2024).

Furthermore, the influence of media exposure on boycott decisions is closely intertwined with Social Identity (SI). Media narratives frequently appeal to group-based identities such as religious affiliation, national solidarity, or humanitarian commitment, thereby reinforcing a sense of "we" versus "they." When individuals identify strongly with a group that collectively endorses a boycott, they are more likely to conform to group norms and expectations by engaging in boycott behavior. Social identity thus acts as a reinforcing mechanism that amplifies the impact of media exposure on boycott decisions, making the action not merely an individual choice but a collective moral expression.

4.3 The Influence of Social Identity (SI) on Individual Morality (IM)

The results of Hypothesis 3 indicate that Social Identity (SI) has a significant but negative influence on Individual Morality (IM), as shown by a p-value of 0.024, which is below the 0.05 significance level. This finding suggests that a stronger identification with a social group is associated with a reduction in the salience of individual moral judgment. In other words, individuals who strongly align themselves with collective identities

may rely more on group norms and shared positions rather than engaging in autonomous moral reasoning. As a result, moral evaluations become increasingly externalized and guided by collective narratives, potentially diminishing personal moral reflection.

This outcome challenges the dominant perspective in social identity theory, which generally posits that strong group identification enhances moral engagement by aligning individual behavior with group-based ethical norms. Brady (2025), for instance, argues that social identity strengthens moral emotions and ethical sensitivity when group values emphasize justice and prosocial behavior (Brady & Van Bavel, 2025). However, the negative relationship identified in this study suggests that social identity does not uniformly enhance individual morality; instead, its influence may depend on the nature of the group, the homogeneity of its moral discourse, and the degree to which moral reasoning is delegated to collective authority.

4.4 The Impact of Social Identity (SI) on Boycott Decisions (BD)

The testing of Hypothesis 4 indicates that Social Identity (SI) does not have a statistically significant direct effect on Boycott Decisions (BD), as evidenced by a p-value of 0.492, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold. This finding suggests that social identity alone is insufficient to directly motivate individuals to participate in boycott actions within the context of this study. Although individuals may strongly identify with certain social or ideological groups, such identification does not automatically translate into concrete boycott behavior.

This result contrasts with some prior studies that highlight social identity as a direct determinant of collective action, including consumer boycotts. However, it aligns with more recent research suggesting that social identity often exerts its influence indirectly, operating through intermediary psychological mechanisms such as moral emotions, perceived injustice, or behavioral intentions. Wahyuni (2024) emphasizes that social identity becomes behaviorally consequential primarily when it activates emotional or moral motivations that legitimize and sustain action (Wahyuni et al., 2024).

In the context of this study, social identity may function as a latent or background factor that shapes how individuals interpret media narratives and experience moral emotions, rather than acting as an independent trigger of boycott behavior. This interpretation is consistent with the broader findings of this research, which indicate that boycott decisions are the result of complex interactions among media exposure, individual morality, and emotional responses. Consequently, the non-significant direct effect of SI on BD reinforces the importance of incorporating mediating variables into the analytical model, as social identity appears to influence boycott behavior only when channeled through moral or emotional processes.

4.5 The Influence of Individual Morality (IM) on Boycott Decisions (BD)

The results of Hypothesis 5 confirm that Individual Morality (IM) has a positive and statistically significant effect on Boycott Decisions (BD), as indicated by a p-value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 significance level. This finding demonstrates that individuals with stronger moral awareness and ethical

sensitivity are more likely to translate their moral evaluations into concrete boycott actions. Moral considerations thus function as a central psychological driver that transforms ethical judgments into behavioral outcomes.

From a behavioral perspective, moral emotions such as empathy toward affected groups, anger toward perceived injustice, and guilt associated with continued consumption of ethically contested products play a decisive role in motivating boycott participation. These emotions heighten the perceived moral cost of consumption and reframe non-consumption as an ethically responsible choice. This process aligns with moral decision-making theories, which emphasize that behavior is not solely guided by rational evaluation but is strongly influenced by affective moral responses that compel individuals to act in accordance with their values.

The findings of this study are consistent with Fauzi et al. (2024), who identified moral factors as key determinants of boycott involvement, particularly in contexts where consumption decisions are closely linked to humanitarian or political issues. When individuals perceive a misalignment between their personal moral standards and a company's actions or perceived affiliations, boycotting becomes a symbolic act of moral expression. Therefore, individual morality not only shapes attitudes but also serves as a direct and powerful predictor of boycott behavior.

4.6 Individual Morality (IM) as a Mediator between Media Exposure (ME) and Boycott Decisions (BD)

The testing of Hypothesis 6 reveals that Individual Morality (IM) significantly mediates the relationship between Media Exposure (ME) and Boycott Decisions (BD), as evidenced by a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates that media exposure does not influence boycott behavior in a purely direct manner; instead, its effect is channeled through the activation of individuals' moral considerations. Media content functions as a catalyst that frames issues in moral terms, prompting individuals to evaluate corporate actions through ethical lenses before deciding to engage in boycott behavior.

This mediating effect highlights the critical mechanism by which media narratives shape consumer action. Media exposure increases awareness of social, political, or humanitarian issues and assigns moral meaning to them by emphasizing themes of injustice, responsibility, and solidarity. Through this process, media messages stimulate moral reflection and emotional engagement, which subsequently motivate boycott decisions. This finding is consistent with Zembylas (2024), who argues that moral emotions serve as essential intermediaries in media-driven social campaigns, bridging the gap between information dissemination and collective action (Zembylas, 2024).

4.7 Social Identity (SI) Indirectly Influences Boycott Decisions (BD) through Individual Morality (IM)

The results of Hypothesis 7 confirm that Individual Morality (IM) positively and significantly mediates the relationship between Social Identity (SI) and Boycott Decisions (BD), as indicated by a p-value of 0.036, which is below the 0.05 significance threshold. This finding demonstrates that although Social Identity does not exert a direct influence on boycott behavior, it plays an important indirect role by shaping individuals' moral evaluations and emotional responses, which subsequently drive

boycott participation. In this sense, social identity acts as a contextual foundation that informs moral interpretation rather than functioning as an immediate behavioral trigger.

This result provides an important clarification of the role of social identity in ethical consumption and political consumerism. Strong identification with a social or ideological group can intensify moral sensitivity by reinforcing shared values, collective narratives, and norms related to justice, responsibility, and solidarity. These group-based values are internalized at the individual level through moral cognition and emotional engagement, such as empathy toward affected groups or moral outrage toward perceived wrongdoing. Once activated, these moral responses increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in boycott behavior as a form of ethical expression and group-aligned action.

The findings are consistent with Sari and Games (2024), who emphasize that social identity influences consumer behavior primarily through moral and emotional pathways rather than through direct behavioral enforcement (Sari & Games, 2024). This mediation effect explains why social identity alone may be insufficient to predict boycott decisions, as observed in Hypothesis 4, but becomes influential when it fosters moral emotions that legitimize and motivate action. Thus, individual morality serves as a crucial psychological mechanism that translates abstract group identification into concrete behavioral outcomes.

5. Conclusion

The hypothesis testing in this study leads to the following conclusions:

Media Exposure (ME) significantly influences individuals' Individual Morality (IM). Frequent and intense exposure to media content related to boycotts, ethical violations, or corporate misconduct effectively raises moral awareness and evokes emotional responses such as anger, empathy, and guilt. Media plays a vital role not only in conveying information but also in shaping profound moral emotions in response to social and ethical issues.

ME is also found to directly and positively influence Boycott Decision (BD). Exposure to media messages highlighting unethical or controversial corporate behavior motivates consumers to reject products as a form of moral and political protest. Thus, the media functions as a powerful agent in mobilizing collective actions and shaping consumer boycott behavior.

Social Identity (SI) has a negative effect on the emergence of Individual Morality. Individuals with strong social group attachments are having lower sensitive to moral and injustice issues. This means that the stronger a person's sense of social attachment, the smaller the role of personal morality in determining their attitudes and actions.

However, SI does not have a direct significant effect on the Boycott Decision but influences BD indirectly through Individual Morality. Individuals who strongly identify with social groups evoke moral emotions regarding issues impacting their group, and these emotions subsequently drive boycott actions. This highlights the crucial mediating role of IM as the pathway linking social identity to boycott behavior.

Individual Morality (IM) is proven to be a primary and significant factor influencing the Boycott Decision. Moral emotions act as strong motivators beyond personal interest, whereby boycott participation becomes an expression of ethical values and solidarity.

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IM also functions as a key mediator between Media Exposure and Boycott Decision, emphasizing that media influence mobilizes action primarily through evoking moral feelings.

In summary, this study confirms that media exposure and social identity shape boycott decisions largely through the moral emotions experienced by individuals. Understanding these mechanisms can help stakeholders in designing effective communication strategies for social campaigns or consumer activism.

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