

NEGOTIATING MUSLIM IDENTITY THROUGH BOYCOTT: Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in Malaysia and the Netherlands

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Abstract

This study examines how members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora negotiate their religious identity through boycott of Israel-affiliated products, comparing the contrasting settings of Muslim-majority Malaysia and Muslim-minority Netherlands. The article treats boycott not as an individual psychological disposition but as a socially and politically embedded practice through which diasporic Muslims articulate belonging, solidarity, and moral commitment. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with twenty-two diaspora members—eleven in each country—analysed comparatively and interpreted through the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a heuristic lens, the study argues that boycott functions as a repertoire of identity negotiation whose meaning is shaped by diaspora identity and host-country socio-political opportunity structures. The findings reveal a shared baseline of moral awareness regarding the Palestinian issue but sharply divergent modes of enactment. In Malaysia, boycott is institutionalized and normalized—sustained by strong social norms, institutional legitimacy, and the ready availability of alternative products—allowing Muslim identity to be expressed collectively and with little friction. In the Netherlands, boycott



is more fragmented and conditional, as a Muslim minority translates confessional commitments into universalist human-rights claims amid weaker normative support from the government and informational uncertainty. Variation, the study demonstrates, is driven not primarily by differences in religiosity but by the degree of alignment between identity, social norms, and structural conditions. The article thus offers a transnational, identity-centred account of Muslim boycott activism and shows how diasporic Islamic identity is negotiated differently across distinct socio-political ecologies.

[Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana anggota diaspora Muslim Indonesia dalam menegosiasikan identitas keagamaannya melalui boikot terhadap produk-produk yang terafiliasi dengan Israel, dengan membandingkan dua konteks yang kontras: Malaysia sebagai negara berpenduduk mayoritas Muslim dan Belanda sebagai negara dengan Muslim minoritas. Artikel ini memandang bahwa boikot bukan sebagai disposisi psikologis individual, melainkan sebagai praktik yang melekat secara sosial dan politik, yang melaluinya kaum Muslim diaspora mengartikulasikan rasa kepemilikan (belonging), solidaritas, dan komitmen moral. Berdasarkan wawancara semiterstruktur dengan dua puluh dua anggota diaspora yang dianalisis secara komparatif dan ditafsirkan melalui Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) sebagai lensa heuristik, studi ini berargumen bahwa boikot berfungsi sebagai repertoar negosiasi identitas yang maknanya dibentuk oleh identitas diaspora dan struktur peluang sosial-politik negara tujuan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya kesamaan dasar kesadaran moral terhadap isu Palestina, tetapi dengan wujud pelaksanaan yang sangat berbeda. Di Malaysia, boikot terlembagakan dan ternormalisasi—ditopang oleh norma sosial yang kuat, legitimasi institusional, dan ketersediaan produk alternatif—sehingga identitas Muslim dapat diekspresikan secara kolektif dengan hambatan yang minim. Sebaliknya, di Belanda, boikot bersifat lebih terfragmentasi dan kondisional, karena kaum Muslim minoritas harus menerjemahkan komitmen keagamaan mereka ke dalam argumen Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) yang bersifat universal. Artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa variasi tersebut tidak terutama disebabkan oleh perbedaan tingkat religiusitas, melainkan oleh derajat keselarasan antara identitas, norma sosial, dan kondisi struktural. Dengan demikian, artikel ini menawarkan penjelasan transnasional yang berpusat pada identitas mengenai aktivisme boikot kaum Muslim, sekaligus memperlihatkan bagaimana identitas keislaman diaspora dinegosiasikan secara berbeda di berbagai ekologi sosial-politik yang berlainan.]

Keywords: *Muslim Identity Negotiation, Boycott Activism, Indonesian Muslim Diaspora*

Introduction

For Muslim communities across the world, the boycott of goods associated with Israel has become one of the most visible ways of enacting religious solidarity with Palestine—a practice through which faith, moral conviction, and political grievance are expressed in the everyday sphere of consumption. Far from a purely economic gesture, the refusal to buy operates as a form of collective moral and political expression: a repertoire of nonviolent resistance that translates shared religious commitment into concrete action.¹ This repertoire assumed a more structured form during the Second Intifada in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when political grievances were increasingly channelled into deliberate market action, and it intensified dramatically after the escalation of the conflict in Gaza following October 7, 2023, which triggered a vast wave of transnational solidarity.² These events revived and substantially broadened the reach of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which targets products and companies associated with Israel as a mechanism of economic and political pressure aimed at ending the occupation of Palestinian territories.³

In the context of Indonesia as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, the boycott movement carries considerable resonance, supported by religious authorities and an extensive network of Islamic organizations. The Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI), as the highest religious authority in the country, responded to the Palestinian crisis by issuing *Fatwa* No. 83 of 2023,

¹ Dito Alif Pratama, “Revisiting the Thought of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi on the Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands,” *Mizanuna: Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah* 1, no. 2 (2023): 40–52, <https://doi.org/10.59166/mizanuna.v1i2.135>.

² Monroe Friedman, *Consumer Boycotts: Effecting Change Through the Marketplace and the Media* (Psychology Press, 1999), https://books.google.com/books/about/Consumer_Boycotts.html?id=6AcfkY9ltFYC.

³ Siti Fatimah Azzahro and Indra Indra, “Sentiment Analysis on Boycott Movement: NVivo Approach,” *IQTISHADUNA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Kita* 13, no. 2 (2024): 393–414, <https://doi.org/10.46367/iqtishaduna.v13i2.2185>.

which explicitly urged Muslims to boycott brands and companies deemed affiliated with Israel and supportive of Zionist colonialism.⁴ This *fatwa* is consistent with the position of prominent Islamic scholar Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, who asserted that boycotting Israeli products constitutes both a moral and religious obligation for Muslims worldwide.⁵ From an empirical standpoint, studies conducted in Indonesia have consistently demonstrated that the boycott intentions of Indonesian Muslims are significantly shaped by factors such as animosity toward Israel, intrinsic religious motivation, as well as the impulse toward self-enhancement and communal solidarity.⁶

What is particularly notable and distinct from the Indonesian case is the tangible impact of the boycott movement in Malaysia, where the alignment between the government's foreign policy and the religious sentiments of its society has created a highly conducive ecosystem for boycott activism. Kuala Lumpur has never extended diplomatic recognition to Israel and has consistently voiced its support for Palestine across various international forums. Organizations such as BDS Malaysia, alongside religious clerics and halal consumer activists, have further reinforced this official stance within the public sphere.⁷ Following the escalation of the Gaza conflict in October 2023, the financial repercussions of the boycott became unmistakably evident. The revenue of Starbucks Malaysia's operator, Berjaya Food Bhd, declined sharply from MYR 1,115.97 million in FY2023 to MYR 750.70 million

⁴ Pratama, "Revisiting the Thought of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi on the Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands."

⁵ Pratama, "Revisiting the Thought of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi on the Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands."

⁶ Uus Ahmad Husaeni and Mohammed Ashfaq Ayoob, "Determinants of Muslim's Intention to Boycott Israel-Affiliated Products: Evidence from Indonesia," *Jurnal Ekonomi & Keuangan Islam*, January 22, 2025, 14–28, <https://doi.org/10.20885/JEKI.vol11.iss1.art2>.

⁷ Najla Nur Fauziyah, "Anwar Ibrahim Says Malaysia Fully Supports Israel-Hamas Ceasefire," *Tempo English*, October 9, 2025, <https://en.tempo.co/read/2055760/anwar-ibrahim-says-malaysia-fully-supports-israel-hamas-ceasefire>.

in FY2024 and further to MYR 476.77 million in FY2025, reflecting a year-on-year decrease of 36.5% in FY2025, accompanied by a net loss of approximately MYR 292 million and a reduction in outlet count from roughly 408 to 320 stores. Furthermore, McDonald's Malaysia filed a lawsuit against BDS Malaysia before subsequently withdrawing it, which serves as direct evidence of the disruptive impact that the boycott movement has had on the operational performance of multinational corporations in Malaysia.⁸

In contrast to Malaysia, the situation in the Netherlands is considerably more complex. Muslims constitute only approximately six percent of the total population in the Netherlands and are largely concentrated in major urban centers within the Randstad region. Nevertheless, pro-Palestinian activism has grown substantially in the country, though it consistently operates in tension with the prevailing principles of liberal democracy. In February 2024, the Court of Appeal in The Hague issued a ruling ordering the Dutch government to cease the export of F-35 fighter jet components to Israel, establishing a significant precedent through judicial channels.⁹ In addition, the Dutch Boycott Salience Index recorded a notable surge, rising from two major boycott-related events in 2023 to six in 2024, representing a year-on-year increase of 200 percent, before moderating slightly to five events in 2025. This pattern indicates that mobilization reached its peak in 2024 yet remained at an elevated level thereafter. Unlike the Malaysian case, boycott efforts in the Netherlands have produced relatively limited impact at the point of consumer purchase and have instead generated more meaningful

⁸ Aisyah Llewellyn, *In Indonesia and Malaysia, Boycotts Hammer McDonald's, Starbucks | Israel-Palestine Conflict | Al Jazeera*, n.d., accessed December 25, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/3/20/in-indonesia-and-malaysia-boycotts-hit-mcdonalds-starbucks>.

⁹ "The Netherlands has to stop the export of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel," accessed December 25, 2025, <https://www.rechtspraak.nl/Organisatie-en-contact/Organisatie/Gerechtshoven/Gerechtshof-Den-Haag/Nieuws/Paginas/The-Netherlands-has-to-stop-the-export-of-F-35-fighter-jet-parts-to-Israel.aspx>.

outcomes through public policy channels, academic institutional pressure, and human rights advocacy.¹⁰

A comparative examination of Malaysia and the Netherlands reveals how the same repertoire of religiously grounded boycott activism can be transformed and adapted within different political opportunity structures. In Malaysia, the strong alignment between the state and society on Islamic foreign policy renders boycott participation a low-cost yet high-profile act that simultaneously expresses Muslim identity and national solidarity.¹¹ In the Netherlands, by contrast, boycott advocacy unfolds within a liberal democratic arena in which minority actors are required to translate their confessional claims into universalist arguments grounded in human rights principles, while navigating procedural and judicial scrutiny, yet retaining the potential to produce concrete policy changes through court rulings and institutional pressure.¹² This divergence in context underscores the critical importance of host country political opportunity structures in shaping both the effectiveness and the conceptualization of transnational Muslim solidarity.

Situated at the intersection of these two contrasting political ecologies, the Indonesian Muslim diaspora constitutes an intellectually productive subject of analysis.¹³ This diaspora does not merely represent a global extension of Indonesian national identity, but also manifests distinctive forms of political expression, identity formation, and consumer

¹⁰ Anthony Deutsch and Charlotte Van Campenhout, “Belgian and Dutch Students Join Gaza Protest Wave,” Europe, *Reuters*, May 6, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belgian-dutch-students-join-gaza-protest-wave-2024-05-06/>.

¹¹ Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, “Boycotts as Moral Protests in Malaysia and Singapore,” *International Sociology* 31, no. 4 (2016): 396–412, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580916643087>.

¹² Michiel Bot, “The Right to Boycott: BDS, Law, and Politics in a Global Context,” *Transnational Legal Theory* 10, nos. 3–4 (2019): 421–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20414005.2019.1672134>.

¹³ Mishbah Khoiruddin Zuhri et al., “Indonesian Muslim Diaspora: Strengthening Cognitive Aspects and Competencies Regarding Islamic Heritage in Southeast Asia,” *Dimas: Jurnal Pemikiran Agama Untuk Pemberdayaan* 23, no. 1 (2023): 173–96, <https://doi.org/10.21580/dms.2023.231.14785>.

behaviour that are directly shaped by the social, political, and religious contexts of their respective host countries.¹⁴ Indonesian Muslims who reside, study, or work in Malaysia are continuously exposed to institutional signals and market alternatives that facilitate the transformation of personal boycott intentions into habitual consumption practices.¹⁵ Meanwhile, the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in the Netherlands is compelled to articulate their position within a broader human rights framework, to forge cross-identity coalitions with non-Muslim allies, and to navigate institutional resistance emanating from multiple directions.¹⁶

Although this phenomenon carries substantial theoretical and empirical relevance, the existing academic literature remains insufficient to explain it comprehensively. A critical review of the available scholarship reveals three clusters of research that have developed in parallel yet have never been adequately synthesized within a single integrated analytical framework. The first cluster consists of studies on the boycott of Israel-affiliated products in Indonesia, which concentrate primarily on psychological determinants, brand image effects, corporate financial performance, or the dynamics of public discourse within the domestic boundaries of Indonesia.¹⁷ The second cluster encompasses research

¹⁴ Musahadi Musahadi and Akhmad Arif Junaidi, "Becoming Europeanized Muslims Religious Identity Formation among Millennials in the Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in the Netherlands," *Journal of Muslims in Europe* (Eropa) 13 no. 2 (2024): 193–214, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22117954-bja10092>.

¹⁵ Eva F. Nisa, "Transnational Halal Networks: INHART and the Islamic Cultural Economy in Malaysia and Beyond," *Global Networks* 23, no. 3 (2023): 557–69, <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12432>.

¹⁶ Ahmad Rofiq et al., "Islamophobia in the Netherlands: The Adaptation Strategy of the Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in the Netherlands in Response to the Anti-Islam Issues," *QIJS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 12 (2024): 119, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v12i1.22466>.

¹⁷ Athira Dwi Jaya et al., "Boycott Calls, Brand Image on Loyalty and Purchasing Decisions of Israel-Affiliated Products," *International Journal of Education, Management, and Technology*, ahead of print, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.58578/ijemt.v3i1.4663>; Ryan Mawendy et al., "The Impact Of Consumer Boycotts on Brand Loyalty and Market Positioning: Insights From Pro-Israel Product Boycotts in Singkawang City, Indonesia," *Al-Kharaj: Jurnal Ekonomi, Keuangan & Bisnis Syariah*, ahead of print, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.30605/al-kharaj.v3i1.12345>.

on the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in Malaysia and the Netherlands, mapping processes of identity formation, acculturation, cultural diplomacy, and responses to Islamophobia, yet without connecting these dimensions to consumer behaviour or boycott activism.¹⁸ The third cluster comprises studies grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which offer a robust psychosocial framework for understanding boycott intentions, but rely exclusively on quantitative approaches and do not account for diaspora identity dynamics, host country political contexts, or transnational experiences as formative variables.¹⁹ These three

doi.org/10.47467/alkharaj.v7i6.7441; Hasanuddin Muhammad, "The Polemic of the Boycott Movement Against Products Affiliated With Israel in Indonesia," *KnE Social Sciences*, ahead of print, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v10i8.18448>; Syarif Maula Andriansyah et al., "Analysis the Impact of Boycott Pro-Israel Products on the Financial Performance of Multinational Companies in Indonesia," *Jurnal Akutansi Manajemen Ekonomi Kewirausahaan (JAMEK)*, ahead of print, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.47065/jamek.v5i1.1671>; Dewi Suryani Sentosa and Novi Indriyani Sitepu, "Descriptive Analysis of Israeli Product Boycott Action: Between Fatwas And The Urgency Of Compliance," *International Journal of Kita Kreatif*, ahead of print, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.24815/ijkk.v1i1.37608>.

¹⁸ Dr Rizki Damayanti, *Islam, Migration, And Diaspora: Strengthening Indonesia-Malaysia Relations Through Shared Heritage In International Affairs*, 2024; Ali Maksum et al., "The Role of the Indonesian Muslim Community Identity in Strengthening Indonesia-Malaysia Relations," *MIMBAR : Jurnal Sosial Dan Pembangunan* 35, no. 2 (2019): 314–24, <https://doi.org/10.29313/mimbar.v35i2.4836>; Zuhri et al., "Indonesian Muslim Diaspora"; Arik Dwijayanto and Yusmicha Ulya Afif, *Cultural Identity Of Diasporic Javanese Muslims Ponorogo In Malaysia: Continuity And Change*, 8, no. 1 (2023); Musahadi and Arif Junaidi, "Becoming Europeanized Muslims Religious Identity Formation among Millennials in the Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in the Netherlands"; Rofiq et al., "Islamophobia in the Netherlands"; Dzuriyatun Toyibah, "Indonesian Muslim in the Netherlands: Responding to Nationalism, Islamism, Democracy, and Pluralism," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 6, no. 2 (2022): 165–80, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v6i2.19746>.

¹⁹ Md Asaduzzaman Babu et al., "Understanding the Psychology behind the Boycott of Israeli-Affiliated Brands: A TPB-Based Study in Bangladesh," *Acta Psychologica* 260 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105572>; Azzahro and Indra, "Sentiment Analysis On Boycott Movement"; Evelyn Evelyn and Laras Sekarasih, "Social Identity and Consumer Boycott Participation in Indonesia: An Extension of Theory of Planned Behavior," *Psikostudia : Jurnal Psikologi*, ahead of print, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.30872/psikostudia.v14i4.21106>; Jian Xin Li and Xiang Gong, "Determinants of Consumer Environment Boycott Behavior: Based on the Theory

clusters, namely boycott studies on Israel-affiliated products, research on the Indonesian Muslim diaspora, and the TPB framework, have thus far evolved in isolation from one another, thereby leaving a significant gap in the literature, as no existing study has simultaneously integrated all three elements within a single coherent and comparative analytical framework.

It is precisely this gap that constitutes the primary justification for why this research is both important and urgent to conduct.²⁰ Conceptually, this study brings together three domains that have hitherto developed in isolation, namely boycott studies, Muslim diaspora studies, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework, with the aim of reconceptualizing boycott intention not merely as an individual psychological construct, but as a moral and political practice embedded within diaspora identity, host country contexts, and transnational spaces.²¹ In other words, this study argues that boycott behaviour cannot be fully understood without considering how diasporic Islamic identity is negotiated within two fundamentally distinct socio-political ecologies. The fact that Indonesian Muslims in two different countries, sharing the same cultural capital yet operating under divergent political opportunity structures, are likely to exhibit qualitatively different patterns of boycott intention represents an intellectual paradox that is highly worthy of in-depth exploration.

To address the research questions formulated hereafter, this study employs a qualitative comparative approach grounded in the Theory

of Planned Behavior,” *Advanced Materials Research* 807–809 (2013): 923–26, <https://doi.org/10.4028/www.scientific.net/amr.807-809.923>; Dr Maya F. Farah, *Understanding and Predicting Consumers’ Boycott Participation: An Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior*, 2007, <https://consensus.app/papers/understanding-and-predicting-consumers-%E2%80%99-boycott-farah/2e39e3897ec65addbb334a8fd3536c90/>; Leni Susanti et al., “The Prominent Of Local Products Following Boycott Calls,” *International Journal of Business and Quality Research* 2, no. 03 (2024): 191–207, <https://doi.org/10.63922/ijbqr.v2i03.1012>.

²⁰ Antonia Delistavrou, “Theory of Planned Behaviour and Boycotting: The Moderating Role of Socio-Political Control and Demographics,” *EuroMed Journal of Business* 17, no. 2 (2021): 270–87, <https://doi.org/10.1108/EMJB-02-2021-0020>.

²¹ Babu et al., “Understanding the Psychology behind the Boycott of Israeli-Affiliated Brands.”

of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which assumes that human behaviour is determined by intention, and that intention is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.²² Methodologically, this study integrates two data collection strategies. The first involves a comprehensive literature review examining academic monographs, selected journal articles, policy reports, and historical-political documents pertaining to pro-Palestinian consumer activism in Malaysia and the Netherlands. The second involves semi-structured interviews with members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora selected through purposive sampling, with a total of 22 participants; 11 people each from both Malaysia and the Netherlands, conducted predominantly through online interviews via zoom platform. Themes emerging from both contexts are then analysed comparatively through a constant comparative analysis process, before being further interpreted using Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in order to capture the ideological and moral depth inherent in diaspora boycott practices.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the study pursues three interrelated objectives that structure the analysis. The first is to examine how members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora negotiate boycott as an expression of religious identity and transnational solidarity in each host country, Malaysia and the Netherlands. The second is to explain the divergence between the two settings by analysing how Malaysia and the Netherlands socio-political contexts mediate the relationship between

²² Icek Ajzen, "The Theory of Planned Behavior," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Theories of Cognitive Self-Regulation, vol. 50, no. 2 (1991): 179–211, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T); Icek Ajzen, "Attitudes, Traits, and Actions: Dispositional Prediction of Behavior in Personality and Social Psychology," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 20 (Academic Press, 1987), [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60411-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60411-6); Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, "The Prediction of Behavioral Intentions in a Choice Situation," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 5, no. 4 (1969): 400–416, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031\(69\)90033-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(69)90033-X); Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, "The Prediction of Behavior from Attitudinal and Normative Variables," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 6, no. 4 (1970): 466–87, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031\(70\)90057-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(70)90057-0). 1985, Ajzen, 1987

diaspora identity and boycott activism. The third is to reconsider what the comparison contributes theoretically—namely, that variation in boycott activism is driven less by differences in religiosity than by the degree of alignment between identity, social norms, and structural conditions, and that the Theory of Planned Behaviour is most productively used here as an interpretive lens embedded within a transnational, identity-centred framework.

Drawing from the identification of the literature gap and the arguments outlined above, this study formulates a main research question that serve as the guiding framework for analysis. This research question asks whether differences exist in boycott intentions toward Israel-affiliated products between the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in Malaysia as a Muslim-majority country and in the Netherlands as a Muslim-minority country, and what factors contribute to such differences. All in all, this question positions this study at the intersection of consumer activism studies, diaspora studies, and transnational Islamic studies, a dimension that has thus far been absent from the existing literature and one that renders this study an original contribution to the advancement of knowledge across these fields.

Boycott as a Negotiated Practice: A Case in Malaysia and the Netherlands

The term “boycott” traces its historical origins to nineteenth-century Ireland, when tenant farmers and local traders in County Mayo collectively refused to engage in any commercial or social dealings with Captain Charles C. Boycott, a land agent acting on behalf of an absentee landlord. This act of coordinated non-cooperation not only compelled Boycott to abandon his post but also introduced a new term into the English lexicon, one that subsequently permeated global political and economic discourse. When consumers choose to cease purchasing certain products, withdraw patronage from particular services, or suspend

transactions with targeted suppliers, they engage in a deliberate act of market-based resistance against conduct they regard as morally, politically, or socially unacceptable. From a definitional standpoint, a boycott may be understood as an organized effort by one or more parties to achieve specific objectives by urging individual consumers to refrain from making certain purchases in the marketplace.²³ The Indonesian national dictionary, Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), defines *boikot* as a collective refusal to cooperate in trade, communication, or participation, signifying a deliberate decision by individuals or groups to disengage from, or withhold support for, a particular entity, product, or service.²⁴ Such disengagement may take the form of refusing to purchase goods or services, abstaining from participation in specific activities, or severing relations with designated individuals or organizations.

Moreover, the concept of intention in the context of consumer boycotts has remained a subject of sustained academic debate, resisting reduction to any single, universally accepted formulation. While the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) conceptualizes intention as a proximal predictor of behaviour—shaped by the individual’s attitude toward the act, the subjective norms perceived from significant others, and the individual’s sense of behavioural control—scholarship on political consumerism suggests that intention in this domain is considerably more fluid, multi-layered, and context-dependent than this framework implies.²⁵ In boycott studies specifically, intention cannot be reduced to

²³ Leni Susanti et al., “The Prominent of Local Products Following Boycott Calls,” *International Journal of Business and Quality Research* 2, no. 3 (2024): 191-207, <https://doi.org/10.63922/ijbqr.v2i03.1012>; see also Monroe Friedman, *Consumer Boycotts: Effecting Change Through the Marketplace and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 3.

²⁴ “Pencarian - KBBI VI Daring,” accessed December 24, 2025, <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>.

²⁵ Michele Micheletti, *Political Virtue and Shopping: Individuals, Consumerism, and Collective Action* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Dietlind Stolle, Marc Hooghe, and Michele Micheletti, “Politics in the Supermarket: Political Consumerism as a Form of Political Participation,” *International Political Science Review* 26, no. 3 (2005): 245–269,

a simple expression of willingness to act; rather, it reflects a complex and ongoing negotiation between moral conviction, social environment, and structural feasibility.²⁶ This analytical ambiguity becomes particularly salient in diasporic settings, where individuals navigate across differentially configured socio-political contexts that continuously reshape both the meaning and the enactment of moral intent, demanding that boycott intention be understood as a socially constituted rather than a purely cognitive phenomenon.²⁷

Across both Malaysia and the Netherlands, respondents in this study consistently framed boycott as a morally charged act fundamentally tied to the expression of solidarity with Palestine. However, what differs most consequentially between the two contexts is not the moral recognition of the issue per se, but the degree to which that recognition is translatable into concrete everyday action. In Malaysia, boycott is articulated as an extension of everyday ethical life—a normalized and socially expected practice seamlessly embedded within routine consumption decisions and communal forms of interaction. In the Netherlands, by contrast, boycott is refracted through multiple layers of pragmatic constraint, structural limitation, and ongoing social negotiation, resulting in a more conditional, selective, and uneven expression of intention. This divergence underscores a critical theoretical insight: that intention is not merely a cognitive disposition reflecting agreement with a moral cause, but a situated capacity to act that is profoundly circumscribed by the broader social and structural environment in which the individual operates.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512105053784>.

²⁶ Jill G. Klein, N. Craig Smith, and Andrew John, “Why We Boycott: Consumer Motivations for Boycott Participation,” *Journal of Marketing* 68, no. 3 (2004): 92–109, <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.3.92.34764>; Sankar Sen, Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, and Vicki Morwitz, “Withholding Consumption: A Social Dilemma Perspective on Consumer Boycotts,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 28, no. 3 (2001): 399–417, <https://doi.org/10.1086/323722>.

²⁷ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222–237; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Empirically, diaspora members in Malaysia tend to define boycott intention as a form of morally grounded and socially reinforced commitment that extends naturally into everyday practice. One respondent, Indah (41 years), for instance, characterized boycott as “the smallest but most real action” she can take as a diaspora Muslim—a formulation that illustrates a seamless and largely unambiguous alignment between ethical belief and consumer behaviour. This reflects a strongly positive attitudinal orientation in which Israel-affiliated products are consistently evaluated through a moral framework.

Similarly, Tasya (23 years) described boycott as an everyday expression of solidarity, whereby routine consumer decisions—such as the selection of food or household goods—become meaningful sites of ethical engagement and collective identity formation. Tasya’s account further highlights the centrality of subjective norms, as individual practices are continuously reinforced through peer networks and institutional messaging within campus environments—channels that function as primary agents of normative socialization.

A third respondent, Salman (32 years), illustrates how perceived behavioural control is substantially enhanced by the ready availability of alternative products and by the normative pull of collective participation, both of which serve to reduce the practical and psychological barriers to consistent engagement. Salman noted that commonly consumed products had been progressively replaced by locally produced substitutes, rendering boycott simultaneously feasible, socially supported, and practically convenient. Collectively, these accounts indicate that in Malaysia, boycott intention emerges as a highly coherent construct in which moral evaluation, social expectation, and structural facilitation converge to produce consistent and predictable behavioural outcomes.

By contrast, diaspora members in the Netherlands articulate boycott intention in a markedly more fragmented and reflexive manner. While moral concern for the Palestinian cause remains sincerely present,

it is systematically mediated by a set of competing considerations that complicate its practical enactment. One respondent, Tris (33 years), framed boycott as an integral component of his Islamic and humanitarian identity, thereby indicating a strong attitudinal foundation. However, Tris simultaneously acknowledged the difficulty of expressing or practicing boycott openly within his professional and social environment—a constraint that reflects structurally weaker and normatively less supportive subjective norms. As a consequence, his boycott intention assumes a more private, selective, and situationally contingent form. A related concern was articulated by Hakim (52 years), who, despite expressing agreement with the moral principle underlying boycott, acknowledged that his participation is governed more by shifting community dynamics than by robust personal conviction, and who expressed significant uncertainty regarding the identification of products warranting avoidance. This reflects limitations not only in normative reinforcement but also in informational clarity—both of which operate to weaken the strength and internal consistency of intention.²⁸

An additional analytical dimension is introduced by an anonymized academic respondent, whose account provides a critically reflexive perspective on the concept of boycott intention. While acknowledging its moral appeal as a form of political expression, she simultaneously raises substantive questions regarding its practical efficacy and systemic effectiveness—particularly in contexts such as healthcare, where consumer choice is structurally constrained. Her position implies that intention is not determined solely by moral agreement, but also by a rational evaluation of the likely feasibility and probable impact of the proposed action.²⁹ In this sense, perceived behavioural control extends

²⁸ Mohamed Farid Farah and Andrew J. Newman, “Exploring Consumer Boycott Intelligence Using a Socio-Cognitive Approach,” *Journal of Business Research* 63, no. 4 (2010): 347–355, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.03.019>.

²⁹ Ismail Abosag and Mohamed Farid Farah, “The Influence of Religiously Motivated Consumer Boycotts on Brand Image, Loyalty and Product Judgment,” *European Journal of Marketing* 48, no. 11/12 (2014): 2262–2283, <https://doi.org/10.1108/>

well beyond mere access to alternative products, encompassing broader assessments of whether boycott participation can meaningfully contribute to political or economic change at a systemic level.

This empirical contrast signals a consequential analytical reorientation. Boycott intention should not be understood merely as a matter of agreement with a moral cause, but as a context-dependent process in which moral recognition is systematically filtered through prevailing social norms, structural constraints, and ongoing identity negotiations. In Malaysia, the mutual alignment of these elements generates a strong and actionable form of intention in which belief and practice are tightly integrated. In the Netherlands, their partial misalignment produces a more negotiated, conditional, and at times internally contradictory form of moral engagement. Intention thus emerges not as a fixed psychological state, but as a socially constituted and contextually mediated phenomenon—one that reflects not only what individuals believe, but also what their structural and normative environment enables them to do.

Diverging Pathways of Boycott Intentions in Malaysia and the Netherlands

This study argues that boycott intentions among the Indonesian Muslim diaspora are not primarily determined by the intensity of shared religious or moral commitments, but by the degree to which these commitments are enabled—or alternatively constrained—by the socio-political environments in which individuals are embedded. While both groups demonstrate a broadly comparable level of moral concern toward the Palestinian issue, their intentions diverge substantially in the mechanisms through which such concern is converted into everyday practice. This divergence indicates that boycott intention ought to be conceptualized not as a uniform or internally driven psychological

disposition, but as a contextually mediated process shaped by the interaction among identity, social norms, and structural conditions.³⁰

In the Malaysian context, boycott intention is not merely a moral proposition to which individuals subscribe in the abstract, but a form of socially embedded practice that is actively materialized in everyday consumer life. What is most analytically significant in the interview data is the fluency with which moral conviction is translated into behavioural action—a translation enabled not by individual willpower alone, but by a surrounding social architecture that renders boycott normative, expected, and practically facilitated. Respondents consistently described Malaysia as an environment in which pro-Palestinian sentiment is highly visible, institutionally expressed, and woven into the fabric of ordinary social interaction. Sophia (26 years) explained that boycott enables her to “show her position” through simple, everyday choices, even without adopting an overtly activist stance—a formulation that resonates closely with Indah’s earlier characterization of boycott as “the smallest but most real action.” Lukman (30 years) contributed a further analytical dimension by emphasizing the collective character of boycott engagement: participation is not only morally motivated but socially reinforced through observed behaviour, as individuals become more willing to act when they perceive peers within their social networks as doing likewise and when product alternatives are readily accessible. This dynamic reflects the sociological mechanism of normative conformity, whereby socially shared behaviour is sustained and reproduced through processes of mutual observation and collective expectation.³¹

³⁰ L. Neilson, “Boycott or Buycott? Understanding Political Consumerism,” *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 9, no. 3 (2010): 214–227, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.313>; Micheletti, *Political Virtue and Shopping*; Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti, “Politics in the Supermarket.”

³¹ Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti, “Politics in the Supermarket,” 253–257; Monroe Friedman, *Consumer Boycotts: Effecting Change Through the Marketplace and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 3–22.

The institutional reproduction of pro-boycott norms across multiple societal spaces—including mosques, community networks, university campuses, and digital platforms—ensures that moral awareness is continuously refreshed and practically reinforced within the Malaysian context. As Tasya (23 years) observed, information regarding boycotted products is actively circulated through institutional channels such as printed materials, peer discussions, and social media, generating an information environment that is structured, accessible, and consistently present. Structurally, as Salman documented, the gradual displacement of targeted commercial brands by locally produced substitutes has progressively lowered the practical barriers to participation, transforming boycott from a morally demanding sacrifice into an economically and logistically feasible everyday practice. Even when minor inconveniences arise—such as the difficulty of identifying a suitable substitute for a preferred product, as reported by Sophia—these are construed by respondents as marginal adjustments rather than prohibitive obstacles, reflecting an overall attitudinal disposition in which the moral imperative is perceived as sufficiently compelling to justify minor personal disruption. Taken together, these findings indicate that in Malaysia, boycott intention is produced through a self-reinforcing alignment among moral evaluation, social expectation, and structural facilitation—constituting what this study terms a high-coherence form of intention, characterized by the close and mutually reinforcing integration of belief, normative endorsement, and actionable behaviour.³²

The Dutch context, by contrast, reveals a substantially more fragmented and negotiated trajectory of boycott intention, in which the translation of moral awareness into concrete action is systematically impeded by competing social, structural, and cognitive constraints. Tris framed boycott as an expression of his Islamic and humanitarian identity,

³² Micheletti, *Political Virtue and Shopping*; Neilson, “Boycott or Buycott?” 218–221.

yet simultaneously acknowledged that its open expression is socially sensitive—particularly within professional environments—reflecting a configuration in which moral conviction lacks consistent normative reinforcement from the surrounding social milieu. This observation is further corroborated by the experiences of Hakim, who expressed agreement with the moral logic of boycott but admitted to significant uncertainty in its implementation, relying predominantly on community cues rather than independent conviction to guide his decisions. FGD participants adopted a more distanced and pragmatic stance, suggesting that boycott does not constitute a salient organizing principle in their daily lives and is frequently subordinated to the demands of academic integration and social belonging. This pattern reflects a condition of diminished normative pressure that is directly linked to minority positioning, in which the public salience of politically motivated consumer activism is substantially attenuated relative to majority contexts.³³

Perceived behavioural control constitutes an equally significant constraint in the Dutch context. Respondents consistently identified the difficulty of reliably identifying Israel-affiliated products within the opacity of globalized supply chains as a recurring practical impediment to consistent engagement. The anonymized academic respondent further elaborated that in structurally constrained sectors—most notably healthcare—consumer choice is not meaningfully free, rendering consistent boycott participation practically infeasible regardless of the strength of individual moral commitment. This introduces a fundamental analytical distinction: even when strong moral agreement is present, the feasibility of translating that agreement into regular, informed practice may be severely limited by informational and structural conditions. Furthermore, the Dutch case exhibits a characteristically higher degree of attitudinal reflexivity and moral ambivalence. Rather than treating boycott

³³ Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” 8–12; Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” 226–229.

as a self-evidently justified moral obligation, several respondents subject it to critical scrutiny regarding its systemic effectiveness and potential unintended consequences. The anonymized academic informant, for instance, questioned whether individual consumption choices can meaningfully influence macroeconomic or geopolitical dynamics, while also raising concerns regarding the collateral economic effects on local workers and economies. Such critical reflexivity transforms the attitudinal component of intention from a stable moral commitment into a more contingent and situationally responsive evaluative position.³⁴

Generational dynamics further compound these patterns. Younger respondents in the Netherlands tend to adopt a more adaptive orientation, prioritizing social integration and everyday pragmatism over the consistent expression of political conviction. This suggests that within minority contexts, boycott intention is shaped not only by structural constraints but also by life-stage considerations and the specific strategies of belonging that individuals deploy in navigating their position between multiple cultural and political worlds.

The divergence between Malaysia and the Netherlands can be traced to three interrelated and mutually reinforcing dimensions. First, the “socio-political opportunity structure” plays a decisive role in determining whether moral commitment can be translated into sustained practice. In Malaysia, this structure is broadly enabling and continuously reinforcing: pro-Palestinian discourse is not merely present but institutionalized across multiple channels, including religious sermons, community gatherings, campus campaigns, and public media, creating a moral environment in which boycott is constituted as a normalized rather than an exceptional response. This normalization is evidenced further by the observable behavioural shifts documented by respondents, including the declining commercial demand for Israel-affiliated brands.

³⁴ Klein, Smith, and John, “Why We Boycott,” 101–105; Abosag and Farah, “The Influence of Religiously Motivated Consumer Boycotts,” 2270–2275.

In the Netherlands, the socio-political environment is considerably more pluralistic and contested: while support for Palestine exists within diaspora networks, it lacks consistent institutional reinforcement, and the public expression of boycott-related positions is frequently perceived as socially sensitive. Individuals in Malaysia thus operate within a structurally enabling environment, whereas those in the Netherlands navigate a more constrained and normatively ambiguous context.³⁵

Second, “diaspora identity” functions as a context-dependent resource that either amplifies or attenuates boycott intention depending on the alignment between individual identity and the host society’s dominant values. In Malaysia, the Muslim Indonesian diaspora identity aligns closely with the broader societal ethos, reinforcing a shared sense of moral responsibility and enabling the collective enactment of boycott as a communal practice. Respondents described how residing within a society in which solidarity with Palestine is widely and visibly expressed served to intensify their own sense of moral commitment, rendering boycott a shared rather than individualized act. In the Netherlands, diaspora identity is subject to more active negotiation: while some individuals maintain a robust Islamic identity as a stable moral reference point, others—particularly younger respondents—adopt a more adaptive orientation in which social integration takes precedence over consistent ideological expression. Identity does not disappear, but becomes more flexible, situational, and selectively enacted.³⁶

Third, the “information ecosystem” exerts a significant structuring influence on how individuals interpret and act upon boycott. In Malaysia, information concerning Israel-affiliated products is relatively structured, systematically curated, and disseminated through institutional channels

³⁵ Dessy Kurnia Sari and Donard Games, “Investigating Young Consumer’s Boycott Behavior in an Emerging Market,” *Cogent Business & Management* 11, no. 1 (2024): 2362444, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2362444>; Farah and Newman, “Exploring Consumer Boycott Intelligence,” 350–353.

³⁶ Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” 4–8; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1–18.

that carry high social credibility—enabling more consistent and informed behavioural application. In the Netherlands, by contrast, the information landscape is characteristically fragmented, inconsistent, and of uneven reliability. Uncertainty regarding the identification of targeted products, compounded by the complexity of global supply chain structures, significantly impairs individuals' capacity to translate moral intent into reliable and informed practice, creating informational ambiguity as a persistent barrier to engagement even among those who express strong moral agreement.³⁷

These findings fundamentally challenge any assumption that Muslim consumer activism operates in a uniform or universally consistent manner. While religious and moral considerations provide a shared motivational starting point, the conversion of moral commitment into concrete, sustained behaviour is profoundly shaped by the specific socio-structural context within which it is embedded. In Malaysia, the convergence of identity alignment, normative reinforcement, and structural facilitation produces a coherent and consistently enacted form of boycott intention. In the Netherlands, the divergence among these elements generates a more negotiated, selective, and contingent mode of engagement. Boycott intention, therefore, is not reducible to an expression of belief; it is a contextually mediated capacity to act within specific social and structural conditions—a conclusion with significant implications for both the theoretical modelling of consumer activism and its practical promotion within transnational settings.

Boycott as Transnational Muslim Activism: Repurposing the Theory of Planned Behaviour

Based on the previous discussion, the Malaysian and the Netherlands cases invite a reconceptualization of what boycott *is* for the Indonesian Muslim diaspora. The dominant literature approaches

³⁷ Farah and Newman, "Exploring Consumer Boycott Intelligence," 349–352; Neilson, "Boycott or Buycott?" 220–224.

the boycott of Israel-affiliated products as a problem of consumer psychology, asking what disposes an individual to withhold a purchase. The evidence points elsewhere. In both settings, respondents described not a private consumption calculus but an act of belonging—a way of locating themselves within a global community of faith and translating solidarity with Palestine into everyday conduct. Indah's account of boycott as "the smallest but most real action" available to a diaspora Muslim, and Tris's framing of it as inseparable from his Islamic identity, are statements about who one is and to whom one belongs. Boycott is thus best understood as a repertoire of transnational Muslim activism: a religiously grounded practice through which diasporic Muslims enact ummatic solidarity across borders.

Thus, if boycott is activism rather than consumption, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) cannot be applied in its original form, yet need not be abandoned. The comparison yields a clear payoff: variation across the two diasporas is driven not by differences in the intensity of religious commitment but by the degree of alignment between diaspora identity, social norms, and structural conditions. Both communities share a moral baseline concerning Palestine; what separates them is whether their host environments allow that baseline to be enacted coherently or force it into fragmentation. This relocates explanatory weight away from individual religiosity toward the fit between the diasporic subject and their socio-political ecology. Repurposing TPB means retaining its three categories while dissolving its individualist premise. Attitude, in Malaysia, is not privately generated but continuously affirmed by a surrounding moral consensus; in the Netherlands, the same concern is subjected to reflexive scrutiny, becoming contingent rather than settled. Subjective norms are not merely perceived pressure but the institutionalized normative environment itself—reproduced in Malaysia across mosques, campuses, and media, and attenuated in the Netherlands by minority positioning. Perceived behavioural control is materially conditioned—

enabled by the local substitutes Salman described, constrained by the opaque supply chains and captive sectors such as healthcare that Dutch respondents identified.

The decisive move is a dimension conventional TPB omits: diaspora identity. It operates as a context-dependent resource that amplifies or attenuates activism depending on its alignment with host-society values. Where diaspora identity converges with the societal ethos, as in Malaysia, boycott becomes communal; where it must be negotiated against pressures of integration, as in the Netherlands, it turns flexible and selectively expressed. Identity thus mediates the entire apparatus, conditioning which attitudes are sustainable, which norms available, and which actions feasible. What emerges is a transnational, identity-centred model in which TPB serves as an interpretive lens rather than a predictive instrument. For boycott studies, religiously motivated boycott cannot be theorized as consumer behaviour abstracted from identity and structure. For the study of Muslim societies, it locates boycott within transnational Muslim activism—showing how the same solidarity is institutionalized in one setting and rendered fragile in another, not because Muslims believe differently, but because their environments enable them to act differently.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated how Indonesian Muslim diaspora identity shapes the negotiation and enactment of boycott activism in Malaysia and the Netherlands, and how host-country socio-political contexts mediate this process. The comparison demonstrates that variation in boycott activism is driven less by differences in religiosity than by the degree of alignment between diaspora identity and structural conditions. In Muslim-majority Malaysia, where diaspora identity converges with a supportive institutional and market environment, boycott is enacted as a coherent and communal practice. In the Muslim-minority Netherlands, where that alignment is weaker, the same moral

commitment is refracted into a fragmented, conditional, and privately negotiated form of engagement. Theoretically, the article has also repurposed the Theory of Planned Behaviour as an interpretive lens embedded within a transnational, identity-centred framework, showing that attitudes, norms, and perceived control are socially and structurally constituted rather than purely individual. In so doing, it reframes boycott as a repertoire of transnational Muslim activism. Future research might extend this framework to other diasporic communities and host-country configurations to test its comparative reach.

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