



Boycotting! Communicating identity versus emotion in regard to Tufan al-Aqsa

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, the boycott of Israeli products has become more prominent among Malaysian Muslims because of the Tufan al-Aqsa war in Palestine. However, the understanding of the boycott is still unclear whether it indicates an emotional expression against the act of Israel oppressing Gaza or is an act of collective identity of Malaysians, where by not joining in, it brings forth embarrassment in front of others. A quantitative approach was employed to measure the understanding of the war and its relation to collective identity and emotional expression towards the Tufan al Aqsa war in Palestine among Malaysian Muslims. The research instrument was a survey using Google Forms distributed via WhatsApp and email to 155 respondents. The data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, namely t-test, Pearson correlation and Chi-square across age, gender, and education, respectively. The findings demonstrate that boycotting is an act of collective identity significantly correlated to emotional expression towards the Tufan al-Aqsa war despite significant differences found in the gender and age factors. The Social Identity Theory clearly states how these factors drive collective action through identity, emotional and behavioural elements. The researchers believe that the motivations and mechanisms behind the protests must be discussed in the academic discourse platform to provide practical guidance for more effective collective action campaigns. While Malaysia openly declares its position against Israel's oppression in Palestine, a future study may look at boycotting Israeli products from a media perspective, that is, traditional versus new media.

Keywords: **Boycott, collective identity, emotional expressions, Tufan al-Aqsa, Palestine, Malaysia**

INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is an emotional issue that not only concerns the Palestinian people, but is also equally emphasised by individuals around the world. The conflict opened the eyes of the international community to the extreme actions of Israel, which are seen as anti-Islamic and anti-Palestinian. The brutality that takes place has sparked concerns for human rights, particularly because it involves the suffering of women, the elderly, and children (Bar-Tal, 2024).

Israel's crimes during the protracted struggle between Israel and Palestine not only infuriated and depressed the Palestinian people, but also had a significant effect on the international community (Magdy, 2024). The conflict is now viewed as a humanitarian catastrophe including severe and horrific acts against the Palestinian people, particularly women, children, and the elderly, in addition to a political one. A number of violent episodes, including assaults on civilian areas, property destruction, and breaches of human rights, have made Israel's aggressive and anti-Islamic behaviour more apparent to the international community (Chotiner, 2023).

Numerous protests have been staged worldwide in response to these crimes in an effort to get the attention of the world's main powers—particularly the United States, which is thought to be heavily involved in this conflict. Enormous protests are staged in a number of global metropolises to urge the international community to take strong action against Israel's conduct. Social media has developed into a vital medium for expressing discontent and disseminating knowledge about the crimes occurring, in addition to traditional forms of protest (Poell, 2019). Thousands of people have raised awareness of this issue by sharing information and starting petitions using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Furthermore, the production of short films and documentaries by individuals and activist groups have also been crucial in increasing global awareness of this conflict.

For instance, films that depict the suffering of the Palestinian people have been able to garner a great deal of attention and foster support for the Palestinian cause on a global scale. This is an example of cross-religious and cross-geographic humanitarian solidarity when non-Muslim community members join forces to denounce Israeli injustices (Al Jazeera, 2023). A prominent mode of protest involves the boycott of goods and services linked to Israel. Malaysia is one of the Muslim-majority nations that has contributed significantly to this boycott effort. The Muslim community in Malaysia has, like the Muslim communities in a number of other nations, shunned global commercial networks that have been linked to or supported by Israel financially. Prominent brands that are being boycotted include fast food restaurants KFC, McDonald's, Subway, and Starbucks. Numerous countries revealed significant losses from the boycott on commercial operations; some branches have reported sharp declines in revenues, and others have even been forced to shut down.

But the question that remains is whether the boycott is primarily driven by sentiment or if the Malaysian community and other Muslim nations are using it as a way to express their shared identity. Is this boycott a calculated move that shows sustained support for the Palestinian cause, or is it merely an ad hoc response to the crimes that have occurred? Boycotting can be interpreted as a bigger political tactic as well as an emotional response to any particular event. The boycott in the Malaysian context could be interpreted as a

manifestation of both sympathy with the Palestinian people and a mixture of rage and disgust over the brutality that has taken place. Sociologically speaking, this boycott is related to the idea of collective identity, as Malaysians—Muslims in particular—perceive themselves as members of a worldwide community that rejects injustice. One way that religious and humanitarian identities bring society together in the struggle against cruelty and human rights violations is through collective action, which is a sign of solidarity.

Tufan al-Aqsa

According to Greenland et al. (2024), the Hamas–Israel conflict is a complicated, protracted issue with broad regional ramifications. The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict has significantly escalated as a result of the Gaza War of 2023. With its roots in historical, political, and geographical issues, this conflict has seen significant violence at different points in time as well as brief ceasefires (Widzer, 2024).

The Gaza War, sometimes referred to as “Tufan al-Aqsa,” is still ongoing. On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists launched one of the bloodiest surprise attacks on Israel in recent memory. An Israeli siege retaliated with strikes on Gaza (Awais et al., 2020; Westfall et al., 2023). The entire world was shocked by the October 7 attack. It signaled a dramatic change in Hamas’s readiness, strategy, and command of the conflict from the start (Patrikarakos, 2023). The operation dealt a serious blow to the Israel’s military and intelligence infrastructure, leading to its crushing loss.

A string of fierce military clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian resistance organisations characterised the 2023 conflict. Palestinian factions demonstrated a high degree of coordination and army capability, maintaining a sustained barrage of rocket fire and other forms of resistance against Israeli targets. These factions were mainly led by the military wing of Hamas, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, and the Saraya al-Quds of the Islamic Jihad (Samuel, 2023).

This war was a deadly and catastrophic military campaign in the Gaza Strip that caused a great deal of destruction and fatalities. Following a widespread attack on the settlements surrounding the Gaza Strip by the resistance movements in Gaza, led by Hamas, hundreds of Israelis were killed and hundreds more were captured. In response, Israeli forces launched a massive offensive in the Gaza Strip using aerial bombing, missiles, and mortar fire.

Israeli soldiers launched a ground operation to destroy the insurgents’ tunnels and other facilities after a few weeks of heavy shelling (Britannica, 2024). There were many civilian casualties, damaged homes, and infrastructure losses as a result of the war. The War further devastated the densely populated Gaza Strip, which was already grappling with inadequate infrastructure and resources. Hospitals and other critical services were damaged, making it impossible for them to handle the flood of injured civilians, which exacerbated the humanitarian catastrophe (Asi et al., 2024).

The humanitarian situation in Gaza was made worse by the considerable civilian deaths and infrastructure damage that occurred during this conflict. Beyond direct military combat, the War also had an impact on Palestine’s political landscape as well as that of the larger Middle East. The conversation on Palestinian resistance and its effects on stability and security in the region grew more heated (Ahmed, 2023). Alongside military operations, the conflict entered cyberspace from the outset (El Zein & Abusalem, 2015). It

also garnered attention internationally, with a number of world leaders and organisations demanding talks and ceasefires even if a long-term solution remained elusive.

Due to the catastrophic humanitarian situation and extensive damage brought on by the military operation—which has been deemed a calamity that has altered the way of life for all Gazans—the ongoing War has drawn attention from around the world and been condemned. The War left a lasting impact on the region, exacerbating existing tensions and leaving deep scars on the affected people (Sunghay, 2024). Human rights organisations and international organisations called for both sides to put civilian protection first as the war intensified and have demanded an immediate ceasefire. An end to hostilities was mediated by the United Nations (UN) and other diplomatic channels. Due to the continuous fighting along the Gaze strip, the situation remains hazardous (United Nations, 2023).

The 2023 Gaza War has far-reaching and complex repercussions that affect regional security, humanitarian situations, and political dynamics. There were civilian casualties and extensive destruction as a result of the fighting. The ongoing conflict underscores the need for meaningful and successful mediation to bring about a long-lasting resolution by highlighting broader geopolitical shifts and the intricate interplay of humanitarian, political, and security challenges in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Abdel-Malek, 2023). A complex interaction of historical, political, and socioeconomic factors has also rekindled concerns regarding the cultural and economic boycotts of Israel. As noted by Avi Pitchon, who provides a scathing critique of cultural contacts with Israel in light of the current hostilities, the conflict has led to louder calls for a cultural boycott against Israel (Al Mayadeen, 2024).

According to Ben-Abdellatif and Bouslama (2016), the boycott notion is essentially a political act intended to influence the policies of the target nation through economic loss. It is defined as the unwillingness to engage in commercial or social interactions with offending parties. The position is made more difficult by Western policies toward the Palestinian Authority, which have traditionally centered on exerting pressure on it to accede to Israeli security concerns. These laws frequently disregard the larger historical background and the continued hardships that Palestinians living under Israeli rule face (Slimia, 2023).

A major obstacle for American businesses doing business in the Middle East is the boycott of Israel, which serves as an example of the wider political and economic fallout from such acts. Businesses have to negotiate the intricate web of political allegiances and international trade (Losman, 1972). Overall, the 2023 Gaza War and the resurging calls for an Israel boycott represent a complex issue with roots in political dynamics, historical grievances, and socioeconomic difficulties that require a comprehensive understanding of the many variables involved (Hokayem, 2023).

The situation is made more complex by the War's larger background and ongoing conflicts in the region, highlighting the conflict's complex and multifaceted nature (Dessi & Kamel, 2019). Pro-Palestine demonstrations in Western nations also brought attention to the conflict's global scope and divisive nature of support for the Palestinian cause (Tuba, 2024). All things considered, the Tufan al-Aqsa Gaza War of 2023 is a complicated and varied battle with important political, psychological, and humanitarian consequences.

Problem statement

One way Malaysians are showing their support for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is by boycotting Israeli goods (Ahmad Lufti et al., 2024; Mohd Yunus et al., 2018; Nordin et al., 2024). In addition to being supported by a number of organisations, the boycott also involves common people as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious leaders, and some political parties. Although the boycott has had a long history, it frequently picks up steam after the most recent crisis or act of violence involving Palestine.

As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is viewed as a religious, moral, and humanitarian issue in addition to a political one, there is strong support in Malaysia for the boycott of Israeli products (Hazlin, 2023). As a Muslim-majority country, Malaysia firmly supports the Palestinian people's right to live free from Israeli occupation, as demonstrated by the numerous boycotts that political figures and members of civil society have organised.

According to a survey by Omar (2020), most Malaysians agreed that a boycott of Israeli goods would be a good way to demonstrate support for Palestine. These boycotts frequently target goods thought to be connected, either directly or indirectly, to businesses that support Israel, especially those in the food, apparel, and technology industries.

Prominent non-governmental organisations like Aman Palestine and Viva Palestina Malaysia frequently spearhead boycotts of Israeli goods in Malaysia. These organisations also carry out awareness campaigns about how an economic boycott might force Israel to cease its oppressive activities against the Palestinian people in addition to encouraging people to boycott (Abdullah & Zainuddin, 2019). Additionally, *fatwas* or pronouncements urging Muslims not to use Israeli-related products, were issued by religious authorities in Malaysia.

Given Malaysia's minimal role in the global market for Israeli products, boycotts in the country are often seen as moral and symbolic actions rather than economically impactful measures. Ben-Abdellatif and Bouslama (2016) described this behaviour as a political and emotional expression, while Ahmad et al. (2021) noted that many Malaysians perceive boycotts as an effective tool to influence international policies toward Israel, even though some question their practical outcomes. These actions are widely regarded as a non-violent form of protest, allowing Malaysians to express solidarity with Palestine and voice opposition to Israeli policies.

However, the boycott movement in Malaysia faces significant challenges, particularly in raising consumer awareness. Many Malaysians are unaware of or lack clarity about which products are linked to Israel. As globalisation blurs the lines of ownership, the complex relationships between businesses and Israeli interests make it difficult to identify boycott targets (Mahmood & Ismail, 2020). Additionally, indirect commercial ties between Israeli companies and commonly used goods in Malaysia further complicate these efforts. Despite these obstacles, the boycott movement endures because of its strong symbolic value. It serves as a platform for Malaysians to show support for Palestine and condemnation of Israeli practices. Beyond the economic impact, boycotts help raise global awareness about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as highlighted by Zulkifli (2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Boycott

The boycott notion is the subject of this study, and it involves two primary variables: people's emotional expression and collective identity. To better understand the phenomenon of people boycotting Israeli products, a thorough analysis of their actions is necessary. It is especially true in the wake of the Tufan al-Aqsa conflict in Palestine, which has sparked strong feelings and increased awareness across the globe, including in Malaysia. This study attempts to analyse the motive for this action from the standpoint of social identity and collective psychology, which is emotional expression, as the boycott phenomenon is frequently perceived as a form of solidarity against the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Scholarly interest has been drawn to the phenomenon of Muslim consumers boycotting businesses, especially in relation to the variables that influence their involvement. A quantitative study by Abdul Talib and Abdul Latif (2017) examined the factors influencing Malaysian Muslims' propensity to boycott. Their study found that boycott intentions are strongly influenced by religiosity, ethnocentrism, and hostility toward the offending countries. The significance of religious and nationalistic attitudes in influencing consumer behaviour among this group was highlighted by this study.

Focusing on youths, Tariki (2019) looked at the elements influencing Malaysian Muslim youths' desire to boycott. According to Tariki (2019), the main factors influencing boycott participation are resentment, perceived severity of the offending company's behaviour, and vulnerability to interpersonal influence. These results imply that perceived moral breaches and social dynamics are important factors in inspiring young customers to engage in boycotts.

Furthermore, the impact of consumer sentiments and religiosity on boycott participation has been studied. According to Muhamad et al. (2018), Malaysian Muslims who are more religious are more likely to boycott, especially when consumer attitudes act as a mediating factor in this association. This suggests that boycott behaviours are greatly influenced by both consumer perceptions and religious beliefs.

The aforementioned studies collectively highlight that religiosity, social influence, perceived corporate misconduct, and nationalistic sentiments are critical factors influencing boycott participation among Malaysian Muslims. Understanding these motivations provides valuable insights into consumer activism within this community, emphasising the need for culturally sensitive corporate practices.

Collective identity

Feelings of solidarity and unity among people with similar experiences, attitudes, and aspirations are called collective identity (Photiou et al., 2017; Smith, 2020). Collective identity is a significant factor in the motivation and maintenance of boycott efforts. Boycotts are frequently viewed as an expression of collective identity in which community or organisation members participate in the campaign to show support for a cause they care about (Jackson & Smith, 2021).

When community or group members feel compelled to take action in response to social or political concerns that impact them, boycotts can be seen as a form of collective identity expression. For instance, Lee et al. (2022) revealed that the Malaysian Muslim

community's boycott of Israeli goods is the outcome of a shared identity centred around support for the Palestinian cause and opposition to the perpetrated violence.

By enhancing a person's sense of community, boycotts can help strengthen a sense of collective identity. According to Lim and Tan (2024), boycotting frequently reinforces people's feelings of cultural and ethnic identity by portraying them as symbols of shared struggle and persistence in the face of significant concerns. The boycott movement's collective identity is not always harmonious, though. Groups with similar identities may experience friction or conflict, particularly if there is a disagreement on the best course of action for a boycott or the topics that should be championed (Kumar & Patel, 2023). Thus, assessing the viability and efficacy of boycott efforts in society requires understanding the collective identity processes.

Emotional expression

This study highlights how emotions like rage, empathy, and moral concerns play a part in people's decisions to boycott. Emotions are considered a potent stimulus for group action. The Social Identity Theory (SIT) holds that these feelings are influenced by social norms and identities rather than being the product of individual reactions. The collective identity of Muslims in the context of the Tufan al-Aqsa war serves to reinforce these feelings and motivate action. The important connection between emotional expression and collective identity highlights the function of emotion as a link between individual identity and group conduct.

Saha and Nair's (2021) research indicates that boycotts are frequently seen as a successful strategy for altering the boycotted party's behaviour. According to their findings, if a boycott is organised and widespread, it can have an impact on decisions made by governments and corporations. They stress that a boycott's ability to succeed rests on its organisers' ability to enlist public support and spread truthful information about the boycott's objectives (Saha & Nair, 2021).

Smith et al. (2022) investigated how social media affects the success of a boycott success in a different study. They discovered that social media is crucial in distributing information and fortifying support for a boycott. Through instant respondent input, social media not only aids in mobilisation, but also in assessing the boycott's efficacy (Smith et al., 2022).

According to Brown and Davies (2023), boycotts can serve as a medium for the expression of a society's feelings and sense of identity. They demonstrated that boycotts serve as a means of representing a group's identity and solidarity in addition to objecting to products. According to their research, boycotts are frequently motivated by identities and ideals of larger groups, rather than merely financial concerns (Brown & Davies, 2023). In the meantime, Yang and Zhao's study (2024) looked at how local boycott dynamics are influenced by global forces and analysed boycotts in the context of globalisation. As a result of globalisation and increasing economic interdependence, they found that boycotts can take different forms and have different effects on the parties they target.

Although there is a common belief that the Israel boycott is a symbol of collective identity that symbolises the unification of Malaysians in expressing opposition to the tyranny taking place, this study has taken an impartial approach to analysing Muslim boycott actions as a manifestation of people's emotions towards the situation in Palestine. The concepts of identity and emotion are essential to comprehending boycotting

behaviour, especially in situations like the Tufan al-Aqsa war. According to SIT, people's feelings of self-worth and belonging come from belonging to social groupings (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Identity acts as a motivating factor for boycotting, bringing individual actions into line with the goals and values of a group (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). According to Hamzah and Mustafa (2019), Malaysian Muslims' boycott of Israeli goods, for example, frequently results from their shared religious and cultural identities, which is essential for inspiring group action. However, emotions—specifically, remorse, empathy, and moral outrage—are crucial in motivating boycotting actions (van Zomeren & Spears, 2009). By strengthening their connection with the collective cause, emotional reactions to perceived injustices might increase people's commitment to boycotts (Chen, 2010).

According to this study, in order to fully comprehend this phenomenon, it is critical to determine whether the boycott is primarily motivated by personal feelings, such as a direct reaction to the brutality that was witnessed, or whether it is a reflection of a deeper communal identity that represents the values and ideals shared by Malaysians.

Conceptual framework — Social Identity Theory (SIT) & Animosity Model (AM)

A thorough understanding of the intricate relationship between collective identity and emotional expression in the context of the Boycott Model can be obtained through a study on Muslims in Malaysia who boycott Israeli goods. The Social Identity Theory (SIT) and the Animosity Model (AM) serve as the conceptual foundation for the boycotting action model that Muslims in Malaysia use against Israeli products. SIT, introduced by Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s, was adopted as the basic framework for interpreting the findings of this study. The theory emphasises the importance of collective identity and its influence on individual behaviour and attitudes.

The Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase (AM) was introduced by Klein et al. (1998), which explains how negative sentiment toward a country can influence consumer behaviour in purchasing products from that country. This model highlights how feelings of hostility or animosity arising from political conflict, history, or significant events can encourage consumers to refuse to buy products from countries they perceive to be responsible for harmful or unethical actions.

AM looks at how customers' unfavourable feelings about a foreign nation affect their buying decisions. This model highlights how hatred, which frequently results from political, economic, or historical disputes, can cause people to reject goods from a certain country, regardless of their value or cost. Unlike general ethnocentrism, animosity is situation-specific and pertains to a nation's past associations or deeds. For example, customers in a nation impacted by previous conflicts or trade disputes might be hostile to products coming from the offending country. This rejection is emotionally motivated by resentment or rage, rather than from a lower-quality product.

According to the paradigm, there are two main types of animosity: economic and war-related. Military battles are the source of war hostility, whereas accusations of unfair trade practices or exploitation are the source of economic animosity. Both kinds have an impact on consumer sentiment, leading to boycotts or avoiding goods associated with the offending country.

The model's relevance is demonstrated by Klein et al.'s study on Chinese customers shunning Japanese goods because of old war-related grudges. Anger influences purchasing decisions by erecting a psychological barrier that surpasses practical factors. The model highlights the intricacy of customer behaviour as well as the significance of social and emotional elements in international marketing. To lessen the impact of hostility, businesses that operate in global marketplaces must employ tactics like corporate social responsibility (CSR) and brand localisation.



Figure 1. Conceptual framework

The main questions of this study are: 1) Does the boycott represent collective identity among Muslim respondents? 2) What is the level of emotional expression represented by Muslim respondents towards Israeli products? and 3) Are there any associations between collective identity and emotional expression as represented by Muslim respondents towards Israeli products? Based on the literature discussion and the Boycott Model, this study wants to understand the extent to which the act of boycotting Israeli products among Malaysian Muslims, is based on emotional expression or collective identity. Specifically, this study wishes to seek an understanding of 1) the level of collective identity represented by Muslim respondents towards Israeli products, 2) the level of emotional expression represented by Muslim respondents towards Israeli products, and 3) the associations between collective identity and emotional expression represented by Muslim respondents towards Israel products.

METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a quantitative approach using a random survey among Muslims (n=155), which enabled the systematic measurement and analysis of these subjective constructs, which are by nature difficult to quantify; it is especially well-suited for researching emotional expression and group identity in boycotting situations. Respondents for the survey were selected using a Google Form distributed through convenience sampling (Bryman, 2016; Etikan et al., 2015). The form was shared amongst the researcher's network, including students, colleagues, and their extended networks (friends of friends).

To identify respondents who were actively boycotting Israeli products, the survey incorporated screening questions that explicitly asked respondents to confirm whether they had participated in boycotts of Israeli products. For example, respondents were asked to indicate if they had intentionally avoided purchasing Israeli goods due to personal, religious, or collective motivations. Only those who answered affirmatively to these screening questions were included in the analysis.

This approach allowed for a practical way to reach potential boycotters while ensuring that the study focused on individuals relevant to the research objectives.

However, the limitations of convenience sampling is acknowledged, and this is added in the study's discussion as a factor to consider in interpreting the findings.

Besides, this approach allows trends and connections to be revealed using validated survey instruments to record the frequency and intensity of emotional responses and collective identity markers across a large sample. Drawing generalisable conclusions regarding group behaviours and motivations requires objectivity and replicability, which this approach guarantees (Ajzen, 1991; Johnson & Christensen, 2024; Leavy, 2022). Additionally, the effects of demographics on emotional and collective reactions can be measured using a quantitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

For the sake of feasibility, the survey form was distributed using a Google Forms link. The link was distributed via WhatsApp and email to those who were identified as opposing Israeli atrocities against Palestinians by boycotting Israeli products. In other words, the respondents' location was kept anonymous. The survey form was built based on the literature highlights that measure emotional expression and collective identity constructs. The emotional expression construct (Klein et al., 1998) consisted of five elements (culture, war, politics, economy, and religion) that were measured on a 7-point scale in the form of statements ($n=12$; $\alpha = 0.903$). Collective identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) was measured using 13 statements that used a 7-point scale on four main components, namely social category (Islam/humanity), social identity, comparison, and positive differences ($n=12$; $\alpha = 0.907$). The analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences 25 (SPSS). The analysis included descriptives (demographic background), and inferential statistics (t-test/chi-square/Pearson correlation).

Notably, the research is limited to the sample size of the respondents, which cannot be generalised in the context of Malaysia. However, the findings are relevantly significant as exploratory research, which provides a surface-level understanding of the boycotting phenomenon in Malaysia. More importantly, the findings benefit future investigations in the study of collective identity and emotional expression in relation to boycotting products with a broader context, and limited to for Israeli products.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented according to the research objectives, which begin with the demographic background, collective identity, and expression of emotion. It is noteworthy that each data category used different analyses for different purposes.

Demographic background

Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic details. For the education background, majority of the respondents held a bachelor's degree ($n=112$). A lower number of respondents had a certificate or diploma ($n=17$), followed by a master's degree ($n=13$), PhD ($n=7$), Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (high school certificate) ($n=4$), while only two respondents had other educational backgrounds. The figures are aligned with the job status data, in which 78 respondents were employed while 66 were students, and only 11 respondents were unemployed.

Table 1. Demographic background of respondents according to frequency (f) and percentage (%) (n=155)

ITEMS	f	%
Educational Background		
1. Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia	4	2.6
2. Certificate/Diploma	17	11.0
3. Bachelor's degree	112	72.3
4. Master's degree	13	8.4
5. PhD	7	4.5
6. Others	2	1.3
Job Status		
1. Employed	78	50.3
2. Unemployed	11	7.1
3. Students	66	42.6
Source of Information about Tufan al-Aqsa		
1. Social media	137	88.4
2. Television	5	3.2
3. WhatsApp	6	3.9
4. Friends	1	0.6
5. Others	6	3.9
Any friends/relatives from Palestine		
1. Yes	18	11.6
2. No	137	88.4

Note: Bold represents highest percentage

With regard to the boycott, the respondents were motivated by the availability of information related to the Tufan al-Aqsa event, whether directly or indirectly. In terms of their information source, 137 respondents referred to social media, followed by WhatsApp and others (n=6 each), five respondents referred to television, and only one referred to friends.

As shown in Figure 2, there were more female respondents (n=100) than male respondents (n=55). The majority of females were aged 16 to 25 years old (58 respondents), followed by 26–35 age group (29 respondents). In contrast, the biggest group of male respondents were aged the 26 to 35 (25) while there were 17 respondents in the age group of 16–25. The remainder of respondents (both male and female) were in smaller numbers in the following age groups: 36–45 (4 each for male and female), 46–55 (7 males and 6 females), 56–65 (2 each for male and female) and above 66 years old (1 female and none for male).

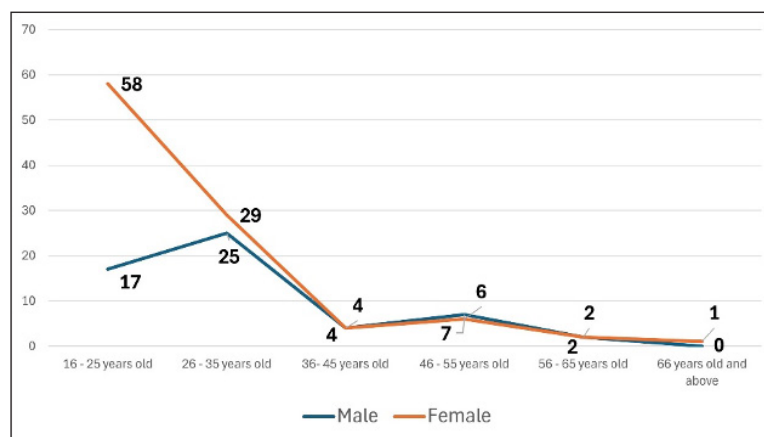


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by gender and age (n=155)

The study found that male respondents had a significantly lower mean (69.00 ± 12.69) in regard to commitment to boycott than female respondents (73.06 ± 7.269), $t(153) = 2.535$, $p = 0.001$. This suggests that women are more committed to boycotting campaigns. SIT can help explain this difference. Women may experience stronger emotional responses due to social roles and expectations of them, leading to higher levels of involvement in collective actions aligned with group values. Thus, this implies that female respondents tend to have a stronger emotional connection to collective identity, which could influence their commitment.

Collective identity and emotional expression

Based on Table 2 which shows the mean and standard deviation results for collective identity, all 12 items have nearly the same mean but not similar standard deviation scores. Two items with the highest mean scores of 6.819 and 6.794 indicate a strong agreement towards the statements about the support for the Palestinian people and how much they comprehend the suffering that the Palestinian people have endured. The lowest mean scores obtained by two items were regarding the recognition of the Muslim community (M 5.948) and political mobility that supports the Palestinian cause (M 6.181). The lower mean scores suggest that the boycotts are unlikely due to recognition and politics. Overall, collective identity as the basis for boycotting is perceived as high with 140 respondents strongly agreeing, followed by 14 moderately agreeing and only one who did not consider his boycott in terms of collective identity (Figure 3).

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation for items measuring collective identity (n=155)

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	I boycott Israeli products as a sign of support for the Palestinian people's struggle	6.819	0.716
2	I boycott Israeli products because I understand the suffering of the Palestinian people.	6.794	0.736
3	I boycott Israeli products as a symbol of Islamic religious struggle.	6.716	0.924
4	I boycott Israeli products as a symbol of obtaining the rights of the Palestinian people.	6.761	0.774
5	I boycott Israeli products because I am one of the Muslim communities.	6.755	0.969
6	I boycott Israeli products to get the recognition of the Muslim community around me supporting the Palestinian cause.	5.948	1.983
7	I boycott Israeli products because there is a connection between myself and other Muslim communities that support the Palestinian people.	6.374	1.339
8	I boycott Israeli products because I know the history of the Palestinian people.	6.594	0.958
9	I boycott Israeli products in support of the political agenda of the surrounding community that supports the cause of the Palestinian people.	6.084	1.739
10	I boycott Israeli products as a political mobility that supports the Palestinian cause.	6.181	1.673
11	I boycott Israeli products as social mobility that supports the Palestinian cause.	6.606	1.066
12	I boycott Israeli products as a communicator of awareness of what is happening to the Palestinian people.	6.781	0.723

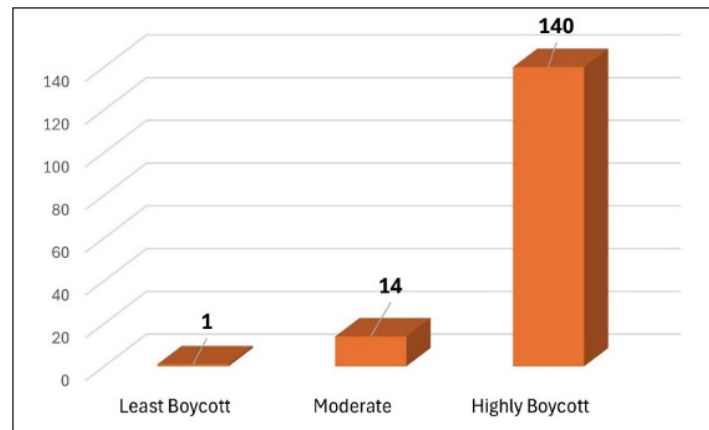


Figure 3. Level of agreement about boycotting based on collective identity (n=155)

In terms of emotional expression, based on 12 items, three items had the highest mean scores, and two had a much lower mean score out of the 7-point scale (Table 3). The three items were reaction against Israel's action of oppressing and fighting the Palestinian people ($M= 6.800$, $SD= .793$), bringing down the business economy of Israeli products ($M= 6.819$, $SD= .669$), and supporting the Palestinian people's struggle to defend their religion, race and country ($M= 6.813$, $SD= .662$). The two items with the lowest mean score refer to the Muslim culture that does not buy Israeli products and ($M= 5.877$, $SD= 1.789$) and family practice that cultivates opposition to Israel ($M= 6.813$, $SD= .662$). This suggests that the boycott carried out by the Muslim respondents of this study was less likely due to the Muslim culture and family practices.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation for items measuring emotional expression (n=155)

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	I boycott Israeli products to ensure that no funds will be channelled to help fight the Palestinians.	6.748	0.761
2	I boycott Israeli products because it is a family practice that cultivates opposition to Israel.	5.877	1.789
3	I boycott Israeli products because of the Muslim culture that does not buy Israeli products.	5.665	1.821
4	I boycott Israeli products out of anger at the war that oppresses the Palestinian people.	6.716	0.952
5	I boycott Israeli products as a reaction against Israel's actions of oppressing and fighting the Palestinian people.	6.800	0.793
6	I boycott Israeli products to bring down the business economy of Israeli products.	6.819	0.669
7	I boycott Israeli products to increase sales of Muslim products in this country.	6.387	1.384
8	I boycott Israeli products to ensure that no Israeli products are sold in this country	6.619	0.948
9	I boycott Israeli products out of religious obligation to oppose Israel at all costs.	6.735	0.765
10	I boycott Israeli products because I don't want to be questioned by Allah swt about my struggle against Israel.	6.723	0.887
11	I boycott Israeli products because I am depressed by the oppressive war on the Palestinian people.	6.432	1.289
12	I boycott Israeli products to support the Palestinian people's struggle to defend their religion, race and country.	6.813	0.662

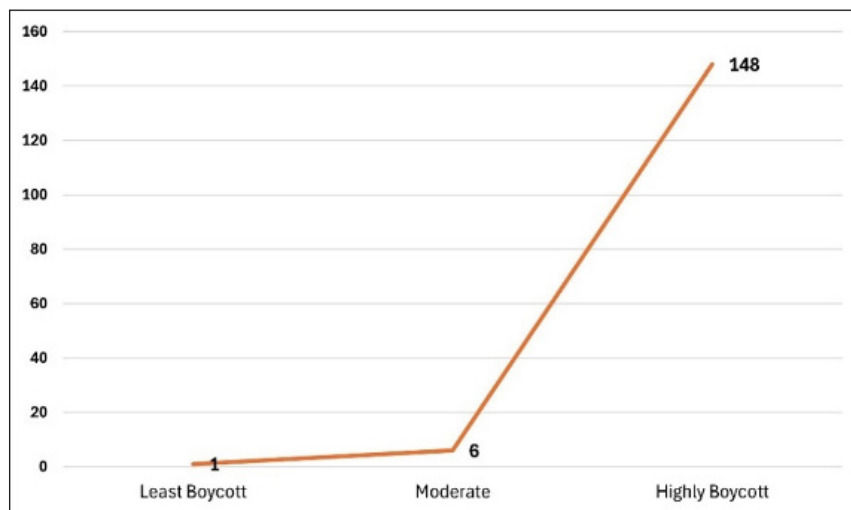


Figure 4. Level of agreement about boycotting based on emotional expression (n=155)

The chi-square test results ($\chi^2 = 82.933$, $p = .000$) show a statistically significant association between collective identity and emotional expression. This finding is important because it reveals that these two constructs are interrelated and jointly contribute to one's tendency to engage in boycott activities. Significantly, the Pearson correlation analysis shows a statistically significant correlation between collective identity and emotional expression among Muslim respondents ($r = .865$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that the action of boycotting Israeli products is not only about collective identity, but is also related to emotional expression among Muslim respondents (see Table 3). Besides, the findings also prove that the respondents were involved in boycotting Israeli products due to the presence of both variables, which resulted in a stronger motivation for their action.

Table 4. Parson correlation between collective identity and emotional expression among Muslim respondents (n=155)

Variables	Collective Identity	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Emotional Expression	.865	0.000

DISCUSSION

According to Givon et al. (2023), women experience emotions more profoundly than males, which may explain why they are more committed to social movement tactics such as boycotts. Given how women are portrayed in society, they are more likely to be empathetic and socially conscious, making them more emotionally invested in issues that align with their group identity. The results indicate a notable difference in the average scores of younger respondents for collective identity and emotional expression depending on their age. Younger people might be more involved in social media and other communication platforms that draw attention to international concerns, which could strengthen emotional reactions and foster a deeper sense of collective identity. According to SIT, an individual's identity is dynamic and changes based on their social environment and

external factors. Brünker et al. (2019) highlighted the possibility that young people are more susceptible to the impact of modern narratives and discourses that highlight the value of group unity and action, leading to higher scores in both collective identification and emotional expressiveness.

The findings highlight the significant role of emotional and empathetic connections in shaping the support for the Palestinian cause among respondents, as indicated by the highest mean scores. These results align with SIT, which emphasises the influence of shared emotional engagement on collective actions (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) while lower mean scores for recognition of the Muslim community and political mobility suggest that these factors were less significant motivators for boycott behaviour. Prior studies indicate that moral outrage and empathy often outweigh institutional or political recognition in driving boycotts (Fernandes, 2020). In addition, a collective identity amplifies participation in boycotts by fostering a unified moral and social perspective (Fominaya, 2018).

According to SIT, when individuals strongly identify with a group, they are more likely to experience emotions that align with the group's collective sentiment. Gruman et al. (2017) as well as Packer and Ungson (2024) found that collective identity influences emotional reactions and collective behaviours which is consistent with the results, indicating that group identity enhances emotional expressiveness, which can promote participation in boycotts. For example, anger or empathy towards the plight of Palestinians can be strengthened by a collective identity as Muslims, which in turn drives the decision to boycott Israeli products.

In order to better understand the dynamics of collective action, protests and boycotts, further in-depth scholarly investigations are warranted. Studies concentrating on the psychological triggers of collective action are necessary because emotional motivations like pride, rage, and empathy are important in encouraging participation (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). In the same way, the impact of common identities—religious, national, or ideological—is essential for encouraging dedication and unity among respondents. A theoretical framework for examining how belonging to a group enhances shared objectives is provided by SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

In the digital age, media outlets play a complex and increasingly important role in influencing how people view boycotts and protests. For example, social media platforms can mobilise people and raise awareness, which can boost collective action. Their algorithms, however, frequently highlight selective storylines, influencing public perception of the efficacy and legitimacy of boycotts. Furthermore, social media frequently creates echo chambers that strengthen preconceived notions and exacerbate polarisation (Sunstein, 2018).

Even if their dynamics are different, traditional media outlets are equally important. However, traditional media outlets' corporate or political ties frequently shape how boycotts are framed, greatly impacting public opinion (Entman, 1993). Furthermore, gatekeeping practices in traditional media determine which voices are amplified, potentially limiting broader awareness of the boycott's objectives and achievements.

This study presents significant remarks on promoting collective identity through culturally aware campaigns and laws, providing politicians with useful information. For scholars, the study adds to the expanding body of knowledge on collective activities by offering a sophisticated perspective that may stimulate more research on group dynamics and emotional reactions. Additionally, media professionals can use these findings to

develop stories and advertising strategies that speak to community values and promote ethical consumer conduct.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide significant insights into the motivation behind the boycott of Israeli products among Muslims in Malaysia. SIT proves that collective identity and emotional expression are closely related and play an important role in motivating collective action. Gender and age differences also illustrate how complex this dynamic is. Understanding these factors can increase the effectiveness of collective action campaigns as well as contribute to a deeper understanding of social behaviour in specific cultural contexts. As social identity continues to evolve, the relationship between identity and emotion will remain an important area to explore in understanding collective action.

A more structured understanding of collective identity and emotional expression can help policymakers and activists design more effective campaigns. They can foster stronger community engagement and solidarity by leveraging emotional and identity aspects. For example, highlighting stories and narratives that align with a group's collective identity can amplify emotional responses and prompt collective actions such as boycotts. However, this boycott action needs to be aspired from a spiritual point of view, as resistance to cruelty is an aspect of faith and piety to Allah swt and not just the world.

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