

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOSITY ON BOYCOTT PARTICIPATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BRAND ATTITUDE WITH BRAND LOYALTY AS THE MODERATING VARIABLE (Study of Starbucks Consumer in Semarang)

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ABSTRACT

Boycott participation represents a form of ethical consumption as an effort by one or more groups to achieve specific objectives by not buying certain products in the marketplace. This study aims to describe and analyze the influence of religiosity on boycott participation and its impact on brand attitude, with brand loyalty examined as a moderating variable.

The population in this study consists of Starbucks consumers in Semarang who have previously purchased Starbucks products and are aware of the boycott issue that impact Starbucks. The sample size used in this study is 100 respondents, obtained using non probability sampling with Lemeshow sampling formula for unknown population. The analytical tool used is SPSS to test simple linear regression and moderated regression analysis (MRA), preceded by validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests.

The results show that religiosity has a positive and significant effect on boycott participation and boycott participation has a negative and significant effect on brand attitude. Furthermore, brand loyalty is also found to significantly weaken the relationship between religiosity and boycott participation.

Keywords: *religiosity, boycott participation, brand attitude, brand loyalty*

INTRODUCTION

The rise of ethical consumerism has transformed individuals from passive buyers into active participants who evaluate and interact with brands based on their internal, social, and environmental values (Sudbury-riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). Social media has amplified this shift by enabling rapid information sharing and collective mobilization, making consumer activism more visible and influential (Carrigan et al., 2023). One prominent form of ethical consumer behavior is participation in brand boycotts, where consumers deliberately avoid purchases to protest perceived unethical practices, leading to decreased sales and negative brand evaluation (Dekhil et al., 2017).

In late 2023, Starbucks became the center of global boycott movements following rising tensions in the Palestine–Israel conflict. The company was perceived by some groups as being politically affiliated and financially supportive of Israel, sparking backlash across Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia (CJPME, 2024). Although Starbucks Corporation has denied the allegations, the issue continued to generate strong emotional reactions among consumers who perceived ongoing support for Starbucks as morally or religiously inappropriate (Starbucks Corporation, 2023).

The financial impact of the boycott is reflected in global sales performance, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Starbucks Q4 (July- August) Sales In Global Scale on 2023-2024

Year	Sales Q3 (in Billion Dollar)
2023	4.120
2024	3.760

Source : Captide, 2024

Starbucks global revenue declined from USD 4.120 billion in 2023 to USD 3.760 billion in 2024, representing a year-on-year decrease of approximately 8,74% (Captide, 2024) . Although multiple macroeconomic factors may contribute to this decline, the contraction coincides with the intensification of boycott movements across various regions. The impact appears even more substantial in Indonesia, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Starbucks Q3 (April- June) Sales in Indonesia on 2023-2024

Year	Sales (in Billion Rupiah)
2023	3.070
2024	2.420

Source : Puspadini, 2024

In Indonesia, Starbucks experienced a 21,17% decline in sales, from IDR 3.070 billion in 2023 to IDR 2.420 billion in 2024. Additionally, 11 stores were reportedly closed nationwide in 2024 (Rengganis, 2024). Similar developments occurred in Malaysia, where approximately 50 out of 408 outlets were closed due to shifting consumer sentiment and commercial pressures (CNA, 2024). These developments indicate that religious and ethical considerations can translate into measurable financial and operational consequences for multinational brands (Abdullah et al., 2021).

Religiosity plays a crucial role in shaping ethical consumption behavior, particularly in societies where religious norms are deeply embedded in daily life. Individuals with higher religiosity tend to align consumption decisions with moral and spiritual values, increasing boycott participation (Dekhil et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2023; Syarif & Herman, 2024). However, Fauzi et al. (2024) found that religiosity may not significantly predict boycott intention, suggesting stronger emotional and social influences. Beyond religiosity, Robinson & Etherington (2016) stated that brand loyalty may moderate boycott responses, as it reflects behavioral repetition and psychological commitment toward a brand, reinforced through reward based programs such as Starbucks Rewards, where members collect points that can be redeemed for discount products and free souvenir (Masternak, 2023). Boycott participation can also reshape brand attitude, an overall evaluative judgment of a brand, potentially damaging credibility and long-term purchase intention (Peter & Olson, 2019).

This research adapts the conceptual framework proposed by Dekhil et al. (2017), which integrates religiosity, boycott participation, brand attitude, and brand loyalty within a single model. However, unlike the original study conducted in Tunisia using an experimental design, this research applies a quantitative survey based approach among Starbucks consumers in Semarang, Indonesia. By addressing population differences, methodological variation, and conflicting empirical findings, this study aims to reassess the role of religiosity in shaping boycott participation, examine its influence on brand attitude, and evaluate the moderating function of brand loyalty within a Muslim majority context characterized by heightened ethical consumer awareness.

STUDY LITERATURE

Religiosity

Religiosity refers to the level of an individual's commitment to their faith, reflected in religious knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and the application of religious principles in daily life (Nasuha, 2021). Possamai & Turner (2011) distinguish religiosity into intrinsic and extrinsic

dimensions: intrinsic religiosity represents a deeply internalized and sincere commitment in which religion serves as the primary guiding force of life, while extrinsic religiosity reflects a more instrumental orientation where religion is used to achieve social or personal benefits. Beyond its personal dimension, religiosity also functions as a source of social cohesion, reinforcing shared moral norms and collective identity within communities (Mahudin et al., 2016). In ethical decision-making contexts, religiosity provides moral clarity and resilience, enabling individuals to align their behavior including consumption choices and boycott participation with deeply rooted values (Gupta et al., 2023). Therefore, religiosity operates both individually and socially, shaping how consumers interpret ethical issues and reinforce moral standards.

Boycott Participation

Boycott refers to an effort by one or more groups to achieve specific objectives by refusing to purchase certain products in the marketplace (Friedman, 1985 as cited in Dekhil et al., 2017). It represents a form of ethical consumption and social protest in which consumers deliberately avoid brands that conflict with their political, moral, or religious values (John & Klein, 2003 as cited in Braunsberger & Buckler, 2011). Boycott participation is primarily driven by ethical and moral motivations, the desire to influence corporate behavior, alignment with personal identity and values, and belief in the power of collective action (Braunsberger & Buckler, 2011). Research further shows that moral outrage and emotional intensity significantly shape willingness to participate (Makarem & Jae, 2016). While social media plays a crucial role in spreading information, strengthening solidarity, and amplifying activism, particularly in politically and religiously sensitive contexts (Syarif & Herman, 2024; Ulfah et al., 2025). Consequently, in the digital era, boycotts have evolved into empowered consumer activism, where purchasing decisions function not only as economic choices but also as expressions of identity, accountability demands, and value alignment.

Brand Attitude

Brand attitude refers to consumers' overall evaluation of a brand, reflecting the extent to which they hold positive or negative assessments across cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). It is shaped by rational judgments of product quality and performance, emotional responses developed through brand interactions, alignment between brand values and consumers' personal, social, or ethical beliefs, and social influence through media and communication channels. Positive cognitive evaluations and satisfying emotional experiences strengthen confidence and attachment, whereas dissatisfaction, negative emotions, or perceived value misalignment may lead to unfavorable attitudes. Brand attitudes are dynamic and may shift due to experiences, contextual changes, or controversies, particularly when consumers perceive inconsistency between their beliefs and the brand's actions (Peter & Olson, 2019). Furthermore, consumer knowledge enhances trust and reduces uncertainty, increasing the likelihood of favorable attitudes and repeat purchase behavior (Riza et al., 2014 as cited in Nugraha & Sjoraida, 2025). Therefore, brand attitude evolves over time as a reflection of product evaluation, emotional connection, social influence, and value consistency.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to a consumer's consistent preference and commitment toward a particular brand, demonstrated through repeat purchases and resistance to switching to competitors (Sari et al., 2023). Loyalty develops through meaningful and consistent interactions that foster trust, comfort, and personal connection rather than merely transactional satisfaction (Robinson & Etherington, 2016). Its core drivers include high-quality and reliable service experiences that create relational comfort, emotional attachment formed through repeated positive interactions, and positive advocacy reflected in willingness to recommend the brand. Loyal consumers often experience reduced decision-making effort due to familiarity and

habitual purchasing patterns (Dekhil et al., 2017). Moreover, loyalty can enhance resilience during controversies, as emotionally attached consumers tend to show greater forgiveness and maintain commitment despite negative events (Khelil, 2025). Thus, brand loyalty functions as a long-term psychological and behavioral commitment that strengthens competitive advantage and provides reputational stability in challenging contexts

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

The Influence of Religiosity on Boycott Participation

Religiosity significantly influences consumer behavior, particularly in ethical and religiously sensitive contexts, as it shapes individuals value systems and consumption patterns (Abdullah et al., 2021). Consumers with strong religious convictions often perceive purchasing decisions as expressions of moral and spiritual identity, leading them to avoid brands that contradict their beliefs. This aligns with Identity-Based Motivation Theory, which explains that when religious identity becomes salient, individuals act consistently with their values (Oyserman, 2015). Thus, boycott participation can be understood as an identity consistent response when a brand is perceived to violate religious principles Dekhil et al. (2017). Empirical studies generally support this relationship. Dekhil et al. (2017) and Ahmad et al. (2025) found that religiosity positively influences boycott behavior, particularly in religious societies. Syarif & Herman (2024) also emphasize that social media amplifies this influence. However, Fauzi et al. (2024) report that emotional reactions, rather than religiosity, may sometimes play a more dominant role. Despite mixed findings, most evidence suggests that religiosity remains a significant predictor of boycott participation.

Based on these theories and previous research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Religiosity has a positive and significant influence on boycott participation.

The Influence of Boycott Participation on Brand Attitude

Boycott participation represents consumer resistance toward brands perceived to conflict with moral, social, or religious values. When consumers engage in boycotts, they reassess a company's ethical standards and social responsibility, often leading to negative cognitive and emotional evaluations. As a result, brand attitude may decline due to reduced trust and unfavorable associations (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2015). In this sense, boycott participation not only reflects purchase avoidance but also signals symbolic rejection that weakens brand image and integrity. As a form of consumer activism, boycott behavior is closely linked to personal and collective identity. Through Self-Perception Theory, individuals infer their attitudes from their own actions; thus, participating in a boycott can reinforce negative evaluations of the targeted brand (Bem, 1972). Research also indicates that ethically or religiously motivated boycotts intensify emotional responses, strengthening negative brand associations and eroding brand equity (Rochma, 2024). Empirical findings consistently show that boycott participation harms brand attitude. Dekhil et al. (2017) found that boycott activities significantly reduced brand evaluations in the Coca-Cola case. Nurkhalisa & Daulay (2025) further demonstrate that boycotts can escalate into brand hate, while Ulfah et al. (2025) reveal that participation shapes long term negative brand perceptions. Collectively, these studies confirm the detrimental impact of boycott participation on brand attitude.

Based on these theories and previous research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Boycott participation has a negative and significant influence on brand attitude.

The Influence of Brand Loyalty in Moderating the Relationship Between Religiosity and Boycott Participation

Brand loyalty reflects a deep consumer commitment characterized by repeat purchases, emotional attachment, advocacy, and resistance to alternatives (Robinson & Etherington, 2016).

It goes beyond transactional behavior, linking the consumer's identity to the brand and fostering defense during challenging situations. When religiosity encourages boycott participation, brand loyalty may function as a moderating factor. Loyal consumers can experience tension between faith-based values and brand attachment; however, strong loyalty may reduce switching intentions (Moore et al., 2003, as cited in Abosag & Farah, 2014). Consistent with Oliver, (1999) view, loyalty represents a strengthened commitment that resists external pressures. Nevertheless, in contexts where religious conviction is highly salient, moral priorities may override loyalty. Empirical evidence supports this moderating role. Dekhil et al. (2017) found that brand loyalty weakens the positive effect of religiosity on boycott participation in the Coca-Cola case. Similarly, Abosag & Farah (2014) show that loyalty mitigates boycott responses among highly religious consumers. Zhang et al. (2020) further demonstrate that loyalty buffers negative reactions in adverse brand situations, reinforcing its protective function.

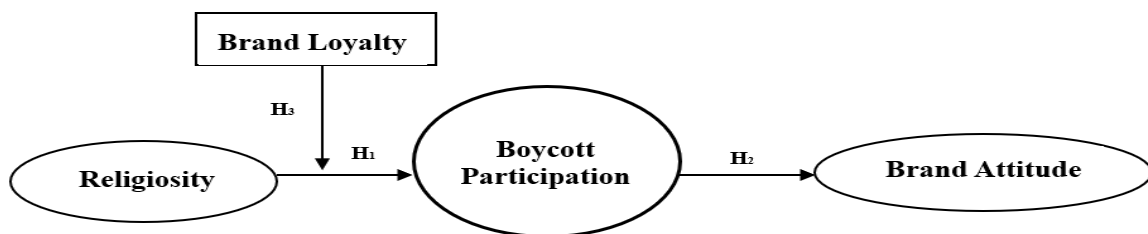
Based on these theories and previous research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed

H3: Brand loyalty weakens and significantly moderates the relationship between religiosity and boycott participation

Theoretical Framework

Based on the theoretical foundation, previous studies, and hypotheses, the following research framework is developed in picture 1. below :

Picture 1. Theoretical Framework



Source : dekhil et al., 2017

The theoretical framework of this study positions Religiosity (X) as the independent variable that influences Boycott Participation (Y₁). Boycott Participation (Y₁) functions as the intervening variable, it is hypothesized to be influenced by Religiosity (X) and, in turn, to shape Brand Attitude (Y₂). Brand Attitude (Y₂) serves as the dependent variable, reflecting consumers overall evaluation and emotional perception of the brand after exposure to boycott participation (Y₁). Furthermore, Brand Loyalty (Z) is incorporated as a moderating variable, as it is expected to influence the strength of the relationship between Religiosity (X) and Boycott Participation (Y₁), either strengthening or weakening this relationship.

RESEARCH METHOD

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of consumers of Starbucks in Semarang City. The target respondents are individuals who have purchased Starbucks products at least once and are aware of the boycott issue related to the brand. This research employs a non-probability sampling technique due to the undefined size of the overall consumer population. The minimum sample size was determined using Lemeshow's formula for unknown populations, resulting in a minimum requirement of 96 respondents (Machali, 2021). To enhance reliability and ensure adequacy, the final sample consisted of 100 respondents.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS to conduct instrument testing, classical assumption testing, regression analysis, and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). Instrument testing included validity and reliability assessments, while classical assumption testing covered normality and multicollinearity. The results showed that all measurement items were valid and reliable, and the regression model satisfied the required classical assumptions. Therefore, the data were considered appropriate for further analysis using linear regression analysis and MRA to test the proposed hypotheses, with a significance level of 0, 05 applied to determine statistical significance and the direction of influence was determined based on the unstandardized coefficient (β), where a positive value indicates a positive influence and a negative value indicates a negative influence.

To examine the proposed relationships, the analysis generated regression coefficients through a series of structural equations. First Equation was used to test the direct influence of Religiosity (X) on Boycott Participation (Y₁). Second equation assessed the influence of Boycott Participation (Y₁) on Brand Attitude (Y₂). Lastly, Third equation (3) incorporated the interaction term (X × Z) to evaluate the moderating role of Brand Loyalty (Z) in strengthening or weakening the relationship between Religiosity (X) and Boycott Participation (Y₁). The regression equations applied in this study are presented as follows:

$$Y_1 = \beta_1 X + e_1 \tag{1}$$

$$Y_2 = \beta_2 Y_1 + e_2 \tag{2}$$

$$Y_1 = \beta_3 X + \beta_4 (X \times Z) + e_3 \tag{3}$$

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

	Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage
Respondent Gender	Men	47	47
	Women	53	53
Respondent Age	17-22	33	33
	23-28	20	20
	29-34	22	22
	35-40	17	17
	41-46	6	6
	47-52	2	2

In terms of gender distribution, 53% of respondents were female and 47% were male. The relatively balanced composition indicates that the analysis reflects perspectives from both genders without significant dominance from one group. Based on age distribution, the majority of respondents were aged 17–22 years (33%), followed by 29–34 years (22%) and 23–28 years (20%). Smaller proportions were represented by the 35–40 age group (17%), 41–46 (6%), and 47–52 (2%). These findings show that the sample is dominated by young consumers, particularly students and young adults, who are generally more active in social media discussions and more responsive to ethical consumption movements, including boycott campaigns (Syarif & Herman, 2024). Overall, the respondent profile indicates that the study largely captures the perceptions and behavioral tendencies of young, socially aware consumers in Semarang who are actively exposed to boycott discourse.

Linear Regression analysis

In this study, regression analysis is used to explain the of Religiosity on Boycott Participation and the influence of Boycott Participation on Brand Attitude.

a) Model 1 ($Y_1 = B_1X + e_1$)

Table 4. Model 1 Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.082	3.770		-.022	.983
	Total_X	.703	.151	.425	4.653	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Total_Y1

Source: processed SPSS results, 2025

$$Y_1 = 0,703X$$

Based on the regression results of Model 1, Religiosity demonstrates a positive and statistically significant influence on Boycott Participation, with a coefficient of 0,703 and a significance level below 0,001. Given that the probability value is substantially lower than the 0,05 criterion, the relationship is statistically robust. This implies that an increase in religiosity is associated with a meaningful rise in individuals willingness to engage in boycott activities, indicating that stronger religious commitment encourages greater participation in boycott behavior. This result aligns with prior research conducted by Dekhil et al. (2017), Abdullah et al., (2021), and Syarif & Herman (2024), all of which reported a significant positive relationship between religiosity and boycott behavior, emphasizing the important role of religious values in shaping ethical and protest-oriented consumption decisions.

b) Model 2 ($Y_2 = B_2Y_1 + e_2$)

Table 5. Model 2 Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	27.560	1.668		16.524	<.001
	Total_Y1	-.596	.092	-.549	-6.501	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Total_Y2

Source: processed SPSS results, 2025

$$Y_2 = - 0,596Y_1$$

Based on the regression results of Model 2, Boycott Participation has a negative and statistically significant effect on Brand Attitude, with a coefficient of -0, 596 and a significance level below 0.001. Since the p-value is far below the 0,05 threshold, the effect is considered highly significant, indicating that higher involvement in boycott actions significantly reduces positive evaluations of the brand. This demonstrates that boycott behavior not only reflects purchase rejection but also reshapes consumers cognitive and emotional perceptions of the brand. These findings are consistent with the previous studies that found boycott participation significantly reduces brand attitude(Dekhil et al., 2017; Nurkhalisa & Daulay, 2025; Ulfah et

al., 2025). Thus, this study strengthens previous empirical evidence that boycott participation has a significant negative impact on brand attitude.

Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA)

In this study, Moderated regression analysis (MRA) is used to explain the influence of brand loyalty in moderating the influence of religiosity to boyvott participation.

c) Model 3 (Y₁= B₃X+B₄(XZ) + e₃)

Table 6. Model 3 Moderated Regression Analysis

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.701	2.603		.269	.788
	Total_X	.975	.108	.590	9.070	<.001
	XZ	-.023	.002	-.678	-10.423	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Total_Y1

Source: processed SPSS results, 2025

$$Y_1 = 0,975X + - 0,023XZ$$

Based on the moderated regression results of Model 3, Religiosity continues to have a positive effect on Boycott Participation with a coefficient of 0,975, and the significance value is below 0,001. In addition, the interaction term between Religiosity and Brand Loyalty has a negative coefficient of -0.023 with a significance level below 0.001, Since the p-value is far below the 0,05 threshold, both the direct and interaction effects are considered highly significant. This indicates that although religious individuals tend to support boycotts, strong Brand Loyalty significantly weakens the influence of Religiosity on Boycott Participation. These findings are consistent with Dekhil et al. (2017)) and Abosag & Fara (2014), who found that brand loyalty plays a significant buffering role in reducing the impact of religiosity on boycott participation.

CONCLUSION

1. H1 is accepted. Religiosity has a positive and significant influence on boycott participation among Starbucks consumers in Semarang. This indicates that individuals with higher religious commitment are more likely to take part in Starbucks boycott actions as a reflection of their moral and religious values.
2. H2 is accepted. Boycott participation has a negative and significant influence on brand attitude among Starbucks consumers in Semarang, meaning that the stronger a person’s involvement in boycott activities, the lower their positive perception and evaluation toward the Starbucks brand.
3. H3 is accepted. Brand loyalty weakens and significantly moderates the relationship between religiosity and boycott participation among Starbucks consumers in Semarang. This means that even though highly religious individuals tend to support boycott actions, those who maintain strong loyalty toward Starbucks are less likely to fully participate in such actions. In this context, brand loyalty serves as a buffering factor that reduces the intensity of boycott behavior driven by religiosity.

Suggestion

1. For Starbucks, transparent, culturally sensitive, and socially responsive communication is crucial, particularly in markets with strong ethical and religious values. Since boycott participation significantly reduces brand attitude, the company should deliver clear and consistent messaging when responding to social or political issues to minimize misinformation and negative consumer perceptions. In addition, as brand loyalty has been shown to weaken consumers tendency to participate in boycotts, Starbucks should continuously strengthen loyalty programs, improve service quality, and enhance personalized customer experiences. Reinforcing emotional bonds with consumers can help reduce boycott behavior and maintain longterm commitment, even during periods of public controversy.
2. For marketers and brand managers in general, strengthening emotional engagement and implementing relationship-based marketing strategies are essential to sustaining customer loyalty and positive brand perceptions. Companies should also ensure ethical alignment in their partnerships and collaborations, particularly in contexts where moral and religious values strongly influence consumer behavior. By maintaining socially responsible branding and ethical consistency, firms can enhance brand credibility, build long-term trust, and reduce the risk of becoming targets of boycott movements.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

This study has several limitations. First, the sample was limited to 100 respondents in Semarang, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader consumer populations in Indonesia. Second, the data were collected solely through questionnaires, which may introduce social desirability bias and may not fully capture the complexity of actual boycott behavior. In addition, the research model focused primarily on religiosity as the main predictor of boycott participation, which means other potential determinants of boycott behavior may not have been fully explored.

Future research is encouraged to involve a larger and more diverse sample, including cross-regional or cross-cultural comparisons, to enhance generalizability. Applying a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques could also provide deeper insights into consumers' motivations in boycott decisions. Furthermore, future studies are recommended to examine brand loyalty not only as a moderating variable but also as a direct predictor of boycott participation. Additional variables such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) perception, moral obligation, and media exposure may also be incorporated to better capture the broader psychological and social dynamics influencing boycott behaviour.

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