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Brand Hate and Boycott Intention toward International Brands Among Malaysian Consumers: Religious Identity and Personality Traits as Moderator

(Kebencian Jenama dan Niat Pemboikotan terhadap Jenama Antarabangsa dalam Kalangan Pengguna Malaysia: Identiti Keagamaan dan Ciri Personaliti sebagai Moderator)

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ABSTRACT

The increasing occurrence of brand boycotts has attracted scholarly and managerial attention as consumers become more conscious of companies' values and corporate practices. This study examines the effects of brand hate, attitude toward boycott, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms on boycott intention among Malaysian consumers, with religious identity and personality traits as moderators. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire, with data collected from 300 Malaysian consumers through an online survey. The data were analysed using PLS-SEM. The findings indicate that most respondents were young consumers aged 18–24 years, and four of twelve hypotheses were supported. This study extends Theory of Planned Behaviour by incorporating brand hate as an emotional antecedent and provides practical insights for international brands operating in Malaysia's multicultural and religiously sensitive market.

Keywords: Brand Hate; boycott intention; international brands; religious identity; personality traits

ABSTRAK

Peningkatan kejadian boikot terhadap jenama telah menarik perhatian akademik dan pengurusan apabila pengguna semakin peka terhadap nilai dan amalan korporat syarikat. Kajian ini mengkaji pengaruh kebencian terhadap jenama, sikap terhadap boikot, kawalan tingkah laku yang dirasakan, dan norma subjektif terhadap niat untuk memboikot dalam kalangan pengguna Malaysia, dengan identiti agama dan ciri-ciri personaliti sebagai pemboleh ubah penyederhana. Kajian kuantitatif telah dijalankan menggunakan soal selidik berstruktur, dengan data dikumpulkan daripada 300 pengguna Malaysia melalui tinjauan dalam talian. Data dianalisis menggunakan PLS-SEM. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa majoriti responden merupakan pengguna muda berumur 18–24 tahun, dan empat daripada dua belas hipotesis telah disokong. Kajian ini memperluaskan Teori Tingkah Laku Terancang dengan mengintegrasikan kebencian terhadap jenama sebagai anteseden emosi serta memberikan pandangan praktikal kepada jenama antarabangsa yang beroperasi dalam pasaran Malaysia yang berbilang budaya dan sensitif terhadap isu agama.

Kata kunci: Kebencian jenama; niat pemboikotan; jenama antarabangsa; identiti keagamaan; ciri personaliti

INTRODUCTION

Globally, international brands play an important role in consumers' preferences and purchasing decisions. A brand represents more than a name and logo, reflecting the broader identity of a company, service, or product (Hansses et al. 2023). As international brands expand widely, their corporate actions, ethical practices, political affiliations, and social responsibilities face greater public scrutiny. This phenomenon is particularly evident during the prolonged Israel-Palestine conflict, which has intensified boycott campaigns against selected international brands perceived to be associated with Israel or its allies (Mahreen Zaman et al. 2025). Such boycotts are consumer protests that are perceived as human rights violations, corporate involvement, and foreign policies related to the conflict (Yang & Mundel 2022). The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, initiated by Palestinian civil society in 2005, is one prominent example (Abbas et al. 2025). However, not all international brands are targeted, as campaigns generally focus on companies based on their perceived involvement or positions, such as Starbucks, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, KFC, Zara, and HP (Alqatan 2025; Assoud et al. 2026). Therefore, socially conscious consumers may develop negative perceptions that evolve into brand hate and boycott intentions.

Brand hate can be described as a strong negative emotional and psychological response that consumers develop toward a brand (Ozdemir et al. 2024). Previous studies have identified several antecedents of brand hate, including corporate failures such as poor product characteristics, service failures, and perceived price unfairness (Mushtaq et al. 2024). Brand hate may also emerge from symbolic incongruity and ideological incompatibility when consumers perceive a mismatch between their personal values and those represented by the brand (Banerjee & Goel 2020). Furthermore,

external crises and corporate social irresponsibility have been shown to intensify negative consumer emotions and contribute to the development of brand hate (Mednini & Turki 2026). These negative emotions frequently translate into adverse behavioural outcomes, such as brand avoidance, negative electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), protests, and even brand sabotage (Sameeni et al. 2024). The widespread use of social media has further amplified these behaviours by enabling consumers to rapidly disseminate grievances and organise collective actions against brands (Odoom et al. 2024).

One of the most significant consequences of brand hate is consumer boycott behaviour. Consumer boycotts represent collective actions in which consumers deliberately avoid purchasing products or services from a particular brand, company, or country to express dissatisfaction or demand change (Babu et al. 2025). Boycotts have become an increasingly influential form of consumer activism, often driven by ethical concerns, political issues, or perceptions of social injustice (Kelm 2026). Recent research also shows that consumer responses to corporate social irresponsibility can be influenced by consumers' perceptions of ethicality, moral responsibility, and the personal benefits associated with continued consumption (Su & Siti 2026). Previous studies suggest that consumer boycotts can result in substantial financial losses, reputational damage, and long-term changes in consumer–brand relationships (Mulyono & Rolando 2025).

The Malaysian context provides a particularly relevant setting for examining boycott intentions toward international brands. Malaysia's multicultural and multi-religious society is characterised by strong religious and cultural values that frequently influence consumption decisions (Mirza et al. 2020). Recent boycott movements targeting international brands associated with geopolitical conflicts have demonstrated the growing influence of consumer activism within the country. According to Chan (2024), as reported by Malay Mail, the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) cautioned against emotionally driven boycotts of multinational fast-food brands due to their potential adverse effects on the local economy and employment. Similarly, Malaysia's Ministry of Economy reported that boycott campaigns linked to the Israel–Palestine conflict contributed to notable employment losses in the food and beverage sector despite having limited effects on national gross domestic product (GDP) (Bernama, 2024). These developments suggest that boycott behaviour in Malaysia extends beyond economic considerations and may be influenced by deeper social, religious, and psychological factors.

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen (1991), attitude toward boycott (ATB), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) have been widely used to explain the boycott intention. Previous Malaysian studies have similarly focused on these TPB dimensions and other behavioural determinants to explain consumers' boycott decisions (Hamzah & Mustafa 2019; Nordin et al. 2024). Although these studies provide valuable insights into the cognitive and social determinants of boycott intention, brand hate and other individual-level factors have received comparatively less attention in an integrated framework. Meanwhile, research on brand hate has shown that strong emotions can trigger various anti-brand responses, but their role alongside TPB determinants remains less understood (Walter et al. 2023). Furthermore, the moderating roles of religious identity and personality traits remain underexplored, particularly in culturally and religiously diverse markets such as Malaysia. Existing evidence is also predominantly drawn from Western contexts, which may limit the applicability of these findings to markets where religious and cultural identities are more prominent in consumer behaviour.

To address these gaps, this study investigates the impacts of brand hate, attitude toward boycott, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on boycott intention toward international brands among Malaysian consumers. In addition, the study examines whether personality traits and religious identity moderate these relationships. This research makes three important contributions. First, the expansion of the TPB by combining brand hate as an emotional antecedent, thereby the integrating of emotional, cognitive, and social determinants within a single framework. Second, it advances understanding of individual differences by examining the moderating roles of religious identity and personality traits in shaping consumers' responses to controversial international brands. Third, it provides empirical evidence from Malaysia, a multicultural and religiously diverse market that remains underexplored in the brand boycott literature. Thus, the study extends previous Malaysian boycott research beyond the focus on TPB-based and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors underlying consumer boycott intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

UNDERLYING THEORY

This study integrates Brand Hate Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and selected dimensions of Big Five Personality Traits Theory to explain consumers' boycott intentions toward international brands. Brand Hate Theory provides the emotional foundation by explaining how intense negative emotions developing from perceived misconduct, ethical concerns, or value incongruence can lead to anti-brand behaviours such as boycotting (Walter et al. 2023; Woodside et al. 2023). TPB explains boycott intention through attitude toward boycott, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen 1991). Consumers may support boycotts when they evaluate participation positively, receive social encouragement, and perceive themselves as capable of avoiding the targeted brand (Hamzah & Mustafa 2019; Mady et al. 2025). This study also focuses on conscientiousness and agreeableness, which may influence responses to unethical brand practices and controversies (Simha & Parboteeah 2020). Hence, the framework integrates emotional, cognitive, social, and personality-related factors to explain boycott intention.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

BRAND HATE (BH)

It refers to a strong negative emotional reaction toward a brand, often triggered by dissatisfaction, feelings of betrayal, unethical business practices, or a mismatch between the brand's values and those of the consumer (C. Zhang & Laroche 2021). Besides, spreading negative word-of-mouth (WOM), filing complaints, and participating in anti-brand behaviour are responses associated with the strong negative emotions toward a brand proposed by Brand Hate Theory (Santos et al. 2023). Previous research has consistently found that brand hate is a key factor influencing consumers' intentions to boycott a brand (Sameeni et al. 2024). Consumers who perceive a brand as violating their expectations or personal values are likely to participate in boycotts as a means of expressing dissatisfaction and holding the brand accountable (Hanssens et al. 2023; Ríos-Rodríguez et al. 2021). Therefore:

H_1 Brand hate has a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

ATTITUDE TOWARD BOYCOTT (ATB)

Attitude toward boycott refers to consumers' positive or negative evaluation of participating in a boycott against an international brand (Kim et al. 2022). According to Ajzen (1991), individuals who perceive boycott participation as beneficial, appropriate, or morally justified are more likely to develop stronger intentions to engage in such behaviour. Previous research has consistently shown that a favourable attitude toward boycotting increases consumers' intention to engage in boycott activities (Sari & Games 2024). Consumers with stronger negative evaluations of a brand or its practices tend to exhibit greater willingness to engage in boycott activities (Delistavrou et al. 2020). Similarly, research has shown that favourable attitudes towards ethical consumption and consumer activism significantly increase the likelihood of participating in boycotts (Nordin et al. 2024). Therefore:

H_2 Attitude toward boycott has a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL (PBC)

Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's belief about how difficult or straightforward it is to perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen 1991). PBC in consumer boycotts refers to consumers' perceived ability to refrain from purchasing the targeted brand, and stronger PBC increases boycott intention by reducing perceived barriers and improving access to substitutes and other practical means of participation (Hamzah & Mustafa 2019; Mady et al. 2025). In previous studies, consumers participating in boycott activities feel they have greater control over their purchasing choices (Chiang & Muhammad Arif 2024). A boycott study on Israel-related companies states that consumers become more knowledgeable and ethical and may use boycotts "to coerce the companies or brands to be environmentally, ethically and socially responsible" (Hamzah & Mustafa 2019). Therefore:

H_3 Perceived Behavioural Control has a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

SUBJECTIVE NORM (SN)

Family, friends, and society are important reference groups that shape an individual's insight; perceptions of whether a particular behaviour should be performed are referred to as subjective norms (Ajzen 1991). In the context of consumer boycotts, SN reflects consumers' perceptions of significant others who approve or support boycott participation, and these norms can significantly shape boycott intention through social pressure and conformity to group expectations (Chiang & Muhammad Arif 2024; Shim et al. 2021). Social influence arising from family, peers, religious communities, and online networks can strengthen consumers' willingness to boycott brands perceived as unethical or inconsistent with their values (Arinta & Mutmainah 2023). In a Malaysian study, consumers who boycotted Israel-related companies reported that the subjective norm had a significant relationship with their intention to participate in the boycott (Hamzah & Mustafa 2019). Therefore:

H_4 Subjective norms have a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY (RI) AS A MODERATOR

Religious identity refers to the extent to which individuals perceive their religious beliefs, values, and affiliation as an important part of their self-concept (Etengoff & Rodriguez 2020). It reflects how religious affiliation shapes an individual's sense of self and their relationship with their religious group. Religious identity should be distinguished from related concepts such as religion, religiosity, and religious commitment. Religion generally refers to an organised system of beliefs,

practices, values, and institutions, whereas religiosity concerns the degree to which an individual holds religious beliefs, engages in religious practices, and incorporates religious principles into daily life (Allolio-Näcke & Demmrich 2024). Religious commitment refers more specifically to the strength of an individual's attachment to and involvement in religious beliefs and practices (Koenig et al. 2015). In contrast, religious identity focuses on the identity-based and self-definitional aspect of religion, particularly how strongly religious affiliation forms part of an individual's self-concept (Etengoff & Rodriguez 2020; Markowski & Serpe 2025). Stojković et al. (2020) conceptualised religious identity development in terms of four statuses: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. This conceptualisation further highlights the distinction between religious identity and religiosity, as religious identity concerns the development and salience of an individual's religious self-definition rather than simply the degree of religious belief, practice, or commitment. In the present study, religious identity was examined as a moderator because it concerns whether the salience of religious identity changes the strength of the relationships between psychological and social determinants and boycott intention. Drawing on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1986), individuals tend to behave consistently with identities central to their self-concept. Religious identity may moderate the relationships between brand hate, attitude toward boycott, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and boycott intention, as religious values can shape moral evaluations, reinforce boycott attitudes, influence perceptions of social expectations, and affect consumers' willingness to avoid brands that are perceived as conflicting with their beliefs. However, these effects may vary depending on the extent to which individuals integrate their religious identity into consumption decisions. Therefore:

H_5 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between brand hate and boycott intention.
H_6 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention.
H_7 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between perceived behavioural control and boycott intention.
H_8 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between subjective norms and boycott intention.

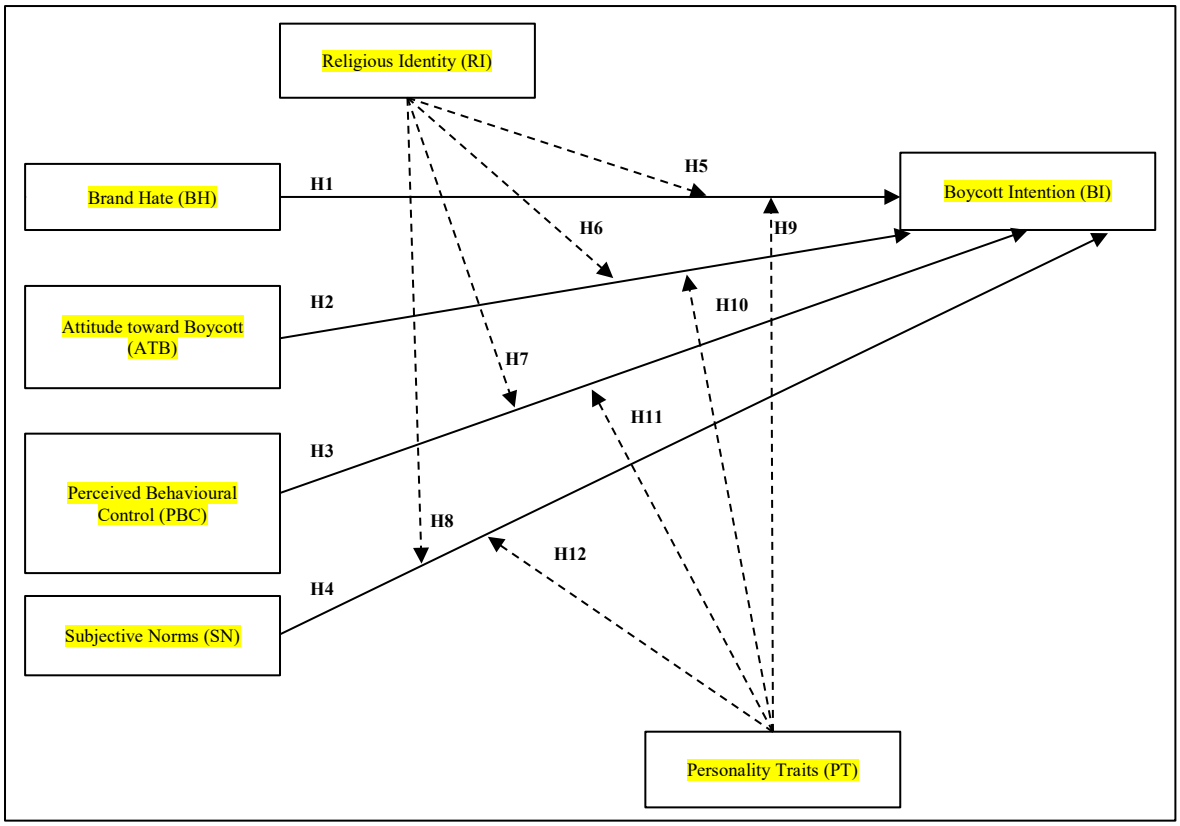
PERSONALITY TRAITS (PT) AS A MODERATOR

The Big Five personality framework comprises five broad dimensions: (i) openness to experience, (ii) conscientiousness, (iii) extraversion, (iv) agreeableness, and (v) neuroticism or emotional stability (McCrae & Costa, 1997). The present study only focuses on conscientiousness and agreeableness because of their potential relevance to ethical evaluation and socially responsible consumer responses. Conscientiousness reflects responsibility, self-discipline, dependability, and adherence to standards. Whereas agreeableness reflects empathy, cooperation, and concern for others (McCrae & Costa 1997; Simha & Parboteeah 2020). These characteristics may be relevant when consumers evaluate brands and consider whether to participate in a boycott. Prior research has examined personality traits in relation to brand hate and consumer responses (Sameeni et al. 2024; Chahal & Dolkar 2024). Following Sameeni et al. (2024), this study examined Personality Trait in the brand-hate as one latent variable, i.e., combining all items that represent the Big Five personality framework, instead of treating all five traits separately. Six items were adapted and operationalised to represent Personality Traits (PT) that reflect conscientiousness and agreeableness as a single latent variable. This decision was made to align the operational model with the study's objective of testing the joint role of these selected personality characteristics. Accordingly, the hypotheses below concern only the combined PT construct, and any conclusions are limited to this operationalisation. Hence:

H_9 Personality Traits significantly moderate the relationship between brand hate and boycott intention.
H_{10} Personality Traits significantly moderate the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention.
H_{11} Personality Traits significantly moderate the relationship between perceived behavioural control and boycott intention.
H_{12} Personality Traits significantly moderate the relationship between subjective norms and boycott intention.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Brand Hate Theory, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and the Big Five Personality Traits Theory are integrated in this study to explain boycott intentions toward international brands among Malaysian consumers. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study and its hypothesis development.



**Note: The bold lines refer to direct relationships; however, broken lines refer to moderating relationships*
H_1 was developed based of Brand Hate Theory
H_2 – H_4 were developed based on Theory of Planned Behaviour
H_5 – H_{12} proposed moderating hypotheses

FIGURE 1. Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a quantitative research design based on a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality can be objectively measured through empirical evidence and statistical analysis (Hair et al. 2021). This approach is appropriate for examining and testing relationships among brand hate, attitude toward boycott, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, religious identity, personality traits, and boycott intention. Primary data were collected directly from respondents using a structured questionnaire containing measurement items adapted from established studies (Hair et al. 2021). A cross-sectional design was adopted, with data collected from respondents at a single point in time to examine their perceptions, attitudes, and boycott intentions. The quantitative approach enabled the proposed hypotheses and relationships to be examined using statistical analysis (Hair et al. 2021). Finally, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to assess the measurement model and structural relationships within the proposed conceptual framework.

TABLE 1. Summary of research

Research Design Characteristic	Type
Research Philosophy	Positivism
Research Purpose	Descriptive
Methodological Choice	Quantitative
Research Strategy	Survey
Data Source	Primary Data
Time Horizon	Cross-sectional
Data Analysis Technique	PLS-SEM

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

Respondents were required to meet the following eligibility criteria: (i) be Malaysian citizens; (ii) be aged 18 years or above; (iii) have prior experience purchasing or interacting with international brands; and (iv) reside in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, or Kota Kinabalu. Screening questions were used at the beginning of the questionnaire to verify these criteria,

and respondents who did not meet any of the eligibility requirements were excluded from the study. Before answering the questionnaire, respondents were provided with a description of international brands and the consumer boycott context. Respondents were not required to have prior knowledge of, or experience with, a specific boycott incident or event. Instead, they were asked to consider international brands in general and evaluate their perceptions and intentions within the stated boycott context. Consequently, the study examined respondents' general perceptions of brand hate, attitude toward boycott, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and boycott intention toward international brands, rather than their responses to a specific brand or boycott incident. Non-probability convenience sampling was used. G*Power indicated a minimum sample size of 129 respondents ($f^2 = 0.15$, $\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80, four predictors). A target of 300 respondents was established to enhance statistical reliability and accommodate incomplete responses.

MEASUREMENT OF CONSTRUCTS

A structured questionnaire adapted from established studies in consumer behaviour, brand management, and boycott research was used to collect data. Hence, to ensure the certain the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire comprised eight segments covering demographic questions (section A), while the others focused on the variables from previously validated scales (Section B to Section H). A five-point Likert scale is widely used in social science and consumer behaviour research because the effectiveness in measuring all constructs ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree (Hair et al. 2021). Therefore, this scale was used to measure all latent constructs in the study. Table 3 summarizes the questionnaire sections, constructs, and measurement items used in this study.

For the Personality Traits construct, six items were initially adapted from Sameeni et al. (2024), representing two selected dimensions of the Big Five personality framework: conscientiousness and agreeableness. The Big Five framework comprises five dimensions; therefore, the present study does not claim that conscientiousness and agreeableness represent the complete Big Five personality structure. Instead, these two dimensions were purposively selected for their theoretical relevance to ethical evaluation, responsibility, social responsiveness, and value-consistent consumer behaviour. Conscientiousness reflects responsibility, self-regulation, and adherence to standards, while agreeableness reflects empathy, cooperation, and concern for others (McCrae & Costa 1997; Simha & Parboteeah 2020). Sameeni et al. (2024) provides a relevant empirical basis for examining personality in the brand-hate context, but it does not provide direct evidence that the Big Five dimensions should be combined into a single latent variable. In the present study, the selected indicators were therefore combined as a study-specific PT construct to test their joint moderating role, in accordance with the scope of the research model. This operational decision does not imply that conscientiousness and agreeableness are theoretically equivalent, or that they constitute a validated higher-order personality construct; their independent moderating effects were not estimated. The measurement model was assessed using indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE), following PLS-SEM guidelines (Hair et al. 2021). These statistical criteria assess the measurement performance of the combined indicators but do not, by themselves, establish the conceptual equivalence of the two dimensions. The findings relating to PT are therefore interpreted as applying only to this combined, study-specific construct.

TABLE 2. Summary of questionnaire items

Section	Construct	Dimensions	No. of Items	Source
A	Demographic Information	-	7	Researcher Developed
B	Boycott Intention	-	3	(Avcı, 2024)
C	Brand Hate	-	5	(Sameeni et al. 2024b)
D	Attitude toward Boycott	-	5	Dini and Astuti, 2024
E	Perceived Behavioural Control	-	4	Dini and Astuti, 2024
F	Subjective Norms	-	4	Dini and Astuti, 2024
G	Religious Identity	-	6	(Stojkovic et al. 2020)
H	Personality Trait	Conscientiousness	3	(Sameeni et al. 2024)
		Agreeableness	3	
	TOTAL		40	

DATA ANALYSIS

According to Hair et al. (2021), IBM SPSS Statistics and SmartPLS 4.0 were used to analyse the collected data. SPSS was used for data screening and descriptive analysis, including checks for missing values, outliers, normality, and common method bias. Subsequently, PLS-SEM was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 to test the proposed research model. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for examining complex relationships, testing moderation effects, and assessing the predictive capability of the model (Hair et al. 2021). The analysis involved two stages. First, the measurement model was assessed based on indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Second, the structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, R^2, and hypothesis testing through 5,000 bootstrapping resamples. Finally, moderation analysis was conducted to examine the effects of personality traits and religious identity, with significance determined using path coefficients, t-values, and p-values.

COMMON METHOD BIAS

The use of a single-administered questionnaire may introduce common method bias (CMB) because the data for all constructs were collected from the same respondents (Hair et al. 2021). To reduce this risk, several procedural measures were implemented during the questionnaire design, including ensuring respondent anonymity and confidentiality, minimising evaluation apprehension, and using clear and straightforward measurement items. The presence of common method bias was assessed after data collection using Harman's single-factor test. According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), total variance indicates that CMB is unlikely to be a serious concern depending on a single factor accounting for less than 50%.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the research process, this study followed established ethical principles. Participants were volunteers and were informed about the aim of the study before completing the questionnaire. All participants had the right to withdraw from the study without any consequences and provided informed consent. Besides, all responses were treated anonymously and confidentially to protect respondents' privacy. Therefore, no personally identifiable information was collected. The collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes, securely gathered to prevent illegal access and managed in accordance with the ethical requirements of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

TABLE 3. Demographic statistics

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	96	32
	Female	204	68
Age	18 – 24 years old	287	95.7
	25 – 34 years old	13	4.3
	35 – 44 years old	0	0
	45 – 54 years old	0	0
	55 – 64 years old	0	0
	65 years old and above	0	0
Ethnicity	Malay	119	39.7
	Chinese	48	16.0
	Indian	7	2.3
	Sabah Native	80	26.7
	Sarawak Native	46	15.4
Marital Status	Single	300	100.0
	Married	0	0
Highest Level of Education	Primary school	0	0
	Secondary school	0	0
	Diploma or equivalent	53	17.7
	Bachelor's degree or equivalent	244	81.3
	Master's degree or equivalent	3	1.0
	Doctor of Philosophy	0	0
	No Formal Education	0	0
Employment Status	Student	294	98.0
	Self-employed	0	0
	Unemployed	0	0
	Government Sector	0	0
	Private Sector	3	1.0
	Other	3	1.0
Gross Monthly Household Income	Below RM 5,250	223	74.3
	RM 5,251 – RM 11,819	61	20.3
	RM 11,820 and above	16	5.3

Table 3 shows that the majority were female (68.0%), aged 18-24 years (95.7%), and students (98.0%). All respondents were single (100.0%), while most held a bachelor's degree or equivalent (81.3%) and reported a monthly household income below RM5,250 (74.3%). The results indicate that there are more young people aged between 18 and 24. Evidence suggests that younger consumers aged 18–24 exhibit distinctive economic and social characteristics, particularly in their financial behaviours, digital engagement, sustainability values, ethical consumption, and sensitivity to social and cultural influences (Rosdiana et al. 2026). All respondents participated in the study by completing the questionnaire through an online survey platform.

MEASUREMENT MODEL ASSESSMENT

The outer loadings were examined to assess indicator reliability. Most indicators exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al. 2021). However, PT3 recorded a low outer loading of 0.308, below the minimum acceptable level of 0.40, and was therefore removed. The initial AVE for the combined Personality Traits (PT) construct was 0.430. After removing PT3, the combined construct demonstrated an AVE of 0.559, composite reliability of 0.863, and Cronbach's alpha of 0.848,

indicating acceptable convergent validity and internal consistency for the retained indicators. The revised measurement model of the construct reliability and validity results is provided in Table 4. These statistics describe the reliability and convergent validity of the retained item set; they should not be interpreted as proof that conscientiousness and agreeableness form one theoretically unified construct. PT was retained as a study-specific combined construct, and the structural results are interpreted only at this combined level.

TABLE 4. Summary of construct reliability and validity

Construct	No. of Item	Items	Loading	AVE	CR	CA
Brand Hate (BH)	5	BH1	0.939	0.867	0.970	0.962
		BH2	0.933			
		BH3	0.950			
		BH4	0.935			
		BH5	0.898			
Attitude toward Boycott (ATB)	5	ATB1	0.941	0.879	0.973	0.965
		ATB2	0.954			
		ATB3	0.955			
		ATB4	0.940			
		ATB5	0.896			
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	4	PBC1	0.713	0.670	0.889	0.836
		PBC2	0.915			
		PBC3	0.886			
		PBC4	0.741			
Subjective Norm (SN)	4	SN1	0.902	0.787	0.937	0.787
		SN2	0.864			
		SN3	0.981			
		SN4	0.892			
Religious Identity (RI)	6	RI1	0.717	0.626	0.909	0.890
		RI2	0.718			
		RI3	0.748			
		RI4	0.884			
		RI5	0.912			
		RI6	0.745			
Personality Traits (PT)	5	PT1	0.758	0.559	0.863	0.848
		PT2	0.676			
		PT4	0.754			
		PT5	0.856			
		PT6	0.680			
Boycott Intention (BI)	3	BI1	0.951	0.915	0.970	0.954
		BI2	0.951			
		BI3	0.967			

**Notes: AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CR = Composite Reliability, CA =Cronbach's Alpha*

The measurement model achieved satisfactory indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity. After removing PT3, all constructs met the recommended thresholds for outer loadings, CR, CA, and AVE, confirming the measurement model's suitability for further structural analysis (Hair et al. 2021).

INDICATOR RELIABILITY

A satisfactory level of indicator reliability is indicated by outer loadings above 0.70 (Hair et al. 2021). As shown in Table 4, all retained items meet the proposed level, with loading ranging from 0.713 to 0.967. The highest loading was recorded for BI3 (0.967), while PBC1 showed the lowest acceptable loading (0.713) indicating that all items contributed adequately to their respective structures. During the initial assessment, PT3 under the Personality Traits construct exhibited a loading of 0.308 and was subsequently removed from the model due to its failure to meet the minimum reliability criterion. Following the removal of PT3, all remaining indicators demonstrated satisfactory reliability and were retained for further analysis.

INTERNAL CONSISTENCY RELIABILITY

According to Hair et al. (2021), satisfactory indicator reliability is generally indicated by outer loadings above 0.70. As shown in Table 4, the retained measurement items had loadings ranging from 0.713 to 0.967. The highest loading was observed for BI3 (0.967), while the lowest acceptable loading was recorded for PBC1 (0.713). During the initial assessment, PT3 under the Personality Traits construct exhibited a loading of 0.308 and was subsequently removed from the model due to its failure to meet the minimum reliability criterion. Following the removal of PT3, all remaining indicators demonstrated satisfactory reliability and were retained for further analysis.

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Outer loadings, CR, and AVE were used to measure convergent validity. According to Hair et al. (2021), convergent validity is established when factor loadings surpass 0.70, CR exceeds 0.70, and AVE exceeds 0.50. The recommended threshold of 0.50 was exceeded by all constructs, namely BH (AVE = 0.867), ATT (AVE = 0.879), PBC (AVE = 0.670), SN (AVE = 0.787), RI (AVE = 0.626), PT (AVE = 0.559), and BI (AVE = 0.915). Furthermore, all constructs recorded

CR values exceeding the suggested level of 0.70. Satisfactory convergent validity was demonstrated by these results, indicating that the measurement items effectively captured their respective latent constructs.

DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The HTMT ratio was examined as a more sensitive assessment of discriminant validity (Hair et al. 2021). Table 5 shows all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.90, with the highest value being 0.802 between Attitude toward Boycott and Boycott Intention. Hence, the results were sufficiently distinct from one another, supporting the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

COMMON METHOD BIAS ASSESSMENT

Common method bias (CMB) was addressed through both procedural and statistical procedures. Procedurally, the questionnaire was designed to ensure clear and concise measurement items, and respondents' anonymity was maintained to reduce potential response bias. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was conducted using an unrotated principal component analysis. The results showed that the first factor accounted for 49.155% of the total variance, which was below the recommended threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Therefore, CMB was unlikely to pose a serious concern in the study.

STRUCTURAL MODEL ASSESSMENT

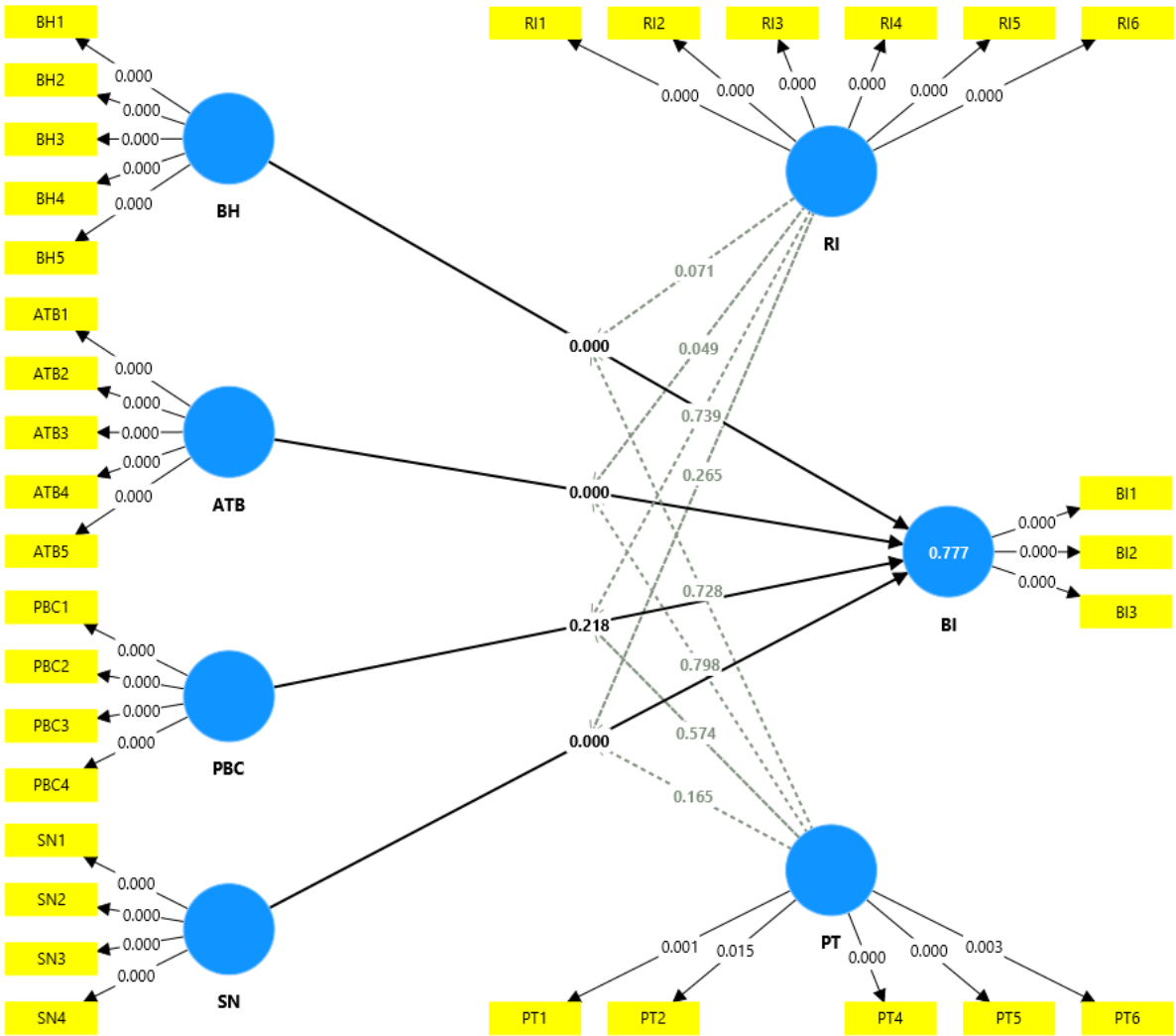


FIGURE 4. Structural model results

TABLE 5. Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio

	ATB	BH	BI	PBC	PT	RI	SN	RI x SN	PT x BH	PT x PBC	PT x SN	RI x BH	PT x ATT	RI x ATT	RI x PBC
ATB															
BH	0.647														
BI	0.802	0.773													
PBC	0.583	0.414	0.437												
PT	0.100	0.176	0.107	0.405											
RI	0.144	0.085	0.175	0.442	0.753										
SN	0.712	0.756	0.756	0.483	0.095	0.086									
RI x SN	0.274	0.362	0.347	0.060	0.063	0.072	0.290								
PT x BH	0.375	0.434	0.329	0.269	0.107	0.107	0.430	0.479							
PT x PBC	0.184	0.269	0.216	0.343	0.135	0.249	0.317	0.069	0.296						
PT x SN	0.380	0.414	0.372	0.302	0.118	0.083	0.669	0.448	0.681	0.414					
RI x BH	0.234	0.256	0.192	0.127	0.117	0.116	0.400	0.539	0.537	0.080	0.520				
PT x ATB	0.465	0.391	0.416	0.189	0.034	0.112	0.402	0.402	0.591	0.601	0.636	0.226			
RI x ATB	0.296	0.236	0.316	0.101	0.070	0.195	0.302	0.552	0.240	0.285	0.429	0.590	0.488		
RI x PBC	0.043	0.118	0.091	0.099	0.232	0.324	0.042	0.528	0.137	0.418	0.082	0.295	0.293	0.542	

COEFFICIENT OF DETERMINATION (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was evaluated using the explanatory power of the structural model. Figure 4 shows the R^2 value for BI was 0.777, indicating that BH, ATB, PBC, SN, RI, and PT explain 77.7% of the variance in BI. Based on this statement, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 represented as substantial, moderate, and weak explanatory power respectively (Hair et al. 2021). Therefore, R^2 value of 0.777 indicates substantial explanatory power, with the model explaining 77.7% of the variance in Boycott Intention.

PREDICTIVE RELEVANCE (Q^2)

TABLE 6. Predictive relevance of the structural model

Endogenous Construct	SSO	SSE	Q^2
Boycott Intention	900.000	277.887	0.691

Note: $Q^2 = 1 – SSE/SSO$

The predictive relevance of the structural model was assessed using the Stone-Geisser Q^2 value. The Q^2 value for Boycott Intention was 0.691, which is greater than zero, indicating that the model demonstrates predictive relevance for explaining Boycott Intention.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

TABLE 7. Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
H_1	BH → BI	0.256	5.123	< 0.001	0.159	0.357	Supported
H_2	ATB → BI	0.362	6.031	< 0.001	0.244	0.479	Supported
H_3	PBC → BI	-0.051	1.232	0.218	-0.135	0.027	Not Supported
H_4	SN → BI	0.349	5.196	< 0.001	0.222	0.485	Supported
H_5	RI × BH → BI	-0.101	1.807	0.071	-0.195	0.053	Not Supported
H_6	RI × ATB → BI	0.132	1.969	0.049	-0.009	0.249	Supported
H_7	RI × PBC → BI	0.015	0.334	0.739	-0.035	0.100	Not Supported
H_8	RI × SN → BI	0.071	1.115	0.265	-0.153	0.187	Not Supported
H_9	PT × BH → BI	-0.019	0.347	0.728	-0.143	0.071	Not Supported
H_{10}	PT × ATB → BI	0.020	0.256	0.798	-0.055	0.164	Not Supported
H_{11}	PT × PBC → BI	0.028	0.563	0.574	0.574	0.137	Not Supported
H_{12}	PT × SN → BI	-0.111	1.387	0.165	0.165	0.035	Not Supported

**Note: BH = Brand Hate; BI = Boycott Intention; ATB = Attitude toward Boycott; PBC = Perceived Behavioural Control; SN = Subjective Norms; RI = Religious Identity; PT = Personality Traits. LLCI = Lower Limit of the 95% Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper Limit of the 95% Confidence Interval. p < .001 indicates p-values smaller than 0.001.*

Table 7 shows that four out of twelve proposed hypotheses were supported. Brand Hate (BH), Attitude toward Boycott (ATB), and Subjective Norms (SN) had significant positive effects on Boycott Intention (BI). In addition, Religious Identity (RI) significantly moderated the relationship between ATB and BI.

DISCUSSION

DIRECT EFFECTS

H_1 Brand hate has a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

H_1 was supported, as brand hate had a positive and significant effect on boycott intention ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 5.123$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that consumers who experience strong negative emotions, such as anger, disappointment, and resentment toward a brand, are more likely to engage in boycott activities. Consistent with the present findings, previous research has shown that brand hate is a significant predictor of anti-brand behaviours, including brand avoidance, negative word-of-mouth, and boycott participation (Nguyen 2026; Sameeni et al. 2024). In the context of international brands, however, not all brands become boycott targets. Boycott intentions are more likely to arise when consumers perceive a specific brand as involved in issues that conflict with values or expectations (Ozdemir et al. 2024). Thus, the present finding supports Brand Hate theory demonstrates that negative emotional responses shape boycott intentions towards international brands.

H_2 Attitude toward boycott has a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

H_2 was supported, as attitude toward boycott had a positive and significant effect on boycott intention ($\beta = 0.362$, $t = 6.031$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that consumers who view boycott participation favourably are more likely to engage in boycott activities. The TPB identified attitude toward boycott as a key predictor of behavioural intention, which is consistent with the expected outcomes. It also aligns with previous studies that have consistently found attitude toward boycott to be a strong determinant of boycott intention across various consumer contexts (Abdelshafy et al. 2025). These

findings confirm that positive evaluations of boycott actions significantly increase consumers' intentions to boycott international brands. In the context of international brands, favourable attitudes toward boycott may be particularly important when consumers perceive specific brands that conflict with their values or concerns related to ongoing issues such as the Israel-Palestinian crisis. However, not all international brands are boycotted, as consumers' evaluations depend on the perceived involvement or association of specific brands with such issues.

H_3 Perceived Behavioural Control has a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

H_3 was not supported, as perceived behavioural control did not significantly influence boycott intention ($\beta = -0.051$, $t = 1.232$, $p = 0.218$). This suggests that stronger boycott intentions are not necessarily driven by consumers' perceptions of having the ability and resources to participate in boycott activities. The influence of perceived behavioural control may be affected by other factors, such as attitudes toward boycotts and subjective norms (Hamzah & Mustafa 2019). In the context of international brands, consumers may intend to boycott specific brands more based on their emotional and social responses than on their perceived ability to avoid the brand. However, not all international brands are targeted by boycott campaigns, as consumers' responses may depend on the perceived involvement of specific brands in controversial issues. Therefore, emotional and social considerations appear to influence boycott intention more than perceived behavioural control does.

H_4 Subjective norms have a positive and significant relationship with boycott intention.

H_4 was supported, as subjective norms had a positive and significant effect on boycott intention ($\beta = 0.349$, $t = 5.196$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that consumers who perceive encouragement from family, friends, religious groups, and society are more likely to develop boycott intentions. The finding is consistent with previous studies showing that subjective norms are a significant predictor of boycott intention (Yan et al. 2025). In Malaysia, social influence also plays an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes toward boycott and purchasing decisions (Mady et al. 2025). In the context of international brands, social pressure may encourage consumers to boycott specific brands perceived to be associated with controversial issues, rather than international brands generally. Therefore, the findings support the TPB proposition that social pressure contributes significantly to consumers' boycott intentions toward targeted international brands.

MODERATING EFFECTS

H_5 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between brand hate and boycott intention.

H_5 was not supported, as religious identity did not significantly moderate the relationship between brand hate and boycott intention ($\beta = -0.101$, $t = 1.807$, $p = 0.071$). This suggests that the influence of brand hate on boycott intention remains relatively stable regardless of consumers' levels of religious identity. Previous studies indicate that religiosity often exerts a direct influence on consumer behaviour rather than acting as a moderating factor (Alam et al. 2025). Furthermore, brand hate is primarily driven by emotional reactions such as anger and resentment, which may directly motivate boycott intentions without requiring reinforcement from religious beliefs (Mady et al. 2025). In the context of international brands, this emotional response may occur toward specific brands perceived to be associated with controversial issues, while not all international brands are subject to boycott campaigns. Therefore, emotional responses appear more influential than religious identity in this relationship.

H_6 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention.

H_6 was supported, as religious identity significantly moderated the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention ($\beta = 0.132$, $t = 1.969$, $p = 0.049$). This suggests that consumers with stronger religious identities are more likely to translate favourable attitudes towards boycott participation into intentions to boycott. Religious identity provides a moral framework that strengthens the alignment of personal beliefs with behavioural intentions (Roswinanto & Suwanda 2023). Previous studies also found that religiosity positively influences attitudes toward boycott participation and ethical consumption (Abdullah et al. 2024). In the context of international brands, this effect may be particularly relevant when specific brands are perceived to conflict with consumers' religious or moral values, rather than applying to international brands in general. Therefore, religious values reinforce the influence of attitudes toward boycotts on boycott intention when boycott actions are perceived as morally or religiously consistent.

H_7 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between perceived behavioural control and boycott intention.

H_7 was not supported, as religious identity did not significantly moderate the relationship between perceived behavioural control and boycott intention ($\beta = 0.015$, $t = 0.334$, $p = 0.739$). Consumers' perceptions of their ability to

participate in boycott activities do not appear to be substantially influenced by religious identity (Beyer et al. 2019). Perceived behavioural control is primarily associated with practical considerations, such as product availability and financial constraints, which may be more important than religious beliefs in shaping consumer decisions (Atakan & Bagozzi 2024). In the context of international brands, these practical considerations may determine whether consumers can avoid some targeted brands, regardless of their religious identity. Therefore, religious identity does not appear to strengthen or weaken the influence of perceived behavioural control on boycott intention.

H_8 Religious identity significantly moderates the relationship between subjective norms and boycott intention.

H_8 was not supported, as religious identity did not significantly moderate the relationship between subjective norms and boycott intention ($\beta = 0.071$, $t = 1.115$, $p = 0.265$). This suggests that the influence of social pressure on boycott intention remains consistent regardless of consumers' levels of religious identity. Subjective norms are an important determinant of boycott intention (Roswinanto & Suwanda 2023), while religious identity has more often been examined as an independent factor rather than a moderating factor (Herman & Salehudin 2025). In the context of international brands, social influence may encourage consumers to boycott, regardless of their religious identification. Therefore, social influence remains an important determinant of boycott intention.

H_9 Personality Traits significantly moderate the relationship between brand hate and boycott intention.

H_9 was not supported, as personality traits did not significantly moderate the relationship between brand hate and boycott intention ($\beta = -0.019$, $t = 0.347$, $p = 0.728$). This conclusion is because brand hate appears to influence boycott intention consistently across different levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness. Previous studies have consistently found that brand hate directly influences anti-brand behaviours and boycott participation (Nguyen, 2026; Sameeni et al. 2024). Furthermore, the strong emotional nature of brand hate may overshadow the influence of personality traits, resulting in a non-significant moderating effect.

H_{10} Personality Traits significantly moderate the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention.

H_{10} was not supported, as personality traits did not significantly moderate the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention ($\beta = 0.020$, $t = 0.256$, $p = 0.798$). Consequently, its strong influence may reduce the ability of personality traits to alter the relationship. Furthermore, boycott intentions are often driven by ethical concerns and social influences rather than stable personality characteristics (Ridwan et al. 2026). Therefore, the moderating effect of personality traits on the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention was not significant.

H_{11} Personality Traits significantly moderates the relationship between perceived behavioural control and boycott intention.

H_{11} was not supported, as personality traits did not significantly moderate the relationship between perceived behavioural control and boycott intention ($\beta = 0.028$, $t = 0.563$, $p = 0.574$). Perceived behavioural control is primarily influenced by situational factors such as resources, opportunities, and product alternatives rather than personality characteristics (Babu et al. 2025; Mady et al. 2025). The effects of personality traits are often indirect and mediated by other variables, although they may influence behavioural intentions in certain contexts (D. B. et al. 2024). Thus, the moderating effect of personality traits on the relationship between perceived behavioural control and boycott intention was not significant.

H_{12} Personality Traits significantly moderates the relationship between subjective norms and boycott intention.

H_{12} was not supported, as personality traits did not significantly moderate the relationship between subjective norms and boycott intention ($\beta = -0.111$, $t = 1.387$, $p = 0.165$). This suggests that social pressure from family, friends, and society influences boycott intention similarly across consumers regardless of their personality characteristics. Previous studies consistently identified subjective norms as an important predictor of boycott intentions (Herman & Salehudin 2025), while personality traits tend to influence behaviour indirectly through attitudes toward boycott and perceptions (Fu et al. 2024; Matha et al. 2022). Therefore, social influence appears to be a stronger determinant of boycott intention than individual personality differences among Malaysian consumers.

The results showed that only one of eight proposed moderation hypotheses was supported, indicating that the moderating effects of religious identity and personality traits were largely limited in the present context. Religious identity may function more strongly as a direct antecedent than as a general moderator, as previous research shows that religiosity can influence attitude toward boycott, ethical consumption, and boycott intentions without necessarily strengthening every behavioural relationship (Roswinanto & Suwanda 2023). In this study, religious identity significantly moderated only the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention, suggesting that its influence becomes more relevant

when boycott participation aligns with consumers' religious and moral values (Herman & Salehudin 2026). The non-significant moderation effects further suggest that boycott intention is driven more by emotional, attitudinal, and social factors than broader individual differences (Alam et al. 2025; Mady et al. 2025). Thus, religious identity and personality traits appear to be context-dependent rather than universal moderators of boycott intention.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study extends Brand Hate Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by explaining boycott intention toward international brands within the sampled Malaysian consumers. First, brand hate was found to be a significant predictor of boycott intention, thereby supporting the argument that emotional responses toward brands are important drivers of anti-brand behaviours. This finding strengthens Brand Hate Theory by demonstrating that negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, and resentment can directly translate into consumers' intentions to boycott international brands.

Furthermore, the findings provide further support for the TPB by demonstrating that attitude toward boycott and subjective norms significantly influenced boycott intention, which indicates that personal evaluations and social pressures play important roles in shaping consumers' behavioural intentions. However, perceived behavioural control was not significant, suggesting that boycott decisions may be driven more by emotional and social considerations than by consumers' perceptions of their ability to participate. This finding extends TPB by highlighting the varying importance of its dimensions in boycott contexts.

Besides, this study contributes to the literature on religion and consumer behaviour by determining that religious identity significantly moderated only the relationship between attitude toward boycott and boycott intention. The translation of favourable attitude toward boycott into behavioural intentions appears to be reinforced by religious identity, highlighting its role as an important contextual factor. However, religious identity did not moderate the relationships involving brand hate, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms. Therefore, its role appears to be context-dependent rather than a universal moderating influence. This finding provides a more nuanced understanding of religious identity by showing that its moderating effect may emerge only when religious values are closely aligned with consumers' evaluations of boycott participation.

Lastly, this study contributes to the personality and consumer behaviour literature by examining the joint moderating role of a study-specific Personality Traits (PT) construct that comprises selected indicators of conscientiousness and agreeableness indicators. The findings indicate that the combined PT construct did not significantly moderate any of the four proposed relationships between brand hate, attitude toward boycott, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and boycott intention. This finding applies only to the combined PT construct and should not be interpreted as evidence that conscientiousness and agreeableness individually lack moderating effects, as their separate effects were not estimated. Rather, the results indicate that the selected personality indicators, when examined jointly, did not significantly change the relationships proposed in the current model. This finding does not necessarily suggest that personality is irrelevant to consumer behaviour; rather, the potential influence of personality may depend on the specific behavioural and situational contexts. In consumer boycotts, emotional responses toward brands, evaluations of boycott participation, and perceived social expectations may also be important in shaping boycott intention. However, these explanations require further empirical investigation and should not be interpreted as effects that the present study has directly established.

These findings also highlight the importance of distinguishing between individual personality dimensions when developing theoretical explanations of consumer behaviour. Although conscientiousness and agreeableness were selected because of their potential relevance to responsibility, ethical evaluation, empathy, and social responsiveness, they represent conceptually distinct dimensions of the Big Five personality framework. Combining their indicators into one study-specific construct does not establish that the two dimensions have equivalent moderating effects. Future research should therefore examine conscientiousness and agreeableness as separate constructs, compare their respective moderating effects, and investigate whether these effects vary across different boycott types, brands, and sociopolitical contexts. Further research could also incorporate the remaining Big Five dimensions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of personality in consumer boycott behaviour. These approaches would help clarify whether personality dimensions strengthen or weaken the relationships between consumers' brand-related perceptions, social influences, and boycott intentions.

The study advances theoretical understanding by demonstrating that boycott intentions are primarily shaped by emotional, attitudinal, and social influences, while the moderating effects of religious identity and personality traits may vary across different consumer boycott relationships. However, the findings should be interpreted within the characteristics of the study sample, which was predominantly young and student based.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

There are several practical implications for brand managers, multinational corporations, marketers, and policymakers that emerge from the findings of this study. First, the significant influence of brand hate on boycott intention highlights the importance of proactively managing consumer dissatisfaction and negative brand perceptions. Organisations should continuously monitor consumer sentiment through social media platforms, customer feedback channels, and online communities to identify potential sources of brand hate before they escalate into widespread boycott movements. Effective

crisis communication and transparent corporate responses are essential for minimising negative emotional reactions and restoring consumer trust.

Second, the significant effect of attitude toward boycott and boycott intention suggests that consumers' evaluations of a brand play an important role in shaping boycott behaviour. Therefore, organizations should strengthen their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, ethical business practices, and stakeholder engagement activities to foster positive consumer attitudes. Brands that are perceived as socially responsible and aligned with consumer values are less likely to become targets of boycott campaigns.

Third, the significant influence of subjective norms shows that social influence plays a key role in consumer decision-making. Marketers should recognise the power of social networks, online communities, influencers, and opinion leaders in shaping public perceptions of brands. Since boycott movements can spread rapidly through social media, organisations should actively engage with consumers and maintain positive relationships with key stakeholders to mitigate negative social pressure.

Finally, the importance of religious values in the Malaysian market is highlighted by the significant moderating effect of religious identity on the relationship between attitudes toward boycotts and boycott intention. Companies operating in Malaysia should be sensitive to religious and cultural concerns when developing marketing strategies, communication campaigns, and corporate policies. Understanding consumers' religious values can help organisations avoid actions that may be perceived as conflicting with societal expectations and reduce the likelihood of boycott participation. Overall, the findings emphasise the importance of managing emotional, social, and value-based factors to maintain positive consumer relationships and protect brand reputation

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the demographic characteristics of the sample may limit the generalisability of the findings. The sample was highly concentrated among young consumers, with 95.7% of respondents aged 18–24 years, 98.0% being students, and 100% being single. Although these respondents provide valuable insights into the boycott intentions of younger Malaysian consumers, their characteristics may not fully represent the broader Malaysian consumer population. Future research could include a more diverse sample across different age groups, occupations, marital statuses, and socio-economic backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer boycott intentions.

Secondly, the geographical scope of the study was limited to three major urban centres, namely Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, and Kota Kinabalu. Although these locations were selected to provide representation from Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak, and Sabah, consumers in smaller towns and rural areas may have different levels of exposure to international brands and boycott-related issues. Future studies could expand the geographical coverage to include additional states and rural communities across Malaysia to enhance the generalisability of the findings.

Thirdly, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the study variables. The data were collected at a single point in time and therefore captured respondents' perceptions and boycott intentions within a specific period. Consumer attitudes, emotions, and boycott intentions may change as social, political, and brand-related circumstances develop. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine how brand hate, attitudes, social influences, religious identity, and boycott intentions evolve over time.

Fourth, the personality component of this study was limited to conscientiousness and agreeableness and did not include the other three Big Five dimensions: openness to experience, extraversion, and neuroticism/emotional stability. In addition, the indicators representing conscientiousness and agreeableness were combined into one study-specific PT construct. Because these dimensions are conceptually distinct and were not analysed separately, the present findings cannot establish their individual moderating effects, and the acceptable reliability and AVE statistics for the combined indicators do not resolve this conceptual limitation. Future research should measure and analyse conscientiousness and agreeableness separately and, where theoretically justified, include all five Big Five dimensions to compare their respective moderating effects on the relationships between brand hate, attitude toward boycott, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and boycott intention.

Finally, this study examined boycott intention rather than actual boycott behaviour. Although intention provides insight into consumers' willingness to boycott international brands, it may not necessarily translate into actual purchasing decisions. Future research could examine actual boycott behaviour and investigate additional factors, such as consumer animosity, perceived corporate social responsibility, ethical consumption, and social media activism, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer boycott behaviour.

Therefore, future studies are encouraged to extend the present framework by integrating additional psychological, cultural, and situational factors to further enhance the understanding of boycott behaviour toward international brands.

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