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KNOWLEDGE CONSTRAINT ON CONSUMER BOYCOTT AGAINST GLOBAL BUSINESSES' SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY VIOLATIONS

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Abstract

Sustainability concerns of both businesses and consumers are increasing. For a more sustainable world, businesses should prioritize sustainability in their operations, and consumers should support these practises by their purchasing power. However, it is still seen that even global businesses commit sustainability violations, and some consumers fail to boycott them even though they have motivation and intent. There are many constraints that limit the intent to turn into action. Lack of actionable information is one of the causes for the attitude-behaviour gap in the sustainable consumption. In this quantitative research, consumers' boycott motivation and intent are examined in the context of social sustainability violations of Apple and Amazon, without giving the names of the companies. Then, the knowledge of the sample is questioned related to the committers of the violations. Results show that more than two third of the sample has high motivation to boycott these companies and the relationship between boycott motivation and intention is statistically significant. However, nearly half of the motivated consumers do not know the committer of the violation in each case. Consumers who are motivated and identify the committer in the cases are about one-third of the sample. The most remarkable result of this research is that consumers have severe knowledge limitations on the enforcement power of businesses in penalizing their violations. This exploratory study gives insights into the knowledge constraints on consumer boycotts against social sustainability violations of global businesses. However, the results can not be generalizable. More similar research focused on different cases is required. For practitioners, the foundation of an organization that can handle communication regarding sustainability violations is recommended to increase consumers' knowledge.

Keywords: Sustainability Violations, Social Sustainability, Boycott Motivation

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Küresel İşletmelerin Sosyal Sürdürülebilirlik İhlallerine Karşın Tüketici Boykotlarında Bilgi Engeli

Öz

Hem işletmelerin hem de tüketicilerin sürdürülebilirlik kaygıları günden güne artmaktadır. Daha sürdürülebilir bir dünya için işletmelerin sürdürülebilir uygulamalara öncelik vermesi ve tüketicilerin de bu eylemleri satın alma gücüyle desteklemesi beklenmektedir. Ancak hâlâ küresel işletmelerin bile sürdürülebilirlik ihlalleri yaptığı ve bazı tüketicilerin motivasyon ve niyetleri olmasına rağmen bu işletmeleri boykot etmedikleri görülmektedir. Çünkü, motivasyon ve niyetlerin eyleme dönüşmesini sınırlayan pek çok kısıt bulunmaktadır. Bu kısıtlar arasında tüketicinin ihlale ilişkin bilgisinin olup olmaması tutumların davranışlara dönüşmesini engelleyen bir kısıt olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu nicel araştırmada, şirketlerin isimleri verilmeden, Apple ve Amazon'un sosyal sürdürülebilirlik ihlalleri konusunda tüketicilerin boykot motivasyonu ve niyeti incelenmektedir. Daha sonra örneklemin ihlalleri gerçekleştirenlerle ilgili bilgisi sorgulanmaktadır. Sonuçlar, araştırma örnekleminin yaklaşık olarak üçte ikisinin yüksek boykot motivasyonu taşıdığını göstermektedir. Boykot motivasyonu ile boykot niyeti arasındaki ilişki de istatistikî açıdan anlamlıdır. Ancak motivasyonu yüksek tüketicilerin neredeyse yarısı ihlali gerçekleştiren şirketi bilmemektedir. Yüksek motivasyonu olan ve şirketleri bilen tüketiciler ise örneklemin yaklaşık üçte birini oluşturmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın en dikkat çekici sonucu, tüketicilerin, işletmelerin sosyal sürdürülebilirlik ihlallerine yönelik boykot motivasyonlarına sahip olmalarına rağmen bilgi eksiklikleri nedeniyle bu motivasyonların davranışa dönüşmesi ihtimalinin düştüğüdür. Tüketicilerin bilgi düzeyinin artırılması için sürdürülebilirlik ihlallerine ilişkin iletişimi yönetebilecek bir organizasyonun kurulması önerilmektedir. Araştırmanın en büyük kısıtı sonuçlarının genelleştirilmesinin mümkün olmamasıdır. Genelleme yapabilmek için farklı ihlallere odaklanan benzer araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sürdürülebilirlik İhlalleri, Sosyal Sürdürülebilirlik, Boykot Motivasyonu

Introduction

The number of research and practices is accelerating day by day in the case of sustainability, not only in academia but also in the business world. Because a sustainable world is vital for future generations of all species on the earth. Although conceptually, sustainability is not covered in a unique way, the definition of United Nations (UN) seems to stand out: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland et al., 1987, p.16).

Sustainability has three dimensions; namely economic, environmental and social. According to Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), “The economic dimension of sustainability concerns an organization’s impacts on the economic conditions of its stakeholders, and on economic systems at local, national, and global levels. The social dimension concerns an organization’s impacts on the social systems within which it operates. And the environmental dimension of sustainability concerns an organization’s impacts on living and non-living natural systems, including land, air, water and ecosystems” (2023a).

High and stable economic growth is desirable not only for the nations but also for the companies. However, achieving this in an environmentally and socially sensitive way seems to be the point. While the emphasis was on the environmental dimension of sustainability for a long time, the social extent is often underestimated, not understood, and analyzed enough (Cuesta, Madrigal, & Pecorari, 2022; McKenzie, 2004; Piracci, Boncinelli & Casini, 2022; Kalfaoğlu, 2023). The definition of social sustainability is not clear, either. However, it is seen that this dimension is highly integrated with social responsibility and ethical behavior.

All businesses, but especially the global ones, have the opportunity and ability to do business in a sustainable way. These businesses can enhance their brand reputation and attract responsible consumers and investors with the help of sustainable operations. The businesses are also capable of operating in a sustainable way, and they can create a faster and higher impact than the other businesses. Nevertheless, it is seen that even some of these companies fail to operate sustainably. The news related to the sustainability violations of these companies reaches consumers. Theoretically, responsible consumers who learn about these violations are supposed to boycott these companies. However, in practice, there is a gap between attitudes and behavior (White, Hardisty & Habib, 2019). Constraints on time, financial resources, cognitive capacity, energy, knowledge of problems and solutions, and action-specific knowledge are some of the constraints that limit sustainable product choices. Among them, lack of action-specific knowledge is a

cause for the attitude-behaviour gap (Turunen & Halme, 2021). Businesses usually communicate their favorable practices in the case of sustainability to attract responsible consumers. They can also use some labels on their green products to emphasize the sustainable aspects. However, if there is an unfavorable practice, consumers can only learn about it from the media if the event makes a splash. Therefore, it is supposed that identifying unsustainable businesses/brands/products is more difficult than identifying sustainable ones. In this context, when the sustainable violation in focus is a social one, the situation becomes more complex because the boundaries of the concept are still unclear.

This study aims to examine the boycott motivations and intentions of consumers against the social sustainability violations of global businesses and have an idea about the effect of knowledge prerequisite. Research on the social dimension of sustainability is less than the environmental one; likewise, buying sustainable products is studied more than rejecting unsustainable ones. This study focuses on the social dimension of sustainability and questions consumers' boycott motivation and intention by considering violations. Real brands and violation cases are used to measure the consumers' knowledge levels. The research results are supposed to give insights into the importance level of the knowledge barrier, and it would be possible to propose some solutions for the academicians and practitioners.

1. Litreture Review

1.1. Social Sustainability

Supra-state organizations, academia, businesses, and consumers care about sustainability more and more every day. Although sustainability dates back centuries at the intellectual level, it has gained conceptual depth in the last century. The concept has over a hundred definitions (Holmberg & Sandbrrok, 1992; Salomone, 2014). Among them, the definition of the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland et al., 1987) steps forth by the ability to mean a lot with few words. In the “Our Common Future” report, the UN defines sustainability

as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland et al., 1987, p.16). While the concept previously focused only on the environmental dimension, it also includes social and economic dimensions today. Sustainable Development Goals declared by the UN in 2015 reveal the multidimensionality of the concept, identifying 17 objectives related to environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

Although social sustainability is an essential dimension of sustainability, this dimension is often underestimated, not understood and analyzed enough (Cuesta et al., 2022; McKenzie, 2004; Piracci et al., 2022; Kalfaoğlu, 2023). Especially after the declaration of the UN Development Goals, this field has started to attract notice in academia and the business world. Like sustainability, there is no generally accepted definition of social sustainability (Dempsey, Bramley, Power & Brown, 2011; Cuesta et al., 2022). Among existing definitions, “equality and democracy” (Sachs, 1999), “improving life” (McKenzie, 2004), “satisfaction of human needs, social justice, human dignity, and quality of life (Littig & Geißler, 2005; Koning, 2001), “wellbeing and health of society members” (Danielle, Fernando & Dana, 2016) were the significant points emphasized.

According to Lehtonen (2004), reaching a single conceptual framework is neither a desirable nor a logical attempt. Because different contexts related to time, location, and situation require their own frameworks. The concept has been studied by various academics in different groups and environments, and different dimensions and meanings have emerged in each research design, confirming Lehtonen's (2004) point of view. For instance, according to Eizenberg & Jabareen (2017), social sustainability includes socially oriented practices that address important social issues to cope with climate change risks and environmental hazards. This perspective defines social sustainability as a result of environmental risks and a tool that should be used to manage them. In this context, the components of the concept are sustainable urban structures, equality, security, and sustainability in production/consumption activities. On the other hand, Chandrakant & Rajesh (2023)

aimed to measure businesses in terms of social sustainability and agreed on a more functional model. In their design, the essential components of the concept are society, employees, human rights, and product responsibility. Similarly, in another study examining social sustainability in terms of businesses, the indicators of this concept are learning and growth, social development, safety, and security (Ajmal, Khan, Hussain & Helo, 2018). When the concept framework is drawn by the employees, the components seem to be socially beneficial practices, human-centredness in job design, and a value-creating relations system (Kalfaoğlu, 2023).

The World Bank also emphasizes this diversity in concept definitions and states that it is due to the diversity of principles, features, conditions, and functions used. Compiling existing indicators rather than developing a new definition may be a more appropriate solution to clarify the concept (Cuesta et al., 2022). Seventy-one indicators were determined, and these indicators were clustered under four dimensions: social participation, social cohesion, flexibility, and process legitimacy (Cuesta et al., 2022). The study approaches social sustainability from a macro perspective and deals with the rankings of countries in terms of social sustainability dimensions and the economic indicators to which they are related.

From a micro perspective, social sustainability is conceptually referred to as corporate social responsibility and ethics. Shayan Fallah, Mohabbati-Kalejahi, Alavi & Zahed (2022) state that the UN Sustainable Development Goals and corporate social responsibility are parallel with protecting the environment and supporting social development. They recommend businesses use these objectives as a framework to improve their corporate social responsibility projects. This relationship is also confirmed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development. The Institute is on the advisory board of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). International Institute for Sustainable Development has prepared a recommendation letter related to the social responsibility standard of ISO. This letter stated that it may not be possible to create a universal definition by listing the individual components of social responsibility. Instead, it is suggested to

determine what “social responsibility is not” by creating negative components (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2004). To summarize, social sustainability is handled with many different approaches and contexts and continues to develop conceptually.

1.2. Global Businesses and Social Sustainability Violations

Businesses need to use scarce resources sustainably to ensure their existence and continuity. So, “doing business in a sustainable way is not a favor, on the contrary, it is a condition for survival” (Sarıkaya, Erdoğan & Kara, 2010, p.43). Surviving is a fundamental motivation to be sustainable in the long term. In addition, businesses have some other motivations in which they can see the outcomes in the short term. These motivations are related to the stakeholders: consumers and investors.

To begin with the consumers, “businesses can attract their attention and build a reputable brand image by balancing price, performance, and sustainability” (Ottman, 1993, p.77) with the help of green marketing. Green marketing is “the development and promotion of products that are deemed environmentally safe (American Marketing Association, 2023).

Secondly, sustainable businesses can attract the funds of investors sensitive to sustainability. In “Socially Responsible Investment,” ESG funds (environment, social, and governance) started trading in some stock exchange markets such as Dow Jones and Borsa İstanbul. To attract these socially responsible investors, businesses should verify their sustainability. GRI seems to be an independent actor in evaluating and measuring volunteer businesses' environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The social standards set by GRI include topics such as local communities, forced or compulsory labor, security practices, child labor, etc. (2023b). Any sustainability violation of a business may decrease its sustainability score and brand reputation, which in turn decreases the revenue and value of the company.

Sustainability should undoubtedly be the common concern of all businesses. Sustainable activities of businesses contribute to the continuation of their existence, strengthen their image from the perspectives of consumers and investors, and, ultimately, make their products and stocks preferable. These opportunities are available to businesses of all sizes.

However, global businesses have a higher ability to realize them, and they can create a faster and higher impact than others. Because:

- By definition, global businesses see the whole world as a target market. So, global business operations can potentially affect a large mass of people.
- They can access locations that struggle with different sustainability issues as they operate worldwide.
- Accessing the capital and technical know-how required is easier than other businesses.
- They can be benchmark to other businesses and be pioneers in the spread of sustainability practices. As a result, global businesses should care about sustainability, both because have to and they can.

Notwithstanding, there is a lot of news related to social sustainability violations of global businesses. H&M used an image in its online store that showed a black child model wearing a hooded sweatshirt that said: “coolest monkey in the jungle” (Stack, 2018), racial treatment of Starbucks’ staff to black people in Philadelphia (Starbucks shuts 8,000, 2018; Ayboğan, 2022), labor rights violation of Apple in the Foxconn factory (Dünyanın en büyük, 2022), again labor rights violation of Amazon in its logistics centers in Poland (Alan, 2020), Turkey (Amazon’daki kötü çalışma, 2018) and the USA (Scheiber, 2023) are some of the social sustainability violation examples. These examples are either accepted by the businesses or went to court. It is seen that businesses are still committing those violations deliberately or carelessly.

1.3. Consumer Boycott Against Social Sustainability Violations

“Consumers begin to realize the environmental and social effects of their consumption. This led many consumers to reevaluate their consumption choices” (Shaw & Newholm, 2002, p.168). These responsible consumers can support sustainability by buying sustainable products (buycott) and by rejecting to buy unsustainable ones (boycott) (Klein, Smith & John, 2004). However, some external factors limit consumers' buycott or boycott decisions. There is still a gap between sustainability attitudes and consumption behaviors (White et al., 2019).

Ölander and Thøgersen (1995) proposed the Motivation, Ability and Opportunity (MAO) Theory in understanding the environmental behavior of consumers. Gilg, Barr & Ford (2005) support the idea that green consumption may be more appropriately termed sustainable consumption. In this context, this theory can also reveal the social concerns in consumption choices. Like environmental actions, the social actions of consumers are shaped by three main determinants: motivation, ability, and opportunity. Motivations in this theory are in accordance with Ajzen's (1985) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The person's intention to engage in the behavior captures the motivational factors and transforms them into a behavioral disposition. Following the motivation-intention argument of this theory, consumers who have boycott motivations against the companies that commit social sustainability violations should also have the intention to boycott these companies. So that, the first hypothesis of this study is:

“H₁ = There is a relationship between boycott motivation and intention in the case of social sustainability violation.”

However, when the focus is on sustainable consumer behavior, TRA is not enough. In other words, the general attitude towards the target action is not predictive enough of specific actions. Consumers' decisions are taken under specific conditions. These conditions, namely the ability and the opportunity, are also influential in decisions. The theorists determined knowledge barrier as a subdimension of ability

construct. Even though the information related to the environmental aspect is part of a campaign, people may lack sufficient information, be unable to understand the message or forget important information. For consumers to buy sustainable products, they need sustainable counterparts and information about these equivalents to take action (Turunen & Halme, 2021). According to a recent report, 61% of consumers need more information to help make better sustainable choices (Ernst & Young Global, 2021).

Availability of substitutes of products or services and uncertainty about which of the existing counterparts is more scientifically sustainable are other examples of ability and opportunity determinants. In addition, whether information about alternatives is transferred to consumers also stands out as a communication barrier (Thøgersen (2005).

Constraints on time, financial resources, cognitive capacity, energy, knowledge of problems and solutions, and action-specific knowledge may limit environmental behavior. Even the consumers are aware of a socially undesirable action, they may not be sure what to do about it or who can solve this problem and how. In addition, boycotts require consumers to restrict their habitual consumption patterns and demand a limitation of choices for the faith of the common good (Hoffmann et al., 2018). If they do not believe that the other consumers will also contribute, their willingness will decrease (Dijk, Wit, Wilke & Budescu, 2004). It is a collective action. “Consumers may deny responsibility if they do not believe in the result because doing the right thing will imply choosing a non-favorite, less convenient, or more expensive brand” (Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995, p. 364).

To summarize, even though consumers’ level of sustainability awareness is high, it is inconsistent with their daily behaviors and habits (Hayta, 2009; Ernst & Young Global, 2021). For example, a study conducted in England shows that the share of consumers who shape their lives according to sustainability issues is between 30% and 35% of the sample (Gilg, Barr & Ford, 2005). Similarly, another study conducted in India showed that 40% of the sample realized whether a product

is environmentally friendly (Maheshwari, Lodorfos & Jacobsen, 2014). Although the focus is on the environmental dimension of the sustainability in this research, it give insights about the knowledge level of consumers. In an other recent survey, 65% of the sample said they want to buy purpose-driven brands that advocate sustainability, yet only about 26% actually do so (White et al., 2019).

Social sustainability is more abstract and complex than environmental sustainability. Moreover, contrary to environmentally friendly products and their practical/visible labels, it is complicated to identify socially sustainable products for consumers. Businesses can support social sustainability through corporate social responsibility projects and publicly share them. However, their practices towards their employees are less subject to communication and are only learned by consumers if there is a violation. Therefore, due to a lack of information, responsible consumers may be less likely to support social sustainability through boycotting or boycotting.

Responsible consumers who are highly motivated to boycott unsustainable brands or businesses are supposed to be stimulated by the news or rumors related to the violations. These consumers can be more aware of the practices of the businesses with the help of perceptual selectivity or cognitive pursuit. Depending on this proposition, H₂ and H₃ are developed.

“H₂: There is a relationship between the motivation to boycott global brands that commit social sustainability violations and being informed about these violations.”

“H₃: There is a relationship between the motivation to boycott global brands that are committers of social sustainability violations and having knowledge about the sustainability scores of these businesses.”

2. Methodology

A quantitative approach is adopted in this study. In order to collect data, a questionnaire is designed. In the first part of the questionnaire, boycott motivations

and intentions related to two social sustainability violations of two businesses (whose names are hidden) are measured with the help of the Boycott Motivation Scale designed by Klein et al. (2004).

Consumer boycott is “an attempt by one or more parties to achieve certain objectives by urging individual consumers to refrain from making selected purchases in the marketplace” (Friedman, 1985, p.97). By definition, boycotters have a common goal: urging the target to change unfavorable behavior. In order to measure the motivations to boycott the businesses that committed social sustainability violations, there should be a violation scenario, news, or facts related to a business. This research selects two social sustainability violation news of two global businesses: Amazon and Apple. The violation news was shared in the questionnaire as follows, hiding business names:

“Company A is a global consumer electronics company. Within the scope of COVID-19 measures, it keeps its employees in quarantine in the lodgings belonging to the company. It continues its activities in a production facility where physical conditions are deemed unsuitable for health and humane conditions.”

“Company B is a global e-commerce company. It is claimed that this company violates the rights of its employees working in its warehouses and logistics centers.”

The reasons why these two businesses and their violations are selected can be summarized as follows:

- In order to increase the validity of the research, it is preferred to apply the scale to two different violations.
- These two businesses are at the top of the most valuable brands list of the Global 500 reported by Brand Finance (2023).
- One is in the service, and the other is in the goods market.
- Both have been operating in Turkey for several years. Regarding online visits, Amazon is the fourth e-marketplace in Turkey in January 2022 (Similarweb, 2022). Apple was Turkey's second-biggest mobile phone seller

in the first quarter of 2022 (Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu, 2022). So that the consumers are assumed to know the brands.

- There have been social sustainability violation news related to these brands in the last three years. This news was published by widely known media channels in Turkey ("Amazon'daki kötü çalışma", 2018; Alan, 2020; Aytekin, 2022).
- These violations are supposed to be more than claims. Because the labor of Amazon in several countries including England, Spain, and Germany, went to strike (Bolelli, 2023; Bektaş, 2022; Almanya'da Amazon İşçilerine, 2021). Foxconn, the production unit of Apple in China, admitted the violations and apologized (Yee & Goh, 2022).
- The social sustainability scores of these businesses are lower than most of their counterparts. The scores of Apple and Amazon and their global counterparts are as follows (S&P Global, 2023):
 - Amazon: 15, E-Bay: 60, Alibaba: 20, Etsy: 45
 - Apple: 24; Xiaomi: 48, Samsung: 41, Acer: 89

In the second part, to learn whether the consumers are informed about the committers of these violations, they are asked to identify these businesses among their counterparts. Still, consumers may not be informed about these violations, but they may have a general opinion about the social sustainability attitude of the mentioned businesses. So, two questions are directed to see if they can identify the global business with the lowest social sustainability score among their counterparts.

Because of the financial constraints, the convenience sampling method is adopted. 404 volunteer consumers who are older than 18 participated in the online questionnaire. The data was collected in April and March 2023. The questionnaires that don't include substantial data are excluded from the analysis, and the research was conducted on 385 questionnaires.

Both parametric and non-parametric techniques are used in the study. In general, Confirmatory Factor Analysis is preferred when the scale is developed and

applied before. However, in this study, Exploratory Factor Analysis is used to see the dimensions of the Boycott Motivation Scale. Because one item of the scale, which directly include the country of origin of the brand that is supposed to be boycotted, is excluded from the scale.

The possible relationship between boycott motivation and intention is tested with the help of Linear Regression Analysis. Among the other techniques that test potential relationships, dependent and independent variables are identified in Linear Regression. This enables one to comment on the antecedents of the constructs, and it is also possible to differentiate the coefficients of the independent variables. The factor loadings of the dimensions, which give insights about their impact on the construct, are used as independent variables in this test. In the next part of the analysis, the participants are clustered according to their level of boycott motivations using K-means Cluster analysis. Lastly, Chi-square analyses are conducted to test if there is a frequency difference of the participants clustered according to their boycott motivation level and knowledge of the companies that committed social sustainability violations. The Chi-square Analysis is repeated by using the company knowledge of the lowest social sustainability score instead of the knowledge of the company in the scenarios.

Because of the non-random sampling method adopted, the generalizability of the results is limited. In addition to this limitation, because of the nature of the study, real brands and cases had to be used. So, the study's results can not be generalized to other cases or brands. The fact remains that this study is exploratory to have some insights about the information barrier that limits boycott behavior. So, the results do not have the power to make predictions but are valuable to give insights about the situation.

3. Analysis

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

In Table 1, the distribution of the answers to the Boycott Motivation Scale is presented. Generally, the participants have high motivation to boycott the businesses in the cases given. In addition to this, the answers to the same questions related to the different cases are similar.

Table 1: Frequency of the Items of Boycott Motivation Scale

Scale Items n=404	Business	I definitely do	I do not agree	I neither agree	I agree	I definitely
		not agree	I do not agree	nor disagree	I agree	agree
I would boycott Company X's products *	Apple	0.8	2.5	13.5	53.1	30.1
	Amazon	1.5	4.3	13.3	55.5	25.4
Boycotts are an effective means to make a company change its actions.	Both	0.8	3.0	19.1	46.2	30.9
Everyone should take part in the boycott because every contribution, no matter how small, is important.	Both	1.3	2.3	15.3	47.0	34.2
By boycotting, I can help change Company X's decision.	Apple	1.3	4.5	22.9	47.5	23.9
	Amazon	0.8	5.5	19.1	47.7	26.9
I would feel guilty if I bought Company X products.	Apple	1.5	2.8	22.1	45.5	28.1
	Amazon	0.5	5.8	16.1	49.7	27.9
I would feel uncomfortable if other people who are boycotting saw me purchasing or consuming Company X products.	Apple	1.5	9.5	23.9	42.0	23.1
	Amazon	1.8	7.5	23.1	45.2	22.4
My friends/my family are encouraging me to boycott Company X.	Apple	2.5	16.6	27.1	39.9	13.8
	Amazon	1.3	16.3	30.7	35.4	16.3
I will feel better about myself if I boycott Company X.	Apple	0.8	5.3	17.6	52.3	24.1
	Amazon	0.5	5.0	16.8	51.3	26.4
I do not need to boycott Company X; enough other people are doing so.	Apple	22.4	49.2	21.1	5.5	1.8
	Amazon	18.6	47.5	22.1	7.5	4.3
I do not buy enough Company X products for it to be worthwhile boycotting; it would not even be noticed.	Apple	19.6	48.2	21.6	8.0	2.5
	Amazon	16.8	51.0	21.9	8.8	1.5
One shouldn't boycott because it will put other Company X jobs in danger.	Apple	14.6	39.2	35.7	7.5	3.0
	Amazon	13.6	39.9	36.9	7.5	2.0

As shown in Table 2, nearly half of the participants could identify the business in the case. In addition, generally, the businesses in the cases are supposed to be the ones that have the lowest social sustainability score.

Table 2: Knowledge Regarding the Knowledge of Committer of the Violations And Social Sustainability Scores

n=385		Apple	Xiaomi	Samsung	Acer
Which of the companies can be Company X?	f	181	118	43	43
	%	47.0	30.6	11.2	11.2
Which of the companies' social sustainability can be the lowest?	f	152	108	46	79
	%	39.5	28.1	11.9	20.5
		Amazon	Alibaba	E-Bay	Etsy
Which of the companies can be Company X?	f	198	112	56	19
	%	51.4	29.1	14.5	4.9
Which of the companies' social sustainability can be the lowest?	f	172	111	50	52
	%	44.7	28.8	13.0	13.5

3.2. Dimensions of the Boycott Motivation Scale

Principal Components Factor Analysis was conducted to determine the scale dimensions used in the research. The results obtained by performing orthogonal (Varimax) rotation are transferred using tables. Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was used to assess the collected data's suitability for structure detection. "KMO is a statistic that indicates the proportion of variance in a considered set of variables that might be caused by underlying factors" (Swarnakar, Singh & Tiwari, 2021, p.9620). The KMO value which is generally considered satisfactory by researchers, is 0.7 (Altunışık et al., 2012). KMO value in the Apple case is 0.865 and in the Amazon case 0.877. So that the data is supposed to be suitable for factor analysis.

The results of the factor analysis of both cases are summarized in Table 3. The total variance explained in the Apple case is 67.7 % and 65.6 % in the Amazon case. The dimensions detected in both of the cases are the same. As can be seen in Table 3, there are two dimensions in both of the cases. In the original paper, the scale has three dimensions: make a difference, self-enhancement, and counter-arguments (Klein et al., 2004). While the first two dimensions represent the personal or social peace of the consumers, the counter-arguments refer to the costs rather than the benefits of boycotting. In this research, it is seen that the first two dimensions merged. This dimension is called "arguments." While the scale is applied twice, and the results are the same in both analyses, the results are supposed to be valid. In order

to measure the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha measure is applied. In both analyses, each dimension's value verifies the reliability of the scale.

Table 3: Dimensions of Boycott Motivation Scale

Factor 1 – Arguments	Apple			Amazon		
	Factor Load.	Var. Ex. %	α	Factor Load.	Var. Ex. %	α
By boycotting, I can help change Company X's decision.	0.85	45.85	0.91	0.85	45.90	0.92
I would feel guilty if I bought Company X products.	0.84			0.83		
I will feel better about myself if I boycott Company X.	0.84			0.81		
Everyone should take part in the boycott because every contribution, no matter how small, is important.	0.84			0.80		
I would feel uncomfortable if other people who are boycotting saw me purchasing or consuming Company X products.	0.80			0.80		
Boycotts are an effective means to make a company change its actions	0.79			0.79		
My friends/my family are encouraging me to boycott Company X.	0.69			0.78		
Factor 2 – Counterarguments						
I do not buy enough Company X products for it to be worthwhile boycotting; it would not even be noticed.	0.87	21.87	0.80	0.86	19.63	0.80
I do not need to boycott Company X; enough other people are doing so.	0.86			0.85		
One shouldn't boycott because it will put other Company X jobs in danger.	0.79			0.81		

3.3. Hypothesis Tests

According to TPB (Ajzen, 1985) and MAO (Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995) theories, motivation is an antecedent of intention. In order to test this relationship, linear regression test is applied to the data. Linear regression is a statistical test applied to a data set to define and quantify the relation between the considered variables. The factor loadings of the dimensions of Boycott Motivation Scale are

used as the dependent variables and the item “I would boycott company X” is used as the independent one. The factors are included to the equation stepwise. The two model options for both cases can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Linear Regression Model Summary for Apple Case

	Independent Variables	Standardized β	Variable Sig.	ANOVA		
				Adjusted R ²	F Value	Model Sig.
Apple	Arguments	0.637	0.000	0.404	270.611	0.000
	Arguments + Counter-arguments	0.588 -0.143	0.000 0.000	0.421	145.365	0.000
Amazon	Arguments	0.703	0.000	0.493	386.978	0.000
	Arguments + Counter-arguments	0.669 -0.115	0.002	0.504	202.571	0.000

The models are statistically significant. So, H_1 is accepted. However, the counter-arguments dimension is not as effective as the arguments dimension. Moreover, the increase in adjusted R^2 is so low that it can be excluded from the model. As a result, the primary antecedent of boycott intention is the motivations regarding arguments (self-enhancement and make a difference).

3.3. Clustering Analysis

K-means is a partitional clustering method. It is commonly adopted in academic research due to its easiness, simplicity, and efficiency. K-means takes a data matrix, where the number of data points is embedded in a dimensional feature space, to create clusters, where each data point is assigned to just one cluster. Data are grouped using an iterative process that begins with the random assignment of a cluster to each data point. Subsequently, data are rearranged within the clusters by assigning them to the nearest cluster center (Javadi et al., 2017). In K-means Clustering Analysis, the analyzer decides the number of clusters. In this research, it is decided to be two because of the nature of the scale. Motivations usually have two directions: positive and negative.

K-means Clustering Analysis was performed using factor loads obtained from the Exploratory Factor Analysis to divide the sample into clusters in line with their motivations. In the Apple case, at 10 iterations, and in the Amazon case, at 14 iterations, optimum clusters are found. Table 5 shows the cluster centers.

Table 5: Cluster Centers of K-means Cluster Analysis

Final Cluster Centers		
Apple	Cluster Centers	
	1	2
Arguments	-0.53858	0.38897
Counterarguments	0.98436	-0.42621
Amazon	Cluster Centers	
	1	2
Arguments	-0.41320	0.34944
Counterarguments	0.98436	-0.49400

Table 6 shows the averages of the answers to each scale item in both clusters in two cases. While the first clusters in each case showed lower agreement to the items of argument dimension than the second clusters, they agreed more to the items of the counterargument dimension than the second clusters. However, the means show that the first groups are not demotivated, but they are hesitant. On the contrary, the second group is highly motivated.

Table 6: Cluster Averages of Boycott Motivation Scale

	Apple		Amazon	
	Cluster 1 n= 134	Cluster 2 n= 264	Cluster 1 n= 145	Cluster 2 n= 253
Arguments	3.35	4.19	3.47	4.16
Counterarguments	3.08	1.88	3.13	1.89

3.4. Chi-Square Tests

In order to see whether the motivated group is more aware of the committers of social sustainability violations, Chi-square tests are done. In Table 7 & 8, the results can be seen.

Table 7. Crosstabs & Chi- Square Test Results of Apple-I

	Hesitants		Highly Motivated		Total	
	n	f (%)	n	f (%)	n	f (%)
Correct	47	12.2	134	34.8	181	47
Incorrect	84	21.8	120	31.2	204	53
Total	131	34	254	66	385	100

Pearson Chi-Square: 9.883, Fisher Exact Test Significance (2- sided): 0.002

Linear-by-linear association: 9.858 Likelihood Ratio: 9.991

Table 8. Crosstabs & Chi- Square Test Results of Amazon-I

	Hesitants		Highly Motivated		Total	
	n	f (%)	n	f (%)	n	f (%)
Correct	59	15.3	139	36.1	198	51.4
Incorrect	82	21.2	105	27.3	187	48.6
Total	141	36.6	244	63.3	385	100

Pearson Chi-Square: 8.182, Fisher Exact Test Significance (2- sided): 0.004

Linear-by-linear association: 8.161 Likelihood Ratio: 8.207

H_2 : “There is a relationship between the motivation to boycott global brands that commit social sustainability violations and being informed about these violations.” is accepted. The group who is motivated to boycott and can identify the business correctly is 34.8% of the sample in the Apple case and 36.1% in the Amazon case. While the group who is motivated but can not identify the business correctly is 31% of the sample in the Apple case and 27% of the sample in the Amazon. In other words, the number of potential boycotters decrease nearly to half, just because they don’t know the violation.

The last hypothesis, “ H_3 : There is a relationship between the motivation to boycott global brands that are committers of social sustainability violations and having knowledge about the sustainability scores of these businesses.” is also tested with Chi-Square. The results are summarized in Table 9 & 10.

Table 9. Crosstabs & Chi- Square Test Results of Apple-II

	Hesitants		Highly Motivated		Total	
	n	f (%)	n	f (%)	n	f (%)
Correct	39	10	113	29.4	152	39.5
Incorrect	92	24	141	36.6	233	60.5
Total	131	34	254	66	385	100

Pearson Chi-Square: 7.835, Fisher Exact Test Significance (2- sided): 0.006
 Linear-by-linear association: 7.814 Likelihood Ratio: 7.993

Table 10. Crosstabs & Chi- Square Test Results of Amazon-II

	Hesitants		Highly Motivated		Total	
	n	f (%)	n	f (%)	n	f (%)
Correct	48	12.5	124	32.2	172	44.7
Incorrect	95	24.7	118	30.6	213	55.3
Total	143	37.2	242	62.8	385	100

Pearson Chi-Square: 11.359, Fisher Exact Test Significance (2- sided): 0.001
 Linear-by-linear association: 11.329 Likelihood Ratio: 11.513

According to the Chi-Square Test results, H_3 is accepted in both cases. Boycott-motivated consumers tend to identify Amazon and Apple as the lowest scorer regarding social sustainability better than the hesitants. Boycott-motivated consumers, which can identify the lowest social sustainability scorers among the others, are 29.4% of the sample in the Apple case and 30.6% in the Amazon case. The consumers who are motivated to boycott but do not know the business with the lowest sustainability score is 36.6% in the Apple case and 32.2% in the Amazon case. These results are similar to the tests regarding H_2 .

Conclusion

This study aims to examine the boycott motivations and intentions of consumers against the social sustainability violations of global businesses and have an idea about the effect of knowledge. Research on the social dimension of sustainability is less than the environmental one; likewise, buying sustainable products is studied more than rejecting unsustainable ones. This study focuses on the social dimension of sustainability and questions consumers' boycott motivation and intention by considering social violations.

According to Phipps et al. (2013), sustainable consumption studies should start from the problem rather than the theory. This study mainly shows that the lack of knowledge prevents some consumers from boycotting social sustainability violations. Therefore, the starting point is the problem. For consumers to take action

within the framework of responsible consumption, they must first know about sustainable and unsustainable products and find substitutes for them (Turunen & Halme, 2021). So that "*knowledge*" appears to be a primary condition affecting responsible consumption. Even though consumers give importance to sustainability and want to take action, they can not if they cannot distinguish the sustainable from the unsustainable ones. The research focuses on whether consumers can identify the businesses that commit social sustainability violations. Boycott motivations and the consumers' knowledge of violations are measured in the context of the Amazon's and Apple's employee rights violation cases. About half of the sample (47% in the Apple case & 51.4% in the Amazon case) could identify the company that violated social sustainability. In the study of Maheswari et al. (2014), 60% of the sample couldn't identify environmentally friendly products. In Ernst & Young Global's study (2021), 61% of the sample declared that they need more information to make better sustainable choices. Likewise, in the study of White et al. (2019), 65% of the sample say they want to buy sustainable products, but 26% do so. The empirical results of these previous studies show that most consumers need more information when identifying sustainable products. The findings of this study support them.

According to the Linear Regression results, there is no problem in the flow of motivations to intents. This study confirms this relationship in line with both TPB (Ajzen, 1985). Consumers who are motivated to boycott these companies also intend to do so. However, according to MAO Theory (Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995), ability and opportunity are also required for intents to turn into behaviors. Knowledge is a subdimension of ability. Consequently, boycott-motivated consumers should know the businesses that committed the social violations to turn their intents into behaviors.

In the Apple case, consumers who have boycott motivation and who can identify the business in the violation case correctly contribute 34.8% of the sample. In the Amazon case, this ratio is 36.1%. Consumers who are motivated but can not identify the business correctly are 31.2% of the sample in the Apple and 27.3% in

the Amazon case. Based on the results, it is seen that almost half of the group that has the potential to boycott, cannot take this action because they do not know about the company related to violation. The most remarkable result of this research is that consumers have severe limitations for the enforcement power on businesses in penalizing their violations. However, it should be noted that according to MAO Theory, knowledge is not the only constraint that limits actions. Apart from knowledge, time, and financial constraints, finding equivalents of the product, etc., are examples of other constraints (Thøgersen, 2005). When those are included, the probability of boycott intentions turning into action decreases more. The effects of these constraints on sustainable consumption behavior remain to be researched.

The second result of the study is that the boycott-motivated group is better than the other one in identifying the social sustainability committers in each case. This group is also more capable of identifying the businesses with the lowest social sustainability scores among their counterparts. The reason underlying these findings can be selective perception, cognitive effort, or both. This topic remains to be researched in the future.

In order to empower consumers in the case of sustainability consumption, consumers' ability to reach information related to both favorable and unfavorable actions of businesses should be increased. Businesses usually communicate their good practices. However, the spread of violations is possible only through media. The foundation of a responsible institution in this regard can help ensure a more regular and healthy communication. A committee or an organization can be founded with the joint efforts of consumers, investors, governments, universities, and non-governmental organizations. This foundation can investigate and disseminate sustainability violations of businesses and share the actions that these businesses take to compensate for these violations.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct similar research in different social sustainability violation cases. Because although the research is

carried out on two different examples of violations to ensure validity, it does not seem possible to generalize.

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