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### Investigating Consumers' Boycott Behavior in the Context of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Social Media, Consumer Animosity and Perceived Efficacy Perspectives

#### *İsrail-Filistin Çatışması Bağlamında Tüketicilerin Boykot Davranışlarının Araştırılması: Sosyal Medya, Tüketici Düşmanlığı ve Algılanan Etkinlik Perspektifleri*

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the effects of consumer animosity, perceived effectiveness, and social media on consumers' boycott intentions. In addition, the study aims to investigate the mediating role of social media in the relationship between consumer animosity and boycott intention and the relationship between perceived efficacy and boycott intention. The study also analyzes whether there are significant differences in the boycott intentions of consumers in seven different regions of Türkiye. A total of 749 consumer data from an equal number of consumers in seven different regions of Türkiye were analyzed using structural equation modeling and ANOVA tests. The study's findings show that consumer animosity, perceived efficacy, and social media positively affect consumers' boycott intentions. While the mediating role of social media in the relationship between perceived effectiveness and boycott intentions was observed, the mediating role of social media in the relationship between consumer animosity and boycott intentions was not detected. It also revealed that there is a significant difference between regions in consumers' boycott intentions. The study differs from other studies in that it both investigates the mediating roles of social media variables and analyzes regional differences in the analysis of boycott intentions.

#### ÖZ

Bu çalışma, tüketici düşmanlığı, algılanan etkinlik ve sosyal medyanın tüketicilerin boykot niyeti üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca çalışma, tüketici düşmanlığı ile boykot niyeti arasındaki ilişkide ve algılanan etkinlik ile boykot niyeti arasındaki ilişkide sosyal medyanın aracılık rolünü araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca Türkiye'nin yedi farklı bölgesindeki tüketicilerin boykot niyetlerinde anlamlı farklılıklar olup olmadığını analiz etmektedir. Türkiye'nin yedi farklı bölgesindeki eşit sayıda tüketiciden elde edilen toplam 749 tüketici verisi yapısal eşitlik modellenmesi ve ANOVA testleri kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları, tüketici düşmanlığı, algılanan yeterlilik ve sosyal medyanın tüketicilerin boykot niyetleri üzerinde pozitif bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Algılanan etkinlik ile boykot niyeti arasındaki ilişkide sosyal medyanın aracılık rolü gözlemlenirken, tüketici düşmanlığı ile boykot niyeti arasındaki ilişkide sosyal medyanın aracılık rolü tespit edilememiştir. Ayrıca, tüketicilerin boykot niyetlerinde bölgeler arasında anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Çalışma, hem sosyal medya değişkenlerinin aracılık rollerini araştırması hem de boykot niyetlerinin analizinde bölgesel farklılıkları analiz etmesi bakımından diğer çalışmalardan farklılık göstermektedir.

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## **1. Introduction**

Social and political developments can present situations where consumers can approve or react together. Consumers can show their reactions to situations that they disapprove of and find ugly regarding the actions of a country, business, or enterprise with a boycott (Abosag and Farag, 2014: 2262). In recent years, developments in the Internet and social media technologies have helped consumers quickly reveal their reactions to businesses and spread them to others. These developments have also caused the boycott phenomenon to increase in popularity (Pandey et al., 2021: 52). Emphasizing that the boycott issue has attracted attention in previous years, Balabanis (2012) stated that 36% of the participants in a study conducted with 15,500 consumers from 17 different countries boycotted at least one brand. It has also been observed that many companies, including well-known multinational companies, have been on the boycott agenda of consumers (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021: 1313-1314). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has recently been on the global agenda, is also on the agenda of consumers in this context.

Unethical and inappropriate behavior and brand practices toward consumers can provoke wrath and elicit emotions from these consumers. Consumer emotions and reactions can escalate gradually and eventually reach a level of animosity. This phenomenon, known as consumer animosity, can also impact consumers' patterns of consumption and intentions to make purchases (Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2007: 99-101). Consumer responses and demonstrations following the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are transforming into movements characterized by consumer animosity. On a global scale, consumers are showing a growing response towards products that are seen as supportive of Israel (Fadzilah et al., 2024: 66). Starbucks experienced a decline in its stock value, dropping from \$103 to \$73, during the period from November to April in 2024 (Investing.com, 2024).

This study aims to uncover consumer responses towards brands about consumer animosity. It seeks to address whether this topic has gained attention through the boycott movement and whether social media has a role in influencing this situation. An essential research issue of this study is whether the perceived success of a boycott by consumers, either individually or collectively through social media, influences the intentions of other consumers to boycott. A research model has been presented to investigate these research problems. In the research model, the consumer animosity variable was examined regarding its effect on boycott intention and the mediating role of social media in this relationship. The effect of the perceived effectiveness of the boycott on boycott intention and the mediating role of social media in this relationship was also examined. The study also examined the direct effect of social media on boycott intentions. In addition to examining the factors affecting boycott intention, consumer data from seven geographically different regions of Türkiye were compared, and inter-regional differences were also examined to determine whether there are differences in consumers' boycott intentions.

The study intends to offer an in-depth contribution to the boycott literature, which has emerged following the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by investigating Turkish consumers' boycott intentions and the factors influencing these intentions. In this direction, consumer data acquired via online surveys were examined using structural equation modeling and ANOVA testing to reveal the psychological and social dynamics of consumers' boycott motivations in depth.

## **2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

It is seen that there are different perspectives in research on boycotts. The focus of the majority of studies is on consumers and consumer behavior. Al Hyari et al. (2012) examine boycott and consumer behavior through religious beliefs, and Awaludin and Al-Khaidar (2023) examine the participation of consumers who support the boycott of Israel through consumer behavior. Shoham et al. (2006) similarly conducted their studies in terms of consumer animosity towards Israel and consumer behavior. Abd-Razak and Abdul-Talib (2012) examined the boycott behavior of Muslim consumers, and Abdul-Talib (2016) examined the behavior of non-Muslim consumers. Boycott studies have also examined consumer behavior and purchasing decisions (Aung et al., 2021).

Boycott studies are commonly examined from both economic and political perspectives. Cossío-Silva et al. (2019) conducted a study to explore the significance of political boycott knowledge on entrepreneurs by implementing an actual boycott in Spain. In contrast, Lasarov et al. (2023) explored the reasons behind the

decline in participation and behaviors related to boycotts over time. Roswinanto and Suwanda (2023) examined the factors that lead to religious boycotts and the impact of religiosity in Indonesia. When analyzing other studies on boycott strategies, Balabanis (2013) focused on the impact of consumer animosity on boycotts, Hawkins (2010) explored boycotts and consumer activism on a global scale, Hoffmann and Müller (2009) examined the strategic effects of consumer boycotts, Neilson (2010) investigated the economic consequences of consumer boycotts, and Hitchcock (2016) analyzed the discourse of Palestinian-centered boycott movements on social media.

The study conducted by Yousaf et al. (2021) focused on analyzing the phenomenon of boycotts from the standpoint of the tourism industry. The study asserts that adverse incidents targeting tourists in a tourist destination in Pakistan are disseminated through social media platforms, influencing the inclination to boycott. Hosseini et al. (2023) conducted a study on the boycott behavior of tourists on social media platforms in Iran. Zhai and Luo (2023) are among the researchers who have examined tourism boycotts.

In his study, Valenzuela (2013) points out that social media can be used to express protests and mediate the relationship between the expression of opinion and protest behavior by using social media for activism. This highlights the potential of social media as a platform for expressing protests. However, Sergius (2012) determined that online consumer boycotts are ineffective in inflicting economic harm on their target businesses. Dalakas et al. (2023) examined Twitter case studies in their study. They found that brand champions have the potential to diminish the impact of a boycott and that the act of threatening a boycott does not always result in an actual boycott taking place. Hitchcock (2016) examines the phenomenon of boycotts about the utilization of social media; Baumgart-Ochse (2019) analyzes international relations from the perspective of justice; Awaludin et al. (2023) investigates the influence of opinion leaders on boycotts; Feiler (2013) explores the economic consequences of the Arab boycott of Israel; Ahsyam et al. (2024) studies the impact of product boycotts on stock prices. Sorek (2022) discusses the concept of boycotts within the context of sports. Gerstenfeld (2003), Storey (2005), and Kagee (2022) conducted scholarly investigations and analyses on the topic of boycotts.

Ultimately, studies that call for a boycott of Israel garner significant attention. Abd-Razak and Abdul-Talib (2012), Abdul-Talib et al. (2016), Hamzah and Mustafa (2018), Ishak et al. (2018), Awaludin et al. (2023), Samudra et al. (2024), Geweke (2024), Aziz and Farouk (2024) have examined the problem of boycott from the Israeli standpoint.

## **2.1. Boycott Definition and Background**

There are many definitions of the concept of boycott in literature. The definition in the studies of Friedman (1985) and Klein et al. (2004) is an example of many studies. A boycott is basically defined as a consumer giving up purchasing a selected business or brand product. Boycotts are also defined as a consumer giving up consumption both individually and collectively (Sen et al., 2001: 400).

The concept of boycott, which is accepted as consumer actions taken to oppose the illegal and immoral behavior of businesses, has increased its importance with the emergence of concepts such as social marketing, corporate social responsibility, and sustainable marketing (Klein et al., 2004: 92). It is emphasized that boycotts can occur for cultural, religious, economic, political, and ideological reasons, as well as social reasons (Cruz, 2013: 507).

Consumers can influence boycott action by informing their family, close circle, and followers about their intentions to boycott through personal social media accounts (Makarem and Jae, 2016: 194). Hence, it is crucial to examine the matter of boycotts from the perspective of social media. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of this aspect.

Boycott studies have been examined using many variables. Nevertheless, this study focused on analyzing the perceived success of the boycott, consumer animosity, and social media characteristics. Hence, a comprehensive analysis of these variables is conducted in the literature section.

## **2.2. Consumer Animosity and Boycott Intention**

The frequent research on the impact of a country's politically significant activities on consumer purchasing intentions and behaviors is driven by the prospect of creating animosity towards brands affiliated with that

country. Furthermore, these activities are especially examined under the term "consumer animosity" (Leong et al., 2008).

Research shows that one of the lasting consequences of boycotts is the emergence of consumer animosity (Ettenson and Klein, 2005: 204-205). Various forms of animosity have been used to analyze consumer behaviors. Several research in literature have examined the connection between religious enmity, religiosity, and boycotts. These studies include the works of Abd-Razak and Abdul-Talib (2012), Al-Hyari et al. (2012), Abosag and Farah (2014), Kalliny et al. (2017), and Mirza et al. (2020). Nevertheless, there are additional research studies that link the specific form of animosity to the act of boycotting, namely through consumer anger (Suhud, 2018; Ali, 2021; Xie et al., 2023; Krüger et al., 2024). The findings of the experiments can be applied to a broader population, indicating that animosity can have detrimental impacts on consumer behavior. The findings are corroborated by Shoham et al. (2006).

Ettenson and Klein (2005) and Hoffman et al. (2011) highlight that consumer animosity has a significant role in shaping boycott intentions. The study undertaken by Smith and Li (2010) confirms this condition in the context of China and Japan. The boycott of Japanese items by South Korean consumers (Lee & Chon, 2021) and the boycott of Turkish products by Iraqi consumers (Ali, 2021) exemplify the impact of consumer animosity. In contrast to these studies, Albayati et al. (2012) have determined that the impact of consumer antagonism is minimal or negligible. The study currently examines the correlation between consumer animosity and the desire to boycott, as well as the role of social media as a mediator in this correlation. This is done using the sample involved in the research.

### **2.3. The Impact of Social Media on Boycotts**

Today, consumers are pushing businesses to act ethically. The success of businesses in their strategies is closely related to consumer approval (Eesley and Lenox, 2006: 765). Businesses can quickly become targets through the internet and social media when they do not act socially responsible. As a result, negative consequences such as economic loss and loss of reputation can occur (Earl and Kimport, 2009: 226-227).

With the widespread use of social media in recent years, consumers can also come together quickly and express their positive or negative reactions to brands easily through these channels (Seidman, 2007; Haug, 2013). The ability of consumers to come together with brands and other consumers in a short time has allowed situations such as creating communities to emerge. These communities can reflect positively on brands, as well as a collective reaction to brands in the event of a boycott or similar negative situation (Dalakas et al., 2023: 3). For example, Salma and Aji (2023) emphasize in their study that the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement in Indonesia is being tried to reach millions of people through social media.

Many factors come to the fore when the studies conducted on the boycott phenomenon on social media are examined. Dalakas et al. (2023) addressed boycotts on social media in the context of political consumerism. Hitchcock (2016) examined boycotts through social media discourse. Echine (2019) evaluated boycotts initiated on social media regarding social networks. Susanti et al. (2024), although focusing on a similar subject to these studies, concluded that social media did not affect boycotting, unlike other studies. Considering the effective status of social media in today's internet age, it is thought that it can also be effective in boycotting. In this direction, social media is one of the study variables, and its relationship with consumer boycott intention is examined.

### **2.4. Perceived Efficacy of the Boycott**

In literature, the perceived effectiveness of a boycott is defined as the impact that participants in the boycott can have on the firm being boycotted. The perceived efficacy, or the consumers' conviction in achieving the desired collective impact by boycotting a business, also enhances the boycott's impact. When the perceived effectiveness of the boycott is high, the level of boycott participation also increases (Shin and Yoon, 2018: 441-444).

Perceived efficacy, a variable widely used in studies on the boycott phenomenon, is seen as an important consumer reason for participation in boycotts. In literature, the concepts of Perceived Effectiveness and Perceived Efficacy have been used in different studies. Efficacy was used in the study since individuals' perceptions of the effectiveness of their boycott participation were examined. The concept of perceived efficacy

is crucial in persuading consumers to initiate and sustain boycott action (Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Hoffman, 2013; Salma & Aji, 2023).

When consumers see a high level of efficacy, their belief in boycotts is strengthened. Boycott organizers should consider this, as the broader dissemination of the boycott will enhance faith in its effectiveness. At this juncture, social media and public spaces can serve as valuable tools (Aung et al., 2021: 118). However, Sergius Koku (2012) highlights in his research that the use of the Internet can enhance the perceived efficacy of the boycott. Nevertheless, he also acknowledges potential challenges associated with this approach.

## **2.5. Hypotheses Development**

Several studies have analyzed consumer behavior related to boycotts. Qualitative and quantitative analysis methodologies, as well as case studies, have been used. Many studies have also examined the motivations behind consumers' boycott behavior by focusing on various variables (Abosag & Farah, 2014; Abdul-Talib et al., 2016; Ali, 2021; Braunsberger & Buckler, 2021; Hosseini et al., 2023; Mirza et al., 2020; Pandey et al., 2021). This study employed a quantitative analysis method and identified consumer animosity, perceived efficacy, social media, and boycott intention as interest factors. The research model is presented in Figure 1. While creating the research model, the relationship between the variables was structured in line with the theoretical foundations. The effects and mediating role of the variables in the model will be better understood in this way.

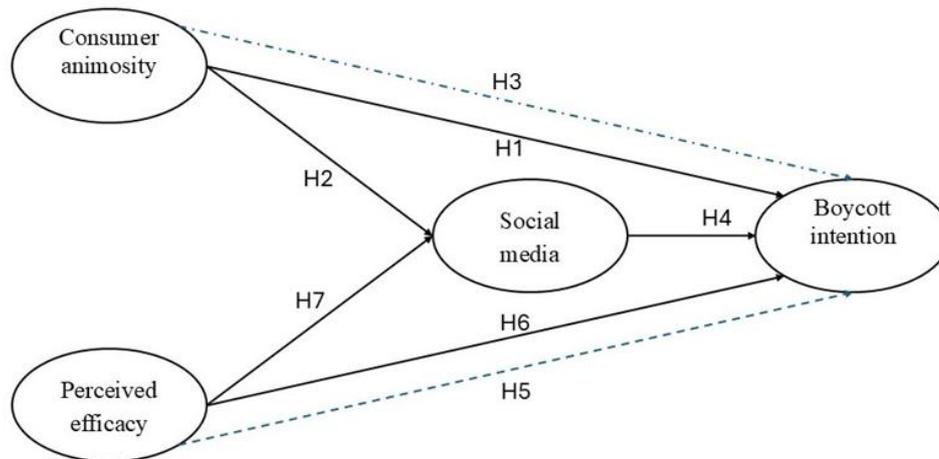
The hypotheses that consumer animosity directly affects boycott intention are constructed similarly to the studies of Alvarez and Campo (2019), Salma and Aji (2023), Roswinanto and Suwanda (2023), and Awaludin and Al-Khaidar (2023) and based on the Consumer Animosity Theory. Consumer Animosity Theory suggests that consumers who harbor feelings of hostility towards a particular country will have a negative desire to purchase that country's products (Klein et al., 1998). Thus, consumer animosity can influence boycott intentions both directly and through social media.

The Perceived Consumer Effectiveness Theory put forward by Klein et al. 2004 provides the basis for examining Perceived Efficacy in terms of its effect on boycott intentions. Awaludin and Al-Khaidar (2023) and Salma and Aji (2023) concluded that high levels of perceived effectiveness may affect boycott intentions. Hoffman (2013), on the other hand, based perceived efficacy on Cognitive Dissonance Theory and revealed that people's perceived efficacy levels could be effective in boycotting. Accordingly, in our study, it is assumed that perceived effectiveness both directly affects boycott intention and shows an indirect effect through social media.

The interaction of people with each other on social media and the aspect of social influence is explained under the Social Media Engagement Theory (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016). Regarding boycotts, social media can be a medium for organizing, promoting, and spreading boycotts. It is hypothesized that there may be mediating roles about consumer hostility, perceived effectiveness, and boycott intention variables. Roswinanto and Suwanda (2023) and Salma and Aji (2023) also concluded that social media may impact boycott intention.

In addition, the Moral Sentiment Theory is also used in boycotts. By associating with situations such as morality and ethics, people may positively affect their boycott intentions by considering the suffering of others (Ishak et al., 2018). While revealing that moral feelings can affect people's boycott intentions, studies show that boycott intentions can be affected by combining religious aspects with morality (Abd-Razak & Abdul-Talib, 2012; Al Hyari et al., 2012).

Finally, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is prominent in boycott studies. This theory, which tries to explain the reasons behind people's behaviors, is examined in terms of the motivations behind people's boycott intentions. The effects of perceived effectiveness, social media, and consumer hostility variables on boycott intention are examined using the theoretical framework of Planned Behavior. Delistavrou et al. (2020) emphasize that this theory can effectively explain the motivations underlying boycotts.



**Figure 1.** Research Model

The study collected prior research variables that could influence the intention to boycott. Unlike the variables used in other studies, this study adds the social media variable. The social media variable is examined both in terms of its effect on boycott intention and its mediating role. The consumer animosity variable (Xie et al., 2023), which is defined as the negative attitudes of consumers towards a business, brand, or its products and the situation of giving up purchasing, has been examined in many studies in terms of its effect on boycott intention (Feng & Yu, 2016; Ali. 2021; Xie et al. 2023; Krüger et al., 2024). In addition, some studies have found a positive effect of consumer animosity on consumers' boycott intentions (Abosag & Farah, 2014). As in the studies of Mishra et al. (2023), Zhai and Luo (2023), and Salma and Aji (2023), in which the effect of consumer animosity variable on boycott intention is examined, this relationship is analyzed through consumer animosity propositions. Accordingly, H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses are formed.

**H1:** Consumer animosity positively influences consumer intentions to boycott.

**H2:** Consumer animosity yields a beneficial impact on social media.

**H3:** Social media moderates the relationship between consumer antagonism and consumer boycott intentions.

Furthermore, it is seen that social media exerts influence on boycott movements. Illia et al. (2022) researched an online boycott that was initiated on social media. Susanti et al. (2024) studied the impact of social media on people's participation in boycotts and their intention to make purchases. Makarem and Jae (2016) analyzed the content of Twitter streams from various social media platforms. Echine (2019) examined the use of social networks during political events, specifically a boycott. Hosseini et al. (2023) investigated consumers' reasons for participating in a boycott centered around social media. Furthermore, an analysis of boycott studies on social media reveals that the objectives behind boycotts include issuing a call to action, raising awareness and sharing information, effecting change, and providing alternative options (Makarem & Jae, 2016). It has also been concluded that social media campaigns positively and significantly affect boycott attitudes (Susanti et al., 2024). When the studies examining social media and boycott are evaluated, it is seen that there are generally methods such as qualitative analysis, rhetoric, netnographic and case studies. However, Kaur and Chahal (2018), who examined the effect of social media in increasing environmental awareness, analyzed the social media scale with six factors and emphasized that changes can be made in the survey by taking the advice of experts. At this point, the factors and propositions measuring the social media effect were adapted to the boycott issue by using this study, and the following hypotheses were proposed:

**H4:** Social media has a positive effect on consumers' boycott intentions.

**H5:** Social media mediates the relationship between perceived efficacy and boycott intention.

Perceived efficacy pertains to the subjective perception of the general public on the likelihood of the boycott achieving its intended objective (Barakat & Moussa, 2017; Zhai & Luo, 2023). Essentially, the question at hand is whether the boycott will achieve success or have any impact. Consumers' views of perceived

effectiveness are influenced by their increased exertion of effort towards attaining the boycott aims and their belief in the efficacy of their actions. Consumer resentment can also influence consumer views of perceived effectiveness (Hoffman, 2013). According to Albayati et al. (2012), there is a clear relationship between consumer animosity, perceived efficacy, and the propensity to join in a boycott. Thus, in accordance with other research, this study posits that there may be a significant correlation between perceived efficacy and boycott intention. Alternatively, it is theorized that social media may act as a mediator in this connection. The study assesses perceived efficacy by utilizing variables derived from research conducted by Salma and Aji (2023). Currently, the study puts out the following ideas concerning the perceived effectiveness:

**H6:** *Perceived efficacy has a positive effect on consumers' boycott intentions.*

**H7:** *Perceived efficacy has a positive effect on social media.*

The study focuses on analyzing consumers' intention to boycott as the dependent variable. The boycott intention factor was measured by utilizing the boycott intention statements in the study by Salma and Aji (2023).

Hendarto, et al. (2018) highlight that Indonesia is a collection of islands separated into three distinct time zones, which might result in variations between the islands. Kuncoro (2013) highlights regional inequality, whereas Wibowo (2016) focuses on the disparity between the wealthy and the poor. This study examines whether there is a notable disparity in the participants' intentions to boycott based on their locations. The data obtained from seven distinct geographical regions of Türkiye will be analyzed for this purpose. Therefore, hypothesis H8 is put forward:

**H8:** *There is a significant difference in the boycott intentions of consumers according to their regions of residence.*

### 3. Method

Data was gathered from seven distinct geographical zones in Türkiye to analyze consumer behavior in the study. The sample comprises 749 participants, with 107 participants from each area. The primary objective of this selection is to analyze and compare the opinions of consumers residing in various regions of Türkiye regarding their plans to boycott.

The sample selection process utilized the stratified sampling method. A stratified sample guarantees that an equivalent number of participants are chosen randomly from each subgroup (such as the seven geographic areas of Türkiye) to reflect specific population segments accurately. An essential aspect of ensuring reliable comparisons and generalizing results is to analyze an equal quantity of inter-regional data.

#### 3.1. Findings

Descriptive statistics about the study participants are shown in Table 1. The distribution of participants according to gender, age range, education level, occupation, and income status is shown in the table.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Study's Participants

|                   |                        | Frequency             | Percent (%)  |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Gender</b>     | Male                   | 339                   | 45,3         |
|                   | Female                 | 410                   | 54,7         |
|                   | <b>Total</b>           | <b>749</b>            | <b>100,0</b> |
| <b>Age</b>        | 18 – 25                | 120                   | 16,0         |
|                   | 26 – 35                | 224                   | 29,9         |
|                   | 36 – 45                | 292                   | 39,0         |
|                   | 46 and above           | 113                   | 15,1         |
|                   | <b>Total</b>           | <b>749</b>            | <b>100,0</b> |
|                   | <b>Education Level</b> | High school and below | 110          |
| Associate degree  |                        | 130                   | 17,4         |
| Bachelor's degree |                        | 316                   | 42,2         |
| Master's degree   |                        | 113                   | 15,1         |
| PhD               |                        | 80                    | 10,7         |
| <b>Total</b>      |                        | <b>749</b>            | <b>100,0</b> |
| Occupation        |                        | Public Personnel      | 295          |
|                   | Private Sector         | 191                   | 25,5         |

|                      |                        |            |              |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Profession</b>    | Student                | 62         | 8,3          |
|                      | Housewife              | 98         | 13,1         |
|                      | Retired                | 35         | 4,7          |
|                      | Other                  | 68         | 9,1          |
|                      | <b>Total</b>           | <b>749</b> | <b>100,0</b> |
| <b>Income Status</b> | Minimum wage and below | 144        | 19,2         |
|                      | 20.000 - 35.000 TL     | 136        | 18,2         |
|                      | 36.000 - 50.000 TL     | 191        | 25,5         |
|                      | 50.000 TL and above    | 278        | 37,1         |
|                      | <b>Total</b>           | <b>749</b> | <b>100,0</b> |

### 3.2. Validity and Reliability Analysis

The scales used for the study underwent validity and reliability evaluations using a measurement model. Table 2, titled "Measurement Model Findings, " shows the analysis results." The table presents the coefficients for internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The average variance values, known as AVE, are used to express the data.

**Table 2.** Measurement Model Findings

| Variables                 | Items | Factor Loadings | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | CR    | AVE   |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------------|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Boycott Intention</b>  | BI1   | 0.967           | 0.974            | 0.974 | 0.983 | 0.950 |
|                           | BI2   | 0.982           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | BI3   | 0.975           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | CA1   | 0.883           |                  |       |       |       |
| <b>Consumer Animosity</b> | CA2   | 0.885           | 0.888            | 0.910 | 0.918 | 0.693 |
|                           | CA3   | 0.892           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | CA4   | 0.702           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | CA5   | 0.802           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | PE1   | 0.916           |                  |       |       |       |
| <b>Perceived Efficacy</b> | PE2   | 0.893           | 0.948            | 0.950 | 0.960 | 0.829 |
|                           | PE3   | 0.928           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | PE4   | 0.890           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | PE5   | 0.924           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | SM1   | 0.902           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | SM2   | 0.835           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | SM3   | 0.810           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | SM4   | 0.901           |                  |       |       |       |
| <b>Social media</b>       | SM5   | 0.907           | 0.955            | 0.957 | 0.962 | 0.762 |
|                           | SM6   | 0.852           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | SM7   | 0.871           |                  |       |       |       |
|                           | SM8   | 0.900           |                  |       |       |       |

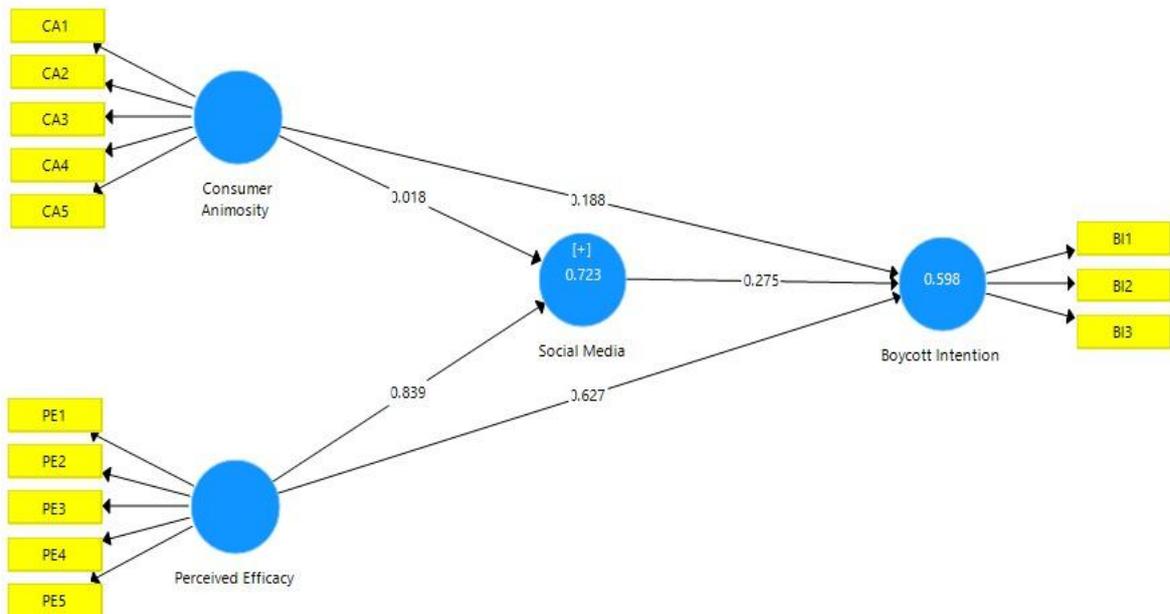
Upon examining the data in the table, it is evident that the values exceed those reported by Hair et al. (2019) ( $AVE > 0.50$ ,  $CR > 0.70$ , and factor loadings  $> 0.70$ ). The CR coefficients range from 0.918 to 0.983, exceeding the specified value. The factor loadings range from 0.702 to 0.967, and the AVE coefficients range from 0.693 to 0.950. This data demonstrates that internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity fulfill the necessary criteria.

The HTMT criterion is utilized to evaluate discriminant validity. This criterion measures the ratio of the average correlations between expressions from different variables in the model to the geometric mean of the correlations between expressions from the same variable. The HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) criterion serves as the foundation for this evaluation. The results for discriminant validity can be found in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity Results (HTMT Criterion)

|                    | Boycott Intention | Consumer Animosity | Perceived Efficacy | Social media |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Boycott Intention  |                   |                    |                    |              |
| Consumer Animosity | 0.615             |                    |                    |              |
| Perceived Efficacy | 0.773             | 0.670              |                    |              |
| Social media       | 0.737             | 0.581              | 0.839              |              |

Hair et al. (2019) asserted that the HTMT ratio criterion should be below 0.85. Upon examination of Table 3, it is found that the threshold values of the HTMT coefficients are below 0.85. This outcome demonstrates that the conditions for discriminant validity have been satisfied. Figure 2 depicts the constructed structural equation model linking Boycott Intention, Consumer Animosity, Perceived Efficacy, and social media.



**Figure 2.** Structural Equation Model Path Diagram

The study's objective is to establish the theoretical connections between the variables influenced by other variables using structural equation modeling (SEM). Figure 2 depicts the correlation between the variables presented in the research model using route analysis. Five thousand resamplings were conducted to assess the statistical significance of the model using the bootstrapping technique. Furthermore, the R<sup>2</sup> values of the scales employed in the study were evaluated alongside the pertinent analyses. The R<sup>2</sup> number quantifies the proportion of the endogenous variable that can be accounted for by the exogenous variable (Hair, 2019).

As to Hair et al. (2019), the R<sup>2</sup> value ranges from 0 to 1. R<sup>2</sup> value 0.25 is considered weak, 0.50 is moderate, and 0.75 is considered substantial. The study found that the R<sup>2</sup> value for the Social Media variable was 72.3%, and the R<sup>2</sup> value for the Boycott Intention variable was 59.8%. These results indicate that the model's fit is satisfactory. The p-values were assessed to ascertain the significance of the β values obtained from the study, using a significance level of 5%. The conclusions of the hypothesis test are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Hypothesis Test Findings

| Hypotheses | Path  | $\beta$ | ss.  | t      | VAF   | p    | Confidence Interval (%95) |
|------------|---|---------|------|--------|-------|------|---------------------------|
| H1         | Consumer Animosity -> Boycott Intention (Without Intermediary)            | .189    | .030 | 6.248  |       | .000 | (0.131; 0.249)            |
| H6         | Perceived Efficacy -> Boycott Intention (Without Intermediary)            | .626    | .035 | 17.734 |       | .000 | (0.555; 0.693)            |
| H2         | Consumer Animosity -> social media  | .017    | .026 | .698   |       | .485 | (-0.033; 0.067)           |
| H7         | Perceived Efficacy -> social media  | .839    | .021 | 39.867 |       | .000 | (0.797; 0.880)            |
| H4         | Social media -> Boycott Intention   | .274    | .053 | 5.157  |       | .000 | (0.169; 0.380)            |
| H3         | Consumer Animosity -> social media -> Boycott Intention (Indirect Effect) | .005    | .007 | .664   | -     | .507 | (-0.008; 0.021)           |
| H5         | Perceived Efficacy -> social media -> Boycott Intention (Indirect Effect) | .230    | .044 | 5.202  | %36,8 | .000 | (0.144; 0.318)            |

Table 4 presents the coefficients showing the mediating role of social media in the effect of consumer animosity and perceived efficacy on boycott intention. The Bootstrap method was employed to conduct mediation analysis. The Bootstrap test yields more distinct outcomes in detecting the mediation effect than the Sobel test and demonstrates substantial statistical potency. Hair et al. (2014) asserted that the Bootstrap test is initially conducted without incorporating the mediator variable in the model. Consequently, it becomes more comprehensible and interpretable to analyze the mediation impact when the mediator variable is included in the model.

Before the inclusion of the mediating variable in the model, it was found that consumer animosity had a positive and significant effect on boycott intention ( $\beta=0.189$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). It was also determined that perceived efficacy positively and significantly affected boycott intention ( $\beta=0.626$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). These values express the total effect. By incorporating the social media factor into the initial model, the influence of consumer animosity on the intention to boycott was identified ( $\beta=0.184$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ) decreased and remained statistically significant, and the impact of perceived efficacy on boycott intention ( $\beta=0.396$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ) also decreased and remained statistically significant.

Additionally, the study revealed that consumer animosity has no statistically significant impact on social media ( $\beta=0.17$ ;  $p=0.485>0.05$ ). However, the analysis results showed that the perceived efficacy has a substantial and statistically significant impact on social media ( $\beta=0.839$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ), and social media also has a positive and statistically significant impact on boycott intention ( $\beta=0.274$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ).

The literature highlights the necessity of conducting further tests to confirm the existence of a mediation effect. The Sobel test is commonly employed in assessing mediation effects; however, it has faced criticism in recent years. According to Hair et al. (2017), the VAF (Variance Accounted For) test is recommended above the Sobel test. The VAF test is computed using the formula of indirect effect divided by total effect, multiplied by 100. The VAF value is expected to be between 0% and 100%. A VAF value above 80% indicates complete mediation, and a VAF value between 20% and 80% indicates partial mediation. A value less than 20% indicates that there is no mediation effect.

In Table 4, it can be said that there is no indirect effect between consumer animosity, social media, and boycott intention, as shown in hypothesis H3. Therefore, social media does not mediate the effect of consumer animosity on boycott intention ( $p>0.507$ ). In the relationship between perceived efficacy, social media, and boycott intention, the indirect effect is  $\beta=0.230$ , while the total effect is  $\beta=0.626$ . The VAF value was determined to be 36.8% when computed using the appropriate formula. Hence, it can be asserted that social media has a limited role in mitigating the impact of perceived efficacy on boycott intentions.

The ANOVA test was employed to ascertain if there exists a statistically significant disparity in the boycott intents of consumers, utilizing data gathered from seven distinct geographical regions in Türkiye. The investigation revealed substantial disparities among regions. As a result of the analysis, significant differences were found between the regions. Post-hoc analyses were also performed to see between which regions the differences occurred.

**Table 5.** Data on the Regions

| Regions                      | N   | Mean   | Std. Deviation | Std. Error |
|------------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|------------|
| Mediterranean Region         | 107 | 3,8201 | 1,12999        | ,10924     |
| Black Sea Region             | 107 | 4,1402 | 1,00540        | ,09720     |
| Aegean Region                | 107 | 3,5841 | 1,30083        | ,12576     |
| Marmara Region               | 107 | 3,9743 | 1,22808        | ,11872     |
| Central Anatolia Region      | 107 | 4,2780 | 1,08882        | ,10526     |
| Southeastern Anatolia Region | 107 | 4,4065 | ,92369         | ,08930     |
| Eastern Anatolia Region      | 107 | 4,3224 | 1,07062        | ,10350     |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 749 | 4,0751 | 1,14248        | ,04175     |

The table includes N, Mean, Std. Deviation and Std. Error information for the regions. In the table below, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the regions as the Sig. The value is less than 0.05 due to the ANOVA analysis (Mishra et al., 2019).

**Table 6.** ANOVA Test Results on Consumers' Boycott Intention

| Boycott Intention | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups    | 56,999         | 6   | 9,500       | 7,667 | ,000 |
| Within Groups     | 919,339        | 742 | 1,239       |       |      |
| Total             | 976,338        | 748 |             |       |      |

The post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine if there were differences in boycott intentions among consumers in different regions. The results showed that the average boycott intentions of those living in the Aegean Region differed significantly from those in the Black Sea Region ( $p=0.010<0.05$ ), Central Anatolia Region ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ), Eastern Anatolia Region ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ), and Southeastern Anatolia Region ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ).

The average intent to boycott among residents of the Mediterranean region varies significantly based on the Central Anatolia Region ( $p=0.044<0.05$ ), Eastern Anatolia Region ( $p=0.017<0.05$ ), and Southeastern Anatolia Region ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). Boycott intentions among residents in the Marmara Region are like those in other regions. This condition is favorably embraced due to the Marmara Region's diverse composition, encompassing socio-cultural elements from all regions of Türkiye.

#### 4. Discussion

This study concludes that consumer animosity positively influences consumers' propensity to boycott. These findings align with prior research, which consistently demonstrates that consumer animosity strongly influences both the intention to boycott and actual participation in boycotts (Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Shahom et al., 2006; Rose et al., 2009; Abdul-Talib et al., 2016; Cossio-Silva et al., 2019; Ali, 2021; Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021). Alternatively, Xie et al. (2023) found brand animosity, and Krüger et al. (2024) found that social animosity impacts consumer boycott intentions. According to Verma (2022), animosity has a detrimental impact on consumer buying behavior. However, Kim et al. (2022) also highlight the significance of consumer closeness in diminishing consumer antagonism. Furthermore, certain studies have determined that consumer animosity does not influence boycotts, which contrasts with the findings of this study (Awaludin & Al-Khaidar, 2023; Salma & Aji, 2023).

The study found that perceived efficacy has a positive effect on boycott intention. This finding is in line with important similar studies in the literature (Sen et al., 2001; Klein et al. (-2004; Ettenson & Klein, 2005; Hoffman, 2013; Ishak et al., 2018; Roswinanto & Suwanda, 2023; Salma & Aji, 2023). Albrecht et al. (2013) argue that consumers are more likely to participate in boycotts when they consider them very effective. In contrast, contrary to the findings of this study, other studies have determined that perceived efficacy does not influence boycott intention (Aung et al., 2021; Pandey et al., 2021).

Another finding of this study is that social media has a beneficial impact on the intention to boycott. However, it does not act as a mediator in the connection between perceived efficacy and boycott intention. On the other hand, social media mediates the effect of consumer animosity on boycott intentions. It was also found that perceived efficacy positively affects social media.

Social media platforms frequently serve to coordinate and promote boycotts targeting businesses and brands (Jurgens et al., 2016: 130). Dalakas et al. (2023) researched the effects of boycott threats on social media, highlighting the significance of social media in this context. According to them, political consumerism on social media happens for several reasons, but brand advocacy can lessen its influence. In his study, Echine (2019) highlights the participants' perspective that social media plays a crucial role in the boycott's effectiveness. Hitchcock (2016) also determined that social media played a role in expanding the boycott movement and heightened consciousness. Currently, it is reasonable to believe that social media can influence boycotts by diminishing the social divide among individuals. The impact of social media on the intention to boycott is corroborated by the results of this study as well as previous research. In contrast to these findings, Sergius Koku (2012) discovered that online consumer boycotts are ineffective in inflicting economic harm on the targeted business.

The research on boycott intentions by area revealed considerable differences between consumers residing in the Aegean area and those residing in the Black Sea, Central Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, and Southeastern Anatolia regions. The consumer boycott intents of individuals residing in the Mediterranean Region showed notable disparities compared to those in Central Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, and Southeastern Anatolia. No substantial disparity was observed in the Marmara Region compared to the other regions.

The differences in boycott intentions between regions also support the study findings regarding the search history data for the concept of "boycott" on the Google Trends page (Google Trends, 2024). When consumers in Türkiye are examined in terms of regions, it is interpreted that consumers in the eastern regions are more sensitive to boycotts, and consumers in the Mediterranean and Aegean regions may have lower attitudes towards boycotts than other regions. Some studies have identified differences in boycott intentions between regions. Consumer animosity may also affect these studies (Smith & Li, 2010; Ahn et al., 2022; Hino, 2023; Kim et al., 2022).

## **5. Conclusion**

This study analyzed the effects of consumer hostility, social media, and perceived efficacy on consumers' boycott intentions during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The objective was to provide a fresh perspective by investigating the intermediary roles of social media and contributing to existing literature. The findings of this study show that these characteristics influence the inclination to boycott. Although social media has a role in influencing the relationship between perceived efficacy and the intention to boycott, it does not play a role in influencing the relationship between consumer animosity and the desire to boycott. The participant's boycott intentions varied significantly across different locations. Furthermore, the utilization of social media and individuals' perspectives significantly impact the formation of intent to boycott. These findings significantly affect politicians and enterprises, providing a fresh perspective on comprehending consumer behavior.

In addition to impacting revenue, boycotts have the potential to harm the reputation of multinational corporations and attract public scrutiny toward unfavorable matters. Businesses should refrain from engaging in dubious conduct while considering the ethical concerns of consumers. Implementing an ethical decision-making process can help identify and address potential negative consequences early (Balabanis, 2013: 515). Policymakers can enhance consumers' confidence in their selections by guiding them toward achieving societal and communal advantages. Furthermore, they can leverage the influence of market mechanisms influenced by consumer preferences while minimizing the need for direct governmental involvement (Ali, 2021: 505). The economic consequences of political boycotts on countries should not be underestimated. Policymakers should consider measures that foster consumer antipathy, as these measures can also negatively affect their nations and economies.

Brands must take steps to reduce the negative feelings of consumers and address their perception of the boycott's effectiveness. Hence, enterprises or brands should be focused on reducing the influence of critical factors that may affect the consumer's decision to engage in the boycott. Furthermore, the significance of social media should not be disregarded. Implementing strategies to mitigate consumer anger through social networks

involves minimizing company remarks likely to provoke consumer reactions and reducing consumer animosity and intent to boycott.

Businesses should endeavor to distance their brands from the target of boycotts and enhance the consumer perception of the brand's worth. They should create tactics to reinforce in consumers' minds that they possess distinct qualities, are essential, and hold significant worth. In order to enhance customer loyalty, it is imperative to prioritize consumer brand communication through digital marketing strategies and viral campaigns on social networks (Cossio-Silva et al., 2019: 336). According to Bravo and Chapa (2024), consumers' judgments of how strongly news is framed regarding moral intensity and their opinions towards the brand will significantly influence their intentions to boycott. Hence, businesses should be cognizant of this matter since the adverse visibility of brands in the media could bolster consumers' inclination to boycott. Conversely, businesses or brands that are not the focus of the boycott may draw attention to themselves by endorsing boycott movements. Afego et al. (2021: 50) demonstrate that companies who openly declare their intention to engage in boycott campaigns experience a statistically significant and positive anomalous stock return of 2.68% on average within a short period following their statement.

When analyzing public boycott campaigns, the decline in Starbucks' stock prices and the drop in consumption goals for Coca-Cola corporations serve as proof that the boycott remains effective and relevant. The boycott campaign in Türkiye may have been influenced by recent statements made by Israeli officials, thereby impacting the perspectives of the survey participants and the resulting conclusions.

## **6. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations**

This study focused on a particular and contemporary boycott phenomenon occurring in Türkiye. The consequences of recent conflicts may have significantly influenced the study. While the study covered seven distinct locations in Türkiye, its limited scope to only one country may restrict the global applicability of the reported conclusions. While the specific sample comprised individuals who shared the same cultural, socio-economic, and political settings regarding the boycott issue, it is important to acknowledge that other participants with potentially different results may not have been included. To enhance the comprehensiveness of the study, it would be beneficial to incorporate people from diverse countries.

Examining the consequences of boycotts or political conflicts on regional economic outcomes might provide diverse viewpoints. Moreover, conducting additional studies on the financial efficacy of boycotts could offer further substantiation for the existing conclusions. Conducting more extensive studies in future studies might help identify universally applicable findings. Researchers can analyze the global impact of boycotts on specific businesses or brands to gain comparative data. All the proposals in the conclusion are believed to have significant implications for practitioners and future research.

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**Etik, Beyan ve Açıklamalar**

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**1. Etik Kurul izni ile ilgili;**

Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, Munzur Üniversitesi Girişimsel Olmayan Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu'nun tarih 29.08.2024 sayı 2024/07 ve karar 01 ile etik kurul izin belgesi almış olduklarını beyan etmektedir.

**2. Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyduklarını kabul etmektedir.**

**3. Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları kullanmış oldukları resim, şekil, fotoğraf ve benzeri belgelerin kullanımında tüm sorumlulukları kabul etmektedir.**

**4. Bu çalışmanın benzerlik raporu bulunmaktadır.**

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