

Elicitation of Malaysian Muslims' Salient Beliefs Towards Boycotting Israel Products

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ABSTRACT

The intention to boycott certain products is important to understand as it has been shown to affect willingness to purchase. However, the factors related to the behavioural intention to boycott Israeli products among Muslims have not been widely studied. This study used the Theory of Reasoned Action to elicit salient beliefs towards the boycotting of Israeli products among Muslims in Malaysia. An online survey comprising open-ended questions regarding normative referents, behavioral outcomes, and control factors was designed and distributed through social media platforms. Data from 104 respondents (29 males, 79 females; $M_{age} = 23.5$, $SD_{age} = 8.53$) were included in the analysis. Two researchers independently extracted the themes for each belief, which were later harmonized with a third researcher. Normative referent beliefs showed a tendency towards in-group vs. out-group thinking. This social cognition is further emphasized in the behavioral outcome beliefs, where hurting Israel's economy and strengthening the local economy are the salient beliefs. As for control factors, humanitarian concerns emerged as the dominant belief. Most respondents believed that boycotting would have no negative consequences. The study identified clear motivators for the boycott of Israeli products and found that similarity in religious affiliation was not a dominant theme. The findings could be useful for orchestrating humanitarian aid for Palestinians by focusing on their salient beliefs towards helping the victims of war.

Keywords: Boycott, Elicitation of Salient Beliefs, Israeli Products, Malaysian Muslim Consumers

