

THE IMPACT OF CONSUMER ANIMOSITY ON BOYCOTT INTENTIONS TOWARDS MCDONALD'S: EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF COGNITIVE-AFFECTIVE EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of consumer animosity on boycott intention through cognitive judgment and affective evaluation among McDonald's consumers in Indonesia. The sample in this study consists of 120 respondents selected using a purposive sampling technique, with the criteria of being at least 18 years old, boycotting McDonald's, and residing in the Greater Jakarta area. Data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media and processed using statistical analysis with the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. The results show that consumer animosity has a significant negative effect on cognitive judgment and affective evaluation. Furthermore, cognitive judgment has been proven to have a significant negative effect on boycott intention, while affective evaluation does not significantly impact boycott intention. These findings indicate that consumer animosity plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' rational assessments and boycott behaviors towards McDonald's in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Consumer Animosity, Cognitive Judgment, Affective Evaluation, Boycott Intention*

1. INTRODUCTION

From late 2023 to mid-2024, the conflict between Palestine and Israel heated up again. The Palestinian Ambassador to Indonesia, Zuhair Al-Shun, revealed that conditions in Gaza would worsen in 2024, with widespread destruction and continued attacks, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the region [1]. This triggered a global reaction, including in Indonesia, where many people felt compelled to show solidarity with Palestine through boycotts of products deemed to support Israel.

One product often targeted for boycott is McDonald's, the biggest fast food restaurant globally that started its operations in 1955 in California and now has thousands of outlets in more than 100 countries, including Indonesia [2]. However, this popularity does not protect McDonald's from global socio-political issues. It frequently faces boycotts over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially after social media posts showed its outlets in Israel providing free food to Zionist soldiers following the October 7, 2023 attack [3].

This perception of McDonald's support for Israel has led to calls for boycotts as a political protest, significantly impacting its sales, which grew only 0.7 percent in 2023, far below the projected 5.5 percent [4]. Following the financial report, McDonald's CEO noted that the hardest impact was felt in Malaysia, Indonesia, and France [5]. In Indonesia, PT Rekso National Food, the franchise holder for McDonald's, reported a revenue decline due to boycotts related to the Israel-Palestine conflict [6]. Many people actively supporting the boycott against McDonald's on social media, which amplifies the impact of protests related to global issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With the widest network of outlets in Greater Jakarta, the public reaction to this issue has been intense through various protests.

Continuing tensions and public protests reflect a deep sense of injustice, leaving McDonald's Indonesia facing major challenges in managing the social impact of international conflicts. Although the company has taken steps to support humanitarian causes in Palestine, boycott intentions remain high. In this context, boycotts are efforts to stop buying products from certain groups to achieve certain goals, usually triggered by consumer anger and animosity [7]. Consumer animosity can harm companies, leading to poor product ratings, reluctance to buy, and potential boycotts [8].

Consumers who exhibit strong animosity also tend to decrease their cognitive appraisal of the product [9]. Recently, researchers have shown that animosity can diminish the quality evaluation of products from the targeted country, this reduction further decreases the likelihood of purchasing foreign products [10], [11]. During a product boycott like McDonald's, the consumer's choice to abstain from purchasing can affect their judgment and result in a negative assessment of the products being boycotted [12]. In turn, negative affective evaluations can diminish purchase intentions [13] thereby increasing the likelihood of boycott intentions.

This scenario underscores a significant challenge for McDonald's in managing consumer trust amid rising animosity. Consumer trust in a brand can be significantly damaged by its perceived connections or actions related to global conflicts [14]. As consumers express their discontent through boycotts, their perceptions of the brand's actions and affiliations become critical. The ongoing socio-political issues have led to a deterioration of trust in McDonald's among certain segments of the Indonesian population, making it essential for the company to address these concerns to maintain its market position.

Based on this understanding, the researcher conducted an empirical study to examine the effects of consumer animosity on boycott intentions toward McDonald's, focusing on the influence of cognitive-affective evaluations.

Theoretical Framework

This research uses the cognitive-affective personality system (CAPS) as its theoretical framework. Cognitive-affective personality system is a theory introduced by Walter Mischel and Yuichi Soda in 1995. Based on the cognitive-affective model, behavior is most accurately forecasted by deeply understanding the individual, the surrounding context, and their interaction [15]. In line with contemporary insights into the biological foundations of human information processing [16], this theory posits that individual differences arise in the characteristics of chosen situations and the activated cognitive-affective mediators, such as encodings and emotions. This theory emphasizes the significance of understanding both the personal and the situational elements that shape behavior, suggesting that personality manifests through specific patterns of responses to different situations.

This theory underscores the significance of both individual traits and situational factors in shaping behavior, suggesting that personality is expressed through distinct response patterns in varying contexts. In the context of consumer animosity, CAPS can help elucidate how negative feelings towards a products/brand influence intentions to boycott. The theory indicates that consumers' cognitive-affective evaluations like their beliefs about a brand's practices interact with their emotional responses, such as anger or disappointment ultimately shaping their behavioral intentions.

The relationship between consumer animosity and cognitive judgment

Recent research on consumer animosity shows that animosity negatively impacts consumer judgments on foreign products. That is, consumers who feel animosity towards a country tend to have a negative bias towards products from that country [17], [18]. This suggests that animosity affects the quality of consumers' cognitive assessment of products produced by the targeted country. When consumers feel animosity towards a country, they tend to judge products from that country negatively, thus maintaining a consistent negative attitude towards the country and its products [18]. In line with the explanation provided earlier, the first hypothesis (H1) is formulated as follows:

H1 : Consumer animosity negatively affects cognitive judgment

The relationship between consumer animosity and affective evaluation

In research related to animosity affecting consumer behavior through emotions, animosity evokes specific emotions, including anger and fear [11]. In addition, previous research also states that consumer animosity can affect affective evaluation [19]. A greater level of perceived animosity leads to a reduced interest among consumers in products from that country. In other words, negative feelings towards a country will reduce consumer interest in products from that country. In line with the explanation provided earlier, the second hypothesis (H2) is formulated as follows:

H2 : Consumer animosity negatively affects affective evaluation

The relationship between consumer animosity and boycott intention

Consumer animosity describes the consumers' negative feeling towards a country, which leading them to avoiding products from that country and can even motivate them to boycott products from that country [20]. This consumer hatred has a big impact in influencing consumers to boycott [21]. Where the greater the perceived animosity, the stronger the consumer's urge to avoid and boycott the product[13]. In line with the explanation provided earlier, the third hypothesis (H3) is formulated as follows:

H3 : Consumer animosity positively affects boycott intention

The relationship between cognitive judgment and boycott intention

Following consumers' cognitive judgment regarding blame, their intentions to boycott are likely to be ensure [22]. Research indicates that cognitive judgment, such as perceptions of fairness and ethical considerations, significantly influence how consumers respond to products associated with brands they view negatively [23]. In line with the explanation provided earlier, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is formulated as follows:

H4 : Cognitive judgment negatively affects boycott intention

The relationship between affective evaluation and boycott intention

Affects are important motivators of behavior [24]. Negative affective reactions to unethical corporate actions are expected to have a more significant impact on consumer behavioral intentions [25]. These emotions in turn, negatively affect consumer behavior, resulting in the avoidance of products associated with the foreign country [11]. Therefore, consumers who experience intense negative emotions are more likely to feel motivated to engage in a boycott or take other actions of rejection. In line with the explanation provided earlier, the fifth hypothesis (H5) is formulated as follows:

H5 : Affective evaluation negatively affects boycott intention

Research Model

According to the description provided above, the research model for this study is outlined as follows:

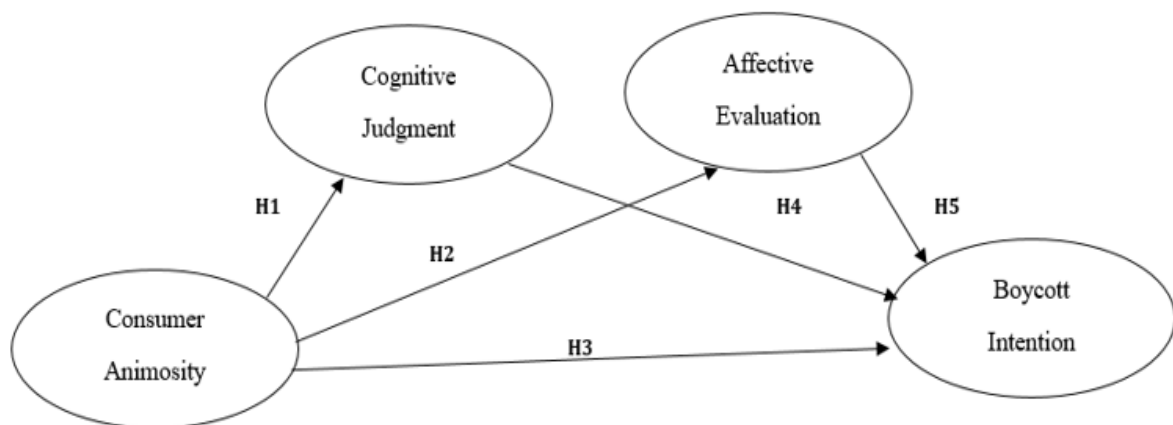


Figure 1. Research Model

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a quantitative approach and applied purposive sampling as its sampling method. Purposive sampling is a technique that involves selecting samples based on specific criteria that correspond with the research objectives [26]. The sample size for this study consisted of 120 individuals, with the main criteria for the sample are individuals who boycott McDonald's, at least 18 years old, and reside in the Greater Jakarta area (JABODETABEK).

This research employed five constructs from prior research: consumer animosity, cognitive judgment, affective evaluation, and boycott intention. The items related to consumer animosity and cognitive judgment were adapted from [27], while those for affective evaluation and boycott intention were adapted from [19] and [28]. All items in this research were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The following are the indicators for each variable in this study :

Table 1. Variable Indicators

Indicators	References
Consumer Animosity	
Negative Feelings	(Klein et al., 1998)
Feelings of Anger	
Unforgettable Actions	
Responsibility Beliefs	
Profit Over Humanity	
Exploitation Concerns	
Excessive Economic Influence	
Unfair Business Practices	
Cognitive Judgment	
Craftmanship	(Klein et al., 1998)
Quality Comparison	
Reliability	
Value for Money	
Affective Evaluation	
Dislike	(Leong et al., 2008)
Lack of Appeal	
Distrust	
Disfavor	
Boycott Intention	
Commitment to boycott	(Lee et al., 2021)
Avoid purchases	
Preference for alternatives	
Minimized spending	
Decreased Willingness	

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire that was distributed online via Google Forms and shared across various social media platforms. This approach facilitated reaching a diverse sample of participants, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. This study uses SmartPLS version 3 software for data analysis, consisted of validity testing, reliability testing, determination of coefficients, predictive relevance, hypothesis testing, and mediation analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data analysis started with a validity test to assess the alignment between the object and the collected data [26]. The validity tests include both convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity evaluates the correlation between indicators of the same concept, verifying the scale's accuracy in measuring the intended construct. Validity is established when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is 0.50 and the loading factor is greater than 0.70 [29]. The AVE and loading factor results in this study meet these standards.

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted Analysis Results

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Consumer Animosity	0.609
Cognitive Judgment	0.668
Affective Evaluation	0.724
Boycott Intention	0.765

For reliability testing, a construct is considered reliable if the Cronbach's alpha value exceeds 0.7, though a value of 0.6 is still acceptable [30]. Regarding composite reliability, a construct is viewed as reliable if the composite reliability value is greater than 0.7 [31]. The analysis shows that this study meets the discriminant validity criteria.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Consumer Animosity	0.908	0.926
Cognitive Judgment	0.834	0.889
Affective Evaluation	0.873	0.913
Boycott Intention	0.923	0.942

In this research, R-square is utilized to evaluate the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. A low R-square value suggests that the independent variables have limited explanatory power concerning the dependent variable, while a value close to 1 indicates strong predictive ability [29]. The R-square results reveal that affective evaluation has a moderate influence (0.344), cognitive judgment has a moderate influence (0.438), and boycott intention has a strong influence (0.707) on the outcome.

In addition, this study uses predictive relevance to gauge the quality of the observation values generated by the model and its parameter estimates. A Q^2 value greater than 0 suggests that the model exhibits strong observation and predictive relevance, whereas a Q^2 value below 0 indicates a lack of relevance [29]. The findings show Q^2 values of 0.280 for cognitive judgment, 0.240 for affective evaluation, and 0.529 for boycott intention, indicating that the model reflects good observation values.

To evaluate the causal relationships between variables, hypothesis testing is performed. In this research, the hypotheses were assessed by checking the t-statistic values, which must be greater than the t-table value ($\alpha 5\% = 1.96$), and a p-value under 0.05 indicates that the hypothesis is accepted [32]. The analysis of the first hypothesis shows a significant negative relationship between consumer animosity and cognitive judgment ($O = -0.662$, $p < 0.000$), thus confirming that the first hypothesis—consumer animosity has a negative effect on cognitive judgment is accepted. These findings suggest that heightened animosity towards a brand like McDonald's in Indonesia negatively affects consumers' objective evaluation of the brand. The second hypothesis demonstrates a significant negative relationship between consumer animosity and affective evaluation ($O = -0.587$, $p < 0.000$). This supports the acceptance of the second hypothesis, indicating that consumer animosity adversely impacts affective evaluation. The findings suggest that negative sentiments towards McDonald's among Indonesian consumers result in unfavorable emotional responses to the brand.

In assessing the third hypothesis, the study finds a positive relationship between consumer animosity and boycott intention ($O = 0.500$, $p < 0.000$). These results confirm the acceptance of this hypothesis. This indicates that public dissatisfaction with McDonald's business operations may be influenced by various sensitive social and cultural concerns. The fourth hypothesis investigates the negative influence of cognitive judgment on boycott intention ($O = -0.290$, $p < 0.007$). which supports the acceptance of this hypothesis. This indicates that improved cognitive evaluations of the brand decrease the likelihood of boycotting. Conversely, negative cognitive judgments about McDonald's suggest that consumers with unfavorable views are more prone to consider a boycott.

Lastly, the fifth hypothesis looks into the relationship between affective evaluation and boycott intention ($O = -0.154$, $p < 0.112$), leading to the hypothesis's rejection. The testing of the fifth hypothesis showed that affective evaluation has a negative impact on boycott intention, but this effect was not statistically significant. One possible reason for this inconsistency is that

although negative emotions towards McDonald's can lead to unfavorable emotional perceptions, they may not translate into strong intentions to boycott. Consumers might continue to patronize the brand due to factors such as convenience, loyalty, or limited alternatives.

The indirect hypothesis testing reveals that the pathway from consumer animosity to boycott intention through cognitive judgment ($O = 0.192$, $p < 0.013$) suggests that this pathway functions as a partial mediator. In contrast, the pathway from consumer animosity to boycott intention via affective evaluation ($O = 0.090$, $p < 0.146$) shows no mediation. This indicates that cognitive judgment plays a critical role in shaping boycott intentions, whereas affective evaluation does not significantly affect this connection. Consequently, consumers tend to rely more on rational assessments than emotional responses when deciding whether to engage in a boycott.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, this study reveals that consumer animosity plays a pivotal role in shaping boycott intentions towards McDonald's in Indonesia, largely through its negative impact on cognitive judgment. While cognitive judgment significantly influences the decision to boycott, affective evaluation does not appear to have the same effect. This indicates that consumers are more driven by rational assessments of McDonald's perceived association with socio-political issues, rather than purely emotional reactions.

For McDonald's Indonesia, the findings have important implications. The company must focus on improving public perceptions and addressing the socio-political concerns that fuel consumer animosity. Transparent communication, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and actions that distance the brand from controversial global issues could help mitigate the negative effects of animosity and restore consumer trust. Proactive engagement with the community and addressing concerns about humanitarian issues may also reduce the likelihood of boycotts, ultimately safeguarding the brand's reputation and financial performance in the region. Moreover, focusing both the cognitive and emotional aspects of consumer sentiment is key for McDonald's Indonesia to mitigate boycott intentions and rebuild its relationship with the public.

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