Brand Awareness, Ethical Concerns, and Social Influence: Key Drivers of Boycotting Behavior Against Nestlé

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

Nestlé is the world's largest food and beverage company founded in 1866 that offer a wide range of products. Nestlé present in 190 countries around the world and its headquarters in Vevey, Switzerland. In today's global market, there has been boycott movement of Israeli products due to Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nestlé also affected by this boycott movement since Nestlé's products is pro-Israel products. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between ethical concerns, brand awareness, social influence, and consumer willingness on moral judgement and its impact on boycotting behavior against Nestlé. Data was collected from 100 respondents from various background. Our findings shows that boycotting behavior among consumer against Nestlé significantly influenced by combinations of brand awareness, ethical concerns, social influence, and consumer willingness to boycott. Meanwhile, moral judgement acts as the mediator that links all of these factors to the decision to boycott. These findings can help Nestlé to develop appropriate strategies in addressing consumer concerns and boycotting behavior against Nestlé's products.

Keywords: Brand awareness; Boycott behavior; Consumer willingness; Ethical concerns; Moral judgement; Social influence.

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, consumers are engaging in boycott movements by refusing to buy pro-Israel products. This is a response to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which has escalated due to Israel's attacks on Gaza. These actions by Israel often result in Palestinians facing aid blockades, power and water shortages, and worsening living conditions. Boycotting has become a form of protest that has developed in recent years to defend the interests of society in general, or consumers in particular. (Dekhil, 2017). Consumers are sending a clear message to the boycott target namely, that they feel the need to distance themselves from the target's egregious behavior by refusing to purchase products sold by the offending industry or even the entire country. From the consumer's perspective, boycotting is a way to demonstrate solidarity with Palestinians and contribute to global awareness. However, this boycott movement has had a significant impact on companies that cooperate with or donate part of their profits to Israel. One of the companies affected by this boycott is Nestlé.

Nestlé is the largest food and beverage company in the world. The company began by introducing infant food made from cow's milk. Since 1912, Nestlé has operated in Malaysia, starting as the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company in Penang. In 1939, the company moved its operations to Kuala Lumpur due to business expansion and growth. Today, Nestlé Malaysia operates six factories and produces approximately 500 Halal-certified products. Key brands such as Maggi, Nescafé, and Milo have become household favorites in Malaysia. This aligns with Nestlé's vision: *"We unlock the power of food to enhance quality of life for everyone, today and for generations to come."* However, everything changed when consumers began boycotting Nestlé's products to show their support for the Palestinian cause. Beyond the current issue, Nestlé has historically faced numerous boycotts due to environmental degradation, human rights concerns, and the exploitation of local communities. Nestlé's history of boycotts offers valuable insights for researchers seeking to analyze how key drivers of consumer behavior interact and influence each other. These past controversies make Nestlé an ideal case study for examining the factors that drive boycotting behavior, particularly ethical concerns, brand awareness, social influence, and consumer willingness to boycott.

This paper aims to understand how key drivers, when interconnected, contribute to boycotting behavior among consumers toward Nestlé products. In proposing this research framework, the paper also highlights a pragmatic approach to addressing the challenges faced by Nestlé due to ongoing boycott issues. Each variable offers different insights into understanding boycotting behavior among consumers. Ethical concerns are one of the primary drivers, as they reflect consumers' moral and emotional beliefs. As markets expand, consumers are becoming more aware and ethical in their consumption choices. They may choose to boycott brands or companies to pressure them into being more socially, ethically, and environmentally responsible (Hamzah & Mustafa, 2019). Ethical concerns also motivate consumers to stand against practices they perceive as unjust. In the case of the boycott of Nestlé's products, ethical concerns demonstrate how consumer activism can drive change and compel Nestlé to analyze and improve its policies. Furthermore, social influence plays a critical role in shaping boycotting behavior among consumers. In today's digital world, social influence has become even more significant as consumers increasingly use social media to interact and share information. A particularly notable shift in attitude has been observed among younger consumers, likely due to their heightened engagement with digital media in addressing social and political issues (Utama,2023). Social media has also made it easier for consumers to participate in boycott movements, for example, by sharing posts and using boycott-

related hashtags. Once consumers begin spreading messages on social media, like-minded individuals are likely to join the boycott, amplifying its reach and impact.

On the other hand, social media continues to be an effective platform for increasing brand awareness among consumers. For example, content posted on social media that is easy to understand and relevant can influence consumers to participate in boycott movements against Nestlé. Furthermore, boycotting behavior among consumers has become more active due to growing awareness of company practices and brand-related issues. Consumers may engage in boycott activities through social media platforms such as Twitter/X, TikTok, and Facebook (Ginder et al., 2020). In addition, participation in boycotts is closely linked to consumers' willingness to engage in such actions. Consumers' willingness to take part in boycotts is influenced by growing social awareness and concerns about the sourcing, manufacturing, and disposal of products (Paek & Nelson, 2009). Several factors have a significant impact on consumer willingness to participate in boycotts, such as moral beliefs, perceived injustice, and perceived personal effectiveness. For instance, consumers are more likely to engage in boycotts when they are aware of social, environmental, or political issues.

This research examines the factors that influence boycotting behavior among consumers toward pro-Israel products, using Nestlé as a case study. It is hoped that the findings will provide valuable insights for Nestlé to implement effective strategies to address the boycott movement and help the company strengthen its brand image while also improving sales performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To evaluate the brand awareness, ethical concerns and social influence that led to boycotting behaviour against Nestlé, it is necessary to grasp the theoretical framework and recent findings in the relevant literature. Based on historical research relevant to this subject topic, this material summarises theoretically.

Boycotting
Boycotting has emerged as a powerful response to corporate misconduct, unethical practices, or controversial company actions, serving as a form of consumer activism. Typically driven by moral, ethical, or social concerns, it represents a conscious refusal to purchase certain goods or services. Recent research highlights how digital platforms have enabled more coordinated and impactful modern boycott movements. A study published in the *Journal of Business Ethics* illustrates how online tools and social media can amplify consumer voices, increase participation, and exert greater pressure on targeted companies, (Hassan and Nasser, 2022) For example, some scholars contend that moral obligations, perceived unfairness, and a sense of social responsibility are key drivers of consumer boycotts. Especially in the internet era, consumers feel increasingly empowered to take action against companies they perceive as harmful to society or the environment. Emotions and personal values play a significant role in motivating such actions. In many cases, public indignation often triggered by corporate scandals involving environmental damage or human rights violations leads to widespread mobilization and collective boycott efforts.

Boycotts also reflect public opinion and prevailing cultural standards. Studies reveal that even morally driven boycotts can evolve into large-scale movements when the cause aligns with widely shared community values. Furthermore, collective identity and social norms play a critical role in sustaining boycott participation. When individuals perceive that their actions resonate with the values of their community or peer groups, they are more likely to engage and remain committed to the boycott effort. This reinforces the idea that consumer activism is not only an individual moral stance but also a socially

constructed and culturally influenced behavior, (Zhao and Li, 2023) Researchers have found in their investigation of boycott dynamics that consumers are more likely to participate in boycotts when they believe their collective efforts will lead to tangible outcomes. The rise of corporate accountability has placed companies like Nestlé long associated with allegations of unethical practices under increasing public scrutiny. Today, boycotts function not only as acts of economic protest but also as symbolic expressions of consumer power and moral conviction.

The growing accessibility of social media platforms has significantly amplified the impact of boycotts. Companies are under constant scrutiny, as information spreads rapidly and any ethical violation can trigger immediate public backlash. Effective boycotts often attract media attention, further enhancing their visibility and influence. As boycotts continue to evolve, they underscore the vital role of collective action in holding companies accountable and promoting ethical, value-driven consumer behavior.

Ethical Concern

Ethical concerns are central to understanding consumer-driven boycotts, as they often stem from moral objections to corporate behavior. Key issues such as human rights violations, worker exploitation, environmental degradation, and unfair trade practices are among the primary causes of ethical consumer action. (Johnson, 2023) in a study published in the *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, examined the growing importance of ethical consumption. The study highlights increasing consumer demand for accountability, particularly from major brands like Nestlé, which has previously faced significant criticism for unethical labor practices and environmental harm.

The rise of ethical consumerism reflects a shift in consumer behavior, where purchasing decisions are increasingly aligned with personal values. Today, ethical concerns are no longer peripheral but have become central issues influencing market dynamics. (Johnson, 2023) also highlights that ethical consumerism is driven by growing awareness, largely facilitated by social media and advocacy organizations. Consumers are now more informed than ever about supply chains, corporate sustainability efforts, and the broader impact of their purchasing choices. This increased access to information motivates consumers to avoid businesses that violate ethical standards and fosters a heightened sense of moral responsibility.

Ethical boycotts also serve as a form of protest against perceived injustices. For example, consumers often view boycotting as an effective means of applying pressure when businesses are associated with environmental damage or exploitative labor practices, particularly in developing countries. The study by (Rojas and Smith, 2021) emphasizes that companies which ignore ethical concerns risk financial losses due to consumer backlash and long-term brand deterioration. As a reflection of their moral and social values, today's consumers increasingly expect corporations to be transparent and socially responsible. Even as consumer activism gains momentum globally, ethical concerns will continue to drive boycott movements.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness enhances the effectiveness of consumer boycotts. A brand's visibility and recognition make it more vulnerable to consumer scrutiny and collective action. According to (Chung and Park, 2021) in the *Journal of Marketing Research*, companies with strong public reputations face greater risks when controversies arise. Their research illustrates that consumers are more likely to boycott well-known brands because such brands are more visible and are perceived as more accountable. The study also emphasizes how social media accelerates public awareness of brand-related controversies, enabling the rapid spread of boycott campaigns.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter (now X), and TikTok provide powerful tools for raising awareness about brand-related issues. Through hashtags, viral content, and influencer endorsements, digital platforms enable the rapid mobilization of public support. (Chung and Park, 2021) note that the visibility of corporate misconduct increases brand vulnerability, as consumers can quickly disseminate information across networks. For companies like Nestlé, which have come under scrutiny for allegedly unethical practices, high public visibility significantly increases the likelihood of consumer backlash.

Brand awareness not only amplifies the reach of boycott movements but also encourages collective action. Consumers are more inclined to boycott brands they recognize, as these brands are perceived as powerful cultural and economic entities, (Ahmed and Nguyen, 2022) found that individuals view their boycotts of well-known brands as more impactful and effective. From this perspective, consumers feel empowered and are more likely to engage in boycott activities. While brand awareness is a key driver of brand success, it also presents a risk when ethical controversies arise. Companies must therefore navigate this double-edged dynamic carefully by maintaining transparent policies and proactively addressing consumer concerns. Failure to do so can result in long-term reputational damage and erosion of consumer trust.

Social Influence
In today's digital environment, social influence is a major driver of boycott behavior. As discussed in the *Journal of Social Influence* by (Martinez and Lopez, 2022), Social Influence Theory highlights the role of social dynamics, opinion leaders, and influencers in shaping consumer decisions. Their research demonstrates that individuals are more likely to participate in boycotts when they perceive their actions as aligned with group norms or societal expectations.

Digital platforms enhance the power of social influence, as campaigns gain momentum through hashtags, viral content, and influencer advocacy, thereby amplifying their impact. Social influence has become a powerful tool for collective action in the internet era. Driven by shared beliefs and goals, online networks are playing an increasingly important role in supporting boycott campaigns. (Martinez and Lopez, 2022) assert that social media engagement lowers barriers to participation, allowing individuals to support movements with minimal effort. The widespread presence of boycott campaigns, combined with peer pressure and the desire for social validation, helps explain their growing impact. Consumers who observe widespread support for a cause are more likely to align their behavior with group actions. Furthermore, the role of opinion leaders and influencers cannot be overstated. Often serving as catalysts for boycott campaigns, influencers leverage their platforms to raise awareness and mobilize their followers. (Ginder, 2020) found that consumers' motivation to participate in boycotts is strongly influenced by perceived social acceptance. When individuals observe others engaging in boycotts, they are more likely to take action themselves, driven by the belief that their collective efforts can lead to meaningful change. Thus, social influence enhances the effectiveness of contemporary boycott movements by aligning individual motivations with collective action.

Consumer Willingness
Consumers play a key role in determining both morally motivated and pragmatic boycotts. Choosing to cut ties with unethical companies reflects the extent to which individuals are willing to act in accordance with their values. Research by (Nguyen, 2024) published in the *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, emphasizes that emotional connection,

perceived efficacy, and personal values significantly influence consumers' willingness to participate in boycotts. The study shows that consumers who believe their actions can bring about meaningful change are more likely to initiate or support boycott movements.

Moral beliefs, cause-based solidarity, and perceived unfairness significantly influence consumer willingness to engage in boycotts. According to, (Nguyen, 2024) consumers who feel ethically motivated particularly in response to corporate misconduct are more likely to participate in boycott actions.

This willingness is further reinforced by the belief that collective social action can hold companies accountable. Ethical concerns surrounding Nestlé, for example, have sparked consumer outrage over issues such as social exploitation and environmental degradation, leading to widespread boycott efforts. (Nguyen, Lee and Chen, 2023) mphasize that emotional involvement—such as indignation or anger—is often the initial trigger for boycotts. Consumer willingness reflects deeply held beliefs and values, rather than merely reflexive behavior. Understanding the drivers of consumer willingness is essential for companies seeking to mitigate the risk of boycotts, especially as ethical consumerism continues to grow. To maintain consumer trust, businesses must demonstrate transparency, align with consumer values, and proactively address ethical concerns.

Implications for Nestlé
The interplay of brand awareness, ethical concerns, social influence and consumer willingness underscores Nestlé's exposure to boycotts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for mitigating reputational risks and addressing consumer expectations. Companies must respond proactively, emphasizing transparency, corporate social responsibility, and ethical alignment with societal values.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, we are trying to get a better handle on why people decide to boycott Nestlé products as part of a larger movement supporting Israel. We figured using a qualitative research method was the easiest way because it lets us really dig into the essentials of what makes consumers tick. This method helps us uncover the deeper information, like social influence, etchical concern, brand awareness and consumer willingness following exposure to boycott calls against goods associated with Israel and their affiliates. This approach gives us a more detailed look on why people decide to buy stuff and how boycotts like the one for Nestlé products that support Israel play a role in their choices. The research is like a deep dive into how these demands can affect what people buy and their overall love for certain brands. It's not just about why folks join boycotts, but also the moral and ethical reasons behind their actions. Two primary ways we used to gather information for this research were surveys. We made these surveys to know what people think and do regarding the boycott scene. The other thing we did was look through an article. We checked out academic journals and stuff that is floating around online to see what's been said before about how people act when they are into these ethical boycotts. References from diverse sources were analysed to extract key insights into the factors influencing consumer behaviour in the context of ethical boycotts. After we got all that information from the surveys and our reading, we will analyse all the data. To analyse the data, we employed theme analysis. One of the most important processes was categorisation, where observations and literature were grouped according to topics like social influence, brand awareness, ethical concerns, and customer willingness. To comprehend how these elements interact and affect boycotting behaviour, recurrent themes, patterns, and important conclusions were found. To convey qualitative findings that provide a deeper knowledge of the consumer decision-making process, insights

were combined into a coherent narrative. By revealing patterns and insights that go beyond outward behaviour, this study seeks to offer a deeper understanding of how societal influence, personal beliefs, and ethical considerations interact to shape consumer behaviour. It also aims to make significant contributions to the larger conversation on ethical consumption and consumer activism, especially in reaction to boycott campaigns around the world.

This study is all about why people decide to boycott Nestlé, focusing on four key drivers which is brand awareness, ethical concerns, social influence, and consumer willingness. Moral judgment acts as a mediator in these relationships. The proposed hypotheses including,

Hypothesis 1: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between brand awareness and boycotting behaviour.
Hypothesis 2: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between ethical concerns and boycotting behaviour.
Hypothesis 3: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between social influence and boycotting behaviour.
Hypothesis 4: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between consumer willingness and boycotting behaviour.
Hypothesis 5: Higher brand awareness positively influences boycotting behaviour.
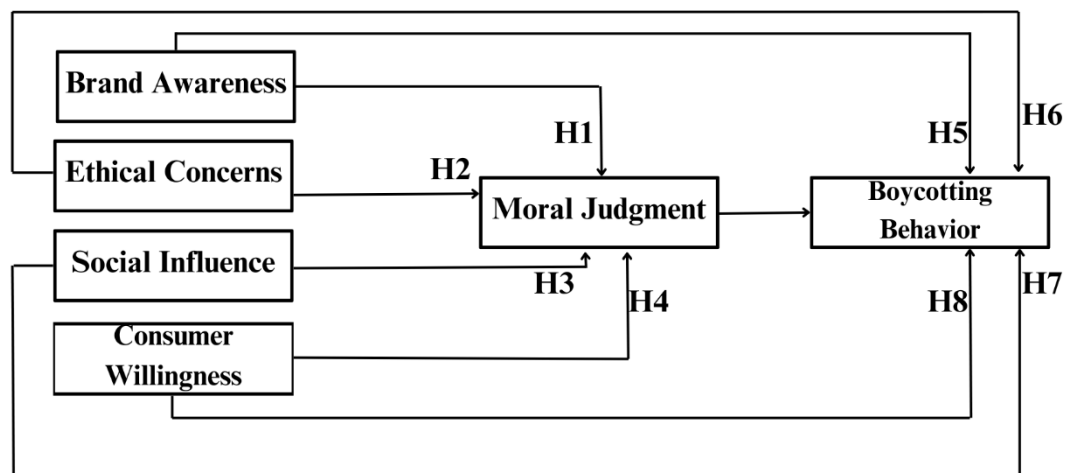Hypothesis 6: Ethical concerns positively impact boycotting behaviour.
Hypothesis 7: Social influence strengthens boycotting behaviour.
Hypothesis 8: Consumer willingness enhances the likelihood of boycotting behaviour.

Conceptual Framework
The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework

Our research model explores how brand awareness, ethical concerns, social influence and consumer willingness influence boycotting behaviour with moral judgment acting as a mediator. It examines both direct effects and indirect effects. This model highlights the role of moral judgment in shaping consumer decisions while identifying key drivers that motivate individuals to engage in boycotting behaviour.

A survey-based quantitative method will be used to get some information on what people think and do about Nestlé stuff. We're totally focusing on those who know about or have actually been part of boycotts, particularly those who are aware of or engaged in boycott

movements. The purposive sampling method will be applied, selecting respondents who demonstrate ethical concerns or have participated in boycotting activities. A sample size of 100 respondents has been determined to ensure statistical reliability and validity. The sample size is appropriate for detecting meaningful relationships among variables while being feasible given the population's accessibility. Our survey will include closed-ended questions and Likert scale items such as 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. We do this survey in order to measure about the brand awareness which is the familiarity with Nestlé's products and controversies. Then, we want to know about the ethical concerns like views on Nestlé's environmental and labor practices. We also want to get the scoop on social pressure, like if your friends say something bad about Nestlé, does that affect if you buy their products? And obviously, we're looking into if people are down to boycott Nestlé and why they might make that call. We are going to be totally transparent with everyone who takes part, like what's the deal with the research and what they're in for. Of course, the data will be anonymized to protect participants' identities and responses will be stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. Ethical approval will be sought, and the research will adhere to data protection laws.

An online survey from Google Forms is what we are going to use to get everyone's thoughts, because it is super easy and people can do it whenever they want. This way, we will get answers from a bunch of different folks in all sorts of places, which is much better for our research. Doing it online makes it so much easier for our respondent to fill it out without worrying about stuff like not having enough time and it will probably make more people want to take part and participate in this online survey. There will be numerous components to the questionnaire we intend to employ. First, we will want some broad background about your life, including your age, gender, and job status as well as any other relevant information. That's all to learn a little bit more about and determine whether you would be a good fit for our research. We shall then probe what we are seeking knowledge about. Following this will be focused questions closely connected to the hypotheses of the study encompassing themes such brand awareness, ethical issues, societal influence, and consumer willingness. To guarantee that the answers are quantifiable and fit for quantitative analysis, every part will include Likert scale items with closed-ended questions. This all will enable us to get some strong data for our study paper to discuss. The methodical design seeks to gather a wide range of information pertinent to comprehending the elements driving boycotting activity. Once the data has been gathered, Excel and SPSS two reliable statistical instruments fit very well for managing and interpreting quantitative data. The analysis will proceed through several stages to ensure a thorough examination of the collected information. For the descriptive statistics, which is like the starting point of our analysis, we are going to summarizing the data to get a quick look at the middle values, called the median and how spread out it is known as the standard deviation. This will give us a basic idea of what is going on in the data and the overall picture of the stuff we are looking at. This technique will help in identifying general trends and patterns within the dataset and offering a foundational understanding of the variables in question. This step is like figuring out the main trends and patterns in the data. The next step will involve assessing the strength and direction of the relationships between key variables. Correlation analysis will allow us to identify whether and how strongly these factors are interconnected, providing valuable insights into their interplay. We will use multiple regression to check how well these factors can guess if someone's will boycott something. It will tell us which of these things has the biggest say in whether someone decides to boycott a product or not. Finally, we will use mediation testing to explore the mediating role of moral judgment in the relationships between the independent variables and boycotting behaviour. We will use statistical models in order to see if our guess is right. We aim to confirm whether moral judgment acts as an intermediary that influences the strength or nature of these relationships. The comprehensive data analysis process is designed to ensure that every aspect of the collected information is thoroughly examined and leading to accurate and reliable

findings. This way, we will get a clearer picture of what is really going on and learn something about why people boycott things.

RESULTS

The majority of respondents were 20 years old and below and majority were female (71%). In terms of ethnicity, 5% were Chinese, following by Malay (91%) and Indian (4%). Over half were students (81%), and (72%) educational level from bachelor of degree. Table 1 below summarises the respondent's demographics details.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of respondents' demography (N=100)

	Frequency/Percentage
Age 20 years old and below 21 - 30 years old 31 - 40 years old 41 - 50 years old 51 years old and above	59 26 4 5 6
Gender Male Female	29 71
Ethnicity Malay Chinese Indian	91 5 4
Occupation Student Government sector Private sector Self employed Unemployed	81 10 4 4 1
Education Level Primary School Secondary School Diploma Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree PhD	1 8 15 72 2 2

Table 2 below summarises the 100 responses on brand awareness of boycotting against Nestle.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of respondents' Brand Awareness (N=100)

	Frequency/Percentage
How familiar are you with the Nestlé brand? Very familiar Somewhat familiar Not Familiar	 92 6 2

What source most influences your awareness of Nestlé brand ethics? Social Media News Advertisements Peer recommendations Family	 42 10 40 7 1
Have Nestlé's controversies impacted your perception of its brand? Yes No Maybe	 64 15 21

The survey shows that 92% of the respondents are very familiar and 6% somewhat familiar. Majority of the respondents are very familiar and ethical awareness if very influenced by advertisements (40%) and social media (42%). However, Nestle controversies have significantly impacted public perception, as 64% respondents indicated negative influence while 21% were uncertain, and only 15% reported no effect. This highlights the importance of ethical considerations in shaping brand reputation. The findings reveal that most respondents are aware of Nestlé brand as they alert about the situation that happened.

Table 3 below summarises the 100 responses on brand awareness of boycotting against Nestle.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of respondents' Ethical Concern (N=100)

	Frequency/Percentage
If you were to boycott Nestlé products, how long would you be willing to maintain the boycott? A few weeks A few months A year or more Until the company changes its practices	 9 8 7 76
Which of the following ethical issues have you heard of in relation to Nestlé? Concern about human rights violations Environmental impact (e.g., pollution) Exploitation of local communities	 79 10 11
Would you stop purchasing a product if you believed the company's practices harmed vulnerable communities? Yes No Maybe	 83 3 14

As can be seen, it is clear there are many ethical concerns about Nestle practices. The majority of respondents 76% would boycott the company until an improvement was shown. That means demands are sure for tangible change and accountability. On the

other hand, very few respondents would be on the boycott for a shorter time. 9% would give it a short after weeks, 8% after a few months, whilst 7% would keep at it for a year or over. This exhibits a long-standing commitment that many consumers have toward ethical concerns.

When it comes to an awareness of specific issues, 83% of respondents indicated that they have concerns related to human rights violations, the most known issue, while the least case of environmental impact (5%) and exploitation of local communities (12%) suggests that these need to involve more attention and awareness-building. Certainly, the people would still hold strong to the ethical stance regarding the respondents' assertion that 81% would cease buying a product if a company were found to be involved in practices that killed vulnerable communities. Only 4% reported they would not stop purchasing, while 15% were uncertain-reflecting only slight hesitancy.

Table 4 below summarises the 100 responses on social influence of boycotting against Nestle.

Table 4. Descriptive analysis of respondents' Social Influence (N=100)

	Frequency/Percentage
How often do your friends or family influence your decision to boycott a Nestlé product?	
Always	37
Often	27
Sometimes	23
Rarely	5
Never	8
How likely are you to participate in a boycott if it is supported by your social circle?	
Very Likely	52
Likely	27
Neutral	13
Unlikely	6
Very Unlikely	2
Have you ever joined a boycott after seeing others do so on social media?	
Yes	80
No	14
Maybe	6

Based on the results provided, that social impact has a very important place in the decision-making process of respondents while boycotting Nestlé. A collective 64% of the participants said that the influence of their close friends or family either always (37%) or often (27%) influences their decision to join a boycott. Another 23% said such influence would sometimes happen, while only a tiny percentage (5% and 8%) had the opinion that they are rarely or never influenced by others. This proves the importance of social contacts in consumer behaviour.

A consideration of the influences of participation in a boycott under their social circle would cast the majority of respondents in a very high probability of participation. Indeed, out of them, 52% stated that they are very likely to participate, and another 27 indicated that they would thus be likely to take part. Only 13% thus remain neutral, and a few said they would be unlikely (6%) or very unlikely (2%) to participate. These show that peer

collective action is a bigger motivator for taking up the boycott than anything else, reinforcing the significance of social validation.

These findings indicate the influence of social media in cases of participation in boycotts. As many as 79 out of the 100 students surveyed stated that they had joined a boycott because they had seen people doing so on social media. This shows how effective the online public outlets are in mobilizing action. In contrast, just 15% stated otherwise, while 6% were unsure (maybe). This thus proves the fact that social media can create awareness and give more momentum to the social cause, especially when the ethical concerns are very high across the board.

Table 5 below summarises the 100 responses on consumer willingness of boycotting against Nestle.

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of respondents' Consumer Willingness (N=100)

	Frequency/Percentage
If you were aware of a boycott against Nestlé products, how likely would you be to join? Very Likely Likely Neutral Unlikely Very Unlikely	 61 26 6 6 1
Would you be willing to stop buying a specific Nestlé product even if it's your favourite? Yes No Maybe	 83 7 10
How long would you be willing to continue a boycott of Nestlé products? Short-term (e.g., a few weeks) Medium-term (e.g., a few months) Long-term (e.g., more than a year) Until ethical concerns are resolved	 7 8 14 71

The findings show, based on the results, that there is quite great public willingness to participate in a boycott against Nestlé products if ethical concerns arise. A staggering 61% reported they are "very likely" to join a boycott, while another 26% are "likely," demonstrating strong tendencies toward collective action. 6% were neutral, and "unlikely". The minimum 1% reported being "very unlikely," respectively, to take part in it.

When asked if they would stop buying a particular Nestlé product, even if it was their favourite, 83% said yes, which shows just how serious they are. Only 7% said they would not stop, while 10% did not know. This suggests that personal attachment to a product is not a significant factor in the ethical actions of consumers.

The length of time a boycott would last: 71% were committed to long-term action, until ethical issues are resolved. A few said they would sustain it only for the long-term period, 14%; fewer were willing to sustain it for the short-term, 7%, or medium-term, 8%. This suggests that most participants view the boycott as a serious and long-term action rather than a temporary response.

Table 6. Descriptive Analysis, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha, And Zero-Order Correlations of All Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Awareness	0.753				
Ethical Concerns	0.296**	0.762			
Social Influence	0.304**	0.576**	0.735		
Consumer Willingness	0.249*	0.739**	0.779**	0.746	
Boycotting Behaviour	0.169	-0.074	-0.229*	-0.197*	0.775
M	3.1733	2.9967	3.5567	3.5500	2.7600
SD	0.42238	0.50695	0.81382	0.63099	0.59000

Note: N=100; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01; Diagonal entries in bold indicate Cronbach's coefficient alpha

As can be seen, the coefficient's alpha of the four factors driving boycotting behaviour falls between 0.735 and 0.775, indicating internal consistency reliability of all variables. The internal consistency was measured using the Cronbach's Alpha value, using the minimal threshold of 0.7 suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Reliability is a tool to measure a questionnaire, which is an indicator of variables. The four reasons why people decide to boycott Nestlé, focusing on four key drivers which is brand awareness, ethical concerns, social influence, and consumer willingness.

We tested our hypotheses using regression analysis. As evident in Table 6, brand awareness, ethical concerns, social influence and consumer willingness were entered as independent variables, while boycotting behaviour was entered as the dependent variable. Hypothesis 1: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between brand awareness and boycotting behaviour. Hypothesis 2: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between ethical concerns and boycotting behaviour. Hypothesis 3: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between social influence and boycotting behaviour. Hypothesis 4: Moral judgment mediates the relationship between consumer willingness and boycotting behaviour. Hypothesis 5: Higher brand awareness positively influences boycotting behaviour. Hypothesis 6: Ethical concerns positively impact boycotting behaviour. Hypothesis 7: Social influence strengthens boycotting behaviour. Hypothesis 8: Consumer willingness enhances the likelihood of boycotting behaviour.

Table 7. Summary of Regression Analysis

Boycotting Behaviour Against Nestle	
Variables entered	Beta
(R2 Change = 0.120)	
Brand Awareness	0.251**
Ethical Concerns	0.095
Social Influence	-0.262*
Consumer Willingness	-0.125

Note: N=100; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Ethical concerns and Consumer willingness did not significantly influence boycotting behaviour against Nestle. We did not find support for Hypotheses 2 and 4. Brand awareness and social influence were positively correlated to boycotting behaviour with beta values of 0.251 and –0.262. Thus, we found support for Hypotheses 1 and 3. The value of R2 was 0.120, which means that 12% of the variation in boycotting behaviour is explainable by brand awareness and social influence. The results offer support for as two primary factors influencing boycotting behaviour against Nestle. We found that brand

awareness is the most dominant factor affecting boycotting behaviour with the highest beta value 0.251, followed by social influence with a beta value of -0.262.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the key factors influencing consumers' boycotting behaviour against Nestlé. Notably, brand awareness and social influence emerged as significant predictors of boycott behaviour, whereas ethical concerns and consumer willingness did not show a statistically significant impact.

Firstly, brand awareness was found to have a positive and significant influence on boycotting behaviour. This suggests that the more consumers are aware of the Nestlé brand and its associated ethical controversies, the more likely they are to engage in boycotting actions. This supports existing literature which emphasizes that increased brand familiarity often leads to stronger reactions when ethical issues arise (Delgado-Ballester & Hernández-Espallardo, 2008). In the context of this study, widespread awareness driven largely by social media and advertisements appears to act as a catalyst for consumer action.

Secondly, social influence also significantly predicted boycotting behaviour, although with a negative beta coefficient. This may reflect the complexity of social dynamics where respondents feel pressure from their social circles not only to act but also to conform in certain ways, sometimes resisting action depending on perceived group norms. Nevertheless, the high percentage of respondents who reported being influenced by friends, family, and social media indicates that peer networks and online platforms play a vital role in shaping consumer choices, echoing findings from studies on digital activism and collective behaviour (Smith et al., 2011).

Contrary to expectations, ethical concerns while widely acknowledged by the respondents did not significantly influence actual boycotting behaviour in the regression model. This might imply a gap between moral awareness and behavioural action, a phenomenon often described in consumer ethics as the *attitude-behaviour gap* (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010). Although 83% of respondents expressed concern about human rights violations, and 81% stated they would stop purchasing if vulnerable communities were harmed, this did not translate directly into statistically significant behavioural outcomes.

Similarly, consumer willingness was not a significant predictor, even though descriptive data showed a strong willingness to participate in a boycott and to forgo favourite products. This may suggest that while intent is high, actual behaviour may still be constrained by convenience, habits, or skepticism about the impact of individual action. The regression model accounted for 12% of the variance in boycotting behaviour (R^2 = 0.120), indicating that other unmeasured factors such as personal values, political orientation, or perceived effectiveness of the boycott may also be influential. Notably, brand awareness had the strongest positive beta coefficient (β = 0.251), underscoring its dominant role as a predictor, followed by social influence (β = -0.262).

These findings highlight the importance of enhancing public awareness and leveraging social networks when mobilizing consumers around ethical issues. For organizations, the results suggest that reputational risk tied to ethical perceptions is real and impactful especially when amplified through consumer awareness and peer influence. Future campaigns aimed at promoting corporate accountability should consider these social and perceptual drivers when designing outreach strategies.

CONCLUSION

Independent variables in this study have been brand awareness, ethical questions, and societal impact, thereby addressing the several factors influencing Nestlé boycott. The results show that both generally and specifically these elements influence consumers' choices to participate in a boycott. Regarding the first point, higher brand awareness results in more scrutiny of business operations; ethical issues draw attention to the differences between corporate behaviour and customer desires; and social influence shapes group behaviour by means of peers, standards, and advocates. This clarifies the reasons behind the action of boycotts.

By examining the differences in consumers' viewpoints and rationales, this paper improves the body of knowledge already in use on unfavourable customer behaviour and consumer attribution of blame to particular companies. This paper investigates how public perception and Nestlé's mistakes influence brand consumption and reputation. Combining brand awareness, ethical, cultural dimensions, political and financial aspects open doors for deeper study across numerous countries, ethnicities, and demographic variances.

This paper offers specific suggestions meant to help Nestlé reduce and overcome the dangers related to boycotts. Restoring client confidence depends on improved openness and responsibility in moral behaviour. Including sustainability into supplier chains, improving labour conditions, and vowing to produce ecologically friendly goods will help one achieve this. Second, resolving misunderstandings and stressing improvements in ethical standards depend on maintaining open and honest interaction with customers by means of efficient marketing and public relations tools. In the end, stress corporate social responsibility initiatives to build good public perception and hence improve brand awareness.

Managing social influence effectively calls for a comprehensive and balanced plan. To properly handle these problems, companies must engage with community leaders, advocacy groups, and influencers as well as with each other to foster cooperative solutions. Dealing with negative campaigns at the same time calls for a great degree of compassion, openness, and forceful actions to correct injustices and rebuild faith. On the other hand, for activist groups to create successful boycotts, it is imperative to focus on convincing themes that appeal to people. Social media is important since it is a fast-reaching tool for spreading knowledge and a powerful tool for Giving supporters specific, doable plans for involvement is absolutely vital. Campaigns based on shared values and moral principles seem more real and approachable, so encouraging more audience participation and support of the cause.

There are certain limits in this study that might affect the generalizability of its findings. Its relevance to higher consumer populations is hampered by the small sample size. Furthermore, a limited concentration on Nestlé results in regional bias since customer behaviour could vary depending on the location. The study also leaves out factors including personal values or socioeconomic level that can influence boycotting behaviour. Future studies should look at boycotts in several sectors to find common reasons and examine cross-cultural differences, therefore clarifying how cultural norms affect worldwide consumer activism and ethical consumption.

All things considered, both companies and activists the intersection of brand awareness, ethical issues, and social effect offers both challenges and opportunities. While activists can use these components to promote ongoing change, businesses have to stress ethical improvements and good communication to rebuild confidence. This study underlines the need of continuous communication between companies and customers

in order to create a market where social responsibility and ethical issues are natural part of decision-making procedures. By means of ongoing participation in this conversation, companies and activists could help to create a more responsible and moral business environment.

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APPENDIX

How familiar are you with the Nestlé brand?
1. Very familiar
2. Somewhat familiar
3. Not familiar

What source most influences your awareness of Nestlé brand ethics?
1. Social Media
2. News
3. Advertisement
4. Peer recommendations
5. Family

Have Nestlé's controversies impacted your perception of its brand?
1. Yes
2. No
3. Maybe

If you were to boycott Nestlé's products, how long would you be willing to maintain the boycott?
1. A few weeks
2. A few months
3. A year or more
4. Until the company changes its practises

Which of the following ethical issues have you heard of in relation to Nestlé?
1. Concern about human rights violations
2. Environmental impact (e.g., pollution)
3. Exploitation of local communities

Would you stop purchasing a product if you believed the company's practices harmed vulnerable communities?
1. Yes
2. No
3. Maybe

How often do your friends or family influence your decision to boycott a Nestlé 's products?
1. Always
2. Often
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never

How likely are you to participate in a boycott if it is supported by your social circle?
1. Very likely
2. Likely
3. Neutral
4. Unlikely
5. Very unlikely

Have you ever joined a boycott after seeing others do so on social media?
1. Yes
2. No
3. Maybe

If you were aware of a boycott against Nestlé's products, how likely would you be to join?
1. Very likely
2. Likely
3. Neutral
4. Unlikely
5. Very unlikely

Would you be willing to stop buying a specific Nestlé's products even if it's your favourite?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Maybe

How long would you be willing to continue a boycott of Nestlé's products?
1. Short-term (e.g., a few weeks)
2. Medium-term (e.g., a few months)
3. Long-term (e.g., more than a year)
4. Until ethical concerns are resolved

What motivates consumers to engage in boycotting behaviour?
1. Dissatisfaction with product quality and lack of alternatives
2. Ethical concerns, social influence, and brand misconduct awareness
3. Loyalty to competing brands and preference for local products
4. Economic factors, such as a rising product prices

What often motivates individuals to join a boycott, even if they are not directly, affected by the issue?
1. Empathy for those impacted by the brand's actions
2. A desire to harm the brand's competitors
3. Financial incentives offered by other companies
4. Curiosity about social movements

Why might boycotting behaviour differ between individuals?
1. Personal values and ethical priorities vary
2. Social and cultural contexts influence decisions
3. Economic constraints affect purchasing flexibility