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From identity to boycott: Responsibility attribution, perceived injustice, group-based emotions, and group efficacy in third-party responses to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict

Kimlikten boykota: İsrail–Filistin çatışmasına verilen üçüncü taraf tepkilerinde sorumluluk atfı, algılanan adaletsizlik, grup temelli duygular ve grup etkililiği

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Abstract

This study investigates boycott behavior toward Israeli products in Türkiye through the lens of the Social Identity Model of Collective Action. Rather than treating boycott as an individual consumption decision, the study conceptualizes it as a form of collective action shaped by social identity, responsibility attribution, perceived injustice, group-based emotions, and group efficacy beliefs. Data were collected from 258 participants residing in Türkiye through an online survey and analyzed using path analysis. The results indicate that identification with Muslim identity is associated with boycott behavior both directly and indirectly. Stronger identification was associated with greater attribution of responsibility to Israel, which was associated with higher perceptions of injustice. Perceived injustice was linked to boycott behavior through emotional processes involving empathy and anger, which were also associated with stronger beliefs in group efficacy. In contrast, attributing responsibility to Palestine was negatively associated with perceived injustice and boycott behavior, suggesting an alternative cognitive pattern associated with lower boycott participation. Overall, the findings indicate a pattern of associations in which identity-based interpretations, responsibility attributions, moral emotions, and efficacy beliefs were linked to boycott participation in a third-party conflict context.

Keywords: *Social identity, collective action, boycott behavior, responsibility attribution, group-based emotions, Israeli–Palestinian conflict.*

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de İsrail ürünlerine yönelik boykot davranışını Sosyal Kimlik Temelli Kolektif Eylem Modeli bağlamında incelemektedir. Çalışmada boykot, bireysel bir tüketim kararı olarak ele alınmak yerine; sosyal kimlik, sorumluluk yükleme, algılanan adaletsizlik, grup temelli duygular ve grup etkililiği inançlarıyla ilişkili bir kolektif eylem biçimi olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Veriler, Türkiye'de yaşayan 258 katılımcıdan çevrimiçi anket aracılığıyla toplanmış ve yol analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, Müslüman kimliğiyle özdeşleşmenin boykot davranışıyla hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı olarak ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Daha güçlü özdeşleşme, İsrail'e daha fazla sorumluluk yüklenmesiyle ilişkili bulunmuş; bu durum da daha yüksek düzeyde algılanan adaletsizlikle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Algılanan adaletsizlik, empati ve öfkeyi içeren duygusal süreçler aracılığıyla boykot davranışıyla ilişkili bulunmuş; bu duygular aynı zamanda daha güçlü grup etkililiği inançlarıyla da ilişkili olmuştur. Buna karşılık, sorumluluğun Filistin'e yüklenmesi, algılanan adaletsizlik ve boykot davranışıyla negatif yönde ilişkili bulunmuş; bu durum boykota katılım eğilimini azaltan alternatif bir bilişsel örüntüye işaret etmiştir. Genel olarak bulgular, üçüncü taraf bir çatışma bağlamında kimlik temelli yorumların, sorumluluk yüklemelerinin, ahlaki duyguların ve etkililik inançlarının boykot katılımıyla ilişkili olduğu bir örüntü ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sosyal kimlik, kolektif eylem, boykot davranışı, sorumluluk atfı, grup temelli duygular, İsrail–Filistin çatışması.*

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, international conflicts can generate psychological reactions even among individuals far removed from the conflict zone. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict illustrates this dynamic by shaping attitudes and emotional responses across distant societies (Basir et al., 2024). Exposure to conflict-related information through global media often elicits empathy toward perceived victims and moral anger toward perceived perpetrators, even among third-party audiences (Halimi et al., 2017). Recent research further suggests that third-party responses to distant conflicts are shaped not only by emotional reactions but also by broader beliefs about solidarity, allyship, and the legitimacy of collective action (Acar et al., 2024; Schreiber et al., 2026). In this context, boycott behavior has emerged as a common form of political consumerism through which individuals symbolically express solidarity and moral positioning.

Boycotts represent more than individual consumer choices; they function as forms of collective action and political participation (Subašić et al., 2011). By refusing to purchase certain products or brands, individuals express support for disadvantaged groups and respond to perceived injustice, even without direct involvement in the conflict (John & Klein, 2003). Understanding this behavior therefore requires a social psychological framework linking identity, injustice perceptions, emotions, and collective action tendencies (Özkan et al., 2022; van Zomeren et al., 2012).

The present study draws on the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008, 2018), which emphasizes group identification, perceived injustice, and collective efficacy as key predictors of collective action. Building on SIMCA, the present study extends the model by introducing responsibility attribution as a conflict-relevant cognitive mechanism associated with perceived injustice and boycott behavior through group-based emotions and efficacy beliefs. This approach is broadly consistent with the dual chamber model (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021), which conceptualizes social identity and morality as core antecedents of collective action while treating injustice and efficacy as more proximal motivational processes. Rather than testing the full dual chamber model, the present study focuses specifically on identity-based interpretations of conflict and examines how attributional, emotional, and efficacy-related processes are associated with boycott participation.

Boycott Behavior as a Form of Collective Action

Boycotts are commonly defined as the deliberate avoidance of products or brands for ethical, political, or social reasons (John & Klein, 2003). Although enacted through individual consumption decisions, they often represent coordinated attempts to influence institutions or actors through shared moral or political concerns (Duğan et al., 2024; Kam & Deichert, 2020). Their distinctive feature lies in their collective meaning: participants typically perceive their actions as part of a broader effort undertaken by like-minded others (Basir et al., 2024; Radke et al., 2020). Refusing to purchase certain products therefore becomes a symbolic expression of opposition to perceived injustice and solidarity with a disadvantaged group. Recent allyship research similarly suggests that solidarity-oriented actions may vary depending on the actor, target group, and perceived moral obligations involved in the conflict (Uluğ et al., 2026).

This collective dimension can be understood through Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which argues that individuals derive part of their self-concept from group memberships. From this perspective, boycott participation functions not only as a political stance but also as an expression of social identity. Compared with more resource-intensive collective actions such as protests, boycotts are relatively low-cost and easily integrated into everyday life, making them especially relevant for examining how identity, injustice perceptions, and efficacy beliefs are associated with collective action.

Social Identity and Conflict Perception: Identification with Muslim Identity

Collective action often emerges when individuals define themselves through group membership and attach emotional significance to that identity (Özkan et al., 2022; Ysseldyk et al., 2010). SIT suggests that social and political events are interpreted not only through personal perspectives but also through group affiliations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In conflict settings, this process structures perceptions of responsibility, injustice, and solidarity (Bar-Tal et al., 2009). Consistent with this view, SIMCA identifies group identification as a central predictor of collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2010, 2012).

Which identity becomes salient depends largely on how the conflict is framed. Research further suggests that identities linked to moral or political causes may generate particularly strong motivations for action (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; van Zomeren et al., 2018). Emerging evidence also indicates that broader belief systems and normative worldviews may shape protest intentions in response to large-scale societal crises (Ozkan, 2024). In conflicts framed through moral or religious narratives, religious identity may therefore function as a moralized identity that provides normative guidance regarding injustice and collective response (Herman & Salehudin, 2026; Ysseldyk et al., 2010).

In Türkiye, Muslim identity represents one of the primary frameworks through which the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is interpreted. Research on boycotts of Israeli products consistently highlights religious motivations as a central driver of participation (Avci, 2024; Basir et al., 2024; Cevher, 2025). Turkish consumers frequently report that religious values shape boycott participation alongside factors such as social pressure, consumer animosity, and perceived efficacy (Duğan et al., 2024; Kızılgeçit et al., 2025). Studies drawing on Islamic perspectives likewise conceptualize boycott behavior as a morally and religiously grounded response to perceived injustice (Özaslan & Altıntaş, 2025).

Responsibility Attribution and Perceived Injustice in Conflict

In conflict contexts, collective actions such as boycotts are shaped less by the occurrence of harm itself than by how responsibility for that harm is interpreted (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Doosje & Branscombe, 2003; Uluğ, 2023). Responsibility attribution therefore represents an important cognitive factor associated with perceived injustice. Although injustice is frequently examined as an antecedent of collective action, the attributional processes underlying these perceptions have received comparatively less attention (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Drawing on appraisal approaches, the present study proposes that injustice perceptions are closely linked to how individuals interpret responsibility for the conflict (Smith et al., 2008).

Appraisal theories suggest that injustice perceptions become stronger when harm is attributed to a controllable external actor (van Zomeren et al., 2012). When responsibility is assigned to a deliberate outgroup actor, group-based anger becomes more salient and is associated with greater support for confrontational collective actions such as boycotts (Smith et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2012). In the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, boycott tendencies are therefore expected to vary depending on whether responsibility is attributed primarily to Israel or to Palestinian actors such as Hamas (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Canetti et al., 2017).

Two contrasting attribution patterns may be relevant. Attributing responsibility to Israel frames the conflict in terms of intentional and stable policies, positioning Palestinians as victims and strengthening perceptions of injustice and support for boycotts (Duğan et al., 2024; van Zomeren et al., 2012). In contrast, attributing responsibility to Palestine or Hamas may weaken boycott motivations by framing Israeli actions as defensive or reciprocal (Halimi et al., 2017; Kızılgeçit et al., 2025). These attribution patterns may also generate different emotional and behavioral tendencies. When the conflict is interpreted as a violation of human rights, moral anger and collective action tendencies become more pronounced; when interpreted

as a strategic confrontation, support for collective action tends to be weaker (Herman & Salehudin, 2026). Attribution to broader external actors may also produce mixed consequences by either expanding boycott targets or weakening efficacy beliefs through perceptions of limited influence (Çelebi et al., 2014; Uluğ, 2023).

Perceived Injustice and Group-Based Emotions: Empathy and Anger

Collective action research suggests that cognitive appraisals alone rarely motivate action; perceptions of injustice are typically accompanied by emotional responses associated with greater readiness for action (da Costa et al., 2023; van Zomeren et al., 2012). Emotions therefore function as a bridge between cognitive evaluations and collective behavior (Saab et al., 2015). In this context, anger and empathy represent two distinct emotional pathways associated with boycott behavior.

Group-based anger is one of the most consistent predictors of collective action and typically emerges when responsibility for injustice is attributed to an external perpetrator (Özkan et al., 2022). As an approach-oriented emotion, anger is associated with confrontation and sanctioning responses toward the perceived perpetrator (Smith et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2012). Boycotts may therefore function as punitive tools intended to impose economic costs on the responsible actor (Kam & Deichert, 2020). Research in Türkiye similarly indicates that moral anger plays an important role in motivating consumer boycotts (Duğan et al., 2024), while findings from European contexts also show that anger toward Israel is associated with boycott tendencies (Hino, 2023).

Empathy, in contrast, is a victim-oriented emotion focused on the suffering of the disadvantaged group rather than punishing the perpetrator (Selvanathan et al., 2018). It involves understanding and sharing the victim's emotional experience and is often associated with altruistic motivations and third-party solidarity behaviors among individuals who are not directly involved in the conflict (Halimi et al., 2017; Radke et al., 2020; Schreiber et al., 2026). In Türkiye, support for Palestine appears to reflect not only anger toward Israel but also empathic concern for civilians in Gaza (Kızılgeçit et al., 2025).

Boycott behavior thus reflects both punitive and solidarity-oriented emotional tendencies. Anger supports the sanctioning dimension of boycott, whereas empathy reinforces its solidarity dimension by expressing support for the victimized group (Halimi et al., 2017; Saab et al., 2015).

Group Efficacy: From Emotions to Boycott Behavior

Collective action research suggests that emotional reactions to injustice do not automatically correspond to behavioral engagement; individuals must also believe that collective efforts can produce meaningful change (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; Thomas et al., 2020). Within SIMCA, this belief—group efficacy—refers to the shared expectation that coordinated action can improve a disadvantaged situation or achieve collective goals (van Zomeren et al., 2010, 2012). Alongside questions of identity and emotion, individuals also evaluate whether collective action is likely to be effective. Recent discussions surrounding Palestine solidarity protests further suggest that efficacy beliefs may become especially complex in prolonged conflicts where collective action is perceived as morally necessary despite uncertainty regarding political outcomes (Acar et al., 2024).

Boycott behavior highlights the importance of such efficacy beliefs because participation often involves personal costs. Accordingly, willingness to participate tends to depend partly on whether individuals believe that collective consumer action can produce tangible outcomes (John & Klein, 2003). Findings from Türkiye similarly indicate that many consumers perceive boycotts as potentially effective tools for influencing political or economic actors (Avci, 2024; Duğan et al., 2024). In this sense, boycott participation reflects not only moral reactions but also instrumental evaluations regarding the effectiveness of collective action.

At the same time, collective action problems such as free-riding or perceptions of limited personal impact may discourage participation (John & Klein, 2003; Uysal, 2025). Beliefs regarding both collective efficacy and personal contribution may therefore become important factors associated with boycott participation. Research on dynamic norms similarly suggests that perceptions of changing collective attitudes may strengthen participation tendencies by increasing the perceived legitimacy of collective action (Eraslan & Cakal, 2026).

The Present Study

The present study examines anti-Israeli boycott behavior in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict through the lens of identity-based collective action. Drawing on SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008), boycott participation is conceptualized not merely as an individual act of political consumption but as a form of collective action associated with social identification, perceived injustice, group-based emotional responses, and beliefs about collective effectiveness. Extending SIMCA, the study incorporates conflict-relevant cognitive and emotional processes by examining how identification with Muslim identity is associated with boycott behavior through responsibility attribution, perceived injustice, group-based emotions (anger and empathy), and group efficacy (see Figure 1). In doing so, the study also contributes to the growing literature on third-party solidarity and identity-based allyship in international conflict settings (Schreiber et al., 2026; Uluğ et al., 2026).

Within the proposed model, Muslim identification functions as a central identity-related factor associated with boycott behavior. Rather than assuming a direct link between identity and injustice perceptions, the model introduces responsibility attribution as a key cognitive intermediary. Specifically, responsibility attribution is examined in two directions: attributing responsibility to Israel versus attributing responsibility to Palestine (Çelebi et al., 2014; Doosje & Branscombe, 2003). When responsibility is attributed to Israel as an external perpetrator, the conflict is more likely to be interpreted as unjust and associated with stronger emotional reactions such as anger (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008).

Research on collective action indicates that perceptions of injustice, although important, are rarely sufficient on their own to motivate action (Thomas et al., 2020). Accordingly, the present study proposes that perceived injustice is associated with two group-based emotions: anger and empathy. Group-based anger is expected to be associated with greater support for confrontational collective action (Smith et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004), whereas empathy may be associated with solidarity-oriented engagement toward the victimized group (Halimi et al., 2017; Schreiber et al., 2026). Considering both emotions simultaneously allows boycott behavior to be examined as both sanctioning- and solidarity-oriented. The association between group-based emotions and efficacy beliefs is treated as context-specific and theoretically exploratory rather than as a fixed ordering across all forms of collective action.

Finally, the model proposes that emotional responses are more likely to be associated with behavioral engagement when accompanied by stronger group efficacy beliefs. Prior research suggests that collective action is less likely when individuals doubt the effectiveness of joint efforts (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; van Zomeren et al., 2010). Accordingly, boycott participation is expected to depend not only on identity and emotional engagement but also on beliefs regarding the effectiveness of coordinated consumer action.

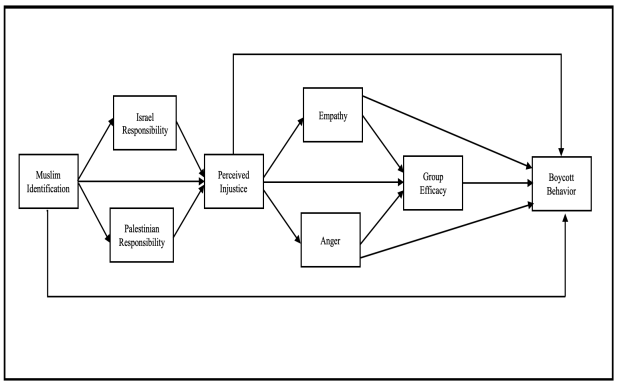

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the research

Methods

Participants

The sample consisted of 258 adults residing in Türkiye. A post-hoc sensitivity analysis conducted using G*Power indicated that, with N = 258 and α = .05, the study had adequate power (≥ .80) to detect small-to-moderate effect sizes (f^2 = .05–.08). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 57 years (M = 27.17, SD = 9.78). Of the sample, 55.4% identified as women (n = 143) and 41.5% as men (n = 107). Most participants held a bachelor's degree (53.9%), and 96.5% identified as Muslim. Participants also reported varying levels of engagement with news related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, with 38.0% following developments "sometimes" and 27.9% "frequently."

Data Collection Instruments

Identification with Muslim Identity: Identification with Muslim identity was measured using the Group Identification Scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992) and adapted into Turkish by Tüzün (2006). The scale assesses cognitive and emotional identification with the Muslim group (e.g., "When talking about Muslims, I usually use the word 'we' rather than 'they'"). It consists of six items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Internal consistency in the present sample was satisfactory (Cronbach's α = .87).

Responsibility Attribution: Responsibility attributions regarding the Israel–Palestine conflict were measured using a Responsibility Attribution Scale adapted from Doosje and Branscombe (2003) and developed for the present study. The six-item scale assesses responsibility attribution toward Israel or Palestine and includes two subdimensions: (a) attribution to Israel (e.g., "The primary responsibility for the Israel–Palestine conflict lies with the State of Israel") and (b) attribution to Palestine (e.g., "The Israel–Palestine conflict emerged as a result of wrong decisions taken by the Palestinian administration"). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale. An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) supported a two-factor structure explaining 57.4% of the total variance, with factor loadings ranging from .64 to .81 (see Appendix 1 for scale items and EFA results). Internal consistency coefficients were .81 for attribution to Israel and .78 for attribution to Palestine.

Perceived Injustice: Perceived injustice was measured using a two-item scale developed based on Tekşam (2023). The scale assesses perceptions of unjust treatment toward Palestinians ("I believe that Palestinians are treated unfairly because of their identity" and "I do not think that Palestinians are subjected to any injustice"). The second item was reverse-coded. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale. The correlation between the two items was modest (r = .26, p < .01), suggesting limited internal consistency; therefore, findings related to this construct should be interpreted with caution.

Group-Based Anger: Group-based anger was measured using two items adapted from Brown et al. (2008) and translated into Turkish to assess anger toward Israel's actions against Palestinians ("Thinking about the harm inflicted on Palestinians by Israel makes me angry" and "Thinking about what has happened to Palestinians makes me angry"). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale. The correlation between the items was high (r = .83, p < .001), indicating strong inter-item consistency.

Outgroup Empathy: Outgroup empathy was assessed using two items adapted from Pedersen et al. (2004) and translated into Turkish to measure empathic responses toward Palestinians ("I empathize with the situation of the Palestinian people" and "I can easily imagine how Palestinians feel"). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale. The correlation between the items was moderate (r = .41, p < .001), indicating that the items

captured related but non-identical aspects of empathy.

Group Efficacy: Perceived group efficacy was measured using the scale developed by van Zomeren et al. (2010) and adapted into Turkish by Tekşam (2023). The four-item scale assesses beliefs regarding the collective capacity of Palestine supporters to defend Palestinian rights and influence political decisions (e.g., "We can successfully defend Palestinian rights against the Israeli government"). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale (α = .87).

Boycott Behavior: Boycott behavior was measured using a seven-item Boycott Behavior Scale developed for the present study. The scale assesses the extent to which individuals deliberately avoid products and brands perceived to support Israel (e.g., "I deliberately avoid purchasing products known to support Israel"). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 7 = Always). An EFA supported a single-factor structure explaining 77.7% of the total variance, with factor loadings ranging from .83 to .93 (see Appendix 2 for scale items and EFA results). Internal consistency was high (α = .96).

Demographic Information: A demographic form assessed participants' age, gender, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, and religious identity.

Procedure

Participants were recruited using a non-probability sampling strategy combining convenience and snowball sampling. Data were collected through an online survey administered via Google Forms. The survey link was distributed through social media platforms and messaging applications, and participants were encouraged to share it within their networks. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and no financial incentives were provided. The first page of the survey included information about the study and an electronic informed consent form. All participants completed the questionnaire in a single session. The study was approved by the Muş Alparslan University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Decision No: 03.12.2025-222368) and conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Analyses were conducted using anonymized data.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Jamovi (version 2.3.21). The analyses proceeded in three stages. First, descriptive statistics and distributional properties (skewness and kurtosis) were examined for all variables. Second, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess bivariate associations. Third, a path analysis model was specified to examine the associations between identification with Muslim identity and boycott behavior through responsibility attributions (to Israel and Palestine), perceived injustice, group-based emotions (empathy and anger), and group efficacy. Path analysis was preferred because it allows the simultaneous estimation of direct and indirect associations within a single structural model. Model fit was evaluated using commonly reported indices (χ^2/df, GFI, CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR). Given the cross-sectional nature of the data, the model was interpreted as a theoretically informed representation of statistical associations rather than a test of causal or temporal processes. Consistent with recent methodological discussions (e.g., Rohrer, 2024), the specified paths were not assumed to represent causal relationships or to account for all possible confounders.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analyses

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in Table 1. Skewness (−1.55 to .31) and kurtosis (−1.89 to .32) values fell within acceptable limits for parametric analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations of the study variables

Variables	Correlations								Descriptive statistics				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	SD	Range	Skew-ness	Kur-tosis
1. Muslim Identification	—								3.93	.98	1-5	-.97	.32
2. Israel Responsibility Attribution	.42***	—							5.98	1.31	1-7	-1.39	1.47
3. Palestinian Responsibility Attribution	.07	-.11	—						3.54	1.80	1-7	.31	-.74
4. Perceived Injustice	.12	.43***	-.36***	—					5.72	1.38	1-7	-.83	-.20
5. Empathy toward Palestinians	.42***	.50***	.03	.31***	—				5.44	1.43	1-7	-1.00	.70
6. Group-Based Anger	.48***	.57***	-.06	.33***	.56***	—			5.96	1.47	1-7	-1.55	-1.89
7. Group Efficacy	.56***	.38***	.07	.12*	.49***	.56***	—		4.93	1.57	1-7	-.52	-.43
8. Boycott Behavior	.58***	.58***	-.09	.30***	.55***	.62***	.61***	—	5.09	1.82	1-7	-.63	-.81

Note. $*p < .05$, $***p < .001$.

Identification with Muslim identity was positively associated with attribution of responsibility to Israel, empathy, group-based anger, group efficacy, and boycott behavior, but was not significantly associated with perceived injustice or attribution of responsibility to Palestine. Attribution of responsibility to Israel was positively associated with perceived injustice, empathy, group-based anger, group efficacy, and boycott behavior, whereas attribution of responsibility to Palestine was negatively associated with perceived injustice.

Perceived injustice was positively associated with empathy, group-based anger, group efficacy, and boycott behavior. Among the variables, the strongest associations with boycott behavior were observed for group-based anger and group efficacy, followed by attribution of responsibility to Israel and empathy.

Path Analysis

The proposed structural model was tested using path analysis. Model fit indices indicated acceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2/df = 2.30$, GFI = 1.00, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .07, and SRMR = .03, consistent with recommended thresholds for structural equation modeling (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Direct effects

Standardized path coefficients are presented in Table 2. Identification with Muslim identity had a significant and positive direct effect on attribution of responsibility to Israel (standardized $\beta = .42$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.41, .71]). It also directly predicted empathy toward Palestinians ($\beta = .25$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.21, .53]), group-based anger ($\beta = .30$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.29, .60]), and group efficacy ($\beta = .34$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.37, .71]). Importantly, identification with Muslim identity retained a significant direct association with boycott behavior even after controlling for all other variables in the model ($\beta = .21$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.20, .57]). However, its direct associations with attribution of responsibility to Palestine ($\beta = .07$, $SE = .11$, $p > .05$, 95% CI [−.09, .36]) and perceived injustice ($\beta = -.03$, $SE = .08$, $p > .05$, 95% CI [−.21, .11]) were not statistically significant.

Attribution of responsibility to Israel directly predicted perceived injustice ($\beta = .42$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.31, .55]), empathy ($\beta = .33$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.23, .49]), and group-based anger ($\beta = .40$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.32, .57]). It also demonstrated a significant direct association with boycott behavior ($\beta = .22$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.17, .45]).

Attribution of responsibility to Palestine negatively predicted perceived injustice ($\beta = -.31$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [−.32, −.16]) and had a small but significant negative direct association with boycott behavior ($\beta = -.09$, $SE = .04$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [−.17, −.01]). It also positively predicted empathy at a modest level ($\beta = .11$, $SE = .04$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [.01, .17]).

Perceived injustice significantly predicted boycott behavior ($\beta = .15$, $SE = .06$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [.04, .27]), empathy ($\beta = .17$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [.06, .31]), and group-based anger ($\beta = .12$, $SE = .06$, $p <$

.05, 95% CI [.01, .24]). However, its direct effects on group efficacy were not statistically significant.

Empathy toward Palestinians directly predicted group efficacy (β = .20, *SE* = .07, p < .001, 95% CI [.09, .34]) and boycott behavior (β = .14, *SE* = .07, p < .01, 95% CI [.04, .30]). Similarly, group-based anger directly predicted group efficacy (β = .31, *SE* = .07, p < .001, 95% CI [.20, .46]) and boycott behavior (β = .17, *SE* = .07, p < .01, 95% CI [.07, .35]). Finally, group efficacy demonstrated a robust direct association with boycott behavior (β = .26, *SE* = .06, p < .001, 95% CI [.17, .41]).

perceived injustice was also significant (β = .02, *SE* = .02, p < .05, 95% CI [.00, .07]).

Additional serial mediation pathways involving empathy were significant. Muslim identity was indirectly associated with boycott behavior through attribution to Israel and empathy, subsequently linked to group efficacy (β = .01, *SE* = .01, p < .01, 95% CI [.01, .04]). A parallel pathway through attribution to Israel and empathy directly to boycott behavior was also significant (β = .03, *SE* = .02, p < .01, 95% CI [.01, .09]).

Table 2. Direct effects in the path model

	β	*SE*	*Boot LLCI*	*Boot ULCI*
Muslim Identification → Israel Responsibility Attribution	.42***	.08	.41	.71
Muslim Identification → Palestinian Responsibility Attribution	.07	.11	-.09	.36
Muslim Identification → Perceived Injustice	-.03	.08	-.21	.11
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice	.42***	.06	.31	.55
Palestinian Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice	-.31***	.04	-.32	-.16
Muslim Identification → Empathy toward Palestinians	.25***	.08	.21	.53
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Empathy toward Palestinians	.33***	.07	.23	.49
Palestinian Responsibility Attribution → Empathy toward Palestinians	.11*	.04	.01	.17
Perceived Injustice → Empathy toward Palestinians	.17**	.06	.06	.31
Muslim Identification → Group-Based Anger	.30***	.08	.29	.60
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Group-Based Anger	.40***	.06	.32	.57
Perceived Injustice → Group-Based Anger	.12*	.06	.01	.24
Muslim Identification → Group Efficacy	.34***	.09	.37	.71
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Group Efficacy	-.04	.07	-.15	.14
Palestinian Responsibility Attribution → Group Efficacy	.04	.04	-.05	.12
Perceived Injustice → Group Efficacy	-.06	.06	-.19	.05
Empathy toward Palestinians → Group Efficacy	.20***	.07	.09	.34
Group-Based Anger → Group Efficacy	.31***	.07	.20	.46
Muslim Identification → Boycott Behavior	.21***	.09	.20	.57
Perceived Injustice → Boycott Behavior	.15*	.06	.04	.27
Empathy toward Palestinians → Boycott Behavior	.14**	.07	.04	.30
Group-Based Anger → Boycott Behavior	.17**	.07	.07	.35
Group Efficacy → Boycott Behavior	.26***	.06	.17	.41

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Indirect effects

Indirect effects are reported in Table 3. The findings indicate the presence of multiple indirect pathways involving both parallel and serial mediation structures. Examination of indirect associations between identification with Muslim identity and boycott behavior revealed significant serial mediation pathways involving responsibility attribution and perceived injustice. Specifically, Muslim identity was indirectly associated with boycott behavior through attribution of responsibility to Israel and perceived injustice, subsequently linked to group efficacy (β = .01, *SE* = .01, p < .05, 95% CI [.00, .02]). A shorter serial pathway from Muslim identity to boycott behavior via attribution to Israel and

A particularly strong indirect association was observed through the pathway involving attribution to Israel and group-based anger (β = .09, *SE* = .05, p < .001, 95% CI [.08, .26]).

When examining indirect associations originating from attribution of responsibility to Israel, several significant serial mediation pathways emerged. Attribution to Israel was indirectly associated with boycott behavior through perceived injustice, empathy, and group efficacy (β = .03, *SE* = .03, p < .05, 95% CI [.01, .12]), as well as through perceived injustice and empathy (β = .02, *SE* = .01, p < .01, 95% CI [.01, .07]). Serial pathways involving perceived injustice and group-based anger (β = .09, *SE* = .04, p < .001, 95% CI [.08, .24]) and extended pathways incorporating group efficacy (β = .05, *SE*

= .04, p < .01, 95% CI [.02, .16]) were also significant. Parallel mediation via group-based anger (β = .02, SE = .01, p < .05, 95% CI [.00, .04]) and via group efficacy (β = .05, SE = .03, p < .05, 95% CI [.01, .11]) was observed.

Perceived injustice demonstrated significant indirect associations with boycott behavior through empathy and group efficacy in serial form (β = .03, SE = .01, p < .01, 95% CI [.02, .07]). A parallel pathway via empathy alone was also significant (β = .07, SE = .03, p < .01, 95% CI [.03, .16]). Similarly, perceived injustice was indirectly linked to boycott behavior through group-based anger and group efficacy in serial configuration (β = .01, SE = .01, p < .05, 95% CI [.00, .02]), and through anger alone in parallel form (β = .02, SE = .02, p < .05, 95% CI [.00, .06]).

Finally, attribution of responsibility to Palestine was indirectly associated with boycott behavior through group efficacy (β = .05, SE = .02, p < .01, 95% CI [.02, .11]). Likewise, empathy was indirectly associated with boycott behavior via group efficacy (β = .08, SE = .03, p < .01, 95% CI [.04, .15]).

Discussion

The present study examined boycott behavior in response to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict by integrating insights from political consumerism with SIMCA. Specifically, the findings suggest that boycott participation among individuals in Türkiye reflects a theoretically informed pattern of associations linking social identity, responsibility attribution, perceived injustice, group-based emotions (particularly anger and empathy), and efficacy beliefs. Although boycott behavior may appear as an individual market decision, the findings support the view that it is embedded within broader collective meaning-making processes. Recent international research on Palestine solidarity movements similarly suggests that third-party collective actions are associated with combinations of moral concern, solidarity beliefs, emotional reactions, and efficacy evaluations (Acar et al., 2024; Schreiber et al., 2026). Accordingly, the present findings suggest that boycott participation in conflict contexts is associated not only with perceived injustice but also with broader identity-based and emotional interpretations of collective action.

Table 3. Indirect effects on boycott behavior

	β	*SE*	*BootLLCI*	*Boot-ULCI*
Muslim Identification → Israel Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.01*	.01	.00	.02
Muslim Identification → Israel Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice → Boycott	.02*	.02	.00	.07
Muslim Identification → Israel Responsibility Attribution → Empathy toward Palestinians → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.01**	.01	.01	.04
Muslim Identification → Israel Responsibility Attribution → Empathy toward Palestinians → Boycott	.03**	.02	.01	.09
Muslim Identification → Israel Responsibility Attribution → Group-Based Anger → Boycott	.09***	.05	.08	.26
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice → Empathy toward Palestinians → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.03*	.03	.01	.12
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice → Empathy toward Palestinians → Boycott	.02**	.01	.01	.07
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice → Group-Based Anger → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.05**	.04	.02	.16
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Perceived Injustice → Group-Based Anger → Boycott	.09***	.04	.08	.24
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Group-Based Anger → Boycott	.02*	.01	.00	.04
Israel Responsibility Attribution → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.05*	.03	.01	.11
Perceived Injustice → Empathy toward Palestinians → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.03**	.01	.02	.07
Perceived Injustice → Empathy toward Palestinians → Boycott	.07**	.03	.03	.16
Perceived Injustice → Group-Based Anger → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.01*	.01	.00	.02
Perceived Injustice → Group-Based Anger → Boycott	.02*	.02	.00	.06
Palestinian Responsibility Attribution → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.05**	.02	.02	.11
Empathy toward Palestinians → Group Efficacy → Boycott	.08**	.03	.04	.15

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

These findings should be interpreted as reflecting theoretically informed patterns of association rather than a definitive multi-stage or temporally ordered psychological process.

At the level of identity, the association between identification with Muslim identity and boycott behavior aligns with core propositions of the social identity approach to collective action. This perspective suggests that individuals interpret social and political events through meaningful group memberships, which may become associated with collective action tendencies when a shared sense of "we" emerges (Özkan et al., 2022; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Research on religious identity similarly emphasizes that such identities extend beyond private belief and may structure collective solidarity practices (Canetti et al., 2017; Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Studies on boycott behavior likewise indicate that religious belonging and value orientations may influence engagement in political consumerism (Basir et al., 2024; Herman & Salehudin, 2026). From this perspective, the present findings suggest that, in the Turkish context, boycott participation may function as a normative expression of identity and solidarity. This interpretation is also consistent with research indicating that broader belief systems and ideological worldviews may be associated with protest intentions and collective engagement following large-scale societal crises (Ozkan, 2024).

A central contribution of the present study lies in positioning responsibility attribution as a key cognitive factor associated with perceived injustice. This perspective is consistent with research suggesting that psychological responses in conflict contexts are often associated less with the mere occurrence of conflict events than with judgments regarding responsibility for harm (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Doosje & Branscombe, 2003). Conflict narratives frequently provide interpretive frameworks concerning the intentions and actions of opposing parties, thereby contributing to responsibility attributions and justice-related evaluations (Canetti et al., 2017; Çelebi et al., 2014). Accordingly, the present findings suggest that boycott behavior is associated not only with perceptions of injustice but also with how injustice is cognitively interpreted through particular perpetrator narratives.

The finding that perceived injustice was associated with both anger and empathy highlights the importance of conceptualizing emotions as a multidimensional motivational system rather than as a single affective response. Appraisal-based theories emphasize that injustice perceptions are closely associated with approach-oriented emotions such as anger, which are often linked to action-relevant motivational tendencies (Smith et al., 2008). Within the SIMCA literature, anger is similarly discussed in relation to construing collective disadvantage as legitimate grounds for protest (van Zomeren et al., 2008, 2012). Empathy, in contrast, has been associated primarily with third-party solidarity, emotional closeness to the victim group, and heightened moral sensitivity (Schreiber et al., 2026; Uluğ, 2023). The simultaneous presence of empathy and anger in the present findings suggests that boycott behavior may reflect both perpetrator-focused sanctioning motives and victim-focused solidarity motivations (Hino, 2023; Saab et al., 2015).

The relationship between group efficacy and boycott behavior further supports SIMCA-based discussions regarding the conditions under which emotional responses are associated with collective action participation (van Zomeren et al., 2010, 2012). In the political consumerism literature, efficacy is often framed in terms of whether individual acts of consumption refusal are perceived as contributing to meaningful collective outcomes (John & Klein, 2003; Kam & Deichert, 2020). Because boycott participation may require sustained behavioral commitment, individuals may be more willing to participate when they believe their actions contribute to a broader collective effort. Accordingly, the observed association between group efficacy and boycott behavior aligns with the view that beliefs regarding collective capacity may accompany emotional reactions and support continued boycott engagement (Tekşam, 2023; Uysal,

2025; van Zomeren et al., 2010). Recent discussions on Palestine solidarity protests similarly suggest that efficacy beliefs may remain psychologically important even when individuals are uncertain about the immediate political effectiveness of collective action (Acar et al., 2024).

From a theoretical standpoint, the present study contributes to the literature by integrating political consumerism with SIMCA while extending the model through conflict-related cognitive processes. Later developments of SIMCA have expanded the original identity–injustice–efficacy framework by incorporating processes such as moralization, normative justification, and perceived action legitimacy (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; van Zomeren et al., 2018). By positioning responsibility attribution at an earlier stage of the model, the present study emphasizes that justice evaluations are interpreted through cognitive judgments regarding the identity of the perceived perpetrator. Within this framework, the legitimacy of boycott behavior may be associated not only with emotional responses but also with normative justifications linked to responsibility attribution (Doosje & Branscombe, 2003; Hino, 2023).

A second contribution concerns the examination of these processes within a third-party sample. Third-party solidarity raises important questions regarding how the boundaries of the collective "we" are constructed and extended beyond direct experience or national identity (Subašić et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2020). The prominence of religious identity in the present findings suggests that solidarity may also be organized around a broader religious superordinate identity (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). This interpretation is consistent with recent allyship research emphasizing that solidarity actions in violent intergroup conflicts may take different forms depending on the actor, target group, and perceived moral obligations involved in the conflict context (Uluğ et al., 2026). From this perspective, boycott behavior—situated at the intersection of politics and markets—may be understood simultaneously as a form of collective action and a symbolic practice of solidarity (Saab et al., 2015; Schreiber et al., 2026). Accordingly, boycott participation may function not only as a sanctioning response toward particular actors but also as a public expression of social identity and solidarity.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design prevents conclusions regarding causal or temporal relationships among variables. Although the proposed model is theoretically grounded, the findings reflect patterns of association rather than a definitive multi-stage process. Mediation analyses and path coefficients derived from cross-sectional observational data remain vulnerable to omitted variable bias, alternative model specifications, and other inferential limitations. Accordingly, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence of causal pathways or temporal ordering. Longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to examine the directionality of relationships among identity, responsibility attribution, emotional responses, and boycott behavior more rigorously.

Second, the model did not include several predictors emphasized in collective action research, including moral convictions, social norms, and ideological orientations. The omission of these variables raises the possibility of unmeasured confounding and limits the comprehensiveness of the model. Third, the study relied on self-report measures, which may introduce biases such as social desirability and common method variance, particularly in politically and morally sensitive contexts such as boycott behavior. Fourth, participants were recruited through non-probability convenience and snowball sampling via digital distribution. Consequently, the sample cannot be considered representative of the broader population, limiting generalizability.

Fifth, some constructs, including perceived injustice and outgroup empathy, were measured using two-item scales. The relatively low to moderate inter-item correlations suggest limited internal consistency, and findings involving these variables should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Finally,

the study was conducted in Türkiye, where the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is highly salient and religious identity plays a prominent role in shaping public responses. This context may strengthen identity-based motivations and emotional engagement, limiting generalizability to other sociopolitical settings.

Future research may address these limitations by employing longitudinal or experimental designs, incorporating additional predictors such as moral conviction and social norms, examining alternative identity bases (e.g., national or ideological identity), and investigating how changing social norms are associated with boycott participation and solidarity-related behaviors over time (Eraslan & Cakal, 2026).

Conclusion

This study conceptualized boycott behavior as a form of collective action rather than merely a consumer choice. The findings suggest a pattern of associations linking social identity, responsibility attribution, perceived injustice, group-based emotions, and efficacy beliefs with boycott participation in Türkiye. In particular, identification with Muslim identity was associated with responsibility attribution patterns, perceptions of injustice, and emotional responses linked to boycott tendencies. These findings highlight that boycott behavior may function as a symbolic, identity-driven practice through which individuals express moral positioning, solidarity with distant others, and beliefs regarding collective agency. By integrating political consumerism with collective action theory, the study illustrates how everyday consumer behaviors may become associated with engagement in morally charged international conflicts.

Declarations

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval: This study was approved by the Muş Alparslan University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (03.12.2025–222368), and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Informed Consent: All participants were informed about the purpose of the study on the first page of the online survey. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and no financial incentive was provided. Electronic informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the questionnaire.

Data Availability: The data analyzed in this study were collected through an anonymous online survey from participants residing in Türkiye. Due to ethical and privacy considerations, the dataset is not publicly available. The data may be made available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical restrictions.

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Appendix 1

Responsibility Attribution Scale

		Attribution to Israel	Attribution to Palestine
1.	İsrail askeri güçleri (İsrail Savunma Kuvvetleri) 7 Ekim sonrasında yaşanan sivil kayıplardan sorumludur.	.81	—
2.	Filistin-İsrail çatışmasının tırmanmasının nedeni İsrail'in izlediği saldırgan politikalarıdır.	.80	—
3.	Filistin-İsrail çatışmasının ana sorumlusu İsrail Devletidir.	.70	—
4.	Filistinli gruplar saldırgan eylemleriyle çatışmanın tırmanmasına neden olmuştur.	—	.81
5.	Filistinli silahlı gruplar (Hamas) 7 Ekim sonrasında yaşanan sivil kayıplardan sorumludur.	—	.76
6.	İsrail-Filistin çatışması Filistin yönetiminin aldığı yanlış kararlar sonucu ortaya çıkmıştır.	—	.64
Eigenvalues		1.83	1.06
Variance Explained by Factors		29.98	27.43
Total Variance Explained		29.98	57.41
Cronbach's α		.81	.78

Appendix 2

Boycott Behavior Scale

		Factor Loading
1.	Filistinlilerle dayanışmanın bir gereği olarak İsrail menşeli ürünleri almam.	.93
2.	Alışveriş yapmadan önce, markanın İsrail'e askeri/ekonomik destek verip vermediğini araştırırım.	.91
3.	İsrail'i desteklediği bilinen ürünleri bilinçli olarak satın almaktan kaçınırım.	.89
4.	İsrail'in eylemlerini protesto etmek amacıyla büyük uluslararası markaları (örneğin kafe, fast food) boykot ederim.	.88
5.	Giyim, teknoloji veya uzun ömürlü tüketim malları gibi daha yüksek maliyetli alanlarda bile boykot kararımı sürdürürüm.	.87
6.	Sosyal medyada veya çevremde, İsrail'i destekleyen şirketleri boykot etmeleri için insanları teşvik ederim.	.86
7.	Boykot eyleminin, İsrail'in politikaları ve Filistin sorununa müdahil olan dış güçlerin tutumu üzerindeki baskıyı artırmanın etkili bir yolu olduğuna inanırım.	.83
Eigenvalues		5.44
Total Variance Explained		77.7
Cronbach's α		.96