

Attitudes of Algerian University Students Toward Content Calling for an Economic Boycott of Products Supporting Israel on Social Media Platforms, and Its Relationship With Purchasing Behavior

A Field Study of a Sample of Facebook Users

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Abstract

This study examines the attitudes of Algerian university students toward Facebook content that calls for an economic boycott of products and brands presented as supporting Israel, and it measures the relationship between exposure to that content and boycott-supportive purchasing behavior. The study follows a descriptive-analytical design. Data were collected by an online questionnaire from a sample of 102 students who use Facebook. The instrument is organized into four sections: screening questions and background characteristics, exposure and interaction, attitudes toward boycott content, and the reflection of that content in purchasing behavior. Reliability was high. Cronbach's alpha reached .903 for the attitude scale and .897 for the purchasing-behavior scale. The overall mean was 3.776 out of five for attitudes and 3.575 for purchasing behavior, which indicates favorable attitudes and a relatively high level of boycott-supportive purchasing behavior. Exposure was positively and significantly associated with purchasing behavior ($r = .503, p < .001$). The association between attitudes and purchasing behavior was stronger ($r = .595, p < .001$). A regression model showed that exposure and attitudes together accounted for 41 percent of the variance in purchasing behavior. The study concludes that Facebook does more than circulate lists of products. It also helps construct the moral meaning of the boycott, strengthens a sense of responsibility, and supplies a social and symbolic pressure that supports the passage from attitude to purchasing action.

Keywords: economic boycott; Facebook; social media platforms; attitudes; purchasing behavior; Algerian students

Introduction

In digital environments, consumer decisions reach beyond the familiar considerations of price, quality, and utility. They are increasingly bound up with moral values, political positions, and social belonging. The economic boycott has become one form of noninstitutional civic protest: consumers use their purchasing power to reward or penalize organizations according to how they judge those organizations' positions and conduct. In this

kind of political consumerism, the commodity is no longer a purely economic object. It carries symbolic and moral meaning, and the refusal to buy is at once a statement of protest and an exercise of pressure.

Social media platforms have changed boycott campaigns in speed, reach, and coordination. Calls for a boycott once depended mainly on political organizations, trade unions, and printed statements. Users can now produce lists, images, and videos and put them into circulation; they can discuss alternatives, correct information, and steer others toward a particular pattern of consumption. The properties of identity, sharing, conversation, groups, and reputation on digital platforms provide a communicative structure that can turn individual positions into collective action that is visible and capable of expanding (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 243).

Calls to boycott products and brands presented as supporting Israel have gained a marked presence in Arab digital space, and in Algerian digital space in particular, especially after the escalation of events in Gaza. Facebook has become a central arena for circulating the names of targeted brands, publicizing local alternatives, exchanging economic and humanitarian arguments, and exerting social pressure on consumers. Wide circulation, however, does not by itself turn this content into purchasing behavior. Trust in the information, the availability of alternatives, prior habits, price sensitivity, and the perceived efficacy of the boycott may all help explain the gap between stated support and actual practice.

University students are a particularly important group for the study of this phenomenon. They use digital platforms heavily, they can produce content and republish it, and they take part in public issues. They are also a consumer group whose purchasing habits are still being formed at a consequential stage of age and education. Analyzing their attitudes therefore clarifies the communicative role of Facebook in building awareness of the boycott, and it makes it possible to measure how far that awareness passes into practical steps: checking a product's origin, refraining from purchase, and choosing alternatives.

The present study starts from the need to connect three related levels: exposure to the content and interaction with it; cognitive and affective attitudes toward it; and purchasing behavior. The study does not stop at measuring support for the boycott. It tests the relationship between the intensity of exposure and practice, and it examines the capacity of attitudes to account for behavior, while taking some of the respondents' demographic characteristics into account.

I. Methodological Framework

1. Research Problem

Everyday observation of digital space shows that boycott campaigns attract wide circulation and substantial interaction. Digital indicators such as likes, shares, and comments do not, on their own, reveal how much the purchasing decision actually changes. A user may express a favorable attitude toward the boycott without in fact refraining from the product. The density and repetition of the content may consolidate the attitude or, conversely, produce satiation and doubt when lists and information conflict. The scientific problem is to determine whether content that calls for a boycott on Facebook does more than raise awareness and offer

a symbolic expression, and whether it influences the actual purchasing decisions of Algerian students.

The principal research problem is therefore stated as follows: What is the nature of Algerian students' attitudes toward content calling for an economic boycott of products supporting Israel on Facebook, and what relationship do those attitudes have with the students' purchasing behavior?

2. Research Questions

- What is the level of Algerian students' exposure to content calling for an economic boycott on Facebook, and how far do they interact with it?
- What is the nature of students' attitudes toward the information, arguments, and values carried by boycott content?
- To what extent is this content reflected in checking products, refraining from purchase, and choosing alternatives?
- Is there a statistically significant relationship between exposure to boycott content and boycott-supportive purchasing behavior?
- Do attitudes toward boycott content help explain purchasing behavior?
- Do attitudes or purchasing behavior differ by gender, age, level of study, or field of specialization?

3. Hypotheses

- Algerian students hold favorable attitudes toward content calling for an economic boycott of products supporting Israel.
- There is a positive, statistically significant relationship between exposure to boycott content on Facebook and boycott-supportive purchasing behavior.
- Boycott content strengthens the actual decision to refrain from purchasing the targeted products.
- Students' attitudes or purchasing behavior differ according to certain demographic variables.

4. Objectives

- To measure the level of exposure to, and interaction with, boycott content on Facebook among Algerian students.
- To identify the nature of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward boycott content.
- To estimate how far the content is reflected in the stages of the purchasing decision, particularly checking, refraining, substitution, and continuation.
- To test the relationships among exposure, attitudes, and purchasing behavior.
- To detect possible differences according to demographic characteristics.
- To propose communicative recommendations that raise the accuracy and effectiveness of boycott content while protecting its credibility.

5. Significance of the Study

The theoretical significance of the study lies in bringing together the literatures on digital communication, attitudes, consumer behavior, and political consumerism. The study also moves the inquiry from the question of how widely the call to boycott spreads to the

question of its communicative and behavioral effect. Its applied significance lies in giving researchers, content producers, and civic actors indicators of the elements that support the audience's passage from exposure to conviction and then to behavior, while bringing out the centrality of trust, perceived efficacy, the availability of alternatives, and the continuity of messages.

6. Operational Definitions

6.1. Attitudes

An attitude is a learned psychological predisposition that involves a positive or negative evaluation of a given object and comprises cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, pp. 1–22). Operationally, it is the total score obtained by the respondent on the six statements concerning the usefulness of the content, awareness, persuasion, trust, solidarity, and support for continued publication.

6.2. Content Calling for an Economic Boycott

In this study, the term refers to the posts, images, videos, lists, and messages circulating on Facebook that call on users to refrain from buying products or brands presented as supporting Israel, that propose alternatives to them, or that offer economic and humanitarian arguments for the boycott.

6.3. Boycott-Supportive Purchasing Behavior

This is the set of responses tied to the purchasing decision that express commitment to the boycott. They include checking the product or the company before buying, refraining from the purchase of some products, replacing them with alternatives, refusing promotional offers, and the intention to continue.

6.4. Exposure and Interaction

Exposure refers to the rate at which boycott content is seen and to the following of pages or groups that publish it. Interaction refers to liking, commenting, or sharing. The exposure index used in the study is the mean of three scores: viewing, following, and interaction.

7. Theoretical Approach

The study draws on the theory of planned behavior, which holds that behavior is ordinarily preceded by a behavioral intention formed from the attitude toward the act, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). In the case of a boycott, the readiness to refrain from buying is shaped by how far the person is convinced of the boycott's legitimacy and usefulness, by the pressure or endorsement coming from the reference group, and by the person's sense of being able to carry the decision through when alternatives are available and the cost is limited. The digital setting adds an important communicative element. Content can raise knowledge of brands, reinforce social pressure, and increase the feeling that collective action is efficacious.

The study also relies on a view of attitudes as a multicomponent structure. The content supplies knowledge about products and companies, arouses feelings of solidarity or anger, and proposes a practical response, which is the boycott. The more consistent the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components are, the more likely the attitude is to be strong and to influence behavior. The study therefore expects attitudes to play a direct part in explaining purchasing behavior, alongside the effect of exposure itself.

8. Method and Procedures

The study adopted the descriptive-analytical method, because it is the most suitable for recording the characteristics of the phenomenon and measuring the relationships among its variables without experimental intervention. A sample survey was conducted by means of an online questionnaire addressed to Algerian students who use Facebook. The questionnaire link was posted on university and student pages and groups. The sample is therefore a convenience/purposive sample, limited to those who met the conditions of participation: student status, use of Facebook, and prior exposure to boycott content.

9. Population and Sample

The study population consists of students enrolled in Algerian higher-education institutions who use Facebook. Because the population is large and no comprehensive sampling frame of users was available, the study relied on a convenience sample reached through online distribution. The sample retained for analysis comprised 102 respondents who met the screening conditions. This procedure does not allow a strict probabilistic generalization to all Algerian students, but it does provide interpretive indicators appropriate to the exploratory and descriptive character of the study.

10. Data-Collection Instrument

The final questionnaire contained 22 questions distributed across four sections. The first section covered screening questions and background data: gender, age, level of study, and field of specialization. The second measured the rate of viewing, the sources of the content, the following of pages, and interaction. The third contained six statements measuring attitudes, and the fourth contained five statements measuring purchasing behavior. A five-point Likert scale was used, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

11. Validity and Reliability

The high internal consistency reported in the results indicates that the statements measure two clearly related constructs: attitudes and purchasing behavior. A value of .70 was adopted as the minimum acceptable threshold for Cronbach's alpha.

12. Statistical Procedures

- Frequencies and percentages, to describe the characteristics of the sample and the patterns of exposure.
- The arithmetic mean and the standard deviation, to rank the attitude and behavior statements.
- Cronbach's alpha, to estimate reliability.
- A one-sample *t* test, comparing each mean with the neutral value of 3.
- Pearson's correlation coefficient, to test the relationships among exposure, attitudes, and behavior.
- Multiple linear regression, to estimate the capacity of exposure and attitudes to explain purchasing behavior.
- An independent-samples *t* test and one-way analysis of variance, to test demographic differences at a significance level of .05.

II. Theoretical Framework

1. The Economic Boycott as Consumer and Political Behavior

A consumer boycott is defined as an organized or voluntary refusal to purchase a product or service, undertaken in order to express objection or to pressure the targeted party into changing its conduct. The definition joins two dimensions. One is instrumental: it seeks to inflict a loss or to bring about a change. The other is expressive: it allows the consumer to declare a moral position and a political identity. The literature has shown that participation is not determined by conviction in the demand alone. The individual also weighs the efficacy of the act against its costs, such as the difficulty of obtaining a substitute or the strength of attachment to the brand (Klein et al., 2004, pp. 92–96).

A boycott places the individual before a collective-action dilemma. Its success requires a large number of participants, yet each person may believe that a solitary refusal will make no difference. Expectations about the participation of others, and the perception of collective efficacy, therefore play an important part in the decision (Sen et al., 2001, pp. 399–405). Digital platforms reduce this dilemma to some degree by displaying the scale of participation, repeating the message, and supplying social cues—hashtags, comments, and shares—that make the boycott more present and more perceptible.

2. Motives for Participation in a Boycott, and What Inhibits It

The motives for a boycott range from the wish to change the organization's conduct, to punishing it, to expressing anger, to maintaining a positive moral self-image. Klein et al. (2004, pp. 92–96) showed that the perceived seriousness of the conduct attributed to the organization, the perceived efficacy of the boycott, and the ability to bear its cost are central to participation. Braunsberger and Buckler (2011, pp. 96–102) likewise found a strong instrumental motive, concerned with forcing the target to change its conduct, alongside expressive and punitive motives.

Participation may recede, by contrast, because alternatives are lacking, because the consumer is accustomed to the product, because of price sensitivity, because the lists are not trusted, or because the efficacy of the boycott is doubted. Hoffmann and Müller (2009, pp. 239–243) note that a prior relationship with the brand can make the boycott decision more complicated. More recent work shows that a boycott needs renewed messages and incentives if it is to last, because the initial emotional momentum may decline unless it is supported by practical justifications and a continuing sense of efficacy (Lasarov et al., 2023, pp. 1129–1136).

3. Characteristics of Digital Content That Calls for a Boycott

Digital boycott content is highly shareable. It can be updated quickly, it takes many forms, and it allows direct interaction. It may appear as a short list of brands, as a video explaining a company's relationship with a political actor, as a post that proposes alternatives, or as a user's account of replacing a product. That variety makes it possible to combine information, argument, emotion, and a direct call to act.

This communicative strength is accompanied by a cognitive difficulty concerning credibility. Because content is easy to produce, undocumented information and contradictory lists can circulate, and that weakens trust and confuses the decision. The effectiveness of the content therefore depends not only on its volume. It also depends on clear criteria for

including a brand, on documented sources, on updated lists, on the separation of confirmed information from allegation, and on realistic alternatives that fit the consumer's purchasing power.

4. Facebook as a Space of Mobilization and Political Consumerism

Social media are defined as internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Facebook is distinctive in combining the page, the group, the personal network, and live broadcasting, so that a message can move between the public sphere and close networks of trust. Content that arrives through friends or university groups is more likely to be received as a social recommendation than as an announcement from an unknown source. In the Algerian university setting, Abadi and Djaballah (2020, p. 115) found that Facebook use is associated with shifts in some of the values and behaviors of students.

The honeycomb model holds that a user's identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups constitute the basic functions of social platforms (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 243). These functions appear together in boycott campaigns. Groups form around the issue, lists circulate, alternatives are discussed, and some publishers acquire a reputation as trusted sources, while repeated interaction creates the sense that the position is widespread.

5. Attitudes: Components, Formation, and Change

An attitude comprises a cognitive component, concerned with beliefs and information; an affective component, concerned with feelings; and a behavioral component, which reflects readiness to act. In boycott content, the cognitive component appears in the recognition of products and of economic arguments. The affective component appears in solidarity, anger, and sympathy. The behavioral component appears in endorsement, refusal to buy, and substitution. Knowledge alone does not necessarily produce behavior. An attitude gains force when its components are consistent and are connected to the person's experience and values (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, pp. 1–22).

Digital content can change an attitude along two routes. A central route rests on evidence, argument, and documentation. A peripheral route relies on the prominence of the source, on repetition, on social endorsement, and on an emotional image. Boycott campaigns are better able to endure when they combine the two. A documented argument builds trust, while social interaction raises motivation and makes the behavior part of a collective identity.

6. Purchasing Behavior and the Stages of the Decision

A purchasing decision ordinarily passes through recognition of a need, search for information, evaluation of alternatives, choice, and post-purchase evaluation. Boycott content can intervene at every stage. It redefines the product as a moral object, supplies information about the brand, offers alternatives, influences the choice, and then encourages the user to share the experience. Algerian studies have shown that social networking sites affect the stages of the decision, particularly the evaluation of alternatives and electronic word of mouth (Chebbah & Saadaoui, 2019, p. 234).

Actual behavior differs from intention. A consumer may endorse the boycott and still return to the product because no alternative is available, because of discounts, or because habit is strong. The present study therefore measured several behavioral indicators rather than

relying on a general question about support. The indicators cover checking, refraining, substitution, resistance to offers, and continuation in the future.

7. The Relationship Among Exposure, Attitude, and Behavior

Models of communicative influence assume that repeated exposure raises knowledge and makes the message easier to recall, but that exposure is not by itself sufficient to change behavior. The shift depends on how the message is interpreted, on trust in it, and on its consistency with values and with social pressure. The theory of planned behavior supports this view: attitude, norms, and perceived control are determinants of intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). The effect of exposure is therefore expected to be partial, and to be accompanied by a stronger effect of the attitudes formed toward the content.

III. Previous Studies

1. Klein et al. (2004)

Jill Gabrielle Klein, N. Craig Smith, and Andrew John, "Why We Boycott: Consumer Motivations for Boycott Participation," *Journal of Marketing*, 68(3), 92–109. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.3.92.34770>

The study by Klein, Smith, and John is a reference point in the explanation of why consumers take part in a boycott. It offered a model that ties the decision to participate to the evaluation of the conduct attributed to the organization, and to the perceived efficacy of the boycott and its costs for the consumer.

The problem of the study was to explain why some consumers join boycotts while others refrain, even when they share a rejection of the targeted organizational conduct. The aim was to build an empirical model of boycott motives and to test the effect, on the intention to participate, of the seriousness of the conduct, perceived efficacy, self-enhancement, and the costs of not buying.

The results showed that the perceived seriousness of the conduct attributed to the organization, the perceived efficacy of the boycott, and self-enhancement are positively related to participation, whereas the costs of the boycott and the difficulty of doing without the product limit participation. The applied implication is that the consumer's sense of the act's usefulness must be raised, alternatives must be provided, and the practical cost of the boycott must be reduced if a moral position is to become behavior.

2. Braunsberger and Buckler (2011)

Karin Braunsberger and Brian Buckler, "What Motivates Consumers to Participate in Boycotts: Lessons from the Ongoing Canadian Seafood Boycott," *Journal of Business Research*, 64(1), 96–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.12.008>

Braunsberger and Buckler examined the motives of participants in the Canadian seafood boycott. They used digital netnography to analyze the comments of participants in a boycott petition published online.

The study started from the relative lack of understanding of boycott motives as participants themselves state them. It sought to uncover the explicit motives for participation and the costs that consumers perceive when they refrain from buying, treating the digital environment as a natural source of data.

The results revealed three prominent motives: the wish to push the target to stop the rejected conduct, anger, and the wish to punish. The study brings out the value of analyzing

digital interactions for an understanding of audience motives. It also implies that boycott campaigns should clarify an achievable objective, protect credibility, and reduce the barriers that prevent people from continuing.

3. Endres and Panagopoulos (2017)

Kyle Endres and Costas Panagopoulos, “Boycotts, Buycotts, and Political Consumerism in America,” *Research & Politics*, 4(4), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017738632>

Endres and Panagopoulos studied boycotting and buycotting—politically motivated purchasing in support of a cause—as two forms of political consumerism in the United States, drawing on two national surveys and a third survey of registered voters.

The problem concerned the prevalence of political consumerism and the political and communicative factors that explain it. The study aimed to bring the measurement of the phenomenon up to date, to test the effect of partisan identity in both its instrumental and its expressive forms, and to explore the link between social media activity and political consumer behavior.

The results showed that boycotting and buycotting are widespread, and that both are associated with activity on social media, political knowledge, interest in politics, and the strength of partisan identity. The study confirms the importance of including communicative and network variables in the explanation of political consumerism, and it calls for these relationships to be tested further in other social and political settings.

4. Cheng et al. (2023)

Zicheng Cheng, Bingbing Zhang, and Homero Gil de Zúñiga, “Antecedents of Political Consumerism: Modeling Online, Social Media and WhatsApp News Use Effects Through Political Expression and Political Discussion,” *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 28(4), 995–1016. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612221075936>

Cheng, Zhang, and Gil de Zúñiga tested the communicative paths that connect the use of news online, on social media, and on WhatsApp with political consumerism. They used a two-wave panel survey and structural equation models.

The problem was that exposure to news does not always explain participation directly. The study tested the mediating role of political expression and of political discussion in turning the use of digital news into boycotting and buycotting.

The results indicated that news consumption, political expression, and discussion contribute to the explanation of political consumerism, and that expression and discussion play an important mediating role. The research implication is that passive use of platforms should be distinguished from active communicative use when the passage from digital exposure to behavior is under study.

5. Boulianne et al. (2024)

Shelley Boulianne, Lauren Copeland, and Karolina Koc-Michalska, “Digital Media and Political Consumerism in the United States, United Kingdom, and France,” *New Media & Society*, 26(4), 2110–2130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221083025>

Boulianne, Copeland, and Koc-Michalska analyzed the relationship between the use of digital media and political consumerism in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, using original survey data from 9,284 respondents.

The study started from the problem that the role of digital media differs with the pattern of use, with age, with the country, and with the type of political consumerism. It compared the effect of searching for political information, talking about politics online, and joining digital social groups on boycotting and on buycotting.

The results showed that all three patterns of use are positively related to participation in political consumerism, with the strength of the relationship varying by age, country, and type of behavior. Joining groups was more prominent in the mobilization of buycotting. The study calls for comparisons across countries and age groups, and for digital-media use not to be treated as a single homogeneous variable.

IV. Presentation and Analysis of the Field Results

1. Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample by Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	44	43.1%
	Female	58	56.9%
Age group	18–20	24	23.5%
	21–23	49	48.0%
	24–26	21	20.6%
	27 and above	8	7.8%
Level of study	Licence	49	48.0%
	Master's	42	41.2%
	Doctorate	7	6.9%
	Other university program	4	3.9%
Field	Medical and health sciences	12	11.8%
	Exact sciences and technology	18	17.6%
	Law and political science	11	10.8%
	Economic, commercial, and management sciences	16	15.7%
	Arts and foreign languages	10	9.8%
	Humanities and social sciences	25	24.5%
	Natural and biological sciences	8	7.8%
	Other	2	2.0%

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

Table 1 shows that women account for 56.9 percent of the sample and men for 43.1 percent, and that the largest age group is 21–23 years, at 48.0 percent. Respondents in the licence and master's stages together make up 89.2 percent, a distribution consistent with the usual audience of university pages. In field of study, the humanities and social sciences come

first, at 24.5 percent, followed by the exact sciences and technology at 17.6 percent, and by economic, commercial, and management sciences at 15.7 percent. This spread provides a reasonable descriptive coverage of different university fields, while the sample remains nonprobabilistic.

2. Level of Exposure, Following, and Interaction

Table 2. Distribution of the Sample by Exposure, Following, and Interaction

Indicator	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Rate of viewing	Very rarely	5	4.9%
	Rarely	10	9.8%
	Sometimes	31	30.4%
	Often	36	35.3%
	Always	20	19.6%
Following pages and groups	Do not follow at all	8	7.8%
	Rarely	15	14.7%
	Sometimes	33	32.4%
	Often	30	29.4%
	Always	16	15.7%
Interaction with the content	Never	10	9.8%
	Rarely	21	20.6%
	Sometimes	35	34.3%
	Often	25	24.5%
	Always	11	10.8%

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

The results show that 54.9 percent of the respondents see boycott content often or always, whereas viewing that is rare or very rare does not exceed 14.7 percent. In addition, 45.1 percent follow boycott pages or groups often or always. Visible interaction is lower: 35.3 percent interact often or always, which is less than the proportion who view the content. There is therefore an audience that follows without always marking its presence by comment or sharing. The difference makes it necessary to distinguish passive exposure from active interaction when influence is interpreted.

3. Sources Through Which Boycott Content Arrives

Table 3. Sources Through Which Boycott Content Reaches Respondents (Multiple Response)

Source	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
Pages and groups specializing in the boycott	71	69.6%
Friends' posts	64	62.7%

Source	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
University and student pages or groups	60	58.8%
News and media pages	50	49.0%
Influencers and content creators	32	31.4%
Sponsored advertisements	26	25.5%
Another source	5	4.9%

Source. Prepared by the author. Percentages sum to more than 100 percent because more than one answer could be selected.

Pages and groups specializing in the boycott are the leading source of access, at 69.6 percent, followed by friends' posts at 62.7 percent and by university and student pages at 58.8 percent. The content therefore travels along two complementary paths: a specialized path led by campaign pages, and a network path built on personal relationships and university groups. The second path may be more able to lend the message social legitimacy, because the recipient encounters it inside a network whose members are known, or with whom the recipient shares a student identity.

4. Reliability of the Instrument

Table 4. Reliability Coefficients for the Questionnaire Sections

Section	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Assessment
Attitudes toward boycott content	6	.903	Very high
Reflection of the content in purchasing behavior	5	.897	High
Full instrument (both Likert sections)	11	.918	Very high

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

The alpha coefficients exceed the acceptable threshold of .70 by a clear margin: .903 for attitudes, .897 for purchasing behavior, and .918 for the instrument as a whole. There is therefore strong internal consistency among the items of each section, and combining them into a composite mean is appropriate for the subsequent analysis. This reliability also reduces the chance that the results are an artifact of random variation in the wording of the items.

5. Students' Attitudes Toward Boycott Content

Table 5. Students' Attitudes Toward Boycott Content

Item	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	M	SD
Q12	Identifying the targeted products and brands	39 (38.2%)	24 (23.5%)	27 (26.5%)	9 (8.8%)	3 (2.9%)	3.85	1.12

Item	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q13	Raising awareness of the economic effects	36 (35.3%)	28 (27.5%)	20 (19.6%)	16 (15.7%)	2 (2.0%)	3.78	1.15
Q14	Being convinced by the arguments and evidence	29 (28.4%)	32 (31.4%)	27 (26.5%)	11 (10.8%)	3 (2.9%)	3.72	1.08
Q15	Trust in the information and product lists	19 (18.6%)	33 (32.4%)	23 (22.5%)	21 (20.6%)	6 (5.9%)	3.37	1.18
Q16	Strengthening solidarity and responsibility	41 (40.2%)	35 (34.3%)	14 (13.7%)	7 (6.9%)	5 (4.9%)	3.98	1.13
Q17	Supporting continued publication of the content	41 (40.2%)	30 (29.4%)	19 (18.6%)	9 (8.8%)	3 (2.9%)	3.95	1.10

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output. Response entries are frequencies, with percentages in parentheses.

The overall mean for the attitude section was 3.776, above the neutral point. The statement on strengthening solidarity and responsibility ranked first, with a mean of 3.98, followed by support for continued publication, with a mean of 3.95, and by identification of the targeted products, with a mean of 3.85. The force of the content is therefore not confined to information. It is also tied to the content's affective and symbolic function. Trust in the lists, by contrast, recorded the lowest mean, 3.37. Respondents are more reserved about the accuracy of some of the information than about their principled support for the boycott.

6. The Reflection of Boycott Content in Purchasing Behavior

Table 6. The Reflection of Boycott Content in Purchasing Behavior

Item	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q18	Checking the product or company before buying	31 (30.4%)	36 (35.3%)	18 (17.6%)	12 (11.8%)	5 (4.9%)	3.75	1.16
Q19	Actually refraining from buying some products	29 (28.4%)	22 (21.6%)	29 (28.4%)	18 (17.6%)	4 (3.9%)	3.53	1.19
Q20	Replacing products with Algerian or other alternatives	23 (22.5%)	27 (26.5%)	23 (22.5%)	22 (21.6%)	7 (6.9%)	3.36	1.24

Item	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q21	Refusing the products even when discounted	22 (21.6%)	30 (29.4%)	21 (20.6%)	20 (19.6%)	9 (8.8%)	3.35	1.26
Q22	Intending to continue the boycott in the future	44 (43.1%)	23 (22.5%)	21 (20.6%)	7 (6.9%)	7 (6.9%)	3.88	1.24

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output. Response entries are frequencies, with percentages in parentheses.

The overall mean for purchasing behavior was 3.575. The intention to continue the boycott recorded the highest mean, 3.88, followed by checking before purchase, at 3.75. The mean for actual refraining was 3.53, above the neutral point and statistically significant. Substitution and the refusal of promotional offers recorded comparatively lower means, 3.36 and 3.35. The costs of carrying the boycott out, the availability of a substitute, and price may therefore limit the translation of support into a stable practice.

7. Hypothesis Tests

7.1. The General Direction of Attitudes and of Purchasing Behavior

Table 7. One-Sample t Tests Against the Neutral Mean of 3

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>	Decision
Attitudes toward the content	3.776	0.925	8.474	101	< .001	Significant, favorable
Boycott-supportive purchasing behavior	3.575	1.025	5.660	101	< .001	Above the neutral point
Actual refraining from purchase (Q19)	3.529	1.194	4.474	101	< .001	Significant

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

The *t* test confirms that the mean of attitudes is above the neutral point by a significant margin, so the first hypothesis is accepted. The overall mean of purchasing behavior, and the mean of actual refraining from purchase, are also above the neutral point, which supports the third hypothesis. The content is associated with tangible behavioral indicators, even though the level of behavior is lower than the level of attitudes. That difference reflects an expected gap between conviction and practice.

7.2. Correlations

Table 8. Correlations Among the Study Variables

First variable	Second variable	Pearson's <i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation
Exposure index	Mean of attitudes	.499	< .001	Positive, moderate
Exposure index	Mean of purchasing behavior	.503	< .001	Positive, moderate

First variable	Second variable	Pearson's r	p	Interpretation
Mean of attitudes	Mean of purchasing behavior	.595	< .001	Positive, moderate to strong

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

There is a significant positive relationship between exposure and purchasing behavior, $r = .503$, so the second hypothesis is accepted. Attitudes are related to behavior at a higher value, $r = .595$. Greater exposure is therefore more consequential when the messages succeed in forming favorable attitudes. The correlation does not establish strict causation, but it supports the theoretical model that places attitude as a mechanism close to behavior.

7.3. Multiple Linear Regression

Table 9. Regression of Purchasing Behavior on Exposure and Attitudes

Variable	B	Standard error	β	t	p
Constant	0.756	0.349	•	2.164	.033
Exposure index	0.274	0.089	.275	3.088	.003
Attitudes toward the content	0.507	0.099	.458	5.138	< .001

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

The regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 99) = 34.461$, $p < .001$. The coefficient of determination was $R^2 = .410$, so exposure and attitudes together explain 41 percent of the variance in purchasing behavior. The standardized coefficients show that attitudes are the stronger predictor ($\beta = .458$), followed by exposure ($\beta = .275$). Repeated viewing, taken alone, has less effect than the respondent's conviction about the content and trust in its moral and practical meaning.

7.4. Differences by Demographic Variables

Table 10. Tests of Demographic Differences

Demographic variable	Dependent variable	Test	Value	p	Decision
Gender	Attitudes	t	1.544	.126	Not significant
Gender	Purchasing behavior	t	2.370	.020	Significant
Age group	Attitudes	F	1.484	.224	Not significant
Level of study	Attitudes	F	0.745	.528	Not significant
Field of specialization	Attitudes	F	1.040	.409	Not significant

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

No significant differences in attitudes appeared by gender, age, level of study, or field of specialization. The moral and cognitive evaluation of the content is therefore similar across the groups in the sample. A significant difference did appear in purchasing behavior by gender. In the data under analysis, the mean for men was 3.84, against 3.37 for women. The fourth hypothesis is therefore accepted only in part: a difference appeared on one variable and not on the others. The gender difference should be interpreted with caution. It calls for an examination of factors such as purchasing power, the type of products consumed, and the availability of alternatives, rather than a direct attribution to gender.

7.5. Hypothesis Tests

Table 11. Summary of the Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Content	Result
First	Favorable attitudes toward the content	Supported
Second	A relationship between exposure and purchasing behavior	Supported
Third	Strengthening of actual refraining from purchase	Supported
Fourth	Differences according to demographic characteristics	Partially supported

Source. Prepared by the author from the statistical output.

V. Discussion of the Results

The results first show a relatively high density of exposure to boycott content: more than half of the respondents see it often or always. That finding is consistent with the networked character of Facebook and with its capacity to multiply a message through specialized pages, friends, and university groups. It is close to the results of Boulianne et al. (2024, p. 2110), who linked joining groups, political search, and digital discussion with political consumerism, and to those of Cheng et al. (2023, p. 995), who brought out the role of expression and discussion in turning news use into participation.

Second, attitudes were higher than behavior, a pattern that is intelligible in light of the boycott literature. Solidarity and support for the continued publication of the content recorded the highest means, while trust in the lists was lower. The moral legitimacy of the boycott is therefore strong in this sample, but the cognitive component that concerns the accuracy of information needs closer control. The result meets Klein et al. (2004, p. 92), who showed that evaluating the rejected act is not enough on its own, because efficacy, costs, and trust affect the decision to participate.

Third, exposure was positively related to behavior at a moderate strength, which supports treating digital content as a factor of mobilization. The result is directly consistent with Mady et al. (2025, p. 1), who found that social media use strengthens perceived control and perceived efficacy and, through them, the intention to boycott, and with Avcı (2024, p. 1), who established the mediating role of social media between social pressure and intention. It also agrees in part with Algerian studies that have demonstrated an effect of platforms on the purchasing decision (Chebbah & Saadaoui, 2019, p. 234; Ben Yahia & Ounis, 2020, p. 60). It further intersects with Kherchi's study of students of economic sciences at the University of

Relizane, which addressed the effect of digital space on the purchasing decision of the Algerian consumer (Kherchi, 2026, p. 864).

Fourth, the association of attitudes with behavior was stronger than the association of exposure with behavior, and attitude emerged as the stronger predictor in the regression. This result supports the theory of planned behavior. The person does not pass from the message to the act automatically, but through an evaluation of the behavior and a perception of norms and of capacity. The more effective content appears to be the content that builds a stable conviction, provides clear alternatives, and gives the respondent the sense that refusing is part of a collective act that has a point.

Fifth, the lower levels of substitution and of resistance to discounts point to the persistence of practical obstacles. When the boycott becomes costly, or when a substitute is scarce, participation may recede even among people who hold favorable attitudes. This is consistent with studies that have treated the cost of the boycott, attachment to the brand, and the lack of alternatives as inhibitors of participation (Sen et al., 2001, pp. 399–405; Hoffmann & Müller, 2009, pp. 239–243). It also partly accounts for Meslati's (2024, p. 73) finding that the boycott showed no significant effect on the decision to purchase Coca-Cola, despite the presence of supportive motives.

Sixth, the effect of the demographic variables was limited. That may indicate that the issue cuts across educational and disciplinary divisions within the student milieu, and that values and networked content play the more central part. The difference in behavior by gender nevertheless needs later examination with a larger and more balanced probability sample, and with the introduction of mediating variables such as income, the type of products, financial independence, and the rate of shopping.

Conclusion

The study concludes that economic-boycott content on Facebook is a form of mobilizing communication, one that combines the transmission of information, the building of attitudes, and the direction of behavior. The results show that students do not receive this content merely as lists of products. They receive it as a moral discourse that ties consumption to solidarity and responsibility. Favorable attitudes are widespread, and a considerable part of them is reflected in checking, refraining, substitution, and the intention to continue.

The gap between high support and the lower level of some indicators of practice confirms, however, that a boycott needs more than a high volume of publication if it is to succeed. It requires documented information, stable and updated lists, available alternatives, and messages that explain the usefulness of the act and that deal with price sensitivity and with prior habits. The strength of the relationship between attitudes and behavior also means that the quality of persuasion matters more than mere repetition, and that trust is the link most in need of reinforcement.

Principal Findings

- Exposure to boycott content is high: 54.9 percent of the sample see it often or always.
- Specialized pages, friends' posts, and university groups are the leading sources through which the content arrives.
- Reliability is high for both the attitude section and the purchasing-behavior section, which permits the use of the composite means.

- Attitudes toward the content are favorable, with a mean of 3.776. Solidarity and support for continued publication rank highest.
- Purchasing behavior is supportive of the boycott, with a mean of 3.575. The intention to continue, and checking before purchase, are high.
- There is a significant positive relationship between exposure and purchasing behavior, $r = .503$.
- There is a stronger positive relationship between attitudes and purchasing behavior, $r = .595$.
- Exposure and attitudes explain 41 percent of the variance in purchasing behavior.
- Trust in the lists, substitution, and resistance to discounts remain points that need support.
- Demographic differences are limited. A difference in behavior appeared by gender only.

Recommendations

- Establish documented and updated reference lists of the targeted products, stating the criterion for inclusion, the source of the information, and the date of the update.
- Separate confirmed information from circulating allegations, and publish corrections clearly when an error appears.
- Move from a discourse of bare prohibition to a discourse of alternatives, by identifying Algerian products and the available substitutes, together with their prices.
- Design content that explains the economic effect of the boycott in plain language, so that the perception of individual and collective efficacy increases.
- Use university pages and groups to publish short content that can be checked and shared.
- Encourage accounts of real experience with substitution and with staying the course. Such accounts reduce ambiguity and increase perceived behavioral control.
- Avoid inflating the lists to the point at which the boycott becomes costly or impossible, and order priorities according to the clarity of the evidence and the possibility of finding a substitute.
- Conduct longitudinal studies that measure whether the behavior continues after media momentum recedes, and comparative studies of Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram.
- Include income, the availability of alternatives, trust in the source, and perceived efficacy in future models.

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Appendix

The Questionnaire Used in the Study

Study questionnaire

Title of the study

Attitudes of Algerian University Students Toward Content Calling for an Economic Boycott of Products Supporting Israel on Social Media Platforms, and Its Relationship With Purchasing Behavior: A Field Study of a Sample of Facebook Users

Dear student,

This questionnaire is part of a scientific study of Algerian students' attitudes toward Facebook content that calls for an economic boycott of products supporting Israel. Please answer the questions carefully and objectively. The information you provide will be used for scientific research only. All answers are treated as strictly confidential. The questionnaire does not ask for your name or your email address. In this questionnaire, **“boycott content”** means the various posts, images, videos, and messages circulating on Facebook that call for a boycott of products or brands presented as supporting Israel.

There is no right or wrong answer. Please choose the answer that expresses your own view and your actual behavior.

Section 1. Screening Questions and Personal Data

No.	Question	Response options
01	Are you a student at an Algerian higher-education institution?	Yes / No
02	Do you use Facebook?	Yes / No
03	Have you previously seen Facebook content calling for a boycott of products presented as supporting Israel?	Yes / No
04	Gender	Male / Female
05	Age	Under 20 / 20 to 22 / 23 to 25 / Over 25
06	Level of study	Licence / Master's / Doctorate / Other university program
07	Field of specialization	Medical and health sciences / Exact sciences and technology / Law and political science / Economic, commercial, and management sciences / Arts and languages / Humanities and social sciences / Natural and biological sciences / Other

Section 2. Exposure to Boycott Content on Facebook, and Interaction With It

No.	Question	Response options
08	How often do you see content on Facebook that calls for the boycott?	Very rarely / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always
09	From where does boycott content usually reach you?	Pages and groups specializing in the boycott / University or student pages or groups / Friends' posts / News and media pages / Influencers and content creators / Sponsored advertisements / Other
10	To what extent do you follow pages or groups that publish boycott content?	I do not follow any / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always
11	How often do you interact with boycott content by liking, commenting, or sharing?	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always

Item 09 allows more than one answer.

Section 3. Students' Attitudes Toward Boycott Content

Instruction. Place a mark (✓) in the column that expresses your opinion on each statement.

The scale runs from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
12	Boycott content helps me identify the products targeted by the boycott.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Boycott content increases my awareness of the economic and humanitarian dimensions of the Palestinian cause.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	I find the arguments and information presented by boycott content persuasive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	I generally trust the information and the product lists published in boycott content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	Boycott content strengthens my sense of solidarity and responsibility toward the Palestinian cause.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	I support the continued publication, on Facebook, of content that calls for the boycott.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Column key: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Section 4. The Reflection of Boycott Content in Students' Purchasing Behavior

Instruction. Place a mark (✓) in the column that expresses your actual behavior.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
18	Boycott content has led me to check the product or the company before deciding to buy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19	I have actually refrained from buying some products after being exposed to boycott content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	I have replaced some products targeted by the boycott with Algerian products or with other alternatives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21	I refuse to buy products targeted by the boycott even when discounts or promotions are offered.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22	I intend to continue boycotting the targeted products in the period ahead.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Column key: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Thank you for your cooperation and for contributing to this scientific study.