

CANCEL CULTURE: EXPLORING YOUTH ATTITUDES TOWARDS BOYCOTTING ISRAELI PRODUCTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA DURING GAZA INVASION

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18832441>

Received	Accepted	Published
29 December 2025	13 February 2026	28 February 2026

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the phenomenon of cancel culture has garnered significant scholarly and public attention, particularly within the context of socio-political movements on digital platforms. Through the theoretical lens of social identity theory (SIT), this study examines the dynamics of cancel culture in Pakistan during boycott activities against Israeli products during the Gaza incursion. The cancellation against Israeli products offers a distinctive case study for examining the dynamics of brand perception among Muslim consumers. The study specifically looks at how Pakistani youth participate in boycott campaigns on social media and explores how their opinions against Israeli goods reflect prejudice against out groups and in-group preference. Data from a sample of Pakistani youth actively engaged in internet boycott movements was gathered using survey research methodology.

Keywords: Cancel culture, boycott movements, social media, sentiments, and attitude

INTRODUCTION

Background

Social networking platforms were initially designed to facilitate diverse online interactions but have since evolved into what we now know as social media. This transformation has deeply penetrated various aspects of society, becoming a significant force in contemporary life. Social media has played a pivotal role in fostering digital participatory cultures and facilitating social movements. While it brings benefits like convenient online shopping, it also introduces challenges such as the spread of intentional misinformation. Despite bridging distances and physical barriers, social media has led to the development of a constant digital presence and non-stop communication (Velasco, 2020). Social media functions not only as a medium

for sharing information but also as a driving force behind the rise of online activist movements. According to Kaplan (2015), social media has advanced from being merely a source of entertainment for younger generations to becoming an important influence across various demographics, affecting both consumers and businesses. The new media enables vast numbers of people, potentially reaching millions, to harness collective networks and a sense of urgency to hold various powerful entities, including individuals, accountable.

In the contemporary new media era, the term "cancel culture" has gained widespread popularity, particularly within the domain of social media. Originally associated with rejecting an object, cancel culture has evolved into a social phenomenon involving the

withdrawal of support for community leaders in response to perceived unpleasant behavior or opinions (Dershowitz, 2020). Beyond its application to individual leaders, cancel culture has now expanded to encompass the boycotting of entire organizations, brands including those in the digital entertainment sector.

Cancel culture was optimized in recent history more than ever as an instrument in support of freedom movements such as the 'Free-Palestinian' and 'Stop War on Gaza' movements. Boycotts have long been a popular tactic in social movements, employed to protest specific practices, policies, or companies, as noted by Earl et al. (2017). This form of collective action involves consumers collectively deciding to withdraw their support or refrain from purchasing a particular company's products to voice their dissatisfaction and advocate for change, as highlighted by Florencio et al. (2019).

The intersection of cancel culture and social media (Nasir, 2025) has reshaped the landscape of public discourse, accountability, and social interactions. Social media's role in cancel culture has contributed to the evolution of societal norms and expectations, pushing for increased accountability and sensitivity to various issues. Media attention of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the representation of cancel movements play a key role in shaping consumer awareness and involvement. The boycott is fueled not only by negative feelings toward Israel but also by a positive motivation to endorse brands that align with consumers' ethical and political beliefs. This positive drive is particularly noticeable in the growing support for local and regional brands, which are perceived as more in line with consumer values.

Emotional elements such as empathy and a sense of injustice, further encourage participation in the boycott. These emotions are often heightened by personal stories and narratives shared within communities, making the boycott a highly personal and emotional issue for many individuals (Utama et al., 2023). Cancel culture has emerged as a

powerful force shaping public opinion and consumer decisions in today's world. While it can drive collective action toward social justice, it also raises trouble by encouraging a mob mentality that could result in unfair outcomes.

In the modern era, social media stands out as a highly influential and widely embraced mode of mass communication. It has effectively transcended traditional constraints of time and space, allowing instantaneous and global connectivity. Social sites encompass online platforms and technologies that empower users to generate, distribute, and swap information, thoughts, and content within virtual communities and networks. These platforms are crafted to enhance communication, collaboration, and engagement among individuals, groups, and organizations (Manning, 2014).

Poignant example of this phenomenon can be observed in the aftermath of the War on Gaza in 2023. The conflict was marked by intense and widespread violence, resulting in significant loss of life and displacement of people. In response to this crisis, various forms of boycotts and protests were carried out, leveraging both passive and active methods to voice opposition and demand change. These social platforms played a critical role in amplifying these movements, allowing for a global audience to engage with and support the causes being highlighted.

This convergence of digital activism and social media has thus enabled rapid and widespread mobilization significantly impacted the effectiveness and reach of contemporary boycotts and protests. Social media users have leveraged various platforms to encourage participation in campaigns aimed at boycotting Western companies and their franchises believed to support Israel. Arab and Muslim online communities began creating and sharing lists of these companies, along with alternatives featuring locally made products. These efforts gained traction as the Israeli bombardment of Gaza intensified. In international consumer markets, the boycott of Israeli products has emerged as a significant

socio-political movement, particularly impactful within Muslim communities. (Nasir, 2025)

The devastation in Gaza and the rising death toll have ignited worldwide protests, bringing the long-standing Israel-Palestine issue to the center of international politics. The conflict over Jerusalem is intricate and highly controversial, with deep historical, religious, and political foundations. It centers on the conflicting claims and aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians concerning the status and control of Jerusalem, a city of immense importance to various religious communities (Beinin & Hajar, 2014).

A substantial wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine began, partly driven by Jews fleeing from Nazism in Europe. Between 1918 and 1947, the Jewish population in Palestine surged from 3 to 33 percent. This demographic change alarmed Palestinians and intensified tensions, which contributed to the Palestinian revolt from 1936 to 1939. During this time, Zionist organizations persisted in their efforts to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Armed Zionist militias also launched attacks on Palestinians, forcing many to flee. Zionism, a political movement that emerged in the late 19th century, sought to establish a Jewish state.

As violence escalated in Palestine, the matter was brought before the newly formed United Nations. In 1947, the UN passed Resolution 181, which recommended dividing Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states, granting around 55 percent of the land to the Jewish state and 45 percent to the Arab state. Jerusalem was to be designated as an international city. Today, Jerusalem remains divided: West Jerusalem is predominantly Jewish, while East Jerusalem is mainly Palestinian. Israel captured East Jerusalem and the West Bank during the Six-Day War in 1967, a move that the international community has not recognized. The ancient city, located in occupied East Jerusalem, holds high religious importance for Christians, Muslims, and Jews. It is home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, known to Muslims as al-Haram al-

Sharif and to Jews as the Temple Mount. This site became the World Heritage Site in 1981 as declared by UNESCO.

Prior to the creation of Israel in May 1948 over three quarters of a million Palestinians were driven from their homes at gunpoint by Zionist militia- this mass displacement became known as an- Nakba (the catastrophe). Another 300,000 Palestinians were driven out during the Six-Day War in 1967. Israel declared the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1980, but it has not been recognized by most countries internationally as a part of Israeli territory. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

In 1993, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed the Oslo Accords, with the goal of achieving peace within five years. This marked the first time the two sides formally recognized each other. A second agreement in 1995 split the occupied West Bank into three zones. The Palestinian Authority, established after the Oslo Accords, was granted limited control over just 18 percent of the territory, while Israel maintained effective control over the West Bank. The Oslo Accords gradually unraveled as Israeli settlements, Jewish communities established on Palestinian land in the West Bank, expanded rapidly. The settler population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem grew from around 250,000 to 700,000 from 1993 to September 2023. About three million Palestinians lived in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The construction of Israeli settlements and a separation wall in these occupied areas has fragmented Palestinian communities and limited their movement. The West Bank is marked with about 700 road obstacles, including 140 checkpoints, through which roughly 70,000 Palestinians with Israeli work permits pass daily. Under international law, settlements are considered illegal, and the UN has condemned them as a major obstacle to achieving a viable Palestinian state under the "two-state solution."

Israel besieged Gaza in 2007 after Hamas took

control, and this blockade remains in effect. Israel also controls the West Bank and East Jerusalem, territories that Palestinians want for their future state. Israel imposed a total blockade on Gaza, on October 9, suspending all fuel, water and food supplies after Hamas launched an unexpected attack within Israel that caused at least 1200 deaths.

Currently, around 5 million Palestinians reside in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, with an additional 1.6 million Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship. This accounts for roughly half of the Palestinian population, with the other half living abroad, including in various Arab nations. Globally, there are approximately 14.7 million Jews, with 84 percent residing in Israel and the United States, while the remainder is spread across countries like France, Canada, Argentina, and Russia. The residents of Gaza are currently enduring a total blockade imposed by the Israeli military, with indiscriminate airstrikes hitting civilians and essential infrastructure, alongside the disruption of fuel, food, water, and medical supplies.

In recent years, the phenomenon of cancel culture has gained notable traction, particularly among younger generations, as a means of expressing social and political discontent. Concurrently, the ongoing genocide of Palestinians has provoked intense debate and heightened emotions globally against the Israeli occupation. Within this volatile socio-political landscape, the sentiment towards Israeli products among youth has become a subject of interest and concern. Despite the prevalence of cancel culture and its potential impact on consumer behavior, there remains a dearth of empirical research examining its influence on attitudes towards products originating from Israel, especially among the youth demographic. Through an examination of the content coupled with an exploration of the sentiments conveyed by participants, the research seeks to uncover the underlying motivations, ideological dimensions, and potential consequences of cancel culture against Israeli's

products in the digital domain. The study aim to examine the role of social media in shaping the attitudes of Pakistani youth (Nasir, 2025) towards Israeli products during the Gaza invasion; analyze the impact of in-group vs. out-group dynamics on the support for cancel culture movements against Israel's products on social media, Further, the researchers investigates the relationship between social identification, social comparison, and the level of support for boycott movements against Israeli products among Pakistani youth. And to explore the effect of social categorization (in-group/out-group distinctions) on engagement in cancel culture movements on social media.

In alignment with the problem statement and the study's objectives, the following research addresses the following question and Hypotheses. To what extent does social media usage predict the attitudes of Pakistani youth toward boycotting Israeli products during the Gaza invasion? How does in-group vs. out-group dynamics predict support for cancel culture movements against Israeli products among Pakistani youth? What is the predictive relationship between social identification, social comparison, and Pakistani youth's support for boycott movements against Israeli products? To what extent does stronger social categorization (in-group/out-group distinctions) predict higher engagement in cancel culture movements on social media? And whether and to what extent do in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination manifest in the attitudes of Pakistani youth towards Israeli products during boycott movements?

H1: Social media significantly influences the attitudes of Pakistani youth towards Israeli products during the Gaza-Israel Conflict. **H2:** The influence of In-group Vs Out-group dynamics significantly predicts support for cancel culture on social media against Israel's products. **H3:** Social identification and social comparison lead to higher support for boycott movements against Israeli products among Pakistani youth. **H4:** Stronger social categorization (in-group/out-group distinction)

is positively associated with higher engagement in cancel culture on social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As per Clark (2020), cancellation is the act of consciously disengaging from someone or something whose principles, actions, or expressions are considered objectionable that an individual opts not to acknowledge them any longer, withholding their attention, time, and financial support. According to Uddin, S. (2023), when a public figure or brand makes remarks that are bigoted or offensive or faces serious allegations such as violence against women or religious insensitivity, opponents of cancel culture argue that an assertive and reactive online community swiftly intervenes to censure them, vociferously announcing a withdrawal of patronage and endorsement. These subject to cancellation ranges from celebrities to corporate brands.

Cancel culture is sometimes identified as having developed from "call-out culture", which refers to a higher social tendency for public condemnation (online or in-person) of a person's character, acts or behaviors considered to be sexist, racist, or otherwise unacceptable. Cancellation, a phenomenon swiftly gaining momentum on social media platforms, is characterized as "virulently uncontrollable" (Velasco, 2020). This trend, propelled by the younger generations desire for societal change, has significantly increased. The phenomenon of cancel culture represents a multifaceted social dynamic in today's digital era, particularly within the ever-evolving sphere of social media (Velasco, 2020). Distinct from conventional consumer-driven boycotts against brands, the act of canceling an individual can be triggered by a single participant within an online collective, rapidly gaining momentum in ways traditional protests rarely match (Costa & Azevedo, 2024). Cancel culture is not a recent development; however, it has evolved within the sphere of social media and digital platforms, becoming a prominent term in contemporary discourse (Tandoc et al., 2022). Cancel culture refers to the collective

withdrawal of support from an individual or brand, often triggered by ethical issues and rapidly spread via social media. It represents a form of personal and communal agency, where people consciously choose to distance themselves from those whose actions or values they find objectionable. As noted by Saint-Louis, H. (2021), cancel culture is a form of self-determination, reflecting a deliberate decision to disengage from individuals or organizations that embody principles seen as morally troubling. It's a way for people to voice disapproval and shift focus away from what they consider unacceptable.

In cancel culture, there is a potential for bandwagon effects, where people join the movement to cancel a brand without fully understanding or critically analyzing the situation. At times, individuals may align with popular opinion out of fear of social exclusion or simply to participate in trending discussions on controversial topics. According to Saint-Louis, H. (2021), those engaging in brand cancellations aren't limited to strong critics but may also include individuals who are curious or seeking more information about the issue. This dynamic often leads to a mixture of genuine concern and impulsive participation in cancel culture.

Cancel culture creates a societal space where individuals who have been harmed can find solidarity and protection by exposing wrongdoers and drawing strength from public support. It also encourages people to become more conscious in their consumer choices, empowering them to invest in causes they believe in and support businesses that align with their values. As Wong (2022) explains, cancel culture acknowledges the significant role corporations play in shaping political and social landscapes. It serves as a tool to hold people and institutions accountable for their actions, driving efforts toward social progress and reform.

The phenomenon of cancel culture elevates the stakes significantly. Usually, it unfolds when a prominent individual publicly expresses an opinion that is dubious, unpopular, or insensitive. The public becomes

aware, reacts, and then the individual is subsequently canceled-boycotted by their followers, supporters, sponsors, and the general public.

In today's fast-paced world, information spreads rapidly across digital platforms, influencing the collective understanding of events. A key feature of social media is its ability to engage large audiences, connect elite and non-elite groups, and enable coordinated action. The rise of the internet, especially social media, has paved the way for new forms of social activism, often referred to as cancel culture. Platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok are prominent channels that give individuals a voice to share their opinions and rally support for causes, as noted by Geusens et al. (2023).

The growing number of internet and social media users suggests that more individuals are freely expressing their opinions and actions online. As of January 2024, there were 71.70 active social media users in Pakistan. As per DataReportal, the internet users in Pakistan increased by 24 million, representing a 27.1 percent growth, between January 2023 and January 2024. This highlights the role of social media as a platform for public expression and the exercise of free speech as part of their human rights. This trend is most prevalent on platforms like Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

Social media has seamlessly integrated itself into every aspect of our daily lives, playing such a dominant role that it touches all levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs from basic survival to the quest for self-fulfillment. Its influence on how we engage with and understand the world is as revolutionary as the development of the opposable thumb was millions of years ago. Recent studies (Jones & Patel, 2022; Lee et al., 2023) explore the deep roots of cancel culture, blending historical patterns of social exclusion with the modern impact of technology. This evolving phenomenon reflects the complex interplay between societal shifts, cultural norms, and the rapid spread of information on digital platforms. Social media sites like Instagram,

Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok have become outlets for self-expression, entertainment, and knowledge-sharing. As Camillis and Dorneles (2022) point out, what was once a tool for addressing serious threats has now often turned into a platform for targeting and attacking those who deviate from the majority's accepted views.

Social media has undeniably transformed into a powerful marketing tool for companies, enhancing sales and fostering stronger connections between consumers and the brands they interact with.

However, as Silva et al. (2021) points out, the benefits of digital marketing have also brought about some negative consequences. When social media users rally around a person accused of a moral wrongdoing, they are often united by shared values, strengthening their sense of community (Henderson, 2020). In many cases, online mobilization has contributed to meaningful change, as seen with the Black Lives Matter movement, which gained widespread attention and support through active engagement on social platforms.

Social media has become the contemporary battleground, hosting a conflict that holds substantial implications for the conception and construction of the future of civilization. Mueller (2021) notes that the shift to digital, networked communication has significantly influenced the direction of our conversations. In the domain of information, communication plays an important role in shaping and influencing our cognitive processes, affecting how we understand, engage with, and respond to the world around us. This digital evolution has transformed the way societies interact and make decisions, with lasting impacts on our collective future.

Social media platforms have emerged as vital spaces for public discourse, frequently shaping societal norms and behaviors (Theocharis et al., 2023). These platforms empower everyday people to swiftly call for accountability from institutions and individuals (Clark, 2020), fostering the expansion of digital participatory cultures and the rise of social movements

(Velasco, 2020). It is being noted that social media has provided ordinary people with a platform to communicate with corporations and institutions, which was previously challenging or nearly impossible. By expressing their views on products, executive actions, and company advertising, consumers have successfully driven change.

Religious sentiments embody the deep emotional and spiritual connections individuals hold toward their faith, doctrines, rituals, and principles. These sentiments play an important role in shaping the identity and worldview of those who adhere to specific religious beliefs. In the digital age, religious institutions are increasingly utilizing social media to reach wider audiences, sharing information on ethical concerns, calling for boycotts, and amplifying messages of social justice. By encouraging their followers to make ethically conscious choices, religious institutions promote participation in boycotts as a means of driving positive change. Pace (2021) explores how social media enables Muslim communities in Europe to organize around religious and social justice issues. The study reveals that digital activism not only influences public perceptions of Islam but also challenges stereotypes and fosters solidarity among diverse Muslim groups across Europe.

Guarezi (2021) emphasizes the phenomenon of cancellation that unfolds when individuals with religious values perceive themselves under attack from companies that do not align with their moral and traditional principles. The challenge intensifies when attempting to find common ground, particularly as cancellation culture is propelled more by emotional logic than rational reasoning. Religious beliefs play a vital role in shaping purchasing decisions, with many respondents citing their faith as a primary reason for endorsing the boycott. This religious influence is often blended with a strong moral and ethical sense, leading consumers to view the boycott as an expression of their spiritual and ethical responsibilities. Also the political consciousness and unity with the Palestinian are important motivators. Many participants

expressed a desire to support what they perceive as a just cause through their purchasing choices (Utama et al., 2023)

In September 2005, the publication of cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten sparked widespread protests from the Muslim community, citing disrespect to their religious beliefs. Social media played a major role as activists utilized hashtags like #BoycottDanishProducts to mobilize support. Online petitions circulated on various platforms, demanding a Danish product boycott and an apology from the newspaper and government. This wave of digital activism had a noticeable impact on Danish exports, as products were pulled from shelves in Muslim-majority countries, resulting in substantial economic losses for Danish companies operating in this region.

Theoretical Framework

Utilizing social identity theory, the researcher aims to analyze and understand the complexity of cancel culture. Individuals are influenced by various factors, including social identity, values, and morality, all of which play significant roles in shaping their responses to cancel culture. Social Identity Theory Social Identity Theory, proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, provides a valuable lens through which to examine the dynamics of youth sentiment towards Israeli products within the context of the Israel invasion of Gaza. This theory posits that individuals derive a significant portion of their identity from their membership in various social groups and categories, and that this social identity shapes their attitudes, behaviors, and interactions with others.

According to Social Identity Theory, social categorization is the process by which people, including themselves, are classified into various social groups, helping them to organize their social environment and understand their place within it (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p.15). Individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, or political affiliation. In

the context of the Gaza-Israel conflict, youth may align themselves with particular social groups (e.g., Palestinians, Israelis, supporters of Palestinian rights, supporters of Israeli policies) based on their perceived social identity.

The second process, known as social identification, happens when individuals embrace the identity of the group they've categorized themselves as part of, leading them to adopt the group's norms, attitudes, and behaviors (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). This identification strengthens their sense of belonging and creates an emotional connection to the group. Individuals compare their own group with other groups in order to establish a positive social identity. This comparison often involves favoring one's own group (in-group) over others (out-groups) and attributing positive qualities to the in-group while stereotyping or devaluing out-groups. In the case of youth sentiment towards Israeli products, social comparison processes may influence perceptions of Israeli brands and products as symbols of the out-group, leading to negative attitudes and potential boycotts.

The last one is social comparison which involves comparing one's group to others helps individuals maintain or boost their self-esteem by favorably positioning their in-group over out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 17). The extent to which individuals identify with a particular social group varies depending on the context and salience of that identity. During times of heightened conflict, such as the Gaza-Israel war, social identities related to nationality, ethnicity, or political allegiance may become particularly important. This heightened salience can intensify inter group dynamics and influence consumer attitudes and behaviors towards products associated with perceived out-groups.

By integrating Social Identity Theory, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of cancel culture in Pakistan, particularly in the context of youth attitudes towards Israeli products during the Gaza invasion.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher conducted a quantitative survey to address the research questions. Quantitative surveys use structured questionnaires with predefined questions and response options, ensuring uniformity in data collection and facilitating comparison across different respondents (Groves, 2011). The questionnaires were circulated among respondents through Google forms. The age range was set by the researcher, as all the specified age groups are active on social media. A non-probability convenience sampling method was used, and the sample consisted of students from different renowned universities of Islamabad that is National University of Modern Languages, Bahria University, Comsats University, Islamic University and Iqra University. Non probability convenient sampling technique has been utilized to work on for this research assessment to select participants for this study. Convenience sampling technique denotes to the data collection method based on the ease, possibility, and time frame. To address time and resource limitations, the researcher chose an online survey method. A total of 308 participants were included to ensure a comprehensive dataset that reflects various viewpoints and experiences. Participants were selected based on their age range (18-35 years) and their active presence on social media platforms from various universities in Islamabad.

Data was collected from December, 2023 to July, 2024. The reason behind the selection of this time period was intentional and based on several key factors such as heightened social media activity. This period coincided with significant online discourse and activism surrounding the Gaza invasion so social media platforms were flooded with posts, campaigns, and discussions related to the conflict, making it a pivotal time to capture youth attitudes and their engagement in boycott movements.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The research is based on descriptive method study in which quantitative analysis of

investigation is applied. For this purpose, the data analysis of survey has been carried out

thoroughly.

Quantitative Survey Analysis

Table 4.1.2. 1 Descriptive Statistics
Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Age		
18-26	179	58.1
27-35	129	41.9
Gender		
Male	199	64.6
Female	109	35.4
Education		
Undergraduate		
Graduate	77	25
Post Graduate		
Area of Living	161	52.3
Rural		
Urban Family	70	22.7
Setup Joint		
Nuclear		
Total	92	29.9
	216	70.1
	177	57.5
	131	42.5
	308	100

Total number of 308 Pakistanis participated in the survey. As shown in the table above, of the 308 participants, 77 (25%) were undergraduate whereas 161 (52.3%) were graduate and 70 (22.7%) were post-graduate. The ages of participants were between 18 to 35 years. Out of 308 individuals, 179 (58.1%) were between the age of 18-26 and 129 (41.9%) were between the age 27-35.

199 (64.6%) male respondents and 109 (35.4%) female respondents participated in the survey among which 92 (29.9%) lived in rural area and 216 (70.1%) lived in urban areas. As shown in the table above, of the 308 participants, 177 (57.5%) lived in a joint family setup and 131 (42.5%) lived in a nuclear family setup

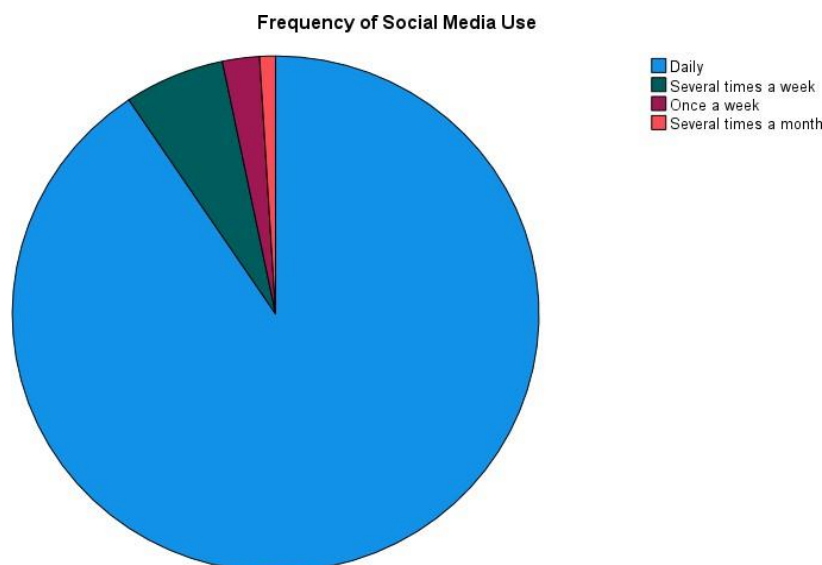


Figure 4.1.2. 1 Frequency of Social Media Use

Figure 4.1.2.2 represents how frequent the survey respondents use the social media. According to the data, the majority of 279 participants (90.6%) use social media daily. However, 19 (6.2%) participants use social

media several times a week. 7 (2.3%) respondents use social media once a week whereas 3 (1.0%) respondents use social media several times a month.

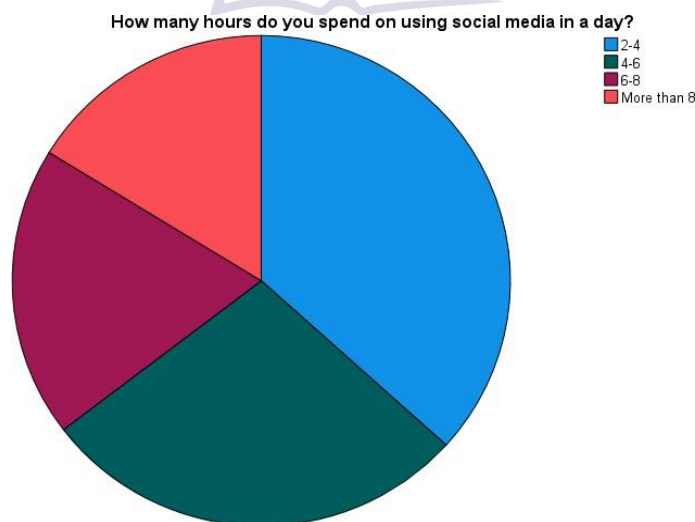


Figure 4.1.2. 2 Social Media Exposure

Figure 4.1.2.3 represents how much time the survey respondents spent on social media daily. According to the data, the majority of 113 participants (36.7%) use social media for 2-4 hours. However, 86 (27.9%) use social

media for 4-6 hours and 59 (19.2%) respondents use social media for 6-8 hours. Pie chart also revealed that 50 (16.2%) participants use social media for more than 8 hours.

The following hypotheses were examined using simple linear regression. Regression analysis is employed to describe and assess the relationship between a specific dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Prior studies that focused on

comparable were able to find significant outcomes with the use of regression analysis. It can, then, be said that the suitable statistical method to disconfirm or confirm the selected hypotheses is regression.

H1. Social media significantly influences the attitudes of Pakistani youth towards Israeli products during Gaza invasion.

Table 4.2. 1

Variable	R Square	B	95%CI	β	t	P	F
Social media Influence	.126	.366	[.258, .474]	.355	6.645	0.00	44.152

Note: $R = .355$, $R^2 = .126$, Adjusted $R^2 = .123$, $F = 44.125$, $P = 0.00$

a) Dependent Variable: Attitude

a) Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Influence

Simple linear regression was conducted to examine how social media impacts the attitudes of Pakistani youth towards Israeli products during the Gaza invasion. The independent variable was social media influence, while the dependent variable was attitude. The results showed an F value of 44.125 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.123. The regression coefficient ($B = 0.366$, 95% CI [0.258, 0.474]) suggests that for each unit increase in social media influence, the attitude score increased by an average of 0.336 points. Additionally, the Pearson correlation

coefficient was 0.00**, indicating a significant relationship ($p < 0.01$).

The statistical analysis supports the hypothesis that social media significantly influences the attitudes of Pakistani youth towards Israeli products. The moderate positive correlation and significant regression results suggest that as exposure to social media coverage of the Gaza-Israel conflict increases, youth develop more negative attitudes towards Israeli products.

H2. The influence of In-group Vs Out-group dynamics significantly predicts support for cancel culture on social media against Israel's products.

Table 4.2. 2

Variable	R Square	B	β	T	P	F
In-group	.139	.235	.302	7.025	0.00	49.346
Out-group	.163	.191	.171	5.026	0.00	29.760

Note: $R_1 = .373$, $R_2 = .296$, $R_1^2 = 1.39$, $R_2^2 = 1.63$, $F_1 = 49.326$, $F_2 = 29.760$, $P_1 = 0.00$, $P_2 = 0.00$

- a. Dependent Variable: I support the Palestinian people on Social Media
- b. Predictors: (Constant), In-group
- c. Predictors: (Constant), In-group, Out-group

In-group and Support ($r = .373$, $p < 0.001$):

The correlation between in-group identification and support for Palestinian people (and boycotting Israeli products) is positive and moderately strong. This implies that higher identification with the in-group (Palestinians) is associated with greater support for cancel culture against Israeli products on social media.

Out-group and Support ($r = .296$, $p < 0.001$):

The correlation between out-group identification and support is weaker than in-group identification but still positive and statistically significant. This indicates that perceiving Israel as the out-group also correlates with support for canceling Israeli products, although to a lesser extent.

In Model 1 ($R^2 = .139$, $p < 0.001$), in-group identification accounts for approximately 13.9% of the variance in support for cancel culture, indicating a statistically significant relationship. This suggests that in-group dynamics meaningfully influence the support for boycotting Israeli products. The model itself is significant ($F = 49.346$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the substantial predictive power of

in-group identification in determining support for cancel culture on social media.

In Model 2 ($R^2 = .163$, $p < 0.001$), the inclusion of out-group identification increases the explained variance slightly to 16.3%, indicating a modest but significant contribution to the prediction of support for cancel culture. However, in-group identification remains the stronger predictor. The model remains statistically significant ($F = 29.760$, $p < 0.001$), with the addition of out-group identification resulting in a relatively small improvement in explained variance (R^2 increase from .139 to .163).

The statistical analysis confirms the hypothesis that in-group vs. out-group dynamics significantly predict support for cancel culture on social media against Israeli products. While both in-group and out-group identification are significant predictors, in-group identification (i.e., support for Palestinians) is a stronger and more influential factor in explaining the level of support for cancel culture.

H3. Social identification and social comparison lead to higher support for boycott movements against Israeli products among Pakistani youth.

Table 4.2. 3

Variable	R Square	B	95%CI	β	t	P	F
Social Comparison	.349	.419	[.317, .521]	.421	8.094	0.00	81.636

Social Categorization	.349	.252	[.154, .351]	.236	5.050	0.00	81.636
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Note: $R^2 = .349$, $R^2 = .296$, $R^2 = .349$, $F = 81.636$, $P = 0.00$

- Dependent Variable: BoycottMovem
- Predictors: (Constant), SocialCategorization, SocialComparison

The mean support for boycott movements is 3.50 (SD = .81), indicating a moderate level of support with some variability. Social comparison has a mean score of 3.74 (SD = .82), suggesting a slightly higher tendency to engage in social comparison. Social categorization has a mean of 3.52 (SD = .85), reflecting a moderate identification with social categories among youth.

There is a moderate positive correlation between support for boycott movements and both social comparison ($r = .542$, $p < .001$) and social categorization ($r = .457$, $p < .001$). This suggests that as social comparison and categorization increase, so does support for boycott movements. Additionally, social comparison and social categorization are moderately correlated with each other ($r = .460$, $p < .001$).

.460, $p < .001$).

Regression analysis shows that social comparison and categorization together explain 34.9% of the variance in support for boycott movements ($R^2 = .349$, $p < .001$), with social comparison ($\beta = .421$) having a slightly stronger influence than social categorization ($\beta = .263$). Both predictors are significant ($p < .001$), meaning higher levels of social comparison and categorization are linked to stronger support for boycotts.

Social comparison and categorization are significant predictors of Pakistani youth's support for boycotting Israeli products, with social comparison playing a slightly more prominent role. These findings highlight how social identity processes drive political engagement.

H4: Stronger social categorization (in-group/out-group distinction) is positively associated with higher engagement in cancel culture on social media.

Table 4.2. 4

Variable	R Square	B	β	T	P	F
Active Engagement	.466	.558	.683	16.348	0.00	267.260

Note: $R = .683$, $R^2 = .466$, $F = 267.260$, $P = 0.00$

- Dependent Variable: Social Categorization
- Predictors: (Constant), Active Engagement

The correlation between Social Categorization and Active Engagement is 0.683, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that

as social categorization increases, engagement in cancel culture behaviors also increases. The p-value (Sig.) for this correlation is 0.000 (less than 0.05), indicating that the correlation is statistically significant. Here social categorization is dependent variable and active engagement is independent variable. Thus, there is strong evidence to support the hypothesis that stronger social categorization is associated with higher engagement in cancel

culture. The analysis supports the hypothesis that stronger social categorization is positively associated with higher engagement in cancel culture on social media. The correlation and regression analyses show a significant, strong relationship between the two variables, suggesting that individuals who categorize others into in-groups and out-groups are more likely to engage in cancel culture behaviors. This finding highlights the importance of social identity in understanding online engagement and social behavior in the context of contentious issues like the Gaza invasion.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter aims to wrap up the overall analysis by reflecting on how cancel culture and boycott movements across the socio-political topography in Pakistan, especially with regards to engagement by youths with global events like the Gaza invasion.

It revisits the objectives of the study, discussing how attitudes of Pakistani youth towards Israeli products were studied through their engagement with online boycott campaigns. This chapter continues with the analysis of roles social media plays in constructing such attitudes and framing public debate while producing conclusions for the above dynamics within digital activism.

Cancel culture is the relative expectation of society toward accountability, representation, and responsible consumption. Cancel culture has been both praised and criticized for its influence on public discourse and consumer behavior. With this research regarding the attitude of Pakistani youth towards boycott movements against the Israeli products it becomes crucial to situate these findings within the broader dialogue surrounding cancel culture. This discussion, other than the most vital insights relating to making activism meaningful among today's youths, also arouses questions about the feasibility and sustainability of such movements in a fast-changing digital landscape. This chapter also reflects on the limits of this study, presenting a nuance regarding online engagement and offer

recommendations for future research to understand this phenomenon of youth-driven activism in an increasingly interconnected digital landscape. Social media platforms have evolved as a result of people's desire to stay connected regardless of time or distance (Shuter, 2012). These platforms serve as centers that gather and display users' behaviors for others to see (Marwick & Boyd, 2014). By giving up privacy and sharing personal information, people gain access to these digital spaces where they can engage with others and create content, reflecting the extent to which they are willing to trade anonymity for the ability to connect. Even though the old times of identity development and extending were strictly confined in off-line mediums, the social media has opened up unending portals which people can reach out to similar interests and expertise (Pfister & Soliz, 2011). In fact, it creates a space where peoples of intersecting identities can bond and connect (Rightler-McDaniels & Hendrickson, 2014). Social media, therefore, becomes an important venue for finding solidarity and support where one may otherwise not have found it for people who identify with groups that they cannot find in their real space next door.

The research was conducted during a specific and highly charged political event—the Gaza invasion. As a result, the findings may reflect temporary attitudes and emotions driven by the event, rather than long-term behavioral changes or sustained boycotting of Israeli products. It is possible that attitudes toward boycotting may fluctuate once the immediate political or social context changes.

Recent studies emphasize the part digital advocacy play in shaping user behavior. Research by scholars like by Kokeyo (2023) shows that digital media plays a worthy role in advocating for Palestine during times of conflict, the study emphasizes how online platforms not only spread information but also provide a space for youth to engage and mobilize in response to perceived injustices. These findings, alongside other recent academic research, strongly support the idea

that social media is a key factor in predicting support for cancel culture, particularly when it comes to Israeli products. The power of these platforms lies in their ability to foster collective action and activism. In the context of the Gaza invasion, social media has been crucial in motivating youth to boycott and oppose brands associated with political controversies, reinforcing the influence of digital spaces in shaping public attitudes and behaviors.

This growing body of research confirms that social media doesn't merely mirror public sentiment, but rather serves as a potent tool that can mold consumer behavior and ignite inspiration among younger Pakistanis, particularly amid the turmoil of the Gaza invasion. A comprehensive examination by David and Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2023) delves into how digital portrayals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict profoundly influence collective viewpoints. Often, misinformation pairs with emotionally charged narratives, swaying perceptions and consumer reactions to various branded commodities. Statistics show that anti-Israel posts on online applications such as TikTok and Instagram greatly outstrip the number of pro-Israeli posts.

This has been proven by extensive academic research as through #BoycottIsrael and #FreePalestine, social media became the most effective advocacy tool and consumer boycott enhancer. Research indicates that emotive involvement and vivid content on social media are important in evoking passionate reactions in the audiences who view them. Such involvement has a strong influencer effect on opinions about the products sponsored by the adverse party. For instance, during the recent Gaza invasion, the widespread circulation of vivid imagery and personal narratives significantly shaped public opinion.

The proposition that in-group versus out-group dynamics significantly influence support for cancel culture against Israeli products on social media is strongly supported by this study and other scholarly works. According to Social Identity Theory, individuals derive their

sense of self from their affiliation with a particular group (in-group) and differentiate themselves from those outside the group (out-group). This distinction often triggers powerful emotional and behavioral responses, especially when matters of morality or justice arise. This notion holds particular relevance in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where Pakistani youth, identifying as part of the Muslim Ummah (in-group), perceive Israel as the out-group, thus fueling their support for boycotting Israeli products. Results are thus aligned with the growing line of research that suggests in-group versus out-group dynamics are increasingly determining participation in cancel culture. Amiot et al. (2021). Shuman et al. (2021) and Abrams and Hogg (2010) asserts that social media magnifies the moral and ideological perceptions between in-group and out-group. The more polarized the outcome, the more room for cancel culture; people are more likely to participate in those in-group behaviors-boycotting or cancel culture-because of the difference between their in-group and an immoral out-group. Polarization creates stronger motivation to protect in-group values and challenges the out-group. Thus, boycotting Israeli products becomes a way of in-group solidarity with Palestine in Pakistan that in turn reinforces collective Muslim identity and opposition to perceived Israeli action.

The fact that people build up their self-concept over their relationship with certain groups is founded on social identity theory. This theoretical framework accounts for the readiness by which Pakistani youth is to support boycott drives targeting Israeli products; considering themselves as part of the Muslim Ummah further underlines this support. Their relation to the international Muslim community forms a bond with deep cohesion over the Palestinian issue. This is because the concept of social comparison exists. For example, people would compare their in-group Palestine supporters with that of the out-group Israelis and hence increase their involvement in boycott campaigns.

There is much evidence to relate that within

this study and from other scholars' work, the Pakistani youth's tendency toward boycott activities against Israeli product lines tends to deepen with strong identification with Palestinian victims. A religious, cultural, and political bond ties the cause of Palestinian with the youth in Pakistan, who find resonance in it and have therefore made a great impact on the involvement of the youth in boycott activities. According to Della Porta (2020), transnational problems could motivate young people everywhere to act as activists. She concludes that extreme emotional and ideological identification with the victimized people calls for participation in boycott campaigns. Identification with a Palestinian cause, when framed by a religious and moral lens is a key factor that goes for inciting the youth of Pakistan to participate in these boycott campaigns.

The findings of this study suggest that social categorization significantly influences Pakistani youth's readiness to take part in boycott movements targeting Israeli products. According to social identity theory, people define their identity in association with the groups they identify with, as explicated by Tajfel and Turner in 1986. Therefore, young Pakistanis who deeply identify with the Palestinian cause or the Muslim community generally are more likely to boycott because for them it is a form of expression of solidarity. This shared identity creates a sense of belonging and a moral obligation to respond to perceived injustices.

A high number of studies commend the notion that social categorization is involved in the influence of online boycott movements against Israeli products. For instance, BDS is one of the numerous modes of collective social and political identity that plays a more significant role in boosting consumerized boycotts. Through social categorization theory, collective identities are utilized by the BDS movement in an organized mobilization to boycott Israeli businesses, which are mostly those linked with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the Muslim community, the behavior is greatly amplified due to the

power of shared political values that legalize boycotts as a method of resistance (Awaludin et al., 2023). This study reflects the mirror image of how convergence between social identity and political position is driving boycott initiatives.

Additionally, Garrett (2009) in his study Echo shows that politically motivated selective exposure among Internet news users suggest that social categorization on social media often results in echo chambers, where users predominantly engage with like-minded individuals. This reinforces pre-existing group identities and strengthens collective action. In the case of Pakistani youth, social media platforms provide a space where religious and political affiliations are constantly reinforced through shared posts, hashtags, and boycott calls, further solidifying the motivation to reject Israeli products as an extension of their group identity.

The current study lays the groundwork for further research on how social identity processes motivate youth to be engaged in cancel culture and boycott movements. Although this study focuses on the Gaza invasion, future studies may look at other geopolitical settings to see if such patterns emerge. At the same time, qualitative research might do more justice to unveiling the personal motivations and emotive drivers behind youth mobilization in the midst of these movements, complemented well with findings placed within this quantitative framework. One could also probe into social media influencers' role in shaping public opinion and effectiveness in relation to achieving economic or political results through boycotts, how demographic impacts are further developed could be added to the area of study. Further research on the psychological effects of participating in cancel culture could help bring more light to the ways in which similar phenomena influence young minds. Long-term effectiveness of cancel culture and boycotts on social media boycotts remains an area ripe for investigation. Further avenues for research would be determining whether online activism actually

results in economic or political change and if such movements would be sustainable in the long run.

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