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Original Article

Personality Traits and Political Consumerism: Exploring the Role of Boycotting Behavior in Contemporary Consumer Activism

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Abstract *- This study examines the relationship among personality traits, demographic variables, and political consumerism, focusing on boycotting behaviour as a manifestation of consumer activism. Political consumerism, in which consumers base their purchasing decisions on ethical, social, or political values, has emerged as a pivotal instrument for global social change. Using a quantitative design, data were gathered from 132 participants to investigate behavioural engagement in boycotting, attitudes towards boycotting, and personality profiles characterised by the Big Five traits. The study examined hypotheses concerning gender, income, and participation in boycotts, in conjunction with personality dimensions. The findings indicate no substantial gender disparities in boycotting attitudes or behaviours, with the exception that females exhibited higher scores in Neuroticism. Income did not exhibit a significant correlation with political consumerism behaviours or attitudes. There was a strong positive relationship between behavioural engagement and attitudes towards boycotting. Personality traits, on the other hand, had little predictive power, except for a possible link between agreeableness and participation in a boycott. The research substantiates political consumerism as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon shaped predominantly by emotional and social influences rather than socio-economic conditions or overarching personality traits.*

Keywords *- Political consumerism, Boycotting behavior, Big five personality traits, Gender differences, Income, Consumer activism, Political psychology.*

1. Introduction

In an era where global issues like fundamental civil rights, inalienable human rights, climate change, and corporate ethics dominate public discourse, consumers are not just buyers but agents of change. Political consumerism, the practice of making purchasing decisions based on ethical, social, or political values, has emerged as a powerful tool for influencing industries and governments.

The paradigm of political consumerism was adopted by citizen involvement as an initiative to showcase their political stances, and there has been an increasing tendency towards individually driven activism (Newman & Bartels, 2010).

Political consumerism first originated as a form of consumer activism, where consumers consciously refrained from purchasing certain products and goods. They began deliberately avoiding products from controversial companies to decrease support for corporations that uphold questionable ethical standards while practicing unprincipled and morally negligent practices. This, in turn, led to rising political instability and societal tension.

1.1. The History and Understanding of Political Consumerism

Historically, behaviors related to political consumerism, such as boycotting and buycotting, can be traced back to the 1955–1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott in the United States of America. A landmark event in the trajectory of political consumerism, which catalyzed the concept of boycotting, was the arrest of civil rights activist Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama (Vogel, 2017).

Her arrest triggered a mass boycott that lasted for a full year, resulting in a $7,000 daily revenue loss for the bus company and significantly impacting the downtown commercial district.

This single event became one of the most pivotal moments in showcasing the rise of political consumerism as a tool for shaping society. The American Civil Rights Movement, through the Montgomery Bus Boycott, successfully challenged racial segregation and led to constitutional change (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005).

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Five years later, another wave of resistance emerged when four black college students sat in the "whites only" section of a Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Within two months, nationwide protests spread across 78 Southern communities, leading to 2,000 arrests and the desegregation of facilities in 110 Southern and border states (Vogel, 2017).

Other historical examples include the White Label campaign of the late 1980s and 1990s, which promoted anti-sweatshop labels to encourage American women to purchase "sweatshop-free" clothing for themselves and their children (Sklar, 1998; Stolle et al., 2005). There are other historical examples from Latin America, such as when people in Brazil mobilised in 1986 to support the government as "price watchdogs." In the 1990s, mostly middle-class consumers in Brazil and Argentina protested against privatised firms that broke the law by picketing, filing class-action lawsuits, and boycotting communication services. In the 1960s and 1970s, upper-middle-class housewives in Brazil and Chile held "marches of the empty pots" to show how political objectives affected government policies (Echegaray, 2015).

Political consumerism in Asia really took off in India between the late 1800s and the early 1900s, especially when the British were in charge. The Partition of Bengal was the main cause of the Swadeshi movement, which was led mostly by Indian nationalists like Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and others. Gandhi's ideas, beliefs, and actions had a big impact on the concept of political consumerism, which became a common way for people to break British trade laws. He did this by encouraging people to reject foreign goods and support domestic production, which promoted the idea of economic self-sufficiency. This movement not only brought about a new way to express political views and take action, but it also stood for the idea of economic autarky, which is the goal of having an economy that can support itself and not be controlled by colonial powers. Gandhi's dedication to advocating for self-reliance—especially regarding dietary practices, clothing, and indigenous production, exemplified by his support for khadi (hand-spun cloth) over British textiles—signified a deliberate transition towards national identity. This kind of political activism can be called "buycotting," which means that people buy things from certain brands or companies on purpose to show their support for their political beliefs. This movement was very important for the growth of political consumerism in India because Gandhi turned it into a common way to resist. Gradually, in contemporary India, Swadeshi—originating from the colonial legacy of political consumerism—remains a mechanism for disseminating nationalist rhetoric, frequently motivated by commercial interests (Sreekumar & Varman, 2019).

More recent events demonstrate the continued relevance of political consumerism. In 2012, LGBTQ+ activists organized a boycott against Chick-fil-A after the company's stance against same-sex marriage became public (Knudsen & Moon, 2017).

In 2018, Nike featured former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick in an advertising campaign, sparking polarized reactions. Boycotts were organized, with viral campaigns of consumers burning Nike products, yet Nike's sales and stock prices rose, showing that boycotts can backfire (Li et al., 2021).

Ben & Jerry's continues to champion progressive causes such as climate action, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ rights, earning consumer loyalty by aligning its brand with social values. Similarly, political endorsements by companies and individuals have led to counter-consumption practices. For instance, Donald Trump's promotion of "LLB" products, whose owners supported his campaign, triggered boycotts among Democrats (Ciszek & Logan, 2018).

1.2. The Role of Social Media in Political Consumerism

Political consumerism has been recognized as a global trend (Friedman, 1999). Whether through boycotting unethical brands or buycotting ethical ones, individuals use consumer power to influence societal change. These behaviors are often categorized as "lifestyle politics," where everyday choices become political statements (De Moor & Verhaegen, 2020). People who engage in lifestyle politics view everyday decisions and happenings as political statements (Bennet, 2019).

Online and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube further amplify political consumerism by enabling group participation in campaigns (Gardo, 2020). Online communities allow symbolic actions like changing profile pictures, which can significantly increase the likelihood of boycott/buycott participation (Boulianne, 2021).

Research found that social media's use during the 2018 US-China trade dispute played a crucial role in shaping people's political consumer behaviours, such as boycotting products produced in China or engaging in purchasing products made in the United States (Lu, Vierrether, Wu, Durfee, & Chen, 2022).

A separate study conducted a national survey of American adults aimed at examining the different perspectives of public attitudes towards the bilateral commercial tension, which eventually led to a trade dispute between the United States and China. Previous literature has demonstrated social media as a key predictor of political consumerism. Recent investigations using the Orientation-Stimulus-Reasoning-Orientation-Response (O-S-R-O-R) model have shown that social media news consumption has an effect on American perceptions and attitudes, especially with the trade dispute between the United States and China. Typically, the O-S-R-

O-R model has been applied to domestic issues, electoral campaigns, and referendums; this study utilizes it within a broader context, applying it to foreign policy issues in order to gain a deeper understanding of personal preferences, perspectives, and experiences. The O-S-R-O-R model has been utilized in political communication research by scholars to explore and analyze the relationship between personal predilections, tendencies, and political engagement.

The role of social media in today's time in facilitating a conversation around political concerns and creating a community wherein people can jointly express opinions about the ongoing political climate in their respective countries cannot be denied. Social media has emerged as a facilitator of political consumerism, boycott behaviour, and buycotting tendencies.

1.3. Understanding Personality in Political Consumerism

Carl Rogers (1961) has stated that personality is an organized, consistent pattern of perception of the 'self' which influences behavior and experiences, and this can be seen as a more humanistic view, implying personal growth and self-contemplation as well as awareness. Personality is one of the key psychological factors that determines, differentiates, and characterizes individuals (Ashton, 2013).

A study conducted at Monash University (Huang, 2024) demonstrated the salience of consumer psychology in understanding market behavior by analyzing market dynamics. Findings revealed that observations of the underlying motivations of consumers have significantly aided companies in determining the specific target markets and formulating better market strategies and policies. This study primarily focused on the Big Five personalities and their effects on comprehending complex consumer behaviors, particularly with regard to sustainable purchasing habits. This paper demonstrates how personality traits and cognitive characteristics can influence their propensity to purchase certain products. Previous literature indicates that individuals exhibiting different personality traits tend to have diverse purchasing preferences. Observations include that individuals with higher openness are more inclined to explore various aspects of consumption and have a higher tendency to experiment with new or different products. Alternatively, individuals with higher levels of conscientiousness tend to value products that satisfy dependability and reliability, reflecting their natural inclination towards pragmatism when making purchasing decisions.

O'Connor, Smith, and Patel (2022) investigated how personality traits and demographic variables can have an effect on car feature preferences, particularly focusing on the relation with Big Five Personality dimensions. Findings from the study revealed a positive correlation between age and personality in terms of car preferences. The outcomes of the study specifically highlight how the younger demographic with narcissistic and extroverted traits are predisposed to care more about the look, appearance, and performance of the car, whereas the older demographic with higher levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness usually prioritize practicality, reliability, and safety.

According to another study conducted by Mulyanegara (2009), consumers who are highly conscientious generally opt for brands that are more "trustworthy" and "reliable." Matzler, Bidmon, and Grabner-Kräuter (2006) found a positive correlation between individuals who have higher levels of extraversion and the purchase of enjoyment-driven products. A study conducted by Lucy and Mooradian (2010) revealed that individuals who are more outgoing, extroverted, and sociable tend to be more aware and active when it comes to social, economic, and environmental issues.

Additionally, research indicates that, alongside extraversion, other personality traits also play a major role in shaping sustainable consumption. Personality traits exert a significant impact on gender, identifying clear differences between men's and women's green consumption. Extroverted individuals are more prone to making risky, impulsive decisions, while individuals with neurotic tendencies are prone to low-risk, cautious decisions. In conclusion, evidence suggests that individuals who exhibit traits of conscientiousness, openness, and neuroticism show a positively correlated pattern of impulsive and spontaneous consumer behavior.

While studies have shown that consumers' personal values and lifestyles can have an influence on social consumption, these factors constitute only two psychological variables. On the other hand, personality traits can be said to be a key determinant in shaping those certain personal value systems, beliefs, and lifestyles (Paetz, 2020). This particular study employed a discrete choice methodology in order to investigate and analyze consumers' personalities as a major contributor to consumer behavior, using the five-factor model. Research revealed that gender, academic degree, income, and four personality traits have been significantly associated with being an underlying force behind consumer behavior. The study held that personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism, and agreeableness have a positive effect on consumer behaviour, with even openness being a driving factor.

Psychological traits play a key role in political consumerism. Personality—defined by researchers such as Allport (1937), Eysenck (1981), and McCrae & Costa (1990)—influences individuals' willingness to engage in boycotts or buycotts.

The Big Five Personality Traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) offer a framework to understand how people's inherent dispositions affect their engagement in political

consumerism (McCrae & John, 1992; Soto et al., 2013; Md Yunus et al., 2018).

- Openness relates to curiosity and creativity, leading to a higher likelihood of engaging with causes.
- Conscientiousness connects with responsibility and discipline, potentially predicting consistent activism.
- Extraversion links to assertive and social activism, while introversion may avoid collective action.
- Agreeableness aligns with empathy-driven support for ethical companies.
- Neuroticism may drive strong emotional responses to injustices, but can also result in avoidance behaviors.

Boycotting and buycotting are not merely economic decisions but expressions of identity shaped by personality traits. According to Kam & Deichert (2019), boycotts reflect avoidance protest behavior aimed at applying economic pressure, while buycotts represent approach-oriented behavior toward companies aligned with consumers' moral and political values.

Thus, personality provides an important lens to understand why individuals with similar resources or political attitudes engage differently in consumer activism.

1.3. Social Class and Political Consumerism

The effect of social class has been evidently proven to have a significant influence on the dynamics of political consumerism. People from higher socio-economic classes usually have more money to spend, more access to information, and more exposure to global issues. This makes it easier for them to participate in boycotts and buycotts (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013). Their education and financial resources often give them a better understanding of moral, environmental, and political issues, which lets them use consumer activism as a way to be involved in their communities. For instance, middle- and upper-class shoppers might choose fair-trade or eco-labeled goods on purpose to show what they believe in and strengthen their social identities as people who care about the environment (Copeland, 2014). In this manner, political consumerism becomes interwoven with class-based lifestyle distinctions, wherein the ability to participate in ethical consumption is frequently associated with privilege.

On the other hand, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face structural barriers that make it harder for them to participate in political consumerism. Financial limitations frequently hinder the prioritisation of ethical considerations over cost-effectiveness, as less expensive options may supersede sustainably or ethically sourced products (Shaw et al., 2016). This does not necessarily mean that people are not politically active; it just shows how differences in resources limit opportunities for consumer activism. In certain instances, working-class communities have participated in collective boycotts, especially concerning labour rights or local economic matters, which exemplify political consumerism grounded in tangible economic conditions rather than global issues (Koos, 2012). So, even though political consumerism is often seen as a personal and voluntary choice, it is heavily influenced by class structures that decide who can afford to align their consumption with political values and who must put their survival needs ahead of activism.

The present study aims to investigate the psychological and demographic factors underlying political consumerism, with a particular focus on boycotting behaviours. Specifically, it examines whether behavioural engagement with boycotting and attitudes toward boycotting vary across gender, income levels, and boycott participation status. Additionally, the study explores the role of personality traits, both overall and across the Big Five dimensions, in shaping political consumerism. Finally, it seeks to identify the interrelationships among behavioural engagement, attitudes, and personality to better understand the characteristics that differentiate active boycotters, non-boycotters, and indifferent consumers.

2. Methodology

2.1. Aim

This study examines how demographic factors (gender, income, and boycott participation) and personality traits (overall and Big Five dimensions) influence political consumerism, specifically attitudes and behavioural engagement with boycotting. It further explores the interrelationships among these variables to identify characteristics distinguishing active boycotters from non-boycotters and indifferent consumers.

2.2. Research Hypotheses

H1: There will be a significant difference between male and female participants in behavioural engagement with boycotting.

H2: There will be a significant difference between male and female participants in attitudes toward boycotting.

H3: Male and female participants will significantly differ in their overall personality scores.

H4: Male and female participants will significantly differ on the Big Five personality subscales (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Openness, Conscientiousness).

H5: Participants who engage in boycotts will report significantly higher behavioural engagement compared to non-participants.

H6: Participants who engage in boycotts will report significantly stronger attitudes toward boycotting compared to non-participants.

H7: Participants who engage in boycotts will significantly differ from non-participants across Big Five personality traits.

H8: Behavioural engagement with boycotting will significantly differ across income groups.
H9: Attitudes toward boycotting will significantly differ across income groups.
H10: Personality scores will significantly differ across income groups.
H11: Behavioural engagement with boycotting, attitudes toward boycotting, and personality scores will be significantly correlated.

2.3. Participants

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between personality traits and political consumerism, with a specific focus on behavioural engagement in boycotting and attitudes toward boycotting. Data were collected from 132 participants, comprising 58 males and 72 females, with 2 participants identifying as "other." For gender-based analyses, responses from participants who selected "other" were excluded due to the limited sample size, which constrained the ability to conduct meaningful statistical comparisons.

2.4. Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative research design to systematically analyze the associations between gender, income, personality traits, and political consumerism behaviours.

2.5. Instrumentation

1. A brief version of the Big Five Personality Inventory (Rammstedt & John, 2007): The questionnaire consists of 10 items, which measure the dimensions of personality, including extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. An example of the item is: "I see myself as someone who tends to be lazy." The responses are to be provided on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Agree strongly."
2. **Behavioral Engagement in Boycotting and Buycotting (**Klein, Smith, & John, 2004) Participants' engagement in political consumerism was assessed using items adapted from Klein, Smith, & John (2004) as cited in *The Attitude Towards Boycotts: Determining Factors*. The items captured different facets of consumer activism, including decisions to avoid or purchase products due to the social or political values of the producing company. Example items include: *"Decided not to buy something from a certain company because you disagree with the social and political policies of the company that distributes the item."* These items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)*.
3. **Attitudes Toward Boycotting (Miller, 2009):** These items focused on participants' evaluations of boycotting as a form of political consumerism, as well as perceived social approval or disapproval from significant others. Example items include: *"I do not like the idea of participating in a boycott." "I would feel guilty if I participated in a boycott."*These items were also rated on the same five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

2.6. Data Collection Procedure

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling, whereby respondents were invited to complete an online survey and share the link within their personal and professional networks. This method was chosen given the sensitive nature of the topic and the need to reach a diverse yet relevant sample. Data were collected using a Google Forms questionnaire, which was structured into two main sections designed to assess behavioural engagement with boycotting, attitudes toward boycotting, and personality traits.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

Prior to participation, all respondents were provided with information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and the expected time commitment. Informed consent was obtained electronically before completing the questionnaire. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and no identifying information was collected. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Clear instructions were provided within the Google Form to ensure accurate and ethical participation.

3. Results

Table 1. The t-test values for gender and behavioural engagement with boycotting.

		n	M	S.D.	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Behavioural Engagement with Boycotting	Male	58	19.98	6.57	-1.62	128	.108	0.29
	Female	72	21.69	5.49				

As per the independent sample t-test which was conducted to examine gender differences in behavioural engagement with boycotting, the results revealed no statistically significant difference between male (M = 19.98, SD = 6.57) and female participants (M= 21.69, SD = 5.49), $t(128) = -1.62$ $p = .108$ ($p > 0.05$), Cohen's $d = 0.29$. The effect size was small, indicating that gender accounted for only a minimal difference in behavioural engagement with boycotting. Thus, H1, which states that there will be a significant difference between genders on the dependent variable of behavioural engagement with boycotting, is *rejected*.

Table 2. The t-test values for gender and attitude towards boycotting.

		n	M	S.D.	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Attitude towards boycotting	Male	58	23.12	4.78	-0.83	128	.407	0.15
	Female	72	23.76	4.03				

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in attitudes toward boycotting. The results revealed no statistically significant difference between male (M = 23.12, SD = 4.78) and female participants (M = 23.76, SD = 4.03), $t(128) = -0.83$, $p = .407$ ($p > 0.05$), Cohen's $d = 0.15$. The effect size was small, indicating that gender accounted for only a minimal difference in attitudes toward boycotting. Overall, the findings suggest that attitudes toward boycotting were similar across genders.

Table 3. The t-test table for gender and personality score.

		n	M	S.D.	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Personality score	Male	58	32.26	3.63	-1.31	128	.194	0.23
	Female	72	33.24	4.67				

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in personality scores. The results revealed no statistically significant difference between male (M = 32.26, SD = 3.63) and female participants (M = 33.24, SD = 4.67), $t(128) = -1.31$, $p = .194$ ($p > 0.05$), Cohen's $d = 0.23$. The effect size was small, indicating that gender accounted for only a minimal difference in personality score.

Table 4. The t-test values for personality subscales and gender

		n	M	S.D.	t	df	p	Cohen's d
EXT	Male	58	6.88	1.88	1.52	128	.132	0.27
	Female	72	6.35	2.07				
AGR	Male	58	7.12	1.39	-0.16	128	.87	0.03
	Female	72	7.17	1.74				
NEU	Male	58	5.09	2.15	-2.36	128	.02	0.42
	Female	72	5.96	2.05				
OPE	Male	58	6.6	1.41	-1.1	128	.275	0.19
	Female	72	6.9	1.65				
CONS	Male	58	6.57	1.81	-0.88	128	.382	0.15
	Female	72	6.86	1.95				

*EXT = Extraversion, AGR = Agreeableness, NEU = Neuroticism, OTE = Openness to Experience, CONS = Conscientiousness

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether scores on the Big Five personality traits differed by gender. The results indicated that males and females did not significantly differ. The results revealed no statistically significant differences across any of the Big Five personality dimensions. For Extraversion, the difference between females (M = 6.35, SD = 2.07) and males (M = 6.88, SD = 1.88) was not significant, t(128) = 1.52, p = .132, d = 0.27. Similarly, Agreeableness there was no significant difference, t(128) = -0.16, p = .87, d = 0.03; Openness to Experience, t(128) = -1.1, p = .275, d = 0.19; or Conscientiousness, t(128) = -0.88, p = .328, d = 0.15. However, Neuroticism showed significant difference in females (M = 5.96, SD =2.05) and males (M = 5.09, SD = 2.15), t(128) = -1.1, p = .02 ($p < 0.05$), d = 0.42, indicating a small to moderate effect. Overall, while personality traits were not significantly associated with gender, Neuroticism showed a potential trend worth further exploration.

Table 5. The t-test values for behavioural engagement with boycotting and participation in the boycott.

		n	M	S.D.	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Behavioural Engagement	No	63	17.79	6.19	-6.23	130	<.001	1.09
	Yes	69	23.68	4.62				

According to Table 5, the t-test for participation in boycott on the dependent variable of behavioural engagement with boycott revealed that there was a significant mean difference between those who did participate in boycott (M = 23.68, SD = 4.62) as compared to those who did not participate in boycott (M= 17.79, SD = 6.19), with t= -6.23, p < .001. The Cohen's d value of 1.09 indicates a large effect size.

Table 6. The t-test values for participation in the boycott and attitude towards boycotting.

		n	M	S.D.	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Attitude towards boycotting	No	63	21.25	4.44	-6.24	130	<.001	1.09
	Yes	69	25.45	3.24				

According to Table 6, the t-test for participation in boycott on the dependent variable of attitudes towards boycotting revealed that there was a significant mean difference between those who did participate in boycott (M= 25.45, SD = 3.24) as compared to those who did not participate in boycott (M = 21.25, SD = 4.44), with t= -6.24, p < .001. The Cohen's d value of 1.09 indicates a large effect size.

Table 7. The t-test values for personality subscales and participation in boycotts.

		n	**M**	**S.D.**	**t**	**df**	**p**	**Cohen's d**
EXT	No	63	6.76	1.98	0.77	130	.444	0.13
	Yes	69	6.49	2.04				
AGR	No	63	7.4	1.47	1.83	130	.07	0.32
	Yes	69	6.9	1.65				
NEU	No	63	5.4	2.11	-0.92	130	.359	0.16
	Yes	69	5.74	2.15				
OTE	No	63	6.7	1.57	-0.53	130	.598	0.09
	Yes	69	6.84	1.52				
CONS	No	63	6.89	1.95	0.98	130	.328	0.17
	Yes	69	6.57	1.83				

*EXT = Extraversion, AGR = Agreeableness, NEU = Neuroticism, OTE = Openness to Experience, CONS = Conscientiousness

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether personality traits differed between individuals who participated in a boycott and those who did not. The results revealed no statistically significant differences across any of the Big Five personality dimensions. For Extraversion, the difference between participants (M = 6.49, SD = 2.04) and non-participants (M = 6.76, SD = 1.98) was not significant, t(130) = 0.77, p = .444, d = 0.13. Similarly, there were no significant differences in Neuroticism, t(130) = -0.92, p = .359, d = 0.16; Openness to Experience, t(130) = -0.53, p = .598, d = 0.09; or Conscientiousness, t(130) = 0.98, p = .328, d = 0.17. However, Agreeableness approached significance, with non-participants (M = 7.40, SD = 1.47) scoring slightly higher than participants (M = 6.90, SD = 1.65), t(130) = 1.83, p = .07, d = 0.32, indicating a small to moderate effect. Overall, while personality traits were not significantly associated with boycott participation, Agreeableness showed a potential trend worth further exploration.

Table 8. The ANOVA for behavioral engagement with boycotting and annual household income

	n	M	S.D.	F	p	η2
30,000 TO 100,000 USD	52	21.13	5.35	0.08	.924	0
Above 100,000 USD	48	20.67	6.21			
Less than 30,000 USD	32	20.75	7.38			

According to Table 8, the ANOVA values for behavioural engagement with boycotting and annual household income reveals that those who have an annual household income of 30,000 to 100,000 USD have a slightly higher mean (M=21.13, SD = 5.35) compared to those earning less than 30,000 USD (M = 20.75, SD = 7.38) and those earning above 100,000 USD (M = 20.67, SD = 6.21). There was no significant difference between the three groups with F = 0.08, p = .924 (p > 0.05). The η2 value of 0 indicates a small, non-existent effect size.

Table 9. The ANOVA for annual income and attitude towards boycotting.

	n	M	S.D.	F	p	η2
30,000 TO 100,000 USD	52	23.67	4.06	1.38	.256	0.02
Above 100,000 USD	48	22.67	4.61			
Less than 30,000 USD	32	24.25	4.48			

According to Table 9, the ANOVA values for attitude towards boycotting and annual household income reveals that those who have an annual household income of above 100,000 USD have a slightly lower mean (M = 22.67, SD = 4.61) compared to those earning less than 30,000 USD (M = 24.25, SD = 4.48) and 30,000 to 100,000 USD (M=23.67, SD = 4.06). There was no significant difference between the three groups with F = 1.38, p = .256 (p > 0.05). The η2 value of 0.02 indicates a small, non-existent effect size.

Table 10. The ANOVA for annual household income and total personality score

	n		M	S.D.	F	p	η2
30,000 TO 100,000 USD	52		33.65	3.54	2.28	.106	0.03
Above 100,000 USD	48		32.71	4.86			
Less than 30,000 USD	32		31.66	4.06			

According to Table 10, the ANOVA values for total personality score and annual household income reveals that those who have an annual household income of 30,000 to 100,000 USD have a slightly higher mean (M=33.65, SD = 3.54) compared to those earning less than 30,000 USD (M = 31.66, SD = 4.06) and those earning above 100,000 USD (M = 32.71, SD = 4.86). There was no significant difference between the three groups with F = 1.38, p = .256 (p > 0.05). The η2 value of 0.03 indicates a small, non-existent effect size.

Table 11. The correlation between behavioral engagement with boycotting, attitude towards boycotting, and personality.

		BEB	ATB	PER
BEB	Correlation	1	0.57	0.15
	p		<.001	.078
ATB	Correlation	0.57	1	0
	p	<.001		.982
PER	Correlation	0.15	0	1
	p	.078	.982	

*BEB = Behavioural engagement with boycotting, ATB = Attitude towards boycotting, PER = Personality score

Table 11 shows the Pearson correlation for Behavioural Engagement with Boycotting (BEB), Attitude Towards Boycotting (ATB), and total Personality score (PER). According to the table, BEB and ATB were significantly positively correlated with r = 0.57, p < .001; however, BEB with PER score had a weak positive correlation, which was non-significant in nature, r = 0.15, p = .078 (p > 0.05). ATB and PER had no correlation and a non-significant relationship with r = 0, p = .982 (p > 0.05).

The research also asked respondents questions about the brand/company they boycotted, along with the political reasons behind their decision. The responses reveal that boycotting practices among the participants are shaped by a combination of political, humanitarian, and ethical considerations. The most common driver was political solidarity with Palestine, with many respondents refusing to purchase products from multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Starbucks, McDonald's, KFC, and Zara, which they perceived as either supporting Israel financially or ideologically. This reflects how global brands often become symbolic targets during geopolitical conflicts. Alongside political motivations, several respondents highlighted humanitarian concerns, particularly regarding exploitative labor practices in the fast-fashion industry, citing brands like Zara, H&M, and SHEIN for poor working conditions, sweatshops, and the mistreatment of Uyghur workers in China. Ethical values also played a role in shaping boycotts, with some individuals refusing to use products associated with animal cruelty (e.g., Maybelline), misogynistic or abusive musicians, or brands accused of racism and discriminatory practices (e.g., Karl Lagerfeld). In addition, region-specific and identity-driven boycotts emerged, such as avoiding Indian products linked to the July Revolution Movement in Bangladesh or Pakistani army-manufactured goods. While some respondents provided clear and well-articulated reasons for their choices, others simply listed products without justification, suggesting that for certain individuals, boycotting may be more symbolic, habitual, or socially influenced rather than rooted in personal conviction. Overall, the findings indicate that boycotting is not a uniform behavior but a multi-layered practice, where political solidarity, ethical concerns, and social identity converge to shape consumer choices.

4. Discussion

The current study investigated the correlation among personality traits, gender, income, and political consumerism behaviours, particularly boycotting and buycotting. Results showed that there were no important differences between men and women in how they felt about boycotting or how they acted when they boycotted. Likewise, no substantial gender differences were identified in the Big Five personality traits, with the exception of Neuroticism, where women exhibited higher scores than men. Moreover, annual income did not substantially affect attitudes towards or participation in boycotting. Correlation analysis revealed a robust relationship between behavioural engagement and attitudes towards boycotting, while personality traits exhibited minimal predictive capability.

Previous research indicates that women frequently engage more actively in political consumerism than men, which contradicts the current findings. Studies conducted in European contexts reveal that women, especially those who are young, well-educated, politically trusting, and digitally engaged, are more inclined to participate in boycotting behaviours (Janseberger & Lefkofridi, 2025). Similar trends have been observed in Brazil, where guilt emerged as a more potent motivator for women than for men, affecting their participation in boycotting (Klein, Smith, & John, 2004; De Paula Andrade Cruz et al., 2013). The increased likelihood of women feeling guilt may be associated with overarching cultural and psychological dynamics related to socially constructed gender roles.

Neilson (2010) also pointed out that women may be more likely to buycott, which means supporting companies that share their values, than to boycott, which is often seen as harsher. This differentiation indicates that gender may influence political consumption variably, with women exhibiting greater receptivity to corporate messaging and socially responsible practices. Another study underscores the substantial impact of gender on political consumerism, especially in delineating the disparities between men's and women's attitudes towards political consumption. It shows that gender ideology has a big effect on how young women act when they boycott or buycott. The study investigates various factors contributing to the existence of this gap, focusing on gender dynamics, political socialisation, socio-economic resources, accessibility, and educational opportunities. In particular, it looks at political consumerism among young women in cities with different job situations. Although gender disparities in participatory activities, such as consumer activism, are diminishing—or even reversing—in Western societies, factors such as enhanced educational opportunities for women and increased workforce integration have produced beneficial spillover effects, fostering voluntary participation and heightened political engagement. Historically, however, inequalities in political participation were exacerbated by unequal access to education, varying employment conditions, income disparities, and broader socio-economic factors such as age, ethnicity, and gender (Lorenzini & Bassoli, 2015).

The current study identified no significant correlations between personality traits and political consumerism, except for elevated levels of Neuroticism in women. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that women generally exhibit greater emotional sensitivity, reactivity, and vulnerability to negative affect—fundamental aspects of Neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Given the association between guilt and Neuroticism, it is reasonable to posit that intensified emotional responses may lead to increased political consumption among women, especially through boycotting (De Paula Andrade Cruz et al., 2013).

While overall personality traits did not exhibit a significant correlation with boycotting, previous research indicates that Agreeableness may be a contributing factor. People who are very agreeable, which means they are altruistic and cooperative, are more likely to buy things for political reasons (Micheletti, 2017). This study did not yield compelling evidence; however, subsequent research involving larger and more varied samples may elucidate the influence of personality on consumer activism.

This study found no significant link between income levels and political consumerism. Individuals from various income brackets exhibited comparable attitudes and behaviours regarding boycotting. These findings diverge from previous studies that recognised income and socio-economic status as significant predictors of political consumerism, especially in Western contexts where enhanced resource access facilitates greater engagement (Ferrer-Fons & Fraile, 2013). Postmodern consumption theories propose that conventional class distinctions may be diminishing in significance, as individuals progressively formulate social identities through lifestyle choices and consumption behaviours (Giddens, 1991). However, alternative research contends that structural determinants, including income and education, persist in influencing access to and modalities of political consumption (Adugu, 2014, 2016; Yates, 2010).
The results of this study highlight the intricacy of political consumerism and indicate that gendered emotional experiences, especially guilt associated with Neuroticism, may partially elucidate women's increased participation in such behaviours. Nonetheless, income and the majority of personality traits exhibited minimal explanatory capacity within this sample.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the correlation among political consumerism, personality traits, gender, and income, specifically concentrating on boycotting and buycotting behaviours. The results indicated that gender did not have a significant impact on attitudes towards boycotting or

behavioural engagement, except in the case of Neuroticism, where women exhibited higher scores than men. This indicates that although general personality traits may not significantly forecast political consumerism, gender-associated emotional tendencies, such as Neuroticism, may influence engagement.

Furthermore, income did not significantly influence attitudes or behavioural engagement, which contradicts previous literature that highlights the impact of socio-economic resources on promoting political consumerism. The study notably emphasised a robust positive correlation between behavioural engagement and attitudes towards boycotting, illustrating the intrinsic link between consumers' beliefs and their actions.

Agreeableness exhibited a modest and statistically insignificant effect; however, its correlation with cooperative and prosocial behaviours suggests avenues for further investigation. In general, the results show that personality traits may play a subtle role in political consumerism. Gender differences in emotional factors like guilt and Neuroticism need to be looked at more closely. Subsequent research ought to utilise larger, cross-cultural samples and incorporate additional variables, including religion, generational disparities, and digital media consumption, to enhance the comprehension of political consumerism.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was conducted with a relatively small sample (N = 132), which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling, introducing potential sampling bias.
2. The research primarily focused on participants from a South Asian context. Political consumerism, however, is influenced by cultural, economic, and political conditions, meaning the findings may not be fully applicable across other regions or societies.
3. Data was collected using self-report questionnaires, which introduces social desirability bias.
4. The study only considers demographic variables of gender and household income. This limits the impact that other demographic factors have on political consumerism, such as social media exposure, political ideology, and social class.
5. Since the survey was in English, it could only be filled out by participants who understood the language. This keeps the survey limited to a certain section of society.

Future Recommendations

1. Future researchers can explore how social class, social media exposure, and the political ideology employed can influence individuals' participation in boycott/buycott.
2. More research can be done to understand buycotting and boycotting.
3. A mixed methods approach will allow a more in-depth understanding of the factors governing political consumerism. This can be done by interviewing participants from different social classes, with different political ideologies, and different stances towards boycotting.
4. A cross-cultural comparison can help explore political consumerism beyond the lens of South Asian participants.
5. Other traits beyond the Big Five can be investigated, such as empathy or social dominance orientation, and their influence on political consumerism.
6. Situational and contextual factors, such as religion, digital media exposure, political ideology, and environmental consciousness, can be included as potential predictors.
7. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to see if personality influences political consumerism over time or during different political/economic events.

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