



Predicting Muslim Consumer Intention to Boycott a Product - a Test of the Theory of Planned Behavior

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This study aims to investigate the behavior of Muslim consumers in boycotting the products of pro-LGBT companies. It involves 407 respondents from 375 local and international consumers. Data analysis is carried out using multiple linear regression. It suggests that the boycott of the local consumers occurs due to subjective norms driven by encouragement from family and close friends while that of the international consumers is influenced by their perceived attitudes and control over behavior.

Key words: *Theory of Planned Behavior, Boycott, Muslim Consumer, International Consumer Behavior.*



Background of Research

Studies on consumer boycotts towards particular products in various contexts have been conducted, including the model of foreign product boycott by Chinese consumers (Smith and Qianpin, 2010), boycott of Danish products in the Middle East related to the Muhammad cartoon controversy (Jensen, 2008), boycott of Muslim consumers on Globality and Intentional attribution of animosity (Abd-Razak and Abdul-Talib, 2012), exploration of the relationship between religious beliefs and consumer boycotts of certain products (Al-Hyari et.al., 2012), the influence of religiously motivated consumer boycotts on brand image, loyalty and product valuation (Abosag and Farah, 2014), the boycott intention of Canadian and Korea students through cross-cultural comparison studies (Mie and Hyang, 2016); consumer motivation to participate in boycotts (Akpoyomare et al., 2012; Braunsberger and Buckler, 2011; Abdul-Talib et al., 2016); and boycott towards foreign products from the perspective of Indonesian Muslim consumers (Sari et al., 2017). However, empirical evidence about Muslim consumers who do boycott as a protest against products advocating the legality of LGBT has never been found.

According to Friedman (1985; 1991), every boycott behavior generally has two objectives: first, forcing the targeted company to modify the initial marketing policy, such as lowering prices, improving after-sale services, recalling and even attracting support for the LGBT community and second, manifesting a more general protest and meeting customer dissatisfaction due to the company policy. This study focuses on the intention of Muslim consumers to boycott using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). TPB goes to three determinants on consumer intentions. The first is “attitude towards the behavior,” referring to how far a person makes a pro or contra evaluation or assessment. The second is a social factor, which is called the subjective norm. It relates to perceived social pressure to conduct a behavior or not. The third is seen as behavioral control, which refers to the feeling of whether it is easy or difficult to react and is recognized to be the reflection of past experiences and anticipated obstacles.

TPB commonly applies to marketing research and consumer behavior, for example predicting purchase intentions of halal food (Alam and Sayuti, 2011), student entrepreneurship in Arabia (Aloulou, 2016; Olatunji, 2017), choosing healthy food (Brouwer and Mosack, 2015), blood donor behavior among young people in Iran (Charsetad, 2016), the adoption of environmentally friendly information technology (Dezdar, 2017), internet use for students in India (Fusilier and Durlabhji, 2005), online trading (Gopi and Ramayah, 2007), healthy food



consumption (Grønhoj et al., 2012), the participation of Muslim consumers using Islamic insurance (Husin and Rahman, 2016), the behavior of selecting luxury fashion (Jain et al., 2017), purchasing official sports merchandise (Min and James, 2016) and using technology for educational students in Singapore (Teo and Lee, 2010). TPB application studies in boycotting the legality of LGBT advocating the products are deemed to be a new research topic not widely explored. Thus, it is essential for academics and marketers to test the validity of TPB in the context of boycotts, and consumer intentions to boycott as a supportive Muslim marketing strategy.

Research context

Today, the LGBT issue becomes more interesting among Muslim academics because of the fact that it is not allowed in Islamic law (haram) due to perceptions regarding increasing population, activities in various sectors of work, recognition and legalisation in state positive law, propensity to disease, and criminal correlation (MUI, 2014). The global LGBT population is still under debate because some are still unwilling to show their identity due to state policies. According to the UN, they numbered in 2011, three million. The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia states that this number reached 1,095,970 in 2012, and around 5% (66,180) of them suffer HIV (Republika, 2016). This equates to 3% of the total population of 250 million in Indonesia, or is equal to 7.5 million. It shows that Indonesia has the fifth largest population of LGBT in the world after China, India, Europe and America (Sixpack Magazine, 2015).

The status of LGBT in some countries in Europe, America, Mexico, Canada, and Australia is legalized. Their existence has equal recognition with straight community members in terms of comprising their physical and biological status (World Economic Forum, 2017). In a Muslim-majority country (Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Lebanon and Turkey) LGBT people seek to demand equal rights by legal law as in developed countries. However, most Muslim countries reject these demands (97% Jordan; 95% Egypt; 94% Tunisia; 93% Palestine; 93% Indonesia; 87% Pakistan; 86% Malaysia; 80% Lebanon and 78% Turkey) (Pew Research Center, 2013).

LGBT is a misleading orientation influenced by the environment, association, or deviant. Empirical evidence shows that the characteristic of LGBT is predominantly formulated due to nature (environment), and parenting patterns. It has become a lifestyle that is not related to genetic factors (American Psychological Association, 2008). LGBT is a psychological and social problem (The Guardian, 2016; The Jakarta Post, 2016).



LGBT in Islam is reflected from the story of the people in the era of Prophet Lut, in which people commit homosexual acts (Quran 7: 80-81; Quran 29: 29) and in the end are destroyed by Allah SWT. Islam views LGBT as deviant behaviour as it violates the nature of humanity as the perfect creature of Allah SWT. Allah explains that there will be a substantial threat to such perpetrators (Quran 29: 31-32; Quran 11: 82-83; Quran 26: 165-166). In the hadith, Prophet Muhammad also said: "Whoever you find does the actions of the people of Lut, then kill the two perpetrators" [Tirmidhi: 1456, Abu Dawud: 4462, Ibn Majah: 2561 and Ahmad: 2727]. Prophet Muhammad said, as cited in Jabir Radhiyallahu'anhu: "Indeed, what I fear most (afflict) my people is the actions of the people of Lut" [Ibn Majah: 2563, 1457. Besides, according to Ibn Abbas RA, the Prophet Muhammad said: "Allah SWT cursed anyone who committed the actions of the people of Lut, (he repeated it three times)" [HR Nasa'i in As-Sunan Al-Kubra IV / 322 No. 7337].

LGBT contradicts the nature of human beings, and it is prohibited in Islam and the majority of Muslim communities - "Muslim consumers" –especially those in Jakarta, are against it (Jakarta Globe, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2013). Moreover, Muslim consumers today are noted for a tendency to protest the policy of companies - such as Apple, Instagram, NIKE, Google, Starbucks, Facebook, Microsoft, and Honda –which advocate LGBT recognition and legal rights. There is however support expressed through various campaign such as Pride Parade and some encouragement for the Supreme Court America to legally recognize LGBT in official state law and support LGBT people through official sites that demand equal rights for all. (The Huffington Post, 2013; Salandra, 2017).

Literature review and hypothesis development

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

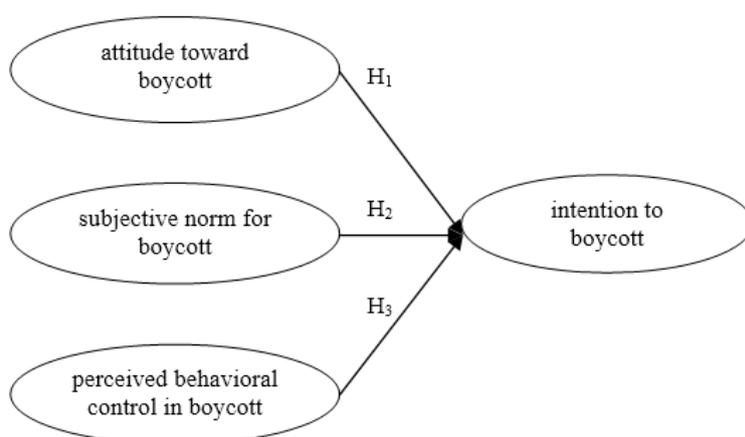
The current study uses the basic concept of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) as the developed Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The focus of this study is the TPB application to examine the determinants of consumer intention to boycott, which includes attitude toward boycott, a subjective norm for boycott, and perceived behavioral control in the boycott of Muslim consumer behavior. Based on TPB, the intention is a function of three determinants, one of which is personal. Social influence is also reflected as it relates control problems (Ajzen, 2005). This theory not only emphasizes the rationality of human behavior but also the belief that target behavior is under the control of the individual's consciousness. A behavior does not only depend on one's intention, but also on other factors such as the availability of resources and opportunities to display the behavior (Ajzen, 2005). Using the original model of TPB, this study investigates

the intention of Muslim consumers' to boycott the legality of LGBT advocated by several companies (see Figure 1).

The Boycott of Consumers

Consumer boycott, according to Friedman (1991), is “an attempt by one or more parties to achieve certain objectives by urging individual consumers to refrain from making selected choices in the marketplace.” Interestingly, this definition characterizes individual consumers as actors rather than organizational entities such as professional associations, business companies, or government institutions, although organizations of various types have started boycotts. The second concern for consideration in this study is the purpose of the boycott. The consumer boycott is seen as an attempt to use market means to achieve what the market may or may not intend. There are strong reasons not to limit the purpose of boycotting the market. Researches on boycotts has been widely carried out, such as the boycott of Danish products among Middle Eastern consumers due to the controversy of the Prophet Muhammad (Jensen, 2008), a model of boycotting foreign product purchases: empirical evidence in China (Smith and Li, 2010), the religion and consumer behavior beliefs evidenced in boycotting the products of Saudi students in UK (Al-Hyari et al., 2012), the effect of religiously motivated consumer boycotts on brand image, loyalty, and product valuation (Abosag and Farah, 2014; Cossiga, 2018), including studies of ethnic perceptual gaps in consumer boycotts of Korean and Canadian university students (Jae and Jeon, 2016).

Figure 1. Conceptual research on product boycott, TPB application



TPB suggests that one of the independent concepts leading to particular intentions is an attitude towards behavior which refers to how much a person has made an evaluation (good or

bad) of behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Some research results indicate that there is a positive relationship between consumer attitudes and intentions in Islamic finance such as (Alam et al., 2012), purchasing environmentally friendly products (Kumar, 2012), shopping (Hsiu-Fen, 2007), purchasing wine (Kitipattarapoomikul, 2013), using sale cards (Haghighi et al., 2012), and blood donors (Charsetad, 2016). However, in the context of online shopping behavior, attitude does not significantly tolerate intention (Al-Jabari et al., 2012), and in the behavior of choosing halal products, the scientists found a positive and significant relationship between attitudes and intentions (Widodo, 2013; Khalek and Ismail, 2015; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lada et al., 2009). The relationship is rational in setting of Muslim students in boycotting products on company policies that support the legality of LGBT in Indonesia. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is:

H1 the attitude of Muslim consumers positively influences their intention to boycott pro-LGBT company product

Marketing research and consumer behavior prove that subjective norm is a social factor which controls the emergence of consumer intention to do or not do something (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm is deemed to be determined by a total set of accessible injunctive and descriptive normative beliefs (Ajzen, 2015). Subjective norms of important people such as close friends and family are able to encourage individual intentions to decide (Charsetad, 2016). The results of empirical studies from various researchers show inconsistent results. On the one hand, subjective norms have a significant relationship to the repurchase intention of Wine (Kitipattarapoomikul, 2013), points of sale (POS) in Iran (Haghighiet al., 2012), online shopping behavior (Al-Jabari et al., 2012), the purchase of organic food (Al-Swidiet al., 2014), and blood donors in Iran (Charsetad, 2016).

Conversely, the subjective norm is found to be insignificant in Islamic housing finance (Alamet al., 2012; Mohamed, Rasheli & Mwangike, 2018) and the purchase of environmentally friendly products in India (Kumar, 2012). Empirical facts in the context of consuming halal products in various countries show that a subjective norm is positively related to consumer intentions and can even become the most significant predictor among other variables (Ladaet al., 2009; Mukhtar and Butt, 2012; Khalek and Ismail, 2015; Alam and Sayuti, 2011). The intention of Muslim students from different cultural backgrounds to boycott the product cannot be separated from the reference and recommendation of their close friends. Subjective norms have an important role in shaping consumer intentions to boycott a product, so the proposed hypothesis is:



H2 Subjective norms of Muslim consumers positively influences the intention to boycott pro-LGBT company products

Perceived behavior control (PBC) describes the feeling of self-efficacy or the behavior of an individual determined by experience, and also an estimate of how difficult it is to perform (Ajzen, 1991). The past experience of an individual towards a particular behavior can be influenced by information obtained from others (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2005). According to Paulet al., (2016), among the three antecedents in the TPB model, PBC becomes an important variable related to behavior. Thus, someone will perform a specific behavior if they the behavior positively, feel social pressure to behave in a certain way, believe in the ability to make it happen, and have the opportunity to conduct the behavior (Ajzen, 2005). In the TPB concept, PBC plays a vital role in determining the intention which is different from the idea of TRA (Ajzen, 1991). Many studies show that PBC is positively related to consumer intentions in various research findings, such as the intention of financing sharia housing in Malaysia (Alamet al., 2012), purchasing environmentally friendly products (Kumar, 2012), purchasing Wine for Generation Y in Thailand (Kitipattarapoomikul , 2013), points of sale in Iran (Haghighiet al., 2012), online shopping in Jordan (Al-Jabari et al., 2012), blood donors in Iran (Charsetad, 2016) and consuming halal products (Bonne et al. , 2007; Khalek and Ismail, 2015; Alam and Sayuti, 2011). For Muslim consumers, the belief and experience of participating in product boycott actions such as the action against pro-LGBT company policies is important capital in the formation of intentions to boycott. For this reason, the proposed hypothesis is:

H3 Perceived behavior control positively influences the intention of Muslim consumers to boycott pro-LGBT company products

Research Methods

The current study employs the proportional stratified random-probability sampling method. Proportional stratified random-probability sampling technique is used for local students and simple random sampling-probability sampling for international students at large Islamic universities in Indonesia as international student learning destinations. The sample size for local students is 375 (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970), and the international student samples is a census of 407, randomly taken. Instrument questionnaire consists of 4 variables and 13 indicators adopted from Jain et al., (2017); Min and James (2016), subjective norm for boycott from Jain et al., (2017), perceived behavioral control in boycott cited in Min and James (2016), and the intention to boycott from Jain et al., (2017); Min and James (2016). All variables in this study are measured using a 7-point Likert's scale measurement response (1 =

Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree) (Likert, 1932), except for the attitude towards boycott which use seven-point semantic differential scales. The survey instrument is originally written using Indonesian to be distributed to local or Malay students, and English and Arabic for international students.

The Results of Research and Discussion

Of the 375 local students selected, there are 280 local students who declare that they have good validity, meaning that all respondents could respond to the full statement submitted by the researcher. 407 respondents from the international students involved in the study were given questionnaires, but only 196 are deemed valid and complete. In general, the local respondents are mostly fourth year students of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim 131 (46.8%), mostly male 141 (50.4%), and 20 years old (52.5%) while the international respondents are the first year students of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim (47.4), male (79.1%) and aged 25-34 (49.5); many of them take the master program (48%), and 28.6% came from Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Afghanistan, Singapore, Cambodia, China (See table 1 below).

Table 1: Overview of the composition of the respondents

Respondent Information	Local students		International students		
	Frequency	<i>percent</i>		Frequency	<i>percent</i>
Gender					
Male	141	50.4		155	79.1
Female	139	49.6		41	20.9
Age (years)					
19	24	8.6	18-24	28	14.3
20	147	52.5	25-34	97	49.5
21	29	10.4	35-44	51	26.0
22	30	10.7	>45	20	10.2
23	27	9.6			
>23	23	8.2			
Study period (year)					
1	8	2.9		93	47.4
2	56	20.0		35	17.9
3	27	9.6		32	16.3

4	131	46.8		16	8.2
>4	58	20.7			
5				15	7.7
>5				5	2.6
Educational level					
Bachelor				68	34.7
Master				94	48.0
Doctor				34	17.3
Country of origin					
Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, <i>Afghanistan</i> , Singaporee, Cambodia, China)				56	28.6
middle East(Saudi Arabia, Yemen)				71	36.2
Africa (Sudan, Libya, Somalia)				49	25.0
Eropa (Russia, Germany, Italy)				20	10.2

Note: Total local student respondents, n=280; Total international student respondents, n = 196

Table 2: The Result of Multicollinearity, Autocorrelation, and Normality Test

Independent variable	Local students				International students			
	VIF	R	Sig		VIF	R	Sig	
Attitude	1.241	-0.161	0.070		1.004	-0.279	0.000	
Subjective norm	1.159	-0.286	0.000		1.008	-0.224	0.002	
Perceived behavioral control	1.084	0.088	0.143		1.010	-0.144	0.043	
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z				3.402				2.678
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				0.124				0.547
Durbin-Watson				1.773				1.909

Note: Total local student respondents, n=280; Total international student respondents, n = 196; Dependent Variable = Muslim Consumer intention

The normality test uses a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. If the significance value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results is > 0.05, the assumption of normality is fulfilled. Furthermore, the Multicollinearity test through the value calculation of VIF (Variance Inflating Factor) concluded that all variables are free from non-multicollinearity because the VIF value is <10. Heteroscedasticity tests using the Spearman Rank correlation coefficient test shows that variable consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and non-behavioral control –

are heteroscedasticity because the magnitude of the probability value is (sig) > 0.05. The implication is that the formulated model is very satisfying.

Table 3: The Result of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Local students				International students			
	Standardized Coefficients (β)	T _{statistic}	Sig.	Decision	Standardized Coefficients (β)	T _{statistic}	Sig.	Decision
(Constant)	15.329				14.022			
Attitude	0.125	1.975	0.049	not support	0.311	4.688	0.000	support
Subjective norm	0.270	4.412	0.000	support	0.068	1.025	0.307	not support
Perceived behavioral control	0.061	-0.877	0.381	not support	0.221	3.315	0.001	support
R Square	0.109				0.159			
Adjusted R Square	0.100				0.146			
F _{statistic}	11.302				12.107			
F _{table}	2.6498				2.6498			
Sign. F	0.000(a)				0.000(a)			
α	0,05				0,05			

Note: Total local student respondents, n=280; Total international student respondents, n = 196; TTable value: = 5% = 1,980; Dependent Variable = Muslim Consumer intention

Table 3 above shows that there is a significant influence between Consumer Attitude, Subjective Norms and perceived behavioral control variables on the intention of Muslim Consumers to boycott the products of pro-LGBT companies using TPB, so this theory is perceived consistent (Ajzen, 1991). The test result for local students, partial testing from H1 to H3 is done by t-test, are as follows. For the hypothesis (H1), the statistical value is 1.975. It is smaller than t table (1.975 < 1,980) with the decision to accept H0. This result shows that the Consumer Attitude does not significantly affect Consumer Intention to boycott pro-LGBT company products. For H2, the statistical value is 4,412. It is greater than t table (4,412 > 1,980). Thus, the test results show that H0 is rejected. These results show that Subjective Norms significantly influence Consumer Intention to boycott pro-LGBT company products. For H3 with statistical value -0.877. This value is smaller than t table (-0.877 < 1,980). Thus,



the test results show that H₀ is not rejected. These results show that perceived behavioral control does not significantly influence Consumer Intention to boycott pro-LGBT company products.

In the context of international students, the statistical value of the hypothesis (H₁) is 4.688. This value is greater than t table (4.688 > 1.980) with the decision to reject H₀. It shows that Consumer Attitudes have a significant positive effect on Consumer Intention. For H₂, the statistic value is 1.025. It is smaller than t table (1.025 < 1.980). Thus, the test results show that H₀ is rejected. These results show that Subjective Norms do not significantly influence Consumer Intention to boycott pro-LGBT company products. For H₃, the statistical value is 3.315. It is greater than t table (3,315 > 1,980). Thus, the test results show that H₀ is rejected. These results indicate that perceived behavioral control significantly influences Muslim Consumer intention to boycott the products of pro-LGBT Company.

The findings of this study indicate that in the context of local Muslim students, the consumer intention to boycott pro-LGBT company products is not influenced by their attitude. However, according to international Muslim students, consumers' attitudes positively influence their intention to boycott pro-LGBT company products. So this empirical evidence shows that according to the experience of international Muslim students, attitudes can determine intentions to boycott and this supports some empirical evidence as found in previous studies (e.g., Widodo, 2013; Khalek and Ismail, 2015; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lada et al., 2009).

Meanwhile, according to international Muslim students, their attitude towards company policies that support LGBT legality are interpreted as evaluations that are either beneficial or not to behavior. It can be shown that, even though LGBT is prohibited in Islamic religion, and its existence is a controversy in society in various countries, international companies such as Apple, Instagram, NIKE, Google, Starbucks, Facebook, Microsoft and Honda continue to issue policies to support the existence of LGBT people through for example their brand presence at the pride parade. With the existence of this type of controversial company policy, Muslim consumers have been influenced in a positive way to boycott products issued by a company that does not support LGBT rights. This fact proves that the more a person's reactive attitude to company policies is controversial, the higher the intention to boycott. This is consistent with the findings of several previous studies (see Bonne et al., 2007; Lada et al., 2009; Mukhtar and Butt, 2012; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Alam et al., 2012) which found a positive influence between attitudes and intention in choosing a product.



The empirical studies find that subjective norms for local Muslim students positively influence consumers' intention to boycott the products of the pro-LGBT company, but the international ones, subjective norms do not significantly influence their intention to boycott. This fact empirically proves inconsistent results from various researchers. On the one hand, subjective norms have a significant relationship to the repurchase of Wine intention for Generation Y in Thailand (Kitipattarapoomikul, 2013), points of sale (POS) in Iran (Haghighiet al., 2012), online shopping behavior for Jordanian consumers (Al- Jabari et al., 2012), buying organic food (Al-Swidi et al., 2014) and blood donation in Iran (Charsetad, 2016). Conversely, subjective norms are found to be insignificant by Islamic home financing (Alam et al., 2012) and purchase of environmentally friendly products in India (Kumar, 2012) as a reinforcement of the findings of this study in the context of local Muslim consumers. International Muslim students from different cultural backgrounds tend to be collective and as such the intention to boycott cannot be separated from the reference of close friends. Subjective norms have an important role in shaping consumers' intentions in deciding to boycott the product of a pro-LGBT Company for people in Muslim countries such as Indonesia.

The perceived behavior control of local Muslim students to boycott products of international companies supporting the legality of LGBT shows that this is not a factor affecting intention to boycott products. However, this is a significant determinant for international Muslim students with regard to their intention to do the boycott. Consumer experience of the use of products issued by Apple, Instagram, NIKE, Google, Starbucks, Facebook, Microsoft, and Honda creates self-efficacy or the ability of every individual and significant capital as a form of intention to boycott. It is clear there are different findings among the local Muslim consumers and their international counterparts. The findings of this study indicate that the relationship between PBC and intention to boycott is consistent with the results of previous studies (Ajzen, 1991; Bonne et al., 2007; Khalek and Ismail, 2015; Alam and Sayuti, 2011) for the international Muslim consumers. However, different results are found for the local Muslim consumers, who prove that PBC significantly does not affect the intention to boycott (Al-Swidi, et al., 2014).

Limitations and recommendations

This study is conducted in only one Muslim country, Indonesia and cannot be generalized to other Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and other Middle East Countries. Thus, further related research needs to be conducted to find more reliable findings in the context of boycott with behavioral theory in either majority or minority Muslim countries such as Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Further, marketing managers need to pay



attention to the behavioral aspects which include attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control both of which are perceived as determinants of Muslim consumers' intention to boycott. Finally, the researcher intends further research by replicating and modifying the TPB model (expanding or decomposes) in different contexts and through integration with other constructs such as habit (Bonne et al., 2007) and positioning subjective norms as moderating variables in the TPB model (Al-Swidi et al., 2014; Hussain et al., 2018).

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