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# South Korean Consumers' Attitudes toward Small Business Owners Participating in the 2019 Anti-Japan Boycott

Eugene Song 

Department of Consumer Science, Chungbuk National University, Cheongju 28644, Korea;  
eugenesong@chungbuk.ac.kr

Received: 31 March 2020; Accepted: 7 May 2020; Published: 9 May 2020



**Abstract:** This study investigated consumer attitudes and the motivation of small business owners who participated in the 2019 anti-Japan boycott in South Korea (hereafter, Korea). The main areas of inquiry involved self-expression, the realization of justice, and consumer attitudes as elements of patriotic consumption. A seven-day survey was conducted among 500 adult consumers aged 18 years and older in Korea. The retrieved data were subjected to frequency analyses, reliability analyses, factor analyses, paired *t*-tests, and regressions. Declining Japanese product sales indicated high levels of a consumer boycott. The analyses demonstrated that consumers held positive attitudes toward small business owners who shared their boycotting beliefs and goals. Second, self-expression and the realization of justice motivation were relatively high, as were attitudes toward the participation message and small business owners who were participating in the boycott. Korean consumers had relatively high intentions to visit the stores of small business owners who were participating in the boycott. Lastly, self-expression motivations, motivations to realize justice, consumer attitudes toward the boycott participation messages of small business owners, and consumer attitudes toward the small business owners themselves had statistically significant positive effects. Small business owners holding general consumer beliefs about boycott participation should actively spread their support messages, and this would provide an excellent opportunity to create positive long-term awareness. This study provided a unique insight into Korean consumer behaviors when patriotism was considered. The findings have significant implications for small business owners looking to sustain themselves during product boycotts.

**Keywords:** boycott; small business owner; motivation; attitude; intention

## 1. Introduction

Historical issues can often lead to serious socioeconomic problems. For example, a South Korean boycott of Japanese products (i.e., No Japan, Boycott Japan) began on 1 July 2019, due to historical issues between South Korea and Japan. These events were part of a movement initiated by Korean consumers to avoid purchasing or consuming products and services from Japan and certain Japanese affiliates based on past grievances. The most recent boycotts were sparked by Tokyo's restrictions on exports of semiconductor materials and display panels that are vital to the South Korean technology industry. This act was widely perceived as a retaliatory move related to a 2018 South Korean Supreme Court ruling that ordered Japanese companies to pay compensation for their use of forced labor during the Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula between 1910 and 1945.

Suzuki (2019) demonstrated that campaigns calling for Japanese product boycotts initiate in South Korea whenever relations between the two countries become problematic. While these are typically short-lived, the newest boycotts are different. Consumer anger toward Japan first ignited during the

summer of 2019 and continues to smolder. This is because many young people have kept up the momentum through social media. The South Korean boycotts of Japanese products have now gained substantial social interest through global media coverage, including reports from the [BBC \(2019\)](#), [The Guardian \(McCurry 2019\)](#), and [PRI \(Kasulis 2019\)](#).

The current boycott is relatively broader and more organizational compared to the boycotts that occurred in the past. In particular, small business owners are directly participating in the boycott by openly displaying that they are participating in it or setting unreasonable prices on products related to the boycott. The small business owners who are participating in the boycott are receiving favorable reactions from the Korean consumers. After the Korea Federation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (KSME), consisting of 27 organizations including Korea Association of Distributors Member (KADM), openly stated that it will participate in the boycott on 5 July 2019, there was a movement from marketplaces all over the country to eliminate products related to the boycott ([Lee 2019](#); [Oh 2019](#)). According to a study by [Song \(2020\)](#), Korean customers have encouraged small business owners to voluntarily participate in the boycott and perceive them as having mutual goals and being in the same boat.

The designer, Yong Gil Kim, created a logo with the words “NO, BOYCOTT JAPAN” which was distributed for free under the condition that all purposes were nonprofit ([Kang 2019](#)). A total of 680 non-governmental organizations are now participating in the boycott, including the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the Korean Alliance of Progressive Movements, and YMCA Korea ([Kim 2019a](#)). In this context, the “NO, BOYCOTT JAPAN” logo has been used as a participation message by many small business owners and protestors. Further, a smartphone application titled “No JAPAN,” developed by an independent app developer (Sansam) in favor of the boycott, was launched on 15 July 2019, to show support. This application contained extensive product lists that many Korean consumers now use to distinguish between Japanese products and alternatives from other nations.

The 2019 Consumer Behavior Survey for Food, which was conducted by the [Korea Rural Economic Institute \(2019\)](#), indicated that 81.5% of consumers agreed with the idea of boycotting Japanese products, while 70% had foregone the purchase of these products altogether. Indeed, among the order of countries that export goods to Korea, Japan fell from first to 28th ([Kim 2019b](#)). Further, trade statistics from the [Japan Ministry of Finance \(2019\)](#) illustrate that Japanese exports to Korea in October 2019 only amounted to 381.8 billion JPY (4.12 trillion KRW), which was a 23.1% drop from the same period in the previous year. The [Japan National Tourism Organization \(2020\)](#) also reported a 65.5% decrease in the number of Korean visitors to Japan (i.e., to 197,300) in October 2019, and Japanese automakers reported that sales to Korea for August 2019 fell 57% from the previous year ([McCurry 2019](#)). Even more dramatically, imports of Japanese beer to Korea had dropped by 99.9% from the previous year in September, or to around USD\$6000 (~7 million KRW; [Kyodo News Agency 2019](#)), before falling to zero the following month ([Pham 2019](#)).

The current boycotts are relatively broader and more organization-based than those in the past. Notably, small business owners are now also directly participating by openly displaying their support of the boycotts or placing unreasonable prices on boycotted products. Such efforts are gaining favorable reactions from Korean consumers. Consisting of 27 organizations (including the Korean Association of Small and Medium-Sized Distributors), the Korea Federation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (KSME) has also openly stated its intention to participate in the boycotts; indeed there have been movements from marketplaces all over the country to eliminate boycotted products ([Lee 2019](#)). [Yomiuri Yomiuri Shimbun \(2019\)](#) said these boycotts are also different from those in the past because they will likely continue over the long term.

As mentioned earlier, South Korean boycotts of Japanese products are rooted in historical issues. In turn, this has stimulated consumer patriotism, which greatly influences purchasing decisions ([Han 1988](#); [Park and Jang 2012](#)). Many previous studies have analyzed the effects of variables such as motivation, benefit, cost, consumer role, efficacy, belief, and a variety of sociodemographic characteristics on the motivation of consumers to boycott specific goods ([Braunsberger and Buckler 2011](#);

Friedman 1999; John and Klein 2003; Klein et al. 2004; Sen et al. 2001). However, few studies have specifically investigated consumer attitudes toward small business owners who participate in boycotts and consumer intentions to visit their stores (Klein et al. 1998; Ma and Kim 2017). This study, therefore, focused on how boycott participation from small business owners affected consumer boycott motivation and intention to visit their businesses. The research involved an investigation of the factors influencing their participation, such as patriotic consumption and consumer motivation. First, Korean consumer participation levels were assessed based on the purchasing levels of products related to the boycott. Second, consumer attitudes toward the participating small business owners and their intention to visit these small businesses were evaluated according to the influences of patriotic consumption and participation motivation.

This study produced important evidence for understanding consumer attitudes when small business owners and consumers (who typically have opposing interests within the market) jointly participate in a consumption movement with common goals. Small business owners and larger enterprises can also use these findings to develop better ways of communicating with consumers.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Patriotic Consumption

Patriotic consumption is associated with a preference for domestic products. It also influences whether consumers purchase domestic or imported products (Han 1988; Park and Jang 2012). Han (1988) found that patriotic consumption substantially influenced the decision to purchase domestic products over imported products, and that it often resulted in favorable evaluations about the quality and usefulness of those products. The same study also demonstrated that advertisements focusing on the patriotic emotions of consumers could positively influence their intention to buy domestic products. In addition, Yoo et al. (2014) studied the effects of patriotism on Korean and American consumers and found that Korean consumers exhibited stronger patriotic consumption tendencies. Further, Tsai (2010) found that patriotism was the driving force behind consumer nationalism. In this context, consumers regard the purchase of domestically-made products as an altruistic contribution to their nation.

Messages that appeal to patriotism and national identity may create positive reactions from consumers; consumers may prefer advertisements with patriotic themes and assess more positively those messages with noticeable appeals to national identity (Castelló and Mihelj 2017; Yoo and Lee 2016). Kim (1999) demonstrated that patriotic advertisements could positively influence consumers and promote sales for poorly performing products. Further, Yu and Yu and Jung's (2004) examination of patriotic advertisements in the context of social interaction revealed that such messages could alter attitudes toward brands and increase purchase intentions based on the level of consumer patriotism. Kim (2015) also found that innate consumer beliefs affected their evaluations of and behavior toward advertising messages. Based on these findings, we developed our first hypothesis:

**Hypothesis (H1).** *Patriotic consumption will positively affect consumer intentions to visit the stores of small business owners who participate in the boycotts.*

### 2.2. Motivation for Boycotting

Perceived egregiousness is one of the reasons consumers participate in boycotts. Specifically, consumers who perceive higher levels of egregiousness have a higher motivation to boycott (Smith and Cooper-Martin 1997); indeed, it provides a reason to act. As Cheon (2019) found, motivation to participate also affects overall boycott participation, and many other previous studies have examined this issue. For instance, Friedman (1999) classified consumer motivation to boycott into instrumental and non-instrumental motivation. While instrumental motivation causes consumer boycotting to force targeted entities to change or cease negative behaviors or decisions, non-instrumental motivation (also called expressive motivation) causes boycotting to express fury or anger toward the

target. The latter type provides stronger motivation (Ettenson and Klein 2005). Klein et al. (2004) also divided motivation for boycotts into two categories: Instrumental and emotional motivation. They stated that instrumental motivation encourages consumers to change society by participating in the boycott, and emotional motivation makes consumers who participate in the boycott experience internal rewards by feeling positive about themselves and highly self-confident. Thus, the types of motivation for participating in a boycott from Klein et al. (2004) and the instrumental and emotional motivations defined by Friedman (1999) are closely related. Additionally, Braunsberger and Buckler (2011) conducted a study about the motivation of consumers to participate in the Canadian seafood boycott, where pledges explicitly expressed their desire for the target to abolish its egregious behavior, their anger about the behavior in question, and their desire for punitive actions. Boycott motivations also include the belief that consumers have the power to impact a boycott target's bottom line and/or behavior as well as the belief that the boycott will succeed in forcing the target to cease its egregious behavior.

Hoffmann (2013) studied the motivations of consumers who boycott companies. He stated that certain attitudes (e.g., empathizing with or having sympathy for those who are disadvantaged due to unjust behaviors) could also work as motivation to engage in a boycott. His study also stated that consumers' moral obligation is a mediator that raises boycott intention. In addition, Cheon (2019) regarded boycotts as elements of political consumerism, thereby classifying participation motivation as expression, sympathy, and realizing justice. In other words, sympathetic feelings toward consumers who had been disadvantaged by a boycott also play an important role in the motivation to participate in a boycott, and this is a non-instrumental motivation.

On the other hand, consumers tend to engage in positive behavior when they have a mutual goal with a specific group of people and thus feel united (Swann et al. 2009; Katz and Kahn 1978). They also prefer and choose conditions or situations with which they can easily fit or express their preference (Snyder et al. 1997; Palmgreen et al. 2001). Song and Lee (2017) found that consumers tend to associate themselves with businesses with which they feel a strong connection, and Lee et al. (2015) found that such a tendency affects the motivation of consumers to behave positively. Many small business owners participated in the current boycott in several ways, indicating that consumers feel strong connections or are united with them.

Subsequently, we developed our second hypothesis as follows:

**Hypothesis (H2a).** *The consumer instrumental motivation (realizing justice) to boycott will positively affect their intentions to visit the stores of small business owners who also boycott.*

**Hypothesis (H2b).** *The consumer non-instrumental motivation (self-expression and sympathy) to boycott will positively affect their intentions to visit the stores of small business owners who are also participating in the boycott.*

### 2.3. Attitudes toward the Participation Message

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined attitude as the acquired predisposition to have positive or negative reactions toward a particular object consistently. Further, the three factors of awareness, attitude, and behavior are organized into a linear hierarchy, meaning that consumers evaluate product characteristics to develop knowledge and beliefs, and thus, develop attitudes. Consumers then decide whether to purchase products based on these attitudes (Biel and Bridgewater 1990; Larimer and Neighbors 2003; MacKenzie and Lutz 1989; MacKenzie et al. 1986).

Boycotts are closely related to consumer ethics (Shim et al. 2018; Smith 2003, 2008). Klein and Dawar (2004) found that a company's social responsibilities could positively affect how it is evaluated by consumers who are sensitive to the social approach. Further, Smith et al. (2010) found that consumers infer whether a company has adhered to its social responsibilities based on limited information, which nevertheless becomes important evidence for how they evaluate it. Indeed, there are numerous cases in which corporate social responsibility has affected how consumers view company reliability, and this also influences their behavior (Becker-Olson et al. 2006). As such, boycotts are significantly related to corporate social responsibility. Messages about a boycott thus affect the level of consumer friendliness

toward a given company (Makaren and Jae 2016). In this study's context, small business owners who relay their intention to boycott may help consumers form attitudes toward the owners themselves, thus leading consumers to visit their stores. From this, we developed our third and fourth hypotheses:

**Hypothesis (H3).** *Small business owners who participate in the boycott will positively affect consumer intentions to visit their businesses.*

**Hypothesis (H4).** *Consumer attitudes toward boycott participation messages from small business owners will positively affect their intentions to visit the businesses.*

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Research Methods

To test the hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed and distributed over seven days (27 November to 3 December 2019) by the online questionnaire research company Macromill Embrain. The survey was offered online for participant convenience, and the participants were alerted about the questionnaire through an e-mail and gave informed consent before participation. Only responses from those who agreed to participate were analyzed. In addition, as this survey did not gather personal and sensitive information, there was no need to conduct an ethical review.

#### 3.2. Participants

A total of 500 participants were selected using the proportional allocation sampling method, which was based on population, gender, age, and area of residence. Of these, 51.6% were male, and 48.4% were female. While 22.2% were in their 20s, 22.8% were in their 30s, 26.8% were in their 40s, and 28.2% were in their 50s or above. In terms of occupation, 63.0% were full-time employees, 5.0% were part-time employees, 5.8% were self-employed, 9.4% were housewives, 5.6% were students, and 11.2% were unemployed or other. The average monthly household income was approximately USD\$4000 ( $\pm$ USD\$3000).

#### 3.3. Analysis

This study conducted a reliability analysis, factor analysis, frequency analysis, mean analysis, paired *t*-test, and regression analysis. The factor and reliability analyses were conducted to verify the scale's reliability and validity, while the others were conducted to analyze the consumer responses. The general participant characteristics were analyzed using descriptive statistics while purchasing behaviors both before and during the boycott were analyzed through a paired *t*-test. Mean and standard deviations were then analyzed to confirm patriotic consumption levels, boycott participation motivations, consumer attitudes, and intentions to visit stores participating in the boycott. Means were calculated by dividing the sum of each measured variable by the number of measured variables. The factors affecting the intention of Korean consumers to visit the stores of small business owners who were participating in the boycott were analyzed through a multiple regression. This included several independent variables, covering patriotic consumption levels, motivations (self-expression, sympathy, and realizing justice), and consumer attitudes (attitudes towards participation messages and small business owners), while the intention to visit the stores of small business owners who were participating in the boycott was set as the dependent variable. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 21.0 software (IBM SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

#### 3.4. Scale Development

A scale was developed to include questions related to boycott participation (10 items), patriotic consumption (eight items), boycott participation motivation (14 items), consumer attitudes (12 items), and the intention to visit stores participating in the boycott (two items) (Table 1). These were compiled following previous studies, as illustrated in Table 2. Aside from the sociodemographic characteristics,

all items were measured on a five-point scale (1 = “never buy” or “strongly disagree,” while 5 = “must buy” or “strongly agree”).

**Table 1.** Scale items and reliability analysis results.

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha		
Purchasing Levels	Purchasing levels before the boycott	I have regularly purchased liquor from 00.	0.852	
		I have regularly purchased clothing from 00.		
		I have regularly purchased cosmetics from 00.		
		I have regularly purchased stationary from 00.		
		I have regularly purchased other products related to the boycott.		
	Purchasing levels during the boycott	I regularly purchased liquor from 00 during the boycott.	0.909	
		I regularly purchased clothing from 00 during the boycott.		
		I regularly purchased cosmetics from 00 during the boycott.		
		I regularly purchased stationary from 00 during the boycott.		
		I regularly purchased other products related to the boycott during the boycott.		
Patriotic Consumption	Patriotic Consumption	Korean people should buy Korean products rather than imported products.	0.907	
		Korean people should not purchase imported products.		
		Only products that cannot be purchased in the Korean market should be imported from foreign countries.		
		As purchasing imported products increases the unemployment rate of the Korean people, Korean people should not buy imported products.		
		Koreans should only purchase Korean products so that foreign companies will not earn money in Korea.		
		There should be higher taxes for import companies to block foreign products from entering the Korean market.		
		Korean people can only continue working without losing their jobs if we buy Korean products.		
		Korean products are the best for Korean people.		
Motivation in Participating in the Boycott	Expression	I participate in the boycott because it reflects my normal beliefs.	0.919	
		I participate in the boycott because it matches my life values.		
		I participate in the boycott because it is related to my conscience.		
		I participate in the boycott because the matter in question makes me furious.		
	Sympathy	I participate in the boycott as it is an expression of sympathy toward others.	0.919	
		I participate in the boycott as I feel guilty when purchasing products related to the boycott.		
		I participate in the boycott as it is a way to show a sense of unity.		
		I participate in the boycott as I am proud of myself for participating in it.		
	Realizing justice	Realizing justice	I participate in the boycott of Japanese products because it is an effective way to change the inappropriate behavior of Japanese businesses regarding the distortion of historical or territorial disputes.	0.915
			I participate in the boycott of Japanese products because I believe it will change unjust traditions.	
			I participate in the boycott of Japanese products because it is effective in realizing social justice.	

**Table 1.** *Cont.*

Variable		Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Consumer Attitude	Participation message	I like this message.	0.963
		This is a good message.	
		I am satisfied with this message.	
		This message is valuable.	
		This message is interesting.	
	I like this message overall.	0.973	
	Small business owners		I like companies (small business owners) who participate in the boycott of Japanese products.
			I am satisfied with companies (small business owners) who participate in the boycott of Japanese products.
			I prefer companies (small business owners) who participate in the boycott of Japanese products.
			I think companies (small business owners) who participate in the boycott of Japanese products are trustworthy.
I feel positive toward companies (small business owners) who participate in the boycott of Japanese products.			
Intention to Visit Stores	I will use products and/or services from small business owners who participate in the boycott during the boycott.	0.932	
	I will use products and/or services from small business owners who participate in the boycott, even after the boycott is over.		

**Table 2.** Principle components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation: Boycott motivation and item loadings.

Items	Component			h <sup>2</sup>
	Self-Expression Motivation	Sympathy	Realizing Justice	
I participate in the boycott because it reflects my normal beliefs.	0.846	0.204	0.280	0.836
I participate in the boycott because it matches my life values.	0.833	0.306	0.226	0.839
I participate in the boycott because it is related to my conscience.	0.769	0.334	0.318	0.805
I participate in the boycott because the matter in question makes me furious.	0.749	0.169	0.422	0.767
I participate in the boycott because it is an expression of my sympathy toward others.	0.182	0.810	0.306	0.784
I participate in the boycott because I feel guilty when purchasing products related to the boycott.	0.192	0.802	0.080	0.686
I participate in the boycott because it is a way to show a sense of unity.	0.217	0.798	0.352	0.808
I participate in the boycott because I am proud of myself for participating in it.	0.418	0.671	0.225	0.676
I participate in the boycott of Japanese products because it is an effective way to change the inappropriate behavior of Japanese businesses regarding the distortion of historical or territorial disputes.	0.289	0.258	0.846	0.865
I participate in the boycott against Japan because I believe it will change unjust traditions.	0.368	0.296	0.793	0.853
I participate in the boycott against Japan because it is effective in realizing social justice.	0.481	0.303	0.724	0.848
Eigenvalue	3.306	2.908	2.553	
% of Variance	30.059	26.432	23.211	

A factor analysis identified whether the factors of motivations for participating in the boycott (expression, sympathy, and realizing justice) can be statistically differentiated. A principle components analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation of the motivation variables found three factors, as we predicted. The results of analyzing Table 2 showed identical results to the to those that are suggested by this study.

### 3.5. Boycott Participation

Boycott participation levels were measured by comparing the purchasing levels of the four main boycotted product types (i.e., liquor, clothing, cosmetics, and stationary) and other products. The products were selected based on the list of major products related to the boycott in Korea (Cho 2019; Kyodo News Agency 2019; McCurry 2019; Lee 2019; Pham 2019; Yomiuri Shimbun 2019) and the items were rated on a five-point scale (1 = “never buy” while 5 = “must buy”).

### 3.6. Consumer Patriotism

Patriotic consumption was measured based on a modified version of the consumer ethnocentrism tendencies scale (CETSCALE), which was developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987) and reconstructed by both Klein and Ettenson (1999) and Park and Jang (2012). They measured consumer patriotism to quantify beliefs of consumers in purchasing and selling domestic and imported products, such as the duty of citizens to purchase domestic products, the awareness of socioeconomic effects of imported products (e.g., effects on unemployment), or policies about high taxes on imported products. This study edited the scale to reflect the boycotts in Korea, and subsequently, it included eight items: “Korean people should buy Korean products rather than imported products,” “Korean people should not purchase imported products,” “Only products that cannot be purchased in the Korean market should be imported from foreign countries,” “As purchasing imported products increases the unemployment rate of the Korean people, Korean people should not buy imported products,” “Koreans should only purchase Korean products so that foreign companies will not earn money in Korea,” “There should be higher taxes for import companies to block foreign products from entering the Korean market,” “Korean people can only continue working without losing their jobs if we buy Korean products,” and “Korean products are the best for Korean people,” and the items were rated on a five-point scale (1 = “Not at all” while 5 = “Strongly agree”).

### 3.7. Motivation to Participate in the Boycotts

The scales used in this study were developed based on the types of motivation for participating in the boycott and those used by Friedman (1999), Cheon (2019), Ettenson and Klein (2005), and Hoffmann (2013). After integrating the motivation types, they were classified into instrumental motivation or realizing justice, expressive motivation, and sympathetic motivation (Cheon 2019; Friedman 1999; Klein et al. 2004). The motivation to realize justice was measured according to three items, including “I participate in the boycott of Japanese products because it is an effective method to change the behaviors of the companies in question,” “I participate in the boycott of Japanese products because I believe it will change unjust traditions,” and “I participate in the boycott of Japanese products because it is effective in realizing social justice.” Expressive motivation was measured according to the following four items: “I participate in the boycott because it reflects my normal beliefs,” “I participate in the boycott because it matches my life values,” “I participate in the boycott because it is related to my conscience,” and “I participate in the boycott because the matter in question makes me furious.” Finally, sympathetic motivation was measured according to the following four items: “I participate in the boycott because it is an expression of my sympathy toward others,” “I participate in the boycott because I feel guilty when purchasing products related to the boycott,” “I participate in the boycott because it is a way to show a sense of unity,” and “I participate in the boycott because I am proud of myself for participating in it.”

### 3.8. Consumer Attitudes

Consumer attitudes were divided into those related to both the participation message and small business owners who were participating in the boycott. First, attitudes toward the participation message were measured using a modified version of the advertisement attitude measurement scale developed by Cha and Kim (2019). This study used the six ratings of “Good,” “Interesting,” “Like,” “Satisfied,” “Valuable,” and “Preferred” to measure participant attitudes toward advertisement messages. Based on the consumer attitude measurement variables used in studies conducted by Pan and Schmitt (1996), Oh and Kwon (2009), and Park et al. (2018), consumer attitudes toward small business owners who were participating in the boycott were measured using five ratings from “Like” to “Satisfied”.

### 3.9. Intention to Visit Stores

Participant intention to visit the stores of small business owners who were participating in the boycott were measured based on whether they were willing to visit or boycott the store during the boycott in addition to whether they would continue to visit or boycott the store even after the boycott.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Scale Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach’s alphas of all variables were over 0.85, indicating high internal consistency (Table 1). A factor analysis was conducted to identify whether the motivation for participating in the boycott (i.e., expression, sympathy, and realizing justice) could be statistically differentiated. As predicted, there were three factors from the principle components analysis (PCA) with the Varimax rotation of the motivation variables, and Table 2 illustrates all analysis results.

### 4.2. Findings

The results of the differences in the purchasing levels of products related to the boycott both before and during the boycott are illustrated in Table 3. There were statistically significant differences in the purchasing levels of all items, including liquor; that is, purchasing was lower during the boycott than it was before. This indicates that Korean consumers were actively participating in the boycott.

**Table 3.** Purchasing levels before and during the boycott.

	Before the Boycott		During the Boycott		<i>t</i> -Test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Liquor	1.91	1.051	1.11	0.471	17.760 ***
Clothing	2.09	1.065	1.15	0.509	21.250 ***
Cosmetics	1.55	0.873	1.10	0.450	12.829 ***
Stationary	2.00	1.112	1.18	0.542	18.140 ***
Others	2.00	0.837	1.18	0.523	21.996 ***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , Note: M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. All variables ranged from 1 (never buy) to 5 (must buy).

The means of the subfactors of the variables were first calculated, and then the means of each variable were analyzed (see Table 4). Patriotic consumption of Korean consumers was the lowest relative level. Out of the motivations to participate in the boycott, realizing justice and expression motivations were relatively higher than sympathy motivation. The consumer attitude toward the participation messages, the consumer attitude toward the small business owners who participated in the boycott, the intentions of the consumers to visit the stores of the small business owners who participated in the boycott were all over three points. Consumer attitudes and visiting intention were both relatively high.

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics.

Variables		Mean	SD
Patriotic Consumption Level		2.537	0.724
Motivation to Participate in the Boycott	Expression	3.785	0.899
	Sympathy	3.165	0.925
	Realizing Justice	3.788	0.945
Consumer Attitudes	Attitudes toward participation messages	3.700	0.958
	Attitudes toward small business owners	3.786	0.955
Intention to Visit Stores		3.736	0.931

The self-expressed motivation to participate in the boycott significantly predicted the intention to visit the stores ( $b = 0.148$ ,  $t(500) = 2.886$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (see Table 5). The motivation of realizing justice also significantly predicted the intention to visit the stores ( $b = 0.147$ ,  $t(500) = 2.875$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Consumer attitudes toward participation messages ( $b = 0.181$ ,  $t(500) = 4.101$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and small business owners ( $b = 0.472$ ,  $t(500) = 10.635$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) also significantly affected this intention. As such, the motivation to participate in the boycott and consumer attitudes significantly explained consumer intention to visit stores that were participating in the boycott ( $R^2 = 0.585$  Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.580$ ,  $F(500) = 116.053$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 5.** Regression.

Variable	B	S.E.	$\beta$	t-Value	p-Value	
(Coefficient)	0.524	0.143		3.670	0.000	
Preference of Consumer Nationalism	0.008	0.041	0.007	0.270	0.836	
Motivation	Expression	0.153	0.053	0.148	2.886	0.004
	Sympathy	0.054	0.041	0.053	1.314	0.190
	Realizing Justice	0.162	0.056	0.147	2.875	0.004
Attitude of Consumers	Attitude Toward Messages	0.179	0.044	0.181	4.101	0.000
	Attitude of Small Business Owners	0.460	0.043	0.472	10.635	0.000

$F$ -value = 116.053,  $p$ -value = 0.000,  $R^2 = 0.585$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.580$ .

## 5. Discussion

South Korean boycotts of Japanese products are typically based on historical issues between the two nations. However, the current boycott is relatively broader and more organizational than past boycotts. This study investigated consumer attitudes and motivation regarding Korea's current anti-Japan boycotts in relation to small business owners who were also participating in the boycotts. This was achieved through focusing on the factors of self-expression motivation, realizing justice, and consumer attitudes as elements of patriotic consumption.

Several important results were found based on these analyses. First, Korean consumers significantly decreased their purchases of Japanese products during the boycotts, including purchases of liquor, clothing, cosmetics, stationery, and other goods, and subsequently, the boycott participation levels were high during the South Korean boycotts of Japanese products. Second, patriotic consumption levels were lower than the median among Korean consumers. Third, self-expression and realizing justice motivation were relatively high. Fourth, attitudes toward the participation message and small business owners who were participating in the boycott were relatively high. Fifth, Korean consumers had relatively high intentions to visit the stores of small business owners who were participating in the boycott. Lastly, self-expression motivations, motivations to realize justice, consumer attitudes toward the boycott participation messages of small business owners, and consumer attitudes toward the small business owners themselves had statistically significant positive effects.

The results also demonstrated that patriotic consumption did not affect consumer intention to visit the stores of small business owners who were participating in boycotts related to historical issues.

This is because ethnocentrism decreases non-purchasing motivation while moderating evaluations about the quality of products and conspicuous consumption. In addition, patriotic consumption was not very strong among Korean consumers. Instead, it was found to be at normal levels. While consumers with strong ethnocentrism have negative attitudes about purchasing foreign products (Choi and Choi 2016; Woo et al. 2007), Korean consumers' motivations of self-expression and realizing justice were high and positively affected their intention to visit the stores of small business owners participating in the boycott. This may be because consumers believed that visiting these stores would lead to the realization of social justice, which was related to self-expression motivation; further, boycotting goals were congruent with their beliefs, values, and consciences (Cheon 2019; Klein et al. 2004).

Consumer attitudes about the boycott participation messages and small business owners who were participating in the boycott also positively affected their intentions to visit those stores. The theory of social identification posits that group identification occurs when people feel a sense of unity or belonging to a particular group (Katz and Kahn 1978). People exhibit consistently positive behaviors toward a group when they feel stronger levels of identification (Swann et al. 2009). In other words, consumers regard small business owners participating in the boycott as members of their group that was seeking common values. This resulted in positive consumer behaviors.

Further, the OECD projects a relatively low real-GDP growth rate of 2.49% for South Korea in 2020 (Cho 2019). During times of economic turmoil, smaller businesses rely more on customer loyalty to maintain sales and productivity (Barbu et al. 2010). In this context, consumer loyalty provides a competitive advantage.

This study is meaningful because we found that consumers can interact and build strong relationships with businesses when they have mutual goals during an international boycott and that consumers evaluate these businesses very positively. These results can contribute academically and socially; they can be used to develop theories to better understand consumers' behaviors as well as find the most effective ways to boycott and implement such actions. It can also be used to better understand the relationships between businesses and consumers as primary data.

This study had some limitations. First, the participants were limited to Korean consumers during a specific boycott that was related to historical issues. We aimed to study how consumer patriotism, motivation, and attitudes toward a boycott influenced their motivation of using small businesses that participate in the boycott. Future studies are necessary to investigate other boycotts to determine the generalizability of these findings. In particular, it will be crucial to focus on causal effects and factors of consumers' attitudes toward small business and their motivation to use these businesses during a boycott.

## 6. Conclusions

This study investigated consumer attitudes toward Korean small business owners as well as their intention to visit those businesses when the owners and consumers shared common beliefs and goals during the boycott. In addition, consumers held positive attitudes toward small business owners who shared their goals, and thus, had greater intention to visit those businesses. This indicates that small business owners should share their boycotting beliefs and goals with consumers. These owners can specifically appeal to consumers by posting signs or other advertisements that state their intention to participate in the boycott and fulfill their social responsibilities as small business owners. Doing so provides an excellent opportunity for small business owners to create long-term positive awareness. The results revealed that reviewing the use of a common logo, as was done during this boycott, will be necessary in the future. Using a stimulant, such as the boycott logo, in a proper way may lead consumers to influence the market more effectively and systematically.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Acknowledgments:** I would like to thank Editage ([www.editage.com](http://www.editage.com)) for English language editing.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

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