



THE INTERSECTION OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM: EXAMINING GEN Z'S ROLE IN ONLINE BOYCOTTS

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	This research aims to investigate the relationship between digital citizenship behavior and political engagement among Generation Z (Gen Z) in Indonesia, with a particular focus on their participation in online boycott movements. The study examines the factors underlying Gen Z's consumer activism in the digital era.
Background	People often perceive Gen Z as being tech-savvy and socially aware, but there has been limited research on how their online actions influence their political or consumer behavior in the real world. This article fills that gap by examining how digital citizenship activity is linked to political activism and boycotting.
Methodology	This study employed a quantitative methodology, surveying 100 Gen Z participants in Bandung City, Indonesia, utilizing electronic questionnaires disseminated via social media and Google Forms. Data were examined utilizing Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to evaluate the associations of digital citizenship activity, political involvement, and boycott behavior.

Accepting Editor Eli Cohen | Received: May 31, 2025 | Revised: September 30, October 7, 2025 |

Accepted: October 8, 2025.

Cite as: Fakhri, M., Hartadi, T., & Kurnianingrum, D. (2025). The intersection of digital citizenship and political activism: Examining Gen Z's role in online boycotts. *Informing Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*, 28, Article 33. <https://doi.org/10.28945/5641>

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Contribution	This research expands existing knowledge by presenting empirical evidence on the non-significance of digital citizenship activity in predicting political activism and boycott behavior, while highlighting political activism as a key predictor of boycotts among Generation Z.
Findings	Key findings indicate that: (1) digital citizenship behavior does not significantly affect political activism or boycott behavior; (2) political activism positively influences boycott behavior; and (3) political activism does not mediate the relationship between digital citizenship behavior and boycott behavior.
Recommendations for Practitioners	Marketers and governments must acknowledge that although Gen Z is digitally engaged, their political and consumer behaviors are driven more by activism and specific issues than by generic internet activity.
Recommendations for Researchers	Future research should investigate alternative mediators, including ethical awareness, social influence, and perceived consumer efficacy, to enhance understanding of the connections between digital behavior, activism, and consumer choices.
Impact on Society	The findings underscore the importance of promoting meaningful political engagement among young people, as political activism, in conjunction with digital literacy, influences their social and consumer behaviors, thereby potentially shaping the future civic and economic environments.
Future Research	Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples, disaggregate the dimensions of digital citizenship, and include previously unexamined factors such as peer influence and trust in institutions to enhance the understanding of Generation Z's activism and boycott behavior.
Keywords	boycotting, political activism, Gen Z, digital citizenship, consumer behavior

INTRODUCTION

The development of the internet and digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped how individuals interact with the world, influencing communication, social interactions, and awareness of political and social issues. Among the most significant changes is the transformation of political engagement, as the internet has become a powerful medium for voicing opinions and mobilizing collective action. This shift is particularly evident among Generation Z (Gen Z), the demographic cohort born between 1996 and 2010, who are currently between the ages of 12 and 26. Gen Z is the first generation to grow up in an era of ubiquitous digital technologies, which has profoundly shaped their worldviews, behaviors, and methods of engaging with societal issues. Their interaction with digital platforms has significant implications for their political activism and civic engagement, making them a critical subject of study in understanding contemporary digital citizenship behavior (Wijaya & Amalia, 2024).

In Indonesia, Gen Z has emerged as a vocal and active participant in political and social activism, often leveraging the internet and social media to address pressing issues such as political corruption, environmental degradation, and social injustice (Musfirah et al., 2024). One notable manifestation of their activism is their involvement in boycotts, a form of consumer activism where individuals abstain from purchasing goods or services from companies whose policies or actions conflict with their ethical, political, or social values (Seyfi et al., 2022). For instance, Indonesian Gen Z has recently mobilized to boycott products affiliated with Israel, reflecting their solidarity with the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation. This trend highlights how Gen Z's activism is deeply rooted in their personal values and beliefs, as well as their desire to align their consumer behavior with their ethical standards (Alfaruqy et al., 2022).

Boycotts have historically been a tool for social and political change, but their dynamics have evolved in the digital age. Social media platforms have amplified the reach and impact of boycotts, enabling rapid mobilization and widespread participation. Gen Z's unique relationship with technology, combined with their strong sense of justice and desire for systemic change, has positioned them as key actors in these movements. Their participation in digital boycotts reflects not only their political engagement but also their digital citizenship behavior – defined as the ability to engage responsibly and ethically in the digital world (Robinson, 2024). Digital citizenship encompasses various dimensions, including digital literacy, etiquette, safety, rights, responsibilities, and activism, all of which are critical to understanding how Gen Z navigates and influences the digital landscape (Alruthaya et al., 2021).

The growing trend of political activism among Gen Z indicates a profound transformation in how this generation exercises civic duties, advocates for their beliefs, and drives social and political change. Social media, often associated with entertainment and information sharing, has become a vital tool for political participation and civic engagement (Velasco et al., 2024). This aligns with existing literature, which suggests that Gen Z's political engagement is deeply tied to their personal values and ethical standards. Their awareness of political issues and willingness to take action demonstrate their commitment to digital citizenship, enabling them to participate effectively and responsibly in the digital environment.

Despite the growing influence of Gen Z in digital activism, there remains a need to explore the specific behaviors and motivations driving their participation in boycotts, as well as the broader implications of their activism on political and economic systems (Grishaeva & Lebedeva, 2021; Salsabila et al., 2021). Previous research has highlighted the importance of digital citizenship behavior in shaping Gen Z's political activism and their ability to drive social and political change through digital platforms. However, the intersection of digital citizenship behavior and political activism, particularly in the context of boycotts, remains underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how Gen Z's political activism on the internet, particularly their participation in boycott activities, can be understood within the framework of digital citizenship behavior. By analyzing the role of Gen Z in digital boycotts, this research aims to provide insight into the evolving nature of political engagement in the digital era. It explores how Gen Z leverages digital tools to organize, communicate, and sustain boycott movements, as well as the broader implications of their activism for political and economic systems. We believe that the contribution to the journal's scope is achieved by bridging applied psychology with studies of digital and social behavior, thereby offering a deeper understanding of how digital contexts influence civic engagement and ethical decision-making in modern society. We are confident that this research meaningfully corresponds with the principles of applied psychology within the broader framework of Informing Science, advancing interdisciplinary insights into how individuals process, interpret, and act upon digital information in civic and consumer domains.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

The idea of digital citizenship has become a vital framework for analyzing how people interact with and navigate the digital world. Digital citizenship refers to the standards of appropriate, responsible, and empowered use of technology. It encompasses various behaviors and skills, including digital literacy, etiquette, rights and responsibilities, safety, and activism (Gilang et al., 2019; Saragih et al., 2018).

A central component of digital citizenship is digital activism, which involves using digital tools and platforms to advocate for social and political change. Research has emphasized the significant role of Gen Z, as digital natives, in utilizing the internet and social media to express their views, organize collective efforts, and create meaningful impact both locally and globally (Alruthaya et al., 2021; Castillo-Esparcia et al., 2023; Seyfi et al., 2022). Gen Z's involvement in digital activism is closely linked to their strong sense of social responsibility and their commitment to aligning their actions, including consumer choices, with their personal values and beliefs (Alruthaya et al., 2021).

Some scholars view digital citizenship as a broader concept than traditional civic participation and political engagement. Bennett et al. (2009) suggest that online activities often include diverse actions, such as visiting pop culture websites, gaming, and using the internet for self-expression. For instance, active participation in an online community may require complex decision-making about when and how to engage in discussions, reflecting a form of digital citizenship that extends beyond conventional political action. Similarly, collaborative activities on multi-user gaming platforms can foster unique opportunities for interaction and problem-solving, which may not be available in other contexts (Castillo-Esparcia et al., 2023). Additionally, the internet has enabled new forms of consumer outreach focused on ethical rather than material consumption.

H1: Digital citizenship behavior has an effect on political activism among Gen Z.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM ON THE INTERNET

The internet and digital technologies have reshaped political activism, providing new avenues for collective action, civic engagement, and social change. Social media platforms, particularly TikTok, play a crucial role in modern activism by enabling the rapid dissemination of information, facilitating coordinated action, and fostering discussions on divisive issues. Activists increasingly rely on these digital tools to raise awareness, mobilize supporters, and amplify their causes to a global audience.

Gen Z has emerged as a leading force in digital activism, leveraging their fluency in online platforms to advocate for social and political issues. Their activism often manifests in viral challenges, coordinated hashtag campaigns, and educational content designed to inform and influence public discourse (Bobkowski & Rosenthal, 2022). However, while digital activism has proven effective in raising awareness, its ability to drive sustained, real-world change remains a key challenge.

Despite its advantages, online activism also has limitations. The anonymity and lack of moderation on some platforms can foster harmful behaviors, such as trolling and misinformation, which may undermine activist efforts (Wong, 2021). Additionally, the transient nature of online trends can make it difficult to maintain long-term engagement. Scholars have also raised concerns about “slacktivism,” where individuals participate in symbolic gestures of support without meaningful action. Understanding the motivations and behaviors behind Gen Z’s digital activism is crucial to ensuring that their efforts translate into lasting social and political impact.

H2: Political activism has an effect on boycotts among Gen Z.

BOYCOTT AS A FORM OF DIGITAL ACTIVISM

Boycotting has become a prominent form of digital activism, allowing consumers to leverage their purchasing power to influence corporate behavior and promote social and political change (Mata et al., 2023). The rise of digital technologies and the widespread use of social media have significantly amplified the reach and impact of boycott campaigns. Social media platforms enable rapid coordination, real-time information sharing, and the ability to hold companies accountable more effectively than ever before (Kurnianingrum et al., 2023).

Gen Z, often referred to as “digital natives,” has played a central role in modern boycott movements. Having grown up in a highly connected digital environment, they are adept at using online platforms to express political views, organize protests, and mobilize support for social and political causes (Seyfi et al., 2022). Their activism is deeply rooted in personal values and a commitment to social justice, sustainability, and ethical business practices. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z is more likely to support brands that align with their ethical standards while quickly rejecting those perceived as deceptive or irresponsible (Harva et al., 2024).

The increasing prevalence of youth-led boycott campaigns demonstrates Gen Z’s determination to drive corporate accountability. When companies engage in unethical or socially irresponsible practices, Gen Z consumers mobilize rapidly, often using digital platforms to coordinate their actions and

amplify their message. Their activism has led to tangible outcomes, including changes in corporate policies, product recalls, and increased transparency (Karmagatri et al., 2023).

From a consumer behavior perspective, Gen Z's participation in boycotts reflects their digital citizenship behavior, which encompasses responsible and ethical engagement in the digital world. Digital citizenship encompasses digital literacy, online etiquette, and activism, all of which influence how Gen Z engages with brands and corporations. By strategically using their purchasing power, they are not only exercising digital citizenship but also demonstrating how digital activism can drive meaningful social change.

H3: Digital citizenship behavior has a direct effect on boycott among Gen Z

H4: Digital citizenship has an effect on boycott among Gen Z indirectly mediated by political activism on the internet.

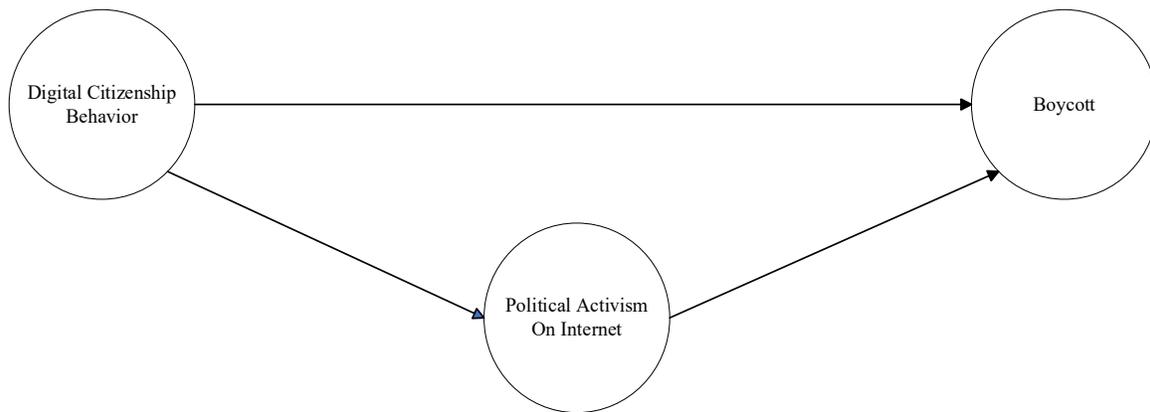


Figure 1. Research framework

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a quantitative approach, providing accurate and objective insights into the study. The method was chosen for its affordability and efficiency in data collection, using social media platforms and electronic forms. Our target population is Generation Z in Indonesia, specifically in Bandung City, with a sample size of 100 respondents. A non-probability, convenience sampling technique was chosen due to accessibility and ease of data collection (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, with survey items adapted from Choi's Digital Citizenship Behavior (DCB) scale and Hamzah's Boycott Behavior scale, incorporating minor modifications to fit the research context. Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Harpe, 2015). For data analysis, we apply Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) using SmartPLS software to examine the relationships among variables.

RESULTS

We begin by describing the results of the outer model, which are illustrated in Figure 2. This figure provides an overview of the measurement model, demonstrating the relationships between the observed indicators and their respective latent constructs.

OUTER MODEL RESULT

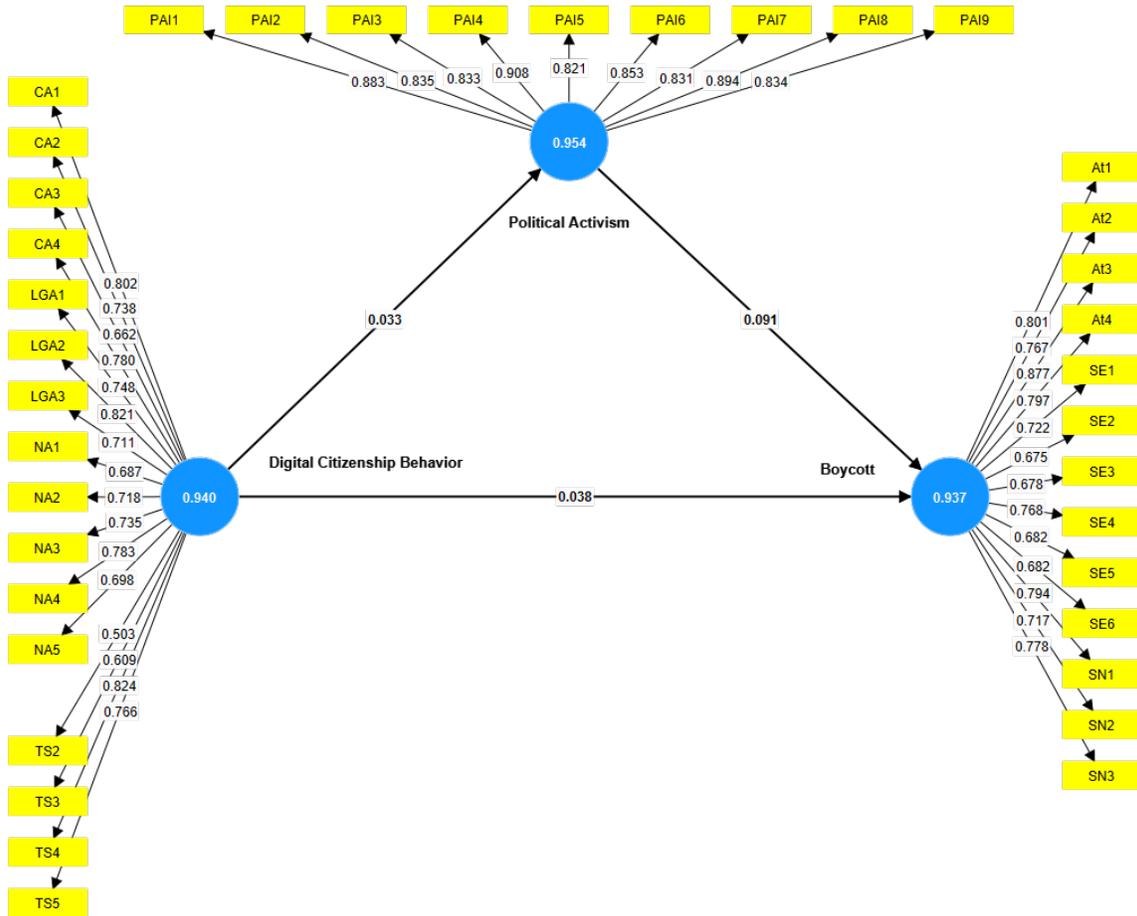


Figure 2. Outer model result

Table 1 presents a detailed breakdown of the outer model results, including factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability. This table provides a comprehensive assessment of the measurement model’s validity and reliability, ensuring that the constructs used in the study meet the necessary statistical criteria.

Table 1. Outer loading result

Variable	Item code	Factor loadings	AVE	Composite reliability
Boycott	At1	0.801	0.565	0.958
Boycott	At2	0.767		
Boycott	At3	0.877		
Boycott	At4	0.797		
Boycott	SE1	0.722		
Boycott	SE2	0.675		
Boycott	SE3	0.678		
Boycott	SE4	0.768		
Boycott	SE5	0.682		

Variable	Item code	Factor loadings	AVE	Composite reliability
Boycott	SE6	0.682		
Boycott	SN1	0.794		
Boycott	SN2	0.717		
Boycott	SN3	0.778		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	CA1	0.802	0.531	0.949
Digital Citizenship Behavior	CA2	0.738		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	CA3	0.662		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	CA4	0.780		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	LGA1	0.748		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	LGA2	0.821		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	LGA3	0.711		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	NA1	0.687		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	NA2	0.718		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	NA3	0.735		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	NA4	0.783		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	NA5	0.698		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	TS2	0.503		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	TS3	0.609		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	TS4	0.824		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	TS5	0.766		
Political Activism	PAI1	0.883	0.732	0.971
Political Activism	PAI2	0.835		
Political Activism	PAI3	0.833		
Political Activism	PAI4	0.908		
Political Activism	PAI5	0.821		
Political Activism	PAI6	0.853		
Political Activism	PAI7	0.831		
Political Activism	PAI8	0.894		
Political Activism	PAI9	0.834		

The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity using factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). The results indicate acceptable measurement properties, though some indicators exhibit lower factor loadings that warrant further consideration.

For the Boycott construct, the CR value of 0.958 exceeds the recommended 0.70 threshold, demonstrating strong internal consistency. The AVE of 0.565 suggests that the construct explains a sufficient proportion of variance in its indicators. Factor loadings range from 0.675 to 0.877, with SE2 (0.675) and SE3 (0.678) falling below the preferred threshold of 0.70. While these values are still within an acceptable range, their relatively lower contribution to the construct may require further refinement.

The Digital Citizenship Behavior construct also demonstrates good reliability, with a CR of 0.949. However, the AVE of 0.531, while above the 0.50 threshold, indicates that some items contribute less to the construct's overall variance explanation. Factor loadings range from 0.503 to 0.824, with

TS2 (0.503) and TS3 (0.609) being the weakest indicators. These items may require further evaluation to enhance construct validity.

The Political Activism construct shows the strongest measurement properties, with a CR of 0.971 and an AVE of 0.732, indicating high internal consistency and strong convergent validity. Factor loadings for this construct range from 0.821 to 0.908, suggesting minimal measurement error and strong indicator reliability.

Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio

The HTMT results indicate that the heterotrait-monotrait correlation ratio for assessing discriminant validity is below the 0.90 threshold, confirming that the constructs are adequately distinct. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. HTMT results

Variable	Boycott	Digital Citizenship Behavior	Political Activism
Boycott			
Digital Citizenship Behavior	0.219		
Political Activism	0.271	0.171	

The HTMT results indicate that all correlation ratios between constructs are below the 0.90 threshold, confirming that discriminant validity is met. The highest HTMT value is 0.271 between Boycott and Political Activism, while the lowest is 0.171 between Digital Citizenship Behavior and Political Activism. These values suggest that while the constructs are related, they remain distinct from one another. Given that HTMT values exceeding 0.90 may indicate poor discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022), the current results support the robustness of the model’s construct separation.

Fornell-Larcker

The Fornell-Larcker results indicate that the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker results

Variable	Boycott	Digital Citizenship Behavior	Political Activism
Boycott	0.751		
Digital Citizenship Behavior	0.235	0.729	
Political Activism	0.319	0.179	0.855

The Fornell-Larcker criterion further supports discriminant validity by demonstrating that the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs. Specifically, the AVE square root values are 0.751 for Boycott, 0.729 for Digital Citizenship Behavior, and 0.855 for Political Activism. Each of these values exceeds the highest correlation with other constructs, confirming that the constructs explain more variance in their indicators than in other constructs.

Cross loading

The cross-loading table is presented in this section to illustrate the discriminant validity of the constructs. Table 4 compares the factor loadings of each indicator on its respective construct with its loadings on other constructs, ensuring that each indicator is more strongly associated with its intended variable. A higher loading on the assigned construct compared to others confirms the distinctiveness of the constructs used in the study.

Table 4. Cross-loading result

Item code	Boycott	Digital Citizenship Behavior	Political Activism
At1	0.801	0.221	0.21
At2	0.767	0.163	0.095
At3	0.877	0.12	0.172
At4	0.797	0.254	0.281
CA1	0.119	0.802	0.061
CA2	0.097	0.738	-0.008
CA3	0.212	0.662	0.177
CA4	0.172	0.78	0.186
LGA1	0.193	0.748	0.063
LGA2	0.155	0.821	0.205
LGA3	0.244	0.711	0.154
NA1	0.185	0.687	0.093
NA2	0.191	0.718	0.062
NA3	0.11	0.735	0.09
NA4	0.159	0.783	0.138
NA5	0.201	0.698	0.081
PAI1	0.252	0.089	0.883
PAI2	0.165	0.171	0.835
PAI3	0.244	0.252	0.833
PAI4	0.305	0.125	0.908
PAI5	0.163	0.157	0.821
PAI6	0.31	0.16	0.853
PAI7	0.382	0.207	0.831
PAI8	0.235	0.087	0.894
PAI9	0.275	0.074	0.834
SE1	0.722	0.126	0.142
SE2	0.675	0.082	0.096
SE3	0.678	0.223	0.188
SE4	0.768	0.143	0.106
SE5	0.682	0.119	0.105
SE6	0.682	0.187	0.439
SN1	0.794	0.099	0.287
SN2	0.717	0.207	0.294
SN3	0.778	0.174	0.221
TS2	-0.014	0.503	0.078
TS3	0.097	0.609	0.119
TS4	0.206	0.824	0.167
TS5	0.138	0.766	0.194

The cross-loading results confirm that each item has the highest loading on its assigned construct, supporting indicator reliability and discriminant validity. This ensures that the items measure their intended constructs rather than overlapping significantly with others. The Boycott construct exhibits strong loadings, with values ranging from 0.675 to 0.877, indicating a well-defined structure. Digital Citizenship Behavior has relatively lower factor loadings, particularly for items CA3 (0.662), NA1 (0.687), and TS2 (0.503), suggesting potential measurement concerns. However, given that its items generally load higher on their construct than on others, discriminant validity is maintained. Political activism displays the strongest loadings, ranging from 0.821 to 0.908, reinforcing the construct’s robustness.

Despite the overall strong construct separation, a few items, such as SE6 (Boycott, 0.682) and PAI7 (Political Activism, 0.831), have moderate cross-loadings on other constructs. These values do not exceed the item’s primary loading but indicate possible conceptual overlap that should be reviewed in future research. The presence of Digital Citizenship Behavior items with relatively lower loadings suggests the need for further refinement in measurement or theoretical justification for their retention.

Overall, the cross-loading results confirm that the measurement model demonstrates adequate discriminant validity, with items showing stronger correlations with their intended constructs than with unrelated constructs. This supports the appropriateness of the model for further structural analysis.

INNER MODEL RESULT

The inner model results (Figure 3) are presented to evaluate the structural relationships among the latent variables. This includes the assessment of path coefficients, R-square values, and significance levels, which provide insight into the strength and direction of the hypothesized relationships. Additionally, the model’s predictive relevance will be examined using Q-square values, while collinearity issues will be assessed through the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. These evaluations help determine the overall explanatory power and validity of the research model.

Result of inner VIF Multicollinearity test

The results of the inner variance inflation factor (VIF) test indicate that all values are close to 1, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Inner VIF value

Variable	Inner variance inflation factor (VIF) value
Digital Citizenship Behavior -> Boycott	1.033
Digital Citizenship Behavior -> Political Activism	1
Political activism -> Boycott	1.033

The VIF values of 1.033 for Digital Citizenship Behavior → Boycott and Political Activism → Boycott indicate minimal correlation between independent variables, ensuring that each construct provides unique explanatory power in the model. Similarly, the VIF value of 1.000 for Digital Citizenship Behavior → Political Activism suggests complete independence between these variables, reinforcing the robustness of the model. Since a VIF value below 5 indicates that multicollinearity is not a concern (Hair et al., 2022), these results confirm that there is no significant collinearity among the predictor variables.

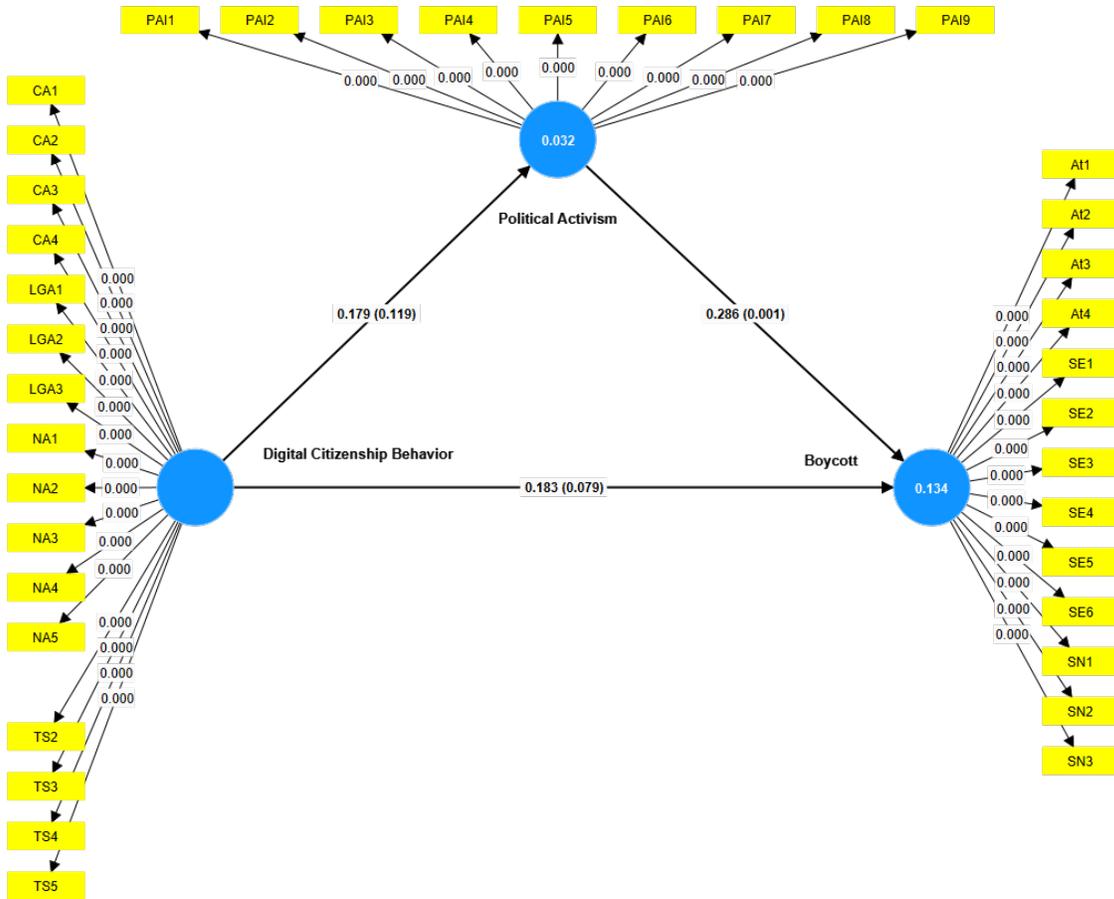


Figure 3. Inner model result

Results of R-Square test

The results of the R-squared test are presented in Table 6, which evaluates the explanatory power of the model in predicting the variance of the endogenous variables.

Table 6. R-Square test result

Endogen variable	R-Square
Boycott	0.134

The R-square value for Boycott is 0.134, indicating that the independent variables explain 13.4% of the variance in boycott behavior. This suggests a weak explanatory power, implying that other factors not included in the model may significantly influence boycott behavior. Similarly, the R-square value for Political Activism is 0.032, meaning that only 3.2% of its variance is explained by the predictor variables. This very low R-square value suggests that additional factors should be considered to better understand what drives political activism.

Results of Q-Square test

Results of the Q-square test review the predictive relevance of the model by assessing how well the independent variables predict the variance of the endogenous variables. The result is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Q-square test result

Endogenous variable	Q square	Review
Boycott	0.015	Predict Relevance
Political Activism	0.005	Predict Relevance

The Q-square values for Boycott (0.015) and Political Activism (0.005) indicate that the model has minimal predictive relevance for these endogenous variables. In PLS-SEM, a Q-square value above zero indicates that the model has some predictive power, but the small values here suggest that the model's ability to predict changes in these variables is weak.

Result of Model Fit test

Results of the model fit test indicate that the structural model demonstrates an acceptable level of fit. Table 8 provides the details of the model fit test.

Table 8. Model fit test result

Model fit	Value	Review
SRMR	0.080	Model fit
NFI	0.701	Model fit

SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) = 0.080. This value indicates an acceptable model fit, as SRMR values below 0.10 suggest that the model adequately represents the data (Hair et al., 2022). NFI (Normed Fit Index) = 0.701. The NFI value of 0.701 suggests a moderate model fit. While values closer to 1 indicate a better fit, a value above 0.60 can still be considered acceptable in exploratory research.

DIRECT EFFECT RESULT

Direct effect results show the strength and significance of the relationships between variables in the structural model presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Direct effect results

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	P values	95% confidence interval		f-square	Explanation
			Lower bound	Upper bound		
Digital Citizenship Behavior -> Boycott	0.183	0.079	-0.046	0.374	0.038	Rejected
Digital Citizenship Behavior -> Political Activism	0.179	0.119	-0.115	0.376	0.033	Rejected
Political Activism -> Boycott	0.286	0.001	0.112	0.44	0.091	Accepted

Effect of digital citizenship behavior on boycott

The path coefficient (0.183) suggests a weak positive relationship between Digital Citizenship Behavior and Boycott. However, the p-value (0.079) exceeds the 0.05 threshold, meaning the effect is not statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval (-0.046 to 0.374) includes zero, further confirm-

ing the lack of significance. The f-square value (0.038) indicates a small effect size. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that Digital Citizenship Behavior does not significantly influence boycott behavior.

Effect of digital citizenship behavior on political activism

The path coefficient (0.179) indicates a weak positive relationship between Digital Citizenship Behavior and Political Activism. However, the p-value (0.119) is above the 0.05 significance level, meaning the effect is not statistically significant. Additionally, the confidence interval (-0.115 to 0.376) includes zero, further supporting the rejection of the hypothesis. The f-square value (0.033) suggests a small effect size. Thus, this result indicates that Digital Citizenship Behavior does not significantly impact Political Activism.

Effect of political activism on boycott

The path coefficient (0.286) shows a moderate positive relationship between Political Activism and Boycott. The p-value (0.001) is well below 0.05, confirming statistical significance. Moreover, the confidence interval (0.112 to 0.44) does not include zero, reinforcing the reliability of this effect. The f-square value (0.091) suggests a small to moderate effect size. Since the hypothesis is accepted, this indicates that Political Activism has a significant positive impact on Boycott behavior.

INDIRECT EFFECT RESULT

The indirect effect result presented in Table 10 provides key statistical values, including the path coefficient, p-value, confidence interval, and effect size.

Table 10. Indirect effect result

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	P values	95% confidence interval		Upsilon V	Explanation
			Lower bound	Upper bound		
Digital Citizenship Behavior -> Political Activism -> Boycott	0.051	0.189	-0.099	0.106	0.0026	Rejected

Mediation effect of political activism on digital citizenship behavior and boycott

The indirect effect of Digital Citizenship Behavior on Boycott through Political Activism has a path coefficient of 0.051, indicating a very weak relationship. The p-value (0.189) is well above the 0.05 threshold, meaning the mediation effect is not statistically significant. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval (-0.099 to 0.106) includes zero, further confirming that the indirect effect is not meaningful.

The upsilon (υ) value of 0.0026 suggests an extremely small effect size, reinforcing the weak mediation. Since the hypothesis is rejected, this result indicates that Political Activism does not significantly mediate the relationship between Digital Citizenship Behavior and Boycott.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide several insights into the relationships between digital citizenship behavior (DCB), boycott behavior, and political activism among Gen Z individuals in Bandung City, Indonesia. Contrary to expectations, the analysis revealed that DCB does not have a statistically significant influence on either boycott behavior or political activism. However, political activism was found to be a significant predictor of boycott behavior, demonstrating a moderate positive relationship. Furthermore, political activism did not significantly mediate the relationship between DCB and

boycott behavior. These findings have important implications for understanding the behavioral patterns of Gen Z consumers and activists, as well as the broader sociocultural factors that influence ethical consumption and political participation.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND BOYCOTT BEHAVIOR

This study found that DCB does not have a statistically significant effect on boycott behavior among Gen Z individuals in Bandung City. The path coefficient of 0.183 suggests a weak positive relationship; however, the high p-value (0.079) and the confidence interval spanning zero (-0.046 to 0.374) led to the rejection of our hypothesis. This suggests that engaging in responsible and ethical online behavior does not necessarily translate into an increased likelihood of participating in consumer boycotts.

Gen Z is often characterized as socially conscious and digitally active, but the specific context of Indonesia may play a crucial role in shaping boycott behaviors. Cultural values, economic considerations, and localized social issues might outweigh the influence of general digital citizenship norms. This suggests that while Gen Z individuals may engage in digital activism, this engagement does not necessarily extend to consumer behavior such as boycotts. DCB encompasses various online behaviors, including digital literacy, ethical engagement, and social responsibility (Rogova & Matta, 2023). However, only specific facets of DCB, such as active participation in online social movements and critical evaluation of online information, may be relevant to boycott behavior (Van Nguyen et al., 2019). Other components, such as basic digital etiquette, may have little to no impact on consumer decisions.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Similarly, this study found no significant relationship between DCB and political activism. The path coefficient of 0.179 indicates a weak positive relationship, but the high p-value (0.119) and confidence interval spanning zero (-0.115 to 0.376) led to the rejection of our hypothesis. This suggests that engaging in responsible digital behavior does not necessarily lead to increased political participation.

Gen Z is generally perceived as politically aware and engaged; however, actual political participation is often influenced by factors such as political efficacy, access to resources, and the perceived effectiveness of activism (Bobkowski & Rosenthal, 2022). Prior research has indicated that while digital skills are high among young students, political involvement remains relatively low (Lozano-Díaz & Fernández-Prados, 2020). This suggests that digital citizenship alone is insufficient to drive political activism. Other factors, such as personal political interest, peer influence, and exposure to political discussions, may play more significant roles in motivating Gen Z individuals to engage in activism (Castillo-Esparcia et al., 2023). Additionally, different forms of political activism may have varying relationships with DCB. While online activism (e.g., signing petitions, participating in social media campaigns) may be more directly linked to DCB, offline activism (e.g., protests, contacting officials) may require additional motivational and structural factors.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND BOYCOTT BEHAVIOR

The study found a statistically significant and moderate positive relationship between political activism and boycott behavior. With a path coefficient of 0.286 and a p-value of 0.001, we accept the hypothesis that greater engagement in political activism is associated with a higher likelihood of participating in consumer boycotts. This finding aligns with existing literature, which suggests that Gen Z's political engagement is often driven by their ethical values and concerns for social justice (Novo Vázquez & García-Espejo, 2021). As digital natives, Gen Z individuals frequently use online platforms to express opinions, organize collective actions, and hold corporations accountable for unethical practices. Boycotts serve as an extension of their activism, allowing them to influence corporate behavior through consumer choices (Flecha-Ortiz et al., 2024).

Political activism likely enhances individuals' awareness of ethical issues and provides them with the motivation and confidence to take action through boycotts. Furthermore, activism fosters a sense of collective responsibility and empowerment, reinforcing the belief that consumer actions can drive social change. However, the effect size ($f^2 = 0.091$) suggests that while political activism is a significant predictor of boycott behavior, other variables also play a role. These may include individual attitudes toward specific brands, social influence, and perceptions of boycott effectiveness.

MEDIATION ANALYSIS: POLITICAL ACTIVISM AS A MEDIATOR

The mediation analysis in this study sought to determine whether political activism acts as an intermediary factor through which digital citizenship behavior (DCB) influences boycott behavior among Gen Z individuals in Bandung City, Indonesia. The findings indicate that political activism does not significantly mediate this relationship. The path coefficient of 0.051 suggests an extremely weak indirect effect, further supported by a non-significant p-value (0.189) and a confidence interval (-0.099 to 0.106) that includes zero. The very low ν ($\nu = 0.0026$) further confirms that the indirect effect of DCB on boycott behavior through political activism is negligible. These results lead us to reject the hypothesis that political activism serves as a meaningful mediator in this context.

This finding contradicts previous assumptions that responsible and ethical online behavior (as characterized by DCB) would foster greater political engagement, which in turn would lead to increased boycott participation (Velasco et al., 2024). In theory, individuals who engage in digital citizenship, such as sharing ethical consumer information, advocating for social causes online, and critically evaluating digital content, might be expected to transition into active political participants and subsequently become more engaged boycotters (Alruthaya et al., 2021). However, our results suggest that this pathway is not strongly supported in the studied population.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how Generation Z's political activism on the internet, particularly their participation in boycott activities, can be understood within the framework of digital citizenship behavior. While the growing influence of Gen Z in digital activism is clear, there remains a necessity to empirically explore the specific behaviors and motivations driving their participation in boycotts, as well as the broader implications of their activism on political and economic systems. Previous research highlighted the importance of digital citizenship behavior in shaping Gen Z's political activism and their ability to drive social and political change through digital platforms.

Our research investigated how information about social and political issues is consumed, interpreted, and translates into actionable civic engagement among Generation Z. The key findings challenge common intuitive assumptions, revealing that digital citizenship behavior does not significantly affect political activism or boycott behavior among Gen Z. This result shows that mere digital engagement or literacy, while important, is insufficient to directly drive consumer activism or broader political participation. Instead, we found a strong positive relationship where political activism directly and significantly influences boycott behavior. The result analysis also demonstrated that political activism does not mediate the relationship between digital citizenship behavior and boycott behavior, suggesting that other, perhaps more potent, factors are at play in shaping these complex decisions.

We believe these findings are significant for clarifying the distinction between superficial digital engagement and value-driven action. For researchers, the study contributes empirical evidence that challenges assumptions about digital citizenship behavior, showing it is not a direct driver of activism or boycotts. This insight advances debates on digital citizenship, political communication, and consumer activism, while highlighting the need to disaggregate dimensions such as social media activism and critical digital literacy. For policymakers and educators, the results underscore that fostering meaningful participation necessitates a broader approach, extending beyond digital literacy to ensure

that online activity translates into offline civic and political engagement. For businesses, the demonstrated link between political activism and boycotts underscores the importance of maintaining transparency, adhering to ethical practices, and aligning with Gen Z's values, as their purchasing decisions are often driven by activist convictions rather than general internet use. The result also suggests that Gen Z individuals can benefit from a clearer understanding of how their digital engagement translates into meaningful collective action, thereby reinforcing the broader implications of their activism for political and economic systems. By situating these findings within the stakeholder landscape, this study not only sharpens theoretical debates but also provides practical guidance for those aiming to engage with or support Generation Z's civic and consumer actions in the digital era.

We also acknowledge that the study has limitations, including a relatively small sample size ($n = 100$), and the use of convenience sampling restricts the generalizability of the results. In addition, treating digital citizenship and political activism as composite constructs may obscure the varied effects of their distinct components. Researchers should consider expanding to larger and more diverse samples across regions and exploring alternative designs, such as longitudinal or comparative studies. Further investigations should also examine other possible drivers of boycott behavior, including ethical awareness, social influence, and trust in institutions, to build a more comprehensive understanding of these complex dynamics.

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