

*The Mediating Role of Brand Loyalty between the nexus of Brand Image on Purchase Intention: McDonald's Case Study: Post Israel-Palestine Conflict*

# The Mediating Role of Brand Loyalty between the nexus of Brand Image on Purchase Intention: McDonald's Case Study: Post Israel-Palestine Conflict

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## **Abstract**

This study is intended to investigate the relationship between brand image and purchase intention through the mediation effect of brand loyalty. Due to the current Palestine-Israel war, the purchase intentions of many brands are affected. McDonald's is also one of those businesses whose purchase intention has been affected by war. Thus, this study is intended to examine customers' purchase intention towards McDonald's. The study uses a quantitative approach using self-administered questionnaires to collect primary data. Data was collected from the SBK Women's

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University students. Non-probability convenience sampling is used with a sample size of 260 students.

**Keywords:** Brand Image, Brand Loyalty, Purchase intention, MacDonald's, Israel- Palestine Conflict

## **Introduction**

### **Background of the study**

Purchase intention, which represents a consumer's propensity to purchase a specific good or service based on a range of internal and external factors, is a crucial component of the decision-making process. Purchase decisions are determined by how people, groups, or organizations assess things to suit their needs; these evaluations are frequently impacted by social, cultural, and economic aspects (Kotler & Amstrong, 2016). A buyer's purchasing intention is shaped by their approach, estimation, and outside factors, which makes it crucial to forecast their behavior. Purchase intention can be used to calculate the likelihood that a buyer will buy a manufactured good. The buyer's intention to purchase the commodities will be higher if the purchasing intention is higher (Rasheed et al., 2014). The decision-making process is complicated, and several elements, including product expertise, pricing, packaging, recommendations, and trends in consumer behavior, have a big influence on whether a customer decides to buy (Witt & Bruce, 1972). Research indicates that customers frequently rely on their decisions on peer recommendations or personal experiences, for instance, underscoring the significance of social and environmental elements in influencing purchase intention (Blackwell et al. [1990].Pdf, n.d.). Furthermore, demographic factors like age and economic status have an impact that makes it harder to forecast purchasing intentions (Kamaruddin & Kamaruddin, 2009). Purchase intention alone may not ensure an actual purchase since consumers' decisions might be influenced by unanticipated events such as changing wants, new knowledge, or availability problems (Engel & Roger, n.d.). Nonetheless, it continues to be an essential predictor of future consumer behavior, particularly in e-Commerce, where knowing client intent can lead to more individualized marketing campaigns and increased conversion rates. As demonstrated by situations where some customers may react favorably to discounts while others may not require incentives, segmenting clients according to their purchase intent enables more focused marketing. Therefore, by matching strategies with specific customer behaviors and preferences, monitoring and utilizing purchase intention can enhance marketing effectiveness, client retention, and overall profitability. Because it gives everyone the freedom to choose, the intention to purchase is the best measure of human behavior. The most popular marketing tool for predicting sales and evaluating the effectiveness of a marketing strategy is purchase intention. The best predictor of a customer's future behavior, according to the idea of Reasoned Action, is their intention to purchase. (Abbas, et al., 2021). Many things can affect a person's intention to purchase. Personal, cultural, and life situations are some of these impacts. Judith and Richard contend that a person's degree of brand loyalty has a significant impact on their likelihood of making a purchase. Brand image is one aspect that influences consumers' intention to purchase a particular brand. Several aspects of social media marketing, including entertainment, trust, interactions, electronic word-of-mouth, and online involvement, have been found to have a substantial impact on brand loyalty. This leads to repercussions for the intention to purchase (Chen, 2024). The strong influence of the brand

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image will increase the positive attitude towards the product, as stated by Wee et al. (2014: 383). This positive attitude will transform the intention to purchase into buying behavior (Çavuşoğlu et al., 2021). The data analysis's findings show a substantial positive correlation between brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Therefore, it may be said that an increase in brand loyalty can boost purchasing intentions (Ehsan Malik et al., 2013). Any antecedents that foster favorable attitudes, including brand loyalty, can be used to explain purchase intention (Atulkar, 2020).

### **Problem Statement and Significance**

Banned brands have surged since the October 2023 start of the Israel-Hamas conflict. Customers in Muslim nations that support Palestine are boycotting Western companies that operate in Israel because they are associated with the Israel-Hamas conflict (Dhir, 2024). Bilkey and Nes (1982) indicated that perceptions of individuals from particular nations are linked to intentions to purchase, as demonstrated by the example of how Arab-Americans' perceptions of Israeli goods changed as a result of international conflicts. When making purchases, consumers consider more than just the products' quality; they also consider their feelings and emotions. Customers may decide not to purchase goods from nations that engage in extreme and intolerable political, military, or economic activity (Prateepkongcharoen & Charinsarn, 2024). When a brand is boycotted, things can spiral out of control. Israel's occupation of Palestine and its fierce assault on the Palestinians to seize Jerusalem have recently gained international attention. Muslims throughout the world were moved by this historic occurrence, and many of them were exhorted to shun anything connected to Israel and its ally, the United States of America. McDonald's is one of the goods that was impacted by this boycott (Suhaimi & Sulaiman, 2013). The collective boycott appears to be harming the company's name and image while endangering sales of the targeted multinational brands (Ishak et al., 2018).

It has been shown that political unrest among nations has a big influence on consumer purchasing patterns in these conflict situations. One of the most significant industrial areas in any nation is the food sector, which is badly impacted by the political unrest in Palestine and Israel (Abdulrahman, 2020). For instance, McDonald's Malaysia is affected in several ways by these boycott campaigns. First of all, their staff were affected. McDonald's Malaysia experienced an 80% decrease in daily income and facility damage during the 2014 boycott, particularly in the East Coast regions. Certain outlets had to be shuttered for safety concerns, and some staff experienced violence. The resignation of a few workers in support of Palestine had an impact on their working hours and morale. Second, there was a decline in customer brand loyalty. Both McDonald's Malaysia's reputation and consumer confidence were badly damaged by the boycott. There has been a notable decrease in the number of patrons in Malaysia, as reported by several shops exhibiting sharp declines in sales (Amirul & Abdullah, 2024). Israeli-affiliated brands like McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, and Starbucks are very well-liked by all demographics in Indonesia, particularly in the city of Palembang. Additionally, all of them are food and drink items that the Indonesian public views favorably. In Palembang, McDonald's is one of the most popular fast food chains with a sizable customer base. Nevertheless, this product is actually an Israeli-affiliated product that is little used abroad. As

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a fast-food establishment with a well-established brand, McDonald's is intricately linked to the brand that has been dormant since the October 2023 Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Syauqi, n.d.).

The economic consequences theme in this section uses a quote from a news article that was referenced in research concerning the financial effects of boycotts as well as their effects on purchase intention, brand image, and brand loyalty.

"In October 2023, the month Israel began its bombardment and ground offensive in Gaza, the fast food chain McDonald's supplied thousands of complimentary lunches to Israeli forces, which infuriated Israel's critics, particularly in the Middle East."

"According to data provided by McDonald's Egypt, the boycott of the fast food chain in Egypt resulted in a 70% decrease in sales."

"Ahmad al-Zaro, a cashier at a big store in the capital, Amman, claimed that 'no one was purchasing these goods' because consumers were opting for local brands." (Elshaer et al., 2025).

The boycott movement's effect on Israeli-affiliated products is seen in the drop in sales. The boycott had a forty per cent negative impact on turnover for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) product groupings, according to Roy Nicholas, Chairman of the Indonesian Retailers Association (Arundo). The findings demonstrate that consumer purchasing decisions are significantly or moderately impacted by boycotts of Israeli and related items (Kurniawan et al., 2013).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between brand image and purchase intention directly and indirectly through brand loyalty as suggested by (Rehmat et al., 2015).

### **Research Objectives**

1. To determine the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention.
2. To determine the relationship between Brand Image and Brand Loyalty.
3. To determine the relationship between Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention.
4. To determine the indirect relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention through Brand Loyalty.

### **Research Questions**

1. Does Brand Image affect Purchase Intention?
2. Does Brand Image relate to Brand Loyalty?
3. Does Brand Loyalty influence Purchase Intention?
4. Does Brand Loyalty relate to the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Purchase Intention**

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), a consumer's purchase intention is a subjective preference for a product and can serve as a useful predictor of their behavior. (Kuang Chi et al., 2009).

The most well-known model of how consumers make decisions about what to buy is

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presented by Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995). The problem identification, information search, alternative evaluation, buy choice, and post-purchase behavior are the five steps that this model breaks down the customer purchase decision process into. According to Engel (1995), there are three types of purchase intentions: fully planned, moderately planned, and unplanned. Unplanned buying occurs when customers choose to purchase a brand and a category of products from a store (Kuang Chi et al., 2009). Customers' purchase intentions are influenced by a brand's level of awareness and loyalty, "an intention to purchase a certain good or service in the near future." Customers' purchase intentions include problem identification, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase behavior (Ehsan Malik et al., 2013). Customers' desire to purchase a good or service is known as their purchase intention (Younus et al., 2015).

Purchase intention is a complex process linked to customer behavior, perceptions, and attitudes, and it is a helpful indicator of the purchasing process, according to Mirabi, Akbariyeh, and Tahmasebifard (2015). Additionally, a number of internal and external factors, such as price, perceived quality, and values, influence a person's intention to purchase. According to Deghani and Tumer (2015), these important characteristics have affected consumers' intent to purchase. According to Xiao, Yang, and Iqbal (2018), customers would be happier when goods and services live up to their expectations and vice versa (Hung et al., 2023). A consumer's attitude toward a specific buying behavior and their willingness to pay for the goods or services are both referred to as their purchasing intention. Purchase intention has been considered one of the most important variables in the business sector. Purchase intention enables customers to further explore their assessments of goods and services by determining whether a product satisfies their needs and expectations. Prior to making the final purchase choice, a buyer develops their purchasing intention. Customers' intentions during the purchasing process are influenced by a variety of circumstances, and the final decision is based on those intentions along with important outside influences (Hung et al., 2023).

### **Brand Image**

The concept was first mentioned in the 1950s, according to Gardner and Levy (1955), who also discussed its social and psychological aspects. The construct found a home in consumer behavior research because of its roots in the psychology discipline. It is founded on many psychological trajectories that characterize the behavior of consumers. As the notion evolved in the 1960s and early 1970s, social psychology's "attitude" construct was the foundation for research and conceptualization. The 1980s saw a rise in attitude-based image research, popularizing the idea that customer behavior and brand image are related. The construct is always interpreted differently depending on the research emphasis (Reynolds & Gutman, n.d.). Dichter (1985) states that Brand image refers to how the entire product, the advertisement, and—above all—the customer trend and attitude screen are structured. Keller (1993) defined brand image as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by brand association held in consumer memory." (Aaker, 1996) in the literature to avoid falling victim to a "brand image trap." The important distinction between brand identity and brand image was clarified and described by him. The publications of Aaker in 1991, 1995, and 2004, in particular, catalyzed the later development of the branding concept and associated ideas.

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(Bastos & Levy, 2012). Graeff (1997) has argued that consumers can perceive the harmony between brand image and self-image in different positions.

The construct is always interpreted differently depending on the research emphasis (Reynolds & Gutman, n.d.). Scholars occasionally employ comparable terms and jargon to refer to the concept, such as perceived image, brand personality, and brand identity. Brand images are how values and beliefs are interpreted. A brand's image is related to the brand images of rival brands; it is not absolute. Direct interaction with the brand also shapes one's perception of it (Malik et al., 2012). (Wijaya, 2013) It is known that the favorable impression consumers form of a brand based on their interactions with it is referred to as its brand image. The term and brand image should be developed because they constitute the basis for well-informed marketing choices regarding the positioning of a product and the targeting of particular market segments. (Lee et al., 2014). According to Işoraité (2018), businesses will benefit from concentrating on their brand image-building tactics. The image of a brand is "a multifunctional set of tangible and intangible features that enable consumers to identify items." "(Surapto, 2020). An asset that affects how customers view a brand is its image. Customers' impressions and ideas about the brand's worth are shaped by the accounting aspects of brand image, which include associations, meaning, and qualities. Well-known brands are widely available in the market, and consumers place a high value on their reputation. (Tahir et al., 2024). According to Kotler, consumers' experiences, selective perceptions, and selective memories combine to create their image of the brand and have a significant impact on their intention to purchase (Chang, 2025).

### **Brand Loyalty**

In brand loyalty research, attitudinal and behavioral techniques have faced off against one another. When loyalty first appeared in marketing literature in the 1940s, it was thought to be one-dimensional. In today's consumer landscape, brand loyalty has transformed due to the influence of social media on consumer behavior (Keller, 1993). According to Oliver (1999), loyalty is "a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future. "Many times, recurring purchasing behavior is used to define behavioral brand loyalty(Kuikka& Laukkanen, 2012). Additionally, research shows that brand loyalty is defined as a customer's preference for a brand based on prior buying experiences (Thompson et al., 2014), and it is determined by the customer's repurchase behavior for the same brand. "The intention to buy the brand as a primary choice" is how consumers exhibit their brand loyalty (Pappu & Quester, 2016). When the emphasis is more on the emotional attachment of the consumer, there is a need to pay closer attention to the relationship between perceived satisfaction and perceived differentiation with brand trust and brand loyalty(Atulkar, 2020).In today's digital age, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn have become valuable channels for brands to engage with their audience, establish connections, and cultivate loyalty (Ebrahim, 2020).The consumer's prior purchases, which eventually lead to a particular purchasing habit, are what are referred to as loyalty creation. 'Despite marketing campaigns and contextual factors having the biggest ability to affect brand loyalty, a relatively permanent shift to consistently repurchasing or patronizing a preferred manufacturer over time, leading to repeated very similar or even the same set making purchases (Huo et al., 2022). There are two aspects to

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brand loyalty. First, a strong resolve to regularly repurchase a favored service in the future is known as behavioral brand loyalty. The intention to repurchase, the willingness to pay a higher price or the availability of devoted customers to spend more money to buy the brand, and the intention to spread positive word-of-mouth about the brand are the second characteristics of attitudinal brand loyalty (Alfian et al., 2024). The term "brand loyalty" describes a customer's resolve to stick with a specific brand even when there are competing products on the market. This type of loyalty shows that the customer and the brand have a deep emotional connection and mutual trust. Building and sustaining brand loyalty has grown more difficult in the setting of contemporary marketing. Before making a purchase, consumers can now readily compare brands and access a wealth of information. Consequently, in order to establish a consistent and favourable brand experience, businesses need to devise efficient solutions (Catur & Hasman, 2025).

### **Brand Image and Purchase Intention**

Previous research can be used to talk about the relationship between purchase intention and brand image. The study of (Rakib et al., 2022) tells that intention to purchase a product is influenced by the strong brand image created by the brand name, brand experience, etc. Thus, it was said that brand image has a significant positive influence on the purchase intention of products. And the results of the research found that a product's purchase intention is significantly impacted by its brand image.

According to (Bian & Moutinho, 2011), products are more likely to be purchased when they are thought to possess a favorable and positive brand image. Therefore, it was said that the level of consumers' favorability to the brand image of a product has a positive relationship to the purchase intention. It states that the intention to purchase a product is positively correlated with the perceived brand image.

As per (Pratama & Setiawan, 2021), purchase intention and brand image are related if the company's brand image is positive and the price is commensurate with the product's quality and competitiveness. Customers' intention to purchase will rise as a result. This study's hypothesis is that purchase intention is positively and significantly impacted by brand image. According to this study, purchase intention is positively and significantly impacted by brand image. This result is consistent with several earlier studies that have found brand image was a significant predictor of purchase intention.

The research conducted by (Razy & Lajevardi, 2015) has investigated purchase intention using price discount as a moderator and selected both intrinsic and extrinsic product cues, brand image, and product knowledge as independent variables. Therefore, the hypothesis put out was that purchase intention increases with brand image. The results section later reveals the relationship between brand image and purchase intention, showing that the better the brand image, the higher the purchase intention.

### **Brand image and Brand Loyalty**

Research conducted by (Suhud & Suriyanto, 2018), where brand image and corporate reputation were independent variables, brand loyalty was the mediator, while purchase intention acted as a dependent variable. In this research, the effect of brand image on brand loyalty was weak.

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(Tunjungsari et al., 2020) in his research, he concluded that there is a positive relationship between brand image and brand loyalty. This outcome demonstrated a favourable correlation between brand image and brand loyalty, supporting Cho's (2011) findings that a positive brand image and brand loyalty are strongly correlated.

The relationship between brand image and brand loyalty has been validated by prior studies. (Alić et al., 2020) claim that brand loyalty is directly and positively impacted by brand image. As he had anticipated, the study's findings demonstrated a positive correlation between brand loyalty and brand image.

(Surapto, 2020) indicates that a company's brand image is what causes brand loyalty. Brand loyalty was found to be positively impacted by brand image.

### **Brand loyalty and Purchase Intention**

A study was conducted by (Suhud & SURIANTO, 2018), in which brand loyalty, acting as a mediator, was affected by brand image and corporate reputation. Further brand loyalty was connected to purchase intention. They found that brand loyalty had a strong effect on purchase intention.

(Ehsan Malik et al., 2013) conducted research in which purchase intention was affected by brand awareness and brand loyalty. The data analysis results in this research paper unequivocally show that brand loyalty is strongly positively correlated with purchase intentions. Therefore, it could be said that brand loyalty can increase purchase intentions.

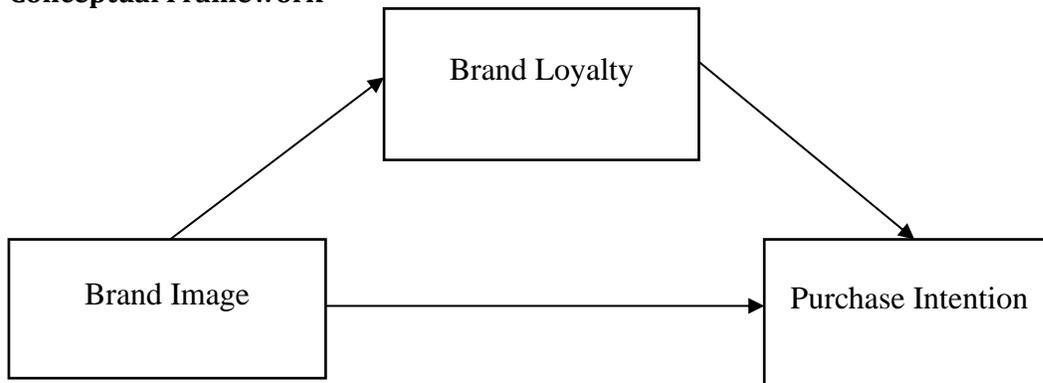
Brand loyalty increases the likelihood that a customer will repurchase the product. Thus, brand loyalty has a beneficial impact on purchase intention, according to the research (Azhar et al., 2023). Purchase intention was the dependent variable in this study, while social media marketing served as the independent variable and brand loyalty and brand trust as mediators. Therefore, the study's findings demonstrated that Purchase Intention is directly and significantly impacted by Brand Loyalty.

As stated by (Ceyhan, 2019), businesses concentrate on brand loyalty since it significantly influences consumers' intention to purchase. In his research, he sought to quantify how consumers' perceptions of brand marketing apps on Instagram profiles affected both brand loyalty and purchase intention. It was claimed that brand loyalty had a favorable impact on purchase intention; nevertheless, subsequent research revealed that brand loyalty significantly and positively influences purchase intention. More specifically, customers are more likely to make a purchase from a business they follow on Instagram when they are more loyal to that brand. This conclusion is supported by earlier research in the literature.

Herbert Kelman (1953) developed the Social Influence Theory (SIT) in the early 1950s as a framework for understanding the circumstances under which social influence results in a change in attitude or behavior. In the context of our study, McDonald's affiliation with Israel has an impact on its brand image, which has been impacted by a number of variables, including social and political pressures, social media campaigns, activists, and more, due to its link with Israel. McDonald's brand loyalty is impacted by a damaged brand image. Customers may cease purchasing from McDonald's as a result of this influence, which has a direct impact on purchase intention. Therefore, Social Influence Theory is extremely relevant to use in this research work.

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**Conceptual Framework**



**Hypotheses**

1. There is a significant relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention.
2. There is a significant relationship between Brand Image and Brand Loyalty.
3. There is a significant relationship between Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention.
4. There is a significant mediating effect of Brand Loyalty on the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention.

**Methodology**

This study used a positivist methodology to gather objective, quantitative data about McDonald's. It collected data using structured questionnaires, a quantitative research design, and a deductive approach. Using brand loyalty as a mediating variable, the study employed a cross-sectional time horizon to explain the relationship between McDonald's brand image and purchase intention.

A non-probability method called convenience sampling was used on a sample of 100 Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University students. In the first section, demographic information (age, education, and monthly income) was gathered. In the second section, five-point Likert scale questions about brand image, brand loyalty, and purchase intention were included.

**Measurement Scale**

The Brand Image measurement scale utilized in this study is adapted from (Araújo et al., 2023). A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "agree," was used for the measurement. Seven items were used to evaluate the brand image small changes were made to the items' phrasing to better fit the study's emphasis on McDonald's brand image, for instance, 'This brand arouses sympathy', was changed to 'McDonald's arouses sympathy', 'This brand conveys a personality that sets it apart from the competition' was modified to 'McDonald's conveys a personality that sets it apart from the competition'. Other items were also modified accordingly.

The Brand Loyalty measurement scale employed in this study is adapted from (Araújo et al., 2023). A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "agree," was used for the measurement. Three items were used to evaluate brand loyalty. Small changes were made to the items' wordings to better fit the study's emphasis on brand loyalty

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of consumers towards McDonalds, for instance, 'I consider myself loyal to the brand' was changed to 'I consider myself loyal to McDonalds'. Other items were also changed accordingly. The purchase intention measurement scale deployed in this study is adapted from (Rakib et al., 2022). A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "agree," was used for the measurement. The purchase intention was assessed using three items. Minor changes were made to the items' phrasing to better fit the study's emphasis on the purchase intention of McDonald's consumers, for instance, 'I will use Smart phone regularly in the future', was changed to 'I will use McDonald's regularly in the future'. Other items were also modified accordingly.

**Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire was used to gather the study's data. A required response rate (260 responses) was achieved by reaching out to students from various departments and semesters across the university. To ensure voluntary participation, participants were initially asked if they would be willing to complete the questionnaire. To give clarification to individuals who showed interest, a brief explanation of the study's background was given. This is how the week-long data collection process went nicely.

**Results**

**Table 1: Demographic**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20 years	44	17%
20-25 years	216	83%
<b>Education</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	15	6%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	29	11%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	106	41%
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	110	42%
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Less than 1000	0	-
1001-2000		-
2001-3000	56	22%
More than 3000	204	78%

The descriptive analysis revealed that 44 (17%) of the respondents were under 20 years old, while 216 (83%) were between 20 and 25 years old. The majority of the students were in their third (41%) and fourth (42%) years of BS, and 78% of them earned more than Rs.3,000 per month.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Min	$\alpha$	Mean	SD	BI	BL
<b>BI-Brand Image</b>	4	.83	4.32	0.46		

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<b>BL-Brand Loyalty</b>	4	.87	4.67	0.43	67***	
<b>PI-Purchase Intention</b>	4	.81	4.71	0.41	54***	78***

First-order correlation analysis indicates brand image was found to have a moderately positive relationship with both brand loyalty and purchase intention ( $r=0.67$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $r=0.542$ ,  $p<.001$ ), while brand loyalty and purchase intention had a strong positive association ( $r=0.78$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

**Table 3: Hypothesized Results**

Variables		b	se	Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap ULCI
<b>Direct Effect</b>					
<b>H1</b>	BI $\longrightarrow$ PI	.421***	.036		
<b>H2</b>	BI $\longrightarrow$ BL	.337***	.056		
<b>H3</b>	BL $\longrightarrow$ PI	.432***	.044		
<b>Indirect Effect</b>					
<b>H4</b>	BI $\longrightarrow$ BL $\longrightarrow$ PI	.032**	.013	.033	.017

(n=260)  $R=* p<.05$ ,  $R=** p<.01$ ,  $R=*** p<.001$

Note: BI= Brand Image BL= Brand Loyalty, PI= Purchase Intention

The results show that brand image has a statistically significant direct impact on purchase intention ( $\gamma =0.421$ ,  $p <0.001$ ), supporting the first hypothesis that there is a relationship between brand image and purchase intention.

The results show that the relationship between brand image and brand loyalty is statistically significant and validated ( $\gamma = 0.337$ ,  $p <.001$ ), as suggested by Hypothesis 2.

According to the third hypothesis, brand loyalty has a favorable effect on purchase intention. The findings indicate that purchase intention is positively impacted by brand loyalty ( $\gamma = 0.432$ ,  $p <.01$ , supporting Hypotheses 3).

Brand image and purchase intention are indirectly related through brand loyalty, according to Hypothesis 4. As anticipated, the results show a statistically significant positive indirect influence of brand image on purchase intention through brand loyalty ( $\rho=0.032$ , 95%; [CI=.033,.017]).

**Discussion**

Since many well-known businesses supported Israel in the conflict, boycotts of brands have significantly increased since the start of the conflict between Israel and Hamas in October 2023. The focus of the entire study is McDonald's, one of these well-known brands. The decision to back Israel caused popular indignation, which hurt its brand's image, loyalty, and purchase intention.

The impact of brand image on purchase intention was anticipated by the first hypothesis. The hypothesis was accepted. This finding is supported by prior studies (Rakib et al., 2022), (Bian

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& Moutinho, 2011), (Pratama & Setiawan, 2021). In this instance, the more McDonald's support for Israel affects the company's brand image, the more it influences consumers' intentions to make a purchase.

This study also found that brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. This finding is in line with several previous studies, which found brand image to be an important predictor of brand loyalty Tunjungsari et al. (2020), Alić et al. (2020), and Surapto (2020). One interpretation is that brand loyalty will increase with a stronger brand image. However, our research shows that McDonald's relationship with Israel during the Israel-Palestine War negatively impacted the company's brand image in many nations, not just Muslim nations but nations worldwide. People began to boycott it. The loyalty of its clients worldwide was negatively impacted by all of these factors. McDonald's lost a significant portion of its clientele as a result.

The evidence presented in the results supports the hypothesis H3 that there is a significant relationship between brand loyalty and purchase intention. This hypothesis was accepted. This outcome is aligned with the study of Suhud & Suriyanto (2018), Azhar et al. (2023) and Ceyhan (2019). Purchase intention was found to be positively impacted by brand loyalty in a statistically meaningful way.

Moreover, the result has proven that there is a significant mediating effect of Brand Loyalty on the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention. H4 was so accepted. The prior study's findings also demonstrated that brand loyalty had a significant impact on the relationship between brand image and purchase intention (Büyükdağ, 2021). In addition to having a direct impact on purchase intention, brand image also indirectly influences it by boosting brand loyalty, which in turn raises purchase intention.

### **Limitation**

The study's findings must be viewed in light of the limiting factors. First, the sample size for this study is considered to be too small and might not fully reflect the intended demographic. Furthermore, this study, which looks at the relationships between the factors influencing customers' purchase intentions, only focuses on Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. Consequently, there was insufficient information in the overall conclusions. In order to effectively reflect the complete target demographic, future research should increase the sample size and include respondents from different cities in Pakistan due to the country's and culture's differences. The higher the target respondents, the more accurate the conclusion will be. Subsequent studies should focus on distributing questionnaires to different age groups.

### **Conclusion**

Because of its connection to Israel in the Israel-Palestine conflict since October 2023, this study sought to quantify the influence of brand image and brand loyalty on McDonald's purchase intention. Four of the investigated hypotheses were accepted. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between brand image and purchase intention, there was a significant effect of brand image on brand loyalty, a significant influence of brand loyalty on purchase intention, and that there was a significant mediating effect of brand loyalty on the relationship between brand image and purchase intention.

These results add to the body of literature, particularly in cases of sociopolitical upheaval

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where ties between consumers and brands completely change. Particularly because there hasn't been any prior research on consumer behavior in the setting of Pakistani society.

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