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Is Brand Activism The New Normal?

Nuket Serin

Florida International University, nseri004@fiu.edu

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

IS BRAND ACTIVISM THE NEW NORMAL?

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

by

Nuket Serin

2022

To: Interim Dean William G. Hardin
College of Business

This dissertation, written by Nuket Serin, and entitled *Is Brand Activism the New Normal?*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Kimberly A. Taylor

William Humphrey

William Newburry

George M. Marakas

Jayati Sinha, Major Professor

Date of Defense: May 26, 2022

The dissertation of Nuket Serin is approved.

Interim Dean William G. Hardin
College of Business

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2022

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Buket Gonca. I want to thank you so much for everything that you have done and are continuing to do for me. Your tireless support and encouragement have driven me to this momentous occasion as I have now finished my dissertation. It was a long, hard road, and when I would feel discouraged or defeated along the way, I sensed that you were with me every step of the way. You are as much a friend to me as a loving mother, and together we have made it as I would not have been able to progress to anywhere near this point without your loving motivation, support, and encouragement. I love you so dearly mother, this dissertation is for you.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
IS BRAND ACTIVISM THE NEW NORMAL?

by

Nuket Serin

Florida International University, 2022

Miami, Florida

Professor Jayati Sinha, Major Professor

In recent years, brands have begun “taking a stand” on sociopolitical issues to influence societal change. As such, brand activism is a newly evolved form of brand communication. Consumer expectations of brands have been evolving rapidly, as brands are expected to profess a more purposeful ethos to society now more than ever before. In the modern marketplace, it has become an increasingly popular trend to see brands promote social movements and fight for issues happening worldwide. Although this emerging phenomenon has caught the attention of marketing literature in recent years, the effects of brand activism on consumer brand perceptions still remain a largely unexplored research area. Understanding such effects is critically important because consumer responses to brand activism are diverse and wide-ranging in scope. Additionally, the literature lacks a reliable psychometric instrument to measure the construct of brand activism. Therefore, the first purpose of this dissertation is to conceptualize and define brand activism from a consumer’s point-of-view. The second purpose of this dissertation is to identify a set of discrete characteristics that are shared among activist brands to develop a brand activism scale. Utilizing a multi-method approach, eight studies (Studies 1, 2A, 2B, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) were conducted to create and test the scale’s validity and

reliability. The third purpose of this dissertation is to explore the scale's applicability in different brand-consumer relationship contexts. Four additional studies (Studies 8A, 8B, 9, 10) were conducted to examine the effects of brand activism on consumer-brand relationships such as brand attitude, willingness to pay a price premium, and intention to click-through as well as to test the downstream consequences of those effects. The present dissertation contributes to the marketing and branding literature by presenting novel findings and discussing their associated managerial implications. Moreover, brand managers may derive benefit from this research as it will help advance their understanding of brand activism and thus foster more satisfactory consumer-brand relationships.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BA	Brand Activism
CRM	Cause Related Marketing
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
WOM	Word of Mouth
WTP	Willingness to Pay

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything.”
(Nike’s 2018 Dream Crazy Campaign)

Introduction

The 2018 Dream Crazy campaign created by Nike proclaims the following: “Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything.” As Nike’s slogan indicates, brands are often expected to have a public position and a powerful voice regarding controversial issues in today’s society. Hence, brand activism has become a mainstream phenomenon in the modern marketplace. In 2016, Nike featured former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick in its marketing campaign after Kaepernick protested social injustice (Guardian 2019; Streeter 2020). After Nike’s Dream Crazy campaign, many brands started speaking out and publicly making their stance known on societal and political issues. In late May 2020, brands’ advocacy on sociopolitical concerns became more popular after George Floyd died. Unsurprisingly, many people and numerous brands, including Nike, Reebok, Twitter, Netflix, Delta Air Lines, TOMS, and Visa, started to protest social inequality and racial injustice during the 2020 Black Lives Matter marches (Loyalty Science Lab 2020; Mirzaei 2020). Another recent example is the pushback against the rise of anti-Asian hatred and bigotry following the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic from Asia (Chung 2021). Many brands, featuring Tommy Hilfiger, Adidas, Kate Spade, Under Armour, and Tory Burch, have started using the hashtag #StopAsianHate on social media to raise awareness and combat racism (Chung 2021; Johannes 2021; Kong 2021).



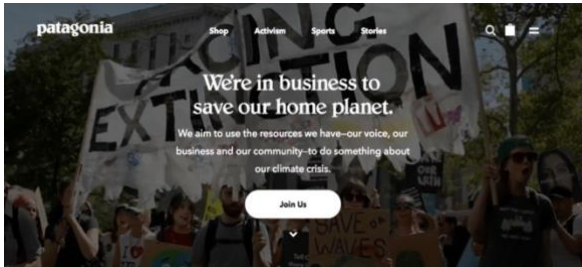
In recent years, other well-known firms, such as Burger King, Calvin Klein, Patagonia, Gillette, Ben & Jerry’s, Target, Ford Motor Company, Airbnb, and Jigsaw




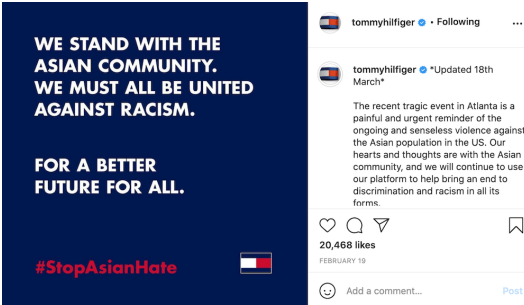

engaged in sociopolitical activism. For instance, Ben & Jerry's, one of the most prominent activist brands, is known for its social awareness. Over several decades, Ben & Jerry's has been trying to bring social change by supporting different issues such as racial justice, LGBTQI equality, the refugee crisis, and the climate crisis (<https://www.benjerry.com/>). To give an example, Ben & Jerry's stood out to express activist behavior in its protest of social injustice and inequality and shared the following statement on social media: "WE MUST DISMANTLE WHITE SUPREMACY" (Solis 2020). In 2016, Target began allowing people to use its restrooms in a way that reflects their gender identity rather than biological sex (Halzack 2016). Burger King launched its "Proud Whopper," which was packed in rainbow-themed wrapping paper, and its campaign focused on supporting Gay Pride Week and other LGBTQI issues in 2014. Burger King declared that "It shows how we, as a brand, believe in self-expression" (Fox 2017; Steinmetz 2014). Similarly, the Pride campaign by Calvin Klein, which starred transgender activist Jari Jones along with eight other LGBTQI models as part of its #PROUDINMYCALVINS campaign launched in 2020 to support LGBTQI equality (Palumbo 2020). Oreo launched its #Proudparent campaign by partnering with the organization PFLAG to support LGBTQI equality in 2020. Oreo took a different approach in their support of LGBTQI issues by promoting the importance of family support in this community and focusing on how to educate the families (Greimel 2021). Another recent example includes Skittles changing its packaging during Pride month to support LGBTQI issues in 2021 (Schrecker 2021).

Focusing on the climate change crisis, Patagonia stated on its website, "We're Part of a Movement for Change." Patagonia initiated an essential step in increasing

awareness of environmental issues and helping solve the climate change crisis by offering support to those who would be most adversely affected by it (<https://www.patagonia.com/activism/>). Additionally, after the immigration ban on Muslim countries, many brands took a stance on refugee issues. For instance, Ford Motor Company indicated its support for diversity and stated the following: “That is why we do not support this policy or any other that goes against our values as a company” (Muio 2017). In another example, British company Jigsaw, through its “Love Immigration” campaign, spoke out in favor of the beauty of diversity and immigration by declaring the following speech to society: “We looked at the fashion industry and realised no one talks about the benefits of immigration or the debt we all owe to it. One of our products could have Mongolian wool, Turkish satin, Chinese silk and Italian buttons so we can really back up this message” (Hobbs 2017). Similarly, Airbnb created a #WeAccept campaign in 2017 supporting immigration to the United States which aimed to offer temporary lodging to support around 100,000 people who needed housing, such as refugees (Gilliland 2018; Sprout Social 2019). Airbnb’s campaign featured the following statement: “We believe no matter who you are, where you’re from, who you love or who you worship, we all belong. The world is more beautiful the more you accept” (Gilliland 2018). TOMS, a well-known socially responsible company, has continuously invested in Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQI, and Women & Girls communities. In 2018, TOMS also started its End Gun Violence Together campaign in response to the rise of gun violence across the US. (<https://www.toms.com/us/impact/report.html>; Papenfuss 2018). Finally, many brands, including H&M, Canada Goose, Starbucks, Heineken, and Samsung, either stopped exporting and importing products or suspended their sales to

Russia after the Russian-Ukrainian war to support Ukraine during this humanitarian crisis in 2022 (Marketing Week Reporters 2022; New York Times 2022). Regarding this, many brands replaced their logo with the Ukrainian flag on social media to advocate for Ukraine. Many brands such as Grammarly, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Gucci have made donation in support of Ukraine (Pittman 2022). Table 1 shows some examples of how various brands are incorporating activism efforts in their marketing practices.

Company	Example of Activist Efforts	Domain	Campaign Name (Year)
Burger King		LGBTQI issues	Proud Whopper Campaign (2014)
Ben & Jerry's		Social Justice	Pecan Resist Campaign (2018)
Patagonia		Climate Change	N/A

<p>Nike</p>		<p>Social Inequality and Racial Injustice</p>	<p>Dream Crazy Campaign (2018)</p>
<p>Airbnb</p>		<p>Immigration</p>	<p>#WeAccept (2017)</p>
<p>Jigsaw</p>		<p>Immigration</p>	<p>Love Immigration Campaign (2017)</p>
<p>Tommy Hilfiger</p>		<p>Racism</p>	<p>#StopAsianHate Campaign (2021)</p>
<p>Dove</p>		<p>Feminism Body Diversity</p>	<p>Real Beauty Bottles Campaign (2017)</p>



<p>Oreo</p>			<p>LGBTQI Rights</p>	<p>#Proudparent Campaign (2020)</p>
<p>Grammarly</p>			<p>Humanitarian Crisis</p>	<p>#StandWithUkraine (2022)</p>

Table 1. Examples of brands that include activism efforts in their marketing practices

The first working brand activism (hereafter, BA) definition was created by Sarkar and Kotler (2018): “Brand activism consists of business efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to promote or impede improvements in society.” BA is a newly evolved form of brand communication and is an extension of corporate social responsibility (hereafter, CSR) (Eyada 2020). However, BA differentiates from CSR activities because it is motivated, at

least ostensibly, by purpose and values rather than marketing and corporate interests. BA also focuses on controversial sociopolitical issues (Batista et al. 2022; Mirzaei et al. 2022). Even though brands' inclusion of societal and political issues in their marketing efforts became more common in recent years, activism efforts in marketing trace their roots to the 1970s (Hermann 2020). One of the initial corporations to incorporate social activism into its marketing schema was The Body Shop (Kotler and Sarkar 2017; <https://www.thebodyshop.com/en-gb/about-us/activism/a/a00015>). The Body Shop fought for issues related to climate change, the Ogoni People in Nigeria, and human rights in general (<https://www.thebodyshop.com/en-gb/about-us/activism/a/a00015>). In the 1980s, some companies such as Patagonia, Benetton, and Absolut Vodka also began including sociopolitical issues in their marketing communication (Collins 2019; Hermann 2020). For instance, Italian brand Benetton created several controversial campaigns, including the 1984 All Are United Campaign, the 1989 Black and White Campaign, and the 2011 Unhate Campaign, to emphasize diversity and inclusivity worldwide (Innovative Design History, n.d.). However, these practices were far from the norm, as brand activism was not common in the marketplace until the past few years (Hermann 2020; Korschun 2021).

Traditionally, companies would often attempt to satisfy their consumers' wants and needs exclusively via their product and/or service offerings to create enduring profitable relationships. The majority of the brands aligned with this purpose have used positioning strategies that focus on the features of their products and/or services to differentiate themselves (Kotler and Sarkar 2017). However, in modern society, the relationships between companies and consumers have evolved rapidly due to different

sets of expectations derived from the current, tumultuous sociopolitical environment (Eyada 2020). As a result, organizations must do more than just position their products/services to remain competitive in many sectors (Kotler and Sarkar 2017).

Companies were also reticent to engage in BA because they were concerned that they could push away customers due to their affiliation with controversial issues (Hermann 2020; Vredenburg et al. 2018). However, in today's society, many vocal consumers expect active social engagement from brands; thus, a company's ideological beliefs have become a key criterion for consumers' consumption decisions. Consequently, taking a stance on public issues became a "new normal" for companies (Sprout Social 2019; Taylor 2018).

US consumers have begun to trust companies more than the government (Edelman 2019). Indeed, only 40% of US consumers trust their government, while 54% trust companies. The same findings hold in other countries, such as France, where 32% of consumers trust their government and 50% trust companies. In Germany, 40% of consumers trust their government while 47% of those trust companies (Edelman 2019). Furthermore, 66% of US consumers think that brands have the power to fundamentally change society (Sprout Social 2019). Likewise, 58% of US consumers think that brands' stance on activist issues influence their perception of the brand (Jungle Scout 2021). 77% of US consumers purchase from brands when they share similar values (McCain 2022). Additionally, 64% of US consumers think that they can develop a relationship based on trust with a brand when they share similar values, which makes it essential for consumers to know the brand's overall purposes (McCain 2022).

On the other hand, the majority of past research has focused on activism on an individual level in different contexts including activist groups (Den Hond and Bakker 2007), consumer activism (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Swimberghe, Flurry, and Parket 2011) and athlete activism (Sappington, Keum, and Hoffman 2019; Smith and Tryce 2019) as seen in industrial/organizational, social psychology, and marketing literature. For instance, activism literature has demonstrated that engaging in activist behaviors increases individuals' wellbeing (Foster 2015; Klar and Kasser 2009).

Even though activism has been extensively researched in general activism literature (Den Hond and Bakker 2007; Swimberghe et al. 2011), prior marketing research has not given attention to the effects of activism in a branding context until recent years. Only a few recent studies have begun to focus on BA (Bhagwat et al. 2020; Eilert and Cherup 2020; Hydock, Paharia, and Blair 2020; Korschun et al. 2019; Mirzaei, Wilkie, and Siuki 2022; Moorman 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Sibai, Mimoun, and Boukis 2021; Vredenburg et al. 2020). For example, past research has explored the effects of BA on brand attitude (Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020), company image (Korschun et al. 2019), and market share (Hydock et al. 2020). These research efforts demonstrate preliminary investigations of BA on a managerial and consumer level. However, the conceptualization of BA and its effects on consumers' perceptions are still unknown to a large extent in the branding context. This dissertation thus tries to address these gaps by investigating BA. Since BA has an impact on consumers' brand evaluation, ultimately affecting its bottom line, brands need to understand how to effectively engage with BA. Therefore, this dissertation first conceptualizes, defines, and offers a way to

measure BA by developing a scale from a consumer's perspective. This dissertation also demonstrates the applicability of the BA scale in various consumption contexts.

Dissertation Purpose

Scholars have recently started to explore the concept of BA. Yet, little research exists on this topic. Previous BA research mainly focused on its conceptual perspectives (Eilert and Cherup 2020; Moorman 2020; Vredenburg et al. 2020) and corporate-level (Bhagwat et al. 2020; Villagra, Monfort, and Mendez-Suarez 2021), such as the effect of activism on investor's point of view (Bhagwat et al. 2020), and except a few research, not much on how consumers perceive these BA efforts (e.g., Batista et al. 2022; Garg and Saluja in press, Hydock et al. 2020; Korschun et al. 2019; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Shetty, Venkataramaiah, and Anand 2019). Furthermore, the literature offers diverse definitions of BA as well as there is no valid and reliable BA scale. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is to address these limitations.

First, this dissertation aims to address this gap and extends BA literature by offering a BA conceptualization and definition from the perspective of the consumers. As of late, both consumers and brands have become more aware of controversial and divisive issues. However, little research has examined the characteristics of the activist brands. Therefore, it is important to provide a BA definition and examine it further in the marketing literature which may assist brands to learn the most effective activist strategies to enhance consumer perceptions.

Second, previous research has emphasized the importance of generating a BA scale (Eilert and Cherup 2020). Given the limited availability of methodological tools to

empirically investigate this phenomenon, this dissertation seeks to answer this call by developing a general-purpose, short BA scale from a consumers' point of view. This dissertation tests the psychometric aspects of the BA measures while also offering a short BA scale. Developing a short BA scale that reflects the domain is more beneficial for future research and managerial implications since a short scale increases its applicability and decreases the demand artifacts (Park et al. 2010; Richins 2004). This BA scale will provide a new and valuable tool to operationalize this construct, which will help scholars discover important insights in future research. To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is the first research to generate and validate a reliable and valid BA scale.

Third, this dissertation will also explore the managerial application of the scale to highlight the effects of BA on consumer evaluations and consumption consequences, including *brand attitude*, *willingness to pay (hereafter, WTP) a price premium*, and *intention to click-through* regarding activist issues. It will also help amplify the potential effects of related issues that brands might confront while practicing activism. The main idea underlying the concept of BA brings a new, strategic approach to marketing and branding literature. Hence, these findings provide novel evidence of such a phenomenon.

Fourth, this dissertation also offers important managerial implications. This research will help companies understand how to position their brands to be perceived as forces for activism and help them identify ways to incorporate activist activities into their marketing strategies more effectively. Furthermore, this dissertation examines several other key metrics of consumer behaviors such as brand attitude, WTP price premium, and intention to click-through, which will help companies decide when and how to adopt BA. This dissertation also tests the effect of gender differences and political orientation on the

consumers' evaluation of activist brands, which may help brands position their products/services and target a specific group of consumers. Given the controversial and polarizing nature of BA, the brands' activism efforts may create a backlash. Therefore, this research may assist brand managers in terms of their ability to identify when their activist efforts may help or hurt their respective brands.

Research Questions

This dissertation aims to provide significant insights into BA literature and the following research questions will be responded in this dissertation:

RQ1. How can BA be defined?

RQ2. What essential characteristics are needed for a brand to be considered an activist, and what are the consequences of BA?

RQ3. How could BA be evaluated from consumers' perspectives?

RQ4. How could the BA scale be applied?

- a. Does BA contribute to more favorable consumer evaluations?
- b. Are consumers more WTP a premium price when they perceive the brand as an activist?
- c. Does BA increase consumers' intention to click-through to the company's website?
- d. Under what conditions do BA efforts backfire?
- e. Do gender and political orientation affect consumers' perception of BA?
- f. What are the impacts of brands' practices and communication efforts regarding activist issues?

- g. Does the length of engagement with activist issues affect consumer evaluations in the digital environment?

Summary

This dissertation is structured as follows: this dissertation first provides a review of branding, CSR, cause-related marketing (hereafter, CRM), and activism literature (Chapter 2). Second, this dissertation reviews the extant literature on BA and discusses the ways BA differentiates from other CSR activities (Chapter 2). Third, this dissertation discusses the limitations of previous BA definitions in the literature, conceptualizes BA, and creates a BA definition from a consumer's perceptions (Chapter 3). Fourth, this dissertation explains the steps taken to develop and validate the BA scale (Chapter 4). In this dissertation, a total of twelve studies were completed. Specifically, eight studies (Studies 1, 2A, 2B, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) were conducted to create a reliable and valid BA scale, all of which adhered to the established methodological procedure for scale development (Churchill 1979; Price et al. 2018; Warren et al. 2019). Fifth, this dissertation explores the concept of BA and tests its applicability in the context of consumer evaluations via four quantitative studies (studies 8A, 8B, 9, 10) (Chapter 5). Specifically, Study 8A tested the effect of activism with undergraduate students in the context of consumer evaluations (Chapter 5). Study 8B tested the effect of BA on WTP a price premium with American adults and tested the moderation effect of gender (Chapter 5). Study 9 investigated how the length of engagement with activist issues (long-term activist engagement vs. short-term activist engagement vs. control) affects consumers' intention to click-through, controlling for the social desirability bias (Chapter 5). Study 10 examined the

effectiveness of the companies' activist action and communication efforts on consumers' WTP a price premium and the moderation effect of political orientation (Chapter 5). Finally, this dissertation examines the significant theoretical contributions and managerial implications of this research, discuss the limitations, and offers avenues for future exploration (Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Branding

According to Bennett's (1988) definition from the "Dictionary of Marketing Terms," a brand, as such, is defined as "a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers." In line with the given definition, branding is an important concept as it provides a distinguishing element for companies (Aggarwal 2004). Brands have become a ubiquitous feature in society, as they span widely across a myriad of consumer contexts and have become an inseparable part of modern life.

Previous literature indicates that the traits or characteristics that are often assigned to humans can also be ascribed to brands (Aaker 1997; Korschun et al. 2019; Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz 2009), such as the notion of a "cool brand" (Warren et al. 2019). Aaker (1997, p. 347) described the construct of brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand." Brands often reflect features of human personality, resulting in a long-lasting brand (Aaker 1997; Heydenrych 2015; Veloutsou and Guzman 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that a relationship with a brand can resemble a relationship with another person (Aggarwal 2004; Fournier 1998). However, relationships require mutual understanding, and sustaining consumer-brand relationships can be a challenging endeavor. As a result, it is critical for brand managers to know consumers' opinions on brands and their activities (Keller 2020).

Even though companies since the industrial revolution have mainly focused on the product/service quality to attain their revenue targets, focusing only on product/service quality proves to be an insufficient go-to-market strategy for many brands, as globalization, and an increasingly competitive market environment, started to

occur during the mid 20th century (Hermann 2020). In response to this, companies have started to differentiate their brand strategies and have begun to give more characteristics to their brands (Hermann 2020). In their research, Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, and Sen (2012, p.408) offers a brand distinctiveness definition as follows: “The perceived uniqueness of a brand’s identity in relation to its competitors.” Distinctiveness is a key component of branding because it gives customers a sense of exclusivity (Keller 2020) and helps to identify themselves with the brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al. 2012).

Consequently, it may lead to fruitful results for companies that effectively position their brands (Keller 2020). For instance, giving a brand a “green” attribute may help it stand out and create distinctiveness (Wang 2017), if consumers believe the brand is actually green. To offer an example in the marketplace, Harley Davidson is considered a distinctive brand due to its “outlaw” image (Carlson, Donovan, and Cumiskey 2009).

Intangible characteristics are a fundamental factor in generating and differentiating brands from competitors (Keller 2020). As such, brand “intangibles” are defined as “those associations to a brand that are not directly related to the product or service and its function and performance” (Keller 2020, p.999). Consumers today have started to examine companies at a deeper level concerning values, beliefs, and production processes, in addition to their understanding of the company’s products and/or services (Keller 2020). Indeed, 72% of US consumers feel it is critical to purchase from companies that represent their values (Engage for Good 2022). Furthermore, consumers are 4.1 times more likely to trust an organization if they believe it has a strong purpose (Zeno 2020). Therefore, companies must learn how to express themselves to the public and impact society beyond making a profit.

In today's competitive market environment, "points of parity" is a must-have feature, while "points of difference" differentiate brands from their competitors and give them a unique identity, both of which serve to boost brand equity (Keller, Sternthal, and Tybout 2002). For instance, corporate social responsibility activities became critical aspects of these "points of parity" for companies in the marketplace (Fleming and Jones 2013).

Corporate Social Responsibility

In the 1950s, the primary CSR definition was provided by Bowen (1953, p.6), who considered CSR to mean, "to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (Turker 2009). Even though CSR is one of the notable domains in the literature, scholars have created inconsistent definitions and conceptualizations of this construct (Turker 2009). Davis and Blomstrom (1975, p.6) provided a CSR definition as "the managerial obligation to take action to protect and improve both the welfare of society as a whole and the interest of organizations." The conceptual framework offered by Carroll's research (1979, 1991) incorporates four dimensions of company responsibilities (e.g., "economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary [philanthropic]") and is still considered the most acceptable and popular way to elucidate the CSR construct (Salmones, Crespo, and del Bosque 2005).

In the 1970s, the establishment of several government organizations (e.g., the "Environmental Protection Agency," "Equal Employment Opportunity Commission," the "Occupational Safety and Health Administration," and the "Consumer Product Safety

Commission”) led companies to create a more comprehensive CSR concept (Carroll 1991). Since then, CSR has become a part of company paradigm and environment, with employees and consumers being treated as legal stakeholders, prompting businesses to strive to satisfy their needs (Carroll 1991; Mohr and Webb 2005). Furthermore, the growing public availability of a company’s information has made CSR activities more significant (Wagner et al. 2009).

Companies may engage in social responsibility behaviors in various ways, such as ethical and fair behavior and charity support in various areas, including environmental, disease, poverty, and disaster relief (Hildebrand et al. 2017; Mohr and Webb 2005). For instance, yogurt company Dannon combats child hunger in the United States and uses this as a critical aspect of its brand persona (Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen 2007). Furniture retail company IKEA devotes itself to sustainability and uses sustainable materials and sources, including cotton and wool, as well as recycled and renewable plastic to produce their products (<https://www.ikea.com/us/en/this-is-ikea/sustainable-everyday/>).

Since companies’ CSR initiatives mostly positively impacts both the organization and society, strategic philanthropy exemplifies as a “happy marriage” of CSR and financial performance (Liket and Maas 2016). The majority of previous research has shown positive consequences of CSR activities regarding the company’s financial performance (Mohr and Webb 2005; Orlitzky, Schmidt, and Rynes 2003). These results are not surprising since prior literature has demonstrated that CSR activities increased evaluation of the brand and intention to buy the product (Mohr and Webb 2005), increased consumer attitudes and assessment of the product (Brown and Dacin 1997), increased product performance perceptions (Chernev and Blair 2015), and increased

purchase likelihood, long-term loyalty, and advocacy behavior when positive (Du et al. 2007). Specifically, Chernev and Blair (2015) found that engaging in CSR activities increases consumers' perceptions of product performance. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) showed that consumers' CSR evaluations might depend on several company- and individual-related features such as issue type, product quality, consumer beliefs about CSR, and whether consumers support CSR issues. Moreover, Hildebrand et al. (2017) examined how different CSR contributions (money vs. in-kind) affect consumer reactions toward the company. On the other hand, CSR is more broad term, and companies may engage in CSR differently. For example, one specific type of CSR is cause-related marketing, which indicates to a company's alignment with specific causes (Chang 2008).

Cause-Related Marketing

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is defined as “the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives” (Varadarajan and Menon 1988, p. 60). CRM integrates corporate philanthropy with a revenue-driven donation perspective, connecting companies' sales of its products or services to its consumers' support of specific causes and certain charities (Andrews et al. 2014; Barone, Norman, and Miyazaki 2007; Varadarajan and Menon 1988). Specifically, the companies donate a money to a charitable issue every time consumers purchase their products. Therefore, companies' CRM practices are concerned with enhancing the bottom line and supporting the cause; hence, the company, the cause, and those consumers who choose to

patronize the brand stand to realize the advantages of CRM (Howie et al. 2018; Robinson, Irmak, and Jayachandran 2012; Ross, Stutts, and Patterson 1991). For instance, to help children in poverty, TOMS started a campaign called “One for One.” This campaign aimed to give away one pair of shoes to children in need for every pair of shoes consumers buy (<https://www.toms.com/us/about-toms.html>). For another example, Bombas company donates socks or other clothing items to homeless people or homeless-related charities and organizations when every item is sold (<https://bombas.com/pages/about-us>).

Previous CRM research has focused on several aspects of its effects (Barone, Miyazaki, and Taylor 2000; Barone et al. 2007; Howie et al. 2018; Khan and Pond 2020; Müller, Mazar, and Fries 2016; Robinson et al. 2012). For instance, Barone et al. (2007) examined how customer perceptions of CRM strategies are influenced by retailer-cause fit. However, since many companies have started incorporating CRM activities into their marketing strategies, it might not be a unique and successful strategy anymore (Ross et al. 1991). Therefore, companies have begun to look for more effective methods to engage with different causes and speak out about issues. In other words, they started to become an “Activist.”

In general, companies’ CSR efforts have started to become less effective (Kotler and Sarkar 2018). Indeed, companies are expected to reduce their spending on CSR operations in 2021 (Engage for Good 2022). Furthermore, consumers’ expectations from and their relationships with companies have been changing in recent years (Korschun 2017; Kotler and Sarkar 2017). Hence, there is an ongoing transition from CSR activities, including CRM, to BA, which is more societally oriented (Kotler and Sarkar 2018).

Given that BA is a relatively new concept and not widespread in its adoption, it may be considered a “point of difference” for companies that can be used to differentiate the brands they offer effectively (Vredenburg et al. 2018; Vredenburg et al. 2020). Even though BA is more often discussed in the popular press as many marketplace activities involving this topic have been occurring, scholars have recently started to examine this notion of BA along with its attendant consequences. Therefore, it is important to understand the construct of BA. However, to understand activism in the branding context, this dissertation first discusses the idea of activism in a general sense.

Activism

Activism is defined as “extra-ordinary, extra-usual practices which aim, collectively or individually, institutionally or informally, to cause social change” (Bayat, 2005, p. 893–894). In line with this definition, activism entails a group initiative to transform common ideas, address the issues, and bring larger-scale changes (Den Hond and Bakker 2007). Similarly, the social movement is described as “a purposive and collective attempt of a number of people to change individuals or societal institutions and structures” (Zald and Ash 1966, p.329). The alignment of one’s identity, ideology, or motive with the social movement is the primary aspect in deciding participation in social movements (Den Hond and Bakker 2007).

Engaging in activism increases individual and collective feelings of empowerment (Drury and Reicher 2005). Furthermore, connection and working with others to advance society makes people happier and increases life satisfaction (Dwyer et al. 2019). Indeed, previous activism literature found that activism increases an

individual's wellbeing (Klar and Kasser 2009); online activism by posting gender-related issues increases wellbeing (Foster 2015); and political activism can increase an individual's wellbeing (Boehnke and Wong 2011; Vestergren, Drury, and Hammar Chiriac 2019). On the other hand, some previous research has also shown adverse effects of activism, such that it may create burnout or emotional exhaustion (Downton and Wehr 1998; Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler 1986).

Previous research has focused on activism in different contexts, such as black community activism (Hope, Pender, and Riddick 2019) and athlete activism, such as Colin Kaepernick's protests during the national anthem (Sappington et al. 2019; Smith and Tryce 2019). Den Hond and Bakker (2007) examined the effect of activism on corporate social change activities. Additionally, previous research has offered several scales in the domain of activism, such as the activism orientation scale (Corning and Myers 2002), black community activism orientation scale (Hope et al. 2019), social activism beliefs rating scale (Ritchhart 2002), attitudes toward athlete activism scale (Sappington et al. 2019), social justice scale (Torres-Harding, Siers, and Olson 2012), and social justice advocacy scale (Dean 2009). However, all of these scales are individual-oriented; hence, the scales' scope is not related to the branding context.

Even though previous literature focuses on individual-oriented activism in different areas, activism has started to extend the brand. BA has recently gained attention, and little research has been done in the domain of BA in marketing literature. Given that activism increases wellbeing (Foster 2015; Vestergren et al. 2019), it is important to understand the construct of BA as a broader term that yields societal effects. Additionally, there is no empirically validated BA scale in the marketing literature to

measure it. Thus, to fill this gap in the literature, this dissertation focuses on BA to create a valid and reliable scale as well as to measure the perceptions of BA. Therefore, this dissertation begins by reviewing the BA literature, which is discussed in the following section.

Brand Activism

Despite the abundance of BA in recent years, not much is known about the effects of BA in academic research. Further, the majority of BA research is limited to theoretical papers (Eilert and Cherup 2020; Key et al. 2021; Moorman 2020; Vredenburg et al. 2020). Eilert and Cherup (2020) offer a theoretical framework that illustrates how to use influence tactics to “build top-down and bottom-up reform” and address the issues that impede social concerns. Furthermore, they asserted that corporate identity (e.g., individualistic, relational, and collectivistic orientation) might determine to what extent organizations can successfully integrate activism (Eilert and Cherup 2020).

In their theoretical framework, Vredenburg et al. (2020) introduced the concept of authenticity into BA and stated the effects of the activist brand and issue inconsistency as a boundary condition. Moorman (2020) reflects six characteristics of brand political activism that corporations should recognize when engaging in activism, such as “brand authenticity view, corporate citizen view, cultural authority view, calculative view, brands as educators view, political mission view, and employee engagement view.” However, the authors have not tested their ideas, limiting their studies to concrete findings.

The other stream of research explored the effect of activism on a corporate level (Bhagwat et al. 2020; Villagra et al. 2021). To give an example, Bhagwat et al. (2020) investigated how corporate sociopolitical activism affects investors' responses. Given that corporate political activism is risky to adopt, investors have an unfavorable opinion towards it. They further found that this relationship is moderated by the incongruity between organizations' stance on issues and their stakeholders' (e.g., "customers, employees, and government legislator") own beliefs as well as brand image. The relationship between investors' opinions on corporate sociopolitical activism is also moderated by the traits of the activism source (Bhagwat et al. 2020).

The other stream of BA research, which includes empirical studies that focus on how consumers evaluate BA, is very limited to date. Previous research has examined the aggregability of the issue and brand attitude (Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020), millennials' purchase decisions toward the activist brands (Shetty et al. 2019), how a market-driven vs. values-driven image changes consumers' response to BA (Korschun et al. 2019), the net effect of corporate political advocacy on small vs. large share brands (Hydock et al. 2020), the impact of the brand responses to consumer's offensive messages on social media by using a sarcastic vs. assertive voice on consumer's brand attitude (Batista et al. 2022), and the effect of issue type, activism type, political orientation, and emotions (Garg and Saluja in press). Additionally, Mirzaei et al. (2022) conducted a content analysis by exploring two companies' (Nike and Gillette) social media campaigns. Their research developed a conceptual framework that classifies the woke activism authenticity dimensions: "social context independency, inclusion, sacrifice, practice, fit, and motivation" (Mirzaei et al. 2022).

Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) discovered the impact of BA on consumers' perceptions, intentions, and actions toward the brand. Interestingly, they found the differences between consumers who support the brands' stance versus those who do not support their stance on consumers' evaluation of the brand. Specifically, they found that when consumers disagree with brands' position, their brand attitude becomes unfavorable, mediated by consumer-brand identification. Interestingly, they also found that when consumers support brands' position, they found no changes in their attitude (Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020), indicating that brands may not directly benefit from consumers who already support brands' position unless there is a public backlash. Further, drawing from the moral coupling and decoupling theories, this effect is moderated by brands' source (CEO vs. brand ambassadors). If the brand and the entity become distant, the adverse effect of BA diminishes. They also found that agreement with brands' stance positively affects consumers' attitudes when there is a public backlash.

In similar research, Dodd and Supa (2014) examined corporate's public stance on the financial bottom line in their corporate social advocacy research. The authors found that consumers' willingness to buy from the company increases when they agree with its position on issues. However, if they disagree with the stance, they are less likely to buy (Dodd and Supa 2014).

Korschun et al. (2019) examined the consumers' responses to the BA regarding company image (market-driven or value-driven company). The authors found that consumers prefer and buy more from market-driven companies that do not take a political stance but prefer and buy more from value-driven companies that take a political stance.

Specifically, they discovered that inconsistencies between a company's intended image and its stance on political topics would lead to corporate hypocrisy.

Another research related to the effect of BA focuses on the communication style and consumer's responses to activist brands. Batista et al. (2022) found that consumers' brand attitude is more positive when the brand responds to consumers' offensive messages on social media related to activist issues in an assertive tone than a sarcastic tone. How the brand is aggressive in their reply mediates and support for brand's stance moderates those effects.

Additionally, 75% of generation Z and 80% of millennials think that brands should engage on issues (Sprout Social 2019). Since activist brands are thought to be values-driven (Vredenburg et al. 2020), it is not surprising that millennials, who are more value-driven, have more favorable attitudes toward those brands (Shetty et al. 2019). Indeed, in their research on the impact of BA on millennials, Shetty et al. (2019) revealed that millennial consumers tend to purchase from a brand that supports an activist issue, whereas they may discontinue purchasing from the brand if they engage in unethical behavior. However, the authors' research is surveyed only Indian consumers in Bangalore City in a single study. Therefore, the findings are not generalizable. Table 2 summarizes the BA studies and their key findings.

Year	Source	Journal	Scope	Study Method	Sample Population	Consumption-Related DVs	Main Findings
2019	Korschun et al.	Working Paper	BA and consumers' responses	Field experiment and lab studies	US pharmacy store consumer and MTurk participants	Unplanned purchase, purchase intention	Consumers buy more from market-driven companies when they do not take a political stance, whereas they buy more from value-driven companies when they take a political stance.
2019	Shetty et al.	Problems and Perspectives in Management	BA and Millennials	Experiment	Bangalore City	Purchase Intention	Millennials tend to purchase from the brand when it supports a cause and stops purchasing if there is any unethical behavior.
2019	Manfredi-Sanchez	Communication & Society	BA	Qualitative analysis of 45 brand campaigns	N/A	N/A	This study categorizes the campaigns into four different categories.
2020	Vredenburg et al.	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Authentic BA	Theoretical Paper	N/A	N/A	This study offers a theoretical framework to engage in authentic BA and introduces the brand incongruency and cause as a boundary condition.
2020	Eilert and Cherup	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Corporate activism	Theoretical Paper	N/A	N/A	This study offers a conceptual framework to examine the strategies related to the influence and change in order to solve the issues.
2020	Mukherjee and Althuizen	International Journal of Research in Marketing	BA and consumer's attitudes, intentions, and behavior	Surveys	US participants and French students	Brand attitude, behavioral intentions, and actual choices	When consumers disagree with a brand's stance, their brand attitude diminishes. This is mediated by consumer-brand identification and moderated by the brand's source of the stance.
2020	Moorman	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Brand Political Activism	Theoretical Paper	N/A	N/A	This research offers to brands six categories to consider while engaging in political activism.
2020	Bhagwat et al.	Journal of Marketing	Corporate sociopolitical activism (CSA) and investors' responses	Analysis of 293 CSA activities in 149 firms	N/A	Stock market reaction	This study finds more adverse responses to activism from investors. Investors respond more positively when the activism aligns with them.
2020	Hydock et al.	Journal of Marketing Research	Corporate Political Advocacy (CPA)	Experiment: surveys and Facebook ads	US undergrads and UK participants	Brand choice, market-level effect, click-through rates (CTR)	This research examines the effects of CPA depend on the market share (small vs. large) of the company.

2021	Key et al.	Journal of Strategic Marketing	BA Change Agents	Theoretical Paper	N/A	N/A	This research offers a theoretical framework to help decrease the risk and increase the effectiveness of BA.
2021	Sibai et al.	Psychology & Marketing	BA	Qualitative Study: Comparative Case Study	N/A	N/A	This research illustrates three controversial methods: “creating monstrous hybrids,” “challenging the establishment,” “demonstrating exemplarity.”
2021	Villagra et al.	Journal of Business Research	Corporate Activism	Event Study	N/A	Stock market performance	When the company has been boycotted, its stock market performance decreases. However, sponsor companies would not be affected by the boycott.
2022	Batista et al.	Journal of Interactive Marketing	BA	Experiment: Survey from Facebook ad and online consumer panel called Toluna	Participants from Facebook ad and Brazilian participants	Brand Attitude	Consumers’ attitude towards an activist brand is more positive when the brand responds to consumers’ offensive messages in an assertive (vs. sarcastic) tone. How the brand is aggressive in their reply mediates and support for brand’s stance moderates those effects.
In Press, 2022	Garg and Saluja	Accepted Manuscript, Journal of the Association for Consumer Research	BA	Surveys	US participants	Brand Attitude and WTP	Consumer’s political orientation moderates the effect of BA on brand attitude and WTP. Additionally, pro-conservative (vs. liberal) activist issues are more favorable by conservatives (vs. liberals).
2022	Mirzaei et al.	Journal of Business Research	Woke BA Authenticity	Content Analysis	N/A (Consumer responses to campaigns on social media)	N/A	This research offers a conceptual framework and identifies the dimensions of woke BA authenticity.
2022	Serin and Sinha	Dissertation	The Measurement of BA and Applicability	Qualitative and quantitative studies	Undergraduate students and American adults	Brand attitude, WTP a premium price, and intention to click-through	This dissertation develops and validates a BA scale and shows the marketing implications of the scale.

Table 2. Brand activism (BA) key research review

Differences Between BA and CSR-Related Brand Activities

In today's society, activist brands have become a new phenomenon. Brands increasingly use sociopolitical causes in their advertising campaigns, social media messages, or statements to raise awareness. This shift poses several questions that must be addressed. What constitutes BA, and what does not constitute BA? What is the difference between CSR-related activities and BA? How does BA demonstrate a distinct construct from CSR? In this dissertation, I aim to answer these questions by demonstrating the differences between BA and CSR-related practices to more firmly conceptualize the BA construct.

During the last century, several brands have engaged in CSR initiatives in different non-divisive causes such as disaster relief, poverty alleviation, disease research, and environmental pollution (Hildebrand et al. 2017). Generally speaking, CSR efforts are more marketing and/or corporate driven (Kotler and Sarkar 2017). In today's society, however, companies are supposed to do more than just make money. They are often expected to consciously engage in social reforms and societal changes (Gelles 2017). Therefore, there is a need to shift from CSR-related activities to BA. In recent years, companies have started to speak out against sociopolitical issues such as social injustice, racial inequality, LGBTQI equality, immigration, gun control, and climate change to create a better society. Because of the growing interest in activism efforts and campaigns, marketing researchers have developed the construct of BA.

BA evolves from CSR practices (Eyada 2020), but it is a unique construct. Previous BA literature has demonstrated the evident differences between BA and CSR activities (Batista et al. 2022; Bhagwat et al. 2020; Eilert and Cherup 2020; Garg and

Saluja in press; Hydock et al. 2020; Key et al. 2021; Mirzaei et al. 2022; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Sarkar and Kotler 2018; Vredenburg et al. 2020).

Table 3 elucidates the differences between BA and CSR-related marketing activities.

	CSR	BA	Representative Past Research
Construct Overview	“Aim to affect stakeholders positively and go beyond its economic interest”	Brands take a stance on controversial sociopolitical issues to promote	Sarkar and Kotler 2018; Turker 2009
Issue Type	Progressive Issues	Progressive or conservative issues	Vredenburg et al. 2020
Example of Issues	Education, disease-related research, poverty, hunger, disaster support	Social inequality, racial injustice, immigration, LGBTQI rights, same-sex marriage, climate change, gun control, abortion	Batista et al. 2022; Bhagwat et al. 2020; Hydock et al. 2020; Key et al. 2021; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Vredenburg et al. 2020
Controversy level	Non-controversial issues	Controversial issues	Batista et al. 2022; Garg and Saluja in press; Mirzaei et al. 2022; Vredenburg et al. 2020
Acceptance of the Issue	Generally/universally accepted, non-divisive issues	Not-generally/universally accepted, divisive issues, different opinions	Batista et al. 2022; Eilert and Cherup 2020; Key et al. 2021; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020
Partisanship level	Due to CSR focus on generally accepted issues, it consists of low partisanship	Due to BA focus on polarizing issues, it consists of high partisanship	Bhagwat et al. 2020
Driven to involve	Marketing and/or corporate-driven	Purpose and values-driven	Vredenburg et al. 2020
Aim	To support issues	To generate societal change through issues	Eilert and Cherup 2020
Adoption	Companies engage with CSR as a part of their business plan	Brands’ engagement with activism can be ad hoc or accidental. For instance, brand’s CEO may talk about activism unintentionally, or the brand may take a stance on issue deliberately	Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020
Engagement Type	Messaging and/or no/minimal practicing	Messaging and practicing	Vredenburg et al. 2020
Methods	Philanthropy, Company practices	Public statements, Company practices	Hydock et al. 2020
Risk Level	Due to its non-controversial nature, it is considered less risky	Due to its controversial nature, it is considered risky	Eilert and Cherup 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020
Effects	More certain	Uncertain	Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020
Consumer Reactions	Consumer’s perception of CSR is more favorable;	May be both negative or positive and may create backlash	Eilert and Cherup 2020; Hydock et al. 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen

	hence; their reactions to CSR is mostly positive		2020; Vredenburg et al. 2020
Consequences	May help the company unless it is considered as an ingenuine activity	May help or hurt the company because of its divisive and controversy nature	Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020
Managerial Application Contexts	TOMS' One for One campaign, Bombas Socks	Ben & Jerry's, Patagonia, Burger King, Jingsaw, Nike, Lyft	
Main sources	Carroll 1991; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001	Batista et al. 2022; Bhagwat et al. 2020; Eilert and Cherup 2020; Garg and Saluja in press; Key et al. 2021; Mirzaei et al. 2022; Moorman 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Sarkar and Kotler 2018; Vredenburg et al. 2020	Batista et al. 2022; Bhagwat et al. 2020; Carroll 1991; Eilert and Cherup 2020; Garg and Saluja in press; Key et al. 2021; Mirzaei et al. 2022; Moorman 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Sarkar and Kotler 2018; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Vredenburg et al. 2020

Table 3. Differences between BA and CSR-related marketing activities

As summarized in Table 3, BA and CSR differ in many key areas, such as the causes/issues they address, motivations for the involvement, and consumer reactions. In general, CSR is often regarded as an obligation that companies should engage in as a part of their business plan due to the law enforcement (Davis and Blomstrom 1975; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020). However, BA utilizes new communication approaches through intentional initiatives (e.g., company statements) or unintended initiatives (e.g., CEO's unintentional communication) (Dodd and Supa 2014; Manfredi-Sanchez 2019). Moreover, while company motivation for CSR is more corporate and marketing-driven, BA is purpose and value-driven (Kotler and Sarkar 2017; Vredenburg et al. 2020). Another significant distinction is the issues in which brands are involved. CSR focuses on generally accepted, non-divisive, and non-controversial philanthropic activities, such as illness research (e.g., breast cancer support), poverty, hunger, disaster support, and education-related support. On the other hand, BA focuses on controversial and polarizing

sociopolitical issues (Batista et al. 2022; Garg and Saluja in press; Key et al. 2021; Mirzaei et al. 2022) and urges brands to advocate their position on specific issues for larger societal impact (Korschun 2021). These issues may include racial inequality, social injustice, LGBTQI rights, gender equality, immigration, climate change, gun control, and abortion (Bhagwat et al. 2020; Batista et al. 2022; Hydock et al. 2020; Key et al. 2021; Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Vredenburg et al. 2020). Sociopolitical issues are described as “salient unresolved social matters on which societal and institutional opinion is split, thus potentially engendering acrimonious debate across groups” (Nalick et al. 2016). Furthermore, while other CSR-related activities only focus on progressive matters, BA encompasses both progressive and conservative issues (e.g., gun control or abortion) (Vredenburg et al. 2020). However, while the issues could be conservative, they may still be considered prosocial activities because brands believe that engaging in these issues is favorable for the community (Vredenburg et al. 2020).

Additionally, CSR activities result in more positive outcomes for companies (Brown and Dacin 1997; Mohr and Webb 2005; Orlitzky et al. 2003). The sociopolitical topics make BA more divisive (Batista et al. 2022); not every consumer finds the issues relevant or can identify with them (Vredenburg et al. 2020). Consequently, BA can create divergent consumer reactions to the brand. As a result, unlike CSR, BA is not favored by everyone, resulting in unpredictable and harmful brand outcomes (Eilert and Cherup 2020).

Controversial Consequences of Brand Activism

Brands may take a stance on issues in various ways, including making public announcements, lobbying for a cause/issue, contributing money or funds to specific causes, and incorporating issue-related activities in their publicity and promotional communication medium (Shetty et al. 2019). However, given that BA focuses on controversy and divisive issues (Batista et al. 2022; Garg and Saluja in press; Key et al. 2021; Mirzaei et al. 2022), consumer responses to BA may differ (Moorman 2020) and may lead to negative consequences. Up to now, some brands such as Patagonia, The Body Shop, Ben & Jerry's, and Levi Strauss have been found to be more successful by taking a stand on issues (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt 2019; Kotler and Sarkar 2018). These companies incorporated BA into their core business plan, not merely using it as a marketing effort centered around societal issues (Kotler and Sarkar 2018). On the other hand, other BA campaigns proved less fruitful, ultimately leading to failure. Pepsi is one of these companies. Pepsi launched a "Live for Now" advertisement campaign in 2017 to support the Black Lives Matter movement (Hermann 2020; Williams 2019). Consumers were enraged by Pepsi's decision to use Caucasian model Kendall Jenner for its activist advertising campaign. Consequently, the Pepsi company stopped running the advertisement in less than two days (Tillman, n.d., Williams 2019).

To give another example in the marketplace, following the police brutality in 2015, Starbucks workers were asked to write #RaceTogether on customers' coffee cups and speak about racial disparity with their customers while waiting in line (Eilert and Cherup 2020; Hertel-Fernandez 2018). However, this #RaceTogether campaign was met

with disapproval. Many people criticized the company's efforts and the campaign's inconsistency (Eilert and Cherup 2020).

The divisive, polarizing, and controversial nature of BA makes it risky. Since activist messages can be interpreted negatively or favorably, this form of activism may result in a wide range of consumer reactions to the brand. For example, When Nike used Colin Kaepernick in their controversial ad in 2016, the results were divisive (Manfredi-Sanchez 2019). Many Americans, in particular, boycotted Nike products and used the #BurnYourNikes on social media to express their dissatisfaction (Manfredi-Sanchez 2019). Some boycotters even cut Nike logos from its products and burned Nike sneakers while sharing the videos and photos on social media (Jarboe 2018; Manfredi-Sanchez 2019). However, Nike's sales increased by 33% after this campaign (Edison Trends 2018). To give another marketplace example, Dick's Sporting Goods focused on a different sociopolitical issue by stopping the sales of guns from their stores in 2018 (Zhang 2020). This decision actually increased the company's net sales by 4.7%, resulting in a \$2.6 billion increase in net sales and a 13% increase in their stock performance (Zhang 2020).

Gillette's ad supporting the #MeToo movement is another notable example of BA with negative consequences. Gillette's toxic masculinity advertisement campaign was watched by 24 million people on social media and disliked by 1.1 million in a single week (Matzelle 2019). In a more contemporary example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, when Costco required customers to enter the store wearing masks for safety reasons, the company faced both backlash and support. As an example of backlash, several Costco consumers began boycotting the business and canceling their subscriptions (Schmidt

2020; Walansky 2020). Furthermore, while many brands chose to exit the Russian market following the Ukrainian-Russian war, Nestle has not left the Russian market. As a result, the company faced backlash from many consumers (Dey 2022). Figure 1 shows the examples of consumers' social media messages and posts about these controversial issues. For example, one consumer shared the following:

@Costco

“You have hit a new low... you are an American corporation with an obligation to support our American values, dictating face mask for your workers is one thing but forcing this on your loyal members who paid for a membership is a complete abuse of power. #boycottcostco”

— “Eric Torres (@therealeric87) May 6, 2020” (Walansky 2020)

“The world’s largest food producer Nestle refuses to leave the Russian market. Bloody money for #Nestle”

— “Oleksandra Matviichuk (@avalaina) March 17, 2022” (Dey 2022)

Travis Akers
@travisakers

CEO of @Nestle Mark Schneider says the company will not exit Russian markets or suspend business with the Putin regime.

These are the companies and products produced under the Nestle umbrella.

9:12 AM · Mar 17, 2022

20.4K Reply Copy link

Read 3.3K replies



April
@hagnOfApril

Not sure what @Starbucks was thinking. I don't have time to explain 400 years of oppression to you & still make my train.

#RaceTogether

RETWEETS 309 FAVORITES 269

6:59 AM · 17 Mar 2015

Celebrate the many shapes and sizes of beauty | Dove

rae paoletta
@PAYOLETTER

DOVE SOLVED BODY SHAMING GUYS!!!!!! IT'S OVER!!!!!!

11:04 PM · 8 May 2017

pilot
@pilotbacon

a spokesperson from dove just crawled out of my shower drain to tell me all bodies are beautiful and women can play sports too

11:24 PM · 8 May 2017

Philip Lewis
@Phil_Lewis_

If she asks you to pick up Dove shampoo from the store, just know it's a trap.

12:31 AM · 9 May 2017

Abbie Evans
@AbbieEvansXO

Ok but Dove's diversity bottles are all still white

Figure 1. Examples of consumers' social media messages

So, why do brands take a chance by taking a stand on divisive, debated topics? The reason is that, as Korshun (2017) stated, “It may be more dangerous to remain silent than to take a political stand.” For instance, almost 200,000 users deleted their Uber accounts and opted for Lyft after Uber remained impartial to the travel ban imposed on Muslims while Lyft contributed money to organizations in response to this ban (Williams 2019).

In sum, BA can be perceived as risky, with both detrimental and positive outcomes. Unlike CSR activities, which are commonly viewed as constructive, BA may alienate or win consumers over. However, identifying whether and under what conditions consumers’ evaluation of the activist brand will be favorable is complicated. Therefore, this research extends the previous literature by developing and validating a BA scale and examining how BA affects consumers’ consumption choices.

The dearth of BA research leaves us with many unexplained avenues. First, since BA is a relatively new construct, there is no scientific proof about how companies can effectively engage with activism and its possible consequences. Second, the literature does not have a validated instrument available to assess BA to date. Hence, this dissertation aims to create and validate the reliable measurement of BA to fill this gap in the marketing and branding literature. Establishing this measurement may help to conduct future empirical studies in the BA domain. This dissertation shows the BA from consumers’ point of view and highlights the important features of an activist brand. Additionally, this dissertation explores the BA area in different consumer-brand relationship contexts such as brand attitude, WTP a price premium, and click-through intention.

Overview of Studies

In this dissertation, twelve studies were conducted to define BA, establish and validate a short BA scale, and assess the managerial applicability of the scale across various consumption contexts. Eight studies were conducted to create a psychometrically reliable and valid BA scale (Chapter 4). Specifically, the first three studies (Studies 1, 2A, and 2B), including the interview and qualitative studies, were conducted to create the initial set of scale items (Chapter 4). Additionally, the interviews and the first parts of Study 2A and Study 2B, with the aid of a literature review, were used to develop the definition of BA (Chapter 3). Next, in Study 3, fourteen expert judges rated each item based on the representativeness of the BA construct (Chapter 4). The initial set of items was created based on the expert judges' ratings and comments. Study 4 aimed to purify the measures with the first sampling and demonstrate that the scale reflects a good-fit model (Chapter 4). The next studies (Studies 5-7) were conducted to test the scale's validity and reliability (Chapter 4). Study 5 aimed to generalize the results of Study 4 (Chapter 4). Study 6 examined the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the scale and confirmed that BA is distinct from similar constructs (Chapter 4). In Study 7, the same participants from Study 5 were invited to take the survey in order to gauge test-retest reliability analysis (Chapter 4). As a result, I created a two-dimensional (action and communication) 8-item BA scale throughout eight studies.

Furthermore, the scale's applicability has also been examined using four studies (Studies 8A, 8B, 9, and 10) with different consumption consequences. Specifically, Study 8A examined consumers' perceptions of BA among undergraduate students. In particular, Study 8A investigated consumer attitudes toward a brand when they considered the brand

as an activist (vs. non-activist) brand (Chapter 5). Study 8B tested the effect of BA in different consumer segments, American adults, and examined whether consumers are willing to pay price premium for an activist brand, and the moderation effect of gender (Chapter 5). Study 9 assessed the effect of the length of engagement with activist issues (long-term activist engagement vs. short-term activist engagement vs. control) on consumers' intention to click-through, controlling for social desirability bias (Chapter 5). Finally, Study 10 examined the impact of brands' activist action and/or communication efforts on consumers' WTP a price premium and the moderation effect of political orientation (Chapter 5). Table 4 summarizes the studies.

Study#	Raw Data Participants (N*)	Type of Participants	BA Scale Development
BA Construct and BA Scale Development			
Study 1	12	Marketing Expert, Marketing Professors, Consumers	Interview Conceptualization and Item Generation
Study 2A	118	Undergraduate Students	Item Generation
Study 2B	123	American Adults	Item Generation
Study 3	14	Expert Judges: Marketing Professors	Scale Refinement
Study 4	402	American Adults	First Sampling Initial Purification
Study 5	252	American Adults	New Sampling Generalizability
Study 6	301	American Adults	New Sampling Validity
Study 7	153	American Adults	Test-Retest Reliability
Applicability/Predictive Validity of BA Scale			
Study 8A	219	Undergraduate Students	Brand Attitude
Study 8B	250	American Adults	WTP a Price Premium
Study 9	374	American Adults	Intention to Click-Through
Study 10	615	American Adults	WTP a Price Premium

*These participants' numbers are the total recruitment for each study. Based on the exclusion criteria, people were excluded from the studies, as explained in each study.

Table 4. Study summary

CHAPTER 3. BRAND ACTIVISM CONSTRUCT DEVELOPMENT

The aim of Chapter 3 was to describe BA from a consumer's perspective. This chapter begins by reviewing the available constructs and their definitions from prior literature. It also delves into the shortcomings of those definitions. Next, three qualitative studies were conducted (interview [Study 1], the first parts of Study 2A and Study 2B). Based on the interview, qualitative studies, and prior literature, this dissertation conceptualizes and defines BA.

Brand Activism Constructs

BA has been recently introduced to marketing literature; thus, it is considered a new concept. Scholars have presented different constructs related to BA, and each have brought different definitions into the literature. One of the first definitions in the literature is made by Sarkar and Kotler (2018). In their primary BA definition, Sarkar and Kotler (2018) define BA as “Brand activism consists of business efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to promote or impede improvements in society.” The key characteristic of this definition is that companies have a “desire to promote or impede improvements in society.” BA is classified by Sarkar and Kotler (2018) into six domains: social, business, political, environmental, economic, and legal activism. According to their conceptualization, BA covers both progressive and regressive topics (Sarkar and Kotler 2018), in line with Vredenburg et al.'s (2020) characterization of BA. However, Sarkar and Kotler's (2018) definition is broader, and it does not reflect the controversial or divisive aspects of BA.

In their corporate activism definition, Eilert and Cherup (2020) put forward a more agnostic BA concept. Eilert and Cherup (2020, p.463) describe corporate activism

as a “company’s willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic, and environmental issues to create societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviors of actors in its institutional environment.” Drawing from the institutional theory, the authors describe corporate activism based on their conceptual framework that addresses various sociopolitical issues and how corporations can use corporate activism to tackle them (Eilert and Cherup 2020). The authors also examine the ways in which those issues can be resolved through changing society’s behaviors and attitudes (Eilert and Cherup 2020).

On the other hand, Bhagwat et al.’s (2020) conceptualization is much more focused on the partisanship of societal and political issues. Since BA focuses on more polarizing topics like racial equality, immigration, LGBTQI rights, gun control, and climate change, corporate sociopolitical activism is characterized by high partisanship (Bhagwat et al. 2020). Bhagwat et al. (2020, p.1) define corporate sociopolitical activism as a “firm’s public demonstration (statements and/or actions) of support or opposition to one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue.” However, in their definition, the authors also highlight the importance of publicity (Bhagwat et al. 2020), which was missing from Sarkar and Kotler (2018) and Eilert and Cherup (2020) conceptualizations.

BA comprises companies’ communication efforts through statements, messages, and/or campaigns (Manfredi-Sanchez 2019). Similar to Bhagwat et al.’s (2020) characterization of publicity in their BA definition, Manfredi-Sanchez (2019, p.343) focuses on the communication aspect and defines BA as “a communication strategy whose aim is to influence the citizen-consumer by means of messages and campaigns created and sustained by political values.” However, this definition is mainly applied to

publicity efforts, and it is missing the action component. Additionally, this definition is also missing the controversial, divisive, or polarizing aspect of BA.

In line with their arguments, Vredenburg et al. (2020, p.3) define authentic BA as a “purpose- and values-driven strategy in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on institutionally contested sociopolitical issues to create social change and marketing success.” The important term of this definition is “marketing success.”

On the other hand, since BA has recently been introduced to the literature, there is no clear definition of BA. Past literature refers to the concept in different terminologies such as BA, corporate activism, brand political activism, sociopolitical activism, and CEO activism. As a result of these varying terms, it is more challenging to grasp the concept overall. The literature lacks a concise and coherent definition of the construct of BA. Additionally, past research has argued that “brand-level” and “corporate-level” phrases have different connotations for consumers (Guevremont 2019). Specifically, consumers evaluate the company at the brand-level given that the brands are not identified with the particular entities by consumers, considering their unawareness of which corporate entity possesses the brands (Guevremont 2019). From a consumer’s perspective, this dissertation explores the concept of BA at the brand-level, resulting in more brand implications. Table 5 summarizes the overview of BA definition in the existing literature.

Construct	Definition	Issue Type	Characteristics	Action	Communication	Authors	Year	Journal
BA	“BA consists of business efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to promote or impede improvements in society.”	Social, political, economic, environmental	Promote Impede	N/A	N/A	Sarkar and Kotler	2018	Book
BA	“BA takes place when a company or brand support promote the social, economic, environmental, cultural and social issue and align it with its core values and vision of the company.”	Social, economic, environmental, cultural	Promote, support alignment between values and mission	N/A	N/A	Shetty et al. 2019	2019	Problems and Perspectives in Management
BA	BA is defined as a “a communication strategy whose aim is to influence the citizen-consumer by means of messages and campaigns created and sustained by political values.”	N/A	Communication strategy Influence	N/A	Messages Campaigns	Manfredi-Sanchez	2019	Communication & Society
BA	BA, which can be defined as “the act of publicly taking a stand on divisive social or political issues by a brand or an individual associated with a brand” (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017).	Divisive social or political	N/A	Public stance	N/A	Mukherjee and Althuizen	2020	International Journal of Research in Marketing
Authentic BA	Authentic BA as “a purpose- and values-driven strategy in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on institutionally contested sociopolitical issues, to create social change and marketing success.”	Contested sociopolitical issues	Purpose-values driven Create change Create marketing success	N/A	N/A	Vredenburg et al.	2020	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing
Political BA	Brand political activism as “public speech or actions focused on partisan issues made by or on behalf of a company using its corporate or individual brand name.”	Partisan	N/A	Action	Public speech	Moorman	2020	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing
Sociopolitical Activism	Sociopolitical activism as a “firm’s public demonstration (statements and/or actions) of support or opposition to one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue.”	Partisan Issue	Support or opposition to issue	Action	Public statements	Bhagwat et al.	2020	Journal of Marketing
Corporate Activism	Corporate activism as “a company’s willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic, and environmental issues to create societal change by	Social, political, economic, environmental	Create societal change by influencing	Take a stand	N/A	Eilert and Cherup	2020	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing

	influencing the attitudes and behaviors of actors in its institutional environment.”							
CEO Activism	CEO activism can be defined as “corporate leaders speaking out on social and environmental policy issues not directly related to their company’s core business, which distinguishes it from nonmarket strategy and traditional corporate social responsibility.”	Social and Environmental policy	Focus issues are not related to company’s core business	N/A	Corporate leaders’ speech	Chatterji and Toffel	2019	Organization & Environment
Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA)	“An organization making a public statement or taking a public stance on social-political issues.”	Social-political issues	N/A	Take a stance	Public statement	Dodd and Supa	2014	Public Relations Journal
BA	“BA refers to when a brand takes a public stance on controversial issues to raise awareness and promote social movements through its actions and communication efforts by using its platforms with the purpose of societal changes.”	Controversial issue	Raise awareness Promote social movements Purpose of societal change	Take a stance Actions	Communication efforts using its platforms	Serin and Sinha	2022	Dissertation

Table 5. Overview of construct definition

Brand Activism Definition

A construct “is a conceptual term used to describe a phenomenon of theoretical interest” (Edwards and Bagozzi 2000). While creating the construct, it is critical to identify what the construct includes and what it does not include (Churchill 1979). As discussed in the previous section, the prior research has attempted to define the construct of BA. Based on the previous BA definitions in the literature, the construct of BA emphasizes the following characteristics and activities: *purpose-and values-driven; take a stance on issues; take actions; create a societal change; focus on controversial, contested, divisive, and partisan issues; communication strategies such as campaigns and/or public statements; influence attitude and behavior; and issues align with its core values and vision.*

Scholars may have different opinions on what BA is and what it constitutes. Therefore, this dissertation aims to understand the notion of BA and generate a definition from a consumer’s perspective. One exploratory research (Study 1) with marketing experts, marketing professors, and consumers, in addition to two qualitative studies (Studies 2A and 2B) were conducted in order to generate a definition of BA with the aid of literature review. The purpose of Study 1 was to understand BA from different perspectives to assist during the construct development and item generation of the BA scale. The purposes of Study 2A and Study 2B were twofold. The first part of Studies 2A and 2B defined the BA explained in this section. The second part of Studies 2A and 2B focused on the item generation of the BA scale that will be explained in Chapter 4.

Study 1: Interview: Exploratory Study

In this dissertation, exploratory research was conducted through qualitative interviews to establish a broad understanding of BA. The interview sought to gain insights that might help create my initial items and test the scale's applicability. The goal of these interviews was to understand the notion of BA, including what BA means, what the specific characteristics/traits of activist brands are, people's responses to BA, and any potential consequences of BA.

Method

Participants. Nineteen participants were invited via emails, personal contact, and social media platforms to join Study 1 as an interviewee. Twelve participants responded to my invitation favorably by accepting to join the interview. The participants comprised two marketing professors, two brand managers, and eight consumers in the US. However, one participant did not have enough prior knowledge of the domain; hence, I had to stop the interview process. Therefore, I conducted the data analysis of the interview with the responses from 11 participants. This sample size shows consistency with the previous scale development literature (Mitrega et al. 2012). Participants' selection criteria were in line with Churchill's (1979) recommendation such that a diverse group of the target population (e.g., marketing professors, marketing experts, and consumers) offers a more comprehensive understanding of the domain.

Design and Procedure. The interview style was semi-structured in-depth interviews (Punch 2005), a commonly used method in the scale development literature (Mitrega et al. 2012). The set of questions was prepared before the interview, but the

interview process itself was more conversational in nature. The interviews took place over the online meeting platform ZOOM and were digitally recorded. When interviewees entered the ZOOM meeting room, their permission to be recorded was asked.

Interviewees were also told that all of the information would be confidential and no personal information would be shared.

The example of the interview questions are as follows: (“Please describe what you think the phrase “BA” means?”; “Why do brands engage in activism?”; “What makes a brand an activist?”; “How important is it to you for brands to engage in activism?”; “What is your response to brands taking positions on current issues?”) (see Appendix A for all questions). Since the interview style was semi-structured, participants could add any extra information.

Results

I transcribed the ZOOM recording following interviews for further analysis. The data was reread back and forth to understand the themes derived from the interview. To analyze the data, the content analysis method was used. Content analysis is defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff 2004). During the content analysis, the common words, related themes, and concepts were searched and coded. The data analysis was also conducted using NVIVO software.

The data analysis revealed different themes related to activities and characteristics of BA within and among participants. The following is an example of the essential characteristics and activities of an activist brands that the participants mentioned.

“Purpose and mission-driven; taking a stance; being able to not be afraid of movement; a better understanding of consumers; helping financially; supporting business and charities; donating to organizations;; willingness to be proactive; supporting the cause; need to know what is happening in the country; strong agenda of motives; caring for people; changing internal policies; need to do PR work such as advertising, campaigns, messages, slogans; polarizing; assertive; generous; storytelling; assertive; authenticity; and empathy, etc.”

Discussion

In Study 1, an interview was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of BA, which will help during the item creation process and applicability studies. For instance, participants emphasized the companies’ communication efforts through particular messages, campaigns, promotional efforts, advertising, and using ambassadors as important instruments to engage in BA. Moreover, they emphasized that in order to be considered authentic, a company’s engagement with activist issues needs to align with its goals. One interviewee mentioned that BA humanizes the brand, consequently increasing brand authenticity.

The subsequent two studies (Studies 2A and 2B) were also conducted to develop a definition of BA.

Study 2A: Generation of Brand Activism Definition through Undergraduate Students’ Perspective

Study 2A was conducted with 118 undergraduate students from a southeastern US university in exchange for extra credit through SONA, an online university platform for students to receive extra credit in their marketing course. Seven students who failed the attention check question were excluded, resulting in 111 final responses for analysis (65.77% male, $M_{age} = 23.11$, $SD_{age} = 5.36$). At the beginning of the survey, participants were asked to describe what BA means (“In your own words (without the use of the internet”), please describe what you think the phrase “brand activism” means?). The details of this study were explained in Chapter 4. The sample BA definitions from participants are listed in Table 6.

Study 2A	
Participant #1	When a brand has a vision and a statement they stand next to and they are advertising that vision and their brand
Participant #2	When businesses try to promote brands in order to achieve positive change
Participant #3	When a brand tries to promote awareness to a current situation going on in the world
Participant #4	BA is the activism in which that is created with purpose of social changes.
Participant #5	BA is when brands post about social matters to show that their company is in support. Such as the Black Lives Matter and Love is Love movements.
Participant #6	The work brand means a type of product that a company provides in order to gain an income. On the other hand, activism means an action taken in order to change a political or social way of viewing things. I imagine that those two combined means that there are trying to make changes in the political or social sphere by using brand, or products as a campaign.
Participant #7	When brands become political or try to bring awareness to an issue
Participant #8	In my opinion I believe BA is where brands use their platform to shed light on ongoing issues in the world such as social injustices.
Participant #9	I think BA is when a company uses various marketing efforts to positively affect social aspects within their community.
Participant #10	It means taking a stand for a political or controversial topic

Table 6. BA definition from Study 2A participants

Study 2B: Generation of Brand Activism Definition through American Adults’

Perspective

Study 2B was conducted with 123 American adults through the Prolific research participant pool in exchange for a small monetary payment to generalize the results of Study 2A. Nine participants who failed the attention check were excluded, resulting in 114 respondents (57.89% female, $M_{age} = 33.24$). As study 2A, the purpose of the first part of this study was to create a BA definition with the aid of a qualitative study. For this reason, the same questions as Study 2A were answered (“In your own words (without the use of the internet), please describe what you think the phrase “brand activism” means?). The details of the study were explained in Chapter 4. The sample BA definitions from participants are listed in Table 7.

Study 2B	
Participant #1	When a brand markets their product in a way that suggests they support a certain cause. For example, a brand posting a tweet in support of a protest or a brand using activist hashtags.
Participant #2	I think it means when brands make public statements, social media posts, financial initiatives, and other significant actions to bring awareness or contribute to social issues.
Participant #3	When a company or brand does things like post on social media regarding social issues (i.e. BLM) or otherwise creates content and products that support social issues.
Participant #4	BA could be a brand taking a stance toward a certain social issue and showing support and activism for that issue.
Participant #5	I believe that BA is when brands make public statements regarding a social/political/environmental issue. many brands made statements like this around June when the BLM movement was in full swing
Participant #6	To me this means when brands choose sides in controversial topics and become activists for what they believe.
Participant #7	When a brand markets their product in a way that suggests they support a certain cause. For example, a brand posting a tweet in support of a protest or a brand using activist hashtags.
Participant #8	I think it means when brands make public statements, social media posts, financial initiatives, and other significant actions to bring awareness or contribute to social issues.
Participant #9	When brands act as activists and make their activities transparent.
Participant #10	A brand or company's footprint within the realm of political and social causes. For example, a company who values the environment would market towards audiences highlighting their work in that area

Table 7. BA definition from Study 2B participants

Data analyses and identification of the common themes for Studies 2A and 2B were made with the assistance of the NVivo software. As summarized from the BA definition from Study 2A and Study 2B participants, the following common themes have emerged: “*public statements, social media posts, taking a stance, raise awareness to issues, create societal change, support, and active involvement.*” One theme that emerged from the studies that was not addressed in the previous definitions is *awareness*.

Based on the exploratory study, qualitative studies, and previous definitions in the literature, this dissertation conceptualizes BA under two main dimensions: action and communication, indicating that brands should both incorporate activism through their action and communication messages. In addition, I suggested that one of the essential features of an activist brand is “raising awareness.” As a result, I provided the following BA definition:

“Brand Activism (BA) refers to when a brand takes a public stance on controversial issues to raise awareness and promote social movements through its actions and communication efforts by using its platforms with the purpose of societal changes.”

CHAPTER 4. BRAND ACTIVISM SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 4 describes the steps for developing a reliable and valid BA scale from consumers’ perspective. The scale development and validation process follow the procedure recommended by Churchill (1979). Churchill (1979) proposes eight steps to developing a multi-item measure with recommended methods: “1) specify the domain of construct 2) generate a sample of items 3) collect data 4) purify measure 5) collect data 6) assess validity 7) assess validity 8) develop norms.” In line with this recommended procedure, I follow the rigorous scale development process using a multi-method approach. I also follow some insights from the previous scale development research (e.g., Aaker 1997; Morhart et al. 2015; Price et al. 2018; Warren et al. 2019). This dissertation aims to create a BA scale through interviews, qualitative studies, expert judge evaluations, and quantitative studies to create items, purify the measure, as well as assuring the generalizability, validity, and reliability through eight studies. Table 8 summarizes the scale development steps that I follow in this dissertation.

Stage 1: Item Generation	Literature Review	Activism Literature, BA Literature, CSR Literature
	Exploratory Survey	Online Survey (N = 118), Undergraduate Students
	Exploratory Survey	Online Survey (N = 123), American Adults
	Interview	Interview (N = 12), 2 Marketing Experts, 2 Marketing Professors, 8 Consumers
Stage 2: Scale Refinement	Expert Judges	Online Survey (N = 14), Marketing Professors
Stage 3: Initial Purification	First Sampling and Purification of Measures	Online Survey (N = 402), American Adults
Stage 4: Scale Generalizability	New Sampling, Generalizability	Online Survey (N = 252), American Adults
Stage 5: Scale Validity	New Sampling, Validity	Online Survey (N = 301), American Adults
Stage 6: Scale Reliability	Test-Retest Reliability	Online Survey (N = 153), American Adults

Table 8. Scale generation procedure

Item Generation

The generation of scale items can be derived from deductive and/or inductive methods (Hinkin 1995). The deductive method includes an extensive literature review to understand the construct and create a definition (Hinkin 1995). The literature review is one way to determine the items' content validity (Straub, Boudreau, and Gefen 2004). Inductive methods apply qualitative studies to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon by utilizing answers from the target population, such as interviews and focus groups (Hinkin 1995). This dissertation follows a mixed method for item generation to satisfy the scale development process requirements and to validate the BA scale.

The item creation process started with exploratory research through a literature review in line with Churchill's (1979) scale development procedure. Given that BA is a relatively new construct, an extensive literature review was conducted before starting the qualitative studies to understand the domain better and gain different perspectives from various literature. For this purpose, the concept of activism was reviewed across different disciplines, including marketing, psychology, sociology, management, and communication literature. CSR-related literature was also reviewed for benchmarking purposes.

The second step in developing a valid scale is to create items to best represent the construct (Churchill 1979). The definition of construct validity is "the extent to which sets of measured items accurately reflect the theoretical latent constructs they are designed to measure" (Hair et al. 2019, p. 675). For items to have construct validity, the items should assure face, content, discriminant, convergent, and predictive validity (Hardesty and Bearden 2004). Hence, in this dissertation, face and content validity were

established via literature review and qualitative studies (Studies 1-3), and convergent, discriminant, and test-retest validity were established through quantitative studies (Studies 4-7).

Study 2A and Study 2B: Generation of Initial Items

The purpose of Studies 2A and 2B was to create the first set of scale items from consumers' point of view. Study 2A was conducted with undergraduate students, and Study 2B was conducted with adult consumers recruited from Prolific to assure the generalizability of the results. First, each study was analyzed separately. Then, the results were combined to create the initial pool of items.

Study 2A: Generation of Initial Items with Undergraduate Students

This qualitative study aims to understand how undergraduate students perceive BA.

Methods

Participants. One hundred eighteen participants were participated from a southeastern public university in the United States through an online platform, SONA, for students to receive extra credit in their Marketing courses. Seven participants were eliminated from the data analysis because they failed the attention check question, resulting in 111 final participants (65.77% male, $M_{age} = 23.11$, $SD_{age} = 5.36$). This sample size was in line with prior scale development research related to the marketing topics (Price et al. 2018).

Design and Procedure. Based on Aaker's (1997) initial item development procedure, this study adopts a "free-association task" to create the initial items from consumers' point of view. Participants answered open-ended questions on BA, a commonly used method during the initial item generation process in the scale development literature (Price et al. 2018). First, participants answered how they would describe BA ("In your own words (without the use of the internet), please describe what you think the phrase "brand activism" means?"). This question was used to create the definition of BA, explained in Chapter 3. Next, they indicated any essential activities an activist brand may engage in ("What essential activities (e.g., behaviors, communications, actions, etc.) does a brand need to engage in for you to consider it as being an 'Activist'"). Then, they indicated their perception of essential characteristics of BA ("Please write down at least 5 essential characteristics (traits, attributes) that come to your mind when you are thinking about 'brand activism'"). In the next part, participants wrote one "activist brand name" ("Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with 'brand activism'"). They were then asked to describe their reason for selecting their chosen brand ("Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is engaging in 'brand activism'").

In the last part, they answered demographic questions such as age, gender, annual household income, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and employment. They also answered an attention check question adapted from Shamon and Berning (2019) ("Should we exclude your data from this study for any reason? For instance, were you distracted,

or did you circle answers randomly?") ("1 = yes, 2 = no"). Finally, they were debriefed and thanked at the end of the survey (See Appendix B for details).

Study 2B: Generation of Initial Items with American Adults

This qualitative study was to explore how American adult consumers perceive BA.

Methods

Participants. In exchange for monetary compensation, 123 participants were participated through the Prolific research participant pool. Nine people who failed the attention check were excluded, resulting in 114 respondents (57.89% female, $M_{age} = 33.24$). This study's sample size was in line with previous scale development research in the marketing literature (Price et al. 2018).

Design and Procedure. Study 2B follows the same procedure as Study 2A. First, participants were asked to describe what BA means. This question was used to create the BA construct definition, which was explained in Chapter 3. Next, they were asked to indicate what essential characteristics a brand needs to engage in to be considered as an activist. Then, they indicated their perception of essential characteristics of BA ("Please write down at least 5 essential characteristics (traits, attributes) that come to your mind when you are thinking about 'brand activism'"). In the following part, participants were asked to provide one brand name they associate with BA and explain their reasons. Finally, they answered demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, annual household

income, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and employment) and an attention check question (Shamon and Berning 2019) (See Appendix B for details).

Study 2A and Study 2B Combined Results

Next, I pooled Study 2A and Study 2B results together (N = 225). The data analysis provided from the open-ended questions was conducted by content analysis and with the assistance of NVivo software. I identified the common words and related themes to BA within and across respondents. Figure 2 shows the most common words that occurred in both studies. Table 9 shows the word frequency and weighted percentage for both studies.



Figure 2. The most common words occurred, Study 2A and Study 2B

Word	Frequency	Weighted Percentage
Social	240	3.21%
Cause	154	2.06%
Donating	104	1.39%
Support	104	1.39%
Awareness	102	1.36%
Promote	100	1.34%
Media	86	1.15%
Communications	80	1.07%
Need	73	0.98%
Change	71	0.95%
Politics	68	0.91%
Issues	68	0.91%
Money	63	0.84%
Activist	62	0.83%
Community	62	0.83%

Table 9. Word frequency and weighted percentage, Study 2A and Study 2B

The main objective of the initial item generation process is to create a set of items to better capture the potential measure (Churchill 1979). Based on Churchill’s (1979) suggestion, items with slightly different meanings and/or identical items were added to create different responses. After item creation, the second step is editing the items to ensure that context and sentence structure are clear (Churchill 1979). Double-barreled items need to be divided into two different sentences or removed (Churchill 1979). Therefore, each item was reviewed again to make it clear and concise. As a result, I created a total of 123 scale items for the following analysis.

Dimensions of Brand Activism

Previous research suggests that the BA scale should be multidimensional (Eilert and Cherup 2020). This supports our findings that common themes from the earlier studies show the dimensionality of the scale. Throughout the literature review, interviews with 11 participants, and qualitative studies with undergraduate students and American

adults (N = 225), two distinct dimensions for BA occurred: action and communication. Based on results, brands are expected to take a stance on issues by their actions. Brands need to participate in several activities to support the issues. They also need to promote their issues to create awareness through their platforms. Many respondents mention social media as an essential marketing channel for brands to communicate their voice, given the increased social media usage.

Previous literature also emphasizes the importance of action and communication regarding brands' activism efforts (Vredenburg et al. 2018). If companies' actions do not match their communication messages, they may not be seen as authentic (Vredenburg et al. 2018). Hence, this leads the activist brands to focus on both communication and action, as explained below.

Action

Throughout the interviews and qualitative studies, many participants stated the importance of brands' actions. Brands need to perform specific actions for the betterment of society and to show that they care. These actions may vary on the issue they are supporting. Brands also need to follow through with what it stands for. Some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

- *To engage in a cause and that the actions are backed by this cause.*
- *Definitely actions, they need to be acting on the current social or political issues.*
- *Need to be vocal about what they believe in and stand for.*
- *Taking some actions which appear to support that cause.*
- *Taking actions to get help improve society.*

- *... Not only communication one should also prove their ideals by practical actions.*

Communication

The majority of the participants mentioned the brand's communication efforts when asked for the essential activities a brand needs to engage in to consider it as being an "Activist". Communication is important to communicate their messages to voice their opinion and influence society. If brands do not communicate their plans, people will not know what they do. One participant mentions that if the brand has no public presence, it is not considered an activist brand. Many participants mentioned that brands communicate their messages through social media, public statements, or marketing channels. Some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

- *"Post on its website or social media account(s) about support for certain issues or identities, especially if those issues or identities are still considered controversial.*
- *Constant communication through different channels.*
- *A brand should speak up on what is going on and post on sites like social media*
- *I believe brands need to have goals that are geared towards social change and actively use their platform to spread awareness about certain issues.*
- *"For a brand to be considered an "activist" brand, it needs to put itself out there in the public. An "activist" brand is always trying to promote itself through ads, special promotions or by word. The term "activist" is used to describe activity in*

the environment so if the brand is stale and has no public presence then it is not to be considered an "activist" brand."

- *Formally promote the movement it supports. There should be signs, commercials, and the brand should be placing attention on social media as well. Social Media is a faster way to spread the message."*

Moreover, some responses also show that the presence of action and communication may lead to the most effective results. For instance, one participant mentions that the brand cannot just post about the issues; it must be active participants in making a difference. Some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

- *Publicly supporting a cause via public communications and through it's company via action*
- *The activities that need to happen are performing certain actions to better society and to communicate what you will be doing to help society. If you don't communicate your plans, people won't know what you are doing.*

Discussion

The data results from the literature review, interview, and two qualitative studies with diverse participants were in line with each other. The main findings from these studies revolve around the importance of brand's actions and communications efforts related to activism. Based on the overall results, an initial 123 BA items with a 7-point Likert scale was created. These items show the activities and characteristics that brands

need to have to be considered as an activist. The aim of Study 3 is to refine the items based on expert judge's ratings.

Study 3: Scale Refinement by Expert Judges

Initial items should possess content and face validity (Hardesty and Bearden 2004). As suggested by Straub et al. (2004), expert judges are one way to determine the items' content validity. Content validity is defined as “the ‘representativeness’ or ‘sampling adequacy’ of the content—the substance, the matter, the topics—of a measuring instrument” (Kerlinger 1973, p. 459). Face validity is defined as “reflecting the extent to which a measure reflects what it is intended to measure” (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Therefore, the aim of Study 3 is to purify the items based on expert judges' evaluation to ensure the scale's content and face validity. This study included 123 items created from the literature review and qualitative studies (Studies 1, 2A, and 2B).

Method

Participants. Thirty-two marketing professors across different universities “who are experts in marketing, BA, and/or scale development” were invited via emails to join Study 3 as expert judges (see Appendix C for the email). Fourteen professors (71.4% male, $M_{age} = 41.86$, $SD_{age} = 8.96$) completed the task within eight days. This sample size ($N = 14$) shows consistency with the previous scale development literature (Price et al. 2018; Reich, Beck, and Price 2018). In addition, five professors emailed and explained their reasons why they could not complete the study. However, three of those five professors explain their comments via discussions by email.

Design and Procedure. At the beginning of the survey, the expert judges were asked to read the working definition of BA to be familiar with the construct of BA. The definition was kept general, and dimensionality was not mentioned in the study to prevent any priming problems related to the construct. It explained to expert judges that this study aims to refine a BA scale. Next, they were asked to think about what it means for a brand to be an activist. They were also asked to think about what essential characteristics and activities a brand needs to engage to be an activist.

Next, they analyzed 123 items that could describe a BA. Specifically, expert judges rated scale items as a “poor”, “fair”, “good”, or “very good” representation of BA construct. This rating criterion was employed from Obermiller and Spangenberg’s (1998) and is a commonly used method in the marketing scale development literature (Golossenko, Pillai, and Aroean 2020; Guevremont 2019; Morhart et al. 2015; Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998). They were also told that there is a section for each item to make comments on the ambiguity, clarity, redundancy, etc., or make modification if necessary. They also completed demographic questions such as age and gender. Study details can be found in Appendix C.

Results

Based on the expert judges’ ratings and comments, I eliminated a total of 60 scale items if more than 75% of the experts’ evaluations were bad. This 75% elimination criterion is one of the most commonly used methods in the marketing scale development literature (Hardesty and Bearden 2004). Additionally, nine items were eliminated because they were found to be similar to the CSR construct (example of items: “The brand is

actively involved in helping communities,” “The brand is active in giving back to the community”). Nine items were eliminated because they were unclear, confusing, generic, or double-barreled.

Moreover, three items were also deleted because expert judges found them to be a too specific type of BA that reflects only particular issues. It was mentioned that it would overlook brands that engage in a different type of activism and might not describe all activist brands. Instead, they suggested keeping the items more general since brands may engage in one or a few of those specific issues, not all of them. Hence, this dissertation kept the items more general to keep the contexts applied in different domains for future research. For example, the following item was eliminated (“The brand raises awareness around equality”). Additionally, three items were eliminated because they may be related to non-activist companies. It was also noted that some items were not specific enough. Instead, they could address the controversial aspect of the topic. Therefore, seventeen items were changed by adding the controversial aspect. As suggested by previous scale development research, judges’ agreement was also checked (Obermiller and Spangenberg 1998). One of the items did not meet this criterion, so it was removed. Table 10 summarizes these results. I only kept the items if the average ratings were more than fair and ratings did not differ more than 1.5 scale points. Since this dissertation aims to create a short-scale, 38 items were held for further analysis. Table 11 shows the initial scale items based on expert judges’ criteria.

Elimination Criteria	Item Eliminated
%75 elimination criteria	60
<i>Mean</i> _{ratings} > 2.5 and <i>SD</i> _{ratings} < 1.5)	1
CSR-related	9
Modified	15
Controversial aspect added	17
Unclear, confusing and generic, double-barreled	9
Specific Type of Activism, not general	3
Could relate to non-activist companies, doesn't have to be activism or BA	3

Table 10. Elimination criteria, Study 3

Item	Wording
1.	The brand is purpose-driven regarding controversial societal issues.
2.	The brand is values-driven regarding controversial issues.
3.	The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society
4.	The brand takes actions on controversial issues to influence society
5.	The brand voluntarily advocates for societal issues
6.	The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing
7.	The brand is outspoken about sociopolitical issues
8.	The brand publicly speaks to influence societal change
9.	The brand is vocal about what it believes in
10.	The brand proactively engages in discussions about polarizing issues
11.	The brand puts meaningful effort into the resolution of controversial issues
12.	The brand voices its stance on contemporary issues to inform society
13.	The brand tries to make society aware of its stance on polarizing issues
14.	The brand is genuine about its activist efforts
15.	The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society
16.	The brand promotes social activities that involve fighting for rights
17.	The brand educates the public about controversial societal issues.
18.	The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media.
19.	The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through its marketing channels.
20.	The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues
21.	The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues
22.	The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues
23.	The brand creates awareness of sociopolitical issues through its advertising campaigns
24.	The brand raises money to support controversial societal issues
25.	The brand works with charitable organizations to engage in controversial causes
26.	The brand raises funds to fight societal problems
27.	The brand encourages consumers to sign a petition to support a particular issue.
28.	The brand is involved in social movements by protesting societal problems
29.	The brand's explicit values are aligned with its activist marketing messages
30.	The brand has a clear goal for its activism efforts
31.	The brand is transparent about its activism efforts
32.	The brand makes clear statements about its activist efforts
33.	The brand openly expresses its opinion about causes it supports
34.	The brand encourages its employees to express their views about controversial societal issues
35.	The brand empowers employees to make a difference in regards to sociopolitical issues
36.	The brand creates awareness of controversial societal issues by launching products that it supports
37.	The brand adapts its business practices in ways that support controversial societal issues
38.	The brand changes its internal policies to address societal problems

Table 11. Initial scale items based on expert judges' criteria

Discussion

Study 3 aimed to purify the initial scale items created from the literature review and Studies 1, 2A, and 2B. For this purpose, fourteen marketing professors rated the one hundred twenty-three scale items based on how they represent the BA construct. Based on the overall evaluation of the ratings and comments, 38 items were kept for the subsequent studies. Since this dissertation aims to create a short scale, the items were diminished to a more modest and succinct number. Short scales are easier to conduct with other constructs and may lessen the demand artifacts (Richins 2004). Hence, conducting a survey on a short scale would be preferable and advantageous for academic and public policy research (Richins 2004).

The following study aims to conduct the first purification of the 38 items with American adult consumers.

Study 4: Item Purification

The purpose of Study 4 is to purify the initial 38 items through rigorous statistical analysis.

Method

Participants. A total of 402 participants were recruited to complete an online survey from the TurkPrime research participant pool in exchange for a small amount of monetary compensation. Seven participants were excluded from the data analysis as they failed to provide a valid brand name. None of the participants failed the attention check question. Therefore, this study included 395 final participants (52.2% women, $M_{age} =$

41.01; $SD_{age} = 13.43$; $Age_{range} = 19-79$) for further analysis. Out of the 395 survey respondents, 76.5% were White/Caucasian, 47.3% were married, 40.8% had completed a bachelor's degree, 77.7% of participants were employed, 30.6% of participants had more than \$90,000 household income, and 29.4% of participants had between \$30,000 - \$59,999.

In the scale development literature, the rule of thumb for the subject to item ratio is to conduct factor analysis is to be considered at least 10:1 (Nunnally 1978, p. 421). This study has enough sample size (395:38), which exceeds the 10:1 rule of thumb to perform the factor analysis (Nunnally 1978).

Design and Procedure. As a cover story, I told participants that the study's objective is to understand their opinion on BA. Participants were asked to answer two open-ended questions. I asked participants to write one activist brand name ("Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with 'brand activism'"). Then, to prompt the consumer's mind with the BA and its activities and/or characteristics, we asked participants to describe why they chose the specific brand ("Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is engaging in 'brand activism'").

Next, participants reported their agreement level with the following statements based on the chosen activist brand. Participants indicated their responses on a 38-item BA scale ("1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree"). Next, participants answered a series of demographic questions such as age, gender, annual household income, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and employment. Then, participants answered attention check question adapted from (Shamon and Berning 2019) ("With the help of the following

statement, you show us that you have read the statement. For this question, we want you to choose “option 5” when answering the question below”). Finally, they were debriefed and thanked for their participation (see Appendix D for study details).

Results

Principal Component Analysis. A principal component analysis was conducted on BA scale with 38 items using SPSS Version 20 software. The principal component analysis is applied when “data reduction is a primary concern, focusing on the minimum number of factors needed to account for the maximum portion of the total variance represented in the original set of variables” (Hair et al. 2019, p. 139). Since this dissertation’s purpose was to create a short scale that reflects the construct as a whole, a principal component analysis method was chosen to assess the BA construct.

This study uses the rotation method of Promax as the extraction method. Additionally, latent roots or eigenvalues below 1 are insignificant and cannot be considered for the analysis (Hair et al. 2019). Hence, the analysis was conducted with eigenvalues higher than 1 (Kaiser 1960). The analysis first started by checking Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (hereafter, KMO) test. The KMO test assesses whether the sample size is adequate to conduct the factor analysis further. The KMO test yielded an adequate sample size to reliably conduct the factor analysis (KMO = .96) (higher than .8 principles). Second, Barlett’s Test of Sphericity result was checked. Barlett’s test of sphericity is “a statistical test for the presence of correlations among the variables” (Hair et al. 2019, p. 136). Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 (703) = 13181.41, p =$

.000), ($p < .05$), showing that there is a significant correlation among the variables to run the analysis (Hair et al. 2019).

Initial factor analysis resulted in a first main factor with an eigenvalue of 19.41, explaining 51.08% variances, and 2.98 for the second factor, explaining 7.85% variances. As seen in the scree plot, there is a significant dip after the first factor, but it gives a reasonable variance to be acceptable for the second factor. Therefore, the primary factor analysis gave a two-dimensional result (action and communication), supporting the multidimensional scale. See Figure 3 for the scree plot from Principal Component Analysis.

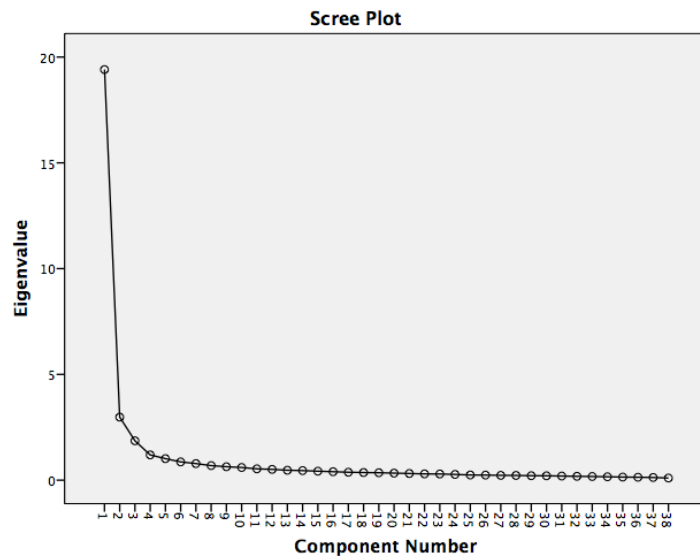


Figure 3. Initial scree plot from principal component analysis, Study 4

Next, I performed a series of factor analyses to reduce the initial 38 items. In each round of the factor analysis, the items were checked for the factor loadings, high cross-loadings, and communalities. Communalities are “the amount of variance accounted for by the factor solution for each variable” (Hair et al. 2019). In the first step, I eliminated

the items if the loadings were below .50 (Hair et al. 2019), cross-loadings were higher than .40 between factors, and communalities were lower than .60. Items were discarded from the analysis one by one each time, and factor analysis was rerun again (Hair et al. 2019). Additionally, each item on the factor was analyzed based on whether the variables were distinctive, fit the theoretical base, or offered any valuable managerial implications (Hair et al. 2019). Therefore, items were kept based on several factors, including high loadings, low cross-loadings, brevity, and practicability.

After a series of principal component analyses, a two-factor solution that explained a cumulative variance of 79.28% resulted in 8 items (Action: 4 items, Communication: 4 items). A final analysis yielded an eigenvalue of 4.58 for the first factor (action) and 1.76 for the second factor (communication), which explained 57.23% and 22.06% variance, respectively. A final result also revealed enough sample size of $KMO = .88$ (above .80). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant ($\chi^2(28) = 2263.64, p = .000$), showing the significant correlation between variables. The final result was based on several iterations of item deletions and wise analysis of each item.

The first factor comprised items that represent actions that the activist brand takes. The second factor comprised items that represent the communication efforts of the activist brand. Previous research has shown that assigning the same weight in the summed scale benefits the scale (Richins 2004). Hence, a two-factor solution with 4-items in each dimension gives a benefit to the BA scale. The result also indicates the final items with high factor loadings and communalities with a high variance explained for each BA factor. Figure 4 shows the final scree plot, and Table 12 shows the principal component analysis results.

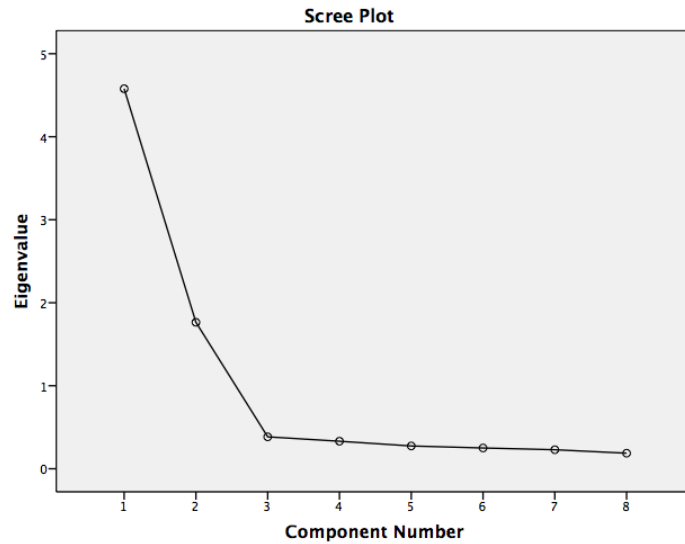


Figure 4. Final scree plot from principal component analysis, Study 4

Pattern Matrix*					
	Component		Communalities	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
	1	2			
6. The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.	.94		.83		
3. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.	.90		.81		
14. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.	.88		.79		
15. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society.	.87		.82	57.23%	57.23%
21. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.		.94	.85		
20. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.		.89	.76		
18. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media.		.86	.77		
22. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues.		.81	.74	22.06%	79.28%

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

*Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 12. Factor analysis results, Study 4

Convergent Validity. Convergent validity is defined as “the items that are indicators of a specific construct should converge or share a high proportion of variance in common” (Hair et al. 2019, p. 675). This study checked the factor loadings and reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient) to establish convergent validity (Hair et al. 2019, p. 675-676).

Internal Consistency Reliability. The results yielded high-reliability scores for both dimensions; with a first factor (Items 3, 6, 14, 15; $\alpha = .92$) and second factor (Items 18, 20, 21, 22; $\alpha = .90$). All the factors exceed the reliability criteria (above .70) (Hair et al. 2019).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis aims to evaluate the construct validity (Hair et al. 2019, p. 675). Confirmatory analysis, using MPlus software, was performed on 395 participants to investigate whether the two-dimensional model fits the observed data. The suggested fit model for the “comparative fit index ($CFI \geq .90$); Tucker Lewis Index ($TLI \geq .95$); Standardized Root Mean Square Residual ($SRMR < .08$); Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA < .08$); ($\chi^2 / df < 3$)”. Based on this, confirmatory factor analysis results demonstrated a good fit model ($CFI = .985$, $TLI = .978$, $SRMR = .033$, $RMSEA = .067$, $\chi^2 (19) = 53$, $\chi^2 / df = 2.79$). All the confirmatory analysis results meet the standard criteria (Parry, n.d.). Table 13 represents the final items of BA.

BA Scale Items
Action Items
ACT1-The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.
ACT2-The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.
ACT3-The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
ACT4-The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society.
Communication Items
COM1-The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media.
COM2-The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
COM3-The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
COM4-The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about socio-political issues.

Table 13. Final items of BA

Discussion

Study 4 aimed to purify the initial BA scale items. The purpose was to create a short scale that is more applicable and valuable (Park et al. 2010), reflecting the construct and fits the model. The principal component analysis provided a two-factor solution with eight items with the best overall model fit: action (4-items) and communication (4-items). The follow-up confirmatory analysis supported that the model was a good fit, and the reliability analysis confirmed the results. The following study is designed to test the results' generalizability with a new sampling of the participants.

Study 5: Generalizability of the Model on New Sample

The purpose of Study 5 was to replicate the Study 4 and showed the results' generalizability.

Method

Participants. In exchange for monetary compensation, 252 participants were recruited from Prolific. None of the participants failed the attention check question. However, six participants were eliminated from the data analysis since they did not provide any valid name of a brand in the first question. Hence, the data analysis included 244 final participants (54.9% women, $M_{age} = 34.57$; $SD_{age} = 13.37$). The final participant number (244:8) exceeds the rule of thumb for the subject to item ratio (10:1), supporting that the sample size was enough to conduct the factor analysis (Nunnally 1978, p. 421).

Design and Procedure. Since this study aims to replicate Study 4 with an 8-item BA scale, I followed the exact study design as Study 4. Participants wrote one name of a brand that they think is associated with BA. Then, to prime participants with BA ideas, they were asked to describe why they believe that the chosen brand is engaging in BA. Following that, participants indicated their agreement on the eight-item BA scale based on the chosen activist brand (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). Next, participants responded to demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, annual household income, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and employment). Finally, they answered the attention check question adapted from (Shamon and Berning 2019) and were thanked. Study details can be found in Appendix E.

Results

Principal Component Analysis. The principal component analysis with a Promax rotation was conducted on an 8-item BA scale via SPSS software to check the replicability of Study 4. Eigenvalues only greater than one were considered (Hair et al.

2019). First, KMO and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were checked in order to see whether there were enough sample size and correlation between the variables. The KMO test yielded an adequate sample size to continue the analysis (KMO = .84), higher than .80 principles. Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 (28) = 1348.79, p = .000$), ($p < .05$), showing that there is a significant correlation among the variables (Hair et al. 2019). The results from a principal component analysis showed a two-factor solution, explaining the 77.81%. Factor loadings from all items were high, and communalities were above .60. Table 14 shows the factor loadings.

Internal Consistency Reliability. High-reliability scores were revealed from the Cronbach’s Alpha [action dimension: $\alpha = .92$, communication dimension: $\alpha = .88$, and full model BA scale: $\alpha = .88$], exceeding the reliability criteria (above .70) (Hair et al. 2019).

Pattern Matrix*					
	Component		Communalities	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
	1	2			
ACT3. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.	.94		.81		
ACT2. The brand engages in activism to increase society’s wellbeing.	.93		.85		
ACT1. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.	.88		.81		
ACT4. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society.	.83		.79	55.69%	55.69%
COM7. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.		.92	.81		
COM6. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.		.91	.78		
COM5. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media.		.85	.71		

COM8. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues.		.73	.66		22.12%	77.81%
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
 * Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 14. Factor loadings, Study 5

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed an acceptable overall fit (CFI = .955 (above .90), TLI = .933 (above .90), SRMR = .053, RMSEA = .115, χ^2 (19) = 80.15, χ^2 /df = 4.22 (below 5; Wheaton et al. 1977). Previous research has shown that χ^2 /df ratio results are reasonable if ≤ 5 (Wheaton et al. 1977). Additionally, the significance of χ^2 statistics results varies depending on the data sample size (Marsh and Hocevar 1985). Therefore, the results show an acceptable overall fit based on the sample size of Study 5 (N = 244) compared to Study 4 (N = 395). Therefore, regarding the sample size, previous research has suggested the model be a reasonable fit χ^2 /df ratios varying from 2 to 5 (Marsh and Hocevar 1985).

Discussion

Study 5 aims to replicate the results of Study 4 and show the generalizability of the scale. The follow-up confirmatory analysis results demonstrated an acceptable overall model fit. Study 6 aims to explore the BA scale’s discriminant validity and prove that BA is a distinct construct compared to theoretically-related constructs. Additionally, in previous studies (Study 4 and Study 5), participants self-selected the activist brand. In the following study (Study 6), participants rated one of the four brands (Nike, Patagonia, Starbucks, Ben & Jerry’s) since they were considered activist brands as they engage in various activist practices such as Nike’s involvement with racial inequality, Patagonia’s

involvement with climate change, Starbucks's involvement with refugees, and Ben & Jerry's involvement with social justice. Moreover, these brands were among the highest cited brands from previous studies, as explained in the following Study 6's procedure.

Study 6: Scale Validity

Study 6 aims to assess the BA scale's construct validity by examining the convergent and discriminant validity. Hence, the BA scale was compared within its dimensions and theoretically related constructs in the literature.

Convergent Validity. This study analyzed the factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) with the confirmatory factor analysis, and reliability to establish convergent validity (Hair et al. 2019, p. 675-676). This study analyzes the reliability using two methods: internal validity (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient) and construct reliability.

Discriminant Validity. Discriminant validity is defined as "the extent to which a construct or variable is truly distinct from other constructs or variables" (Hair et al. 2019, p. 676). To establish discriminant validity, four conceptually related constructs, namely CSR, corporate citizenship, brand authenticity, and brand hypocrisy, were used to explore the BA scale's distinctiveness. First, the CSR construct seems to be related but dissimilar from BA based on the literature and previous discussion (Vredenburg et al. 2020). Even though previous research has discussed that BA is a different construct than CSR, it is essential to empirically prove the distinctiveness of the construct. The three most-cited articles within the CSR scale development literature (Salmones et al. 2005; Alvarado-Herrera 2017; Turker 2009) were selected to establish this distinctiveness. Turker's

(2009) scale has comprised of seventeen items with four dimensions: Social and nonsocial stakeholders (seven items), employees (five items), customers (three items), government (two items). Salmones et al.'s (2005) scale has three dimensions with 11 items: Economic responsibility (three items), ethical-legal responsibility (four items), philanthropic responsibility (four items). Additionally, I also used the CSR scale from Alvarado-Herrera (2017) with only a social dimension (six items).

The corporate citizenship scale (Maignan and Ferrell 2000) was chosen because they seem to be related but distinct from BA. The corporate citizenship scale is comprised of a total of 18 items with four dimensions: Economic citizenship (four items), legal citizenship (four items), ethical citizenship (five items), and discretionary citizenship (five items) (Maignan and Ferrell 2000). The brand authenticity scale (Morhart et al. 2015) was used because its two dimensions seem related to the BA (symbolism with four items and integrity with four items). The brand hypocrisy scale (Guevremont 2019) was also used because its two dimensions seem related to the BA (mission hypocrisy with three items and social hypocrisy with three items).

Method

Participants. A total of 301 respondents were recruited from the CloudResearch, research participant pool in exchange for monetary compensation (60.1% women, $M_{age} = 37.88$; $SD_{age} = 12.45$; $Age_{range} = 19-83$). Out of the 301 survey respondents, 72.8% were White/Caucasian, 11.6% were African-American, 10% were Asian, 48.8% were married, 40.5% had completed a bachelor's degree, 75.1% of participants were employed, and 35.5% of participants had an annual household income between \$30,000-\$59,999. Either

of the participants did not fail the attention check question. The rule of thumb for the subject to item ratio was high enough (301:8), exceeding (10:1) rule (Nunnally 1978, p. 421).

Design and Procedure. Study 6 was a one-factor with four-level (Brand: Nike vs. Ben & Jerry's vs. Patagonia vs. Starbucks) between-subject design. Participants were randomly assigned one of the four brands: Nike (N = 76), Ben & Jerry's (N = 76), Patagonia (N = 74), Starbucks (N = 75). In this study, I used different brand types from various sectors to remove any potential preconceptions around BA. This method was employed by many prior scale development papers in the branding literature (Morhart et al. 2015). These brands were chosen because they have been engaging in activism. When asked participants for an activist brand name in my qualitative and quantitative studies, they were also among the most cited brands. For instance, in Study 4, out of 395 respondents, 39.75% of participants wrote Nike, 5.57% of participants wrote Starbucks, 4% of participants wrote Patagonia, and 3.54% of participants wrote Ben & Jerry's.

Participants completed each question while thinking about the brand they were assigned to. Participants first answered the proposed 8-item BA scale ("1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree"). Then, they answered questions on three corporate social responsibility scales (Salmones et al. 2005; Alvarado-Herrera 2017; Turker 2009), corporate citizenship scale (Maignan and Ferrell 2000), brand authenticity scale (Morhart et al. 2015), and brand hypocrisy scale (Guevremont 2019) ("1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree"). Finally, participants indicated their demographics (e.g., age, gender, annual household income, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and employment) and

answered the attention check question (Shamon and Berning 2019). The details of this study are in Appendix F.

Results

Principal Component Analysis. To replicate the previous findings and show the scale's generalizability with a new sampling, I conducted a Principal Component Analysis using Promax rotation. KMO results yielded an adequate sample size to conduct the factor analysis (KMO = .900). Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated a significant correlation between BA variables to conduct the analysis ($\chi^2 (28) = 2221.07, p = .000$). All the item communalities were higher than .60, and factor loadings were higher than .77 with 84.14% total variance. See Table 15 for factor analysis and descriptive statistics details.

	Item Loadings		Descriptive Statistics	
	Component		Mean	SD
	1	2		
3. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.	.96		4.69	1.57
4. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society.	.94		4.97	1.46
1. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.	.88		4.88	1.43
2. The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.	.88		4.87	1.42
7. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.		.99	4.76	1.50
6. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.		.92	4.72	1.56
8. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues.		.91	4.64	1.54
5. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media.		.77	4.64	1.43

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
 * Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 15: Factor loadings, Study 6

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with MPlus software to assure the psychometrics properties of the two-dimensional 8-item BA scale. Analysis revealed an overall acceptable fit for the model (CFI = 0.975, TLI = 0.963, SRMR = 0.040, RMSEA = 0.099, $\chi^2(19) = 74.82$) (Marsh and Hocevar 1985; Wheaton et al. 1977), replicating the prior study results.

Convergent Validity: I checked the BA's convergent validity within two dimensions with a confirmatory factor analysis by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) scores. The recommended level for AVE is expected to be higher than .5 to establish a convergent validity (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hair et al. 2019). As expected, the AVE value for the action dimension was 0.79 and the communication dimension was

0.78, exceeding the expected criteria of 0.50. These results confirmed the convergent validity of each latent construct.

Second, composite reliability (CR) for each BA dimension was calculated using factor loadings. For action dimension CR = .94 and communication dimension CR = .93, which exceed the suggested $>.7$ threshold (Hair et al. 2019). These results again proved each latent construct's convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity. To assess whether the BA scale with two dimensions (action and communication) is empirically distinguished from potentially related constructs, I analyzed the discriminant validity of the scale with the Fornell and Larcker (1981) method. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE for each second-order construct was compared with the squared correlation between constructs. The AVE for each construct should be higher than the squared correlation between the two factors for the BA scale to have a discriminant validity (Hair et al. 2019).

For this purpose, BA, CSR, corporate citizenship, brand authenticity, and brand hypocrisy scales were averaged for each dimension to create a composite score. Next, composite reliability, average variance extracted, and squared root of average variance extracted for each construct were calculated based on the confirmatory factor analysis using the factor loadings. Specifically, I compared each BA dimension (action and communication) with all the pair of constructs (a total of six constructs with 16 dimensions (four dimensions of CSR scale 1, three dimensions of CSR scale 2, and one dimension of CSR scale 3, four dimensions of corporate citizenship scale, two dimensions of brand authenticity scale, and two dimensions of brand hypocrisy scale).

The results proved that the BA scale has a discriminant validity since all the squared root for AVE for action (0.89) and communication dimension (0.88) was higher than the all corresponding correlation between the constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The descriptive statistics, CR, and AVE are summarized in Table 16. Table 17 shows the correlation matrix for each construct and the squared root of the AVE (along the top of the diagonal for each construct).

Latent Constructs	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	Mean	SD
Brand Activism - Communication	0.93	0.78	4.70	1.38
Brand Activism - Action	0.94	0.79	4.86	1.35
Brand Hypocrisy - Social	0.90	0.74	3.27	1.62
Brand Hypocrisy - Mission	0.92	0.78	3.11	1.67
Brand Authenticity - Integrity	0.94	0.79	4.91	1.41
Brand Authenticity - Symbolism	0.94	0.79	4.80	1.46
Corporate Citizenship - Discretionary	0.89	0.62	4.97	1.13
Corporate Citizenship - Ethical	0.90	0.63	5.23	1.10
Corporate Citizenship - Legal	0.89	0.66	5.30	1.12
Corporate Citizenship - Economic	0.87	0.62	5.37	1.07
CSR (Salmones et al.) - Philanthropic	0.85	0.59	4.81	1.17
CSR (Salmones et al.) - Ethical-Legal	0.77	0.48	5.10	1.03
CSR (Salmones et al.) - Economic	0.80	0.59	5.66	1.07
CSR (Alvarado-Herrera) - Social	0.93	0.68	4.74	1.90
CSR (Turker) - Government	0.87	0.77	5.21	1.28
CSR (Turker) - Customers	0.81	0.58	5.16	1.14
CSR (Turker) - Employees	0.92	0.65	4.69	1.16
CSR (Turker) - Social and Nonsocial Stakeholders	0.94	0.70	4.75	1.26

Table 16. Confirmatory factor analysis, Study 6

Latent Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 BA Communication	0.88																	
2 BA Action	0.62***	0.89																
3 Brand Hypocrisy Social	-0.06	-0.28	0.86															
4 Brand Hypocrisy Mission	-0.02	-0.27	0.97***	0.89														
5 Authenticity Integrity	0.36***	0.72***	-0.45***	-0.44***	0.89													
6 Authenticity Symbolism	0.37***	0.70***	-0.35***	-0.34***	0.87***	0.89												
7 Corporate Citiz Discretionary	0.45***	0.69***	-0.35***	-0.39***	0.87***	0.78***	0.79											
8 Corporate Citiz Ethical	0.42***	0.63***	-0.35***	-0.37***	0.77***	0.70***	0.92***	0.80										
9 Corporate Citiz Legal	0.43***	0.60***	-0.35***	-0.37***	0.69***	0.61***	0.84***	0.97***	0.81									
10 Corporate Citiz Economic	0.20**	0.23***	-0.08	-0.12*	0.26***	0.22***	0.45***	0.59***	0.66***	0.79								
11 CSR (Salmones et al.)-Philanthropic	0.43**	0.76***	-0.44***	-0.45***	0.91***	0.84***	0.92***	0.78***	0.70***	0.28***	0.77							
12 CSR (Salmones et al.)-Ethical	0.40**	0.76***	-0.41***	-0.40***	0.92***	0.81*	0.91***	0.89***	0.87***	0.48***	0.91***	0.69						
13 CSR (Salmones et al.)-Economic	0.08	0.13**	-0.13*	-0.15**	0.13**	0.13***	0.31***	0.43***	0.49***	0.84***	0.17**	0.34***	0.78					
14 CSR (Alvarado-Herrera) Social	0.52***	0.77***	-0.33***	-0.35***	0.87***	0.83***	0.87***	0.74***	0.67***	0.25***	0.93***	0.86***	0.11*	0.83				
15 CSR (Turker) - Government	0.32***	0.47***	-0.35***	-0.36***	0.67***	0.57***	0.77***	0.81***	0.81***	0.48***	0.66***	0.84***	0.34***	0.64***	0.88			
16 CSR (Turker)-Customers	0.38***	0.63***	-0.41***	-0.43***	0.86***	0.77***	0.94***	0.83***	0.76***	0.44***	0.87***	0.90***	0.31***	0.81***	0.81***	0.76		

17 CSR(Turker)- Employees	0.39***	0.61***	- 0.25***	- 0.27***	0.79***	0.72***	0.87***	0.73***	0.67***	0.32***	0.83***	0.86***	0.15**	0.81***	0.70***	0.85***	0.81	
18 CSR(Turker)- Social-Nonsocial	0.46***	0.77**	- 0.34***	- 0.35***	0.82***	0.76***	0.82***	0.71***	0.64***	0.25***	0.92***	0.85***	0.12*	0.88***	0.64***	0.80***	0.79***	0.83

*Correlations are based on CFA; N = 301 (**p < .001; *p < .05; *marginally significant)*

The square root of the AVE is displayed along the diagonal.

Table 17. Correlation matrix results, Study 6

Discussion

Study 6 aims to examine the reliability and validity of the BA scale. Study 6 results replicate the previous results with high factor loadings and high reliability with an acceptable fit model of the BA scale. Additionally, this study confirms the convergent and discriminant validity of the scale, showing that BA is a distinct construct from CSR, corporate citizenship, brand authenticity, and brand hypocrisy. The purpose of following Study 7 is to show the test-retest reliability of the model.

Study 7: Test-Retest Reliability Analysis

Study 7 aims to demonstrate the scale's reliability, adopting the test-retest reliability method. This method is commonly used in the scale development literature (Garbinsky et al. 2020). The test-retest reliability aims to examine whether participants' respondents remain consistent over time (Elkin 2012). In order to achieve this, the same scale is performed using the same population at two different times (Peter 1979). The two studies' result is correlated to see whether the results are steady based on overtime (Peter 1979). According to Peter (1979), a two-week internal period is enough to apply the test-retest reliability method.

Method

Participants. A total of 250 participants who had completed Study 5 were contacted approximately one month (26 days) later through the Prolific research participant pool and invited to join Study 7 in exchange for a small monetary compensation. Previous research has used a time span ranging from six days to four

months (Haws, Winterich, and Naylor 2014; Price et al. 2018; Reich et al. 2018). As supported by the previous research, this time frame is enough to examine test-retest reliability (Peter 1979) and was in line with the previous scale development research (Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose 2001; Haws et al. 2014; Reich et al. 2018; Wilk, Soutar, and Harrigan 2019).

One hundred fifty-three participants finished the survey within three days. The rate for the response was 61% and showed consistency with prior scale development literature for the retest-reliability analysis (Garbinsky et al. 2020). First, I pooled the two databases from the first and second data collection. Then, I matched the participants from Studies 5 and 7. Out of 153, 33 respondents were excluded since the participants' IDs differed from Study 5. Two participants were eliminated because they did not provide any brand name. None of the participants failed the attention check. Of the initial sample, I continued the analysis with 118 participants (55.9% women, $M_{age} = 36.19$; $SD_{age} = 12.97$; $Age_{range} = 18-68$; 75% White/Caucasian and 21% were Asian). This sample size was enough to conduct the analysis and shows consistency with the previous scale development literature (Reich et al. 2018).

Design and Procedure. To examine the test-retest reliability, I used the same study design as used in Study 5. Specifically, participants provided one activist brand name and wrote down why they chose the particular brand. Then, participants completed the two-dimensional 8-item proposed BA scale (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). Finally, they answered basic demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, annual household income, ethnicity, marital status, level of education, and employment) and attention check (Shamon and Berning 2019) (see Appendix G for study details).

Results

First, the data from Studies 5 and 7 were pooled together and coded as Time 1 (respondents from Study 5) and Time 2 (respondents from Study 7: current study). In order to check the test-retest reliability, I conducted three different methods. First, I checked the internal consistency reliability between Time 1 and Time 2. Second, I compared the means between Time 1 and Time 2 participants by conducting an ANOVA (Price et al. 2018). Third, I checked the intraclass correlation coefficient (Price et al. 2018).

Internal Consistency Reliability. All the factors exceeded the reliability criteria (above .70) (Hair et al. 2019) [action ($\alpha = .93$), communication ($\alpha = .89$), and full model BA scale ($\alpha = .89$)] at Time 2. These results showed that high reliability and consistency persistent over time compared to Time 1 scores [action ($\alpha = .93$), communication ($\alpha = .85$), and full scale ($\alpha = .98$)].

ANOVA (Time 1 and Time 2). First, action, communication, and 8-item BA scale were averaged to create a composite score at Time 1 and Time 2. In order to check the test-retest reliability, I conducted a one-way repeated measures ANOVA (within-subjects ANOVA) between Test (Time 1) and Retest (Time 2) were performed. As expected, the ANOVA results demonstrated a non-significant differences for full BA scale (8-items) means between Time 1 ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.19$) and Time 2 ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.16$; $F(1,117) = .08$, $p = .772$). As intended, the ANOVA results revealed a non-significant differences in means for the action between Time 1 ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.50$) and Time 2 ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.43$; $F(1,117) = .07$, $p = .788$). As anticipated, the ANOVA results also yielded a non-significant difference for the communication dimension between Time 1

($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.25$) and Time 2 ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.30$; $F(1, 117) = .05$, $p = .824$).

These results showed a consistency between two time points, confirming the high test-retest reliability. Additionally, these results assure that the BA scale’s internal consistency persisted satisfactorily at the second data collection (Time 2) compared to the first data collection (Time 1).

Intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC). “The ICC is the proportion of the total variance explained by the between-person variance” (Elkin 2012). ICC was checked to examine the test-retest reliability analysis by comparing participants’ scores on full model BA and each dimension for Time 1 and Time 2, using SPSS software. The ICC coefficient for action is .77, communication is .62, and the full BA scale is .71, indicating that the results were satisfactory. Table 18 summarizes the results.

	Test-Retest Reliability										
	Cronbach’s Alpha		Mean (SD)		F		Sig.		ICC	LC	UC
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2			
Action	.93	.93	5.15 (1.50)	5.18 (1.43)	.07	.79	.77	.66	.84		
Communication	.85	.89	4.98 (1.25)	5.01 (1.30)	.05	.82	.62	.45	.73		
BA	.98	.89	5.07 (1.19)	5.10 (1.16)	.08	.77	.71	.58	.80		

Table 18. Test-retest reliability results, Study 7

Discussion

Study 7 showed the generalizability and reliability of the two-dimensional 8-item BA scale with a new sampling. Study 7 established the test-retest reliability of the BA scale as a full model and for each dimension.

Throughout eight studies (Studies 1, 2A, 2B, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), I developed and validated a two-dimensional 8-item BA scale. The following chapter will explore the managerial application of BA.

CHAPTER 5: APPLICABILITY OF BRAND ACTIVISM SCALE

In the previous chapters, I conceptualized BA and created a valid BA scale from a consumers' perspective. This BA scale depicts how brands can effectively involve in activism: action and communication. Given the controversial and divisive nature of BA, the outcomes can be risky, with consumers preferring or opposing brands and spreading either positive or negative information. Indeed, many consumers boycotted Nike when it featured Colin Kaepernick and shared burned Nike products on social media. Hence, brand managers must be cognizant of the implications that will help them carefully consider engaging in BA. Therefore, this dissertation explores the managerial applicability of BA, which can provide valuable information for brand managers to assess the impact of BA on their bottom line.

This chapter explores BA employing four studies (Studies 8A, 8B, 9, and 10) in its nomological network, including consumers' attitudes towards brands, WTP a price premium for an activist brand, and intention to click-through and downstream consequences of those effects. Specifically, Study 8A aims to examine how college students' evaluation may differ towards activist (vs. non-activist) brands. Moreover, this study also explores whether consumers' evaluation differs when primed with the BA definition (vs. no BA definition). Study 8B investigates whether American adults are WTP a price premium for the activist (vs. non-activist) brand and how these effects might change across different gender. Study 9 focuses on the effect of the length of engagement in activist issues (long-term engagement vs. short-term engagement vs. control) on consumers' intention to click-through and whether the effect is driven by consumers' social desirability bias. Study 10 investigates the effectiveness of two dimensions of the BA scale (action and dimension) on WTP price premium. Specifically, it tests the impact

of the brand's action and communication efforts regarding activist issues on WTP a price premium, and the moderation effect of consumers' political orientation. Therefore, the following four studies' findings are beneficial for managers who want to use these variables to measure brand performance and make their brands thrive in this competitive environment.

Study 8A: The Effect of BA on Brand Attitude

Study 8A had two main objectives. Firstly, it examined the effects of BA on consumers' brand evaluation. I predicted that consumers' assessment of the brand would be higher when perceived as an activist brand than a non-activist brand. Secondly, this study aimed to investigate whether priming the consumers with a BA definition would change the proposed effect. Brand attitude refers to a consumers' overall perception of the brand (Mitchell and Olson 1981). From a managerial standpoint, evaluating consumers' perceptions of an activist brand might help brand managers determine whether to initiate or continue participating in controversial issues.

Method

Participants and Design. Study 8A is a one-factor with four-level (activist brand + BA definition vs. activist brand + no BA definition vs. non-activist brand + BA definition vs. non-activist brand + no BA definition) between-subjects design. In exchange for extra course credit, 219 undergraduate students were recruited from a southern university in the US through SONA, an online student subject pool. Six participants were eliminated from the data analysis because one participant failed the

attention check, and five participants failed to provide any brand name, leaving 213 final participants (60.6% women, $M_{age} = 22.18$; $SD_{age} = 4.71$; $Age_{range} = 18-49$). Of 213 undergraduate students, 64.8% were Latino/Hispanic, 54% had a monthly income of less than \$1000, and 56.8% were employed. Using G*Power 3.1 software, a post power analysis revealed that the statistical power ($1 - \beta$) to detect a 0.25 effect size using a one-way ANOVA with four groups on 213 participants was 0.87 and $\alpha = .05$ (Faul et al. 2007).

Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned one of the four conditions. Upon logging into the survey, participants in the “activist brand + BA definition” condition read the following proposed BA definition: “*Brand activism refers to when a brand takes a public stance on controversial issues (e.g., social injustice, social inequality, immigration, LGBTQI, etc.) to raise awareness and promote social movements through its actions and communication efforts by using its platforms with the purpose of societal changes.*” Next, they were asked to write the name of a brand (any type - e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that they think engages with BA and is considered an activist brand. They were also asked to describe the reason(s) they believe that the chosen brand engages in BA and is considered an activist brand.

Participants in the “non-activist brand + BA definition” condition again read the proposed BA definition. Next, they were also asked to write the name of a brand (any type - e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that they believe does not engage with BA and is considered a non-activist brand. They were also asked to describe the reason(s) they believe that the chosen brand does not engage in BA and is considered a non-activist brand.

Participants in the “activist brand + no BA definition” condition did not receive any information about the brand definition; thus, they did not read the proposed BA definition. Next, they were asked to write the name of a brand that they think is an activist brand and explain their reasoning.

Participants in the “non-activist brand + no BA definition” condition also did not receive any brand definition information and did not read the proposed BA definition. Next, they wrote one non-activist brand name and described their reason(s).

Following these brand type questions, all participants answered the proposed 8-item BA scale (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). Next, they answered a one-item manipulation check question (“Did you consider this brand as an activist brand?”) (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). Then, they indicated their responses on the four-item brand attitude questions, modified from Warren et al. (2019) (“My overall impression of the brand is; “1 = bad, 7 = good; 1 = unfavorable, 7 = favorable; 1 = negative, 7 = positive; 1 = dislike, 7 = like”). I also ruled out some alternative explanations, such as brand familiarity (“How familiar are you with the brand?”) and purchase frequency (“How often do you purchase from the brand?”) (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). Finally, they answered basic demographic questions and attention check question (Shamon and Berning 2019) (see Appendix H for the details).

Results

BA Scale. To check participants’ evaluation of activism across activist and non-activist brands, I analyzed the BA scale. I expected participants to evaluate the BA higher in the activist brand condition (both with and without BA definition) compared to the

non-activist brand condition (both with and without BA definition). Additionally, I wanted to explore if consumers' perceptions of BA differed after reading the definition of BA.

First, the 8-item BA scale ($\alpha = .97$) was averaged to create a composite score. Using one-way ANOVA, the results demonstrated a significant main effect of brand type on BA ($F(3, 209) = 108.52, p = .000$). The follow up Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that participants' ratings in the activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 5.72, SD = 1.16$) were not significantly different than the activist brand + BA definition condition ($M = 5.38, SD = 1.07, p = .85$). Moreover, means derived from participants in the non-activist brand + BA definition condition ($M = 2.57, SD = 1.41$) were not significantly different than non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 2.55, SD = 1.20, p = 1.00$). These results demonstrated that when the BA definition was given (vs. not given) to the participants, the pattern of the results was similar. Further, this shows that participants had prior knowledge of what BA is.

Furthermore, as expected, a one-way ANOVA demonstrated that in the activist brand groups (both with definition [$M = 5.38, SD = 1.07$] and no BA definition [$M = 5.72, SD = 1.16$]), participants rated BA scale significantly higher than the non-activist brand groups (both with definition [$M = 2.57, SD = 1.41$] and no BA definition [$M = 2.55, SD = 1.20$]) ($p = .000$).

Brand Attitude (activist vs. non-activist brand). The four-item brand attitude scale was averaged to create a composite score for brand attitude ($\alpha = .97$), which was the key dependent measure in this study. As intended, the results revealed a significant main effect of brand type on brand attitude, as evidenced by a one-way ANOVA ($F(3, 209) =$

15.30 $p = .000$). The follow up post-test using Bonferroni revealed that ratings were higher in the activist brand + BA definition condition ($M = 5.90, SD = 1.42$) compared to non-activist brand + BA definition ($M = 4.99, SD = 1.78, p = .010$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.65, p = .001$).

Likewise, participants in the activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 6.48, SD = .88$) reported higher brand attitude than non-activist brand + BA definition ($p = .000$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition ($p = .000$) conditions.

Brand attitude in the activist brand + BA definition condition was not significantly different from activist brand + no BA definition condition ($p = .239$). Similar patterns were found for the non-activist brand groups: there were no significant differences between non-activist brand + BA definition and non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($p = 1.000$).

The results support my prediction that consumers have a higher brand attitude when perceiving the brand as an activist than a non-activist brand. Moreover, the results were similar when priming participants with the definition of BA. Table 19 summarizes the results.

MEANS (SD)		
	BA Scale (Full)	Brand Attitude
Activist Brand + BA definition	5.38 (1.07)	5.90 (1.42)
Activist Brand + no BA definition	5.72 (1.16)	6.48 (0.88)
Non-Activist Brand + BA definition	2.57 (1.41)	4.99 (1.78)
Non-Activist Brand + no BA definition	2.55 (1.20)	4.81 (1.65)

Table 19. One-way ANOVA results, Study 8A

Content Coding of Brand Activism

To ensure that each participant chooses either an activist or non-activist brand in their given condition, three-independent raters who were unaware of the study's intent coded each explanation that the participants wrote ("0 = definitely an activist brand, 1 = definitely a non-activist brand, 2 = unrelated"). Based on the independent coder's responses, I eliminated 24 participants who did not match their assigned condition. Additionally, as explained at the beginning of the study, six participants were eliminated either they failed the attention check or did not provide a brand name. As a result, I reran the study with a total of 189 participants (59.8% women, $M_{age} = 22.21$; $SD_{age} = 4.79$; $Age_{range} = 18-49$) to make sure that the results still held.

BA Scale

BA Scale (Full Item). The 8-item BA scale ($\alpha = .97$) were averaged to create a composite score. There was a significant main effect of brand type on BA scale ($F(3,185) = 136.05, p = .000$). The follow up Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that participants in the activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 5.69, SD = 1.12$) was not significantly different than activist brand + BA definition condition ($M = 5.43, SD = 1.05, p = .100$); however it was significantly different than non-activist brand + BA definition condition ($M = 2.38, SD = 1.13, p = .000$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 2.36, SD = 1.06, p = .000$). The non-activist brand + BA definition group did not differ statistically than non-activist brand + no BA definition ($p = 1.000$).

BA Scale-Action. I averaged the four-item action score to create an action index ($\alpha = .95$). A one-way ANOVA demonstrated a significantly main effect of brand type on BA

scale action dimension. The follow up Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that activist brand + BA definition group ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 1.17$) was not significantly different than activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.08$, $p = .510$); however it was significantly different than non-activist brand + BA definition condition ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.26$, $p = .000$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.12$, $p = .000$). The non-activist + BA definition group did not differ statistically than non-activist brand + no BA definition ($p = 1.000$). Likewise, participants in the activist brand + no BA definition condition was significantly different than non-activist brand + BA definition condition ($p = .000$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($p = .000$).

BA Scale-Communication. I averaged the four-item communication to create a composite score ($\alpha = .97$). The effect of brand type on BA communication dimension was significant ($F(3,185) = 108.97$, $p = .000$). The follow up Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that participants in the activist brand + BA definition condition ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.09$) was not significantly different than activist brand + no BA definition ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.50$, $p = 1.000$); however it was significantly different than non-activist brand + BA definition ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.21$, $p = .000$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 1.15$, $p = .000$). The non-activist brand + BA definition group did not differ statistically than non-activist brand + no BA definition ($p = 1.000$). Likewise, participants in the activist brand + no BA definition group was significantly different than non-activist brand + BA definition ($p = .000$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition group ($p = .000$).

Brand Attitude (activist vs. non-activist brand). The effect of brand type on brand attitude ($\alpha = .97$) were tested by conducting a one-way ANOVA. As anticipated, the effect of brand type on brand attitude was significant ($F(3,185) = 17.55, p = .000$). The follow up Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that the ratings in the activist brand + BA definition group ($M = 6.03, SD = 1.23$) was significantly higher than non-activist brand + BA definition ($M = 4.97, SD = 1.73, p = .002$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition group ($M = 4.67, SD = 1.68, p = .000$).

Likewise, the attributes were significantly higher in the activist brand + no BA definition ($M = 6.48, SD = .84$) compared to non-activist brand + definition ($p = .000$) and non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($p = .000$). Activist brand + BA definition did not statistically differ in terms of brand attitude compared to the activist brand + no BA definition groups ($p = .693$) and non-activist brand + BA definition did not differ compared to non-activist brand + no BA definition condition ($p = 1.000$) regarding brand attitude. Table 20 summarizes the results from BA scale and brand attitude.

MEANS (SD)				
	BA Scale (Full)	BA Scale-Act	BA Scale-Com	Brand Attitude
Activist Brand + BA definition	5.43 (1.05)	5.47 (1.17)	5.40 (1.09)	6.03 (1.23)
Activist Brand + no BA definition	5.69 (1.12)	5.87 (1.08)	5.51 (1.50)	6.48 (0.84)
Non-Activist Brand + BA definition	2.38 (1.13)	2.65 (1.26)	2.11 (1.21)	4.97 (1.73)
Non-Activist Brand + no BA definition	2.36 (1.06)	2.48 (1.12)	2.23 (1.15)	4.67 (1.68)

Table 20. Final results, Study 8A

Alternative Explanations

I also ran a one-way ANCOVA to control for the familiarity and purchase frequency. The one-way ANCOVA showed that the results still hold, and patterns were the same after controlling for the purchase frequency and brand familiarity ($F(3, 183) = 13.56, p = .000$).

Discussion

This study shows that consumers favorably evaluate the brand when they perceive it as an activist brand than a non-activist brand. Additionally, I wanted to explore if consumers' perception of BA and brand attitude shifted when the BA concept was given to them versus when it was not. This study showed that consumers' evaluation of the BA did not change when they read the BA definition compared to when they did not read it. These findings demonstrated that consumers have a general understanding of BA.

I conducted this study with undergraduate students. However, the following study was conducted with American adults to investigate the impact of BA on consumers' WTP a price premium. Study 8B also aimed to show the moderation effect of gender.

Study 8B: The Effect of BA on WTP a Price Premium

The purpose of Study 8B was twofold: First, it was designed to understand how BA affects consumers' WTP a price premium for the activist brand. This study uses a free-association task to think about the activist brand in general without focusing on a specific issue and the brand. I predict that consumers are more WTP a price premium for an activist than a non-activist brand. Second, it was designed to show the moderation

effect of gender. One of the most important brand equity indicators is how much consumer is WTP a price premium for one brand over another (Aaker 1996). Additionally, gender differences were found in different consumer preferences and consumption contexts, such as luxury brand consumption (Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann 2013), hedonic and impulsive consumption (Tifferet and Herstein 2012), and sustainable consumption (Costa Pinto et al. 2014). Therefore, this research investigates the gender differences in consumers' WTP a price premium to activist (vs. non-activist) brands. It is important for managers to position their pricing strategies based on different product categories (activist vs. non-activist brand) and as well as gender differences.

Method

Participants and Design. Study 8B comprised a 2 (brand type: activist brand vs. non-activist brand) x 2 (gender: male vs. female) between-subjects design. A total of 250 participants were recruited from the Prolific research participant pool for small financial compensation.

Eight respondents did not provide any brand name; eight indicated their gender as other; hence, they were eliminated from the analysis. Therefore, I conducted the analysis with 234 participants (51.3% women, $M_{age} = 33$; $SD_{age} = 11.74$; $Age_{range} = 18-77$). Out of 234 participants, 29.9% reported \$30,000-\$59,999 annual household income, 62.4% were White/Caucasian, 17.9% were Asian, 56.8% were single, 44% indicated their education as other, 23.1% indicated some college education, and 63.7% were employed.

Additionally, none of the participants failed the attention check. The post hoc power analysis results showed that the statistical power ($1 - \beta$) to detect a 0.25 effect size using a

two-way ANOVA with 234 participants was determined to be 0.90 and $\alpha = .05$ (Faul et al. 2007).

Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned one of the two conditions. First, participants read the proposed BA definition and were asked to think of either an activist or a non-activist brand. In the activist brand condition, participants wrote one brand name they think it is associated with activism and described their reason(s) on why the brand is activist. In the non-activist brand condition, participants wrote one non-activist brand name and explained their reason(s).

Next, participants rated the chosen activist vs. non-activist brand on the 8-item proposed BA scale (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). After completing this task, participants answered a one-item manipulation check question that asked them to report whether they thought the brand was an activist or non-activist brand (“Did you consider this brand as an activist brand?”) (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). Immediately after that, participants answered the questions about WTP a price premium that was the key-dependent measure in this study. Specifically, participants indicated their WTP a price premium for the chosen brand on a 2-item 7-point Likert scale adapted from Netemeyer et al. (2004). The items are as follows: “I am willing to pay more for this brand than other brands in the same product category,” “I am willing to pay a higher price for this brand than other brands” (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”) (Netemeyer et al. 2004).

To rule out some alternative explanations, participants answered a one-item brand familiarity question (“How familiar are you with the brand?” [“1 = unfamiliar, 7 =

familiar”]) and a one-item purchase frequency question (“How often do you purchase from the chosen brand?” [“1 = not at all, 7 = very often”]).

In the last part, participants answered demographic questions such as age, gender, annual household income, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and employment. They also answered attention check questions adapted from (Shamon and Berning 2019). Finally, they were thanked for their participation (see Appendix I for details).

Results

Manipulation Check. To confirm whether participants think their chosen brand is either an activist or non-activist brand, I performed a two-way ANOVA. A two-way ANOVA with activist manipulation as the dependent variable and brand type and gender as the predictors yielded a marginally significant main effect of activist manipulation ($F(1, 230) = 3.66, p = .057$). The follow-up simple effect analysis showed that participants in the activist brand condition considered the brand more as an activist brand ($M_{\text{activist}} = 5.44, SD = 1.41$ vs. $M_{\text{non-activist}} = 1.45, SD = .84$), supporting the successful manipulation check. The effects of gender were not significant ($F(1, 230) = 1.94, p = .165$).

BA. The full BA (8 items; $\alpha = .97$) scale, action (4 items; $\alpha = .97$), and communication (4 items; $\alpha = .96$) were averaged to create a composite score. All of them exceed the .70 threshold criteria that support high internal reliability (Hair et al. 2019). Next, I examined the consumer perceptions of BA between activist and non-activist brands using the full BA scale and action and communication dimensions. There was a significant interaction effect of brand type when I performed a two-way ANOVA with

BA (8-items) as the dependent measure and brand type and gender as the predictors ($F(1, 230) = 364.66, p = .000$). In the activist brand condition, participants evaluate the brand more activist ($M_{\text{activist}} = 5.20, SD = 1.26$ vs. $M_{\text{non-activist}} = 2.17, SD = 1.17$). Gender ($F(1, 230) = .89, p = .348$) and brand type x gender ($F(1, 230) = 1.88, p = .172$) were resulted in a non-significant effect.

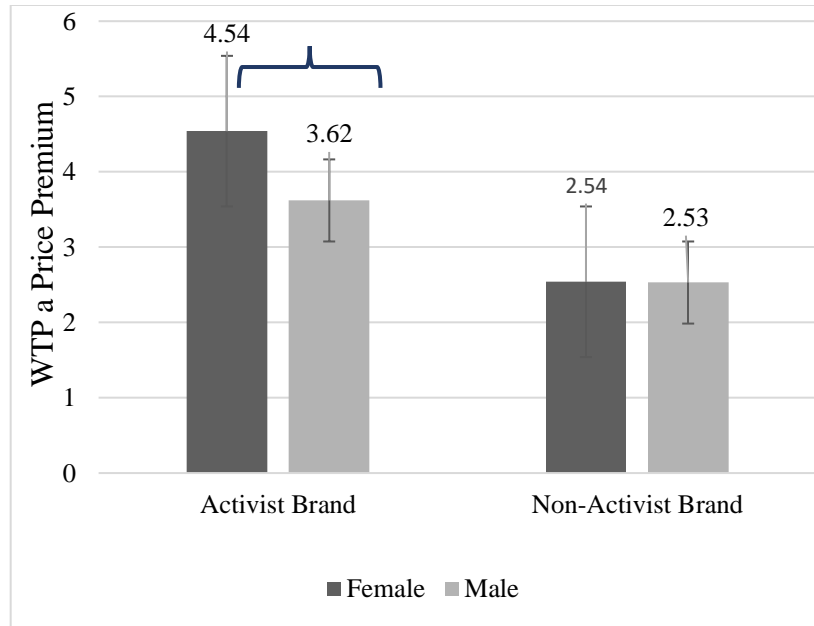
Next, I checked the action dimension. A two-way ANOVA with action as the dependent variable and brand type and gender as the predictors yielded a significant main effect of brand type ($F(1, 230) = 208.52, p = .000$). In the activist brand condition, participants evaluate the brand more activist ($M_{\text{activist}} = 5.07, SD = 1.57$ vs. $M_{\text{non-activist}} = 2.33, SD = 1.33$). Gender ($F(1, 230) = 1.74, p = .188$) and brand type x gender ($F(1, 230) = 2.80, p = .096$) were resulted in a non-significant effect. Likewise, A two-way ANOVA with communication as the dependent variable and brand type and gender as the predictors yielded a significant main effect of brand type ($F(1, 230) = 208.52, p = .000$). Participants in the activist brand condition evaluate the brand more activist ($M_{\text{activist}} = 5.07, SD = 1.57$ vs. $M_{\text{non-activist}} = 2.33, SD = 1.33$). There were no significant differences for gender ($F(1, 230) = 1.74, p = .188$) and brand type x gender ($F(1, 230) = 2.80, p = .096$). Overall, these results suggest that in the activist brand condition, participants evaluated the activist brand higher compared to non-activist brand.

WTP a Price Premium (activist vs. non-activist brand). The two-item WTP a price premium scale was averaged to create the WTP a price premium score ($r = .97$). A two-way ANOVA with WTP a price premium with dependent variable and brand type and gender as predictors yielded a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 230) = 4.23, p = .041$). The main effects of brand type ($F(1, 230) = 48.59, p = .000$) and gender ($F(1, 230)$

= 4.46, $p = .036$) were also significant. As predicted, the follow up simple effect test revealed that females reported higher WTP a price premium in the activist brand condition ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.61$) than non-activist brand condition ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.63$), $F(1,230) = 41.78$, $p = .000$). Males also reported higher WTP a price premium in the activist brand condition ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.92$) than non-activist brand condition ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.59$), $F(1,230) = 11.79$, $p = .001$).

Alternative Explanations. To rule out any alternative explanations, a two-way ANCOVA with income, purchase frequency, and brand familiarity as a covariate on WTP a price premium were performed. The results show similar pattern which revealed a marginally significant interaction effect ($F(1,227) = 3.48$, $p = .063$). The main effects of brand type ($F(1,227) = 53.08$, $p = .000$) and gender ($F(1,227) = 4.07$, $p = .045$) were also significant.

The Moderation Effect of Gender. To test whether gender moderates the effect of brand type on WTP a price premium, a moderation analysis using a PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2018) with 5,000 bootstrap samples were performed. Brand type (0 = activist, 1 = non-activist) as an independent variable, WTP a price premium as a dependent variable, and gender (0 = female, 1 = male) were entered as a moderator. As expected, gender was a significant predictor of the relationship between brand type on WTP a price premium ($\beta = .91$; $SE = .44$; 95% $CI = .04, 1.78$; $p = .041$): consumer's WTP a price premium was stronger for females ($M = 4.54$) than males ($M = 3.62$) for an activist brand. In contrast, both females and males were less WTP for a price premium in the non-activist condition ($M_{female} = 2.54$ vs. $M_{male} = 2.53$). The results from this analysis are shown in Figure 5.



$(\beta = .91; SE = .44; 95\% CI = .04, 1.78; p = .041)$

Figure 5. The moderation effect of gender, Study 8B

Discussion

In Study 8B, I aimed to show that consumers are WTP a price premium when they perceive the brand as an activist (vs. non-activist) brand. Indeed, the results of Study 8B support my predictions that consumers are more WTP a price premium for the activist brand than the non-activist brand. Additionally, the results show that gender moderates the effect of BA on WTP a price premium. Specifically, females are more WTP a price premium for an activist brand than males. However, no significant differences were found for the non-activist brand. Both females and males are less WTP a price premium for a non-activist brand.

In Study 8B, consumers choose the specific brand that they think is either activist or non-activist without specific issues the brand takes a stance on. However, I used

fictitious brands in the following studies (Studies 9 and 10). Participants were assigned specific brands across different controversial issues such as the climate change crisis as well as racial injustice and racial inequality.

Study 9: The Length of Engagement with Activist Issues

Given the increased technology in the modern era, brands have started to use digital communication through social media platforms to engage with their consumers on activist issues (Batista et al. 2022). Click-through is one of the ways to measure consumers' interest in the company as well as a source of profit for companies (Ogbanufe and Kim 2018). Therefore, it is critical to understand consumers' intention to click-through to better engage with the controversial issues and increase customer satisfaction. However, the attractiveness of brand posts on social media to make consumers click-through to their website might depend on several factors such as the length of activist engagement. Study 9 aimed to demonstrate the effect of the length of engagement (long-term vs. short-term vs. control) with activist issues on consumers' intention to click-through. Specifically, this study proposes that consumers' intention to click-through will be higher when the brand engages with activist issues in the long-term as opposed to short-term and the control condition. Study 9 also aims to gauge consumers' social desirability on their responses to activist issues.

Pretest

A pretest was conducted to confirm whether participants consider the brand as an activist (vs. non-activist) brand, the appropriateness of the chosen brand name, the

familiarity of the brand, and whether they equally like the social media post across conditions.

Participants and Design. The pretest for Study 9 comprises a one-factor three-level (the length of activist engagement: long-term vs. short-term vs. control) between-subjects design. A total of 151 participants were recruited from the CloudResearch online research participant pool. Seven participants failed the attention check question and I continued the data analysis with 144 participants (51.4% female; $M_{age} = 40.68$; $SD_{age} = 11.82$; $Age_{range} = 19-80$).

Stimuli and Procedure. Study 8A and Study 8B used real brands to measure consumers' perception and WTP a price premium towards activist brands. Nevertheless, in Study 9 and Study 10, I used a fictitious brand name to rule out any previous notions about the brand. In this pretest and main study (Study 9), I used a fictitious clothing brand named Cloths. The chosen activist issue for this study was the climate change crisis. The length of engagement with activist issues (long-term vs. short-term vs. control) was manipulated within the social media advertisement. Specifically, the brands' long-term and short-term engagement with activist issues were manipulated with the length of engagement, such as over ten years and two months, respectively. Since the brand was not engaging with activism and was considered a non-activist brand in the control condition, participants did not read any information about activism.

Upon logging into the survey, participants were asked to carefully read and think about the social media advertisement from Twitter and answer the questions. In the long-term condition, participants read the following social media post: "Cloths is a clothing brand that provides high-quality and fashionable clothes at a reasonable price. As a

Cloths brand, we have been fighting the climate crisis for over 10 years. We are involved in raising awareness and taking action on environmental issues.

#StrikeForClimateChange 🌍 If you want to learn more about us, click our website: www.cloths.com.”

Participants read the following social media post in the short-term engagement condition: “Cloths is a clothing brand that provides high-quality and fashionable clothes at a reasonable price. As a Cloths brand, we have been fighting the climate crisis for 2 months. We are involved in raising awareness and taking action on environmental issues. #StrikeForClimateChange 🌍 If you want to learn more about us, click our website: www.cloths.com.”

In the control condition, participants read only the information about the brand as follows: “Cloths is a clothing brand that provides high-quality and fashionable clothes at a reasonable price. If you want to learn more about us, click our website: www.cloths.com.” The social media posts are displayed in Figure 6.

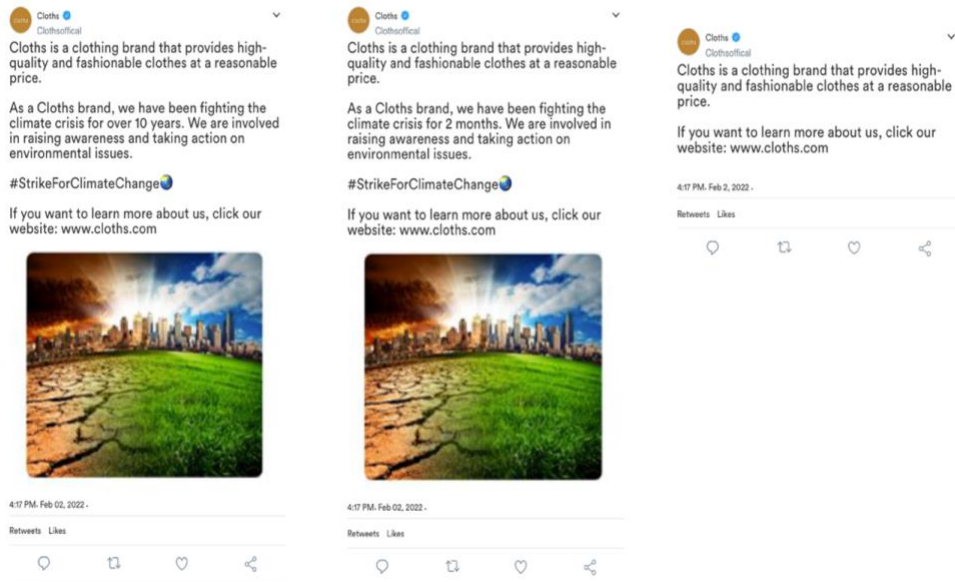


Figure 6. Stimuli, Study 9

After participants viewed the social media post, they answered the manipulation check question (“Would you consider the Cloths brand to be an “activist” brand?” [“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”]). Next, they answered questions on the appropriateness of the brand name (“Do you agree that the brand name “Cloths” is an appropriate name for a clothing company?” [“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”]), liking the social media post (“Do you like this social media post?” [“1 = not like at all, 7 = extremely like”]), and brand familiarity (“How familiar are you with the “Cloths” brand?” [“1 = unfamiliar, 7 = familiar”]). In the end, participants answered demographic questions such as age, gender, annual household income, and ethnicity. Additionally, participants answered the attention check question adapted from Chugani and Irwin (2020) (If you are reading this, please do not answer this question and leave it blank. (“1

= not at all true of me, 2 = slightly true of me, 3 = moderately true of me, 4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me”) (see Appendix J for pretest details).

Pretest Results

Activist Brand Manipulation Check. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of the length of engagement on the activist brand manipulation check ($F(2,141) = 42.45, p = .000$). The follow up Bonferroni post-hoc test found that participants in the long-term activist engagement condition evaluated the brand to be more activist ($M = 5.58, SD = 1.08$) compared to the short-term engagement condition ($M = 4.84, SD = 1.63; p = .034$). Moreover, in the long-term engagement condition, participants also evaluated the brand to be more activist ($M = 5.58, SD = 1.08$) compared to the control condition ($M = 3.00, SD = 1.40; p = .000$). Participants in the short-term condition ($M = 4.84, SD = 1.63$) also evaluated the brand as more activist compared to the control condition ($M = 3.00, SD = 1.40; p = .000$). These results confirmed that manipulation of the activist brand was successful.

Appropriateness of the Brand Name. I performed a one-way ANOVA to compare the appropriateness of the brand name across conditions. As expected, there were no significant differences between long-term engagement ($M = 4.44, SD = 1.66$), short-term engagement ($M = 5.10, SD = 1.55$) and the control condition ($M = 5.02, SD = 1.66; F(2,141) = 2.26, p = .108$) on appropriateness of the brand name. These results indicated that consumers found the brand name appropriate for the clothing company in all three conditions.

Liking the Social Media Post. As expected, a one-way ANOVA showed that there were no significant differences between long-term activist engagement ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.58$), short-term engagement ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.60$) and the control condition ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.18$; $F(2,141) = 2.08$, $p = .129$) on liking the social media post, indicating that consumers similarly liked the social media post across conditions.

Familiarity of the Brand. There were no significant differences between long-term activist engagement ($M = 1.16$, $SD = .37$), short-term activist engagement ($M = 1.25$, $SD = .96$) and the control condition ($M = 1.44$, $SD = 1.13$; $F(2,141) = 1.21$, $p = .300$), based on a one-way ANOVA on brand familiarity, indicating that consumers were not familiar with the Cloths brand across three conditions.

Pretest Discussion. The pretest results suggested that the manipulation check for the activist brand was successfully made. Additionally, the chosen brand name “Cloths” was appropriate for a clothing company, and participants were not familiar with the brand. Finally, I asserted that participants liked the social media post equally across three conditions.

Main Study

Method

Participants and Design. Study 9 is comprised of one factor with three-level (the length of activist engagement: long-term vs. short-term vs. control) between-subjects design. This study is a preregistered study through AsPredicted, a research registration platform. A total of 374 participants were recruited from CloudResearch, an online research subject pool, in exchange for a small payment. Thirteen participants failed the

attention check question; hence, they were eliminated from the analysis following the pre-registration rules. The data analysis was conducted on the responses of 361 participants (54% female; $M_{age} = 40.31$; $SD_{age} = 12.72$; $Age_{range} = 19-83$). The majority of participants (76.2%) were White/Caucasian. Also worth noting, 21.9% of participants indicated their annual household income as \$100,000 and above while 19.7% of participants indicated their income was between \$20,000-\$39,999. A post power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 software (Faul et al. 2007) to determine the effect size. The results showed that the statistical power ($1 - \beta$) to detect a 0.25 effect size using a one-way ANOVA with 361 participants was determined to be 0.992 and $\alpha = .05$.

Stimuli and Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned one of the three conditions. The length of engagement (long-term vs. short-term vs. control) was manipulated within the social media advertisement as explained in the pretest. In the long-term activist engagement condition, participants read the information about the brand and its engagement with activist issues for over ten years. In the short-term activist engagement condition, participants read the information about the brand and its engagement with activist issues for two months. In the control condition, participants only read the information about the brand and did not receive any information about the brand's engagement with activism since the brand is considered as a non-activist brand.

As an activism manipulation check, participants answered the following question on a 1-item 7-point Likert scale ("Would you consider the Cloths brand to be an "activist" brand? [“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”]). Following that, participants answered their intention to click through to the website to receive more information about the company, which was my key dependent measure in this study. I

measured consumers' intention to click-through on a one-item scale, modified from Aguirre et al. (2015) (I would like to click on this brand's website to get further information; "1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree"). Next, participants answered questions about the proposed 8-item BA scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) regarding their level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the Cloths brand. Participants also answered a brand familiarity question ("How familiar are you with the "Cloths" brand?" ["1 = unfamiliar, 7 = very familiar"]) and social media usage habit questions with a 5-item 8-point Likert scale (0 = not one day last week, 7 = every day last week), modified from Dempsey et al. (2019).

I used two items from the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability scale to measure social desirability (Reynolds 1982), which was also used by previous research (Gligor, Newman, and Kashmiri 2021) ("I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way;" "I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget" ["1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree"]). The lower score indicates tendencies of higher social desirability.

Finally, participants answered demographic questions such as age, gender, annual household income, and ethnicity. In the end, they answered the attention check question adapted from Chugani and Irwin (2020) ("If you are reading this, please do not answer this question and leave it blank, 1= not at all true of me, 2 = slightly true of me, 3 = moderately true of me, 4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me") (see Appendix K for study details).

Results

Activist Brand Manipulation Check. As a manipulation check to confirm whether participants perceived the Cloths brand as an activist or non-activist brand in the social media post, I conducted a one-way ANOVA analysis. The results demonstrated a significant main effect of the length of engagement on manipulation check ($F(2,358) = 116.91, p = .000$). I conducted a follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc test and found that participants considered the Cloths brand to be an activist brand in the long-term engagement condition more than the control condition ($M_{long-term} = 5.74, SD = 1.17$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.16, SD = 1.53; p = .000$). Participants also considered the brand as an activist in the short-term condition at higher rates compared to the control condition ($M_{short-term} = 5.33, SD = 1.46$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.16, SD = 1.53; p = .000$). There was also a marginally significant difference between long-term and short-term engagement conditions: participants considered the brand an activist in the long-term condition more than in the short-term ($p = .067$). These results proved that the manipulation check for the brand type was successful.

BA Scale-Action. The four-item action dimension was averaged to create a composite action index ($\alpha = .97$). A one-way ANOVA demonstrated a significant main effect of the length of engagement on BA scale action dimension ($F(2,358) = 92.41, p = .000$). The follow up test demonstrated that participants' means for the action dimension were higher in the long-term engagement ($M_{long-term} = 5.53, SD = 1.11$) compared to the control condition ($M_{control} = 3.49, SD = 1.48, p = .000$). However, there were no significant differences between the long-term and short-term engagement conditions

($M_{short-term} = 5.45$, $SD = 1.30$; $p = 1.000$). As expected, participants reported higher means in the short-term engagement compared to the control condition ($p = .000$).

BA Scale-Communication. The four-item communication dimension was averaged to create a composite communication index ($\alpha = .95$). Similar results were found on consumers' evaluation of the communication dimension. A one-way ANOVA demonstrated a significant main effect of the length of engagement on BA scale communication dimension ($F(2,358) = 75.58$, $p = .000$). Based on the follow-up test results, participants' means for communication dimension were higher in the long-term engagement ($M_{long-term} = 5.12$, $SD = 1.24$) than in the control condition ($M_{control} = 3.12$, $SD = 1.60$, $p = .000$). However, there were no significant differences between the long-term and short-term engagement conditions ($M_{short-term} = 5.05$, $SD = 1.40$; $p = 1.000$). As expected, participants' means were also higher in the short-term engagement compared to the control condition ($p = .000$).

BA Full Scale. The eight-item BA scale was averaged to create a composite BA index ($\alpha = .96$). The results were the same when I analyzed the full BA scale with eight items. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of the length of engagement on BA scale ($F(2,358) = 100.97$, $p = .000$). The follow up test revealed that participants evaluated the brand as more activist in the long-term engagement ($M_{long-term} = 5.33$, $SD = 0.99$) compared to the control condition ($M_{control} = 3.31$, $SD = 1.48$, $p = .000$). However, no significant differences between long-term and short-term conditions ($M_{short-term} = 5.25$, $SD = 1.20$; $p = 1.000$) were found. As expected, the means were also higher in the short-term engagement compared to the control condition ($p = .000$).

Intention to Click- Through. To investigate the effect of the length of activist engagement on consumers' intention to click-through, a one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted. As expected, a significant main effect $F(2,358) = 3.09, p = .047$ was revealed when I conduct a one-way ANOVA analysis. The follow up test results showed that consumers' intention to click-through were marginally higher in the long-term compared to the control condition ($M_{long-term} = 4.36, SD = 1.81, M_{control} = 3.84, SD = 1.67; p = .073$). However, no significant differences between long-term and short-term conditions ($M_{short-term} = 4.30, SD = 1.82; p = 1.000$) as well as between short-term and control conditions ($p = .128$).

I also conducted a one-way ANCOVA analysis using social media usage, brand familiarity, and social desirability measures as covariates to see the impact of the engagement length on consumers' intention to click-through to the website. To create a composite score for the social media usage, five items were averaged ($\alpha = .85$). The two-items social desirability measures were also averaged to create a composite index ($r = .63$). The one-way ANCOVA revealed a significant effect between the length of activist engagement and click-through intention using the covariates ($F(2,355) = 4.62, p = .010$). The follow-up post-hoc test results show that consumers' intention to click-through was higher in the long-term condition than the control ($p = .009$), but it was not different from the short-term condition ($p = .971$). Moreover, consumers' intention to click-through was not different in the short-term condition than in the control condition ($p = .129$).

Alternative Explanations

Social Desirability Bias. To ensure that there were no differences in social desirability across three conditions, I conducted a one-way ANOVA analysis. The results indicated non-significant differences across three conditions ($M_{long-term} = 3.44$, $SD = 1.62$ vs. $M_{short-term} = 3.32$, $SD = 1.58$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.22$, $SD = 1.67$; $F(2,358) = .56$, $p = .574$) and the means of the consumers' social desirability tendencies were in the middle.

Brand Familiarity. A one-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect of the length of engagement on the brand familiarity $F(2,358) = 4.83$, $p = .009$. The follow test revealed that participants were more familiar with the brand in the short-term compared to the long-term condition ($M_{short-term} = 1.58$, $SD = 1.39$ vs. $M_{long-term} = 1.18$, $SD = .54$; $p = .007$). However, there were not any significant differences in terms of the effect of the engagement length on brand familiarity between long term and the control conditions ($M_{control} = 1.34$, $SD = .89$, $p = .708$) as well as between short term and the control conditions ($p = .185$), indicating that consumers were not familiar with the brand across these conditions.

Social Media Usage. A one-way ANOVA on the effect of the engagement length on the composite social media usage score established a non-significant main effect ($F(2,358) = .81$, $p = .446$). These results indicated that consumers' social media usage was similar across three conditions ($M_{long-term} = 3.34$, $SD = 1.82$ vs. $M_{short-term} = 3.43$, $SD = 1.80$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.63$, $SD = 1.79$).

Discussion

In study 9, I aim to show that consumers' intention to click-through differs based on the length of engagement with activist issues (long-term engagement vs. short-term engagement vs. control). I found a significant effect of the engagement length on intention to click-through. Consumers had a marginally higher intention to click-through when the brand had a long-term engagement with activist issues than in the control condition. Contrary to my prediction, consumers' click-through intention surprisingly did not differ when the brand had a long-term or short-term activist engagement as well as between the short term and the control conditions. I also found that consumers' intention to click-through were higher in the long-term engagement condition compared to the control condition when I used the brand familiarity, social media usage, and social desirability as covariates. In the following study (Study 10), I try to see whether consumers' political orientation might influence the perceptions towards activist brands. Additionally, Study 10 aims to provide insights on the effectiveness of brands' activist actions and/or communication on consumers' WTP a price premium.

Study 10: The Effect of Action and Communication Activities on WTP a Price

Premium

Study 10 aims to show each BA dimension (action and communication) on WTP a price premium for the brand. I predict that consumers will have a stronger WTP a price premium when the brand has high (vs. low) activist action regardless of high or low activist communication.

This study aims to demonstrate the most effective way brands can engage in activism is by both taking action and communicating their messages to consumers. If brands make equal efforts to communicate and take action, consumers are more likely to believe their activism; otherwise, it may create an inconsistency (Vredenburg et al. 2020; Wren 2020). As a result, these activist activities can be seen as a woke-washing (Vredenburg et al. 2020; Wren 2020). Specifically, in this study, I expect that the brands' activist actions lead consumers to WTP a price premium irrespective of their communication efforts. If the brand has low action and high communication, WTP a price premium will be the lowest. Additionally, this study demonstrates the moderation effect of political orientation.

Pretest

Before the main study, a pretest was conducted to confirm the appropriateness of the chosen brand name, whether they considered the brand as an activist brand, and whether the scenario reflects the activist action and/or communication messages.

Participants and Design. The pretest for Study 10 is designed as a 2 (action: high vs. low) x 2 (communication: high vs. low) between-subjects design. I recruited 161 participants from CloudResearch, an online participant recruitment pool, in exchange for a small monetary payment. Two participants failed the attention check; thus, they were eliminated from further data analysis (Final N = 159, 56% women, $M_{age} = 37.75$; $SD_{age} = 11.26$; $Age_{range} = 20-70$).

Stimuli and Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned one of the four conditions. Within the fictitious brand scenarios, I manipulated action and

communication messages. The chosen issue for this study was racial injustice and inequality since various companies, including Nike and Ben & Jerry's, have begun engaging these issues over the past few years. Thus, from a managerial perspective, it is crucial for brands to know how to effectively engage with racial injustice and inequality issues to create the most meaningful changes in society.

Upon logging into the survey, all participants were presented the same picture of the chocolate brand and were asked to carefully read the brand advertisement (see Figure 7 for the brand stimuli).



Figure 7. Stimuli, Study 10

Following the brand advertisement, participants read about the brand information for at least 30 seconds and answer the following questions based on the brand. The communication and action manipulation were made in the scenario. In the high action and high communication condition, participants read the following scenario: “The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the

brand Chocolan exhibits high engagement in prosocial corporate practice and high activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. At Chocolan, they also promote and communicate their activist messages through several platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by both **TAKING ACTION** and **COMMUNICATING** their messages to the public for the betterment of our global society. For instance, the Chocolan brand posted the following message on social media: At Chocolan, we believe that the human race deserves to live in a better world where all are welcome and accepted. **WE MUST END RACIAL INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY. #STOPRACISM #STOPINEQUALITY #STOPINJUSTICE”**

In the high action and low communication condition, participants read the following scenario: “The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits high engagement in prosocial corporate practice and low activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. However, at Chocolan, they do not promote and communicate their activist messages through platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to

fighting it by only TAKING ACTION but not COMMUNICATING their messages to the public for the betterment of our global society.”

In the low action and high communication condition, participants read the following scenario: “The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits low engagement in prosocial corporate practice and high activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they do not put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. However, at Chocolan, they promote and communicate their activist messages through several platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by only COMMUNICATING their messages to the public but not TAKING ACTION for the betterment of our global society. For instance, the Chocolan brand posted the following on social media: At Chocolan, we believe that the human race deserves to live in a better world where all are welcome and accepted. WE MUST END RACIAL INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY. #STOPRACISM #STOPINEQUALITY #STOPINJUSTICE”

In the low action and low communication condition, participants read the following scenario: “The brand Chocolan has not addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism so far. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits low engagement in prosocial corporate practice and low activist marketing messaging.”

Following the brand type manipulation, participants completed the questions about the appropriateness of the brand name (“Do you agree that the brand name

“Chocolan” is an appropriate name for a chocolate company” [“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”]), manipulation check for the activist brand (“Would you consider the Chocolan brand to be an “activist” brand? [“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”]), evaluation of activist actions (“How likely are you to agree that the Chocolan brand is taking action on activist issues? [“1 = not likely at all, 7 = extremely likely”]), and evaluation of activist communication messages (“How likely are you to agree that the Chocolan brand is communicating activist messages? [“1 = not likely at all, 7 = extremely likely”]). Participants also completed a brand familiarity question (“How familiar are you with the brand” [“1 = unfamiliar, 7 = familiar”]). Additionally, participants completed demographics questions related to age, gender, and attention check (adapted from Chugani and Irwin 2020) and were thanked for participating in the study (see Appendix L for pretest details).

Pretest Results

Appropriateness of the Brand Name. A two-way ANOVA with appropriateness of the brand name as the dependent variable and action and communication as predictors was performed. As expected, no significant interaction effect of action and communication on appropriateness of the brand name were found ($F(1,155) = .01, p = .934$). The main effect of action ($F(1,155) = .17, p = .682$) was not significant. Conversely, the main effect of communication was significant ($F(1,155) = 5.46, p = .021$). These results indicate that consumers found the brand name appropriate across four conditions.

Manipulation Check for Activist Brand. A two-way ANOVA with activist brand manipulation check as the dependent variable and action and communication as predictors resulted in a non-significant interaction effect ($F(1,155) = 1.75, p = .188$). The main effects of action ($F(1,155) = 102.99, p = .000$) and communication ($F(1,155) = 43.87, p = .000$) were significant. A follow up simple effect test revealed that when the Chocolan brand has high communication, participants are more likely to consider it to be an activist brand when the brand has high (vs. low) action ($M_{highact} = 5.93, SD = 1.35$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 3.77; SD = 1.80; F(1,155) = 39.68, p = .000$). When the brand has low communication, participants are more likely to consider it to be an activist when the brand has high (vs. low) action ($M_{highact} = 4.63, SD = 1.70$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 1.83, SD = 1.28; F(1,155) = 64.60, p = .000$). These results proved that activist brand manipulation was successful.

Evaluation of Activist Action. A two-way ANOVA with taking action as the dependent variable and action and communication as predictors resulted in a significant interaction effect ($F(1,155) = 7.31, p = .008$). The main effects of action ($F(1,155) = 114.45, p = .000$) and communication ($F(1,155) = 25.01, p = .000$) were also significant. A follow up simple effect test revealed that when the brand has high activist action, participants' evaluation did not differ regardless of communication ($M_{highcom} = 5.79, SD = 1.46$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 5.18, SD = 1.66; F(1,155) = 2.65, p = .105$). When the brand has low activist action, participants' evaluation of activist actions were higher when the brand has high (vs. low) activist communication ($M_{highcom} = 3.69, SD = 2.18$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 1.68, SD = 1.16; F(1,155) = 29.53, p = .000$).

Evaluation of Communication Messages. A two-way ANOVA with an evaluation of communication messages as the dependent variable and action and communication as predictors concluded a non-significant interaction effect ($F(1,155) = 2.54, p = .113$). The main effects of action ($F(1,155) = 6.04, p = .015$) and communication ($F(1,155) = 219.15, p = .000$) were significant. When the brand has high activist communication, participants' evaluation did not differ regardless of its activist actions ($M_{highact} = 5.69, SD = 1.47$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 5.49; SD = 1.45; F(1,155) = .38, p = .539$). When the brand has low activist communication, participants' evaluation of communication messages was stronger when the brand has high (vs. low) action ($M_{highact} = 2.58, SD = 1.84$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 1.63, SD = 1.10; F(1,155) = 8.05, p = .005$).

Brand Familiarity. A two-way ANOVA with brand familiarity as the dependent variable and action and communication as predictors revealed a non-significant interaction effect ($F(1,155) = .12, p = .734$). Likewise, the main effects of action ($F(1,155) = 1.99, p = .161$) and communication ($F(1,155) = .02, p = .900$) were also non-significant. In general, brand familiarity was low in all conditions ($M_{highact-highcom} = 1.29; M_{highact-lowcom} = 1.24, M_{lowact-highcom} = 1.10, and M_{lowact-lowcom} = 1.13$), indicating that consumers were not familiar with the Chocolan brand.

Pretest Discussion

The results from the pretest demonstrated that the Chocolan brand name was a suitable name for a chocolate company. Manipulation of the activist versus not activist brand was successful across four conditions. Additionally, consumers' evaluation of activist action and communication within the scenario was clear. Finally, consumers were

not familiar with the Chocolan brand. Consequently, I used the pretested brand name and scenario in the following Study 10.

Main Study

Method

Participants and Design. Study 10 is comprised of a 2 (action: high vs. low) x 2 (communication: high vs. low) x 2 (political orientation: continuous) between-subjects design. This study was preregistered with AsPredicted, a research registration software. A total of 615 participants were recruited from CloudResearch, the online research participant recruitment pool, in exchange for a small payment. Following the exclusion criteria outlined in preregistration, I eliminated 18 participants due to their failure of the attention check question, resulting in 597 final responses for analysis (59.1% women, $M_{age} = 37.57$; $SD_{age} = 11.95$; $Age_{range} = 18-83$). Out of 597 participants, 20.4% indicated their annual household income ranged between \$60,000-\$79,999, 20.1% indicated \$20,000-\$39,999 and 19.8% indicated \$40,000-\$59,999. In terms of their ethnicity, most participants (72.5%) were White/Caucasian, and 10.7% were African-American. Additionally, 44.2% of participants were married and 38% were single. In regard to their education, 37.4% had a bachelor's degree as the highest level of education while 24.6% had only completed some college. Finally, 71.2% of participants were employed.

After gathering the results, I conducted a post hoc power analysis using G*Power 3.1 software (Faul et al. 2007). The results showed that the statistical power ($1 - \beta$) to detect a 0.25 effect size using a 2x2x2 with 597 participants was determined to be 0.996 and $\alpha = .05$.

Stimuli and Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned one of the four conditions. I used the pretested scenarios in this study as explained in the pretest section. Participants were presented the same picture of the chocolate brand after accessing the survey, and were asked to carefully read the brand advertisement, as explained in the pretest section.

After seeing the brand advertisement, participants were asked to read about the brand information for at least 30 seconds and answer the following questions. The communication and action manipulations were made within the scenarios, as explained in the pretest section. Across all four conditions, participants read their assigned scenarios with varying activist action and communication manipulations.

Next, participants answered the activist brand manipulation check question on a 7-point Likert scale (“Would you consider the Chocolan brand to be an “activist” brand?” [“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”]). Right after, participants completed a two-item WTP a price premium measure, anchored by a 7-point Likert scale which was the key-dependent measure in this study (“I am willing to pay more for this “Chocolan” brand than other brands in the same product category;” “I am willing to pay a higher price for this “Chocolan” brand than other brands” [“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”]); modified from (Netemeyer et al. 2004). Then, participants rated the Chocolan brand based on the proposed 8-item BA scale (“1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree”). To rule out alternative explanations, they completed a one-item brand familiarity (“How familiar are you with the brand?” [“1 = unfamiliar, 7 = familiar”]) and a one-item purchase frequency of chocolate products (“How often do you purchase chocolate products” [“1 = not at all, 7 = very often”]) questions.

Finally, participants completed demographic questions including age, gender, annual household income, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and employment status. They also answered the political orientation question (“What is your political orientation?” [“1 = very liberal, 7 = very conservative”]). In the end, they answered the attention check question adapted from Chugani and Irwin (2020) (“If you are reading this, please do not answer this question and leave it blank;” [“1 = not at all true of me, 2 = slightly true of me, 3 = moderately true of me, 4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me”]) (see Appendix M for study details).

Results

Manipulation Check. To confirm whether participants consider the brand as an activist brand, I conducted a two-way ANOVA with activist brand manipulation as the dependent variable and action and communication as the predictors. This two-way ANOVA supported my prediction that there was a significant interaction effect ($F(1,593) = 41.12, p = .000$). A follow up simple effect test revealed that when the brand has high activist communication, participants considered the brand more activist in instances where brand action is high (vs. low) ($M_{highact} = 6.04, SD = 1.21$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 4.36, SD = 1.66; F(1,593) = 105.75, p = .000$). Similarly, when the brand has low activist communication, participants considered the brand more activist in cases where the brand has high (vs. low) action ($M_{highact} = 4.76, SD = 1.54$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 1.60, SD = 1.15; F(1,593) = 383.26, p = .000$). The main effects of action ($F(1,593) = 443.71, p = .000$) and communication ($F(1,593) = 308.06, p = .000$) were also significant.

The manipulation check results indicated that manipulation of the activist brand was successful across conditions.

BA Scale-Action. The four-item action dimension was averaged to create a composite action index ($\alpha = .94$). A two-way ANOVA with BA action dimension as the dependent variable and activist action and activist communication messages as predictors produced a significant interaction effect ($F(1,593) = 34.84, p = .000$). After conducting a follow-up simple effect test, I found that when the brand has high activist action, participants' evaluations of the action scale dimension were higher when the brand has high (vs. low) activist communication messages ($M_{highcom} = 5.58, SD = 1.49$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 4.72, SD = 1.45; F(1,593) = 26.16, p = .000$). When the brand has low activist action, participants' evaluations of the action dimension were stronger when the brand has high (vs. low) activist communication messages ($M_{highcom} = 4.34, SD = 1.54$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 2.06, SD = 1.36; F(1,593) = 181.59, p = .000$). The main effects of activist action ($F(1,593) = 264.20, p = .000$) and activist communication ($F(1,593) = 172.68, p = .000$) were also significant.

BA Scale-Communication. The four-item communication dimension was averaged to create a composite action score ($\alpha = .97$). A two-way ANOVA with communication dimension as the dependent variable and activist action and communication messages as predictors yielded a nonsignificant interaction effect ($F(1,593) = 1.55, p = .214$). A follow up simple effect test revealed that when the brand has high activist communication, evaluations of the communication dimension were higher if the brand has high (vs. low) activist action ($M_{highact} = 5.84, SD = 1.03$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 5.29, SD = 1.16; F(1,593) = 13.80, p = .000$). However, when the brand has low activist communication,

evaluations were higher if the brand has high (vs. low) activist action ($M_{highact} = 2.45$, $SD = 1.64$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 1.64$, $SD = 1.13$; $F(1,593) = 30.74$, $p = .000$). The main effects of action ($F(1,593) = 42.74$, $p = .000$) and communication ($F(1,593) = 1157.90$, $p = .000$) were also significant.

BA Scale-Full Item. The eight-item BA scale was averaged to create a composite BA index ($\alpha = .94$). A two-way ANOVA with BA full scale as the dependent variable and activist action and communication as predictors yielded a nonsignificant interaction effect ($F(1,593) = 18.97$, $p = .000$). A follow up simple effect test revealed that when the brand has high activist communication, evaluations of the BA scale were stronger for those brands that have high (vs. low) activist action ($M_{highact} = 5.71$, $SD = 1.16$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 4.82$, $SD = 1.12$; $F(1,593) = 42.77$, $p = .000$). When the brand has low activist communication, participants' evaluations were stronger for the high (vs. low) activist action brands ($M_{highact} = 3.58$, $SD = 1.22$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 1.85$, $SD = 1.19$; $F(1,593) = 164.99$, $p = .000$). The main effects of action ($F(1,593) = 186.95$, $p = .000$) and communication ($F(1,593) = 706.51$, $p = .000$) were also significant.

WTP a Price Premium. The two-items WTP a price premium scale were averaged to create a WTP a price premium index ($r = .98$). The effects of the brand activist action and communication on consumer's WTP a price premium were tested by a two-way ANOVA. Using WTP a price premium as the dependent variable and action and communication as predictors yielded a significant main effect of action ($F(1,593) = 13.57$, $p = .000$). As expected, the main effects of communication ($F(1,593) = 1.41$, $p = .235$) and action x communication ($F(1,593) = 2.43$, $p = .120$) were non-significant.

Unsurprisingly, a follow up simple effect test revealed that when the brand has low activist communication, consumers' WTP a price premium did not differ and were both high regardless of action efforts (high vs. low) ($M_{highact} = 3.51$, $SD = 1.80$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 3.20$, $SD = 1.66$; $F(1,593) = 2.29$, $p = .130$). However, as predicted, in the high communication condition, consumers reported higher WTP a price premium when the brand has high (vs. low) action ($M_{highact} = 3.56$, $SD = 2.02$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 2.80$, $SD = 1.64$; $F(1,593) = 13.54$, $p = 000$). The results are shown in Figure 8.

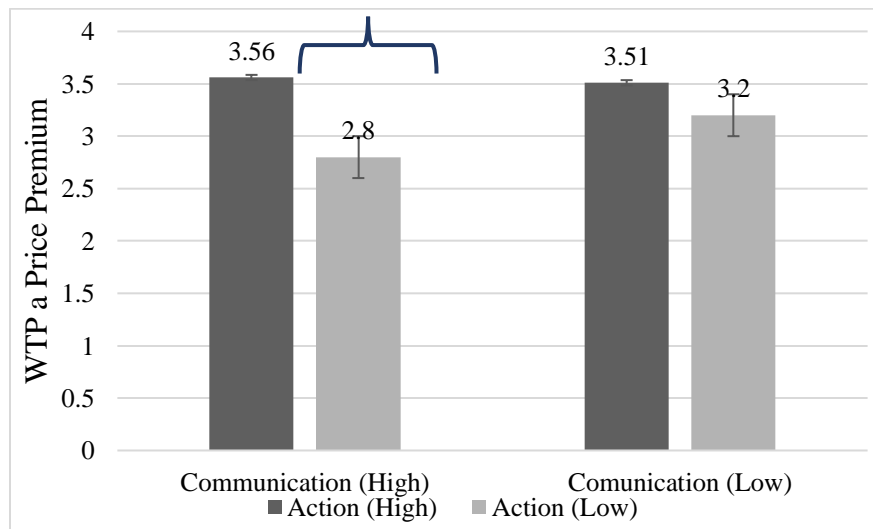


Figure 8. The effects of brand's activist action and communication on WTP a price premium, Study 10

Alternative Explanations

I conducted a two-way ANCOVA on WTP a price premium by controlling for the brand familiarity, purchase frequency, and income as covariates to rule out any alternative explanations. The interaction effect of action and communication ($F(1,590) = 3.18$, $p = .075$) and the main effect of communication ($F(1,590) = 1.80$, $p = .180$) were

not significant. However, the main effect of action was significant ($F(1,590) = 15.89, p = .000$). As expected, a follow up simple effect test revealed that when the brand has low activist communication, consumers' WTP a price premium did not differ and were both high regardless of brands' action efforts (high vs. low) ($M_{highact} = 3.51, SD = 1.80$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 3.20, SD = 1.66; F(1,593) = 2.47, p = .117$). However, as predicted, in the high communication condition, consumers reported higher WTP a price premium when the brand has high (vs. low) action ($M_{highact} = 3.56, SD = 2.02$ vs. $M_{lowact} = 2.80, SD = 1.64; F(1,593) = 16.33, p = .000$). As predicted, the results had the same pattern of the effect after controlling for these three variables.

The Moderation Effect of Political Orientation

To test whether or not the effect of brand type on WTP a price premium is moderated by political orientation, I conducted a moderation analysis using a PROCESS model 3 (Hayes 2018) with 5,000 bootstrap samples. The political orientation (continuous measure; 1 = very liberal, 7 = very conservative) was mean-centered prior to analysis. WTP a price premium (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) as the dependent variable, communication (0 = low, 1 = high) as the independent variable, action (0 = low, 1 = high) and political orientation as moderators were entered. The interaction effect between action and political orientation (measured) was significant for the WTP a price premium ($\beta = -.7714, SE = .1146; 95\% CI = -.9965, -.5464; p = .000$). The interaction effect between activist communication and political orientation was also significant for the WTP a price premium ($\beta = -.5263, SE = .1123; 95\% CI = -.7469, -.3057; p = .000$). The interaction effect between activist action and activist

communication was not significant ($\beta = .4989$, $SE = .2755$; 95% CI = $-.0421, 1.0399$; $p = .071$).

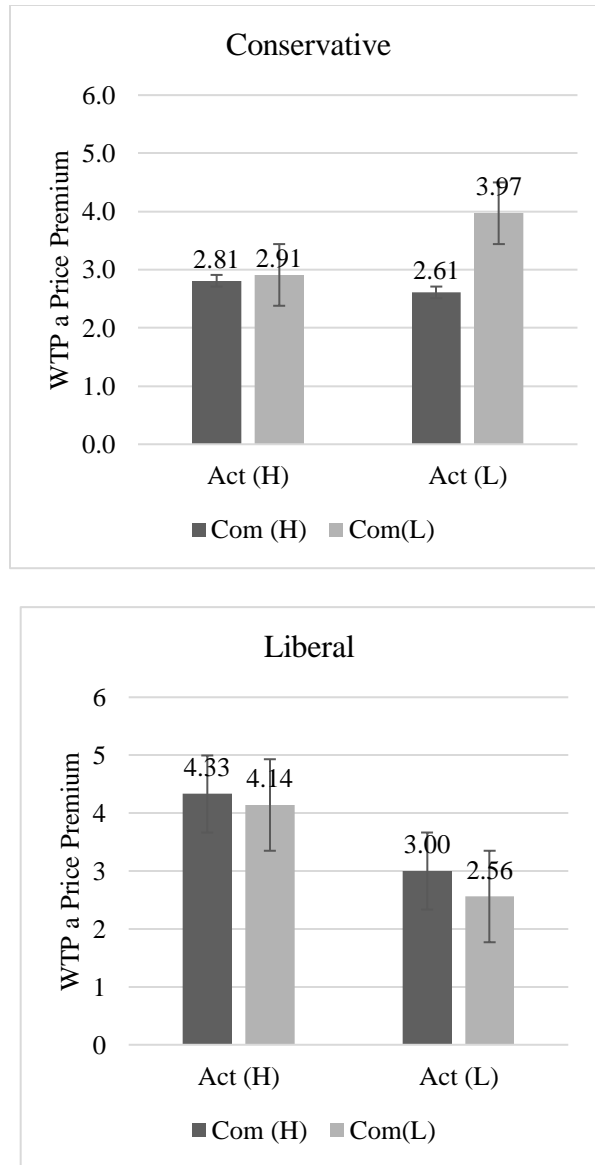
As predicted, the three-way interaction between communication and political orientation was significant for the WTP a price premium ($\beta = .4416$; $SE = .1616$; 95% CI = $.1242, .7590$; $p = .007$). Specifically, as expected, no significant differences were found between the interaction of action and communication for liberal consumers ($p = .511$). Liberal consumers, when the brand had high activist action, had a higher WTP a price premium regardless of the activist communication messages ($M_{highcom} = 4.33$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 4.14$). However, when the brand had low activist action, liberal consumers had a lower WTP a price premium regardless of the activist communication messages ($M_{highcom} = 3.00$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 2.56$). These findings suggest that liberal consumers indicate a higher WTP a price premium for brands with high action and high communication than those brands who are not acting on activist issues and only communicating their messages. Additionally, liberal consumers convey a higher WTP a price premium for brands that address sociopolitical issues by taking action and communicating their messages to society rather than brands which do not address any sociopolitical issues.

In contrast, the interaction between action and communication was significant for the conservatives ($p = .001$). When the brand had high activist action, conservative consumers indicated a lower WTP a price premium regardless of the communication ($M_{highcom} = 2.81$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 2.91$). On the other hand, when the brand had low activist action, conservative consumers indicated a higher WTP a price premium when the company had low communication ($M_{highcom} = 3.97$ vs. $M_{lowcom} = 2.61$). These findings suggest that conservative consumers express a higher WTP a price premium for

brands that do not address sociopolitical issues than brands actively engaging with activist action and communication. Table 21 and Figure 9 show the results.

	WTP a Price Premium						WTP a Price Premium					
	Coeff.	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Coeff.	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Act (X)	0.27	0.19	1.38	0.17	-0.11	0.65	0.28	0.19	1.46	0.15	-0.1	0.65
Com(W)	-0.45	0.19	-2.33	0.02	-0.84	-0.07	-0.5	0.19	-2.61	0.01	-0.87	-0.12
Act x Com	0.5	0.28	1.81	0.07	-0.04	1.04	0.56	0.27	2.06	0.04	0.02	1.09
Political Orientation	0.41	0.08	5.41	0.00	0.26	0.56	0.36	0.08	4.86	0.00	0.22	0.51
Act x Political Orientation	-0.77	0.11	-6.73	0.00	-1.00	-0.55	-0.74	0.11	-6.55	0.00	-0.96	-0.52
Com x Political Orientation	-0.53	0.11	-4.69	0.00	-0.75	-0.31	-0.44	0.11	-3.98	0.00	-0.66	-0.22
Act x Com x Political Orientation	0.44	0.16	2.73	0.01	0.12	0.76	0.35	0.16	2.17	0.03	0.03	0.66
<i>Covariates</i>												
Familiarity							0.4	0.08	5.07	0.00	0.25	0.56
Purchase Frequency							0.07	0.04	1.79	0.07	-0.01	0.15
Income							-0.01	0.04	-0.27	0.79	-0.09	0.07
Constant	3.26	0.14	23.93	.0000*	2.99	3.53	2.47	0.27	9.09	0.00	1.94	3.01
Model Summary	R² = .15 F(7,589) = 14.30; p = .0000*						R² = .19 F(10,586) = 13.53; p = .0000					

Table 21. Moderation results, Study 10



Liberal Political Orientation (-1.7126): $F(1, 589) = 0.43, p = .51$
 Conservative Political Orientation (1.7126): $F(1, 589) = 10.38, p = .00$

Figure 9. The moderation effect of political orientation, Study 10

Discussion

Study 10 explores the effect of a brands' action and communication efforts regarding activist issues on WTP a price premium. This study found that when BA efforts

involve high action regardless of communication, consumers' WTP a price premium was higher compared to other groups. As expected, this study also demonstrated that the low action and high communication lead to the lowest WTP a price premium among consumers. Furthermore, this study showed the boundary conditions of the proposed effects. More liberal consumers have higher tendencies to pay a price premium when the brand has high action and high communication. However, conservative consumers have higher tendencies to pay a price premium when the brand has low action and low communication, which is indicative of a non-activist brand.

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Branding has been one of the most studied fields among scholars (Keller and Lehmann 2006). The brand is considered the most critical, intangible facet of a company. Therefore, it is critical to understand consumers' thoughts and responses to various brands (Keller 2020). In today's social and political environment, the nature of interactions between consumers and brands has continuously changed. Consumers expect companies to have values that can establish a connection with them. Hence, brands are becoming more purpose- and value-driven. In the past, companies may have been hesitant to engage in BA out of fear of alienating and losing consumers due to conflicting viewpoints (Key et al. 2021; Vredenburg et al. 2018). Brands mostly stay silent and do not risk losing any customers (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt 2019).

Even though brands have started engaging in sociopolitical issues in recent years, scientific proof has not been acquired about how to effectively engage with BA in marketing literature. As of yet, there is no scale to measure BA. Therefore, this dissertation's purpose is to create a BA scale from a consumer's perspective. The second purpose of the study is to explore the marketing applicability of BA in different consumption contexts and test consumers' perceptions of BA. As a result, this research offers significant theoretical, managerial, and public policy implications.

This dissertation uses a mixed-method approach by conducting qualitative and quantitative research across twelve studies. To create the scale items and to test their validity, eight qualitative and quantitative studies were completed (Study 1, 2A, 2B, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). In Study 1, a marketing expert, marketing professors, and consumers were interviewed as a part of an exploratory study to grasp the concept of BA. In Studies 2A and 2B, the qualitative studies were conducted with undergraduate students and adult

consumers. The first three studies aimed to examine consumers' perceptions of BA in order to define it and to create the initial scale items. Study 3 sought the refinement of the scale by expert judges. The expert judges rated each item based on the representativeness of the BA construct. The purpose of Study 4 was the first purification of the scale items. In Study 4, the initial scale was reduced to a shorter form comprising eight items divided into two groups (Action and Communication). Study 5 aimed to replicate the results of Study 4 on the new sample. Study 6 aimed to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of the scale. Finally, Study 7 aimed to examine the test-retest reliability of the scale by comparing the same participants' responses at two different times.

The second part of the dissertation focuses on BA's applicability in various consumption contexts. Four quantitative studies were conducted to test the consumers' perceptions of BA. Study 8A examined the consumer perception of BA with college students. Moreover, this study showed that the results were hold when priming consumers with a definition for BA. Study 8B examined the effect of activist vs. non-activist brands on WTP a price premium. This study also demonstrated the moderation effect of gender. Study 9 investigated the effect of BA in a different consumption context: intention to click-through. Specifically, I tested the effect of the length of engagement with activist issues (long-term vs. short-term vs. control) on consumers' intention to click-through. Additionally, Study 9 also revealed that the results are not affected by consumers' social desirability tendencies. Finally, Study 10 explored the impact of the brands' activist action and communication efforts on consumers' WTP a price premium as well as the moderation effect of political orientation.

Theoretical Contributions

Considering the abundant examples of BA in the marketplace in recent years, prior marketing literature has not given enough attention to the effect of activism in the branding context. Therefore, this dissertation offers three main theoretical contributions. First, previous research in the activism area mostly focused on an individual level. Therefore, this dissertation offers an extension to the activism literature (Bayat 2005; Boehnke and Wong 2011; Den Hond and Bakker 2007; Klar and Kasser 2009; Vestergren et al. 2019) by defining BA and developing a measurement tool. Since BA is a relatively new construct, this conceptualization contributes to the BA literature.

Secondly, this dissertation makes a significant theoretical contribution by developing and validating a BA scale. Scholars highlight the importance of a BA scale in the marketing literature (Eilert and Cherup 2020). This dissertation creates a BA scale based on the perceptions of consumers. This dissertation conceptualizes BA and offers an 8-item, 2-dimensional scale (Action and Communication). To the best of my knowledge, this BA scale is the first valid and reliable BA scale. Therefore, creating and validating a BA scale will help further understand the construct and measure BA in future research.

Third, the recent *Journal of Consumer Research Curation* calls for research on BA and consumers' responses to brands' political stances (Keller 2020). Thus, this dissertation seeks to answer this recent call to discover the effect of BA on consumers' perceptions. Additionally, this BA scale offers a general measurement without focusing on specific controversial issues (e.g., inequality, social justice, immigration, or LGBTQI issues). This gives future research the flexibility to use this BA scale to focus on any issues. This scale measures how brands can effectively engage in BA and be considered

activist brands. Developing such a valuable tool to measure the perception of BA offers a significant contribution to branding literature.

Practical Implications

This research offers both significant managerial and public policy implications. Given that BA is a popular topic, in recent years, brands have started to promote social movements and have begun to take a stance on polarizing controversial issues such as racial inequality, gay marriage, health care reform, abortion, and immigration (Dodd and Supa 2014; Korschun et al. 2019; Moorman 2020; Vredenburg et al. 2020). On the other hand, reactions to BA may differ among different consumers and company-related circumstances. Therefore, some companies have abstained from taking a stand, while others are more willing to voice their opinions on sociopolitical issues. Since BA creates more dividing opinions among people, there is a greater need to understand how to effectively engage in BA.

Hence, this dissertation examines consumers' perception of the activist brand. Specifically, it investigates the effect of BA in various consumers' perceptions and consumption-related contexts such as brand attitude, WTP a premium price, and intention to click-through. This dissertation also shows when and under what conditions BA may be perceived as favorably or unfavorably. For instance, it shows the effect of gender and consumers' political ideology on their evaluation of activist vs. non-activist brands.

This research can help brand managers to understand under what conditions to engage with sociopolitical issues. Manager of the companies can generate their campaigns and advertisements related to activism on a variety of channels, adjusting

them to meet the demands of various consumers. With increased digital marketing communication and social media, consumer-brand engagement has become even more critical. For instance, this dissertation offers an understanding of consumers' online communication behaviors, such as intention to click-through to the company's website.

This research offers not only valuable managerial implications but also significant public policy implications. Activism literature has demonstrated that engaging in activist behaviors increases human wellbeing (Boehnke and Wong 2011; Foster 2015; Klar and Kasser 2009). For instance, people from a minority group and those who suffer from racial inequality or social injustice can feel support from society, leading to increased life satisfaction and wellbeing.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Limitations

Despite the fact that this dissertation provides important theoretical and methodological contributions, it still has limitations that should be investigated in future research. Particularly, the BA scale's generalizability can be tested in various countries and cultures. Even though this dissertation offers a variety of demographics, such as young Hispanic and American adult consumers, the studies were generally performed on US consumers. Future research can validate the results in different countries.

The current scale was also developed to measure BA at a general level. Therefore, future research may develop the scale based on different issues, such as social injustice, LGBTQI equality, racism, or climate change. Additionally, in this dissertation, I focused on more progressive issues such as social injustice, racial inequality, and climate change.

Future research may test the effect of brand activism on consumers' perception of more regressive issues such as gun control or abortion.

Additionally, Study 8A explores whether priming consumers with a BA definition would change their perceptions of activist vs. non-activist brands. However, this study was performed with undergraduate students. Given that this study was conducted with a young population, they may have already had enough knowledge on BA and may not have needed to be primed. However, I did not conduct this study with older participants, who might not had enough knowledge on either branding or activist brands. That said, future research may test the priming effect with an older population recruited from an online research participant pool (e.g., CloudResearch or Prolific). Additionally, in Study 8A and Study 8B, participants were not given a specific brand, and they chose the activist and non-activist brands they would evaluate. This might have created a bias that consumers might already choose a brand they like. However, to address this concern, I used fictitious brands in Study 9 and Study 10.

Furthermore, in this dissertation, most of the studies were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the behavioral lab was not available, and all the studies were conducted online, either using online subject recruitment pools such as CloudResearch, Prolific, or SONA. Participants can join the study in any location and under any condition, unlike in the behavioral lab, which might affect their responses. Moreover, conducting a field study was impossible during the pandemic. Thus, future research should focus on conducting a field study.

Future Research

Future research can investigate the attitude toward BA in different product categories, such as luxury brands vs. non-luxury brands. Given that BA may focus on inequality and/or social justice, luxury brands' stance on issues may not seem genuine and may even create a backlash. Future research can investigate brand-cause fit among luxury and non-luxury brands and measure the consumer's consumption consequences. Another exciting research avenue is to test the underlying drivers of BA on consumer perception. The activist brand may be seen as more humanized. Hence, it may increase positive consumption consequences.

Furthermore, self-construal may affect consumers' evaluation of the activist brands. Interdependent self-construal consumers are community-oriented, whereas independent self-construal consumers are self-oriented. Consequently, their perception, interest, and/or concern about society might be different. Furthermore, because the controversiality or relevance of the causes may vary by country and culture, the evaluation of the activist brand may be different. Even within a single country, individuals may vary depending on different socio-demographic characteristics. Therefore, future research can also validate the results in cross-cultural contexts within the US. Future research may measure and explore whether BA increases society's wellbeing by engaging in activist behavior.

Additionally, whether consumers are already supporting or opposing the brand's stance may have an effect on their evaluation. Therefore, future research may also test these effects in their studies.

Conclusion

This dissertation sheds light on the marketing literature by developing and validating a BA scale. It also shows consumer's perceptions toward the activist brand. There is a greater need for marketing literature to examine BA to understand consumer behavior better. This dissertation provides a way to develop and validate a BA scale and examine its applicability in different consumption contexts. Given the increased attention on BA from companies, the practical implications of these findings are worth noting. It is my hope that this dissertation may be an inspiration for future research in the field of BA.

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APPENDICES

IRB Approval Letter



MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Jayati Sinha
CC: File
From: Christopher Grayson, MBA, CIM, CIP, Director, Research Integrity 
Date: March 25, 2022
Proposal Title: Is Brand Activism the New Normal?
Approval # IRB-20-0380-AM06
Reference # 109507

The Florida International University Office of Research Integrity has approved the following modification(s):

- New CITI certification provided for the principal investigator.

There are no additional requirements in regards to your study. However, if there are further changes in the protocol after you commence your study, then you are required to resubmit your proposal for review. For further information, you may visit the FIU IRB website at <http://research.fiu.edu/irb>.

Appendix A: Details, Study 1

Interview Instructions

All the responses will be kept anonymous and will be confidential. Your identity and personal information will not be shared or matched with the answers or responses. Thank you for joining my interview today.

Interview Questions

1. Do you think that a brand can be an activist?
2. Please describe what you think the phrase “BA” means?
3. Why do brands engage in activism?
4. What makes a brand an activist?
5. What aspects of these companies/brands/programs/campaigns make them authentic/inauthentic, in your opinion?
6. What aspects, if any, make any of these brand efforts feel inauthentic/authentic to you?
7. What essential activities (such as behaviors, communications, actions) does a brand need to engage in for you to consider it as being an “Activist”?
8. Please tell me at least 5 essential characteristics (traits, attributes) that comes to your mind when you are thinking about “BA”
9. What distinguishes an activist brand from a not-activist brand?
10. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with “BA.”
11. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is not engaging in “BA.”
12. How important is to you for brands to engage in activism?
13. Are there any brands you patronize because of their activist position?
14. What is your response to brands taking positions on current issues?

Demographics

1. Age
2. Ethnicity

Appendix B: Details, Study 2A and Study 2B

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand consumers' opinion on "BA". Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully, and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Please do not check any Internet sources for your answers. Please provide your own opinion on each question. If you check any Internet sources and if you do not give your own opinion, you may not receive your credit for this study. Thank you again for your participation.

BA Definition Task

“In your own words (without the use of the internet), please describe what you think the phrase “BA” means.”

BA Scale Item Generation Task

What essential activities (e.g., behaviors, communications, actions, etc.) does a brand need to engage in for you to consider it as being an ‘Activist’?”

Please write down at least 5 essential characteristics (traits, attributes) that come to your mind when you are thinking about ‘BA’

Characteristics 1	Characteristics 2	Characteristics 3	Characteristics 4
Characteristics 5	Characteristics 6	Characteristics 7	Characteristics 8
Characteristics 9	Characteristics 10		

Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with ‘BA’

Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is engaging in ‘BA’”

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$29,999

- b. \$30,000-\$59,999
 - c. \$60,000-\$89,999
 - d. More than \$90,000
4. What is your ethnicity?
- a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
5. What is your marital status?
- a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Currently separated
 - e. Widow/Widower
 - f. Never Married
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- a. High school
 - b. Some college
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. PhD/Post Doctoral
 - g. Other
7. Are you employed? (Yes, No)
8. Should we exclude your data from this study for any reason? For instance, were you distracted, or did you circle answers randomly? (Yes, No)

Appendix C: Details, Study 3

Email Invitation for Expert Judges

Dear (Dr.)____,

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is Nuket Serin. I am a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Marketing Department at Florida International University.

The reason why I am sending you this email is to humbly request your participation as an expert judge in a survey. I am developing a BA Scale for a study pursuant to my dissertation research and would like to have you as an expert judge. Your recommendations will be used to refine my current scale which will allow me to create the final scale that I will propose for my dissertation.

The task involves rating 123 items on how representative they each are of the “BA” construct. (“poor”, “fair”, “good”, “very good”)

The task can be completed on: https://fiu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4SEm7hC4y4G011X

I understand that you might have a very busy schedule, but I would much appreciate it if you would agree to participate in completing this task by December 21st. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. In the event that you are unable to complete the questionnaire, please let me know.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

General Survey Instructions

Sarkar and Kotler (2018) provide a working definition for BA, which states that “BA consists of business efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to promote or impede improvements in society.” BA differentiates from other corporate social responsibility activities because it is driven by purpose and values, as well as it tends to focus on more controversial or contested social issues (Sarkar and Kotler 2018; Vredenburg et al. 2020)

This study aims to refine a “BA Scale”. I would like you to think about what it means for a brand to be an “Activist.” Please think about what essential characteristics and activities (e.g., behaviors, communications, actions, etc.) a brand needs to engage in for you to consider it as being an “Activist”.

In the following section, you will be asked to analyze 123 items that could describe a “BA”. Please take your time to think about each item and rate the extent to which each item represents the BA construct. Thank you for participating in this study.

Items evaluated by Expert Judges

(1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good)

Instructions for the Item Purification Task: Please rate the following items on how representative they each are of BA construct – “poor”, “fair”, “good”, “very good”.

Here is also a section for each of the items where you may comment on any ideas/suggestions (e.g., items’ ambiguity, clarity, redundancy, etc.) you have for each of the items. Please also feel free to modify items and suggest new ones.

Comments for each question _____

1. The brand is purpose-driven regarding societal issues
2. The brand is values-driven regarding societal issues
3. The brand takes a stance on current issues to create a better society
4. The brand takes actions on controversial issues to improve society
5. The brand is actively involved in helping communities
6. The brand voluntarily advocates for societal issues
7. The brand engages in activist actions to increase society’s welfare
8. The brand is motivated to make a difference in society
9. The brand is outspoken about social issues
10. The brand is committed to a specific set of social issues
11. The brand advocates for civil rights demonstrations
12. The brand is active in giving back to the community
13. The brand publicly speaks about social issues to influence societal change
14. The brand is vocal about what it believes in
15. The brand has a responsibility to contribute to society
16. The brand proactively engages in discussion about social issues that need to be changed
17. The brand puts meaningful efforts towards the resolution of social issues
18. The brand voices its opinion on contemporary issues to inform society
19. The brand tries to make society aware of controversial issues
20. The brand spreads ideas that are good for society
21. The brand shares its authentic opinion to support the cause
22. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts
23. The brand promotes social movements for the betterment of society
24. The brand promotes social activities that involve fighting for rights
25. The brand supports underrepresented communities in society
26. The brand gives voice to underrepresented populations
27. The brand raises awareness around equality
28. The brand raises awareness around social justice
29. The brand focuses on a contribution to the wider public interest
30. The brand educates the public about social issues
31. The brand creates awareness about social issues through its social media platforms
32. The brand creates awareness about social issues through its marketing channels

33. The brand uses brand ambassadors to spread awareness about social issues
34. The brand makes public statements about societal issues
35. The brand creates public campaigns that are beneficial to the community
36. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about societal issues
37. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about societal issues
38. The brand has a strong social media presence to support a social issue
39. The brand creates marketing material to support particular issues
40. The brand creates awareness of controversial issues through advertising campaigns
41. The brand gathers a collective voice within the society to solve social problems
42. The brand donates money in efforts to support specific issues
43. The brand financially supports a cause
44. The brand raises money for societal issues
45. The brand works with charitable organizations to further engage in social causes
46. The brand raises funds to fight societal problems
47. The brand donates a percentage of its profits to specific social issues
48. The brand hosts fundraising events to support specific issues
49. The brand encourages consumers to sign a petition to support a particular issue
50. The brand cooperates with organizations with common concerns to support its causes
51. The brand is involved in social movements by protesting societal problems
52. The brand's actions align with the cause(s) that it supports
53. The brand's values-driven messages align with the social issues it supports
54. The brand addresses issues that are consistent with its business practices
55. The brand engages in social issues that are consistent with its core values
56. The brand addresses social issues that are relevant given its product portfolio
57. The brand's explicit values are aligned with its activist marketing messages
58. The brand has a clear goal for its activism efforts
59. The brand is transparent about its activism efforts
60. The brand has integrity with its practices
61. The brand makes clear statements about social causes that it supports
62. The brand openly expresses its opinion about causes that it supports
63. The brand uses statistical facts to promote social issues that it supports
64. The brand provides concrete solutions to the causes that it supports
65. The brand has a thorough understanding of its customer base
66. The brand has clear intentionality for its activism efforts
67. The brand engages in community outreach programs
68. The brand's profits are not the reason for its activist behavior
69. The brand supports diversity in its workplace
70. The brand creates equal opportunities for all demographics of individuals in its workplace
71. The brand fights against inequality in its workplace
72. The brand demonstrates equality in its business practices
73. The brand demonstrates inclusiveness in its business practices
74. The brand encourages its employees to engage with social issues that it supports

75. The brand encourages its employees to express their views about social issues
76. The brand encourages its employees to participate in protests
77. The brand empowers employees to make a difference in regards to social issues it is aligned with
78. The brand creates awareness by launching products focusing on social issues that it supports
79. The brand makes changes to products and services in response to issues
80. The brand treats its employees fairly
81. The brand adapts its business practices in ways that support its efforts at addressing social issues
82. The brand implements changes to its work environment to support an issue
83. The brand makes effective internal changes to tackle problems within the institution
84. The brand offers products that help the cause it cares about
85. The brand changes its internal policies aimed at addressing societal problems
86. The brand does not neglect the quality of its products while taking a stance on societal issues
87. The brand tries to influence society through public demonstrations (e.g., organized marches)
88. The brand works with suppliers to use eco-friendly products
89. The brand behaves ethically in its business practices
90. The brand is inclusive in its marketing materials
91. The brand is aware of the environment
92. The brand is environmentally friendly
93. The brand is environmentally responsible
94. The brand produces environment-friendly products
95. The brand makes products that support equality
96. The brand has sustainable production processes
97. The brand adapts its advertisements to promote diversity
98. The brand adapts its advertisements to promote equality
99. The brand operates efficiently not to harm the environment
100. The brand has a clear concept of how to better the environment's condition
101. The brand delivers clear communication about its efforts to lessen its environmental impact
102. The brand reduces the negative impact of its activities in the ecological environment
103. The brand is concerned with making its workplace more eco-friendly
104. The brand is honest
105. The brand is caring
106. The brand is aware
107. The brand is supportive
108. The brand is active
109. The brand is engaged
110. The brand is helpful
111. The brand is powerful
112. The brand is social

- 113. The brand is charitable
- 114. The brand is passionate
- 115. The brand is strong
- 116. The brand is empathetic
- 117. The brand is fair
- 118. The brand is kind
- 119. The brand is loyal
- 120. The brand is thoughtful
- 121. The brand is trustworthy
- 122. The brand is committed
- 123. The brand is compassionate

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix D: Details, Study 4

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand your opinion on "BA". Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully, and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Please do not check any Internet sources for your answers. Please provide your own opinion on each question. If you check any Internet sources and if you do not give your own opinion, you may not receive your compensation for this study. Thank you again for your participation.

Qualitative Questions

1. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with ‘BA’.
2. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is engaging in ‘BA’.

Initial BA Scale List

(1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree)

Instructions for Item Purification: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the activist brand you came up with.

1. The brand is purpose-driven regarding controversial societal issues
2. The brand is values-driven regarding controversial issues
3. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society
4. The brand takes actions on controversial issues to influence society
5. The brand voluntarily advocates for societal issues
6. The brand engages in activism to increase society’s wellbeing
7. The brand is outspoken about sociopolitical issues
8. The brand publicly speaks to influence societal change
9. The brand is vocal about what it believes in
10. The brand proactively engages in discussions about polarizing issues
11. The brand puts meaningful effort into the resolution of controversial issues
12. The brand voices its stance on contemporary issues to inform society
13. The brand tries to make society aware of its stance on polarizing issues
14. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts
15. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society
16. The brand promotes social activities that involve fighting for rights

17. The brand educates the public about controversial societal issues
18. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media
19. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through its marketing channels
20. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues
21. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues
22. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues
23. The brand creates awareness of sociopolitical issues through its advertising campaigns
24. The brand raises money to support controversial societal issues
25. The brand works with charitable organizations to engage in controversial causes
26. The brand raises funds to fight societal problems
27. The brand encourages consumers to sign a petition to support a particular issue
28. The brand is involved in social movements by protesting societal problems
29. The brand's explicit values are aligned with its activist marketing messages
30. The brand has a clear goal for its activism efforts
31. The brand is transparent about its activism efforts
32. The brand makes clear statements about its activist efforts
33. The brand openly expresses its opinion about causes it supports
34. The brand encourages its employees to express their views about controversial societal issues
35. The brand empowers employees to make a difference in regards to sociopolitical issues
36. The brand creates awareness of controversial societal issues by launching products that it supports
37. The brand adapts its business practices in ways that support controversial societal issues
38. The brand changes its internal policies to address societal problems

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$29,999
 - b. \$30,000-\$59,999
 - c. \$60,000-\$89,999
 - d. More than \$90,000
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American

- d. Asian
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
5. What is your marital status?
- a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Currently separated
 - e. Widow/Widower
 - f. Never Married
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- a. High school
 - b. Some college
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. PhD/Post Doctoral
 - g. Other
7. Are you employed? (Yes, No)
8. With the help of the following statement, you show us that you have read the statement. For this question, we want you to choose "option 5" when answering the question below.
(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thank you!

Appendix E: Details, Study 5

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand your opinion on "BA". Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully, and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Please do not check any Internet sources for your answers. Please provide your own opinion on each question. If you check any Internet sources and if you do not give your own opinion, you may not receive your compensation for this study. Thank you again for your participation.

Qualitative Questions

1. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with 'BA'.
2. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is engaging in 'BA'.

BA Scale Items

(1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree)

Instruction: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents "the activist brand you came up with".

Action Items

1. The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.
2. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.
3. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
4. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society

Communication Items

1. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
2. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
3. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media
4. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues.

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$29,999
 - b. \$30,000-\$59,999
 - c. \$60,000-\$89,999
 - d. More than \$90,000
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
5. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Currently separated
 - e. Widow/Widower
 - f. Never Married
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. High school
 - b. Some college
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. PhD/Post Doctoral
 - g. Other
7. Are you employed? (Yes, No)
8. With the help of the following statement, you show us that you have read the statement. For this question, we want you to choose "option 5" when answering the question below.
(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thank you!

Appendix F: Details, Study 6

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand consumer's opinion. Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully, and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you again for your participation.

Instructions for the Following Scales

Please think about the brand [] while answering the following questions.

BA Scale

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the brand []

1. The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.
2. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.
3. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
4. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society
5. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
6. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
7. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media
8. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues.

Corporate Social Responsibility (Turker 2009)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements regarding the brand [].

Social and Nonsocial Stakeholders Items

1. Our company participates in activities which aim to protect and improve the quality of the natural environment.
2. Our company makes investment to create a better life for future generations.
3. Our company implements special programs to minimize its negative impact on the natural environment
4. Our company targets sustainable growth which considers future generations.
5. Our company supports nongovernmental organizations working in problematic areas.

6. Our company contributes to campaigns and projects that promote the well-being of the society.
7. Our company encourages its employees to participate in voluntarily activities.

Employees Items

1. Our company policies encourage the employees to develop their skills and careers.
2. The management of our company is primarily concerned with employees' needs and wants.
3. Our company implements flexible policies to provide a good work & life balance for its employees.
4. The managerial decisions related with the employees are usually fair.
5. Our company supports employees who want to acquire additional education.

Customers Items

1. Our company respects consumer rights beyond the legal requirements.
2. Our company provides full and accurate information about its products to its customers.
3. Customer satisfaction is highly important for our company.

Government Items

1. Our company always pays its taxes on a regular and continuing basis.
2. Our company complies with legal regulations completely and promptly.

Corporate Social Responsibility Scale (Alvarado-Herrera 2017)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements regarding the brand [].

In my opinion, regarding society, the brand [] is really...

1. Trying to sponsor educational programmes.
2. Trying to sponsor public health programmes.
3. Trying to be highly committed to well-defined ethical principles.
4. Trying to sponsor cultural programmes.
5. Trying to make financial donations to social causes.
6. Trying to help to improve quality of life in the local community.

Corporate Social Responsibility Scale (Salmones et al. 2005)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements regarding the brand [].

I believe the brand [] ...

Economic Responsibility Items

1. Tries to obtain maximum profit from its activity
2. Tries to obtain maximum long-term success

3. Always tries to improve its economic performance

Ethical-Legal Responsibility Items

1. Always respects the norms defined in the law when carrying out its activities
2. Is concerned to fulfil its obligations vis-à-vis its shareholders, suppliers, distributors and other agents with whom it deals
3. Behaves ethically/honestly with its customers
4. Respecting ethical principles in its relationships has priority over achieving superior economic performance

Philanthropic Responsibility Items

1. Is concerned to respect and protect natural environment
2. Actively sponsors or finances social events (sport, music...)
3. Directs part of its budget to donations and social works favouring the disadvantaged
4. Is concerned to improve general well-being of society

Corporate Citizenship Scale (Maignan and Ferrell 2000)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements regarding the brand [].

Economic Citizenship Items

1. We have been successful at maximizing our profits.
2. We strive to lower our operating costs.
3. We closely monitor employees' productivity.
4. Top management establishes long-term strategies.

Legal Citizenship Items

1. The managers of this organization try to comply with the law.
2. Our company seeks to comply with all laws regulating hiring and employee benefits.
3. We have programs that encourage the diversity of our workforce (in terms of age, gender, and race).
4. Internal policies prevent discrimination in employees' compensation and promotion.

Ethical Citizenship Items

1. Our business has a comprehensive code of conduct.
2. We are recognized as a trustworthy company.
3. Fairness toward co-workers and business partners is an integral part of the employee evaluation process.
4. A confidential procedure is in place for employees to report any misconduct at work.
5. Our salespersons and employees are required to provide full and accurate information to all customers.

Discretionary Citizenship Items

1. Our business supports employees who acquire additional education.
2. Flexible company policies enable employees to better coordinate work and personal life.
3. Our business gives adequate contributions to charities.
4. A program is in place to reduce the amount of energy and materials wasted in our business.
5. We encourage partnerships with local businesses and schools.

Brand Authenticity (Morhart et al. 2015)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements regarding the brand [].

Symbolism Items

1. A brand that adds meaning to people's lives
2. A brand that reflects important values people care about
3. A brand that connects people with their real selves
4. A brand that connects people with what is really important

Integrity Items

1. A brand that gives back to its consumers
2. A brand with moral principles
3. A brand true to a set of moral values
4. A brand that cares about its consumers

Brand Hypocrisy Scale (Guevremont 2019)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements regarding the brand [].

Mission Hypocrisy Items

1. A brand that positively promotes a product associated with harmful consequences
2. A brand that professes to be good for people but is not
3. A brand that has negative consequence for people or society

Social Hypocrisy Items

1. A brand that supports social responsibility activities inconsistent with its mission
2. A brand that engages in social responsibility activities which do not reflect its values
3. A brand that engages in social causes for marketing purposes only

Brand Familiarity

(1 = Unfamiliar, 7 = Familiar)

- *How familiar are you with the brand?*

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$29,999
 - b. \$30,000-\$59,999
 - c. \$60,000-\$89,999
 - d. More than \$90,000
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
5. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Currently separated
 - e. Widow/Widower
 - f. Never Married
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. High school
 - b. Some college
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. PhD/Post Doctoral
 - g. Other
7. Are you employed? (Yes, No)
8. With the help of the following statement, you show us that you have read the statement. For this question, we want you to choose "option 5" when answering the question below.
(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thank you!

Appendix G: Details, Study 7

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand your opinion on "BA". Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully, and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Please do not check any Internet sources for your answers. Please provide your own opinion on each question. If you check any Internet sources and if you do not give your own opinion, you may not receive your compensation for this study. Thank you again for your participation.

Qualitative Questions

1. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with 'BA'.
2. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is engaging in 'BA'.

BA Scale Items

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the activist brand you came up with.

Action Items

1. The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.
2. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.
3. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
4. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society

Communication Items

1. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
2. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
3. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media
4. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues.

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$29,999
 - b. \$30,000-\$59,999
 - c. \$60,000-\$89,999
 - d. More than \$90,000
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
5. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Currently separated
 - e. Widow/Widower
 - f. Never Married
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. High school
 - b. Some college
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. PhD/Post Doctoral
 - g. Other
7. Are you employed? (Yes, No)
8. With the help of the following statement, you show us that you have read the statement. For this question, we want you to choose "option 5" when answering the question below.
(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thank you!

Appendix H: Details, Study 8A

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand your opinion on BA. Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully, and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you again for your participation.

Instructions for the Qualitative Questions. Please carefully read the following "BA" definition. Next, please carefully answer the following questions.

"BA refers to when a brand takes a public stance on controversial issues (e.g., social injustice, social inequality, immigration, LGBT, etc.) to raise awareness and promote social movements through its actions and communication efforts by using its platforms with the purpose of societal changes."

Qualitative Questions

Activist Brand Condition

1. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with 'BA' and is considered as an "Activist" Brand".
2. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is engaging in "BA" and is considered as an "Activist" Brand".

Non-Activist Brand Condition:

1. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is NOT associated with 'BA'" and is considered as a "Non-Activist" Brand.
2. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the brand you mentioned above is NOT engaging in "BA" and is considered as a "Non-Activist" Brand".

BA Scale Items

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the [] brand.

Action Items

1. The [] brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.
2. The [] brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.

3. The [] brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
4. The [] brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society

Communication Items

1. The [] brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
2. The [] brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
3. The [] brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media
4. The [] brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about sociopolitical issues.

Manipulation Check (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

- Did you consider this [] brand as an activist brand?

Brand Attitude Scale Items (modified from Warren et al. 2019)

Instruction: Please give us your opinion about the [] brand?

- 1= Bad, 7=Good
- 1=Unfavorable, 7=Favorable
- 1=Negative, 7=Positive
- 1=Dislike, 7=Like

Brand Familiarity (1-item)

(1 = Unfamiliar, 7 = Familiar)

How familiar are you with the [] brand?

Purchase Frequency (1-item)

(1 = not at all, 7 = very often)

- How often do you purchase from the [] brand?

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your monthly income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$1,000
 - b. \$1,001-\$2,000
 - c. \$2,001-\$5,000
 - d. More than \$5,000
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American
 - d. Asian

- e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
5. Are you employed? (Yes, No)
 6. With the help of the following statement, you show us that you have read the statement. For this question, we want you to choose "option 5" when answering the question below.
(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thank you!

Appendix I: Details, Study 8B

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand consumer's opinion. Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully, and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you again for your participation

Instructions for Qualitative Questions: Please carefully read the following "BA" definition. Next, please carefully answer the following questions.

"BA refers to when a brand takes a public stance on controversial issues (e.g., social injustice, social inequality, immigration, LGBT, etc.) to raise awareness and promote social movements through its actions and communication efforts by using its platforms with the purpose of societal changes."

Qualitative Questions

Activist Brand Condition

1. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is associated with 'BA' and is considered as an "Activist" Brand".
2. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the [] brand you mentioned above is engaging in "BA" and is considered as an "Activist" Brand".

Non-Activist Brand Condition:

1. Please provide one brand name (any type – e.g., product, service, retail, etc.) that you think is NOT associated with 'BA'" and is considered as a "Non-Activist" Brand.
2. Please describe the reason(s) you believe that the [] brand you mentioned above is NOT engaging in "BA" and is considered as a "Non-Activist" Brand".

BA Scale Items

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the [] brand.

Action Items

1. The [] brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.
2. The [] brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.
3. The [] brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
4. The [] brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society

Communication Items

1. The [] brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
2. The [] brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
3. The [] brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media
4. The [] brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about socio-political issues.

Manipulation Check (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

- Did you think the brand as an activist brand?

Willingness to Pay a Price Premium (Netemeyer et al. 2004)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

1. I am willing to pay more for this [] brand than other brands in the same product category.
2. I am willing to pay a higher price for this [] brand than other brands.

Brand Familiarity (1-item)

(1 = Unfamiliar, 7 = Familiar)

- How familiar are you with the [] brand?

Purchase Frequency (1-item)

(1 = Not at all, 7 = Very often)

- How often do you purchase from the [] brand?

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things...

1. Age
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$29,999
 - b. \$30,000-\$59,999
 - c. \$60,000-\$89,999
 - d. More than \$90,000
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other

5. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Currently separated
 - e. Widow/Widower
 - f. Never Married

6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. High school
 - b. Some college
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. PhD/Post Doctoral
 - g. Other

7. Are you employed? (Yes, No)

8. With the help of the following statement, you show us that you have read the statement. For this question, we want you to choose "option 5" when answering the question below.
(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thank you!

Appendix J: Details, Study 9 Pretest

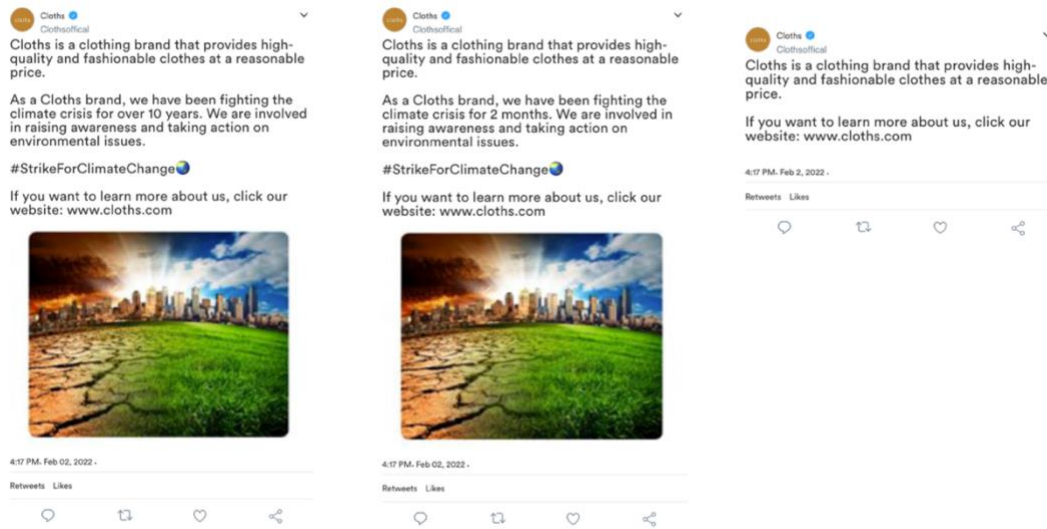
MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand consumer's opinion. Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you again for your participation.

Instructions for the Social Media Advertisement. Please carefully read and think about the following social media advertisement and then answer the questions.

Stimuli for Social Media Advertisement



Manipulation Check (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

- Would you consider the Cloths brand to be an “activist” brand?

Appropriateness of the Brand Name (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

- Do you agree that the brand name “Cloths” is an appropriate name for a clothing company?

Liking the Post (1-item)

(1 = not like at all, 7 = extremely like)

- Do you like this social media post?

Brand Familiarity (1-item)

(1 = Unfamiliar, 7 = Familiar)

- How familiar are you with the “Cloths” brand?

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things about you...

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your gender? (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
Less than \$20,000; \$20,000-\$39,999; \$40,000-\$59,999; \$60,000-\$79,999;
\$80,000-\$99,999; \$100,000 and above
4. What is your ethnicity?
White/Caucasian; Latino/Hispanic; African-American; Asian; Middle Eastern;
Other

5. Attention Check

If you are reading this, please do not answer this question and leave it blank. (1 = not at all true of me, 2 = slightly true of me, 3 = moderately true of me, 4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me).

Thank you for completing the study!

Appendix K: Details, Study 9

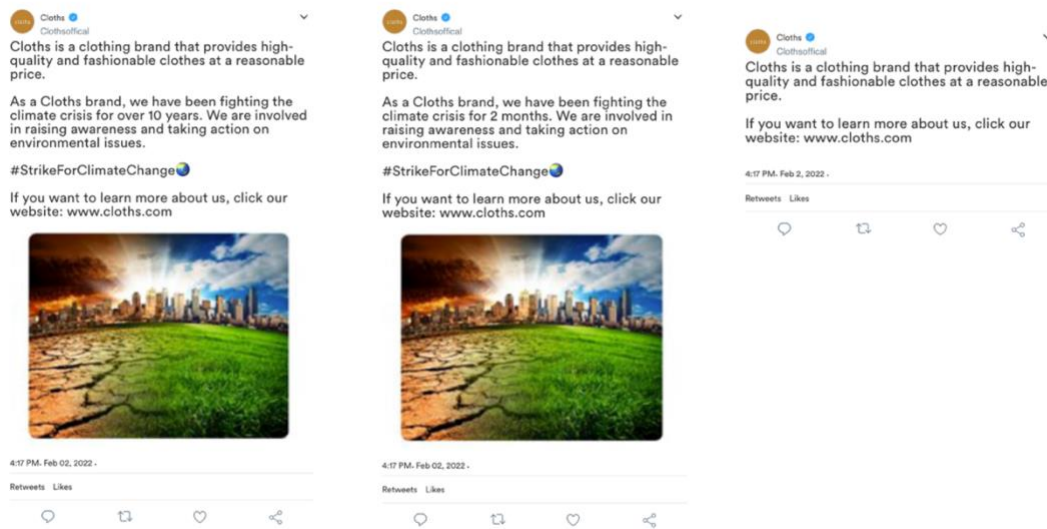
MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

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Instructions for the Social Media Advertisement. Please carefully read and think about the following social media advertisement and then answer the questions.

Stimuli for Social Media Advertisement



Manipulation Check (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

- Would you consider the Cloths brand to be an “activist” brand?

Intention to Click-Through (modified from Aguirre et al. 2015) (1-item)

(1 = not at all likely, 7 = very likely)

Instruction. Please rate your agreement with the following statement.

- I would like to click on this brand's website to get further information.

BA Scale Items

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the brand.

Action Items

1. The brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.
2. The brand engages in activism to increase society's wellbeing.
3. The brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
4. The brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society

Communication Items

1. The brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
2. The brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
3. The brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media.
4. The brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about socio-political issues.

Brand Familiarity (1-item)

(1 = Unfamiliar, 7 = Familiar)

Instruction: Please give us your opinion on the following statement.

- How familiar are you with the brand?

Social Media Usage Habit (Dempsey et al. 2019) (5-item)

(0 = not one day last week, 7 = every day last week)

Instruction: Please reflect on how you used social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and others) in the past week and report the number of times you used it under the circumstances listed below.

- Change or update your status on social media
- Click the 'like' button next to other people's status, photos, links, or other posts on social media
- Comment on other people's photos on social media
- Comment on other people's status, photos, links, or other posts on social media
- Send private messages on social media

Social Desirability Bias (Reynolds 1982) (2-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instruction. Please rate your agreement with the following statements.

- I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
- I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things about you...

1. What is your age? __
2. What is your gender? (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
Less than \$20,000; \$20,000-\$39,999; \$40,000-\$59,999; \$60,000-\$79,999;
\$80,000-\$99,999; \$100,000 and above
4. What is your ethnicity?
White/Caucasian; Latino/Hispanic; African-American; Asian; Middle Eastern;
Other
5. Attention Check (*modified from Chugani and Irwin 2020*)
If you are reading this, please do not answer this question and leave it blank. (1 = not at all true of me, 2 = slightly true of me, 3 = moderately true of me, 4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me).

Thank you for completing the study!

Appendix L: Details, Study 10 Pretest

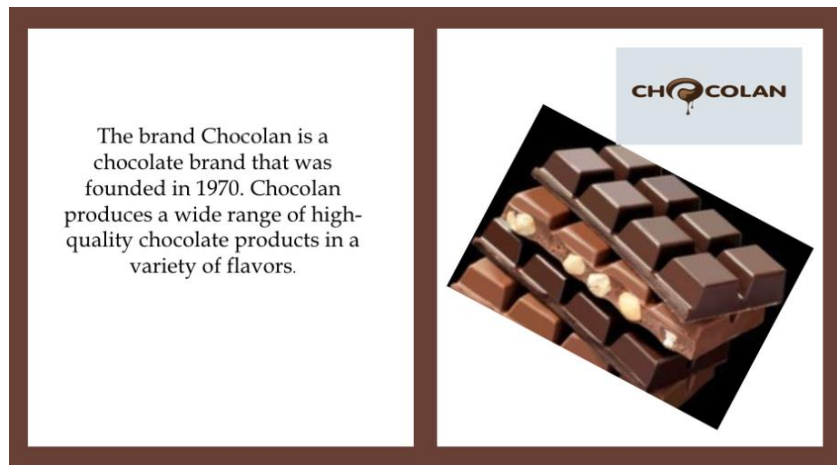
MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand consumer's opinion. Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you again for your participation.

Instructions for the Brand Advertisement. Please carefully evaluate the following brand advertisement and answer the following questions.

Brand Advertisement and Brand Information Stimuli



Instructions for the Scenario: Please spend at least 30 seconds carefully reading and thinking about the following company information.

High Action and High Communication Condition

The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits high engagement in prosocial corporate practice and high activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. At Chocolan, they also promote and communicate their activist messages through several platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate

brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by both **TAKING ACTION** and **COMMUNICATING** their messages to the public for the betterment of our global society. For instance, the Chocolan brand posted the following message on social media: At Chocolan, we believe that the human race deserves to live in a better world where all are welcome and accepted. **WE MUST END RACIAL INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY. #STOPRACISM #STOPINEQUALITY #STOPINJUSTICE**

High Action and Low Communication Condition

The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits high engagement in prosocial corporate practice and low activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. However, at Chocolan, they do not promote and communicate their activist messages through platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by only **TAKING ACTION** but not **COMMUNICATING** their messages to the public for the betterment of our global society.

Low Action and High Communication Condition

The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits low engagement in prosocial corporate practice and high activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they do not put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. However, at Chocolan, they promote and communicate their activist messages through several platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by only **COMMUNICATING** their messages to the public but not **TAKING ACTION** for the betterment of our global society. For instance, the Chocolan brand posted the following on social media: At Chocolan, we believe that the human race deserves to live in a better world where all are welcome and accepted. **WE MUST END RACIAL INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY. #STOPRACISM #STOPINEQUALITY #STOPINJUSTICE**

Low Action and Low Communication

The brand Chocolan has not addressed any sociopolitical causes such as racism so far. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits low engagement in prosocial corporate practice and low activist marketing messaging.

Instruction: Please give us your opinion on the following statements.

Appropriateness of the Brand Name (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

- Do you agree that the brand name “Chocolan” is an appropriate name for a chocolate company?

Manipulation of the activist brand (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

- Would you consider the Chocolan brand to be an “activist” brand?

Evaluation of the Activist Action (1-item)

(1 = not likely at all, 7 = extremely likely)

- How likely are you to agree that the Chocolan brand is taking action on activist issues?

Evaluation of Communication Messages (1-item)

(1 = not likely at all, 7 = extremely likely)

- How likely are you to agree that the Chocolan brand is communicating activist messages?

Brand Familiarity (1-item)

(1 = Unfamiliar, 7 = Familiar)

- How familiar are you with the brand?

We would like to know a few more things about you...

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender (Male, Female, Other)

3. *Attention Check (1-item)*

(1 = not at all true of me, 2 = slightly true of me, 3 = moderately true of me, 4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me).

- If you are reading this, please do not answer this question and leave it blank.

Thank you for completing the study!

Appendix M: Details, Study 10

MARKETING STUDY!

General Instructions

Thank you for participating in this study. The objective of this study is to understand consumer's opinion. Your task in these studies is to read the questions carefully and give your sincere response to the questions provided. Please read each question carefully and answer them honestly and thoughtfully. There is NO wrong or right answer, and your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you again for your participation.

Instructions for the Brand Advertisement. Please carefully evaluate the following brand advertisement and answer the following questions.

Brand Advertisement and Brand Information Stimuli



Instructions for the Scenario: Please spend at least 30 seconds carefully reading and thinking about the following company information.

High Action and High Communication Condition

The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits high engagement in prosocial corporate practice and high activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. At Chocolan, they also promote and communicate their activist messages through several platforms to deliver their voice to a

broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by both TAKING ACTION and COMMUNICATING their messages to the public for the betterment of our global society. For instance, the Chocolan brand posted the following message on social media: At Chocolan, we believe that the human race deserves to live in a better world where all are welcome and accepted. WE MUST END RACIAL INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY. #STOPRACISM #STOPINEQUALITY #STOPINJUSTICE

High Action and Low Communication Condition

The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits high engagement in prosocial corporate practice and low activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. However, at Chocolan, they do not promote and communicate their activist messages through platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by only TAKING ACTION but not COMMUNICATING their messages to the public for the betterment of our global society.

Low Action and High Communication Condition

The brand Chocolan has addressed sociopolitical causes such as racism. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits low engagement in prosocial corporate practice and high activist marketing messaging. For instance, as a brand, they do not put their words into action by supporting movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) through their generous financial contributions to combat racism. However, at Chocolan, they promote and communicate their activist messages through several platforms to deliver their voice to a broader community to help end discrimination and racism in all its forms. As a chocolate brand, they have zero tolerance for racism and are committed to fighting it by only COMMUNICATING their messages to the public but not TAKING ACTION for the betterment of our global society. For instance, the Chocolan brand posted the following on social media: At Chocolan, we believe that the human race deserves to live in a better world where all are welcome and accepted. WE MUST END RACIAL INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY. #STOPRACISM #STOPINEQUALITY #STOPINJUSTICE

Low Action and Low Communication

The brand Chocolan has not addressed any sociopolitical causes such as racism so far. According to reports, the brand Chocolan exhibits low engagement in prosocial corporate practice and low activist marketing messaging.

Manipulation Check (1-item)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please give us your opinion on the following statement.

- Would you consider the Chocolan brand to be an “activist” brand?

Willingness to Pay a Price Premium (Netemeyer et al. 2004)

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

- I am willing to pay more for this “Chocolan” brand than other brands in the same product category.
- I am willing to pay a higher price for this “Chocolan” brand than other brands

BA Scale Items

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on how well it represents the brand.

Action Items

1. The Chocolan brand takes a stance on issues to advance its vision of a better society.
2. The Chocolan brand engages in activism to increase society’s wellbeing.
3. The Chocolan brand is genuine about its activist efforts.
4. The Chocolan brand promotes social movements for its vision of a better society

Communication Items

1. The Chocolan brand creates awareness about controversial issues through social media.
2. The Chocolan brand makes public statements about divisive societal issues.
3. The Chocolan brand uses its platforms to communicate a message about controversial societal issues.
4. The Chocolan brand consistently uses its marketing communications to speak about socio-political issues.

Instruction: Please give us your opinion on the following statements.

Brand Familiarity (1-item)

(1 = Unfamiliar, 7 = Familiar)

- How familiar are you with the brand?

Purchase Frequency (1-item)

(1 = Not at all, 7 = Very often)

- How often do you purchase chocolate products?

Demographics

We would like to know a few more things about you...

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Please indicate your annual household income (including allowances)
 - a. Less than \$20,000
 - b. \$20,000-\$39,999
 - c. \$40,000-\$59,999
 - d. \$60,000-\$79,999
 - e. \$80,000-\$99,999
 - f. \$100,000 and above
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. African-American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
5. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Currently separated
 - e. Widow/Widower
 - f. Never Married
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. High school
 - b. Some college
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. PhD/Post Doctoral
 - g. Other
7. Are you employed?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. What is your political orientation?
(1 = very liberal, 7 = very conservative)

Attention Check (1-item)

(1 = not at all true of me, 2 = slightly true of me, 3 = moderately true of me, 4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me).

- If you are reading this, please do not answer this question and leave it blank.

Thank you for completing the study!

VITA

VITA

NUKET SERIN

2022	Ph.D., Marketing Florida International University
2017	MS, Marketing University of South Florida
2014	MA, Business Administration (with thesis) Cukurova University
2011	BS, Business Administration Cukurova University
2022	Best Social Media and Digital Marketing Track Paper Award, Marketing Management Association Spring Conference, St. Louis, MO
2021	Beta Gamma Sigma Academic Honor Society
2021	FIU Graduate School Dissertation Year Fellowship
2021	Outstanding Graduate Scholar Award, Florida International University
2021	Society for Marketing Advances Conference Doctoral Consortium Fellow, Orlando, Florida
2021	AMA-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium Fellow, Indiana University
2021	Transformative Consumer Research Grants, ACR, \$2000
2021	FIU Graduate Student Research Support Award, \$1200
2021	FIU CIBER Doctoral Research Support, \$2,000
2021	Carolan Research Institute Grant, \$5,000
2020	AMA DocSIG's Student Spotlight Series
2020	AMA HigherEd SIG Doctoral Students Grants Award, \$264

2020	FIU Graduate & Professional Student Committee Travel Fund, \$650
2019	Association for Consumer Research Conference Travel Stipend, \$850
2018	BDSA Research Presentation Recognition, Florida International University

RESEARCH PUBLISHED

Garcia-Collart, Tessa, Nuket Serin, and Jayati Sinha (2019), "Healthy (In)Congruence: When Hispanic Identity and Self-Framed Messages Increase Healthier Choices," *Journal of Advertising*, 49 (1), 98-108.

Nakiboglu M. A. Burak and Nuket Serin (2016), "A Pilot Study That Revealed the Relationship Between Product Placement Practices and Consumer's Purchase Intention," *Nigde University Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 9 (2), 135-51.

- Research project funded by the Cukurova University Scientific Research Projects, Turkey