

Brand Activism and the Role of Authenticity and Identity Signalling

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Abstract: Brands are almost obliged to take a stand on controversial, social, and political issues. Belief-driven consumers expect that brands pick the right side. However, when brands take a stand, this must align with their values, beliefs, and practices. If this is not the case, they may receive backlash or even a boycott. This study contributes to the existing literature about brand activism. It provides new insights into the effects of brand activism on brand attitude and the intention to buy a brand's product when the authenticity of the activism and the identity relevance of the product are considered. The authenticity of brand activism is essential since it can reduce the risk of being perceived as profit-seeking. Also, the identity relevance of the product could affect the relationship between brand activism and customer behaviour since some products are more used for identity signalling than others.

Keywords: Authentic Brand Activism; Corporate Social Activism; Customer Behaviour; Identity Signalling; Identity Relevance

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Introduction

On 3 September 2018, Colin Kaepernick, a National Football League (NFL) player, tweeted: Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything. #justDoIt (Collin Kaepernick, 2018). It is the start of a campaign by Nike and Colin Kaepernick and a reaction to police brutality, racial inequality, and other social issues in the U.S. The deal prompts a flurry of debate. The tweet was trending topic on Twitter, with some customers urging to boycott Nike and even burning their Nike shoes in protest. Others praise Nike for taking a stand on the issues and starting the discussion. Nike is not the only brand that uses socio-political issues in its communication. The rise of socio-political activist brands demonstrates that brands can stand for a purpose beyond the product or service they offer (Moorman, 2020). Brand activism is an emerging marketing tactic for brands seeking to stand out in a fragmented marketplace by taking public stances on social and political issues (Vredenburg et al., 2020). An emergent concept in brand activism is corporate social activism (CSA). According to Bhagwat et al. (2020), CSA is defined as a firm's public demonstration of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan socio-political issue.

However, because there is no agreement within much of society regarding the appropriate response to socio-political issues, engagement in such an issue offers no clear value from the perspective of the stakeholders and society (Nalick et al., 2016). According to a recent study by Edelman (2018), one in two people will choose, switch, avoid or boycott a brand based on its stand on societal issues. Of this group, 67% bought a brand for the first time because of its position on a controversial issue, and 65% will not buy a brand because it stayed silent on an issue it had an obligation to address. These people are called belief-driven buyers. To better understand why brands engage in socio-political issues, Nalick et al. (2016) highlights several motivating stakeholder-related perspectives that may empower a brand to engage in these issues. The first perspective involves the risk a brand takes on the

dynamic nature of a socio-political issue. The brand assumes that many stakeholders will turn around in the long run and will support the position of the brand. In other words, the brand perceives the stakeholders who will likely support the position as more valuable than stakeholders whom the brand's position might alienate.

At the same time, stakeholders could pressure a brand into taking a stand. This refers to the second perspective and includes stakeholder pressure recognition. Often brands have assessed whether engagement in a socio-political issue is worthwhile and have decided against it. However, when stakeholders demand action, staying neutral could do more damage. Therefore, brands will engage in socio-political issues.

Several researchers have studied how investors react to CSA events (Bhagwat et al., 2020) and why firms engage in socio-political issues (Nalick et al., 2016). Furthermore, studies also focused on whether brands that engage in socio-political issues are viewed more positively than brands that do not engage in socio-political issues (Schmidt et al., 2021). However, few studies have focused on brand attitude and consumer purchase intention. None of these studies has considered if the identity relevance of the product the brand offers moderates this relationship.

This paper focuses on brand activism and investigates whether a brand's public demonstration of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan socio-political issue influences consumers' attitudes towards a brand and their intention to buy the brand's product. Furthermore, the identity relevance of the product, the authenticity of brand activism and the consumer-brand agreement are considered.

Study 1

Systematic Literature Review

The literature review summarises relevant research themes and concepts relating to brand activism.

Theoretical Background

Corporate Socio-Political Activism (CSA) and (anti) brand activism

A socio-political issue is a salient unresolved social matter on which the societal and institutional opinion is split. According to Nalick et al. (2016), these issues are identified by the lack of societal consensus, low information rationality, evolving viewpoints and issue salience. CSA is a firm's public demonstration of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan socio-political issue (Bhagwat et al., 2020).

CSA is different from other corporate social and political activities, namely corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate political activity (CPA) (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Nalick et al., 2016; Schmidt et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Corporate social responsibility refers to the actions of a company that advance social good beyond what is required by law (Kang et al., 2016). For instance, CSR activities are viewed as beneficial by most of society. On the contrary, CSA lacks this type of consensus because there is no right or wrong. Next to CSR, firms also engage in CPA. CPA is a firm's efforts to influence or manage political entities (Hillman et al., 2004). CPA is different from CSA in the way the activity is publicised.

Whereas CSA is publicly promoted as a manifestation of the brand's values, CPA is executed quietly. A closely related and often used term for CSA is brand activism. Brand activism is a strategy that seeks to influence consumers via campaigns created and sustained by social and political values (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). This form of activism is often accidental, and ad hoc and therefore carries many risks concerning the response from the brand's stakeholders

(Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). When a brand engages in a socio-political issue, it is willing to alienate a part of its customer base since there is no correct response to such issues. It could misalign with some of its customers (Key et al., 2021).

In general, there are four typologies of brand activism (Vredenburg et al., 2020). These typologies consider the degree of activist marketing (high vs. low) and corporate socio-political practice (high vs. low). Brands in the *absence of brand activism* do not yet embrace a socio-political issue and do not have a purpose that connects to prosocial practices. However, consumers expect brands to take a stand as it is becoming more normative to do so (Mirzaei et al., 2022). *Silent brand activists* adopt socio-political issues as their strategic focus. However, silent activists' brands tend to keep their practices silent and often are minor and do not have the following more prominent brands have. Finally, authentic activist and *inauthentic activist brands* are discussed in the next part. Contrary to brand activism is anti-brand activism. This form of active resistance (from consumers and other stakeholders) develops around someone's disagreement with a brand. Consumers engage in anti-brand activities when they disagree with the brand's practices and opinions (Romani et al., 2015).

The authenticity of CSA and (in)authentic brand activism

According to Vredenburg et al. (2020), the authenticity of CSA is conceived as: "a strategy in which brands have a clear purpose- and value-driven communication around an activist stance on socio-political issues while also engaging in prosocial corporate practice." To gain a better understanding of the authenticity of CSA, the following example from CSR is used. When an organisation does not follow their claims about CSR, it is called "greenwashing" (Gatti et al., 2019). Greenwashing is the act of misleading consumers and stakeholders about the environmental performance (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020).

In the context of CSA, a brand may distance itself from its brand purpose, values and corporate practice when engaging in a socio-political issue out of a sense of urgency, which can result in so-called “woke washing” (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Furthermore, consumers can also perceive CSA activities as an attempt by brands to sell more of their products (Edelman, 2018; Vredenburg et al., 2020).

It is expected that inauthentic brand activism has a negative effect on consumer behaviour whereas authentic brand activism has a positive effect on consumer behaviour.

As mentioned before, there are four typologies of brand activism. Two of which are authentic brand activism and inauthentic brand activism. Brands that engage in socio-political issues and are perceived as authentic have aligned their purpose, values, marketing messaging and practices (Vredenburg et al., 2020). In contrast, inauthentic brand activism lacks this alignment.

Materials and Methods

This study performs a systematic literature review which entails a systematic search based on scientific research to answer a scientific question. This involves desk research. A systematic literature review follows clearly defined steps where the search criteria are stated before the search is conducted. Scientific databases and search engines are used to find relevant research and literature.

An ongoing literature review is undertaken to search for relevant literature during this study. The selection process is based on key search words and synonyms. Since CSA is a relatively new concept in the literature, additional filters such as geography and time have not been used.

Table 1. Search Strings

Search string.	Hits	Papers selected	Other papers selected	Papers excluded after reading	Total papers
("corporate sociopolitical activism" OR "brand activism") AND (consumer AND behavio*)	10	5	6	1	10
("corporate sociopolitical activism" OR "brand activism") AND (consumer OR behavio*)	25	10	/	6	4
("corporate social-political activism" OR "brand activism" AND authent*)	9	6	4	3	7
("corporate social-political activism" OR "brand activism" AND "identity signalling" OR "product type")	0	/	2	/	2
("corporate social-political activism" OR "brand activism")	33	1	0	1	0

Due to the lack of relevant papers, the choice was made to include the final search string. However, this resulted in more hits in the same or irrelevant papers. Furthermore, many papers appeared multiple times in different searches. This partly accounts for the low number of papers the final search string yielded. Other search strings include double papers. Also, there were no initial papers on the relationship between brand activism and product type. Indicating a gap in the research thus far.

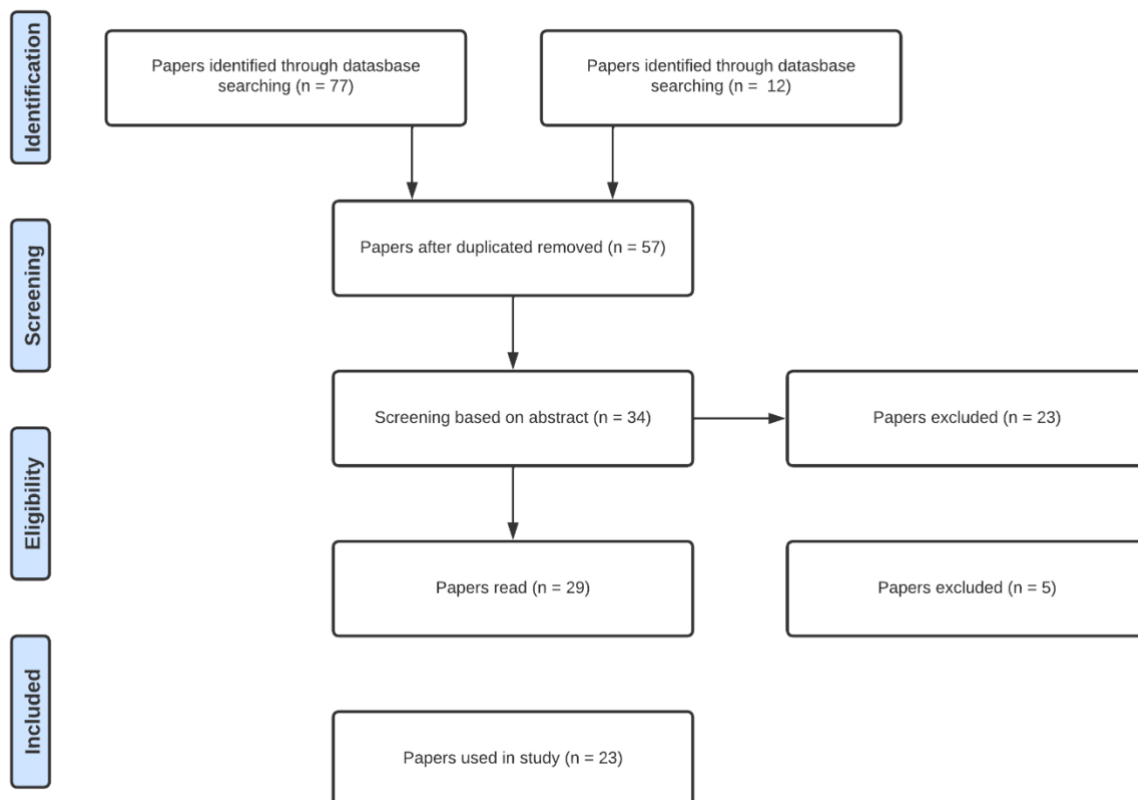


Figure 1. Search Flow

Figure 1 visualises the process of the systematic literature review.

Results

The effect of CSA and brand activism on customer behaviour

There has been much research on the effect of CSR on consumer behaviour. As mentioned before, taking a stand on a socio-political issue is not without risk. There is a possibility of alienating a part of the customer base or even shareholders. On the other hand, consumers and stakeholders expect brands to give their opinions on controversial and polarising problems. However, activities related to CSR are often beneficial for society and do not incite polarising discussions between consumers. This is the main difference between CSA and brand activism. Consumers that agree with the brand's stand on a socio-political issue are more likely to favour the brand and purchase their products. Since this implies higher self-brand similarity, resulting in higher consumer-brand identification (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). However, it is unlikely to find a significant positive effect on consumer behaviour when there is alignment between the brand and the consumer since this is what a consumer expects.

When the consumer disagrees with the brand, and there is misalignment between the consumer and the brand on the issue, consumers will be less likely to show their support for the brand and will not buy their products (Hong & Li, 2021). Expectations are that disagreement between the consumer, and the brand will result in lower self-brand similarity and lower levels of consumer-brand identification. Furthermore, the negative impact of a brand engaging in a socio-political issue is regulated by felt empathy for the issue. The greater the level of empathy, the stronger the negative consequences for the brand (Romani et al., 2015). According to a recent study by Edelman (2018), 1 in 2 people will choose, switch, avoid or boycott a brand based on its stand on societal issues. These people are called belief-driven buyers. Of this group, 67% bought a brand for the first time because of its position on a

controversial issue, and 65% will not buy a brand because it stayed silent on an issue it had an obligation to address.

To better understand why brands engage in socio-political issues, Nalick et al. (2016) highlights several motivating stakeholder-related perspectives that may empower a brand to engage in these issues. The first perspective involves the risk a brand takes on the dynamic nature of a socio-political issue. The brand assumes that many stakeholders will turn around in the long run and will support the position of the brand. In other words, the brand perceives the stakeholders who will likely support the position as more valuable than stakeholders whom the brand's position might alienate.

At the same time, stakeholders could pressure a brand into taking a stand. This is the second perspective and includes stakeholder pressure recognition. Often brands have assessed whether engagement in a socio-political issue is worthwhile and have decided against it.

However, when stakeholders demand action, staying neutral could do more damage.

Therefore, brands will engage in socio-political issues.

Authenticity of CSA, brand activism and woke washing

Authentic brand activism is a purpose- and values-driven strategy in which a brand embraces a stance on a socio-political issue to establish social change and marketing success (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Following this definition, Vredenburg et al., 2020 introduces four characteristics:

1. The brand is purpose and value-driven
2. It addresses a controversial, contested, or polarising socio-political issue
3. The issue can be progressive or conservative
4. The firm contributed to a socio-political issue through messaging and brand practice

Mirzaei et al., 2022 identified six dimensions that could help brands authentically engage in controversial issues. First, the independence of a brand from topical and trendy social issues,

also called social context independence, can prevent the risk of being perceived by consumers as opportunistic. An example of not being socially context-independent is the BLM campaign of Pepsi.¹ They received backlash as they were accused of being unauthentic and wanted to jump on the bandwagon to use a socio-political issue to promote their product. The second dimension involves inclusion. It entails that brand activist messages or campaigns should be neutral, which means that the message should not only focus on the issue but also display its positives. The third dimension is sacrifice, which entails how far a brand is prepared to go beyond what is necessary. This could be a sacrifice in market share, revenue, or certain boycotts from stakeholders. The fourth dimension involves the practices of the brand. Does the brand deliver what it promises? Failing to walk the talk can be perceived as inauthentic (Mirzaei et al., 2022; Vredenburg et al., 2020). The fifth dimension calls for a fit between the brand and the issue it engages in. In other words, the congruence. A brand's lack of fit will also be perceived as inauthentic. Therefore, the only accepted view in the marketing community is that brands should not engage in socio-political issues unless they can authentically align brand activism with the target markets (Moorman, 2020). The final dimension covers the brand's motivation to engage in socio-political issues. When a brand fails to be transparent in its motivation, it can be perceived as profit-seeking, corrupt and exploitative (Mirzaei et al., 2022).

The effect of identity signalling, CSA, and brand activism on customer behaviour

Consumers use a product to signal their identity to others. This is an exciting notion since CSA and brand activism involve taking a stand on socio-political issues where there is no consensus. It, therefore, is an excellent opportunity for an individual to express their identity.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/business/kendall-jenner-pepsi-ad.html>

To understand why products affect the relationship between brand activism and customer behaviour, we first must understand the three levels of social perception on consumption. These levels of consumption are self, others, and the system.

Recent research has shown that consumption for social signalling goals may have ironic effects on consumer behaviour and sense of self (Ordabayeva et al., 2022). For example, consumers may purchase products that bring forward someone's competencies, signalling their success to others to compensate for insecurities one might have.

At the second level, for others, individuals may display different behaviour as opposed to consuming for themselves. For example, consumers tend to look for more information before purchasing when consuming for others. The third level, consumption on the system level, is interesting as it relates to consumer behaviour induced by a brand taking a stand. Ordabayeva et al., 2022 argues that social perceptions influence how consumers behave and consume at this level. Individual perception of the system influences how they trade-off between their own versus others' relative social positions and interests when deciding which products to consume. Moreover, the observed structure of the system can create a mismatch between what the consumer intends to signal to others versus how others receive these signals. Furthermore, there could be tension between the current system's structure and the envisioned system's envisioned structure through the consumer's eyes. This may result in different consumer behaviour to challenge the system that is brought about by brands taking a stand. Finally, someone's misperception about the decency and honesty of the system may inspire consumers to participate in (anti) brand activism. These forms of identity-based consumption allow consumers to associate themselves with brands that align with their ideological opinions (Hydock et al., 2020). People tend to use products to express their identity. Thus, the symbolic, visible, and identifying relevant products are more frequently used than the instrumental, invisible and identity irrelevant ones for this goal (Kim et al., 2012). Therefore,

expectations are that products can play a significant role in the relationship between brand activism and consumer behaviour. When people look for social identity-related products such as t-shirts, shoes, jackets and watches, they consider the product's and brand's social image-related aspects to manage their social image and impression. This is called impression management (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Social identity refers to the individual's knowledge that they belong to a particular group with the emotional and value significance of that group (Cornelissen et al., 2007). People buy products not only for what they do but also for what they symbolise. The products people buy can act as signals of identity. People's tastes, i.e., the products they buy, attitudes they profess, and preferences they hold, can signal identity. However, the identity that people infer from another's choice depends on the set of people who share the same attitude and preferences, which means that the communicated identity, which is signalled by, for example, buying a specific car, is partly determined by the people who also buy the same car (Berger & Heath, 2007). However, there is no research on the effect of products on the relation between brand activism and consumer behaviour.

Discussion

This systematic literature review investigated the relationship between CSA, brand activism and customer behaviour when the message's authenticity or campaign and product type were considered. The results showed that consumers expect brands to take a stand on socio-political issues. It is something that they expect. At the same time, other stakeholders can also put pressure on a brand to take a stand. Taking a stand is not without risk. According to prior research, consumers who agree with a brand are more likely to favour and buy its products. However, this does not translate to a significant positive effect since the customer expects the brand to take a stand. Brands could alienate a part of their customer base. On the other hand, when consumers disagree with the brand, this could result in a boycott.

The authenticity of brand activism is essential to be perceived as genuine and honest.

Unauthentic brands lack a purpose and are not value-driven. When this is exposed, consumers perceive the brand as profit-seeking, dishonest, corrupt, and exploitative. The authenticity of brand activism can be measured through the independence of a brand from topical and trendy social issues; the inclusiveness of the communicated message; the preparation to make financial sacrifices; the fit between the brand's existing knowledge and the topic; the motivation of the brand; is the brand practising what it is advocating and taking a stand for. When people look for social identity-related products such as t-shirts, shoes, jackets, and watches, they consider the product's and brand's social image-related aspects to manage their social image and impression. Since consumers can exhibit intense reactions when a brand takes a stand and are willing to boycott a brand, it is also expected that this translates to consumers showing their stand or identity by buying the product the particular brand offers. This is also known as a form of identity-based consumption. Unfortunately, there has not been any research into this topic.

Implications

This systematic literature review gathered insights into the effects of brand activism on customer behaviour. Furthermore, it considered the authenticity of brand activism and the role products play in this relationship. Since businesses need to be more transparent and tensions worldwide have increased, brands are expected to engage in these so-called socio-political issues. Brands should pick their battles since there is a high risk of alienating a large part of the customer base and, when perceived as unauthentic, could receive backlash from their customers and other stakeholders. Brands should therefore ensure that the public demonstration in favour or against the controversial issue aligns with their beliefs, values, and practices. This study also tried to obtain more insights into the effect of different products and the identity signalling that comes with it. It addresses that several product types are used

for identity signalling and that a brand may experience more risk when engaging in socio-political issues as certain products are used more than others for this purpose.

Future Research

There has been much research into the effects of CSR on customer behaviour, attitudes, and purchase intentions. Contrary to the relatively new concept of CSA and brand activism. The main difference is that CSR engages in issues with a shared understanding of doing the right thing in society. In contrast, CSA engages in a controversial issue where there is no consensus on doing the right thing. Several studies have highlighted the motivations to show public demonstration and the effect on investors and have investigated the response of other stakeholders. However, few studies have linked brand activism and the authenticity of these campaigns, and none have considered product type or purchase situation. A recommendation is to research further the effects of product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian or identity relevant vs. identity irrelevant) and purchase situation (public vs. private) to understand the differences in customer behaviour even better.

Study 2

Theoretical development

As a result of the systematic literature review there are some avenues which remain unknown. For example, what is the effect of the authenticity of the brand activism on consumer behaviour and what role does identity signalling play in that relationship. This chapter discusses the constructs, their relations, and the hypotheses used to fill this gap in research.

Conceptual Framework

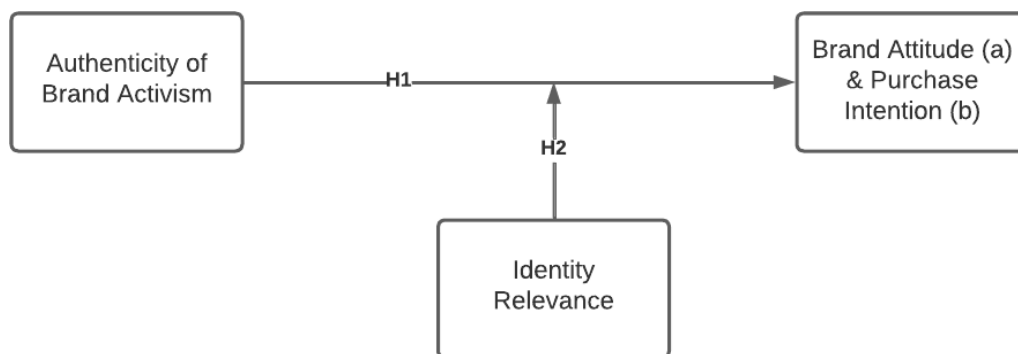


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Figure 2 depicts the conceptual model. The model consists of two hypotheses per dependent variable, brand attitude which will be labelled with “a” and purchase intention with “b”.

Brand Activism (Authentic vs. Inauthentic)

The focus of this study lies in the effect that authentic brand activism has on consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Brand activism is defined as a firm's public demonstration of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan socio-political issue (Bhagwat et al., 2020). Socio-political issues are a salient unresolved social matter on which the societal and institutional opinion is split. Nalick et al. (2016) identifies these issues as the lack of societal consensus, low information rationality; evolving viewpoints; and issue salience. This makes brand activism different from CSR and CPA, as discussed in the literature review.

Brand activism is a risky strategy for a brand to pursue since it can result in a boycott or backlash due to the lack of consensus among stakeholders (Atanga et al., 2022). Since brand activism is a risky strategy to pursue, the public demonstration of support for or opposition must be authentic and genuine. According to Vredenburg et al. (2020), the authenticity of brand activism is conceived as a strategy in which brands have a clear purpose- and value-driven communication around an activist stance on socio-political issues while also engaging in prosocial corporate practice. When an organisation does not follow their claims about CSR, it is called “greenwashing” (Gatti et al., 2019). In the context of brand activism, a brand may distance itself from its brand purpose, values and corporate practice when engaging in a socio-political issue out of a sense of urgency, resulting in so-called woke washing (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Furthermore, consumers can also perceive brand activism as an attempt by brands to sell more of their products (Edelman, 2018; Vredenburg et al., 2020). According to Mirzaei et al. (2020), the authenticity of brand activism can be measured through the independence of a brand from topical and trendy social issues; the inclusiveness of the communicated message; the preparation to make financial sacrifices; the fit between the brand existing knowledge and the topic; the motivation of the brand; is the brand practising what it is advocating and taking a stand for? Expectations are that authentic brand activism has a significant positive effect over inauthentic brand activism.

H1a: Authentic brand activism has a positive effect on brand attitude

H1b: Authentic brand activism has a positive effect on purchase intention

Identity Relevance

People use products to express their identity. Thus, the symbolic, visible, and identity-relevant products are more frequently used than the instrumental, invisible and identity-irrelevant ones for this goal (Kim et al., 2012). When people look for social identity-related

products such as t-shirts, shoes, jackets and watches, they will consider the social image-related aspects of the product and brand to manage their social image and impression, also known as impression management or identity signalling (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Social identity refers to the individual's knowledge that they belong to a particular group with the emotional and value significance of that group (Cornelissen et al., 2007). The products people buy act in that case as signals of identity. People buy products not only for what they do but also for what they stand for. People's tastes, i.e., the products they buy, attitudes they profess, and preferences they hold, can signal identity. However, the identity that people infer from another's choice depends on the set of people who share the same attitude and preferences, which means that the communicated identity, which is signalled by, for example, buying a specific car, is partly determined by the people who also buy the same car (Berger & Heath, 2007). Since brand activism involves engaging in socio-political issues where there is no consensus in society, the product category that the brand sells will influence if consumers boycott the brand in the first place.

Therefore, it is expected that the identity relevance of products (i.e., t-shirt vs. sock) will moderate the relationship between authentic brand activism, brand attitude and purchase intention.

H2a: Identity-relevant products positively influence the levels of brand attitude when consumers are exposed to authentic brand activism

H2b: Identity-relevant products positively influence the purchase intentions when consumers are exposed to authentic brand activism

Control Variables

To account for differences in the results, there are control variables. These variables help explain the differences within the results that are not explained by the conceptual framework

Demographics

Control variables for gender and age will be added to the experiment to account for any differences among these variables.

Consumer-brand agreement

To control for a dominant personal stance on the social-political issue, the participants will be asked to indicate their level of agreement with the overall social-political issue (agree vs. disagree). Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) used the same additional question to divide the participants. Subsequently, they matched the personal viewpoints of the participants with the brands' stances.

Methods

The aim of the systematic literature review was to summarises relevant research themes and concepts relating to brand activism. As a result, gaps in research have been found. The second study aims to fill these gaps with explanatory research. In this section the methods will be discussed.

To test whether brand activism influences brand attitudes and purchase intentions while considering the authenticity of the message and the identity relevance of the product the brand offers, a between-subject experiment is conducted where participants are exposed to the brand activism of a fictional brand. The fictional brand is called UFASHION. UFASHION is a modern clothing brand that sells a wide range of garments. Clothing is an item that everyone is familiar with and often is used to signal identity.

Participants

For this study, a convenience sample was used. Therefore, it consists of respondents collected by utilising the author's network. The survey was distributed via WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. This resulted in 166 respondents, of which 109 finished

the survey. For the collection of data, a seven-point Likert scale was used. There were no obvious outliers. 61.5% of the participants were between 18 and 24 years of age. Furthermore, 50.5% (n = 55) were male, 48.6 (n = 53) were female and 0.9% (n = 1) were non-binary (third gender).

Experimental Design

To test whether exposure to brand activism (authentic vs. inauthentic) influences consumers' brand attitude and purchase intention while considering the authenticity of the message and the social identity relevance of the product, there are specific criteria which should be considered.

First the product type. It depends on whether someone perceives a specific product as identity relevant or identity irrelevant. The assumption has been made that t-shirts are social identity relevant, and socks are social identity irrelevant. This assumption was also made in the research of Kim et al., 2012 and was proven to be justified. To test this assumption, a pre-test is conducted at the start of the survey. Each participant was randomly assigned to a group. This resulted in 55 respondents for t-shirts and 54 respondents for socks. For each group, an advertisement was created (see Appendix 1, see Appendix 2). The advertisements contained the exact text. This text focused on the brand UFASHION. Subsequently, the participants were exposed to an image containing a picture of the product and supportive text regarding the product. Since both groups were exposed to the same information about the brand, any changes in brand attitude can be accounted to the exposure to the type of brand activism (authentic vs. inauthentic). On the other hand, both advertisements differ in the shown product and supportive text. Any changes regarding purchase intentions can be accounted to the type of product and brand activism (authentic vs. inauthentic).

Second the authenticity of the message. To test the effect of authentic and inauthentic brand activism on brand attitude and purchase intention, participants were exposed to either

an authentic message (see Appendix 4) or an inauthentic message (see Appendix 5). For the design of an authentic message, Mirzaei et al. (2020) criteria were used to develop the message. Furthermore, to design a relevant message, a closer look is taken at large multinationals that engage in brand activism. Brands that have been used to develop the message are Coca-Cola² and Apple³. The participants were randomly assigned to a group. This resulted in 57 respondents that were exposed to an authentic message and 52 respondents that were exposed to an inauthentic message.

Finally, the social-political issue needs to be incorporated into the experiment. For this case, the same issue was used in the research of Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020). The social-political issue used was the refugee crisis (see Appendix 3). The message took inspiration from the UNHCR⁴ (the UN Refugee Agency) and used an image to visualise the magnitude of the problem. Furthermore, the message is neutral to prevent any biases or prejudices.

To test whether participants perceived the product as identity relevant (vs. identity irrelevant) and the brand activism as authentic (vs. inauthentic) two pre-tests were conducted within the experiment. The first pre-test investigated if participants perceived the depicted product (t-shirt vs. sock) as identity relevant or identity irrelevant. Participant must answer two 7-point Likert scale questions to indicate the identity relevance of the product. Subsequently the mean of the answers was computed into a new variable. This new variable consisted of two groups. Product perceived as identity irrelevant, and product perceived as identity relevant (see Appendix 10). Moreover, the pre-test for perceived authenticity (see Appendix 11) was conducted after the participants were exposed to the stimuli (see Appendix 3). Also, the pre-test was computed into a new variable based on the mean.

² <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/social-impact>

³ <https://investor.apple.com/esg/default.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/>

The main experiment has a two by two between-subject design. For analysis participants are assigned to an identity relevant (vs. identity irrelevant) product and to authentic (vs. inauthentic) brand activism based on the answers given in the pre-tests. Creating 4 groups in total. The purpose of this design is to test the main effect of authentic (vs. inauthentic) brand activism on the dependent variables brand attitude and purchase intention, and the interaction effect of identity relevant (vs. identity irrelevant) products.

Procedure

The participants are first exposed to the pre-test of the product type. This pre-test contains an introduction to the fictional brand UFASHION and one of the product types (t-shirt vs. socks). Subsequently, the participants had to indicate their brand attitude and purchase intentions before the stimuli (authentic vs. inauthentic). Next, they were exposed to the social-political problem. Later the participants were asked whether they perceived the stimuli as authentic or inauthentic.

Identity relevance (t-shirt vs. sock): To test the social identity relevance of the product type, the scale developed by Berger & Heather (2007) was used. The scale consists of a 7-point Likert scale with two items and had *strongly disagree/strongly agree* as endpoints. The scale demonstrated a good reliability with $\alpha = 0.822$ for t-shirts and $\alpha = 0.775$ for socks.

Brand attitude: To measure the attitude of a participant towards a brand that engages in social-political issues, the scale of Faircloth et al., 2001; Keller, 1993; Ferrell et al., 2019 was used. The scale consists of a 7-point Likert scale with two items and had *strongly disagree/strongly agree* as endpoints. The scale demonstrated good reliability with $\alpha = 0.914$

Purchase intention: To measure the intentions of the participant to purchase the product, the scale of White et al. (2016) was used. The scale consists of a 7-point Likert scale with three items and had *strongly disagree/strongly agree* as endpoints. The scale demonstrated good reliability with $\alpha = 0.902$

Brand activism: (authentic vs. inauthentic): To test whether the communicated brand activism (authentic vs. inauthentic) is perceived as such, the scale of Mirzaei et al. (2020) was used. The scale consists of a 7-point Likert scale with six items and had *strongly disagree/strongly agree* as endpoints. Of which two items were recoded (Q4, Q5). The scale demonstrated moderate reliability with $\alpha = 0.546$

Table 2. Operationalisation of Constructs

Construct	Operationalisation	Source	Questions
<i>Authenticity of Brand Activism</i>	The authenticity of brand activism is conceived as a strategy in which brands have a clear purpose- and value-driven communication around an activist stance on socio-political issues while also engaging in prosocial corporate practice	Mirzaei et al. (2020) Vredenburg et al. (2020)	Is the brand practising what it is advocating and taking a stand for? Is the campaign inclusive and neutral in its message and fights against prejudice? Is there any degree of fit between the brand's existing knowledge and the topic? Is the brand mostly seeking profit by engaging in a socio-political issue? (R) Is the socio-political issue tied to current social movements and topical social issues ? (R) Is the brand prepared to make financial sacrifices , and invest in the issue they are advocating for?
<i>Product Type</i>	The products people buy act as signals of identity. People buy products not only for what they do but also for what they symbolise	Berger & Heather (2007)	Does this product significantly express your identity? Can you tell a person by his or her product selection?
<i>Brand Attitude</i>	The attitude towards a brand is a consumer's overall evaluation of that brand. These attitudes can be related to product-related attributes and their benefits, but also to non-product-related attributes and symbolic benefits	(Faircloth et al., 2001) (Keller, 1993) (Ferrell et al., 2019)	In general, my feelings towards (brand) are favourable My opinion about the brand is positive
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	The likelihood that a person will buy a product	White et al. (2016)	Very likely to buy this product

	Very willing to buy this product
	Very inclined to buy this product

Note. (R) items are recoded

After exposure to the stimuli, participants are asked to answer questions regarding their stance on the social-political issue and demographics. These variables also serve as control variables.

Results

In this chapter, the proposed model and its variables are tested on their effect on dependent variables (i.e., brand attitude and purchase intention). IBM SPSS version 28.0 is used to analyse the data. For each dependent variable, the initial model is tested first. Subsequently, the entire model is tested per dependent variable. Resulting in two models for brand attitude and two models for purchase intention.

Data Screening

As mentioned before, 109 respondents finished the survey. Next, the dataset is checked for outliers. Since regression is used for the final analysis, Cook's Distance is used to check for any outliers. Appendix 5 shows outliers of the dependent variable brand attitude and purchase intention. As can be seen; there are some outliers. However, after carefully observing the registered responses, no outliers were removed.

Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis is conducted split per group (authentic vs. inauthentic) to create an overview of the data. Table 3 displays this analysis.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>								
Authenticity		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Authentic	Identity Relevance	61	4.5082	1.39192	-.597	.306	-.294	.604
	Authenticity	61	4.2650	.46684	.814	.306	.364	.604
	Brand Attitude	61	4.7869	1.13820	-.283	.306	-.226	.604
	Purchase Intention	61	4.0383	1.42478	-.168	.306	-.271	.604
	Gender	60	.5167	.50394	-.068	.309	-2.065	.608
	Consumer Brand Agreement	61	4.59	1.407	-.413	.306	-.362	.604
	Valid N (listwise)	60						
Inauthentic	Identity Relevance	48	4.5000	1.32488	-1.074	.343	.609	.674
	Authenticity	48	2.4965	.76143	-.145	.343	-1.273	.674
	Brand Attitude	48	2.6250	1.51412	.782	.343	-.524	.674
	Purchase Intention	48	2.0764	1.08119	.680	.343	-.734	.674
	Gender	48	.5000	.50529	.000	.343	-2.089	.674
	Consumer Brand Agreement	48	4.17	1.754	-.043	.343	-1.066	.674
	Valid N (listwise)	48						

From table 3, the means of the dependent variables brand attitude and purchase intention are different for each group. The group exposed to authentic brand activism shows higher levels of brand attitude and greater intention to purchase the brand's product indicating that the first hypotheses are not rejected. The difference between brand attitude and purchase intention can be accounted for since each respondent was exposed to a different product (t-shirt vs. sock).

Table 4. Distribution of Gender

<i>Gender</i>				
Authenticity			Frequency	Percent
Authentic	Valid	Female	29	47.5
		Male	31	50.8
		Total	60	98.4
	Missing	System	1	1.6
Total			61	100.0
Inauthentic	Valid	Female	24	50.0
		Male	24	50.0
		Total	48	100.0

Table 4 displays the distribution of gender across both groups. The authentic group consists of 51.7% males, whereas the inauthentic group consists of 50% males. Moreover, the authentic group represents 48.3% of females, whereas the inauthentic group is 50% represented a female. Furthermore, the authentic group consists of 1.6% non-binary/third gender, which translates to 1 respondent and therefore, for the sake of simplicity is reported as missing value.

Multiple Linear Regression

The study aims to examine what effect (in)authentic brand activism has on brand attitude and purchase intention and whether the identity relevance of the product mediates this effect. Since there are multiple independent variables, multiple regression will be conducted. Multiple linear regression is a type of regression where the dependent variable shows a linear relationship with two or more independent variables (Stockemer, 2018). First, the assumptions are checked. To check for homoscedasticity, the plotted residuals should be scattered randomly, around 0. Furthermore, the residuals should be evenly distributed. Appendix 14 depicts the residuals of the dependent variable brand attitude and purchase intention. Another assumption of multiple linear regression is that the dependent variables (i.e., brand attitude, purchase intention) are normally distributed. Appendix 15 depicts the

distribution of the standardised residuals for the dependent variable brand attitude and purchase intention. Although there are some deviations, the data seems to be normally distributed. Since this is only a visual representation of the assumption, the Shapiro-Wilk test, depicted in appendix 15 was also conducted. The results are insignificant. Therefore, the data is normally distributed.

Model

Since there are two dependent variables, the analysis is split into two sections. The first section focuses on the first dependent variable, brand attitude. Before analysing the full model, the initial model was tested. The initial model does not incorporate the control variables. The results of the multivariate regression are depicted in table 5 and show the relationships between the variables and how they impact the model. The same procedure was followed for the second dependent variable, purchase intention.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression

<i>Variables</i>	Effect of identity relevance and (in)authentic brand activism on:			
	Brand Attitude		Purchase Intention	
	Model 1A (BA)	Model 2A(BA)	Model 1B(PI)	Model 2B (PI)
Intercept	2.626 (.191)***	2.755 (.219)***	2.077 (.185)***	2.119 (.216)***
Authenticity	2.161 (.255)***	2.048 (.245)***	1.961 (.247)***	1.846 (.241)***
Relevance	.119 (.123)	.068 (.119)	.188 (.119)	.156 (.117)
Authenticity x Relevance	-.074 (.190)	-.051 (.183)	-.101 (.184)	-.094 (.181)
Gender		-.122 (.262)		-.128 (.258)
Consumer-Brand Agreement		.291 (.084)***		.247 (.083)**

Note: *** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.01$

Note: ** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.05$

The table displays two models per dependent variable. The initial model is without the control variables, and the full model includes the control variables. In this model, the independent variable authenticity is dichotomous. The reference group perceived the stimuli as inauthentic. Therefore, the coefficients are the difference between the mean of the authentic

versus the inauthentic group. Indicating that a positive coefficient results from a higher mean for the dependent variables for the group that perceived the stimuli as authentic.

The full model summary (see Appendix 7) that tests the dependent variable brand attitude and incorporates the control variables explains 49.1% of brand attitude. The models give the summary $F(5, 102) = 19.687, p < .001, R^2 = 0.655$.

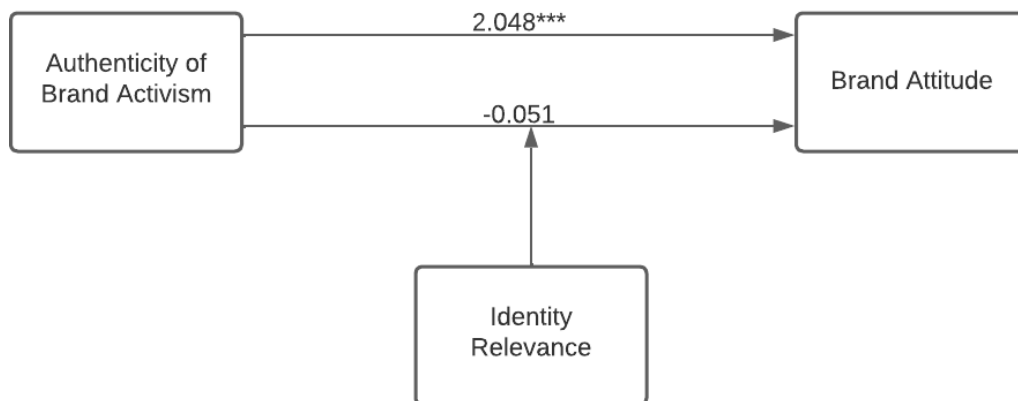


Figure 3. Visualization Model A (BA)

Note: *** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.01$

Note: ** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.05$

Figure 3 gives a visual presentation of the relationship between the authenticity of authentic brand activism and brand attitude and the interaction effect of identity relevance.

The relationship between authenticity of brand activism is significant. However, the interaction effect of identity relevance is insignificant.

The full model summary incorporating all the control variables and testing the dependent variable purchase intentions (see Appendix 9) explains 44.8% of the variance in purchase intention. The model gives the summary $F(5, 102) = 16.575, p < .001, R^2 = 0.448$.

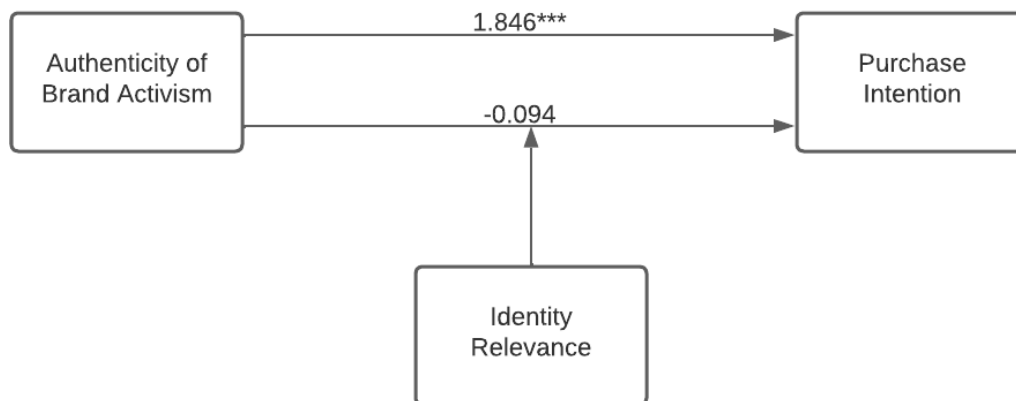


Figure 4. Visualization Model B (PI)

Note: *** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.01$

Note: ** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.05$

Figure 4 gives a visual presentation of the relationship between the authenticity of brand activism and purchase intentions. Furthermore, the interaction effect of identity relevance is included. The relationship between authenticity of brand activism and purchase intention is significant whereas the interaction effect of identity relevance is insignificant

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1a (**H1a**)

To test the first hypothesis, the main effect of authentic brand activism on brand attitude is analysed. As seen in in table 5, it was found that the perceived authenticity of the brand activism significantly predicted brand attitude ($b = 2.048, p < .001$). To empower this result, an independent sample T-test was conducted which gave $t(107) = 6.135, p < .001$ (see Appendix 12).

Hypothesis 1b (**H1b**)

This hypothesis follows the same procedure only with a different dependent variable, purchase intention. As seen in table 5 it was found that the perceived authenticity of brand activism significantly predicted brand attitude ($b = 1.846, p < .001$). To empower this result, an independent sample T-test was conducted which gave $t(107) = 3.843, p < .001$ (see Appendix 12).

Hypothesis 2a (**H2a**)

For the third hypothesis, stating that identity-relevant products moderate the relationship between authentic brand activism and brand attitude, the main effects of both independent variables on the dependent variable (brand attitude) are analysed. An interaction term (authenticity x relevance) is created to conduct the analysis. The interaction effect of authentic brand activism and identity-relevant products on brand attitude gives $b = -0.051, p .781$. Indicating that there is no significant interaction effect on brand attitude.

Hypothesis 2b (**H2b**)

As was the case with the first two hypotheses, the fourth and final hypothesis follows the same procedure only with a different dependent variable, purchase intention. The interaction effect of authentic brand activism and identity-relevant products on purchase intention gives $b = -0.094, p .602$. Meaning that there is no significant interaction effect on purchase intention.

Control Variables

This section discusses the relationships and influences of the control variables on the dependent variables. Figures 5 displays the control variables' path coefficients, consumer-brand agreement.

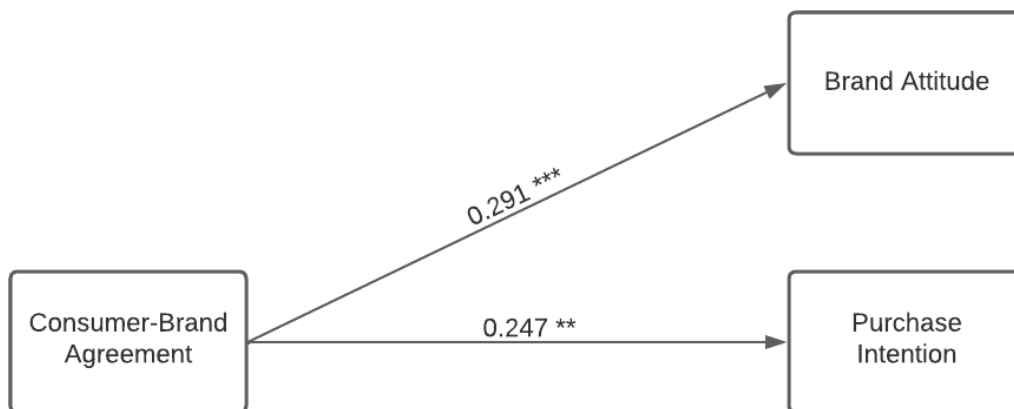


Figure 5.

Note: *** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.01$

Note: ** indicates significance at $\alpha = 0.05$

As can be seen in figure 5, the consumer-brand agreement has a significant effect on brand attitude and purchase intention. The variable is coded that a higher score indicates a higher level of agreement with the brand. The model shows that participants who agreed with the brand indicated a higher brand attitude and a higher intention to purchase the brand's product.

There was no effect for gender. Therefore, the model is excluded from the analysis.

Discussion

Consumers expect brands to pick a side in wicked problems. Therefore, brands are becoming much more than the direct consequence of a market segmentation strategy (Maurya & Mishra, 2012). Brand activism is an emerging concept in the marketing landscape (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Brand activism is defined as a firm's public demonstration of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan socio-political issue (Bhagwat et al., 2020). Distinguishing is from other activist strategies such as CSR and CPA. This study investigated whether authentic (vs. inauthentic) brand activism positively affected brand attitude and the intention to purchase the brand's product. Furthermore, it investigated whether the identity relevance of the product the brand sells moderated this relationship. Respondents were randomly assigned to the authentic or inauthentic group to test the influence of authentic brand activism and identity relevance products on brand attitude and purchase intentions.

It was found that the group exposed to authentic brand activism scored significantly higher on both brand attitude and purchase intention. Indicating that inauthentic brand activism or so-called woke-washing has significant negative consequences for the brand. The identity relevance of the product had an insignificant effect on both dependent variables.

Furthermore, the results show that the efforts of authentic brand activism do not translate to higher levels of brand attitude or a stronger intention to buy the brand's products. On the contrary, inauthentic brand activism showed significantly lower levels of brand attitude and weaker intention to buy the brand's products.

The results also show that people who agree with the brand and are exposed to authentic brand activism have a significantly higher brand attitude and are more willing to purchase the brand's products. This result aligns with the research of Romani et al. (2015). They found that the greater the level of empathy for the social-political problem, the stronger the positive or the negative consequences for the brand were depended on the authenticity of the brand

activism (Romani et al., 2015). As was the case for the social-political issue used in this research. Many participants were in favour to take in more refugees and therefore felt empathy for the issue.

Moreover, the interaction effect of authentic brand activism and identity-relevant products showed an insignificant effect on both constructs. This means that consumers do not distinguish brand attitude or purchase intention based on the identity relevance or irrelevance of the product the brand offers. This contrasts with the research of (Kim et al., 2012), where the combination of CSR and identity relevance of products significantly boosted the levels of purchase intention. An explanation could be that brand activism engages in issues without consensus on the problem. Consumers support the brand but do not want to adhere to it publicly. However, this remains an assumption.

Implications

Some implications can be made because of the study. First, a brand must be careful when engaging in social-political issues. When they are perceived as inauthentic, the consequences are substantial. Moreover, the positive impact of brand activism has seemed not to be different than when a brand chooses to do nothing.

Another implication derived from this study is that brands should know their customers. They must know what their beliefs are, and which values they adhere to since consumer-brand agreement has a significant effect on brand attitude and purchase intention. Brand activism is certainly not a strategy to pursue for a brand without any knowledge of the composition of their customers. Although this study failed to prove that identity relevant (vs. identity irrelevant) products significantly affect brand attitude and purchase situation, brands should be careful.

Limitation and Future Research

Before interpreting the result, one must know that this study has several limitations. First, UFASHION is a fictional brand that removes any pre-existing attitudes about a brand that could influence the results. However, the study did not control for any existing attitudes towards the shown products that could influence the results. Future research could explore a different product category or even focus on B2B purchases.

The pre-test for identity relevance (t-shirt vs. sock) failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Therefore, data had to be transformed. Participants that indicated that the product was identity relevant (t-shirt or sock) were assigned to the identity relevant group and vice versa. This resulted in unequal and small groups, which influenced the results and their reliability. Future research could investigate this effect with known or proven identity-relevant and identity irrelevant products. Moreover, another meaningful avenue for research could be the influence of services instead of products.

Furthermore, the visuals used in the survey, the supportive text and the name of the brand were not controlled for. Participants could have formed prejudices based on this content so that the result could have been influenced. Also, the average age of the participants does not represent a normal population.

Future research could also focus on the purchase situation and the customer disposition. Since identity signalling is not only subject to products people buy but also to the purchase situation (private vs. public).

Another interesting topic is the cost of switching from a brand because of brand activism. Future research could investigate at what costs people are willing to switch and if product type and the purchase situation influence this.

Since this study used a social-political problem that is not gender-related, there was no significant effect of gender. However, the effect could be there because each social-political problem has different characteristics.

Finally, the main limitation of this study is the population in which the study was conducted. As mentioned, the study made use of the author's network. Since the author and his network have much in common (i.e., values and beliefs) and form a fraction of the population, there is a possibility that the questions are not answered correctly or give a false impression of reality. Moreover, the language used in the survey was English. Since the sample's population consist of mostly native Dutch speakers, there could be a chance that questions were misunderstood. Future research could use the same study design and select a more inclusive and representative population.

**UFASHION socks are manufactured with
great care**



**Our socks are available in any colour and
we have them for any purpose**



Appendix 3 (Social-Political Issue)

At the end of 2021 because of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, events seriously disturbing public order or for economically motivated reasons, 89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced. Due to this number of refugees, the EU has asked several countries including the Netherlands to accommodate extra refugees.

89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced

at the end of 2021 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.



16 June 2022

Source: [UNHCR Global Trends 2021](#)

Appendix 4 (Authentic Manipulation)

"We recognise that the success of our business, like many others, is directly linked to the diversity of our associates, business partners and the communities we all serve. To play our part we would like to donate monthly to our partners that advocate modern immigration. Only then we can accommodate and help more refugees"

Following the initiative, the refugee organisation made the following comments

The refugee organisation is pleased with the support. UFASHION has been a supporter of meaningful immigration reform. The brand has advocated for the creation of a modern immigration system with rational laws and regulations. Thanks to their donations we can create awareness to reform immigration and take care of more refugees in the Netherlands

Appendix 5 (Inauthentic Manipulation)

"UFASHION always aims to help the ones in need. To support immigration reform, we have initiated several new campaigns. 10% of each sale will be donated to a charity that advocates for shelter for refugees. Be quick! While supplies last!!!"

Following the initiative, the refugee organisation made the following comments

The refugee organisation and others that support refugees have not received any donations from UFASHION. The chairman of the refugee organisation said that it is sad to witness a clothing brand, motivated by money, taking advantage of this situation to generate more sales

Appendix 6 (Initial Model Brand Attitude)

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.640 ^a	.410	.393	1.32254	.410	24.273	3	105	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity x Identity Relevance , Authenticity, Identity Relevance

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Attitude

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta				Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.625	.191			13.752	<.001			
	Authenticity	2.161	.255	.635		8.470	<.001	.635	.637	.635
	Identity Relevance	.119	.123	.095		.972	.333	.073	.094	.073
	Authenticity x Identity Relevance	-.074	.190	-.038		-.387	.699	.025	-.038	-.029

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Attitude

Appendix 7 (Full Model Brand Attitude)

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.701 ^a	.491	.466	1.24547	.491	19.687	5	102	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Consumer Brand Agreement , Authenticity x Identity Relevance , Authenticity, Gender , Identity Relevance

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Attitude

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		Correlations			
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.755	.219		12.591	<.001			
	Authenticity	2.048	.245	.600	8.372	<.001	.639	.638	.591
	Identity Relevance	.068	.119	.054	.572	.569	.072	.057	.040
	Authenticity x Identity Relevance	-.051	.183	-.026	-.278	.781	.025	-.028	-.020
	Gender	-.122	.262	-.036	-.466	.642	-.116	-.046	-.033
	Consumer Brand Agreement	.291	.084	.268	3.454	<.001	.374	.324	.244

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Attitude

Appendix 8 (Initial Model Purchase Intention)

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.621 ^a	.386	.368	1.27998	.386	21.995	3	105	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity x Identity Relevance , Authenticity, Identity Relevance

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		Correlations			
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.077	.185		11.241	<.001			
	Authenticity	1.961	.247	.607	7.940	<.001	.608	.612	.607
	Identity Relevance	.188	.119	.158	1.581	.117	.125	.152	.121
	Authenticity x Identity Relevance	-.101	.184	-.055	-.547	.586	.049	-.053	-.042

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Appendix 9 (Full Model Purchase Intention)

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.670 ^a	.448	.421	1.22945	.448	16.575	5	102	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Consumer Brand Agreement , Authenticity x Identity Relevance , Authenticity, Gender , Identity Relevance

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		Correlations			
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.199	.216		10.182	<.001			
	Authenticity	1.846	.241	.570	7.644	<.001	.606	.603	.562
	Identity Relevance	.156	.117	.131	1.330	.187	.129	.131	.098
	Authenticity x Identity Relevance	-.094	.181	-.051	-.523	.602	.049	-.052	-.038
	Gender	-.128	.258	-.040	-.495	.622	-.106	-.049	-.036
	Consumer Brand Agreement	.247	.083	.240	2.969	.004	.351	.282	.218

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Appendix 10 (Pre-Test Identity Relevance)

Group Statistics

	product type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Identity	t-shirt	55	4.7000	1.23828	.16697
Relevance	sock	54	4.3056	1.45179	.19756

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means					
		Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Identity Relevance	Equal variances assumed	.065	.130	.39444	.25829	-.11759	.90648
	Equal variances not assumed	.065	.130	.39444	.25867	-.11852	.90741

Identity Relevance (new computed variable)

Authenticity			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Authentic	Valid	Identity	11	22.9	22.9	22.9
		Irrelevant				
		Identity	37	77.1	77.1	100.0
		Relevant				
		Total	48	100.0	100.0	
Inauthentic	Valid	Identity	18	29.5	29.5	29.5
		Irrelevant				
		Identity	43	70.5	70.5	100.0
		Relevant				
		Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 11 (Pre-Test Perceived Authenticity)

Group Statistics

	Authenticity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Authenticity	Authentic	57	4.0322	.66922	.08864
	Inauthentic	52	2.8878	1.11717	.15492

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means					
		Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Authenticity	Equal variances assumed	<.001	<.001	1.14434	.17463	.79816	1.49053
	Equal variances not assumed	<.001	<.001	1.14434	.17849	.78926	1.49942

Perceived Authenticity per Group

Authenticity			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Authentic	Valid	Identity	11	22.9	22.9	22.9
		Irrelevant				
		Identity	37	77.1	77.1	100.0
		Relevant				
		Total	48	100.0	100.0	
Inauthentic	Valid	Identity	18	29.5	29.5	29.5
		Irrelevant				
		Identity	43	70.5	70.5	100.0
		Relevant				
		Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 12 (Independent Sample T-Test)

Group Statistics

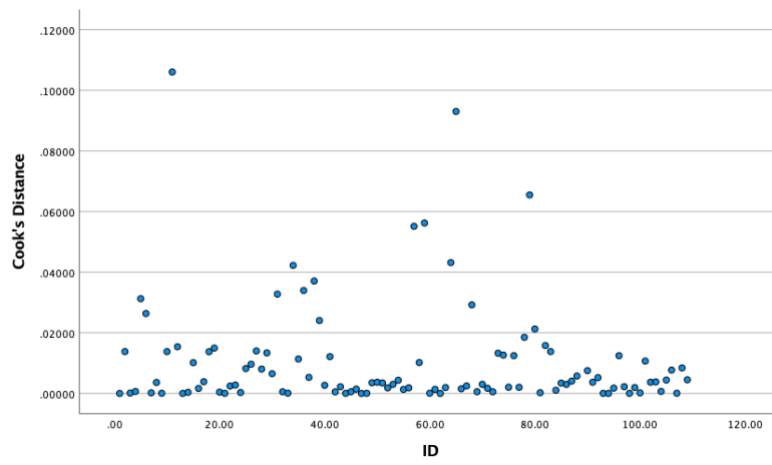
	Authenticity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand Attitude	Authentic	57	4.6579	1.38924	.18401
	Inauthentic	52	2.9327	1.54675	.21450
Purchase Intention	Authentic	57	3.7076	1.53797	.20371
	Inauthentic	52	2.5897	1.49307	.20705

Independent Samples Test

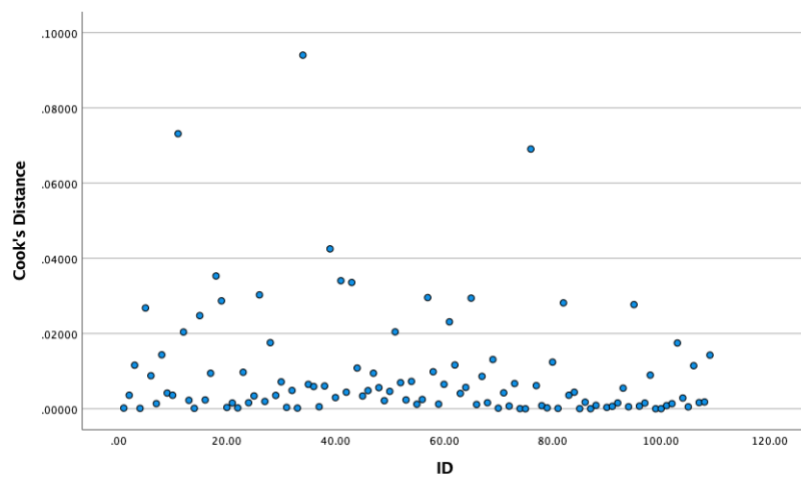
		t-test for Equality of Means					
		Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Brand Attitude	Equal variances assumed	<.001	<.001	1.72520	.28121	1.16773	2.28267
	Equal variances not assumed	<.001	<.001	1.72520	.28261	1.16471	2.28570
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	<.001	<.001	1.11786	.29086	.54126	1.69446
	Equal variances not assumed	<.001	<.001	1.11786	.29046	.54203	1.69369

Appendix 13 (Outliers)

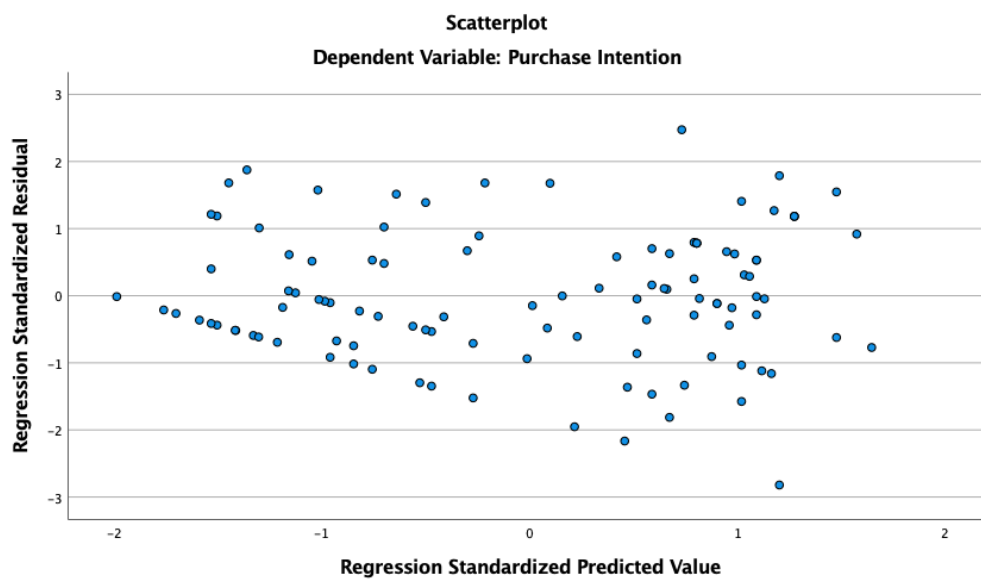
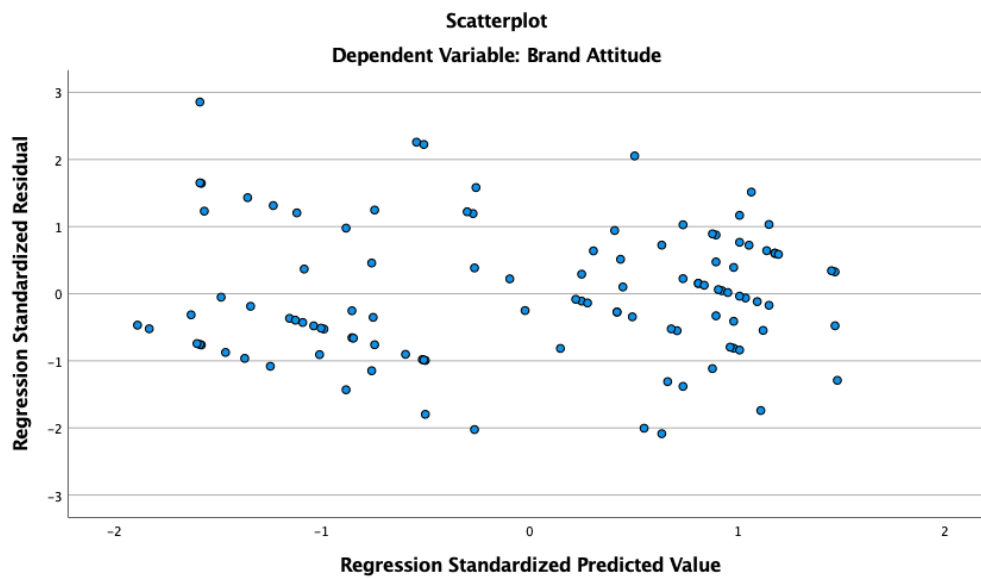
Brand Attitude



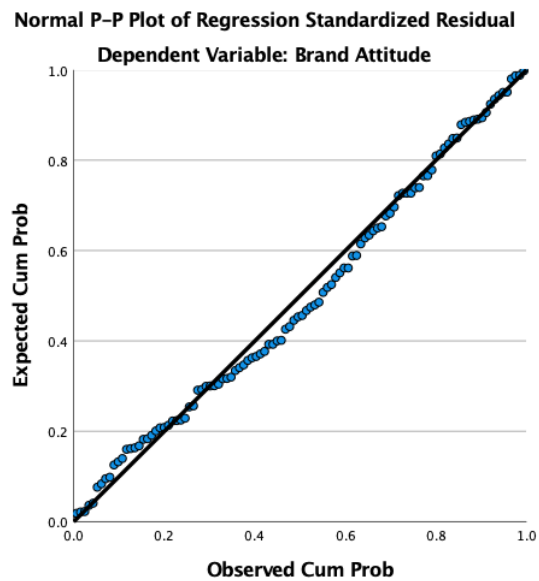
Purchase Intention



Appendix 14 (Linearity and Homoscedasticity)



Appendix 15 (Normality)

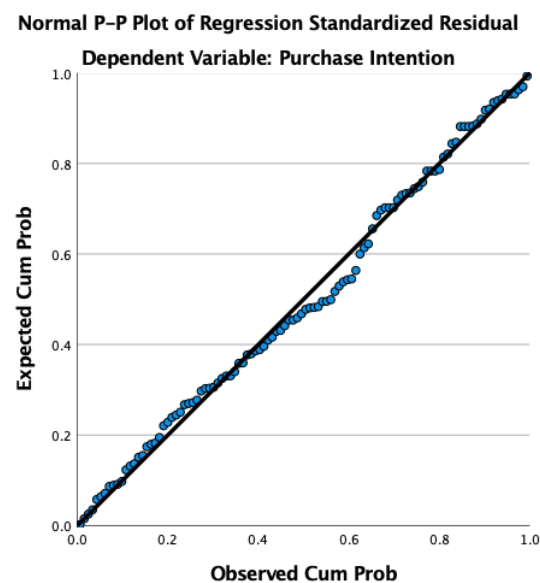


Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Unstandardised Residual	.064	108	.200*	.988	108	.425
Standardised Residual	.064	108	.200*	.988	108	.425

*, This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Unstandardised Residual	.066	108	.200*	.993	108	.888
Standardised Residual	.066	108	.200*	.993	108	.888

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

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