



**Brand Activist Attributes:  
Conceptualisation, Scale Development, and  
Empirical Validation of the Role in Consumer-Brand Relationships**

**Junan He**

Submitted in accordance with the  
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Sheffield University Management School

The University of Sheffield

June 2023

# Abstract

Academic and industry research indicates the increasing consumer expectations of brands to take stances and actions on unsolved and, at times, polarising socio-political issues, referred to as “brand activism” (Moorman, 2020). However, given the divisive nature and polarising effect of brand activism, brand managers face a challenging dilemma in balancing the risks of mismanaging brand activism with the potential to enhance brand perception and cultivate brand love (Kotler and Sarkar, 2017). Consequently, the evolving consumer expectations and managerial uncertainties regarding brand activism necessitate theoretical advancements in understanding consumers’ perceptions of brand activism.

The aim of this thesis is to develop and empirically validate a construct that captures how consumers perceive brand activism, referred to as “*brand activist attributes*” (BAA). To achieve this aim, the thesis adopts a mixed-methods, sequential exploratory approach. The qualitative phase involves conducting 32 in-depth interviews to conceptualise the BAA construct and explore an initial conceptual model of BAA. This is followed by a quantitative phase, which draws on three studies ( $n = 325$ , 711, and 143, respectively) to develop and validate a 13-item BAA scale. Furthermore, the initial model is empirically tested with a nationally representative UK sample ( $n = 1,042$ ). The findings validate the higher-order, three-dimensional, reflective structure of BAA, which is defined as a brand’s capacity to enact influence on the status quo of socio-political issues and empower consumers to engage with these issues in the marketplace. The results of the model testing reveal: 1) two BAA antecedents (issue-brand fit and brand values-driven motives); 2) a positive BAA effect on brand love under the full mediation of self-brand values congruence and the moderation of issue salience; and 3) the full mediation of brand love between self-brand values congruence and purchase intention.

Theoretically, the thesis responds to calls for research in “better marketing for a better world” (Chandy et al., 2021) by introducing BAA as a prospective branding strategy that benefits consumers, brands, and societies. It advances the understanding of consumer-brand relationships in politically polarised contexts, particularly in terms of how consumers perceive and respond to brand activism. Moreover, it provides empirical support for the prior proposition that commercial brands can assume an active role in democratic deliberations and societies. Managerially, the findings emphasise that BAA should be regarded as a long-term strategy for building brand love through values congruence rather than a one-off tactic pursued for immediate benefits. Additionally, the findings shed light on the selection of issues and market segments when strategising and implementing BAA. Lastly, the BAA scale assists policymakers from government authorities and NGOs in quantifying brand influence and identifying prospective partnerships to drive socio-political changes.

# Acknowledgements

---

Hey Junan,

Congratulations - you did it! The 18-year-old you must be so proud to see the person you have become over the past decade, discovering, recognising, and embracing the good things in life that bring you joy and showcase your talents. You didn't get many things right the first time, but the stumbles and falls brought you here. And none of this would have been possible without the generous support of many wonderful people:

First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my parents for their unconditional love and support. I can only imagine how hard it must have been for you to see me leave home to study somewhere 9,500 km away, and not being able to see me in person for over four years because of the COVID pandemic. I have been doing very well and thriving here, cherishing the time I spend at work and with my dear friends. Words cannot capture the extent of my gratitude - thank you for letting me be me and follow my dreams.

My deepest appreciation goes to my amazing supervisors, Prof. Eva Kipnis, Dr. Lien Monkhouse, and Prof. Fraser McLeay. It was your help and guidance during the application process for the programme and scholarship back in 2019 that made this journey a reality. Wow, it has been over four years since our first correspondence! Reflecting upon this journey, I realise I took a risky path in exploring an emerging field, employing a range of mixed methods I wasn't too familiar with at the start. Thank you for highlighting to me the potential risks, and ultimately giving me the autonomy in making the decisions. Your wealth of experience, expertise, and insights have been invaluable, and I feel incredibly blessed to have you as my supervisory team. There were countless moments when I felt like banging my head against the wall, but thanks to your unwavering trust in me, I got this big work done.

Moreover, this journey has introduced me to so many remarkable individuals. They've nudged me out of long hours of work, inviting me to cafés, parks, pubs, clubs, cities, countries, and other places of wonder. The world isn't always kind, but their companions

have been a lifeline during the darkest days and toughest times. Their warm smiles and unexpected gestures have chased away loneliness and kept hunger at bay.

To those who taught me the meaning of being loved and how to love, I owe a special debt of gratitude. For a long time, I have been trying so hard to block my feelings and prioritise self-enhancement, believing that success was solely driven by ambition, greed, envy, and jealousy. However, the interactions with you revealed a deeper truth - that love is the ultimate source of inspiration and fulfilment. I will carry your love and our memory with me throughout my life.

And of course, I cannot forget to mention my beloved companions, “Bao’zi” my cat and Bobby my dog, who have been a constant source of comfort and happiness. Their adorable presence and 6 am wake-up calls to keep me disciplined (to feed them) have undoubtedly contributed to my progress.

I don’t know what I have done to deserve the support and companions of these extraordinary individuals and fantastical beasts, but I do know I am the luckiest. This thesis represents not only years of hard work but also a testament to the power of love, support, and resilience. Without you all, this journey would have been incomplete.

To all of you, I offer my heartfelt and sincere thanks.

Junan,

30 June 2023

## **Declaration and Statement of Copyright**

---

I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means ([www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means)). This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. Please ensure that any publications arising from the thesis are acknowledged in this section

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotations from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

# Table of Contents

---

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Declaration and Statement of Copyright</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Research Motivation	1
1.2 Research Aim, Objectives, and Expected Contributions	4
1.3 Thesis Structure	6
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Overview of Chapter 2	8
2.2 Consumer-Brand Relationships (CBRs): How Consumers See and Interact with Brands	10
2.2.1 Brands with Human-Like Characteristics: Fantasy, Metaphor or Reality?	10
2.2.1.1 Seeing Brands with Human-like Personality Traits	11
2.2.1.2 Seeing Brands with Human-like Mental States	12
2.2.2 The Dynamic of CBRs: Diversity, Key Constructs, and Theoretical Muddling	14
2.2.2.1 Brand Trust: I Can Rely on You	15
2.2.2.2 Consumer-Brand Identification/Connection: You are a Part of Me	15
2.2.2.3 Brand Attachment: Ties that Bond	18
2.2.2.4 Brand Love: Art of (Conceptualising) Love	20
2.2.2.5 Theoretical Muddling of CBR Constructs	22
2.2.3 CBRs as a Process Phenomena: Initiation, Development, and Dissolution	25
2.2.4 Summary	28
2.3 Brand Attributes: Building Strong and Positive CBRs	31
2.3.1 Brand Utilitarian Attributes: Solving Practical Needs	32
2.3.2 Brand Hedonic Attributes: Satisfying the Sensory Pleasure	33
2.3.3 Brand Symbolic Attributes: Enabling Self-Construction	34
2.3.4 The Impact of Brand Attributes	36
2.3.4.1 The Impact of Brand Utilitarian Attributes	36
2.3.4.2 The Impact of Brand Hedonic Attributes	37
2.3.4.3 The Impact of Brand Symbolic Attributes	38
2.3.4.4 Boundary Conditions: Influential Factors on Brand Attributes	40
2.3.4.5 Interaction between Different Brand Attributes	40
2.3.5 Summary and Research Gap	41
2.4 Democratic Deliberation as Political Participation	44

2.5 Consumers as Political Actors	48
2.5.1 Political Consumerism	48
2.5.2 Consumer Participation in Social Movements	50
2.5.3 Consumer Movements	53
2.5.4 Motivations for Consumer Engagement in Political Participation	54
2.5.5 Summary	60
2.6 Brands as Political Actors	63
2.6.1 Corporate Social Responsibility	63
2.6.2 Brand Activism	65
2.6.3 Corporate Political Activities	69
2.6.4 Brand's Role in Deliberative Democracy	71
2.6.5 Summary and Research Gap	72
2.7 Theoretical Foundations - A Political Marketing Perspective	75
2.8 Chapter 2 Concluding Remarks	78
<b>Chapter 3: Overview of Research Design</b>	<b>79</b>
3.1 Overview of Chapter 3	79
3.2 Philosophical Stance	80
3.3 Research Design	83
3.4 Unit of Analysis and Research Site	85
3.5 Chapter 3 Concluding Remarks	87
<b>Chapter 4 Qualitative Phase - Study 1 Conceptualisation and Initial Conceptual Model</b>	<b>88</b>
4.1 Overview of Chapter 4	88
4.2 Research Approach	89
4.3 Research Strategy	92
4.4 Data Collection Method	95
4.4.1 The Use of Semi-Structured Interviews	95
4.4.2 Sampling and Participant Information	96
4.4.3 Design and Implementation of Interviews	100
4.5 Data Analysis Method	104
4.6 Study 1 Findings - Conceptualisation and Dimensions of BAA	108
4.6.1 1st BAA Dimension: Activist Branding	113
4.6.1.1 Process of Activist Branding	113
4.6.1.2 Legitimacy of Activist Branding	117
4.6.1.3 Marketing Communications of Activist Branding	122
4.6.2 2nd BAA Dimension: Brand Transformative Influence	143
4.6.2.1 Raising Awareness	143
4.6.2.2. Facilitating Discussions	147
4.6.2.3 Swaying Opinions	149
4.6.2.4 Shaping Behavioural and Habitual Shifts	153
4.6.2.5 Normalising Transformative Changes	155

4.6.3 3rd BAA Dimension: Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent	157
4.6.3.1 Empowerment through Activist Brands to “Vote”	157
4.6.3.2 Empowerment through Activist Brands to Voice Out	159
4.6.4 Conceptual Distinction of BAA from Other Constructs	165
4.7 Study 1 Findings - Antecedents of BAA	169
4.7.1 Issue-Brand Fit and BAA (H1)	169
4.7.2 Brand Values-Driven and Egoistic Motives and BAA (H2 and H3)	174
4.7.2.1 Perceived Brand Values-Driven Motives	175
4.7.2.2 The Impact of Brand Values-Driven Motives	176
4.7.2.3 Perceived Brand Egoistic Motives	178
4.7.2.4 The Impact of Perceived Brand Egoistic Motives	180
4.8 Study 1 Findings - Outcomes of BAA	183
4.8.1 Self-Brand Values Congruence (H4)	183
4.8.2 Brand Love and Purchase Intention (H5 and H6)	190
4.9 Study 1 Findings - The Role of Issue Salience (H7a, H7b, and H7c)	195
4.10 Chapter 4 Concluding Remarks	203
<b>Chapter 5: Quantitative Phase - Study 2 Scale Item Generation and Initial Refinement</b>	<b>204</b>
5.1 Overview of Chapter 5	204
5.2 Specifying BAA as A Reflective-Reflective Higher-Order Construct	206
5.3 Study 2a Scale Item Generation	207
5.4 Study 2b Expert Judgement Survey - Initial Scale Refinement	209
5.4.1 Survey Design	209
5.4.2 Results of Expert Judgement Survey	210
5.5 Study 2c Exploratory Factor Analysis - Further Scale Refinement	214
5.5.1 Sampling	214
5.5.2 Survey Administration	215
5.5.3 Survey Design and Procedure	219
5.5.4 Data Preparation	220
5.5.5 Data Analysis and Results	221
5.5.5.1 Factorability	221
5.5.5.2 Factor Extraction	221
5.5.5.3 Item Examination	224
5.5.5.4 Reliability	226
5.6 Chapter 5 Concluding Remarks	228
<b>Chapter 6: Quantitative Phase - Study 3 Scale Validation</b>	<b>229</b>
6.1 Overview of Chapter 6	229
6.2 Study 3a Confirmatory Factor Analysis- Scale Purification and Validation	230
6.2.1 Sample, Procedure and Measures	230
6.2.2 Examining Non-Response Bias and Common Method Variance	231
6.2.3 Scale Purification	236



6.2.4 Validation of Second-Order Three-Factor Structure	243
6.2.5 Discriminant, Predictive, and Known-Group Validity	246
6.3 Study 3b - Test-Retest Reliability	250
6.3.1 Sample, Procedure, and Measures	250
6.3.2 Test-Retest Reliability	250
6.4 Chapter 6 Concluding Remarks	252
<b>Chapter 7: Quantitative Phase - Study 4 Model Testing</b>	<b>253</b>
7.1 Overview of Chapter 7	253
7.2 Pretest	256
7.3 Sampling and Procedure	258
7.4 Data Examination	260
7.5 Examining Non-Response Bias and Common Method Variance	261
7.6 Measurement Model	263
7.7 Structural Equation Model	266
7.8 Testing Moderating Effects	271
7.9 Chapter 7 Concluding Remarks	273
<b>Chapter 8: Discussion of Findings</b>	<b>275</b>
8.1 Overview of Chapter 8	275
8.2 Discussion of Results Obtained for the Conceptualisation of BAA and its Dimensions	276
8.2.1 Discussion of Activist Branding	276
8.2.2 Discussion of Brand Transformative Influence	278
8.2.3 Discussion of Brand as Consumer Empowering Agent	279
8.2.4 Discussion of BAA	280
8.3 Discussion of Results Obtained for Examining BAA's Role in Conceptual Model and its Facilitating Condition	282
8.3.1 Discussion of Issue-Brand Fit and BAA	282
8.3.2 Discussion of Brand Values-Driven Motives and BAA	283
8.3.3 Discussion of Brand Egoistic Motives and BAA	284
8.3.4 Discussion of BAA and Self-Brand Values Congruence	286
8.3.5 Discussion of Self-Brand Values Congruence Effect	287
8.3.6 Discussion of Self-Brand Values Congruence as a Full Mediator	289
8.3.7 Discussion of Issue Salience as a BAA Facilitating Condition	290
8.3.8 Discussion of BAA Scale	291
8.4 Chapter 8 Concluding Remarks	293
<b>Chapter 9: Summary, Contributions, Implications, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research</b>	<b>294</b>
9.1 Overview of Chapter 9	294
9.2 Summary of Research Motivation, Aim, and Objectives	295
9.3 Summary of Key Findings	297
9.3.1 Research Objective 1: Conceptualise BAA	297

9.3.2 Research Objective 2: Explore an Initial Conceptual Model of BAA	297
9.3.3 Research Objective 3: Develop a Scale to Measure BAA	298
9.3.4 Research Objective 4: Validate BAA on Consumer-Brand Relationships	298
9.4 Theoretical Contributions	301
9.4.1 Contributions to brand attributes: Fulfilling Needs Regarding Socio-Political Issues	301
9.4.2 Contributions to Brand Activism: Consumer Perception and Response	301
9.4.2.1 Consumer Perceptions of Brand Activism	301
9.4.2.2 The Effect of Brand Activism and its Underlying Mechanism	302
9.4.3 Contribution to Debates on Brand's Role in Society: An Activist, Transformative, and Empowering Actor	303
9.4.4 Contribution to Political Consumerism and Social/Consumer Movements: The Mechanism of Buying for Socio-Political Reasons	304
9.4.5 Contributions to Self-Brand Congruence Theory: Pursuit of Values an Alternative Mechanism	306
9.5 Implications and Recommendations for Brand Managers	308
9.5.1 1st BAA Dimension: Activist Branding	308
9.5.2 2nd BAA Dimension: Brand Transformative Influence	309
9.5.3 3rd BAA Dimension: Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent	310
9.5.4 Issue-Brand Fit on BAA	311
9.5.5 The Insignificant Effect of Brand Egoistic Motives on BAA	312
9.5.6 The Significant Positive Effect of Values-Driven Values on BAA	312
9.5.7 Self-Brand Values Congruence Fully Mediates the Effect of BAA on Brand Love	313
9.5.8 The Moderating Role of Issue Salience	314
9.5.9 Brand Love Fully Mediates the Effect of Values Congruence on Purchase Intention	315
9.5.10 Overall Managerial Implications and Recommendations	315
9.6 Implications and Recommendations for Policymakers	318
9.7 Limitations and Directions for Future Research	320
9.7.1 The Dynamic and Fluid Nature of CBRs	320
9.7.2 Contextual Validity of BAA	321
9.7.3 The Effect of BAA in a Cross-Cultural Context	322
9.8 Chapter 9 Concluding Remarks	323
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>324</b>
Appendix 1. Summary of the Literature Review: Key Tenets, Findings, Research Gaps and Future Opportunities	324
Appendix 2. Semi-Structured Interview Protocol (Study 1)	332
Appendix 3. Design Survey Questionnaire (Study 2c - Pre-Screening Survey)	335
Appendix 4. Definition, Sources, Scale Items (Study 2b - Expert Judgement Survey)	337
Appendix 5. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 2c - EFA Survey)	356
Appendix 6. Definition, Source, Scale Items, and Alpha Values (Study 3a - CFA Survey)	

Appendix 7. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 3a - CFA Survey)	366
Appendix 8. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 4 - Pretest Survey)	377
Appendix 9. Definition, Source, Scale Items, and Alpha Values (Study 4 - Model Testing Survey)	389
Appendix 10. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 4 - Model Testing Survey)	394
Appendix 11. Participant Information Sheet (Interviews)	402
Appendix 12. Consent Form (Interviews)	406
Appendix 13. Participant Information Sheet (Surveys)	408
Appendix 14. Consent Form (Surveys)	412
Appendix 15. Study 3 Independent T-Test for Examining Non-Response Bias	414
Appendix 16. Study 4 Independent T-Test for Examining Non-Response Bias	415
Appendix 17. Studies 3a, 3b, and 4: Correlation Matrix for First-Order Factors of BAA	416
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<b>417</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>418</b>

## List of Tables

---

Table 2-1. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.2 Consumer-Brand Relationships)	29
Table 2-2. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.3 brand attributes)	43
Table 2-3. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.4 Democratic Deliberation as Political Participation)	47
Table 2-4. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.5 Consumers as Political Actors)	62
Table 2-5. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.6 Brands as Political Actors)	73
Table 4-1. Information of Interview Participants (Study 1)	98
Table 4-2. Data Structure of the Conceptualisation of BAA (Study 1)	111
Table 4-3. Conceptual Distinction of BAA from Related Marketing Constructs (Study 1)	166
Table 4-4. Summary of the Propositions and Hypotheses (Study 1)	201
Table 5-1. Initially Refined Scale Items Based on Expert Judgement (Study 2b)	211
Table 5-2. Examination of Outliers (Study 2c)	220
Table 5-3. Examination of Eigenvalues (Study 2c)	223
Table 5-4. Results of Factor Extraction with Principal Axis Factoring (Study 2c)	225
Table 5-5. Results of Parallel Analysis with Principal Axis (Study 2c)	227
Table 6-1. Model Comparison Tests with Marker Variables (Study 3a)	235
Table 6-2. Factor Loadings, Mean and Standardised Deviation (20 Items; Study 3a)	237
Table 6-3. Convergent Validity and Reliability (20 Items; Study 3a)	239
Table 6-4. Factor Loadings, Mean and Standardised Deviation (13 Items; Study 3a)	240
Table 6-5. Convergent Validity and Reliability (13 Items, Study 3a)	242
Table 6-6. Model Fit Indices and Model Comparison (Aware Sample; Study 3a)	244
Table 6-7. Model Fit Indices and Model Comparison (More Divisive Sample; Study 3a)	244
Table 6-8. Model Fit Indices and Model Comparison (Pooled Sample; Study 3a)	245
Table 6-9. Discriminant Validity of the BAA Scale (Study 3a)	248
Table 6-10. Predictive Validity of the BAA Scale (Study 3a)	249
Table 7-1. Summary of Hypotheses (Study 4)	254
Table 7-2. Pretesting Results of Issue-Brand Combinations (Study 4)	257

Table 7-3. Information of Participants (Study 4)	259
Table 7-4. Univariate and Multivariate Detection Results (Study 4)	260
Table 7-5. Model Comparison Tests with Marker Variable (Study 4)	262
Table 7-6. Construct Measures and Psychometric Properties (Study 4)	264
Table 7-7. Structural Model Estimation Results (Study 4)	270
Table 9-1. Summary of the Propositions and Hypotheses	300

## List of Figures

---

Figure 2-1. Overall Structure of Literature Review	9
Figure 3-1. Overview of Research Design	84
Figure 4-1. Visualisation of the Conceptualisation of BAA and its Dimensions	112
Figure 4-2. Visual Presentation of Conceptual Model (Study 1)	202
Figure 5-1. Visualising the Specification of BAA	206
Figure 5-2. Result of Scree Plot (Study 2c)	227
Figure 7-1. Visual Presentation of Conceptual Model	255
Figure 7-2. Visual Presentation of Structural Model (Direct Effects; Study 4)	268
Figure 7-3. Visual Presentation of Nested Model (Direct and Indirect Effects; Study 4)	269
Figure 7-4. Visual Presentation of the Moderation Effects (Study 4)	272

# Chapter 1 Introduction

*“If we share values on climate, same-sex marriage rights, racism, I think that’s a deeper bond than sugar and fat.”*

— Jostein Sondheim, CEO, Ben and Jerry’s (Holman and Buckley, 2020)

## 1.1 Research Motivation

---

The opening quote points to the evolution of consumer-brand relationships (CBRs), encompassing how consumers perceive, interact with, and establish relationships with brands (Fournier, 1998; MacInnis and Folkes, 2017). This evolution now includes the consideration of critical yet, at times, divisive socio-political issues faced by society, such as abortion rights, Brexit, and racial and gender equality. Indeed, recent industry reports indicate that as many as 89% of consumers now expect brands to engage with these issues (Alldredge et al., 2021; Edelman, 2021, 2022). In response, brands<sup>1</sup>, defined as “a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller’s goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers” (American Marketing Association, 2023), are increasingly recognising and fulfilling these expectations by adopting positions and taking actions on the issues (Guha and Korschun, 2023; Haddon, 2022; The CMO Survey, 2022). This phenomenon is referred to as brand activism by scholars (Moorman, 2020). Scholars differentiate brand activism from corporate social responsibility (CSR) or cause-related marketing due to its contentious nature (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Kotler and Sarkar, 2017). Previous research has established that

---

<sup>1</sup> In the context of this thesis, the term “brands” applies to commercial brands that provide products and/or services to avoid confusion with non-profit brands.

engagement with widely supported social issues (e.g. support for housing and education) can serve as a branding strategy that yields consumer-related outcomes such as identification, satisfaction, and loyalty (Kang et al., 2016; Lenz et al., 2017; Polonsky and Jevons, 2009). Yet, it remains uncertain whether brand engagement with more polarised issues can achieve the same outcomes (Pimentel et al., 2023). Many heed the saying “get woke, go broke”, as exemplified by Elon Musk’s blame of Netflix’s subscriber loss for diverse casting and socially conscious writing: “The woke mind virus is making Netflix unwatchable” (Di Placido, 2022, p. 1). Nevertheless, an increasing number of brands are standing out and succeeding for their well-crafted strategy of tackling critical yet controversial issues. For instance, Unilever associates its 400 brands with respective progressive issues and attributes the distinct brand perception and sales growth of its brands like Dove and Ben and Jerry’s to their commitment to promoting diversity, inclusivity and equality (Chaudhuri, 2022; Unilever, 2022).

Amidst the ongoing debate and conflicting consumer-related outcomes of brand activism, many managers face a formidable dilemma in balancing the potential risks of brand activism with the potential to cultivate an enhanced brand perception and brand love (He, 2022; Moorman, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Recent academic research reveals that brand activism has a positive (versus negative) effect on consumer responses in the case of consumer-brand alignment (versus misalignment) on stance (Hydock et al., 2020; Wannow et al., 2023), if not an overall asymmetrically negative effect (Haupt et al., 2023; Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020). However, how consumers perceive and respond to brand activism remains largely inconclusive and critically requires investigation (Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020; de Ruyter et al., 2022).



Moreover, existing research has devoted little attention to conceptualising brand activism from a branding perspective, especially in terms of brand attributes. Brand attributes refer to the extent to which a brand is perceived as having qualities and characteristics that align with consumer expectations and satisfy consumer needs (Page and Herr, 2002; Keller, 2021). Previous studies have quite well-established how the strategic management of brand utilitarian (e.g. quality), hedonic (e.g. aesthetic and experiential features) and symbolic (e.g. means for self-expression) attributes can meet consumer expectations and drive desirable consumer-brand relationships (e.g. Batra et al., 2012; Keller, 2012; Khamitov et al., 2020). Scholars acknowledge that changes in consumer needs necessitate the corresponding adaptation of branding strategies (e.g. Park et al., 1986), yet, the current theorisation of brand attributes lack thorough consideration of consumer expectations and needs regarding socio-political issues. These gaps impede the advancement of branding in benefiting consumers, brands and societies (Chandy et al., 2021; de Ruyter et al., 2022), as well as the better understanding of CBRs in socio-political contexts (e.g. Huff et al., 2021; Price and Coulter, 2019; Shultz et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020). In sum, the question of how consumers perceive brand activism, referred to as *brand activist attributes* in this thesis, is both managerially and theoretically critical, yet the answer to it remains elusive and uncertain.

## 1.2 Research Aim, Objectives, and Expected Contributions

---

This thesis intends to contribute to the advancement of the literature on branding, brand activism, and consumer-brand relationships, while also providing practical insights into whether and how brand activism can benefit brands, consumers, and societies. The research aim of this thesis focuses on the construct development of brand activist attributes (BAA). Accordingly, four research objectives were formulated to achieve the aim of construct development: 1) to conceptualise the construct of BAA; 2) to explore an initial model capturing the role of BAA in consumer-brand relationships; 3) to develop a scale to measure BAA; and 4) to empirically validate BAA on the initial model of consumer-brand relationships.

This thesis is expected to contribute theoretical insights and empirical findings to brand attributes, brand activism, and consumer-brand relationships. First, it intends to approach the phenomenon of brand activism from a consumer perspective, and theories how brand activism could serve as a branding strategy that benefits consumers, brands, and societies. Second, it intends to contribute to the branding theory by introducing the critical yet underdeveloped construct *brand activist attributes* (BAA), as a new form of brand attribute in a socio-political context. This construct will be conceptualised and operationalised to explain how consumers perceive brand activism. Third, it expects to contribute to the literature on consumer-brand relationships by inductively exploring and then empirically testing the role of BAA in a broad conceptual model that includes constructs related to consumer perception and response to brands. These findings extend the existing literature and enhance our understanding of how and when brand activism can serve as a branding strategy that fosters strong and positive consumer-brand relationships in socio-political contexts.

The managerial implications of this thesis are threefold. First, the thesis aims to provide practitioners with a robust BAA scale to assess how consumers perceive brand activism. Second, it expects to offer brand managers insights and empirical evidence on when and how brand activism can serve as a prospective branding strategy to achieve benefits for consumers, brands and societies. Third, it intends to provide policymakers a consumer perspective on the role of commercial brands in the democratic political system and offers suggestions for policy development and implementation.

## 1.3 Thesis Structure

---

This thesis includes nine chapters: 1) Introduction; 2) Literature review and theoretical foundations; 3) Overview of research design; 4) Qualitative phase - Study 1 BAA conceptualisation and initial conceptual model; 5) Quantitative phase - Study 2 scale item generation and initial refinement; 6) Quantitative phase - Study 3 scale validation; 7) Quantitative phase - Study 4 model testing; 8) Discussion of findings; and 9) Summary, contributions, implications, limitations, and future directions.

Following the introduction to this thesis, Chapter 2 first reviews the existing literature on CBRs to gain insights into how consumers perceive and interact with brands. The chapter also examines the current conceptualisation of brand attributes and highlights its misalignment from contemporary consumer needs and branding practice. Lastly, the chapter provides a multidisciplinary review of the political role played by consumers and brands in a political system, drawing on the deliberative democracy theory, and develops a theoretical foundation that explores how brands can engage with socio-political issues to satisfy consumer needs.

Chapter 3 discusses the research philosophy and presents an overall research design, including data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter 4 presents the detailed design of the qualitative phase and reports the findings, such as the conceptualisation of BAA and the initial conceptual model comprising a set of propositions and hypotheses to be tested in the quantitative phase. Chapter 5 and 6 reports the design, analysis and results of BAA scale development and validation. This is followed by Chapter 7, which empirically tests the exploratory conceptual model proposed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 8 offers a discussion of the study findings, integrating from the empirical evidence with the existing multidisciplinary literature. Lastly, Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by summarising the research motivation, aim, objectives, its key findings and how these findings help achieve the objectives. Hence, the chapter articulates the theoretical contributions as well as managerial implications and recommendations. Moreover, this chapter discusses limitations and proposes future directions for research, closing with concluding remarks.

# Chapter 2 Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations

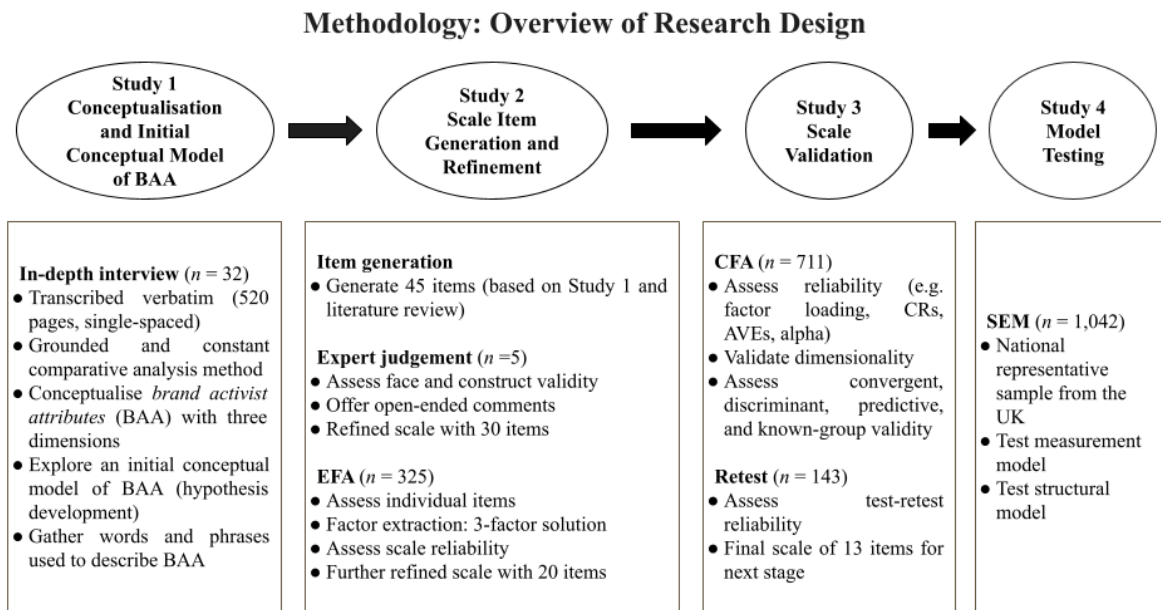
## 2.1 Overview of Chapter 2

---

The focus of this thesis is on the construct development of *brand activist attributes* (BAA) and its role in consumer-brand relationships (CBRs). However, before the construct of BAA and its role in CBRs can be envisaged, it is necessary to understand the current conception of CBRs and brand attribute, and also align conceptions of consumers and brands with the evidence of the evolved nature of the contemporary marketplace permeated by politics and socio-political considerations.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to: 1) understand the existing underpinnings and key constructs of CBRs; 2) review the existing conceptualisation of brand attribute and identify its limitations; and 3) develop a theoretical foundation that facilitates the investigation of how brands meet consumer needs and expectations regarding socio-political issues through brand activism. The chapter is structured into six main sections. (please refer to Figure 2-1 for a visual presentation of the connection between these sections).

Figure 2-1. Overall Structure of Literature Review



Section 2.2 addresses the first chapter objective and outlines the construct that can arguably represent strong and positive CBRs. Section 2.3 addresses the second chapter objective by unfolding the existing conceptualisation of brand attributes and its misalignment from the evolved consumer expectations of brands for addressing socio-political issues. Together, Sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 achieve the third chapter objective. In particular, Section 2.4 reviews deliberative democracy theory to develop a view that political participation goes beyond electoral contexts and comprises actors and activities that take place in the marketplace. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 review existing conceptions informing the political role of consumers and brands, respectively. Finally, Section 2.7 proposes theoretical foundations that depict a wider political system where brands engage in deliberation about socio-political issues with other political actors to satisfy consumers' needs. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the literature review. Section 2.8 briefly concludes this chapter.

## **2.2 Consumer-Brand Relationships (CBRs): How Consumers See and Interact with Brands**

---

Since the seminal work by Fournier (1998), extensive research has significantly advanced our understanding of consumer-brand relationships (CBRs)—the purposive and reciprocal interactions between consumers and brands—and the sequential effects of CBRs on relational, organisational and social outcomes (Khamitov et al., 2020; Macinnis et al., 2020; Nguyen and Feng, 2021). The CBRs literature is rooted in two fundamental theories: the theory of interpersonal relationships (Hinde, 1995) and brand anthropomorphisation/personification theory (Cohen, 2014). The interpersonal relationship theory suggests that relationships are purposive involving reciprocal interactions between relationship partners. The brand anthropomorphisation/ personification theory posits that consumers perceive as possessing human-like characteristics, such as personalities, intentions, and values. These two theories form the foundational basis for CBRs, highlighting that people perceive and interact with brands in a manner similar to their interactions with other humans (Fournier, 1998). This theoretical foundation, emphasising human-like characteristics and interactions, serves as an instrumental, if not a dominant, lens through which scholars and practitioners conceptualise, measure, and investigate interactions between consumers and brands (Blocker et al., 2012; Davies et al., 2003; Fetscherin et al., 2019).

### **2.2.1 Brands with Human-Like Characteristics: Fantasy, Metaphor or Reality?**

Despite its influence for over a decade since its initial development, the CBRs theory has faced criticism due to its ambiguity and lack of evidence regarding whether consumers genuinely perceive brands as human-like entities (Avis et al., 2012). Moreover, contradictory evidence has challenged the proposition of similarity in the judgement processes between



humans and brands (Alvarez and Fournier, 2016). For instance, Yoon et al. (2006) conducted a study using functional magnetic resonance imaging to investigate the similarity of judgement processes between humans and brands. Their findings revealed differences in brain activation patterns, with brand judgements showing lower activation in the medial prefrontal cortex regions, responsible for judgements about persons, and higher activation in the left inferior prefrontal cortex, associated with judgements about objects. These results suggest that distinct brain areas are involved in the evaluation of brands and humans, challenging the assumption that people assess and judge brands in the same way as they do with humans.

Criticism and contradictory evidence have fuelled further research to explore how and under what conditions consumers do perceive brands in anthropomorphic terms. To date, the literature has established the conceptualisation and manifestation of brand anthropomorphism (for a review see MacInnis and Folkes, 2017). Drawing on psychological theories of anthropomorphism (Epley et al., 2007), scholars in CBRs explicitly conceptualise that consumers attribute human-like characteristics to brands as non-human entities (Aggarwal and McGill, 2007; Kim and McGill, 2011; Golossenko et al., 2020). The following section examines two main ways in which brands are perceived to be anthropomorphic: brands with human-like personality traits and brands with human-like mental states.

#### 2.2.1.1 Seeing Brands with Human-like Personality Traits

In her groundbreaking work on brand personality, Aaker (1997) empirically derived five broad personality traits that consumers associate with brands: sophistication, sincerity, excitement, competence, and ruggedness. These brand personality traits have been cross-culturally validated by subsequent studies (Sung and Tinkham, 2005). Carpara and et

al. (2001) applied Digman's (1990) Big Five personality traits observed in humans (i.e. openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) and found that conscientiousness and agreeableness remain salient in consumers' perceptions of brands. Grohmann (2009) further explored this topic and discovered that consumers also perceive brands as having "male" and "female" personality traits. Chen et al. (2015) utilised a combination of machine learning and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) techniques, revealing that brand personality traits activate specific brain regions associated with reasoning, imagery, and affective processing - cognitive processes that require consumers to conceive of brands as having human-like traits.

Other studies establish that the perception of brand human-like characteristics becomes more pronounced when consumers are exposed to subtle or explicit cues that induce anthropomorphism (Puzakova and Kwak, 2017; Waytz et al., 2010). These cues include, but are not limited to, brand animation with resemblance to human face and body (Brasel and Hagtvedt, 2016; Hur et al., 2015; Miao et al., 2022), brand association with human name (Eskine and Locander, 2014; Waytz et al., 2014), and brand description with first-person narratives (Aggarwal and McGill, 2007; Puzakova et al., 2013). These studies, along with others in the field, provide substantial evidence that consumers perceive brands as possessing human-like personalities, particularly when exposed to anthropomorphic cues. This evidence is further supported by bibliometric and meta-analytic reviews (Eisen and Stokburger-Sauer, 2013; Radler, 2018).

#### 2.2.1.2 Seeing Brands with Human-like Mental States

The anthropomorphisation of brands, attributing them with human-like personality traits, has the potential to influence consumers' perception of brands having mental states. This

perception includes the brand capacity to make moral judgments and form intentions towards others (Epley and Waytz, 2010). To investigate the extent to which consumers evaluate brands based on intentions, akin to their evaluations of humans, Kervyn et al. (2012) applied *the Stereotype Content Model* from psychology within a consumer-brand context. The stereotype model proposes that perceived intentions, specifically “what are this other’s intentions toward me?”, play a vital role in people’s judgments of individuals and social groups. These perceived intentions guide people’s decision-making and interactions with the subject (Fiske et al., 2002). This stereotype model was replicated and extended in a subsequent study by Cuddy et al. (2007), where participants were asked to rate 20 social groups based on the perceived warmth. The results indicate that the participants’ judgement of social groups varied depending on whether the groups were perceived to have positive, cooperative intentions or negative, competitive, or exploitative intentions (e.g. middle-class was viewed as well-intended while the rich was perceived as ill-intended). Kervyn et al.’s (2012) empirical evidence demonstrates the applicability of this stereotype model to consumer perception of brands, as consumers attribute good intentions to certain brands (e.g. Public Transport, Johnson & Johnson) and negative intentions to others (e.g. BP and Marlboro). This finding is consistent with earlier research by Aaker et al. (2010), in which a series of experimental studies demonstrated that consumers perceive non-profit organisations as being warmer than commercial brands. These pioneering works, along with subsequent works they inspired (e.g. Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Kolbl et al., 2019, 2020), further establish the validity of the basic tenet of CBRs theory: that people perceive brands in a manner similar to their perceptions of humans.

### **2.2.2 The Dynamic of CBRs: Diversity, Key Constructs, and Theoretical Muddling**

CBRs encompass various dimensions, including but not limited to functionality, emotional connection, duration, frequency, sincerity and importance (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2014). Existing literature has established the diverse nature of CBRs. For instance, consumers may perceive the brand as a “servant” working for their benefit, taking on the role of a “consumer-master” (Kim and Kramer, 2015). Conversely, when the brand restricts their ability for self-expression, consumers may view it as a rival (Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018). The fundamental premise for these diverse forms of CBRs—consumers form relationships with brands similarly to interpersonal relationships—is also supported by neuroscientific evidence. A functional magnetic resonance imaging study by Reimann et al. (2012) revealed an association between established CBRs and insula activation, a mechanism crucial for psychological experience in interpersonal relationships, such as empathy, social exclusion, aversion, addiction, maternal and romantic love.

Although more than 52 taxonomies of CBRs have been proposed to date (e.g. best friends, flings, and enmities; see Fournier, 2009), scholars have primarily focused on the positive-negative relationship dichotomy (Fetscherin et al., 2019; MacInnis and Folkes, 2017). Four main types of CBRs have garnered significant attention: brand trust (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), brand identification (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), brand attachment (Park et al., 2010), and brand love (Batra et al., 2012). Empirical studies have identified these CBRs as positive predictors of key brand benefits, such as market share, cash flows and profits (e.g. Khamitov et al., 2019; Nguyen and Feng, 2021; Pansari and Kumar, 2017).

### 2.2.2.1 Brand Trust: I Can Rely on You

The classic theory of interpersonal relationships defines trust as the belief in the trustworthiness and reliability of a partner (Rotter, 1967). This definition, widely adopted by marketing scholars, applies to both inter- and intra-organisational relationships. Schurr and Ozanne (1985) define trust as “the belief that a party’s word or promise is reliable and a party will fulfil his/her obligations in an exchange relationship” (p. 940). Similarly, Moorman et al. (1993) define trust as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (p. 82). These definitions of trust emphasise that the belief of a commercial partner performing agreed actions and delivering expected outcomes will lead to a perception of integrity on which the party can confidently rely (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Applying the concept of trust to the context of CBRs, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) empirically developed an instrument for measuring *brand trust*, referring to it as “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” (p. 82). In a similar vein, Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman (2001) suggest that brand trust relates to the extent to which consumers are confident that the brand will meet their consumption expectations, such as getting tasks done and achieving goals. Overall, the concept of brand trust encompasses consumers’ confidence and belief in the brand as a relational partner, particularly in its ability to fulfil its stated function.

### 2.2.2.2 Consumer-Brand Identification/Connection: You are a Part of Me

Early research on *consumer-brand identification* drew upon the literature on organisational identification, which posits that when members (e.g. employees or alumnus) of an organisation identify with the organisation, the members feel personally connected to the organisation and incorporate the organisation into their self identity (Mael and Ashforth,

1992). In the context of CBRs, brands, as carriers of symbolic meanings (Levy, 1959; McCracken, 1986), enables consumers to reflect on their sense of self, construct their identity, and achieve identity-related goals (Belk, 1988; 2013). Building on Belk's (1988) argument that consumers are what they buy, own, and consume, Bhattacharya et al. (1995; 2003) propose that consumers identify with brands to achieve self-definitional needs. This notion of consumer-brand identification has propelled research on how consumers identify with brands (Chernev et al., 2011; Lam et al., 2010; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Grounded in this stream of thoughts, Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) define consumer-brand identification as a consumer's cognitive perception of a state of oneness with or belongingness to a brand. Despite the extensive research conducted on the cognitive aspect of consumer-brand identification, Lam et al. (2012) draw attention to the longstanding disregard for the potential affective dimension in terms of how consumers emotionally connect with a brand. In response, the study by Wolter and Cronin (2015) decomposes consumer-brand identification into cognitive identification and affective identification. Their findings empirically support the notion that consumers not only cognitively identify with a brand, but also derive affectively positive emotions from the cognitive identification. Although their study establishes the discriminant validity between the cognitive and affective dimensions of identification, the authors missed an opportunity to demonstrate, at the dimension level, the conceptual and empirical distinctiveness of the proposed affective identification ("an effectively positive connection...positive self-conscious emotions... a customer purposely using an organisation's identity for positive self-evaluation"; p. 402) from related constructs, such as brand affect (i.e. "a brand's potential to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer as a result of its use"; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; p. 82). Additionally, they did not establish, at the construct level, the distinction between their conceptualisation and well-established ones by Bhattacharya et al. (1995; 2003) or Stokburger-Sauer and Sen

(2012). In summary, existing literature largely agrees that consumer-brand identification, as a form of CBRs, pertains to the extent to which a consumer cognitively identifies with a brand, perceiving a sense of oneness with or belongingness to the brand.

It is worth noting that consumer-brand identification shares conceptual similarities with another CBR construct termed *consumer-brand connection* (Escalas, 2004; Escalas and Bettman, 2003; Chaplin and John, 2005), and the literature has not reached a consensus on the conceptual and empirical distinctions between these constructs. Grounding in the same theoretical notion of the extended self (Belk, 1988) that underlies consumer-brand identification, consumer-brand connection is defined as “the extent to which individuals have incorporated brands into their self-concepts” (Escalas and Bettman, 2003; p. 40), with the goal of constructing their actual or ideal self—defining who they are and who they would like to be (Escalas, 2004). Given the similar theoretical ground (i.e. extended self; Belk, 1988) and subject entity (i.e. self-brand overlap, self-definitional needs, and enabling self-construction) that both consumer-brand identification and consumer-brand connection address, scholars have highlighted the conceptual similarity between these two constructs (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) while others adopt them interchangeably (e.g. Albert and Merunka, 2013; Albert et al., 2008; Sen et al., 2015). This conceptual overlap is also supported by empirical evidence from a meta-analysis, suggesting that these two constructs exhibit substantially similar predictive power for CBR outcomes (Khamitov et al., 2019). Consequently, further theoretical and statistical investigation is necessary to explore the construct overlap.

### 2.2.2.3 Brand Attachment: Ties that Bond

Akin to the conceptualisation of other CBRs, the idea of consumers developing a strong emotional attachment to brands draws upon psychology literature, specifically attachment theory in the parent-infant context (Bowlby, 1980). Bowlby define attachment as an emotion-laden bond between an individual and a significant other, which is naturally desirable for average humans to form, such as parentships, kinships, friendships, and romantic relationships (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Hazan and Shaver, 1994; Trinke and Bartholomew, 1997).

Analogously, Thomson et al. (2005) propose that consumers can also become emotionally attached to a small subset of brands. They provide a conceptualisation of *brand attachment*, defining it as the strength of the emotion-laden bond between a consumer and a specific brand. They distinguish brand attachment from three related constructs: brand attitude, brand satisfaction, and brand involvement. According to them, brand attachment is characterised by strong affective emotions and often reflects high brand involvement, favourable brand attitudes, and brand satisfaction. Brand involvement, on the other hand, is a cognitive-based construct representing the allocation of cognitive resources to the brand, while brand attitude and satisfaction are evaluative-based constructs that invoke evaluative reactions to the brand.

In line with their conceptualisation of brand attachment as an emotion-based construct, the measurement of brand attachment proposed by Thomson et al. (2005) comprises a set of emotion-based items that tap into three categories of emotional feelings experienced by consumers: affection, connection, and passion. Furthermore, the examination of discriminant validity indicates the distinction between brand attachment and the related construct. However, it remains unclear whether and to what extent Thomson et al.'s (2005) brand



affection dimension of brand attachment is similar or different from Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2001) widely known and adopted brand affect. Although Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) do not provide a clear theorisation or conceptualisation of brand affect, the construct appears to be largely emotion-based regarding its given definition: "a brand's potential to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer as a result of its use" (p. 82); and its indicator: "I feel good when I use this brand", "This brand makes me happy", "This brand give me pleasure" (p. 87). Given the similarity in literal meaning and indicators, it is not clear to what extent Thomson et al.'s (2005) brand affection is similar to or different from Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2001) brand affect.

While Thomson et al. (2005) conceptualise and operationalise brand attachment as emotional-based and distinguish it from the cognitive-based construct of brand involvement, Park et al. (2010; 2013) conceptualise cognitive connection, similar to brand involvement in Thomson et al. (2005), as one of the components of brand attachment. They explicitly define brand attachment as the strength of the bond connecting the consumer and the brand, represented by the consumer's memory network that involves both cognitive thoughts and emotional feelings about the brand in relation to the self. On one hand, they argue that self-brand connection should be conceptualised as an indicator of brand attachment that captures the "bond". On the other hand, they propose the other indicator "brand prominence" to add precision to the definition of brand attachment, recognising that the bond represented by consumer-brand connection can vary in its "strength", i.e. "the perceived memory accessibility of a brand to an individual" (Park et al., 2013, p. 231).

In summary, while early work draws from psychological attachment theory and conceptualises brand attachment as the positive emotions the consumer feels with the brand,

more recent works re-conceptualise brand attachment to incorporate consumer-brand connection and brand prominence. Park et al.'s (2010; 2013) conceptualisation of brand attachment, although without explicit acknowledgement, places disproportionate emphasis on consumers' self-definitional needs and their usage of brands for self-construction purposes in the context of symbolic consumption.

#### 2.2.2.4 Brand Love: Art of (Conceptualising) Love

Similar to the early conceptualisation of other types of CBRs discussed earlier, pioneer theorists drew on psychology theories to develop the notion of *brand love* in consumer research. Sternberg's (1986, p. 119) triangular theory of love posits that intimacy (i.e. "feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness"), passion (i.e. "the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation") and commitment (i.e. short term recognition of being in love and long term intention to maintain that love) are three fundamental components of love. Shimp and Madden (1988) argue that this tripartite structure of interpersonal love is analogous to the consumer-brand relationships, whereby consumers develop attachment, connectedness, passion-like feelings, love, and commitment towards significant brands.

Building upon this pioneering work and Fournier's (1998) notion that consumers relate to brands similarly to the way they do with humans, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) propose a formal conceptualisation of brand love as a construct. They define brand love as "the degree of passionate emotional attachment" (p. 81) a consumer has for a brand . To operationalise this conceptualisation, they developed a measure that captures passion, attachment, positive brand evaluations and brand-related emotions as indicators of brand love. Given the conceptual and operational similarity, scholars have pointed out that Carrol and Ahuvia's

(2006) brand love seemingly refers to “a state that seems similar to brand attachment” (MacInnis and Folkes, 2017, p. 12) - the cognitive connection and emotional bond between a consumer and a brand (Thomson et al., 2005).

Moreover, the direct adoption of Sternberg’s (1986) three components of interpersonal love in a consumer-brand context might introduce bias in participants’ responses to their genuine conception of “brand love” and miss the opportunity to capture the interaction nuances in a consumer-brand context. Therefore, to further explore the complexity and validate the construct of brand love, Albert et al. (2008) adopted a mixed-methods and cross-cultural approach. Their cluster analysis of the words used by consumers to describe why a particular brand is special reveals 11 dimensions of brand love, labelled as: “passion (for the brand), duration of the relationship (the relationship with the brand exists for a long time), self-congruity (congruity between self-image and product image), dreams (the brand favours consumer dreams), memories (evoked by the brand), pleasure (that the brand provides to the consumer), attraction (feel toward the brand), uniqueness (of the brand and/or of the relationship), beauty (of the brand), trust (the brand has never disappointed), declaration of affect (feel toward the brand)” (pp. 1072–73). While Albert et al. (2008) contribute a broad range of dimensions of brand love, they acknowledge the limitation that the results do not conceptually represent the aspects of attachment or commitment, which prior literature on consumer research argues to be the most important aspects of brand love (Fournier, 1998; Thomson et al., 2005). MacInnis and Folkes (2017) further conclude that the 11 dimensions identified by Albert et al. (2008) seem to refer to a colloquial expression of brands they consider special. These studies highlight the substantiality of brand love as a construct, yet little agreement has been reached regarding what exactly “brand love” entails, given the

diversity in its definition ranging from one to 11 dimensions (Albert et al., 2008; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

Given the conceptual ambiguity of brand love, Batra et al. (2012) argue that such a complex concept can be better represented by using a protocol, which is a category of a list of attributes one associates with a concept (Fehr, 2006). In their mixed-method sequential exploratory study, they reveal a higher-order prototype of brand love that captures high quality, consumer-brand connection, passion-driven behaviours, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, anticipated separation distress, attitude valence, attitude strength, loyalty, and WoM. The authors note the overlap between their conceptualisation of brand love and other constructs concerning different forms of CBRs, such as brand attachment (Thomson et al., 2005) and consumer-brand connection (Escalas and Bettman, 2003), but they argue that their conceptualisation integrates and goes beyond existing constructs to serve as an integrated framework for understanding the overall cognitive, affective, and behavioural experiences of strong and positive relationships consumers form with brands.

#### 2.2.2.5 Theoretical Muddling of CBR Constructs

As discussed above, the literature has extensively examined various consumer-brand relationships (CBRs), with significant attention given to brand trust, consumer-brand identification/connection, brand attachment, and brand love. These CBR constructs were initially developed based on corresponding constructs from the psychology literature, which primarily focus on interpersonal relationships. Consumer scholars have analogously applied established interpersonal constructs, such as trust, attachment, and love, to describe specific types of relationships between consumers and brands. Despite sharing a common foundation

in psychology literature, the conceptual development of these CBR constructs relies on specific psychological constructs. For instance, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) utilise Stenberg's (1986) tri-component interpersonal love to represent consumers' love for brands, while Thomson et al. (2005) draw from Bowlby's (1980) work on interpersonal attachment to develop the concept of brand attachment.

These initial conceptualizations of CBR constructs have undergone further refinement and expansion by subsequent works, incorporating contextual components specific to consumer-brand interactions, particularly under the influential notion of Belk's (1988) extended self. For instance, Park et al. (2010) build upon the classic conceptualisation of emotion-based brand attachment by Thomson et al. (2005) and incorporate Escalas and Bettman's (2003) notion of consumer-brand connection. This expanded conceptualisation of brand attachment highlights the cognitive and affective bond that occurs when consumers use brands as symbolic means to achieve self-definitional goals. Similarly, Albert et al. (2008) proposed an extended conceptualisation of Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) brand love, incorporating not only emotion-based components but also symbolic (e.g. consumer-brand connection) and cognitive components (e.g. memories evoked by the brand).

However, the proposed or refined conceptualisations often overlook the conceptual distinctions among CBR constructs. The fuzzy definitions and conceptual overlaps among interpersonal relationship constructs, analogously applied to the consumer-brand context, have made it challenging for scholars to conceptually differentiate CBR constructs. For instance, consumer-brand connection (Escalas and Bettman, 2003) and consumer-brand identification (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) heavily overlap in terms of their focal notion of "oneness", "self-brand overlap", "consumer self-definitional needs", and "self-construction".

Brand love, as defined by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), is described as an affective emotional attachment to a brand, while Park et al. (2013) consider consumer-brand connection (based on Escalas and Bettman, 2003) as a dimension of brand attachment. Additionally, Wolter and Cronin (2015) view affective emotion as an indicator of consumer-brand identification. This theoretical overlap of brand relationships has been noted as a significant challenge by Khamitov et al. (2019).

Arguably, the conceptual overlap among the focal CBR constructs also leads to similarities in measurement. For instance, consumers' perception of connection to the brand serves as an indicator of various scales. such as Escalas and Bettman's (2003) consumer-brand connection scale ("I feel a personal connection to this brand", p. 382), Thomson et al.'s (2005) brand attachment scale ("the extent to which the word [connected] describes your feelings for the brand?", pp. 79–80), Park et al.'s (2013) brand attachment scale ("...to what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to the brand?", p. 246), and Batra et al.'s (2012) brand love scale ("the extent to which you feel emotionally connected to the brand?", p. 8).

To address concerns regarding measurement similarity, researchers have examined the predictive power of these CBR constructs on outcomes related to CBRs, particularly brand loyalty. Brand loyalty, defined as consumers' constant preference for the brand or branded offerings (Homburg et al., 2009; Mazodier and Merunka, 2012), has been identified as a promising mechanism through which CBR constructs relate to key financial performance, such as the ratio of advertising spending to sales, market share and cash flows (e.g. Morgan and Rego, 2009; Mazodier and Merunka, 2012). A meta-analysis conducted by Khamitov et al. (2019) confirms the positive predictive power of brand trust, brand attachment, brand love, consumer-brand connection, and consumer-brand identification on brand loyalty. Their

findings further suggest that brand attachment and brand love are more effective drivers of loyalty compared to other CBR constructs. Moreover, the results indicate that brand attachment and brand love exhibit statistically equivalent power in predicting brand loyalty, contradicting Park et al.'s (2010; 2013) claim and finding that their brand attachment outperforms brand love.

In summary, the literature has identified various typologies of CBRs, including brand trust, consumer-brand connection, consumer-brand identification, brand attachment, and brand love, which have been extensively examined for their predictive power in relation to CBR-related outcomes. Although scholars have pointed out the conceptual overlap and lack of conceptual distinction among these CBR constructs, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to establish clear distinctions or examine interrelationships among existing CBR constructs. Until such establishment, a hierarchical conceptualisation is deemed appropriate to represent the complexity of CBRs. Therefore, the thesis follows Batra et al.'s (2012) widely adopted view that CBRs, as a fuzzy and complex concept, are better described as prototypes—a holistic consumer perception of cognitive, affective, and behavioural brand experiences. As such, this thesis refers to strong and positive relationships consumers have with brands as brand love, aligning with the general description in the field of CBRs (e.g. Fetscherin et al., 2019).

### **2.2.3 CBRs as a Process Phenomena: Initiation, Development, and Dissolution**

CBRs are not only dynamic in form but also evolve as a process phenomenon. While previous research has primarily focused on temporarily stable relationship structures, it is crucial to recognise that the development of CBRs is a process phenomenon. Similar to interpersonal relationships, CBRs develop or change over time in response to fluctuations in

personal, brand-related, and contextual fluctuations (Alvarez et al., 2021). Fournier (1998) suggests that CBRs follow the development trajectories of interpersonal relationships, such as Levinger's (1983) five-stage model of initiation, growth, maintenance, deterioration, and dissolution.

Building upon this notion of CBRs as a series of simplified and generalised stages, subsequent research investigates how CBRs unfold within a specific stage of interest. For instance, Coulter et al. (2003) employ an interpretive perspective to explore how consumers become aware of the self-relevant significance of a product brand within a broad socio-cultural context. Their study contributes to the understanding of the origins of CBRs by highlighting the influence of socio-cultural factors, such as social networks and cultural ideologies, on consumers' interpretations of ideologically positioned brands. They argue that culture-informed interpretations largely trigger or hinder the initiation of CBRs. Through a case study conducted in Hungary, they illustrate how exposure to dominant ideologies in the United States informs a participant consumer's interpretation of branded cosmetics as a symbolic passport to cosmopolitanism. This culture-informed interpretation motivates her self-education on global fashion trends and initiates a committed relationship with L'Oréal, a brand she perceived as enabling her to stay young and beautiful.

Beyond the initiation stage, consumers consider establishing strong and meaningful relationships with brands and expect brands to actively contribute to the development of relational bonds (Gobe, 2002). In this line, Thomson et al. (2005) argue that CBRs can be sustained and further developed through emotional-based branding strategy, which demonstrate a deep understanding of and sincere efforts to enrich consumers' lifestyles, goals, and life projects. Their case study illustrates how Starbucks' cosmopolitan and artisan



motifs serve as an authenticating narrative for self-expression, similar to the concept of consumers' authenticity seeking proposed by Bartsch et al. (2022), thereby curating a culturally distinctive and emotionally intimate consumer experience.

Not only do consumers actively build relationships with brands, but they also terminate them. Coulter and Ligas (2000) depict the process in which negative service encounters precede the development of satisfying relationships and eventually lead to the termination of existing relationships with service providers. The termination is influenced by a range of factors, including those related to service, market, self, and others. Russell and Schau (2014) further theorise the accommodation process that consumers undergo to cope with the loss experienced when their relationships with brands are discontinued.

While these studies have shed light on individual stages of CBRs in typical development trajectories (growth, maintenance, and dissolution), comprehensive developmental models that explain how CBRs change longitudinally are still lacking in the literature (Fournier, 2009). To address this gap, Alvarez et al. (2021) adopt a relational paradox lens to investigate how consumers enable or disable CBRs over time. They propose that the (dis)stability of CBRs is largely governed by the paradoxical tensions that consumers experience in their interactions with brands. One dominating tension embedded in CBRs is affect-instrumentality tension, which arises in the exchange of instrumental resources (e.g. money and time) for affective value (e.g. status and love). Consumers actively engage in the relationship work attempting to address these tensions and thereby alter the trajectory of CBRs. These changes in the relationship trajectory result in two broad relational outcomes: consumer engagement in CBRs when the sacrifice for the exchange is beneficial, or relationships deterioration when instrumental costs threaten prospective or existing relationships. Their findings advance our

understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which CSR trajectories unfold and suggest future investigation into how relationship-building actions link to the development process of CBRs.

#### **2.2.4 Summary**

In summary, this section critically reviewed the foundational principles of CBRs, providing substantial evidence from the literature to support the idea that consumers perceive and interact with brands in ways similar to their interactions with humans. Although there are conceptual and measurement similarities among CBR constructs, several pragmatically simplified forms of stable CBRs have been established conceptually and validated empirically for their positive impact on brand- and CBR-related outcomes. The literature also highlights the dynamic and fluid nature of CBRs, as consumers initiate, maintain and terminate their relationships with brands. Therefore, scholars and marketers need to understand how branding strategies and activities drive brand love. Table 2-1 provides a summary of the literature discussed in this section. The next section reviews the literature on conceptualisation and the impact of brand attributes on CBRs.

Table 2-1. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.2 Consumer-Brand Relationships)

<b>Section 2.2 Consumer-Brand Relationships (CBRs): How Consumers See and Interact with Brands</b>	
<i>Seeing Brands with Human-Like Characteristics</i>	
<b>Summary of Key Tenets and Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debates and counter evidence exist regarding whether consumers perceive brands with human-like characteristics.</li> <li>• Most studies explicitly or implicitly assume that consumers perceive brands with human-like characteristics to varying degrees, such as personality, values, and intentions.</li> <li>• Bibliometrics and meta-analytic reviews also examine the conditions under which these perceptions become more salient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avis et al. (2012); Yoon et al. (2006)</li> <li>• Aaker (1997); Torelli et al. (2012); Kervyn et al. (2012)</li> <li>• Eisen and Stokburger-Sauer (2013); Macinnis and Folkes (2017); Radler (2018)</li> </ul>
<i>The Dynamic of CBRs: Diversity, Key Constructs, and Theoretical Muddling</i>	
<b>Summary of Key Tenets and Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBR-related constructs are deeply rooted in psychology constructs regarding interpersonal relationships, such as trust, attachment, and love.</li> <li>• CBRs are dynamic in form, as reflected by over 50 different typologies.</li> <li>• Dominant CBR constructs include brand trust, consumer-brand identification/connection, brand attachment, and brand love, among others.</li> <li>• Arguably, CBR-related constructs inherit from their interpersonal counterparts fuzzy definitions and conceptual overlaps, resulting in notable similarities in their conceptualisation, measurement and predictive power to CBR outcomes.</li> <li>• CBR is better to be described as prototypes, that is, an overall consumer perception of cognitive, affective, and behavioural brand experience, referred to as brand love.</li> <li>• Empirical research supports the satisfactory validity and reliability of brand love.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mael and Ashforth (1992); Rotter (1967); Sternberg (1986)</li> <li>• Fournier, (1998; 2009)</li> <li>• Fetscherin et al. (2019); MacInnis and Folkes (2017)</li> <li>• Khamitov et al. (2019)</li> <li>• Batra et al. (2012); Carroll and Ahuvia (2006)</li> <li>• Khamitov et al. (2019)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This thesis refers to strong and positive relationships as brand love, in line with the general description in the field of CBRs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fetscherin et al. (2019)</li> </ul>
<i>CBRs as a Process Phenomena: Initiation, Development, and Dissolution</i>	
<b>Summary of Key Tenets and Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBRs are fluid as a process phenomenon and undergo various temporarily stable stages such as development, maintenance, and termination.</li> <li>• CBRs change over time due to fluctuations in personal, brand-related, and contextual factors.</li> <li>• Positive CBRs occur when the perceived benefits outweigh instrumental costs. Thus, brands should enable consumers to overcome the challenges and achieve desired goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fournier (1998); Gobe (2002); Russell and Schau (2014)</li> <li>• Coulter et al. (2003); Coulter and Ligas (2000)</li> <li>• Alvarez and Fournier (2021); Thomson et al. (2005)</li> </ul>
<i>How Consumers Perceive and Interact with Brands in Socio-Political Contexts</i>	
<b>Research Gap and Research Opportunities</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBRs are primarily driven by the contextual meanings consumers derive from brands and their offerings.</li> <li>• Brand love can be cultivated by enabling consumers to achieve their desirable goals through the design, implementation, and delivery of brand offerings.</li> <li>• The effectiveness of brand offerings depends on the broader context in which the consumer, the brand, and their relationships are situated.</li> <li>• Research on CBRs in socio-political contexts, especially the politically-polarised context of brand activism, remains scarce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fennell (1978); Fournier (1998; 2009)</li> <li>• Epp and Price (2011); Tuli et al. (2007)</li> <li>• Fournier and Alvarez (2019); MacInnis et al. (2019)</li> <li>• Huff et al. (2021); Hydock et al. (2021)</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Brand Attributes: Building Strong and Positive CBRs

---

Successful brands build strong and positive relationships with their consumers by ensuring that their products and services are strategically designed, effectively communicated, and efficiently delivered to facilitate the achievement of consumer goals (Tuli et al., 2007; Epp and Price, 2011). Indeed, CBRs are largely purposive and contingent upon the meaning and benefits that brands provide to consumers (Fournier, 1998; 2009). From a functionalist view, consumers' relationships with brands are shaped by the brand attributes that entice, enable and enrich consumers' lives (Keller, 1993). Marketers identify, specify and clarify various types of consumer needs, and subsequently propose, curate and implement brand attributes to fulfil those needs (Fennell, 1978). Brand attribute is defined in this thesis as the extent to which a consumer perceives that the qualities and characteristics of a brand or its products and services satisfy the consumer's needs and expectations.

In a critical review, Sirgy (1982) argues that the literature on self-concept in consumer behaviour lacks coherence and suffers from fragmentation. He also criticises the undeveloped theoretical foundations for modelling the impact of self-brand congruence on consumer attitudes and preferences towards brands. In subsequent studies, Sirgy et al. (1991; 1997) draw extensively from Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) expectancy-value model, which posits that brand attitudes are shaped by consumers' prior expectations and their evaluative judgement of the expected attributes. Early consumer research scholars such as Olson and Dover (1979) assert that consumers form pre-purchase beliefs about product and service attributes and develop prior expectations regarding brand offerings. For instance, hotel guests typically expect a restful environment, quick check-in/-out service, comfortable beds, and friendly hotel staff (Boulding et al., 1993). While the extent may vary, consumers tend to seek

confirmation of their expectations (Kopalle and Lehmann, 2001; Nickerson, 1998). Therefore, consumers utilise their prior expectations as benchmarks to evaluate and judge their actual perception of product or service attributes (Oliver, 1980). The actual perception can vary in terms of how the attributes being evaluated fall short of, matching, or exceeding the prior expectations (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993). When consumers perceive attributes as better (worse) than their expectations, they experience confirmation (disconfirmation), indicating that their expectations are met (not met) by the actual attributes (Habel et al., 2016). A well-defined brand attribute is considered successfully delivered when consumers' actual perception of product or service attributes confirms or surpasses their prior expectations, signifying that their needs are satisfied by the performance of brand attributes (Keller, 2012; 2021).

### **2.3.1 Brand Utilitarian Attributes: Solving Practical Needs**

The formulation of brand attributes depends on the identification of consumer needs to be fulfilled (Keller, 2021). Existing literature categorises brand attributes into three main types: utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic (Park et al., 1986). Utilitarian needs prompt consumers to seek products and services that address practical problems. Brand utilitarian attribute aims to satisfy consumers' goal-oriented needs related to accomplishing practical tasks. To curate the brand utilitarian attributes, a brand offers instrumental and problem-solving qualities that are essential in providing a solution to a specific problem or issue consumers seek to resolve (Brechan, 2006). For example, a toothpaste brand prevents cavities, while a transportation brand enables passengers to travel and commute. Consumers form prior expectations and use these expectations as a reference point to evaluate the extent to which their actual perceptions of brand utilitarian attributes align with their ideal expectations (Sirgy et al., 1991).

### **2.3.2 Brand Hedonic Attributes: Satisfying the Sensory Pleasure**

Brand hedonic attributes relate to consumers' desire for sensory stimulation and pleasure (Desmichel and Kocher, 2020; Fennell, 1978; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Marketers develop brand hedonic attributes to engage consumers' senses and cater to their longing for sensory pleasure (Krishna, 2012; Zarantonello et al., 2013). While sensations can be evoked through controllable brand-related stimuli such as design aesthetics, communication, and store atmosphere (Babin and Attaway, 2000; Brakus et al., 2009; Page and Herr, 2002), the perception of brand hedonic attributes is subjective. This subjectivity arises because sensation and perception are distinct stages of sensory processing. Indeed, Krishna (2012) notes that sensation relates to the biochemical and neurological external stimulation received by sensory organs, while perception involves the understanding of sensory information. Consumers have different goals and expectations regarding hedonic experience (Evanschitzky et al., 2014), which leads them to perceive the same hedonic attributes differently (Arnould and Price, 1993; Celsi et al., 1993; Joy and Sherry, 2003).

Arnould and Reynolds (2003; pp. 80–81) identify six main hedonic needs: adventure (i.e. “shopping for stimulation, adventure, and the feeling of being in another world”), gratification (i.e. “shopping for stress relief, shopping to alleviate a negative mood, and shopping as a special treat to oneself”), idea (i.e. “shopping to keep up with trends and new fashions, and to see new products and innovations”), role (i.e. “the enjoyment that shoppers derive from shopping for others”), social (i.e. “the enjoyment of shopping with friends and fam”), and benefit (i.e. “shopping for sales, looking for discounts, and hunting for bargains.”). Evanschitzky et al. (2014), through a study involving four countries, provide evidence of the validity of these six hedonic needs in a cross-cultural context and highlight that consumers' hedonic experiences are influenced by culturally informed hedonic needs.

For example, individuals may derive olfactory and oral pleasure from a bottle of wine, while others may find it distasteful (Fennell, 1978). Moreover, individuals may hold different goals and expectations for their first and repeated consumption occasions, resulting in distinct sensory experiences from the same brand or branded offering (Russell and Levy, 2012). Consumers intuitively compare their prior expectations with actual perceptions (Oliver and Swan, 1989). This tendency applies to the evaluation of brand hedonic attributes, where expectations can be either confirmed or disconfirmed by actual perceptions (e.g. when touch or visual cues disconfirm expectations; Sundar and Noseworthy, 2016). Brands should ensure that consumers' actual perceptions of hedonic attributes align with their ideal expectations.

### **2.3.3 Brand Symbolic Attributes: Enabling Self-Construction**

Brand symbolic attributes relate to the cultural meanings embedded in brands, such as personality traits and social class (McCracken, 1986). These attributes aim to satisfy consumers' needs related to self-concepts (Bhat and Reddy, 1998). According to Rosenberg (1979), consumer self-concept refers to an individual's subjective perception of self, encompassing various characteristics like personality, values, age, nationality, gender, ideology, and social group membership (Graeff, 1996; Sirgy, 1982). Consumer self-concept plays a crucial role in guiding the consumption of brand symbolic attributes (Lecky, 1945; Rosenberg, 1979; Sirgy, 1982). When consumers attach significance to meanings beyond tangible and physical attributes, they perceive brand offerings as symbolic (Levy, 1959).

Similar to consumer self-concept, brand symbolic attributes span a wide range, including gender, age, social class, ethnicity (McCracken, 1986; 1989), personality (Aaker, 1997; Caprara et al., 2001; Grohmann, 2009), values (Torelli et al., 2012), myths (Holt, 2004), metaphors (Zaltman and Zaltman, 2008), and ideology (Varman and Belk, 2009).



Consequently, brands and their offerings can function as a means for consumers to construct and communicate their self-concepts to others (Escalas and Bettman, 2003). Literature suggests that consumer self-concepts guide their evaluation and consumption of brand symbolic attributes (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; Malär et al., 2011). Marketers strategically infuse cultural meanings into brands to shape the desired image in consumers' minds (Holt, 2002; McCracken, 1986; 1989). However, consumers actively reinterpret and transform symbolic meanings based on their personal circumstances, lifestyle goals, and social environments (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Therefore, their perception of brand symbolic attributes is subjective and beyond the control of marketers (Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; Price and Coulter, 2019).

Consumers expect brands to offer symbolic attributes that fulfil their self-related needs, and these expectations can be confirmed or disconfirmed by their actual perception of symbolic attributes (Sirgy et al., 1991; 1997). If a brand endorses unfavourable social groups or represents the negative images of the consumer (Ogilvie, 1987), the consumer may feel threatened and associate the brand with negative symbolic meanings (Banister and Hogg, 2004). In such cases, consumer's actual perception of brand symbolic attributes contradicts their ideal expectations. On the contrary, the curation of brand symbolic attributes is considered successful when the attributes help consumers achieve self-related goals. Indeed, Escalas and Bettman's (2003) propose and find that consumers are more likely to incorporate a brand into their self-concepts for self-verification or self-enhancement when the brand is associated with favourable social groups. Their findings suggest that consumers interpret and evaluate the extent to which brand associations with social groups, a type of brand symbolic attributes, can enable them to achieve self-related goals. Moreover, research indicates that consumers perceive symbolic attributes when the brand characteristics align with their

expectations regarding (multi)cultural identity (e.g. Kipnis et al., 2019; Zeugner-Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2015; Zhang and Khare, 2009), personality (e.g. Aaker, 1997; Fennis and Pruyn, 2007), gender (e.g. Grohmann, 2009; Lieven and Hildebrand, 2016), culture affiliation (e.g. Steenkamp and de Jong, 2010; Kipnis et al., 2019), ideology (e.g. Shepherd et al., 2015), and basic human values (e.g. Torelli et al., 2012; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008). For instance, consumers may view global brands as a symbol of their global citizenship (Strizhakova et al., 2008), while others may leverage luxury brands to uphold or elevate their social status (Kim et al., 2018).

In summary, consumers form prior expectations of brand attributes to fulfil their self-related goals. Consumers perceive a particular attribute when consumers' expectations align with their actual perceptions, indicating the potential of a brand attribute to satisfy consumer needs during or after brand usage (Keller, 2012; 2021). Specifically, brand utilitarian attributes relate to the consumer's perception of the extent to which a brand's utilitarian characteristics (e.g. quality, convenience, durability) solve practical problems. Brand hedonic attributes pertain to the consumer's perception of the extent to which a brand's hedonic qualities (e.g. deliciousness, soft touch, visual aesthetics) provide sensory enjoyment. Finally, brand symbolic attributes concern consumer's perception of the extent to which a brand's symbolic meanings (e.g. globalness, coolness, social status) satisfy their self-maintenance or self-enhancement needs.

### **2.3.4 The Impact of Brand Attributes**

#### **2.3.4.1 The Impact of Brand Utilitarian Attributes**

Building upon the aforementioned concepts, researchers have examined the brand-related outcomes of different brand attributes, including the utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic

attributes. With regards to brand utilitarian attributes, it refers to their perception of the extent to which a brand's utilitarian qualities and characteristics (e.g. durability, convenience, and performance) fulfil their practical problem-solving needs. Scholars have drawn insights from the confirmation/ disconfirmation literature (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Olson and Dover, 1979) and propose that consumers develop positive evaluative attitudes towards brand utilitarian attributes. Oliver (1980) discovered that consumers express higher levels of satisfaction when product utilitarian attributes that meet or exceed their prior expectations. Kopalle and Lehmann (2001) found that consumers with higher expectations are more satisfied when their perceptions confirm their ideal expectations of product utilitarian attributes, while those with lower expectations are less satisfied when their perceptions disconfirm their ideal expectations. These findings suggest that satisfaction is influenced by the alignment between expectations and actual perceptions. Recent studies have also shed light on the impact of brand utilitarian attributes on brand satisfaction (Habel et al., 2016; Nam et al., 2011) and consumer-brand identification (Lam et al., 2012).

#### 2.3.4.2 The Impact of Brand Hedonic Attributes

In addition to brand utilitarian attributes, researchers have investigated the impact of brand hedonic attributes. Page and Herr (2002) found that product aesthetics have a positive impact on consumers' affinity for the brand. Similarly, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) proposed and demonstrated that consumers develop brand affect, defined as a positive emotional response resulting from brand use, when consumers' needs for sensory pleasure are met by brand hedonic attributes. Mano and Oliver (1993) provided evidence supporting their hypothesis that consumers' favourable evaluations of both utilitarian and hedonic product attributes positively affect brand satisfaction, brand affect, and ultimately, product brand satisfaction. Along the utilitarian-hedonic attribute dichotomy, Voss et al. (2003) developed

scales to operationalise brand utilitarian and hedonic attributes and demonstrated that both attributes significantly predict purchase intention. Adopting the scales, Chitturi et al.'s (2008) study shows that brand utilitarian attributes enhance brand satisfaction, while hedonic attributes enhance consumer feelings of delight, defined as the emotions of cheerfulness and excitement. Moreover, their results indicate that brand hedonic attributes exhibit a stronger indirect effect on brand loyalty (measured by word of mouth and repurchase intentions) compared to brand utilitarian attributes. Delgado-Ballester and Fernandez Sabote (2015) found that both brand utilitarian and hedonic attributes have a positive effect on consumer-brand identification and word of mouth. Furthermore, the results reveal that brand hedonic attributes have a stronger impact on identification and a weaker impact on word of mouth than utilitarian attributes, particularly when moderated by consumer age. In a retail setting, Liu-Thompkins et al. (2022) demonstrated that consumers' experience with a retailer's utilitarian attributes (e.g. product assortment, price, and location) and hedonic attributes (e.g. sensory elements of the retail environment) can positively affect consumers' loyalty towards a retailer, which refers to their preference for, consistent repurchase from, and support for a specific retailer over time (Oliver and Burke, 1999; Wallace et al., 2014).

#### 2.3.4.3 The Impact of Brand Symbolic Attributes

Regarding brand symbolic attributes, scholars draw upon psychological theories and propose that consumers perceive brands based on their self-concepts. Consequently, they identify and prefer brands whose symbolic attributes align with their self-concepts. Levy (1959) pioneered the idea that consumers associate themselves with symbols they encounter in the marketplace, which influences their behaviours. His seminal work prompted consumer researchers to investigate the specific role of consumers' self-concepts in their behaviours. For instance, Dolich (1969) conducted an experiment to examine whether consumers tend to

link brand symbolic attributes with their self-concepts and the subsequent impact on their brand choice. In his experiment, he asked consumers to rate their self-concepts and their most preferred brand on the same semantic scale (i.e. impulsive/deliberate and simple/complex). The results indicated a positive relationship between the congruence score (computed as the reversed discrepancy score between the rating of brands' symbolic attributes and that of consumers' self-concepts) and their brand preference. Although the design and results might have suffered from common methods bias, his study provides initial empirical evidence of the impact of brand symbolic attributes on consumer behaviours. Considering the reliability of the discrepancy score (Johns, 1981; Peter et al., 1993), Johar and Sirgy (1991) proposed a direct method to directly measure consumers' perception of the symbolic match (e.g. this brand is consistent with how I see myself). Further, they compared this direct measure with traditional measures in six studies involving different populations, product categories, and consumption settings. The results indicated that their direct measure exhibits better predictive validity and power than the traditional measures. Regardless of the measurement method used, they provide additional empirical support to the impact of brand symbolic attributes on various brand-related outcomes, including brand preference, brand satisfaction, brand attitude, and brand choice.

More recent studies have also revealed the positive impact of brand symbolic attributes on several brand-related outcomes, such as brand engagement, consumer-brand identification, brand attachment, brand love, brand loyalty, brand advocacy, word of mouth, willingness to pay more, and purchase intention (Bajac et al., 2018; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Kang et al., 2015; Kressman et al., 2006; Japutra et al., 2018; 2019; Lam et al., 2012; Malär et al., 2011; Landon, 1974; Roggeveen et al., 2021; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012; Tan et al., 2019; Wallace et al., 2017). Furthermore, scholars have demonstrated the validity of this impact

across Eastern and Western countries and cultures (Bajac et al., 2018; González-Jimenez et al., 2019). In summary, the literature has well established the positive impact of brand symbolic attributes on consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviours, as confirmed by a meta-analysis (Aguirre-Rodríguez et al., 2012). The next section examines the conditions under which the impact of brand attributes varies contextually.

#### 2.3.4.4 Boundary Conditions: Influential Factors on Brand Attributes

Although the respective impacts of utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic attributes have been well-established, it is less clear which attributes serve as the strongest driver and how these attributes interact to build strong and positive CBRs. Brechan (2006) demonstrated that brand utilitarian attributes outperform hedonic attributes in a local public transport setting. In the context of luxury consumption, Schade al. (2016) showed that both brand utilitarian and hedonic attributes have a positive effect on consumers' luxury purchase behaviour across all age groups, while the impact of symbolic attributes only affects the luxury consumption of young adults. Their findings suggest that the impact of respective brand attributes largely depends on the brand category and the salience of consumer needs. Other scholars examine how brand attributes interact with each other, as elaborated below.

#### 2.3.4.5 Interaction between Different Brand Attributes

Johar and Sirgy (1991) argue that the evaluation of brand symbolic attributes is more intuitive and thus occurs prior to the more cognitive-consuming utilitarian attributes. They further propose that the evaluation outcome of symbolic attributes positively biases the subsequent evaluation process of utilitarian attributes. Similarly, Page and Herr (2002) suggest that judgements on brand utilitarian attributes take longer to process and involve the integration of brand symbolic attributes. Regarding this "biassing" effect, the literature presents rather

contradictory evidence. On the one hand, Bairrada et al. (2018) found that brand utilitarian attributes have a positive effect on brand symbolic attributes and a total effect on brand love through symbolic attributes. Considering all three brand attributes, Coelho et al. (2020) discovered that brand utilitarian attributes has a positive effect on both hedonic and symbolic attributes, and a total effect on brand evaluation through hedonic and symbolic attributes. They also found that brand hedonic attributes have a total impact on brand evaluation through symbolic attributes. On the contrary, the “biassing” effect of brand symbolic attributes is supported by Chon and Olsen (1991) and Sirgy and Su (2000), indicating that the more positively consumers evaluate brand symbolic attributes, the more likely they are to evaluate brand utilitarian attributes positively. The effect is also evidenced in subsequent studies (Page and Herr, 2002; Kressman et al., 2006; Hung and Petrick, 2011).

### **2.3.5 Summary and Research Gap**

To summarise, the literature has well established the conceptualisation of brand utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic attributes and theorisation of how brand attributes enables consumers to achieve three main types of individual goals: solving a practical daily-life problem (utilitarian needs), enjoying sensory pleasure (hedonic needs), and identifying with social groups (symbolic needs). However, the current conceptualisation and theorisation tend to narrowly focus on consumers’ need for fulfilling individual goals and overlook their need to contribute to the collective goals of their societies. Marketing scholars have long advocated for understanding consumers’ needs in the context of their life circumstances and social environment (e.g. Fennell, 1978; Tuli et al., 2007). Indeed, social contexts circumscribe consumers’ life tasks, themes and broader concerns (Holt, 1997), thereby influencing the types of needs they expect brands to address and the evaluation of brand attributes (Fournier, 1998). Keller (2021) highlights that brands exist to provide consumers with critical attributes,

but the brand attributes are contingent on ever-evolving consumer needs. For instance, in times of fear, threats, and crises, consumers may have a heightened need for brands to provide comfort and reassurance (Mende and Scott, 2021; Shultz et al., 2021). Thus, the current conceptualisations and theorisations of brand utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic attributes may fall short in satisfying consumers' frustrated needs for coping with unsolved problems embedded in a broader social context, or even the need for restructuring the situation (Fennell, 1978; Epp and Price, 2011). Therefore, a gap remains in the current conceptualisation of brand attributes and the changing and unresolved consumer needs regarding socio-political issues. This thesis aims to address this gap by conceptualising brand activist attributes (BAA). Table 2-2 provides a summary of the literature discussed in this section.

The following Section 2.4 draws from the democracy theory to develop a broader view of political participation and inform the evolution of marketplaces as a contemporary political arena. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 review how consumers and brands can play a political role in the politicised marketplace. Section 2.7 proposes a theoretical foundation of how brands could satisfy consumer needs in the wider political system.



Table 2-2. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.3 brand attributes)

<b>Section 2.3 brand attributes: Building Strong and Positive CBRs</b>	
<i>Three Types of brand attributes (Utilitarian, Hedonic, and Symbolic)</i>	
<b>Summary of Key Tenets and Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● brand attributes refers to the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand’s attributes align with their needs and ideal expectations.</li> <li>● Academics identify, specify and clarify three primary types of consumer needs: utilitarian (e.g. solving a practical daily-life problem); hedonic (e.g. enjoying sensory pleasure), and symbolic (e.g. identifying with social groups).</li> <li>● Marketers aim to fulfil these needs by proposing, curating and implementing brand attributes, which have a positive impact on CBBs, supported by numerous meta-analyses.</li> <li>● Boundary conditions: the effect of brand attributes depends on the salience of specific consumer needs and expectation within embedding consumption context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keller (1993; 2021); Park et al. (1986)</li> <li>● Chitturi et al. (2008); Fennell (1978); Sirgy et al. (1991; 1993); Voss et al. 2003</li> <li>● Aguirre-Rodríguez et al. (2012); Liu-Thompkins et al. (2022)</li> <li>● Schade et al. (2016)</li> </ul>
<i>brand attributes and its Impact in a Socio-Political Context</i>	
<b>Research Gap and Opportunities</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Socio-political contexts shape consumers’ life tasks, themes and broader concerns, influencing the needs they expect brands to fulfil and their evaluation of brand attributes.</li> <li>● Brands exist to offer critical attributes, but the specific attributes they serve are contingent on ever-evolving consumer needs.</li> <li>● The current understanding of brand utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic attributes may fall short to address consumer needs regarding unsolved socio-political issues.</li> <li>● The evolution of brand attributes is necessary in response to the evolved and unsolved consumer needs within socio-political contexts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fournier (1998); Holt (1997)</li> <li>● Keller (1993; 2021)</li> <li>● Fennell (1978); Epp and Price (2011)</li> <li>● Keller (2021); Chandy et al. (2021); de Ruyter et al. (2022)</li> </ul>

## 2.4 Democratic Deliberation as Political Participation

---

Section 2.3 previously emphasised the focus on utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic needs in the current conceptualisations of brand attributes, and it argued that the broader consumer considerations and needs regarding socio-political issues have been overlooked. This section reviews a wider perspective on political participation, which recognises marketplaces as an unconventional and informal political arena. This viewpoint informs the conception of consumers and brands as political actors, as presented in Sections 2.5 and 2.6, respectively.

The liberal democracy theory centres on individual liberty and adopts an election-centric view, considering democracy as the arena through which fixed preferences and conflicting interests are channelled via the mechanism of vote aggregation, representation, and elections (Friedman, 1962). According to this liberal political system, citizens are seen as private actors with fixed preferences for social and political goals (Elster, 1986). To address conflicts of preference and reach compromises, citizens possess the right to elect political representatives and parties, who form institutions empowering voters to express preferences and attempt to maintain or challenge the status quo in line with those preferences (Friedman, 1962). In this regard, Verba and Norman's (1972) classic definition characterises political participation as "activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they take" (p. 2). From this election-focused perspective, political participation involves activities such as working for political parties, voting for political candidates, persuading others to vote, or engaging in other electoral-centred actions.

However, the liberal democracy theory discussed above has been criticised for its exclusive focus on traditional forms of political participation for electoral purposes, neglecting emerging forms of participation (Stolle et al., 2005). This criticism is rooted in the deliberative democracy theory (Elster, 1998), which emphasises people's involvement in debates and discussions regarding socio-political issues, leading to diverse opinions and informed decision-making (Chambers, 2003; Dalton et al., 2004). Unlike the liberal democracy theory, deliberative democracy theory is talk-centric and focuses on the communicative processes that shape opinions and preferences before the act of voting (Dalton et al., 2004). According to this viewpoint, political participation entails engaging in debates and discussions that stimulate and generate reasonable opinions. During deliberation, individuals are willing to reflect on their current preferences and either maintain or revise them based on the arguments presented by contributors in the dialogues (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004; Habermas, 1998). The deliberative democracy theory contends that deliberation can inform wills, transform opinions, and serve as a process through which actors engage with each other to collectively address unsolved socio-political issues (Chambers, 2003; Fung, 2005). For instance, Graham et al. (2015; 2016) propose that everyday talk about politics on "non-political" social media represent a form of online political deliberation. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, they found that political discussions online partially transfer into political actions, such as supporting or participating in strikes. Their findings suggest that political deliberation on social media mobilises political participation. Similarly, Lundgaard and Etter (2022) argue that everyday talk on social media serves as a means for informal discussion and the expression of opinions about socio-political issues within the deliberative system. This thesis aligns with this perspective of deliberative democracy, which recognises that politics extends beyond the voter-party interactions in the electoral context to include the promotion of ideas, persuasion of opinions, and formation of

preferences within a broad range of public arenas, such as the social demonstrations, everyday talk about socio-political issues on social media or in marketplaces.

This section has reviewed the deliberative democracy theory and adopted its viewpoint that political participation is not confined to the electoral context but encompasses a wide array of public arenas, such as social demonstration and discussions about socio-political issues. Table 2-3 provides a summary of the literature discussed in this section. The subsequent Section 2.5 aims to understand how and why consumers engage in political participation by examining three research streams: political consumerism, social movements, and consumer movements.

Table 2-3. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.4 Democratic Deliberation as Political Participation)

<b>Section 2.4 Democratic Deliberation as Political Participation</b>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Liberal democracy emphasises a vote-centric view, considering democracy as the arena where fixed preferences and conflicting interests are channelled through the mechanism of vote aggregation, representation, and elections.</li> <li>● However, this vote-centric perspective has been criticised for overlooking political participation beyond electoral context.</li> <li>● Deliberative democracy highlights communicative processes of opinion and will-formation that precede voting.</li> <li>● Deliberative democracy takes a talk-centric view and argues that political participation also involves debates and discussions that provoke and generate reasonable opinions, such as everyday talks on social media.</li> <li>● This thesis adopts the talk-centric view of political participation that goes beyond the electoral context and includes the deliberation process, where various actors interact with each other to debate and deliberate towards possible solutions to critical socio-political issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Friedman (1962)</li> <li>● Stolle et al. (2005)</li> <li>● Dalton (2004)</li> <li>● Chambers (2003); Fung (2005); Lundgaard and Etter (2022); Graham et al. (2015; 2016)</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Consumers as Political Actors

---

This section aims to examine the role of consumers within a broader political context, especially in the process of democratic deliberation, by examining three research streams: political consumerism, social movements, and consumer movements. Table 2-4 provides a summary of the literature discussed in this section.

### 2.5.1 Political Consumerism

This subsection examines the political role of consumers as portrayed in the literature on political consumerism. While traditional political activities were popular in the 1960s, subsequent decades witnessed a significant decline, particularly in America and other Western democracies (Putnam, 2000). For instance, Americans were 13% less likely to vote in 1988 compared to 1960 (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Consequently, some argue that there was a general decrease in people's political participation in many countries. However, this assertion of decline has been criticised for its voter-centric view, which primarily focuses on periodic voting opportunities for electing representatives to form a government with decision-making power (Bennett, 2012; Copeland, 2014). Taking the broader perspective on political participation proposed by the deliberative democracy theory, Bennett (1998) argues that people become more interested in less hierarchical and more lifestyle-related forms of participation. This perspective suggests that individuals may abstain from voting and joining political parties, yet they can still be politically active beyond electoral processes. For instance, the 1970s witnessed increased participation in non-electoral forms of political activities such as legal demonstrations and signing petitions (Dalton, 2008). These activities are referred to as direct or unconventional forms of political participation because they occur outside of the electoral settings (Barnes and Kaase, 1979). Consequently, although

individuals may have become less active in electoral activities, they engage in political participation in a more social and informal manner (Dalton, 2008; Dalton et al., 2004).

Scholars highlight that politics also permeates the marketplace, where consumers make purchase decisions based on political, ethical, or environmental reasons with the intention of influencing institutional or market practices. This phenomenon is known as political consumerism (Micheletti et al., 2004; Stolle et al., 2005; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). While the conceptualisation of political consumerism is relatively recent, its origins can be traced back to the 1900s when the anti-sweatshop campaign urged consumers to buy “sweatshop-free” commodities (Sklar, 1998). A more recent example is consumers choosing to boycott or support Nike due to its advertising campaign featuring the former quarterback Colin Kaepernick, a controversial figure for protesting against social injustice and police brutality (Copeland and Boulianne, 2022). The *World Values Survey* (Inglehart, 1981; 1997; Inglehart and Baker, 2000), which tracks political participation behaviour in 50 countries and societies worldwide, reveals that the percentage of individuals who have boycotted or are willing to boycott ranges from 30% to 44% between 1981 and 2022. Additionally, Edelman (2020; 2022) reports that 68% of consumers avoid or boycott brands based on their stance on societal issues, while 58% make purchases or advocate for brands aligned with their beliefs and values. Scholars studying political consumerism perceive this form of politically influenced consumption as a manifestation of lifestyle politics within the marketplace (Stolle and Micheletti, 2013).

Furthermore, scholars argue that political consumerism, as a form of political participation, can effectively challenge both corporate and governmental policies and behaviours (Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). By making purchase decisions based on social and political

considerations, consumers compel brands to incorporate these factors when evaluating the consequences of their actions and policies (Willis and Schor, 2012). For instance, the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 serves as a prominent example of how boycotts can be used to challenge institutional racism and create space for more inclusive and diverse practices (Francis et al., 2021; Friedman, 1999; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013).

In summary, the literature on political consumerism suggests that individual consumers can exercise their purchasing autonomy to buy or avoid a brand or a branded product for political, ethical, or environmental reasons, thereby engaging in a lifestyle-oriented and loosely organised form of political participation in the marketplace with the goal of achieving social and political objectives (Stolle and Micheletti, 2013; Willis and Schor, 2012). The next subsection examines the literature on consumer participation in social movements, which represents another form of political engagement.

### **2.5.2 Consumer Participation in Social Movements**

The deliberative democracy theory emphasises public disclosure and deliberation as the core elements of democracy, involving all individuals in the deliberative process. This perspective recognises the role of social movements and their consumer supporters in bringing socio-political issues to the attention of the public sphere (Medearis, 2005). Social movements can be defined as sustained and organised collective actions aimed at affecting institutional and social change (Snow, 2004). These movements often emerge through grassroots efforts involving diverse individuals and organisations sharing a common vision for societal transformation (Carberry et al., 2019). Prominent examples of social movements include Black Lives Matter (BLM), #MeToo, climate strikes and marriage equality.



Social movement can manifest through *social movement organisations* (SMOs), which are typically formal non-profit entities that mobilise and leverage support to advance social movement goals (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Zald and Ash, 1966). SMOs can drive change by lobbying governments and exposing corporate misconduct (de Bakker and den Hond, 2007). For instance, SMOs can mobilise consumers to boycott Nike due to poor labour conditions in its supply chain (Locke et al., 2007) or put pressure on Coca-Cola's water stewardship practices (King, 2008). Research on management and organisational science also demonstrates that SMOs can directly sell products or services to promote socio-political causes and bring about changes (Akemu et al., 2016). For example, an anti-racket social movement organisation may establish a commercial travel agency as a means to challenge Mafia extortion of protection money in Sicily, Italy (Lee et al., 2018). In this case, the travel agency partners with hotels, shops and restaurants that publicly oppose the Mafia extortion, using its tours as a way for tourists to support the anti-racket movement (Lee et al., 2018).

Broad support from individuals is crucial for social movement organisations to operate effectively and for social movements to achieve their desired goals. Support for social movements can take many forms and differ in the degree of commitment. High-commitment support includes participating in demonstrations and actively engaging with SMOs (McAdam et al., 1988). Low-commitment support encompasses actions such as corresponding with representatives, donating to SMOs, and consumer behaviours. For instance, widespread consumer boycotts or buycotts of brands and their offerings can signal consumer preferences for socio-political issues to the industry and express citizen concerns to the government.

In a review by Nardini et al. (2021), BLM is used as an illustrative example to demonstrate the role of consumers and brands in the success of social movements in driving societal

change. #BLM originated on social media in 2013, aiming to foster a sense of community and demand dignity for black individuals (Ryder, 2020). Initially, the hashtag had limited popularity and lacked support from the general population in the United States. However, in 2014, the shooting of Michael Brown sparked widespread deliberation and demonstrations throughout the country (Cobb, 2016). The movement remarkably expanded its network following the killing of George Floyd (Demby, 2020). The exposure to this tragedy compelled people to support the movement and engage in activities such as disseminating information, sharing opinions, educating others, and aligning with like-minded individuals and organisations on a global scale (Buchanan et al., 2020). This shared sense of purpose established a common ground for fostering connections among community members and solidifying the network of people and organisations dedicated to fighting for a solution (Nardini et al., 2021). The support of commercial brands has played a crucial role in raising public awareness, stimulating conversations, and fostering deliberation on the issues highlighted by the movement. Nike, in particular, made a high-profile show of support by featuring Colin Kaepernick, a former quarterback and controversial activist against police brutality and racism, in its advertisements in 2018 (Branch, 2020). Nike's bold stance inspired other popular brands like Coca-Cola, H&M, and Apple to release public statements and adjust their policies in support of the movement (Branch, 2020). Such advocacy efforts have garnered support from emotionally connected consumers, broadening the movement's community, influencing public opinion, and shaping social norms and beliefs (Newman and Brucks, 2018). Over time, the ongoing support from a wide range of actors has translated into attitudinal and behavioural changes, nurturing the foundation of collective engagement (Cohn and Quealy, 2020). By 2020, BLM has won hearts and minds, becoming the largest movement in the United States that prompts deliberation on and drives policy changes both domestically and internationally (Buchanan et al., 2020). In their conclusion, Nardini et al.

(2021) highlight the collective effort of individuals and organisations sharing a common goal as the key to the success of social movements in effecting societal changes.

In summary, sociologists studying social movements portray consumers as a social group generally awaiting to be awakened and mobilised by grassroots activists, SMOs and commercial brands, offering their time, energy and financial support to advance social movements aligned with their visions of societal change. While social movement studies often depict consumers as the mass population following the lead of social movement actors (e.g. activists, and SMOs) in achieving social goals, consumer research places consumers at the centre of the movement, examining how consumer movements resist and seek to transform consumer culture and the marketplace. The next subsection will examine the literature on consumer movements, which represent a distinctive form of social movement initiated by consumers.

### **2.5.3 Consumer Movements**

Consumer research also demonstrates a keen interest in social movements, particularly new social movements. These movements are intentional, persistent, and collective endeavours by citizens striving for societal change beyond the traditional scope of political institutions and means (McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 2005). Consumer movements, as a type of new social movement, can be defined as collective actions undertaken by a group of consumers to influence consumer culture or the marketplace (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004). Such movements arise from collective actions driven by shared societal interests, such as perceived social injustices and questionable market practices (Jasper, 2011; Izberk-Bilgin, 2010). These movements involve individuals who share a collective identity and a vision for change (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013).

King and Pearce (2010) outline several steps that consumer movements can take to induce changes: 1) exposing unethical market practices through social and mass media; 2) supporting innovative practices initiated by start-ups; 3) advocating for regulation of concerning market practices and offerings; 4) mobilising resources to promote a new consumer culture, and; 5) engaging in political conversations and pressuring governments to enact legislative changes. Prior research has demonstrated the transformative power of consumer movement in driving changes (King and Pearce, 2010; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004; Gollnhofer et al., 2019). For instance, Weijo et al.'s (2018) ethnographic study illustrates how Finnish consumers with a growing culinary curiosity transformed the homogeneity of market offers through state-regulated food production. The collective grievances of Finnish consumers sparked a consumer movement, where unwanted consumption experiences translated into a collective identity within the marketplace. This social identification garnered public attention, social sympathy, and broad support for the movement, ultimately leading to a transformation in the food production process within the market context.

In summary, consumer research posits consumers as proactive actors who share societal goals and initiate movements to induce changes, particularly within the marketplace or consumer culture.

#### **2.5.4 Motivations for Consumer Engagement in Political Participation**

The previous subsections have reviewed three forms of consumer political participation: political consumerism, social movement, and consumer movement. This subsection aims to review and discuss the motivations behind consumers' engagement in political participation.

The literature suggests that participation in political consumerism is related to political efficacy, political engagement, and post-materialistic values. Berlin (2011) and Inglehart (1997) argue that individuals engage in lifestyle politics, such as political consumerism, due to doubts about the capacity of institutions and institutional actors to address their social and political concerns. This doubt aligns with Niemi et al.'s (1991) conception of external political efficacy, which refers to "beliefs about the responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions to citizen demand" (p. 84). Stolle and Micheletti (2013) find that people are more likely to participate in political consumerism if they have low efficacy towards political institutions, as confirmed by a meta-analysis by Copeland and Boulianne (2022). Stolle and Micheletti (2013) also find that practitioners of political consumerism believe that unconventional and individualistic political activities, such as demonstrations and signing petitions, can contribute to the solution of their concerns, even if these activities may not be the most effective means of enacting change. They suggest that individuals are motivated by their internal political efficacy, which refers to "beliefs about one's own competence to understand, and to participate effectively in politics" (Niemi et al., 1991, p. 85). Therefore, individuals adopt political consumerism as an additional instrument in the marketplace to achieve their social and political goals.

Scholars also explore the connection between political engagement and political consumerism. It is well-established in the literature that the more people engage with politics, in terms of following, caring about, thinking about, and committing to politics, the more likely they are to follow and engage with different forms of political participation (Schlozman et al., 2018; Verba et al., 1995). The meta-analysis by Copeland and Boulianne (2022) confirms that this connection also applies to political consumerism; the more people

engage with politics, the more likely they are to consider the political meaning and implications of brands and their offerings in their purchase decisions.

Furthermore, scholars identify post-materialist values as a prospective explanation for participation in political consumerism. According to Inglehart's (1981; 1997) theory of values change, postmaterialist values are associated with concerns for the environment, the inclusion of minorities, gender equality, human rights, and similar issues. Empirical research indicates a positive relationship between postmaterialist values and various forms of lifestyle-related political participation, such as boycotting, striking, circulating petitions, and participating in demonstrations (Copeland, 2014; Inglehart, 1981; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). Scholars provide similar explanations for this consistently observed relationship. Inglehart (1981) proposes that post-materialists, who possess a relatively secure outlook on immediate physiological needs, prioritise dissatisfying aspects of the status quo and actively pursue favourable social and political transformations. Stolle and Micheletti (2013) contend that post-materialism encourages individual autonomy and self-expression, thereby motivating people to express their social and political concerns in the marketplace as an alternative to the traditional political domain. Similarly, Copeland (2014) posits that post-materialists incorporate not only basic physiological needs or desires for recreation into their purchase decisions, but also public-spirited concerns within the broad sphere of politics.

Sociology research has long established the role of external benefits in movement participation. Klandermans (1984) proposes that movement participation is the result of a cost-benefit calculation, where individuals are more inclined to take part in social movements when they expect external benefits from their participation. Klandermans (1984; 1997) specifies three types of external benefits: personal benefits (e.g. pay rise), social benefits (e.g.

admiration and respect from friends and family), and collective benefits (e.g. goal achievement of systematic change). In their influential work, Simon et al.' (1998) conducted two field studies on the participation of older people and the gay movement, providing support for Klandermans' (1984) theory that perceived personal, social, and collective benefits motivate movement participation.

In addition to external benefits, scholars have identified three types of internal drivers for movement participation: values, social identification, and negative emotions. According to Rokeach's (1973) values theories, individuals hold a range of values that differ in their compatibility and attainability. Building upon this values theory, Snow et al. (1986) propose that individuals are guided by their values to support SMOs, emphasising the importance of values congruence, which refers to the alignment between individual and SMO values. In particular, values congruence is perceived when individuals interpret the SMO's political preferences, activities, and goals to be consistent with their own values. They argue that SMOs need to identify, idealise, and promote compatible values that align with the target constituents, clarifying the connection between the promoted issues or causes and the interests and life situations of potential supporters. By framing their activities and goals in a language that adheres to the audience's values, SMOs can resonate with individuals who share common political grievances, mobilising them to support the SMO as an organisational base for expressing their discontent and acting in pursuit of their values.

Consistent with Snow et al.'s (1986) proposition, Stern et al. (1999) argue that while a small group of people expect a direct and personal benefit from the achievement of social movements (material/direct benefits), most are motivated to support by their non-material concerns for socio-political issues and their values. They propose that movement support is

rooted in personal values and norms, which are feelings of personal obligation linked to self-expectations that impel individuals to act in ways that support movement goals (Schwartz, 1977). They suggest that people's resonance with the movement's values activates personal norms, creating a sense of obligation to support the social movement. For instance, religious fundamentalist movements are built on traditional values of duty, and family loyalty, which views the maintenance of social order and traditional structures as essential for the public good, thus activating feelings of obligation among individuals with traditional values to offer support. Conversely, social movements for civil rights and social justice can be framed under universalism values, emphasising individual well-being and self-autonomy, thus activating personal norms that obligate universalists to support the movement. Supporting their hypotheses, personal norms, in the form the feelings of obligation to support the movement, have a significant direct effect on consumer behaviours, such as purchasing organic, recycled, environmentally-friendly products and avoid products that harm the environment. Schwartz's values, on the other hand, have an indirect effect on consumer behaviour through personal norms. Interestingly, they also include Inglehart's post-materialist values as a competing explanatory variable and found no significant relationship with consumer behaviours as a form of non-activist support for social movements.

Social identification also serves as another motivation for movement participation. From a social psychology perspective, Tajfel (1981) suggests that social movements are collective efforts by a group of people who share and dedicate themselves to collectively solve a common problem. Individuals identify with and categorise themselves into particular a social group which aims to achieve the collective goal (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). In line with this notion, sociological scholars propose that a sense of social identification is influential in individuals' engagement with social movements their group fights for (Simon et al., 1998).



Empirical research confirms that social identification with a movement group positively correlates with motivation to actively participate in social movements (e.g. Sturmer and Simon, 2004a; 2004b; Sturmer et al., 2003). A more recent study by Sturmer (2018) also finds that the relationship between group identification and movement participation is mediated by an inner obligation to behave as a “good” group member. Their results suggest that the identification pathway represents intrinsic involvement based on the internalisation of group-specific behavioural standards, in contrast to the external benefits.

Furthermore, Sturmer and Simon (2009) examined the role of negative feelings in movement participation, controlling the effects of external benefits and group identification. The results of their field study and experiment indicate that anger affects movement participation only to the extent that participation serves to release negative emotions, such as anger about social injustice. Based on these findings, they suggest that individuals’ participation in social movements may be motivated by a desire to reduce their negative emotions. In other words, when experiencing negative emotions, individuals may support social movements of concern (e.g. through protests or boycotts), especially in behaviourally and economically less costly or even non-political ways, as a means to vent negative emotions and alleviate internal tension.

Drawing from consumer psychology, Nardini et al. (2021) identify two main psychological mechanisms that motivate movement participation. On the one hand, a perceived connection to a social movement is necessary for movement participation. People are more likely to engage with information that they perceive as relevant to themselves (Wood and Hayes, 2012). Their connection to a social movement can be initiated when the movement’s purpose and goals align with their values and identity. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of a

movement connection can empower those who feel powerless to effect change individually (Talukdar et al., 2005). Therefore, people's movement connections motivate them to become more committed to and increase their willingness to participate in social movements (Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Rucker et al., 2014). On the other hand, individuals' connection to other movement supporters also influences movement participation. Individuals in a social movement influence and are influenced by each other through their interactions where they get to know each other, exchange views on the movement, and develop feelings of respect for each other (Clark and Kashima, 2007; Henderson et al., 2018). The reinforcement of a collective sense of social goals and identity further enhances their conviction of the movement and their social connections (Berger, 2014; Bublitz et al., 2020).

### **2.5.5 Summary**

In summary, this section has synthesised a body of multidisciplinary literature, which shows that consumers consider societal and political factors in their consumption decisions and practices (Copeland, 2014). Table 2-4 provides a summary of the literature discussed in this section. Of particular relevance to the focus of the present research is the indication that, consumers are not solely reactive resources awaiting mobilisation by SMOs or activists (Colli, 2020; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1986), but also active participants who take individual and collective actions to induce societal changes by leveraging their purchasing power (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004; Varman and Belk, 2009). Such politically-driven consumption decisions and practices are seen as unconventional and informal forms of political participation (Stolle and Micheletti, 2013).

The multidisciplinary review also identifies two main motivations for consumer's political participation. On the one hand, consumers are motivated by the need to release negative

emotions related to societal issues, leading them to engage in political participation to express socio-political grievances and alleviate internal tension (Simon et al., 1998; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). On the other hand, consumers who feel powerless due to their limited individual power may be motivated to engage in political participation by a sense of empowerment, believing that their individual effort contributes to advancing and achieving collective goals aimed at desirable changes in the status quo (Simon et al., 1998; Talukdar et al., 2005; Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

Table 2-4. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.5 Consumers as Political Actors)

<b>Section 2.5 Consumers as Political Actors</b>	
<i>Consumers Responsively and Actively Engage in Political Participation</i>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Literature on participation in social movements often portray consumers as reactive resources, waiting to be mobilised by activists and social movement organisations.</li> <li>● Research on consumer movements highlights that consumers can be active actors in taking individual and collective actions to induce societal changes by leveraging their purchasing power.</li> <li>● Literature on political consumerism argues that politically-driven consumption practices represent an unconventional and informal form of political participation</li> <li>● Together, the multidisciplinary review suggests that consumers engage with and exert influence on socio-political issues through interaction with brands and other actors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Colli (2020); Tajfel (1981); Tajfel and Turner (1986)</li> <li>● Kozinets and Handelman (2004); Varman and Belk (2009)</li> <li>● Stolle and Micheletti (2013)</li> <li>● Copeland (2014); Lee et al. (2018); Nardini et al. (2021)</li> </ul>
<i>Motivations for Consumer Political Participation</i>	
<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consumers engage in political participation to vent socio-political grievances and reduce internal tension.</li> <li>● Consumers who feel limited in electoral contexts may empower themselves through their participation in movements or political consumerism to advance and achieve collective goals in maintaining or challenging the status quo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Simon et al. (1998); Stolle and Micheletti (2013)</li> <li>● Simon et al. (1998); Talukdar et al. (2005); Tajfel and Turner (1986)</li> </ul>

## 2.6 Brands as Political Actors

---

While there is a view that commercial brands should solely focus on economic pursuits (Singer, 2019), a body of multidisciplinary literature demonstrates that brands do engage in political activities for various reasons. This section examines three research streams that explore brand engagement with socio-political issues: corporate social responsibility, corporate political activities, and brand activism. Subsequently, adopting a deliberative democracy theory perspective, it reviews the political role played by brands within a broader political system. Table 2-5 provides a summary of the literature discussed in this section.

### 2.6.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

Scholars in the field of *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) have long advocated for considering social expectations and the obligation of brands to support social goals shared by stakeholders and society at large (e.g. Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1979). Early CSR scholars emphasise that the existence and operation of brands should be bound by social contracts (Frederick, 2006). These social contracts comprise social rules and expectations by which members of society behave (Carroll, 2021). Consequently, brands are granted permission to operate only if they are obligated to contribute to societal benefits (e.g. Donaldson, 1982). In addition to fulfilling the social expectation of behaving with “good intentions”, some argue that CSR initiatives should deliver on their promises of societal good and thus advocate the measures of CSR social performance (Wood, 1991). For instance, studies have incorporated socio-cultural outcomes, such as diversity and equality (Nie et al., 2018), and environmental outcomes, such as carbon emissions and green innovations (Lampikoski et al., 2014; Wright and Nyberg, 2017), into the realm of CSR. However, Barnett et al.’s (2020) bibliometric mapping of 6,254 articles addressing CSR performance indicates a disproportionate focus on

financial outcomes as a measure of CSR effectiveness. Indeed, a significant number of CSR studies view CSR initiatives as responsive activities aimed at meeting social demands and expectations from stakeholders, with the potential to enhance financial performance as part of the brand's overall strategy (Ackerman and Bauer, 1976; Chernev and Blair, 2015; Kitzmueller and Shimshack, 2012). The objective of this research stream is to address stakeholder expectations, as well as the measurement of financial outcomes resulting from CSR activities (Cochran, 1984). Therefore, this stream's core focus lies in modelling CSR activities, stakeholder responses, and financial performance, as Carroll (2021, p. 1263) reflects: "... most of what we have thought about CSR stood on the shoulders of businesses' foundational economic role in society." Such CSR models stipulate that the strategic management of brand activities and brand concepts should closely align with societal expectations (Berman et al., 1999; Orlitzky et al., 2003; Waddock and Graves, 1997). Consequently, the management outcomes will be at least tolerable, if not morally appealing, to stakeholders. Taking an optimistic view, brands should "strive to make a profit, obey the law, be ethical, and be a good corporate citizen" (Carroll, 1999, p. 289). Despite the various theoretical underpinnings, a considerable amount of existing CSR research is characterised by reactive response widely accepted expectations, driven by economic considerations.

Scherer and Palazzo's (2007) argue that CSR research, influenced by liberal democracy theory, assumes fixed preferences and acceptance of the status quo, thereby overlooking the process by which individuals' preferences are formed and how dialogical disclosures could transform those preferences. The current CSR models operate on the assumption of accepting and reacting to the status quo and established power structures. This strategy may be feasible for societal issues or causes that have achieved social consensus, such as sustainability, education, and the elimination of hunger. However, when considering the diversity of fixed

preferences and conflicting interests, what may be a morally justified stance for some could be intolerable to others' moral orientations. In the case of divisive issues, assuming the feasibility of meeting the society's overall expectations might be overly simplistic and idealistic. The implicit rationale underlying CSR models may reinforce the view that dominant stakeholder groups represent society and consequently motivate selective responses to the expectations of these dominant groups, who wield the strongest economic, social, or legal power over brand operations and performance. Recognising the ever-growing political polarisation, the literature on brand activism explores the phenomenon of brands becoming involved in contentious socio-political issues.

### **2.6.2 Brand Activism**

In response to the growing consumer demand, an increasing number of brands are taking stances and engaging in actions related to divisive socio-political issues (Guha and Korschun, 2023; Haddon, 2022). Scholars refer to this phenomenon as *brand activism* or *corporate social/political advocacy* (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020; Dodd and Supa, 2014). Bhagwat et al. (2020) define brand activism as “a firm’s public demonstration (statements and/or actions) of support or opposition to one side of a partisan issue” (p. 1). Moorman (2020) defines it as “public speech or actions focused on partisan issues made by or on behalf of a company using its corporate or individual brand name” (p. 388). Dodd and Supa (2014) refer to corporate social advocacy as “organisation making a public statement or taking a public stance on social-political issues” (p. 5). Hydock et al. (2020) define corporate political advocacy as “a brand takes a public stance on a controversial sociopolitical issue” (p. 1136). To be consistent, this thesis adopts the term brand activism to refer to a brand taking a public stance and/or actions on one or more unsolved and controversial socio-political issues.

However, despite the emerging nature of this field, only a few studies have provided theoretical insights and empirical evidence on consumer responses to brand activism. Dodd and Supa (2014) applied Ajzen's (2005) theory of planned behaviour to gain insights into consumer responses concerning brand activism and its influence on purchase intentions. According to this theory, an individual's intention to perform a behaviour is influenced by normative beliefs and subjective norms (Ajzen, 2005). However, Dodd and Supa do not explicitly state their hypotheses or explain how the theory informs their research inquiry. Regardless, their experimental results indicate that positive (versus negative) attitudes towards a brand's stance, reflecting a match (versus mismatch) between consumer and brand, lead to stronger (versus weaker) purchase intentions. Although their findings imply a symmetric impact of brand activism on consumer response, the underlying mechanisms through which consumers develop attitudes and purchase intentions towards brands taking a stance on socio-political issues remain elusive.

Recent studies have drawn on moral identity theory and self-brand congruence theory to examine consumer responses to brand activism (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Hydock et al., 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020). Moral identity theory posits that individuals possess a set of moral trait associations about their moral character (Aquino and Reed, 2002). For example, individuals may profile a typical moral person in terms of characteristics (e.g. being generous and well-intended), feeling (e.g. concern for others), and behaviours (e.g. donating to charitable organisations). Individuals' moral identity is said to be salient when they tend to assign substantial cognitive resources to the consideration of moral traits (e.g. have more thoughts) and adopt moral traits as an important concept to define themselves (Aquino and Reed, 2002). Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Turner, 1985) posits that people tend to categorise others as in-group or out-group based on whether others' identities are



similar or different to their own. Moral identity serves as one of the standards for them to categorise other people and brands into in-group and out-group and therefore (Reed et al., 2007). In line with self-brand congruence theory (Sirgy et al., 1991), consumers tend to respond positively to in-group brands which share similar moral traits with them and respond negatively to morally out-group brands (Choi and Winterich, 2013).

Building upon these theories, Hydock et al. (2020) and Bhagwat et al. (2020) propose that consumers' moral identity guides their evaluation of brand activism and leads to the outcome of self-brand moral congruence (versus incongruence) when the brand share the same (versus opposite) stance with them on socio-political issues. Assuming the symmetric effect of self-brand (in)congruence suggested by prior findings, they hypothesise that consumers respond positively (vs. negatively) to brand activism when the brand takes the consumer's stance. Bhagwat et al. (2020) analysed the relationship between brand activism events and sales and found that sales growth is positive (vs. negative) and significant for brand activism events that have a low (versus high) level of deviation from the consumer's stances. Hydock et al. (2020) adopted an experimental design where they assigned consumers brand activism and control conditions. The results indicated that consumers are more (versus less) likely to choose a brand that engages in brand activism when the brand's stance matches (versus mismatches) the consumer's own stance on the issue. Furthermore, they found that brand activism repels same-sided consumers to a greater extent than it attracts opposite-sided consumers at the individual level. Additionally, the net impact is negative for large-share brands but positive for small-share brands because the latter has fewer existing customers to lose and more potential consumers to gain. Finally, they identify authenticity, manipulated as the first brand of its type to take its particular stance vs. just one of many brands to do so, as a necessary condition for the positive net effect of small-share brands. In sum, the findings of

Bhagwat et al. (2020) and Hydock et al. (2020) suggest the symmetric impact of brand activism under the moderation of authenticity.

Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) also draw upon the moral identity theory but present contrasting evidence, indicating an asymmetric negative effect of brand activism. They posit that brand activism provides consumers with an opportunity to assess the level of self-brand congruence in terms of moral identity. In this evaluation, they argue that the effect of self-brand congruence would be asymmetric rather than symmetric within the context of moral judgements. Specifically, while the negative impact remains, consumers expect brands to engage in “morally right” behaviours as a moral obligation, thus refraining from rewarding a brand for sharing their stance on socio-political issues. Similar to Hydock et al. (2020), Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) assign consumers to brand activism and control conditions to investigate consumer responses to brands taking a stance. Across a series of five studies, they consistently found that self-brand incongruence in terms of socio-political stance significantly and negatively affects consumers’ attitudinal, intentional, and behavioural responses, whereas self-brand congruence does not have a significant effect, supporting their hypothesised asymmetric effect of brand activism. Mukherjee and Althuizen’s (2020) findings contradict not only Bhagwat et al. (2020) and Hydock et al. (2020) but also the extensive literature on CSR and cause-related marketing, which demonstrates that consumers reward brands for exhibiting moral behaviours, as confirmed by meta-analyses (Fan et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2016).

In summary, recent studies on brand activism have primarily relied on moral theory and self-brand congruence theory to understand consumer responses. However, these studies present contradictory findings, and the underlying mechanisms of consumer evaluation and

response to brand activism require further investigation. Political theories may provide an alternative explanation, as political consumerism scholars argue that consumer responses to brands with political meaning are driven by political motivations. Additionally, little attention has been given to examining the long-term impact of independent brand activism incidents or the cumulative effect of consistent activism incidents on brand perception and its relationship with aligned consumers. This thesis aims to address these gaps to enhance our understanding of how brand activist practice influences consumer perception and response, by conceptualising BAA and empirically examining its role in consumer-brand relationships.

### **2.6.3 Corporate Political Activities**

This subsection provides a review of management literature with the aim of identifying the reasons and methods by which brands actively engage in politics and the resulting outcomes of these political activities.

A diverse range of brands engage in political activities and have exerted influence on policymakers through campaign donations, political connections, lobbying, and even bribery (Delmas and Montes-Sancho, 2010; Schuler et al., 2002). It is not surprising that management scholars view profit maximisation as the central driver of brand political activities (e.g. Hillman and Hitt, 1999; Lawton et al., 2013). Since politicians possess the power to introduce new policies or modify existing ones, which can significantly impact firm performance, managers strive to align politicians' interests with their own and reduce policy uncertainty (Sutton et al., 2021). The field of corporate political activities (CPA) has emerged as an overarching frame to study and understand how brands can gain competitive advantages in the political arenas (Hillman et al., 2004). Indeed, Baron (1995) argues that both market and non-market activities are purposeful actions, occurring in the marketplace or political

domain, aimed at enhancing the brand's core competence and ultimately improving profit. Within this perspective, brands can strategically invest in a political issue if there is a considerable net impact on their competitive advantages and performance (Aplin and Hegarty, 1980). For instance, defence brands may donate to government officials to influence votes on national defence bills (Magee, 2002), and alcohol brands may actively seek to shape alcohol-related policies by framing policy debates to marginalise policies that contradict their commercial interests and by building relationships with key actors to manage threats (McCambridge et al., 2018). Empirical studies adopting structured content analysis have consistently found a positive relationship between the number of non-market actions taken by a brand and brand performance, such as gross profit margin and market share (Ferrier et al., 1999; Shaffer et al., 2000). Using panel data from 500 large companies in the US over a six-year period, Kim (2008) found a positive relationship between lobbying expenditures and firm equity returns. To date, a growing body of empirical research provides evidence supporting the notion that a firm's aggregate lobbying expenditures, as an attempt to sway government officials to make pro-firm decisions, have a positive impact on firm economic performance (Lux et al., 2011; Ridge et al., 2017).

The literature on CPA is grounded in the assumption that brands are economic actors. In their pursuit of advantage competitiveness and financial performance, brands seek to shape regulatory environments or public policies in ways that are favourable to their interests. Brands exercise political influence by engaging with the political system, particularly through non-transparent activities, such as lobbying, political connections, corruption and so on. This assumption aligns with the notion that brands serve economic ends but employs political means (Singer, 2019). In their conclusion, Scherer et al. (2007; 2016) summarise that CPA

focuses on the dyadic interaction between brands and political officials to examine the political impact of brands on the policy-making process and outcomes.

#### **2.6.4 Brand's Role in Deliberative Democracy**

As discussed in Section 2.6.1 to 2.6.3, previous research on CSR, CPA, and brand activism has disproportionately focused on the consequences of brand engagement with socio-political issues on brand performance. In the same vein, Scherer et al. (2007; 2016) argue that the current conceptualisation of brands primarily as economic entities aligns with liberal democracy theory, which draws a clear distinction between the political and private domains. Within the regulatory framework of liberal political systems, brands primarily exist in the economic system to enhance economic efficiency through both market activities (e.g. performance of brand attributes) and non-market activities (e.g. CPA). In this line, some management scholars insert that brands have no greater duty than to maximise profits (Friedman, 1970; Levitt, 1970).

Nevertheless, a growing number of scholars point out that even though brands serve economic ends, the social and political meanings and consequences should not be neglected (Barnett et al., 2020; Singer, 2019). Indeed, prior research may have largely overlooked the role of brands in the procedural input that precedes the decisions within a broader political system, which is underpinned by the deliberative democracy theory. In an effort to address this oversight, Scherer and Palazzo (2007) draw from the theory of deliberative democracy and propose a conceptualisation of how brands could interact with a wide range of actors to engage in public deliberations and shape preferences. With their embeddedness in the deliberative process of political decision-making, brands are not simply reactive to stakeholder expectations; they can play an active role in reinforcing or reshaping expectations

within the overall processes of public will formation aimed at addressing significant societal challenges (Scherer et al., 2016). This theoretical perspective offers a prospective foundation for conceptualising commercial brands as political actors driven by economic motivations, engaging with and exerting influence on socio-political issues through the deliberative process, employing various strategic and tactical options. For instance, as outlined in Section 2.5.2, support for social movements and social movement organisations (SMOs) can be seen as a form of political participation. Along these lines, CSR initiatives and brand activism in support of social movements and SMOs, represent active participation in and contributions to the deliberation process where public opinions could be shaped and informed with regard to socio-political issues. As Nardini et al. (2020) state, irrespective of why brands engage with socio-political issues, their actions to support or oppose such issues influence public opinion and help maintain or change the status quo.

### **2.6.5 Summary and Research Gap**

In summary, drawing from the theory of deliberative democracy, management research challenges the notion that brands are purely economic actors and proposes a conceptualisation of brands as active political actors in the broader political decision-making process. However, a gap remains in whether and how brands can meet consumer needs through engagement with socio-political issues, and ultimately to drive strong and positive consumer-brand relationships. This thesis aims to address this gap by conceptualising BAA and empirically examine its role in consumer-brand relationships. Table 2-5 provides a summary of the literature discussed in this section. The next section aims to develop a theoretical foundation that facilitates the empirical investigation of the conceptualisation of BAA and its role in consumer-brand relationships.

Table 2-5. Summary of Literature Review (Section 2.6 Brands as Political Actors)

<b>Section 2.6 Brands as Political Actors</b>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The multidisciplinary review (e.g. CSR, political CSR, brand activism, corporate political activities) challenges the conventional view of commercial brands as purely economic actors and suggests the perspective of commercial brands as a type of active actor within the deliberative political system.</li> <li>● Brands exist largely to increase economic efficiency through both market activities (e.g. performance of brand attributes) and non-market activities (e.g. CPA).</li> <li>● Regardless of motives behind, the social and political meanings and consequences of brand political activities should not be neglected.</li> <li>● Within the deliberative political context, when brands take stance and actions on socio-political issues, they play an active role in reinforcing or reshaping opinions and preferences regarding socio-political issues and thus help maintain or challenge the status quo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moorman (2020); Scherer and Palazzo (2007); Singer (2019)</li> <li>● den Hond et al. (2014); Hambrick and Wowak (2019)</li> <li>● Barnett et al. (2020); Singer (2019); Wickert (2016)</li> <li>● Dalton (2004); Nardini et al. (2020); Scherer et al. (2016)</li> </ul>
<b>Key Findings, Research Gap, and Future Opportunities</b>	<b>References</b>
<p>Recent research on brand activism has examined how consumers respond to brands that take stance and actions on polarised socio-political issues. These studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● share the similar root in moral theory and self-brand congruence theory.</li> <li>● reveal contradictory findings regarding the asymmetric negative or symmetric effect of brand activism on CBRs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bhagwat et al. (2020); Hydock et al. (2020); Moorman (2020); Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020); Vredenburg et al. (2020)</li> </ul>

- have not empirically validated the theoretical assumption of the self-brand (moral) congruence as the underlying mechanism.
- overlook the examination of whether the impact of independent brand activism incidents persists over time or whether and how a series of consistent activism incidents translate into a long-term brand perception.

These gaps hinder the understanding of whether and how brand activism fulfils consumer needs and expectations regarding socio-political issues.



## 2.7 Theoretical Foundations - A Political Marketing Perspective

---

This section draws from political marketing to establish a theoretical foundation that depicts the situation or context in which brands fulfil consumer needs and expectations regarding socio-political issues in a broader political system underpinned by the deliberative democracy theory, as reviewed in Sections 2.5 and 2.6.

At its origin, political marketing applies the concept of marketing to understand how the creation, communication and persuasion of political ideas result in partisan commitment, votes and electoral change (Butler and Collins, 1994). Marketing is conceptually underpinned by and concerned with the creation of benefits by identifying and fulfilling needs (Wilkie and Moore, 2012). When individuals become aware of and concerned about a problem, they actively seek and evaluate available problem-solving offerings (Oliver, 1980). In response, brands can fulfil consumer needs by providing well-defined offerings that address specific problems (Keller, 2012), such as a suit that adheres to dress codes or a laundry service that cleans bedsheets effectively.

It is important to note that offerings that fulfil consumer needs extend beyond commercial products and services to include ideas in the public domain (Kotler and Levy, 1969). This extension gave rise to political marketing, which applies marketing principles to politics. Early theorists defined political marketing as the marketing of ideas and opinions on public issues to influence people's votes in elections (Henneberg, 2002). From this perspective, political marketing primarily focuses on how political parties and candidates create, communicate and persuade voters regarding their political ideas and opinions on social and political issues (Brennan and Henneberg, 2008). Butler and Collins (1994) argue the

alignment between these political offerings and voters' preferences facilitates the satisfaction of voters' needs, leading to their commitment to and votes for the political parties or candidates (Butler and Collins, 1994). This translation of political ideas into vote(r)-related outcomes is viewed as voters' psychological consumption of political offerings that fulfil their needs to solve the "who-should-I-vote-for" problem regarding issues of concern (Reid, 1988).

While political marketing has traditionally focused on the voter-party interaction during electoral contexts, it is important to recognise that voting is just one form of political activity (Achen and Bartels, 2016; Campbell, 1960). Henneberg et al. (2009) argue for the inclusion of all political activities that provide benefits for actors and society at large, moving beyond the narrow focus on voting. This broader scope of political marketing is essential as the global political system increasingly transcends the public domain, with politics permeating private and commercial sectors (Bennett, 2012; Dalton et al., 2011). Such transformations facilitate dynamic interactions in socio-political debates and confrontations among different actors, including government organisations, NGOs, brands and consumers (Stanley, 2020). The ever-blurring boundary of political participation challenges the conventional focus of political marketing on the electoral context. Consequently, the inclusion of deliberation as a form of political participation is considered promising for the wider applicability of political marketing (Henneberg et al., 2009).

As outlined above, the vote(r)-centric perspective primarily revolves around periodic voting opportunities to elect representatives and form a government with decision-making power. On the contrary, the deliberation-centric view emphasises people's engagement in debates and discussions about socio-political issues, resulting in diverse opinions and informed

decision-making (Chambers, 2003). The deliberative process provides spaces for consumers and brands, along with other actors, to engage in political participation, including fostering concern for collective problems, discussing different views, shaping opinions, and forming judgements and decisions on controversial issues (Ozanne et al., 2009). For example, commercial brands can advocate for socio-political issues or challenge existing laws (Cova, 2020; Parcha and Westerman, 2020), while NGOs and activists can voice concerns when political elites fail to address them (Claus and Tracey, 2020). Additionally, lobbyists can intervene in the policy-making and legislation processes (Lawton et al., 2013; Ridge et al., 2017).

Embracing the broader view of political participation, multi-actor interactions can provide a wide range of contextualised benefits (Brennan and Henneberg, 2008), such as public deliberation (Chamber, 2003), policy legitimation (Brennan and Henneberg, 2008), a sense of belongingness to a political in-group (Ravald and Gronroos, 1996), fulfilment of civil duty (Pattie et al., 2003), and political representation by other entities (Dalton, 2002). Within this expanded political system, marketing, especially political marketing, is well-suited to examine the identification and satisfaction of needs (Hill and Martin, 2014; MacInnis et al., 2020). To facilitate this examination, Korschun et al. (2020) propose a comprehensive triadic-interaction framework depicting how three sets of actors—consumers, brands and other political entities (elected officials, legislative bodies, and non-governmental organisations with a political mission)—interact around socio-political issues to benefits actors involved and societies at large. Building upon this framework, this thesis focuses on conceptualising a construct termed *brand activist attributes* (BAA), which explores how brands benefit consumers by fulfilling their needs and expectations regarding socio-political issues within the politicised marketplace.

## 2.8 Chapter 2 Concluding Remarks

---

Chapter 2 has examined the multidisciplinary literature for a better understanding of whether and how brands can engage with divisive socio-political issues to cultivate strong and positive CBRs (for a summary see Appendix 1). Sections 2.2 and 2.3 delve into the theoretical foundations, current conceptions, key constructs of CBRs and brand attributes. These sections also highlight the misalignment between the theorisation of brand attributes and consumer needs regarding socio-political issues. Moving forward, Section 2.4 explored the theory of deliberative democracy and advocated for a broader perspective on political systems, recognising that politics extend beyond electoral contexts and permeate unconventional political arena like the marketplace. Guided by this viewpoint, Section 2.5 examined the multidisciplinary literature on political consumerism, social movements, and consumer movements, while Section 2.6 focused on CSR, CPA, and brand activism. The insights gathered from these sections substantiate the notion that both consumers and brands play influential roles in the wider political system, rooted in the principles of deliberative democracy theory. Lastly, drawing upon the theory of political marketing, Section 2.7 developed a theoretical foundation that depicts the circumstances and contexts in which both consumers and brands become political actors engaged in deliberating socio-political issues. This theoretical foundation, elucidating how and why consumers derive value and conceive benefits from brand engagement with socio-political issues, aims to facilitate the empirical investigation. Chapter 3 will proceed with a discussion of the research philosophy and presents an overview of research methodology employed to collect and analyse empirical data.

## **Chapter 3: Overview of Research Design**

### **3.1 Overview of Chapter 3**

---

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology approaches that underpin the research design of this thesis. It is important to note that further details for each study will be expanded and explained in subsequent chapters. Section 3.2 discusses and justifies the adopted ontological and epistemological assumptions. Section 3.3 outlines the overview of research methodology that informed the specific choices of data collection and analysis methods employed in the subsequent studies. Section 3.4 presents the rationale for selecting the unit of analysis and the choice of country as the research site. Finally, Section 3.5 offers a brief conclusion to this chapter.

## 3.2 Philosophical Stance

---

Research philosophy can be defined as a set of paradigms, also commonly referred to as philosophical assumptions, guiding the development of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2015). It encompasses two primary types of assumptions: ontology, which pertains to the nature of reality, and epistemology, which concerns what constitutes valid knowledge (Krauss, 2005). The understanding and choice of a consistent set of paradigms will facilitate the achievement of the research aim (Deshpande, 1983). Therefore, a clear and consistent set of paradigms is essential for achieving the research aim of this thesis, which is to conceptualise the BAA construct and empirically examine BAA in consumer-brand relationships. There are four main sets of research philosophical assumptions: constructivism (also called interpretivism), positivism, postpositivism, and pragmatism (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Wahyuni, 2012).

Constructivism embraces a relativist ontology, positing that reality is socially constructed, making it subjective and multifaceted (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). In this paradigm, realities take the form of mental constructions and are contingent on the perspectives of individuals or social groups holding these mental constructions (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism acknowledges the interdependence between the researcher and the researched object. The researcher's theoretical background and values influence the knowledge that is constructed through interaction with the phenomenon and participants in the inquiry. Epistemologically, constructivism takes a subjectivist stance, asserting that knowledge is generated through the researcher's interpretation of individuals' subjective views and experiences of phenomena (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

Positivism adheres to the ontology commonly called "naive realism," asserting that reality is objective and external to social actors (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012). This perspective posits that knowledge serves the purpose of comprehending objectively measurable phenomena, expressed through law-like generalisations that remain unaltered by time and context (Saunders et al., 2015). In terms of epistemology, positivism maintains an objective stance, recognising only observable phenomena as sources of legitimate data (Crotty, 1998). It presupposes independence between the researcher and the researched object, asserting the researcher's ability to eliminate potential mutual influences between the

researcher and object. Thus, legitimate knowledge can only be acquired through objective measurement, independent of the researcher's values (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Postpositivism represents a paradigm that critiques and modifies positivism (Creswell and Poth, 2016). While positivism posits a singular, measurable reality independent of the researcher, postpositivism adopts the ontology of critical realism. Postpositivism acknowledges that while a reality exists, the interpretation of measured outcomes and the claim of reality are inevitably influenced by the theoretical knowledge, assumptions, and values of the researcher (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Epistemologically, postpositivism maintains a modified objective stance, asserting that reality can be apprehended through critical examinations, albeit imperfectly (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Consequently, knowledge is generated under the influence of the researcher's conjectures and values, serving as an approximation of reality (Creswell and Poth, 2016).

Many assert that research philosophy plays a fundamental role in informing the selection of data collection and analysis methods (Crotty, 1998; Kivunja and Kuini, 2017; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). While this thesis adopts a more pragmatic stance, contending that a paradigm does not necessarily dictate the research approach, it follows the dominant view that the foundational assumptions of paradigms are often associated with certain types of research approaches and shape the research procedures (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

Constructivism is typically affiliated with qualitative approaches, actively seeking diverse perspectives from participants, such as those cultivated through numerous interviews. When participants articulate their understandings, they articulate meanings influenced by social interactions with others and their own personal histories. In the context of this thesis, constructivism is deemed suitable for facilitating the qualitative phase where the conceptualisation of BAA is derived from the researcher's interpretation of participants' experience and articulation about brand activism.

Positivism and postpositivism are commonly linked with quantitative approaches (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The positivism/postpositivism paradigm guides the research by commencing with a predetermined theory to be tested, wherein specific variables and empirical measures are identified. Researchers assert knowledge claims based on detailed variable measures and evidence gathered to either support or reject a hypothesis regarding relationships or causes of variables. The postpositivism paradigm is deemed facilitative in the

quantitative phase of this thesis where a scale can be developed to measure BAA and used to test relationships derived from the qualitative findings.

Pragmatism advocates for the adoption of the most suitable approach and an integrated approach that bridges the gap between positivism and interpretivism. They dismiss the idea of incompatibility, asserting that both quantitative and qualitative research methods should be seen as complementary and viable tools within a researcher's repertoire (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). This approach is most frequently associated with a mixed-methods design, especially when the research objective cannot be adequately addressed solely through either quantitative or qualitative methods (Feilzer, 2010). Pragmatism asserts that multiple paradigms can be applied in mixed-methods research. The emphasis lies in employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively achieve the research aim and objectives at hand. Thus, the pragmatist perceives reality as both singular (for instance, there might exist a theory explaining the studied phenomenon) and multiple (acknowledging the significance of assessing various individual perspectives on the nature of the phenomenon). Adopting this pragmatic view, the choice of paradigm in different research phases aligns with the research approach employed during the corresponding stage of the research process.

This thesis aims to conceptualise the BAA construct and empirically examine its role in consumer-brand relationships. Such exploration of an under-investigated construct and model testing are typically attainable through a mixed-methods approach (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). This approach is deemed most appropriate to facilitate a comprehensive understanding and empirical examination of how consumers assess and form relationships with activist brands (Arnould and Thompson, 2015; Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; MacInnis et al., 2019). Therefore, this thesis embraces a pragmatist philosophical stance to enable the use of a mixed-methods research approach to bridge the philosophical and methodological gap (Price and Coulter, 2019). In the qualitative phase, constructivism is deemed helpful and adopted to elicit multiple perceptions and responses from the participants and thus to build a rich understanding of the subjective meaning of brand activism. Notably, the paradigm in the quantitative phase shifts from constructivism to postpositivism, in which the researcher makes claims for knowledge based on measures of variables and evidence for rejecting or supporting hypotheses included in the initial conceptual model.



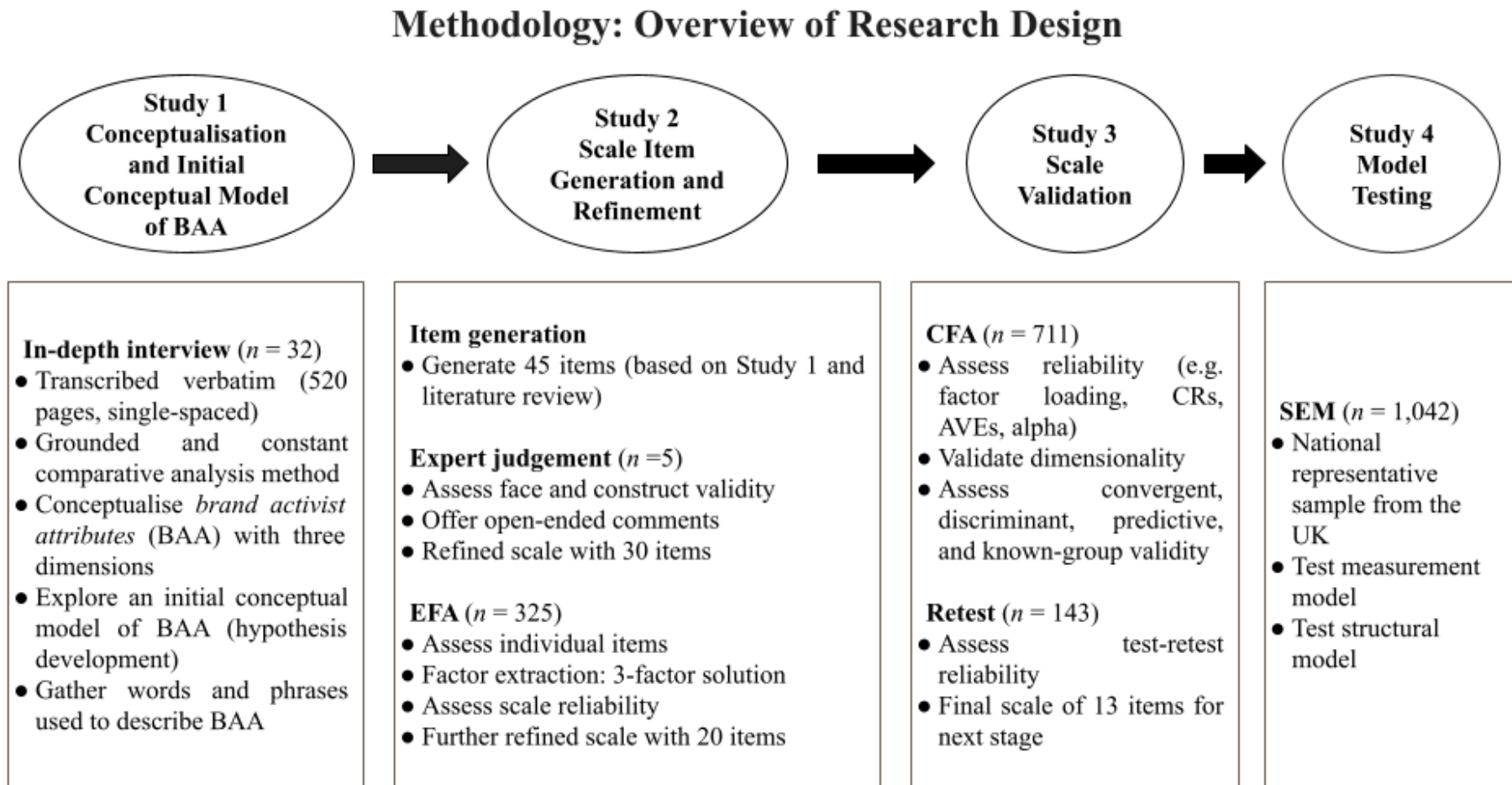
### 3.3 Research Design

---

Enabled by the pragmatist stance, this thesis adopts a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach, which permits researchers navigating between and switching epistemological stances and approaches (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Figure 3-1 presents a more detailed diagram that elaborates on this research approach. Scholars in business and management increasingly acknowledge the advantages of integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of research problems and to advance disciplinary knowledge (Azorin and Cameron, 2010; Harrison III, 2013). Given the novelty of the brand activism construct and the scarcity of research on consumer perceptions of brand activism, it was deemed pertinent to commence with a qualitative exploration of BAA, the focal phenomenon (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2006). Following a grounded theory approach (Gioia et al., 2013; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), the initial qualitative Phase 1 intends to achieve research objectives 1 and 2, that is, to explore the nature of BAA and an initial conceptual model regarding the role of BAA in consumer-brand relationships. Notably, the use of the grounded theory approach stops upon the completion of the qualitative Phase 1 and does not extend to the quantitative phase.

The subsequent quantitative phase follows established scaling procedures to achieve research objectives 3 and 4, that is, to develop a scale to measure BAA (Churchill, 1979; Netemeyer et al., 2003) and validate BAA in consumer-brand relationships (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Specifically, this phase encompasses four studies (Study 1: BAA conceptualisation and initial conceptual model, Study 2: item generation and scale refinement, Study 3: scale validation, and Study 4: model testing). The rationale behind this sequential design is to assess whether and to what extent individual consumer experiences elicited in Phase 1 can be generalised to a larger population sample obtained in Phase 2 (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Specific data collection and analysis methods will be further elaborated on in the respective chapters in the remainder of this thesis.

Figure 3-1. Overview of Research Design



### 3.4 Unit of Analysis and Research Site

---

Researchers must determine the appropriate unit of analysis, which refers to the focal entity being analysed (Babbie, 2020). The unit of analysis encompasses various entities such as individuals, groups, organisations, artefacts (e.g. advertisements, films, newspapers), policies, social interactions (e.g. friendships, marriages, social movements), and more. The decision regarding the unit of analysis should be aligned with the research question at hand (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). In the context of this thesis, the research aim is to investigate how individual consumers perceive and respond to BAA; hence, the unit of analysis is determined to be individual consumers. Babbie (2020) highlights the distinction between the unit of analysis and the aggregates that researchers generalise about. Individual consumers, as the unit of analysis, can be described in terms of certain characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) and aggregated to make generalisations about specific populations (for example, females respond to BAA more positively than males). Therefore, generalisations about the aggregate populations are made based on the characteristics exhibited by individual consumers as the unit of analysis (Babbie, 2020).

The selection of the United Kingdom as the research site is motivated by two primary reasons. First, as discussed in Chapter 2, the conceptualisation of BAA is largely rooted in the theoretical foundation of deliberative democracy, where social actors (e.g. individual consumers, brands, and NGOs) possess the right and willingness to freely express their views on socio-political issues. The viability of the concept of deliberative democracy is more likely in full democracies, which are nations where “civil liberties and fundamental political freedoms are not only respected but also reinforced by a political culture conducive to the thriving of democratic principles” (*The Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2015, p. 44). According

to *The Economist's Democracy Index 2021*, the UK is categorised as a full democracy and ranked the 18th most democratic country out of 167 countries, based on a composite score across five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, and political culture (*The Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2021). Second, the UK holds a prominent position in the global economy, being the sixth-largest economy in the world in 2022 based on nominal gross domestic product (GDP) valued at \$3.19 trillion and the ninth-largest based on purchasing power parity valued at \$3.77 trillion (International Monetary Fund, 2022). Additionally, Inglehart et al.' (1981; 1997; 2000) studies on societal and national values indicate that the UK exhibits high post-materials values, wherein individuals are more inclined to consider socio-political issues in their consumption decisions compared to individuals from countries with high materialist values.

### **3.5 Chapter 3 Concluding Remarks**

---

With respect to the research aim and objectives, this chapter discussed and justified the adoption of pragmatism as the philosophical stance and the mixed-methods exploratory sequential approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. In particular, the qualitative phase aims to explore the nature of BAA and develop the initial conceptual model of BAA, while the subsequent quantitative phase intends to develop a BAA scale and test the conceptual model. Lastly, justification has been provided for selecting the individual level as the unit of analysis and the UK as the research site.

# **Chapter 4 Qualitative Phase - Study 1 Conceptualisation and Initial Conceptual Model**

## **4.1 Overview of Chapter 4**

---

This chapter presents Phase 1 of this thesis, that is the qualitative phase aiming to achieve two research objectives: 1) conceptualise *brand activist attributes* (BAA), by identifying its nature and key attributes, and 2) explore an initial conceptual model for BAA for testing. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 detail and justify the research approach and strategy that informed specific data collection and analysis methods adopted in the qualitative phase. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 outline how the qualitative data was collected and analysed and present the rationale for selecting these methods as the most appropriate ones to achieve the research objectives. Section 4.6 presents the findings of the conceptualisation of BAA and its dimensions, addressing the research objective 1. Sections 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 present the findings that inform the hypothesised conceptual model of BAA, addressing the research objective 2. Lastly, Section 4.10 concludes this chapter with a brief summary of key procedures and findings.

## 4.2 Research Approach

---

Study 1 aims to conceptualise BAA and its role in CBRs. Specifically, it seeks to explore: 1) what is BAA in terms of conceptualisation?; 2) How consumers respond to BAA incidents and brands in terms of outcomes?; 3) What determines consumer perception of BAA in terms of antecedents?; and 4) What are conditions in which BAA becomes more/ less salient in CBRs? In general, the main objectives of Phase 1 are to develop a new or lesser-known construct and to explore its relationships with other consumer-related constructs, which fall within the typical scope of grounded theory investigation (Fischer and Otnes, 2006; Flint et al., 2002; Gioia et al., 2013).

In their influential work, Glaser and Strauss (1967) propose grounded theory as an approach for developing new theory, challenging the prevalent assumption that qualitative research merely describes pre-existing and universal social behaviour. The approach is underpinned by the notion that reality is provisional about which theories could be developed. Taking this view, grounded theory focuses on “the actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in real settings” (Gephart, 2004, p. 457). Grounded theory involves constantly contrasting the socially constructed daily “realities” perceived by the actors who participate in those realities with researchers’ interpretation of those realities (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). By developing theories that address the interpretive realities of actors in social settings, grounded theory adopts theoretical sampling to identify participants who can offer rich experiences of the phenomenon of interest (Suddaby, 2006). Therefore, the theory development process is inductive in its nature, with researchers reflecting on qualitative data related to a phenomenon to identify patterns and construct new theories (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Eisenhardt et al., 2016; Zeithaml et al., 2020). Grounded theory is widely regarded as

suited to understanding the process by which actors construct meanings out of intersubjective experiences, allowing researchers to make claims about how individuals interpret reality (Suddaby, 2006).

Although the approach grounds theory from data, prior research cannot be ignored. Rather, researchers should immerse themselves in the setting of interest and leverage existing literature to facilitate an understanding of that particular setting (Fischer and Otnes, 2006). Indeed, as Glaser and Strauss (1967) state, while it is possible to develop new theories directly from data, it is more desirable and usually necessary to start from a substantive theory grounded in existing research in a particular subject area. Substantive theories can provide a stimulus to research ideas and offer an initial guide of research direction (Suddaby, 2006). In this thesis, the substantive theory of “brand attributes” guides the research aim, which is to conceptualise BAA, as a new form of brand attributes, in a setting where brands and consumers are both political actors involved in the debate of socio-political issues within a wider political system, as previously outlined in Chapter 2. To safeguard from a heavily theory-laden view of the phenomenon, the approach and procedures adopted in this thesis follow established recommendations of maintaining a healthy level of scepticism towards pre-existing theories (Corley et al., 2021; Suddaby, 2006; Gioia et al., 2013; 2022).

The grounded theory approach is particularly suited to marketing and consumer behaviour research that explores the nature of a new construct, its antecedents/facilitators, or implications/consequences in a specific context that give rise to questions about the construct and its relationships (Fischer and Otnes, 2006). For instance, Coupland (2005) studies “invisible brands” in private spaces - a less-studied context of brand consumption. By



grounding her study in the data collected from participants' pantries and kitchens, she conceptualises the degree of "visibility" as a new dimension of brand.

An example of adopting a grounded theory approach to explore the previously unidentified antecedents or consequences of a construct could be found in Drumwright's (1994) study of socially responsible buying. Rather than focusing on exploring the nature of socially responsible buying, Drumwright sought to identify factors that motivate socially responsible buying. Grounding from the data she collected from ten externally-recognised firms that have been engaging in socially responsible purchase behaviours, Drumwright identified a range of individual and organisational factors prompting organisations to be more (versus less) socially responsible in buying practices.

Also, studies that identify a new construct can also explore the antecedents and consequences of that construct. For instance, Flint et al. (2002) adopted the grounded theory approach to investigate the meaning of desired value change for customers in the business-to-business context of the American automobile manufacturing industry as a representative setting to the mature and manufacturing-oriented industries. The findings from their grounded theory study not only sheds light on the nature of the construct but also the contextual conditions that drive desired value change and its outcomes on customer relationships.

In sum, the grounded theory approach has been used to theorise new constructs and/or their relationships with other constructs. Therefore, the grounded theory approach is deemed well-suited for this thesis to achieve the research aim of identifying the nature of BAA and providing initial insight for hypothesising antecedents, consequences, moderators, and mediators of its effect.

### 4.3 Research Strategy

---

Zeithaml et al. (2020) identify three main strategies for constructing grounded theory: case studies, ethnography, and theories-in-use strategy. Case studies involve an in-depth examination of one or multiple cases within a real-world context (Gebhardt et al., 2006). A case is typically an entity in the domain of interest. Cases in marketing and consumer behaviour research might be individual consumers (e.g. Alvarez et al., 2021), projects (e.g. Molner et al., 2019), and buyer-seller relationships (e.g. Narayandas and Rangen, 2004). Case studies can also involve one or multiple levels of analysis (Yin, 1984). For instance, Pettigrew (1990) studied the competitive advantages of multiple major British firms at both the organisational and industrial levels, while Gebhardt et al. (2006) conducted a multi-firm investigation to examine the creation of market orientation at two levels of analysis: firm and industry. Studies that adopt the case study strategy typically combine multiple sources of data, such as questionnaires, field observations, review of archives, and interviews (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The other strategy is ethnography, which aims to describe the formulation of social phenomena through people's behaviours and experiences, focusing on patterns of actions at the cultural and/or social level rather than at a cognitive level (Atkinson et al., 2001). Ethnography aims to establish the subjective significance of experience of particular groups of people and the underlying reasons for that significance (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). Ethnographic studies typically involve extended immersion in the specific cultural context of interest to enhance understanding of social incidents and patterns of collective behaviours within the cultural and/or cultural context under investigation (Deshpande and Webster, 1989; Peterson et al., 2021).

The theories-in-use strategy is the third strategy researchers can adopt to create grounded theories, especially organic or home-grown theories in the marketing discipline that are specific to marketing-related issues (Kohli, 2009; Rust, 2006; Zeithaml et al., 2020), such as Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) service quality and Kohli and Bernard's (1990) market orientation. A theories-in-use is a person's mental model of how things work in a particular context that guides their deliberate behaviour (Argyris and Donald, 1974). All actors in the field of marketing—such as marketers, consumers, service providers, and policy makers—have mental models that can be elicited by the theories-in-use strategy to develop new constructs, propositions and hypotheses. The theories-in-use strategy relies on the assumption that individuals are holders of the proximity of the theory the researcher aims to uncover and further refine with consultation of the existing literature (Zeithaml et al., 2020). Therefore, the theories-in-use strategy advocates the development of theories with the use of one-to-one and in-depth interviews with a relatively small number of participants (often 15–25). The emergence of ideas and mental models that guide their perceptions of and responses to marketing-related issues of particular interest serve as the starting point which the researchers as the critical evaluator, usually with a particular theoretical lens, can elicit, abstract and extend into theories (Zaltman, 2003).

The main objectives of the qualitative phase of this thesis are to explore, from the perspective of individual consumers, the nature of BAA and its antecedents, consequences, and moderators of its effect on CBRs. Considering these objectives, the theories-in-use strategy is deemed most appropriate as it is particularly useful when researchers want to construct organic marketing theories concerning new and emerging phenomena in the marketplace (Zeithaml et al., 2020). In particular, the strategy advocates the elicitation of theory from individual consumers' experiences and knowledge about the phenomenon of interest. Also,

theories-in-use can serve as an exploratory approach to build the ideal foundation for empirical efforts (Zeithaml et al., 2020), that is the empirical validation of the BAA construct and testing of the theory concerning BAA and related constructs. Therefore, it is deemed that the theories-in-use strategy is well-suited to achieve the objectives of Phase 1 of this thesis. The next sections detail and justify the choice of data collection and data analysis methods, followed by the presentation of findings and chapter concluding marks for this chapter.

## 4.4 Data Collection Method

---

### 4.4.1 The Use of Semi-Structured Interviews

As discussed previously, the theories-in-use strategy recommends employing interviews to gather qualitative data on consumers' experiences and knowledge of the marketing-related phenomenon, which can be abstracted and further developed into new theories (Zeithaml et al., 2020). Following this rationale, the qualitative phase adopted an interview method to collect data on participants' perceptions and responses to brand engagement with socio-political issues. Specifically, qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews, which are useful to elicit the nature of the focal concept and understand its relationships with other concepts in an exploratory phase (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Kvale, 2008). Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006), which is deemed most suited when the researcher has determined the broad domain of and exhibited some understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Turner, 2010). In particular, the form of loose and flexible design allows dialogues during the semi-structured interviews and follow-up questions that gives the interviewees to elaborate on their previous explanations (Bell, 2014; Hopf, 2000). Moreover, semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable for investigating individuals' perceptions, cognitive, and attitudinal responses to issues of the research interest (Barriball and While, 1994), especially when the interviewees might have relative low level of deliberative consideration or evaluation of the issues (Astedt-Kurki and Heikkinen, 1994). Given the main objectives of the qualitative phase is to examine consumer perceptions and responses to BAA, which might not be a particularly salient or frequently-considered subject or issue in the mind of consumers, the format of semi-structured interview is deemed most suited for the qualitative phase of this thesis.

#### **4.4.2 Sampling and Participant Information**

The grounded theory approach and theories-in-use strategy are characterised by the use of theoretical sampling as a data collection method (e.g. Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Zeithaml et al., 2020). Theoretical sampling is a data collection process by which participants are chosen purposely, not to improve statistical validity, but to develop new theories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). It advocates the recruitment of research participants who have the experience and knowledge about the issue/phenomenon of interest (Zeithaml et al., 2020). In the later stage of theoretical sampling, that is, after the initial data collection, data analysis and collection occur simultaneously and new data collection is determined by the ongoing interpretation of data and emerging theory (Suddaby, 2006).

In line with the above tradition and prior studies (e.g. Huber and Matthew, 1994; Thomas and Epp, 2019), the qualitative phase in this thesis adopts the theoretical sampling to recruit participants. Given the research objectives of understanding the nature of BAA and its role in CBRs, the interviews were conducted with a view to identify consumers who are over 18 and attentive to brand involvement in socio-political issues. Participants were sought from diverse demographic and cultural backgrounds, in which a wide range of experiences, interpretations, responses to socio-political issues and brand involvement in such issues is informed and shaped. Recruitment was done through the researcher's and supervisors' personal network and a volunteer panel managed by the University of Sheffield. While some rules of thumb suggest an optimal sample size between 15 to 25 of interview participants, the actual sample size should be determined by the reach of data saturation (Zeithaml et al., 2020). Therefore, the data collection process stopped when the researcher determined that further data collection would only reveal incremental but not substantive insights and contributions to the theory development (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The final sample consists of 32 participants,

with a is gender-balanced distribution (17 females and 15 males), and diverse age (two aged from 18 to 25, nine aged from 26 to 40 , 19 age from 41 to 60, two age over 60), ethnicity (19 white and 13 others), nationality (seven countries), and occupations (seven students and 25 professionals). Table 4-1 details sample characteristics.

Table 4-1. Information of Interview Participants (Study 1)

No.	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Nationality	Minutes	Issues of Importance
01	26-30	Female	Asian (Chinese)	University student	Chinese (Mainland)	73	Racial issues; sustainability
02	31-35	Female	Asian (Chinese)	University teacher	Chinese (Mainland)	96	Child well-being, gender issues
03	26-30	Female	Asian (Chinese)	University student	Chinese (Mainland)	113	Animal cruelty, immigration
04	26-30	Male	White (Welsh)	Office administrator	British	84	Racial issues, gender issues
05	18-25	Male	White (British)	University student	British	98	Racial issues, gender issues
06	60+	Gay Male	White	Musician/historian	British	77	Racial issues, Brexit
07	31-35	Female	Asian (Thai)	E-commerce manager	Thai	62	Child well-being, sustainability
08	31-35	Male	White	University student/engineer	British	62	Gender issues, racial issues
09	41-45	Female	Asian (Chinese)	Marketing director	Chinese (Mainland)	44	LGBTQ issues, animal cruelty
10	18-25	Female	Asian	University student	Chinese (Hong Kong)	56	Racial issues, LGBTQ issues
11	60+	Male	White	College teacher	British	87	LGBTQ issues, animal cruelty
12	26-30	Male	Asian (Chinese)	University student	Chinese (Hong Kong)	143	Animal cruelty, LGBTQ issues
13	41-45	Female	Latino (Brazilian)	Lecturer	Brazil	49	Child well-being, sustainability
14	46-50	Male	White (Irish)	Technical support officer	British (Irish)	30	Brexit, sustainability
15	26-30	Female	Chinese	University student	Chinese (Mainland)	81	LGBTQ, gender issues
16	51-55	Male	White (Caucasian)	Professor in management	British	42	Racial issues, Brexit
17	51-55	Male	White (British)	Information specialist	British	88	Brexit, child well-being
18	46-50	Female	(South) Asian	Lecturer	British	47	Brexit, LGBTQ issues
19	51-55	Female	White (Russian)	English tutor	British and Russian	35	Animal cruelty, Brexit
20	51-55	Male	White (British)	Digital specialist	British	54	Gender issues, sustainability
21	46-50	Female	White (Welsh)	Career adviser	British (Welsh)	48	Gender issues, Brexit
22	41-45	Female	White (British)	Executive assistant	British	40	Gender issues, child well-being
23	46-50	Male	White (British)	Customer services manager	British	35	Child well-being, animal cruelty
24	51-55	Female	White (British)	University Researcher	British	45	Animal cruelty, sustainability
25	41-45	Male	Asian (Chinese)	Academic in engineering	British	47	Brexit, sustainability
26	51-55	Female	White (British)	Administrative officer	British	34	Abortion, sustainability
27	46-50	Male	White (British)	Employability manager	British	50	Sustainability, child well-being
28	46-50	Male	White (British)	Digital content manager	British	56	Racial issues, immigration



29	36-40	Female	Asian (Chinese)	Student adviser	British	53	Immigration, Brexit
30	56-60	Male	White (European)	Lecturer in Asian studies	British	68	Child well-being, sustainability
31	46-50	Female	White (German)	Student adviser	German	37	Animal cruelty, sustainability
32	46-50	Female	White (British)	Executive assistant	British	30	Animal cruelty, child well-being

#### **4.4.3 Design and Implementation of Interviews**

Ensuring rigorous data collection procedures is crucial for conducting high-quality and trustworthy qualitative research (Epp and Otnes, 2021). The design and implementation of the interviews followed the guidelines outlined by McCracken (1988) and Kallio et al. (2016). An interview protocol was developed to guide the interviews and ensure consistency. The protocol includes a list of main and follow-up questions in a logical sequence, aiming to steer discussion towards the research aim (Krauss et al., 2009). Particular attention was given to crafting participant-oriented, open-ended, clear, and non-leading interview questions (Kvale, 2008; Krauss et al., 2009; Turner, 2010). The interview protocol (in Appendix 2) encompasses general questions, questions specific to the research objectives, and follow-up questions (Kallio et al., 2016; McCracken, 1988).

Prior to the interviews, participants were asked to read the participant information sheet (in Appendix 11) and sign the consent form (in Appendix 12). The interviews commenced with broad questions about the participants' backgrounds and general brand consumption (e.g. "Tell me a little bit about yourself"; "Do you have a favourite brand, and if so what is it and why?"). These questions were used as ice-breakers to create a relaxed conversation atmosphere as they are issues that the interviewees are familiar with while aligning with the phenomenon of research interest (Krauss et al., 2009; Whiting, 2008).

Subsequently, specific questions were posed to explore participants' thoughts, feelings and purchase intentions regarding self-nominating BAA instances (i.e. cases of brands engaging with socio-political issues). These questions were designed in accordance with the main objectives of the interviews and presented in a progressive and logical manner (Krauss et al., 2009; McCracken, 1988). For instance, participants were initially asked to recall and describe

instances of brand involvement in socio-political issues, in line with the first objective of exploring the nature of BAA. Subsequently, they were asked to discuss their thoughts and feelings about these instances, in alignment with the second objective of examining consumer responses to BAA. Following were questions designed to achieve the third objective of identifying the possible moderators of the effect of BAA (e.g. “Do you think that there are situations where your responses (e.g. feelings, thoughts and purchase intentions) would be different in extent/ direction?”).

Additionally, follow-up questions were utilised to generate the richest possible conversation related to the research aim, including verifying unclear responses (e.g. “I’m sorry, could you repeat what you just said? I didn’t quite hear you.”), direct probes (e.g. “Can you please elaborate?”; “I’m not sure I understand X. . . .Would you explain that to me?”), and indirect probes, such as neutral verbal expressions (e.g. “uh-huh”), verbal expression of empathy (e.g. “I can see why you say that was difficult for you...”), and mirroring technique (e.g. “So you were shopping at . . .”).

Following previous studies (e.g. Licsandru and Cui, 2019; Epp and Price, 2011), the research also employed the photo elicitation technique to facilitate discussion (McCracken, 1988). Photo elicitation involves presenting participants with photographs related to the research objectives or issues to elicit enriched qualitative information (Heisley and Levy, 1991). During the semi-structured interviews, a collection of three to four advertisements and news stories was assembled respectively for a variety of socio-political issues, such as Brexit (e.g. Marmite’s advertisements of “love it - hate it” with the European Union flag on the product package), LGBTQ+ issues (e.g. Calvin Klein’s Pride campaign featuring trans model Jari Jones), gender issues (e.g. Windex’s advertisement with the slogan “Until there isn’t a glass

ceiling to clean.”), and ethnic issues (e.g. Adidas’s anti-racism campaign). After participants deliberated on their self-nominated instances, they were asked to choose two socio-political issues of personal concern to them or significant others. Subsequently, they were presented with the collections of advertisements and news stories related to the socio-political issues they picked and hence asked about their thoughts and feelings about those collections. The photo elicitation part of the interview was followed by questions about personal information (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity), an opportunity for further elaboration (e.g. “Are there any more things you would want to say before we end the interview?”), and expressions of appreciation for the participants’ time.

Adhering to ethical research principles (Thompson et al., 1989; Cooper and Schindler, 2003), participants were asked to read and sign two documents reviewed and approved by the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee: a participant information sheet (in Appendix 11) and participation consent form (in Appendix 12). Participants were reminded of their rights to refrain from answering any question they felt uncomfortable with and to withdraw from the study during or after the interview within a two-week cooling-off period. To protect participants’ anonymity, a participation number was assigned to each participant, and only these numbers were used throughout this thesis. Also, caution was given in the design of questions related to participants’ personal yet non-identifiable information. For instance, participants were asked to report their gender and ethnicity they personally identify with, only if they felt comfortable doing so.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the spring of 2021 over a university-approved virtual conferencing platform (*Google Meet*) due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The interviews were conducted in English, with the participants’ consent, and were audio

recorded for subsequent verbatim transcription by the researcher. The 32 interviews ranged in duration from 30 to 143 minutes ( $M = 60$  minutes), generating a total of 520 pages of single-spaced text in size 14.

## 4.5 Data Analysis Method

---

The analysis employed the constant comparative method to analyse the interviews (Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Each interview was initially analysed individually, followed by a comparison between interviews to identify similarities and differences, adhering to a grounded, iterative and hermeneutic process (Spiggle, 1994; Thompson, 1997).

All interview transcripts were read through to gain a holistic understanding of the entire data set (Spiggle, 1994). In the second step, *categorisation* (Spiggle, 1994) akin to open coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), was performed as initial coding in an inductive and informant-centric manner. A chunk or unit of data conveying relevant and coherent meaning were identified as a meaning unit (e.g. words, phrases, or sentences) and broken up from the text. Each break-up meaning unit was interpreted, abstracted and coded as an informant-centric (sub-)theme. Each of these (sub-)themes adhered faithfully to the informants' terms and stood for what is being expressed. As the focal construct BAA was not well defined during the initial stage of analysis, the (sub-)themes were particularly useful in identifying, clarifying and defining the potential attributes or properties of BAA (Zeithaml et al., 2020).

The third step *comparison* (Spiggle, 1994), involved comparing meaning units within (sub-)themes to explore their similarities and differences. Initially, the focus was on comparing new meaning units with identified meaning units, but as coding and theme development advanced, the comparison shifted towards comparing meaning units with the properties or attributes of the developed (sub-)themes (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Meaning

units that share conceptual similarities to previously coded meaning units were coded under the same (sub-)theme (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

In the fourth step, *abstraction* (Spiggle, 1994) akin to Corbin and Strauss's (2008) axial coding, (sub-)themes with similar properties or features were grouped into more abstract research-centric aggregate dimensions. These aggregate dimensions represented relevant phenomena or concepts indicated by a group of similar themes. Abstraction helped reduce the number of grounded (sub-)themes and further distil them into more abstract aggregate dimensions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Gioia et al., 2013).

In the fifth step, *dimensionality* (Spiggle, 1994), each new meaning unit under a (sub-)theme elaborated and brought in variation the attributes or characteristics of the respective (sub-)theme. Hence, related (sub-)themes were categorised together to inform the corresponding aggregate dimension. Subsequently, these aggregate dimensions, along with related (sub-)themes, informed the conceptualisation of the focal concept, BAA (Zeithaml et al., 2020). The resulting data structure of the BAA conceptualisation (Table 4-2) helped to graphically demonstrate the progression from (sub-)themes to aggregate dimensions, which then informed the BAA conceptualisation (Gioia et al., 2013). In this step, addressing the lack of clarity and precision surrounding the focal concept BAA posed a significant challenge. Consequently, the analysis adhered to Zeithaml et al.'s (2020) suggestion that "when the core construct is yet to be defined precisely, the emerging antecedents, consequences, mediators and moderators need to be identified and defined in conjunction with the core construct in a way that the resulting propositions make sense" (p. 40).

With the data structure of the BAA conceptualisation and other identified concepts at hand, the fifth step, *integration* (Spiggle, 1994) akin to Corbin and Strauss's (2008) selective coding, was employed to inform an initial conceptual model that captures the relationship between identified concepts (Gioia et al., 2013). Specifically, BAA was chosen as the focal concept in the conceptual model due to its relevance to the essence of the research. Propositions were formulated based on participant articulations, focusing on the relationship between BAA and relevant concepts (e.g. antecedents and consequences of BAA). Subsequently, hypotheses were deduced from the relational propositions, consulting the existing literature to specify the constructs/measures representative of the concepts and specify the relationships between them.

Following the reading and categorisation steps, *iteration* played a crucial role at each subsequent stage of analysis, involving a back-and-forth movement between the data, interpretations, and relevant literature (Corley and Gioia 2004; Spiggle, 1994). In the later phase of the comparison step, as new (sub-)themes emerged, the literature was consulted to ensure a manageable number of themes by merging and relabelling similar ones. During the abstraction and dimensionality steps, iteration facilitated the identification of relevant literature, which helped to inform the categorisation of themes into aggregate dimensions. In the integration step, iteration assisted in initially specifying and continually refining the relationships between the focal construct BAA and other identified concepts (Spiggle, 1994). This iterative process ensured that the initial propositions forming the initial conceptual model align closely with the grounded data analysis. Furthermore, the extensive number of theoretical propositions generated in the initial stage were carefully examined and consolidated to identify commonalities and establish more comprehensive and concise propositions, drawing on insights from the literature (Zeithaml et al., 2020).



To ensure the rigour of the analysis, the process sought *refutation* by subjecting emerging interpretations—lower-order concepts, higher-order concepts and conceptual relationships—to the data (Spiggle, 1994). This involved examining the interpretations sequentially in different contexts and considering specific cases that might disconfirm the emerging interpretations.. Refutation was conducted in a hermeneutic manner (Thompson, 1997), which involved two key practices: 1) reserving the final interpretation of a specific passage until the interview had been thoroughly considered in its entirety, treating individual meaning units as parts and the entire interview as a whole; and 2) reassessing each interview in the context of the initial data structure from analysing the interviews individually, treating each interview as a part and the complete set of interviews as a whole. This hermeneutic process of refutation proved valuable in elucidating the boundary conditions of consumer reactions to BAA, shedding light on why consumers may perceive and respond to BAA differently.

## 4.6 Study 1 Findings - Conceptualisation and Dimensions of BAA

---

Three dimensions, namely *activist branding*, *brand transformative influence*, and *brand as consumer-empowering agent*, have emerged from the data analysis in consultation with the relevant literature. By examining the holistic relationships among the (sub-)themes presented in Table 4-2 both across and within these three dimensions, the conceptualisation of BAA was derived (for a visual presentation, please refer to Figure 4-1). The data analysis and interpretation suggest the first dimension of BAA, *activist branding*, depicted on the bottom left of Figure 4-1. Activist branding consists of articulations/themes of the *process*, *legitimacy*, and *marketing communications of activist branding*. Particularly, the theme of legitimacy of activist branding is informed by three sub-themes: *deliberative democracy*, *freedom of speech*, and *boundary conditions*, while marketing communications is enlightened by eight sub-theme: *products*, *advertisements*, *physical environment*, *social media*, *celebrity endorsement*, *sponsorship of NGOs*, *public statements*, and *market entry decisions*. Based on these (sub-)themes, activist branding in this thesis is referred to as the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints.

Furthermore, the analysis and theorisation suggest the second dimension of BAA, *brand transformative influence*, represented on the top left of Figure 4-1. Brand transformative influence reflects the articulations/themes of a brand's influence on socio-political issues regarding: *raising awareness*, *facilitating discussions*, *shaping behavioural and habitual shifts*, and *normalising transformative changes*. As illuminated by these themes, brand transformative influence in this thesis refers to the consumer perception of a brand's capacity

to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues.

Moreover, the analysis suggests the third dimension of BAA, *brand as consumer-empowering agent*, depicted on the right of Figure 4-1. Participant discourses indicate two themes regarding a sense of *empowerment through activist brands to “vote” and to voice out*. Encapsulating these two themes, brand as consumer-empowering agent in this thesis is referred to as the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them. Holistically considering these three aggregate dimensions and their (sub-)themes, BAA is conceptualised in this research as the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to enact transformative influence on the status quo of socio-political issues and empower consumers to engage with these issues in the marketplace. These attributes can be established in the minds of consumers through the strategic incorporation of the issues into the brand’s marketing communications.

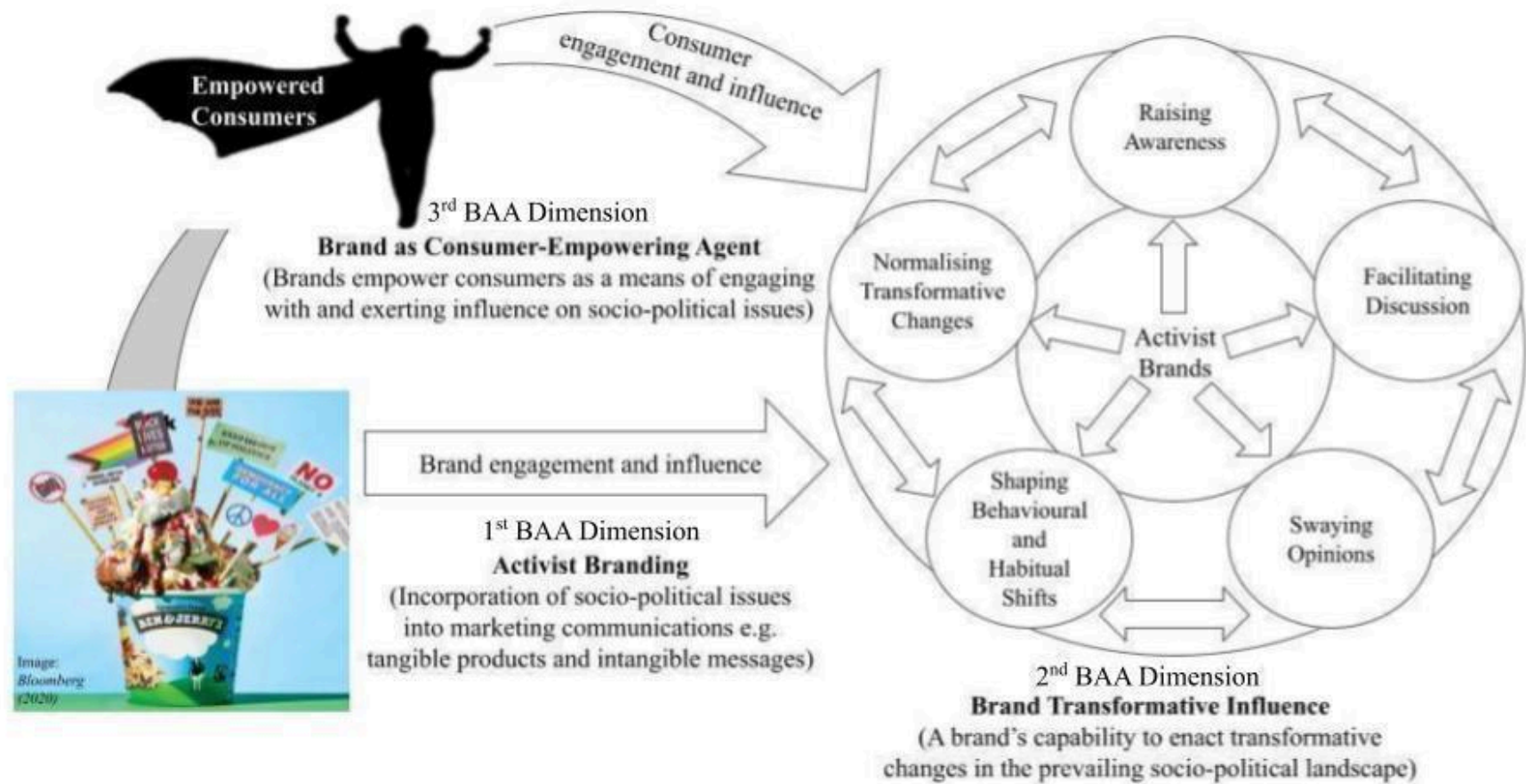
The conceptualisation of BAA and its three dimensions capture the consumer perception that they consider activist branding influential regarding its impact on maintaining or challenging the status quo of socio-political issues. Activist brands and their offerings can be symbolised and utilised as a psychological “vote” for or against these issues. When activist branding aligns with and reflects consumers’ preferred stance and ideal vision, they perceive activist branding and its subsequent influence as transformative, contributing to the advancement of issues in their desired direction. Furthermore, activist branding and transformative influence facilitate the symbolisation of activist brands and their offerings as a means through which

consumers can gain (a sense of) participation in and control over the issues. In other words, activist brands empower consumers by providing an alternative choice to express and realise their socio-political stance and vision in the marketplace, transcending the boundary of the traditional political domain. The following sections provide a more detailed elaboration on each dimension with illustrative quotes from disclosures obtained during interviews with participants.

Table 4-2. Data Structure of the Conceptualisation of BAA (Study 1)

Aggregate Dimensions	(Sub-)Themes
<b>Activist Branding</b>	Theme 1: Process of activist branding
	Theme 2: Legitimacy of activist branding (Sub-themes: deliberative democracy, freedom of speech, and boundary conditions)
	Theme 3: Marketing communications of activist branding (Sub-themes: products, advertisements, physical environment, social media, celebrity endorsement, sponsorship of NGOs, public statement, market entry choices.)
Definition: the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints.	
<b>Brand Transformative Influence</b>	Theme 1: Raising awareness
	Theme 2: Facilitating discussions
	Theme 3: Swaying opinions
	Theme 4: Shaping behavioural and habitual shifts
	Theme 5: Normalising transformative changes
Definition: Brand transformative influence is defined as the consumer’s perception of a brand’s capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues.	
<b>Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent</b>	Theme 1: Empowerment through activist brands to “vote”
	Theme 2: Empowerment through activist brands to voice out
Definition: the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them.	
Note: Characterised by the three aggregate dimensions above and their (sub-)themes, BAA is defined as the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to enact transformative influence on the status quo of socio-political issues and empower consumers to engage with these issues in the marketplace. This conceptualisation is reflected in Figure 4-1 in condensed wording, for conciseness.	

Figure 4-1. Visualisation of the Conceptualisation of BAA and its Dimensions



#### 4.6.1 1<sup>st</sup> BAA Dimension: Activist Branding

Data analysis and theorisation elicited participants' conception of *activist branding* as the first aggregate dimension informing the BAA conceptualisation. Participant articulations reflect their conceptions of activist branding encapsulating three themes, namely, *process of activist branding*, *legitimacy of activist branding*, and *marketing communications of activist branding*. The theme of *process of activist branding* reflects participants' conception of the process through which brands establish association with socio-political issues in mind, while the *legitimacy of activist branding* theme captures the participants' ascribed legitimacy to this process. Moreover, the *marketing communications* theme presents various channels and touchpoints through which participants receive information about the association between brands and these issues. Based on these themes, the aggregate dimension of activist branding refers to the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints.

##### 4.6.1.1 Process of Activist Branding

The theme of *process of activist branding* captures the participants' conception of the process through which brands establish association with socio-political issues in mind. Participant 28, a digital content manager who has been persistently actively following brand-generated content on social media, expresses his firm belief that:

*"[...] brands do have views and brands do have values. [...] I'm aware that Nike has long been a vocal, and possibly like, you know, the highest-profile player in terms of a brand being vocal and expressing its views on socio-political issues. [...] Also, I think*

*about Ben & Jerry's... [...] a company that basically produces ice cream was sharing its views and having views on social and political issues. [...] So yeah, I don't remember what was the issue that Ben & Jerry's was sharing an opinion on. [...] I was just interested to see a large multinational that appears to have progressive views, which is something of a rarity, really. I think, in general, if brands do have social and political views and they tend to be more conservative. So yeah, they just expressed their views. [...] I think I was first aware because the UK government criticised them for having a view on assert[ing] fiscal issues. [...] I think they have been pushing for a lot of things - it seems rather interesting – just, in general, like progressive issues. And they do respond to news directly, but they do respond to the UK government's views. And I think sometimes their cultural approach to politics and so so yeah just like seeing a company that it's okay to have a view on certain issues.”*

In P28's disclosures, the opposition of the ice-cream brand Ben & Jerry's against government policies speaks to Cova's (2020) note that well-known multinational brands “are becoming increasingly active in the political landscape” (p. 430), where some intentionally advocate for specific socio-political issues and defend themselves against criticism from governance authorities. His observation is reminiscent of the conceptualisation of brand activism, which pertains to the phenomenon of brands taking public stances on socio-political issues (Hydock et al., 2019; Moorman, 2020). Drawing on the theory of deliberative democracy (Chambers, 2003), it can be seen that commercial brands and their marketing activities are playing an increasingly important role in a wider political system, where various actors interact to explore solutions for socio-political issues (Korschun et al., 2020). In this sense, the practice of brand activism can be regarded as a form of political participation, as activist brands engage with the government and other actors in debates and discussions about socio-political



issues.

Similar to the formation of personal impressions (Srull and Wyer, 1989; Buss and Craik, 1983), P28's observation of brand political participation has led to dispositional inferences that spontaneously shape his impression of the brand (Fournier and Alvarez, 2019). Additionally, according to McCracken's meaning transfer model (1986; 1989), the brand engagement of brands in democratic deliberation has cognitively linked the focal issues to the brands, transferring the meaning of those issues to the brand itself. These transferred meanings of those issues have become psychologically salient and easily accessible memories associated with the brand (Park et al., 2013), becoming an integral part of the brand in P28's mind. In the words of Batra (2019, p. 536), this observed brand political participation serves as "conduits of cultural meaning transfer", contributing to the creation of a distinct image of the brand in the minds of the target audience and consumers. Consequently, P28's observation of brand activism establishes a meaningful connection between the brands and the focal issues, resulting in a salient and enduring socio-political image of the brands in his mind.

Other participants also share a similar perception to P28 regarding the association of brands with socio-political issues. For instance, P08, an avid car enthusiast and dedicated follower of the Force 1 Race, argues that:

*"They (Brands) are acknowledging social shifts within the social culture like a lot of themes. McLaren, Mercedes, etc are promoting different things, like diversity, culture and the Black Lives Matter movement etc."*

In his articulation, these branding practices actively advocate for multi-cultural diversity and racial equality, resonating with Kipnis et al.'s (2021) notion of diversity-and-inclusion-engaged marketing. In a broader sense, P08's argument corresponds to Holt's (2002; 2004) notion that certain brands actively respond to specific socio-political tensions prevalent in particular historical moments and embrace the socio-political changes in the consumer and marketplace culture.

Considering digital-platform-mediated deliberation (Halpern and Gibbs, 2013; Chadwick, 2008), P17, an experienced information specialist and technophile, exemplifies how influential technology brands' platform- or service-related policies can play an either intended or unintended political role in the process of democratic deliberation (Frynas and Stephens, 2015):

*“Obviously brands like Facebook and Google have been involved in political issues. Twitter, obviously, [has been] stopping Donald Trump’s Twitter account. [...] invariably it does fall at the feet of the corporation.”*

The capability of technology brands to provide platform-based digital spaces for political deliberation and discussion underscores the increasing political significance of technology brands, especially in an era where democratic deliberation has been further escalated by and heavily relies on the advancement of digitalisation and use of social media (Peterson and Godby, 2020; Lucarelli et al., 2021). Indeed, Korschun et al. (2020) demonstrate how technology brands intervene differently in response to Trump's posts on social media; “Snapchat threatened to temporarily disable the President's account; Twitter placed a warning on his tweet that it violated its policy against glorifying violence; Facebook took no action at

all” (p. 382). P17’s observations regarding technology brands’ intervention in freedom of speech and political elections echo Scherer et al.’s (2016) concerns and the emerging evidence presented by Crow et al. (2021) regarding the consequences of brand engagement in democratic deliberation.

#### 4.6.1.2 Legitimacy of Activist Branding

Contrary to the long-held belief that the public conceives brands solely as economic actors (Singer, 2019), the analysis reveals the theme of *legitimacy of activist branding*, which reflects the participants’ view that brands can, under certain conditions, legitimately engage in political deliberation within the framework of deliberative democracy. This theme was informed by three sub-themes: *deliberative democracy*, *freedom of speech*, and *Boundary Conditions*, which are elaborated upon below.

*Sub-theme Freedom of Speech.* The sub-theme of *freedom of speech* reflects the participants’ view that activist brands are entitled to whichever positions they would like to take and the corresponding expression and actions, as exemplified by the participants’ discussion on brand involvement in Brexit below:

*“I think it [Brexit] is quite polarising within families and stuff, so yeah about who voted Leave and who voted Remain. Everyone’s opinion on it was either good or bad. I think, when it comes to British brands, I think they definitely are more inclined to give their opinions on this because it does affect them a lot. So British brands who deal closely with Europe are affected by Brexit, so they could be entitled to display their own opinions. People can make their choices upon these private companies. [...] These companies are entitled to their opinions [...] Yeah, I think it’s definitely*

*completely fine for UK businesses to have a political opinion about this, especially since it's such a big decision that does affect them alike greatly.*" (P05, British male, university student)

*"[...] they've got a lot of money that they can choose to put into campaigns that they want. It's free, you know, free speech in a free country, you know. I don't have a problem with them doing it, but you want to just have a balanced view as well. [...] I don't think you can stop them from having that opportunity because to do that means you have to shut down free speech."* (P21, a British female in her 40's)

The concept of legitimacy can be understood as subjective and socially constructed by collective audiences (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Suchman, 1995). In the context of brands, legitimacy may be negotiated by consumers (Kates, 2004), specifically regarding the legitimacy of brand engagement in Brexit. This pertains to the assumed appropriate role assigned to brands by consumers as the target audience in the marketplace (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006). The participants' acceptance of activist branding is rooted in their perceived perception that the brand discussions on Brexit align with the widely-shared social assumption that individual entities are entitled to freedom of speech. This alignment establishes cognitive legitimacy (Suchman, 1995), which emerges when participants have little doubt that the observed brand practice is normatively consistent with social norms, values and expectations (Hannan and Carroll, 1992), as exemplified by the disclosure of P06, a Jewish-British historian who is outraged by Brexit and its consequences:

*"They [brands] are entitled to their point of view [of Brexit]. [...] I don't see anything inappropriate about it. I don't think you should constrain anyone from expressing*

*their points of view. [...] Within reason, I think people should be able to say what their point of view is.”*

Sub-theme *Deliberative Democracy*. Arguably, the legitimacy ascribed to activist branding by the participants can be seen as contingent upon the sub-theme of *deliberative democracy*. The participants' disclosures reflect an underlying assumption of deliberative democracy (Palazzo and Schere, 2006), wherein brand participation in debates and discussions about Brexit is viewed as offering valuable input in the process of expressing conflicts, exchanging arguments, and striving for reasoned decisions (Dryzek, 2001). This assumption is explicitly stated by P16, a professor in management: *“In a democratic society, both positions (on Brexit) are legitimate. Okay, so ultimately, I wouldn't censor either of them because I believe in democracy.”* Similarly, P21 also embraces the idea that deliberative democracy provides fertile ground for freedom of speech:

*“I think it (to vote for Leave or Remain in the Brexit referendum) is our own decisions, whilst I don't agree with Brexit, I wouldn't want to stop other people who did have that political view and voted for it. If that's what they thought was the best decision for them and their family, you know, because even it's tough when you're on the other side, the losing side. That's what it is to be in a democratic country, you have to sometimes lose, and be okay with that and just take the consequence for it to be fair for everyone.”* (P21)

Based on this assumption, the participants reflect on their self-preparation to encounter opposition or support from brands in order to exchange perspectives and validate claims, with the aim of achieving a deeper mutual understanding among the involved actors (Habermas,

1990; Manin, 1987). Consequently, the legitimacy of activist branding can be understood as the outcome of the presupposed assumption and acceptance of public deliberation that is free and equal within the context of deliberative democracy (Bohman, 1998).

*Sub-theme Boundary Conditions.* While the aforementioned sub-themes reflect the participants' belief in deliberative democracy and freedom of speech, legitimating activist branding, the sub-theme of *boundary conditions* captures their view that ascribed legitimacy is not unconditional. Referring to the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM), P23 (male, in his 40's) emphasises that the violation of social norms and legal regulations challenges the foundation of this legitimacy:

*“So if, for example, we had a clothing company in support of Black Lives Matter or against Black Lives Matter [...] I sort of take a liberal sort of view on it. So it's like “Well, that's... that's fine. I think everyone's entitled to their opinion. Obviously, some people go off and go about it and go about things in the wrong way. So, you know, you have the demo[stration]s, the violent demos and protests and everything else. Is that the right way to go about things? I don't think so. However, just, you know, people have a different view, absolutely. Of course, it's perfectly fine and perfectly acceptable.” So with the brand having a view on things that I feel differently, it would depend, for example, if it was Nike [that] came out and supported a racist movement or, you know, a racist person or something then you would think “This is not acceptable.” Then I think you would... if it was supporting something which is, you know, you could go one way or the other based on your personal preference and your personal viewpoint, then I'd be pretty blunt about it and it wouldn't affect my views on it. If it was something which is totally out of order or really controversial, you know, I*

*think then I would probably have a different view on that and that brand and then not use them again.” (P23)*

In alignment with other participants, P23 holds a set of presupposed either-right-or-wrong assumptions that business operations and political deliberation should adhere to rules, standards, principles, or codes as guidelines (Evan and Freeman, 1988; Lewis, 1985). He critically evaluated whether the practice of activist branding truly aligns with these guidelines to determine its legitimacy. Research on business ethics indicates that when a brand deviates from these guidelines, it can be considered a brand transgression or misconduct (Aaker et al., 2004; Huber et al., 2010). In his hypothetical scenario, P23 expresses his perception of brand support to any form of racially-biased speech or behaviours as an act of racism in the marketplace (Crockett, 2022), which would greatly disappoint him and violates social norms and legal regulations, constituting a brand transgression or misconduct (Magnusson et al., 2014). Brand transgressions or misconducts have significant consequences for consumer reactions to the misconducting brands (Huber et al., 2010; Khamitov et al., 2020). Indeed, the hypothetical transgression creates a sense of moral misalignment with P23’s assumptions and undermines his rationale for ascribing moral legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) to activist branding. In line with Kates’ (2004) notion that brand legitimacy is dynamic and contingent on the moral judgement of consumers, P23 expresses his belief that brand participation in deliberative democracy should align with the presupposed assumptions of boundary conditions (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006), otherwise activist branding is likely to be challenged and questioned for its legitimacy.

In summary, the analysis and interpretation of data suggest the sub-themes of *deliberative democracy*, *freedom of speech*, and *boundary conditions*. Together, these sub-themes

subsequently informed the theme of *legitimacy of activist branding*. Consistent with the deliberative democracy theory (Chambers, 2003; Dalton et al., 2004), the theme encapsulates the participants' belief that not only individuals but also brands, among other social actors, have conditional rights to participate in the deliberation process in free democratic societies where disclosures, even if undesired, are more tolerated and legitimised (Chambers, 2003; de Keersmaecker et al., 2021). In this legitimised position, the following sections discuss how brands practise activist branding through their marketing communications encompassing various channels and touchpoints.

#### 4.6.1.3 Marketing Communications of Activist Branding

In the marketplace, marketing communications serve as channels and touchpoints through which brands become associated with certain meanings derived from consumer needs, including utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic aspects (Batra, 2019; Park et al., 1986; Price and Coulter, 2019). Marketing communications encompass the dissemination of messages to target audiences through the use of different channels and tools, including products, digital media, print, television, advertising, sponsorship, public relations, social media, promotion, and so on (American Marketing Association, 2023). The theme of *marketing communications of activist branding* reflects participants' expressed beliefs that brands can incorporate socio-political issues in the marketing communications, as P01, a female university student in business, comments:

*“I think brands could have a lot of ways to communicate their marketing strategies, their marketing campaigns on different channels. [...] I think the brands could communicate their marketing campaigns related to standing out for political issues.”*



Her view speaks to Cerne's (2012) note that marketing communications can become socio-political when brands produce and distribute information about socio-political issues, shaping how these issues are understood and performed. More specifically, participants share various tools and media through which brands tap into socio-political issues. The following sections elaborate on eight sub-themes—*products, advertisements, physical environment, social media, celebrity endorsement, sponsorship of ngos, public statements, and decisions regarding market entry decisions*—that represent the channels and touchpoints brands employed to engage with socio-political issues.

*Sub-theme Products.* The sub-theme of *products* reflects the participants' conception of branded products as one medium through which brands incorporate issue-related meanings into their brand concept. This is exemplified by the following quotes in relation to promoting patriotism/nationalism:

*"I will say some of them were using it in an active way - us(ing) the patriotism to promote their products. For example, we have like... although some products are not well designed, but if they wear the mask saying this is like a way to contribute to your country, people will buy it. And I don't think that will be a really nice thing to do. Also, you will find a lot of luxury brands... I also see brands that... whenever it is a Chinese New Year, they will put very like ugly designs on the products, which is like saying "Oh, this is something about China and this is something about like Chinese New Year." (P02, a Chinese female living in the UK)*

*"The third one with HP sauce. I mean the sauce itself is nice on a bacon sandwich and other foods, but I guess I'll say originally it's a British company, so they're trying*

*to make it seem truly British with the white British gentleman with some sort of traditional British clothing on military kind of thing with their flags, pictures and the Queen, etc. So now then, maybe they're trying to make it seem like a patriotic product.”* (P08, British male in his 30's)

In their accounts, P02 and P08 perceive a sense of patriotism evoked by the design of branded products, interpreting such design as an instance of activist branding that positions the brand with a patriotic image appealing to certain market segments. Their perception aligns with prior studies; brands like Jack Daniel's in America and Tim Hortons in Canada leverage patriotism to promote the possession and consumption of products associated with iconic national symbols (Cormack, 2008; Holt, 2006). Huff et al.'s (2021) three-assemblage model of politicisation of objects proposes that there are three levels of assemblage: product assemblage, meta-market assemblage, and market assemblage. Adopting this three-assemblage model to the accounts of P02 and P08, the visual components—Britain as the brand origin (Sichtmann and Diamantopoulos, 2013), and the British gentlemen, clothing, flag and the Queen as “cultural elements” (Moon and Song, 2015, p. 154)—constitute materials of the product, that is, the micro-product assemblage (Huff et al., 2021). These iconic symbols carry cultural meanings collectively shared in the meta-market assemblage, which encompasses national heritage, collective memory, mainstream media, and the market (Huff et al., 2021), imbuing branded products with a shared sense of “nation-ness” (Anderson, 1991; Weedon, 2004). Within the middle market assemblage (Huff et al., 2021), the products' national affiliation(s) are linguistically leveraged through self-brand connection narratives (Escalas, 2004) to reframe patriotism as spending and shift reflection on national heritage to personal consumption (Zhao and Belk, 2008). Thus, through the process of activist branding, branded products are curated as a means of practising patriotism in the

minds of consumers, resonating with Spielman et al.'s (2020) concept of product patriotism.

In the case of racial stereotype, P16, the professor in management, provides a detailed illustration of how changing the brand logo to remove racial connotations relates to into decolonisation and racial equality:

*“Well, it (Uncle Ben’s logo) depicts a kind of avuncular uncle. It takes a sort of avuncular image of an elderly black man. It’s got deep historical roots in American culture. This image is similar to Aunt Jemima. And there was a book called Uncle Tom’s Cabin that changed a lot of views about slavery and black people in the United States. And a lot of slaves lived in the houses with their masters and they were, they were bottlers and servants, and they were socialised into the ways of white people. So this character Uncle Ben looks like this sort of typical slave from the 19th century who was friendly to white people but accepted his place in the social hierarchy. In some ways, it’s quite a dated and potentially racist image. But it’s also a powerful global brand and has been for many many years, isn’t it? Interesting how the image survives in the current day, in the current time, even though it’s potentially problematic. [...] Well, that (whether or not Uncle Ben’s should change its logo) is what we call decolonisation. It’s provoked partly by the Black Lives Matter, isn’t it? It means coming to terms with some of these, these, these images - what they represent and including statues, phrases and beliefs. And if necessary, changing them. Sounds a bit like a cultural revolution in some ways it is but hopefully without the violence. So yeah, I think all of these, all of these images, and all of these brands have to be probably reassessed in the context of the post-colonial era, in the context of Black Lives Matters.” (P16)*

In P16's account, the long-standing name and logo of the rice brand Uncle Ben's, featuring an elderly African American man in a bow tie, symbolise frozen representations of the African experiences during colonial times (Bonsu, 2009). This portrayal of *artificial Africas* (Mayer, 2002, p. 1) is viewed as a manifestation of the socio-political values of colonial ideologies, perpetuating a system that devalues colonial subjects as subhuman savages and subordinates to the white race (Ivie, 2005; Williamson, 2002). This specific portrayal of inferiority, informed by colonialism (O'Barr, 1994; Schroeder 2002), can be seen as a marketing practice that employs race as a cultural symbol to craft a distinct brand positioning (Crockett, 2008; Johnson et al., 2019), catering to "consumer fantasies that involve the maintenance of a fixed historical image of the colonised" (Bonsu, 2009, p. 5). These "fantasies" appear in the participants' discussions: "*people have this image of black people, you know, they work on the farm, but they're also really good cooks or something and they*" (P04, a British male in his 20's who works as an office administrator); "*There's an assumption that the kind of food people cook with that rice identifies with a particular racial group*" (P06, the Jewish-British historian). These rhetorical branding practices speak to Grier et al.'s (2019) argument that gaining access to markets is facilitated by a racist hierarchy rooted in colonial and imperialist practices within postcolonial contemporary marketplaces. The intertwining of colonial ideologies and marketing practices, perpetuated through the dominant marketplace disclosures that mask the continuity and exploitation of colonial power relations, limits consumers' awareness of the colonial ideologies being perpetuated (Poole et al., 2021).

The management's decision to rebrand Uncle Ben's to Ben's Original (D'Innocenzio, 2020) and eliminate "the image of savage" (Ivie, 2005, p. 59) is seen by P26 as an act of

decolonising marketing that identifies and challenges colonialism-informed practices in the marketplace (Eckhardt et al., 2022). In response to this socio-political (re)branding, P04, the office administrator, recalls: *“I saw the news about changing the logo. I don’t know what exactly they’ve done. It’s like: “Oh yeah, that makes sense actually!”* His reflection demonstrates that eliminating racist connotations in the process of activist branding serves *“as a moment in time where people are understanding the symbolism of an Aunt Jemima, you know an Uncle Ben...”* (Eckhardt et al., 2022, p. 179). With more socially aware consumers like P06, who reckons that *“He (Uncle Ben’s) is broken in any case. [...] I would just think that a couple of the wordings are slightly in poor taste and ought to be changed”*, activist branding presents an opportunity for the historically colonial brands to embrace *“post-colonial marketplace practice”* (Grier et al., 2019, p. 93) and turn *“socio-political risk into your brand’s advantages”* (Fournier et al., 2021, p. 19).

*Sub-theme Advertisements.* This sub-theme reflects the participants’ observations that *Advertisements* can serve as another touchpoint through which activist branding establishes a connection between the brand and certain socio-political issues in the minds of consumers. For instance, the use of gender roles in advertisements has been a longstanding tradition in the marketplace (Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976; Gilly, 1988). In response to brand advertisements involving the portrayal of gender roles, P19, a Russian-British female in her 50’s, reckons that *“They (advertisements) portrayed women in a very traditional kind of way that women used to be portrayed”*, in line with the literature documenting the frequent use of stereotypical gender roles in advertising (Courtney and Whipple, 1983; Furnham and Mak, 1999). Gender stereotypes are beliefs that certain characteristics differentiate women and men (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1981). In the below quotes, participants provided further details on specific characteristics used to stereotype women, with some pointing out physical

appearance attributes (e.g. hair length, body height; Tosi and Einbender, 1985) employed to sexually objectify women as sources of erotic gratification and decorative stimuli (Ferguson et al., 1990; Zimmerman and Dahlberg, 2008): *“it is sexualising this woman [...] and it is kind of a crudely sexualised look”* (P18, a British female in her 40’s with a South Asian background); *“I will say women should be proud to show their bod[ies] in front of the public, but this is kind of like trying to entertain males more in her underwear. She’s in there, just, you know, in a gesture that is kind of like trying to seduce the man”* (P15, a Chinese female in her 20’s). Echoing this sentiment, P21, a British female in her 40’s, elaborates the negative portrayal of women being associated with stereotypical role behaviours:

*“It’s just blatantly using a woman’s body to sell a product. [...] it just represents everything that’s negative to me about advertising and brands being able to put that image out there and say to young men this is what you should expect from women: if you’re in a relationship with a woman she will be the one who just like goes around the kitchen in their lovely matching sets of underwear and cooking chickens for you, you know, like they’re just there to serve you.”* (P21)

According to her account, the portrayal of women in relationships exposes young audiences to misleading views of outdated role expectations, where women are exclusively responsible for domestic tasks and are seen as sexual property to men (Deaux and Lewis, 1984; Ferguson et al., 1990).

Occupational status is another characteristic used to depict gender roles in advertisements, as discussed by P15 in response to a comparison of two beer advertisements at different times:

*“About the left one, although I would say they are a couple in love, but the woman is serving him by pouring him a glass of beer and the man is holding a hammer up, implying that the man is the one who is supporting the family and who is financially supporting the family. But, actually, maybe women can do the same. Women can hold a hammer too. And why are we the one who is serving beer to the other one? But, in the one on the right side, they were sitting next to each other and they were both holding a beer and they were probably working together to move into a new place. And, yeah, they are happy. So I would say the one on the right is much better.” (P15)*

In response to the left advertisement, P15 interprets that the difference in objects associated with male and female implies stereotype-informed assumptions about occupational role for different genders (Deaux and Lewis, 1984). His interpretation aligns with prior studies that labour-intensive tasks and jobs are traditionally associated with men, while caring and nurturing responsibilities are more commonly associated with women (Liljedal et al., 2020; Tosi and Einbender, 1985). In contrast, he reckons that the contemporary advertisement in the right promotes gender equality through *femvertisements* (Zeisler, 2016), a combination of feminism and advertising that accentuates pro-female messages and decimates stereotyping of women (Varghese and Kumar, 2022). Furthermore, P15 expresses his belief that the portrayal of male and female in an equal position to consume hedonic products and undertake domestic responsibilities “are more representative of contemporary women and are gradually becoming equal to men” (Eisend, 2010, p. 420).

This advancement of gender equality in advertisement can be regarded as an attempt to break out and abandon negative stereotyping of gender roles, particularly those related to women, as reflected in P19’s opinion that *“I think, these days, these advertisements are not used*

*anymore in the western world anyway, because they are portraying women in a way that we don't want to be seen".* In this line, femvertisements have been increasingly adopted as an award-winning branding strategy to cater to target consumers' expectations regarding female empowerment and gender equality (Sterbenk et al., 2022). Therefore, in the context of activist branding, exemplified by the use of gender role in advertisement, advertisements can serve as a branding technique to promote brands by delivering issue-related messages that the brand embraces and engages with transformative changes in social values (Goffman, 1979; Holbrook, 1987), and potentially attempting to shape the values of its target audience (Pollay, 1986; 1987).

*Sub-theme Physical Environment.* This sub-theme encapsulates the participants' expressed belief that brands can establish associations with socio-political issues by exposing consumers to politically-charged evidence in the physical environment. For instance, P10, a young female from Hong Kong, China, who came to the UK to pursue her bachelor's degree, recounted an incident during the 2019-2020 protest movement in Hong Kong, where thousands of restaurants and shops publicly signal their support to the protests (Beech, 2020; Prasso, 2020), demonstrating the phenomenal of large-scale activist branding:

*"I don't know if you heard of Lennon Wall. So a quick example... a shop or restaurant could put a lot of memos written by customers on a wall and then the memos are filled with words like "Keep-It-On-Hong-Kong" or "Hang-In-There-Hong-Kong-People" or something like these" (P10).*

In line with Lee et al.'s (2018) documentation of the anti-racket movement in Palermo, Italy, P10's account of the protest movement in Hong Kong also highlights the interplay of ideas,



spaces, brands and consumers. The retail and service brands in this context invite and spark consumer creativity, generating novel and problem-solving ideas within the marketplace (Burroughs and Mick, 2004; Dahl and Page, 2007), thereby enriching the movement (Weijo et al., 2018). In particular, each memo produced during the movement can be seen as a personal contribution aligned with the movement's goals (Visconti et al., 2010). The politicisation of objects (Huff et al., 2021) and the production of collective creativity through an object pathway (Martin and Schouten, 2014) strategically integrate within the physical environment of the service settings. Consequently, the service settings are politically repurposed as semi-public sites of movement mobilisation (Maciel and Wallendorf, 2021), reminiscent of the politically bourgeois public sphere found in eighteenth-century British coffeehouses and Ottoman coffeehouses, which accommodated discussions and formation of socio-political opinions (Karababa and Ger, 2011; Habermas, 1992).

Another telling example is the display of pro-Brexit magazines in the British pub chain Wetherspoons, as illustrated by the participants:

*“Wetherspoons, the cheap fast food place, and the boss, Tim Cook, was very pro-Brexit. And in Wetherspoons, they make like a little magazine that they put out inside the pubs every month and [there are] always pro-Brexit stuff in there. Even like at the beginning before Brexit happened and stuff, he’s a very pro-Brexit person, so he obviously used his business to vocalise this to the working-class kind of customers.”*

(P05, British, male, university student)

*“I know Wetherspoons produces some sort of magazines that you can sit and read in the pub. And they are quite political and quite biassed as well, you know.”* (P24,

British, female, in her 50's)

*“I mean, Wetherspoons has been very vocal. Me [I] and my partner and my family went to Wetherspoons last year and there was literally like... like mock newspapers on the... on the tables or like, you know, campaigning about Brexit...”* (P28, the digital content manager)

Participants shared experiences of encountering pro-Brexit magazines, which they conceive as a means of increasing the visibility of the Brexit issue to a wider audience, potentially influencing their voting choices in the referendum. This practice reflects brands' use of *noisy politics*, employing loud and repetitive messages to bring socio-political issues to the forefront of public awareness (Feldmann and Morgan, 2022, p. 349). Thus, these intentional displays of the politically-charged magazines within the service setting serve as physical cues, conveying the brand's explicit support for the Brexit campaign (Feldmann and Morgan, 2021). As demonstrated above, the deliberate display of politicised objects as tangible evidence in the physical environment, such as memos on walls or magazines on the table, becomes brand-related stimuli (Brakus et al., 2009), intentionally communicating the politically-charged brand image (e.g. support for protest movements or pro-Brexit stances) to the consumers (Bitner, 1992; Jung and Mittal, 2020). Within the brands' physical facility, consumers interpret or consume the socio-political meaning conveyed by these objects, associating the deduced socio-political meaning with the brand itself. This intentional design of the physical environment facilitates the process of activist branding.

*Sub-theme Social Media.* This sub-theme describes the participants' view that social media can serve as a platform for brands to publicise their involvement in socio-political issues.

Social media, including information and communication platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, can facilitate information flow and interactive communications among different actors (Chadwick, 2008). As such, social media offers a virtual space for deliberative democracy outside conventional political forums (Halpern and Gibbs, 2013; Scherer et al., 2016). In line with this perspective, our consumer participants discuss how social media serves as another touchpoint for connecting socio-political issues with brands. Specifically, the connection arises from brand participation in everyday talk (Lundgaard and Etter, 2022)—informal political talk whereby actors express, discuss opinions about certain issues whilst others might become informed about the issues and develop and clarify their preferences (Graham et al., 2015)—on social media. For example, P26, a British female in her 50's, shares how The Body Shop expresses its stance against animal testing and circulates related information to its social media followers: *“I mean it’s on social media [where] they send out newsletters. And if you join The Body Shop then you will notice information about animal testing in all their literature.”* The publication of digital newsletters can be seen as an act of the brand to “justify” its stance with supporting information (Lundgaard and Etter, 2022), which may include empirical or logical evidence from scientific articles or expert arguments (Brooker et al., 2018). By “propagating” this digital literature (Lundgaard and Etter, 2022), the brand and its followers contribute to everyday talk on social media a more diverse view (Jackson and Foucault, 2015), wider awareness (Park and Kaye, 2019) and collective framing of the issue (Castello and Lopez-berzosa, 2021).

Brand participation in everyday talk can also take a more interactive form, as demonstrated by P31’s observation of a brand publicly firing consumers with opposing views on social media:

*“[...] when the Black Lives Matter movement started like being quite big. I think it was on social media and on Twitter. There was a Tea Company. Actually, it was Yorkshire Tea as one of those that supported Black Lives Matter. I can't remember if it was a customer that made a comment saying he won't buy because of that. The customer said: 'Oh, you know, for that reason, I am not going to buy this brand other tea brands. I'm not drinking your tea anymore but drinking whatever other tea it was.' And then that company actually responded saying: "Oh, this is great, you know. We don't actually want customers like you!"* (P31, a German female who works in the UK and is proud of having a family with members from a diverse background)

In the account of P31, the tea brand engages with a consumer on Twitter through reciprocal one-to-one interactions (Graham et al., 2015), a commonly found practice in existing deliberation literature (Esau et al., 2017; Stromer-Galley, 2007), where the pro-movement brand directly pushed back the consumer opposition to its stance by publicly “firing” the consumer. This emotionally-charged “conversation” (Lundgaard and Etter, 2022) left the impression in the mind of the consumer of how brands could become politically expressive in everyday talk on social media.

Whilst the tea brand is seemingly being rather spontaneous and “talk(ing) for talk's sake” (Graham et al., 2015, p. 8), other brands address others and their opinions in a more deliberative manner in everyday talk with the aim to “directly address other actors or specific conversations” (Lundgaard and Etter, 2022, p. 12), as illustrated by the account of P28:

*“Ben and Jerry's... I've seen them on social media and they do... they do appear to be interested in engaging in social and political conversation. [...] they are spending*

*time on... on engaging with people on their social media channels from all sides of the spectrum. Yeah, I mean, obviously, they're supporting people with whom they agree, but they're also engaged in the conversation with people who disagree, really".*

(P28, the digital content manager)

According to P28, the ice cream brand uses its voice and assets to spark online conversations and deliberate with an array of responses, including both support and outrage (Ciszek and Logan, 2018). Through *conversational interactivity* (Lundgaard and Etter, 2022), the brand establishes in the mind of consumers its engagement with a wide range of actors on social media in “an inclusive and equal manner, oriented towards an effective, collective decision point” (Bächtiger and Parkinson, 2019, p. 2). As illustrated above, brands leverage social media as a virtual arena for deliberative democracy, cultivating a brand image of active participation in everyday talk about socio-political issues.

*Sub-theme Celebrity Endorsement.* This sub-theme reflects participants’ articulations that celebrity endorsement can also serve to communicate a brand’s commitment to socio-political issues. Celebrities enjoy widespread public recognition, and some utilise their prominence to draw public attention to socio-political issues. For example, the pop star Lady Gaga has advocated for LGBTQ+ rights, and John Lennon contributed to anti-war protests (Bennett, 2014). These celebrity activists leverage their status to engage in activism and advance an activist agenda. Consequently, they can serve as galvanising figures and symbols for the social movements, establishing a widely-known “woke” image and attaining cultural authority and influence within these movements (McCurdy, 2013). P25 discusses how celebrities can serve the activist branding process:

*“I think, as a consumer, I see that different industry [industries] may have different strategies, obviously. But if you look at the consumer brands... if they use celebrity endorsement, that's one area I think they could influence this... so if they use, you know, for example, maybe a public figure that is well-known for having a stance in these things, for example, then that might influence the consumers a bit more than the brand just saying we support this, because, for me personally, I think if you claim something you need to show us what your actions are.”* (P25, a Chinese-British male in his 40's)

P25 suggests that celebrity endorsement as a marketing technique can effectively signal and validate a brand's stance on socio-political issues. This view speaks to McCracken's (1986; 1989) influential meaning transfer model, which posits that cultural meanings associated with a celebrity—such as social class, personality, gender, political stance—can be transferred to a brand through various communication channels, including advertisements, news coverage, and social media (Bergkvist and Zhou, 2019). Indeed, the alignment of a celebrity activist with a brand can lead consumers to associate the celebrity's stance and socio-political meanings with the endorsed brand (Hydock et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020). For instance, the pairing of the politically polarising celebrity Colin Kaepernick with Nike in the brand's 30th-anniversary *Just-Do-it* campaign successfully transferred the activist image to the brand, as evidenced by the extensive discussion of Nike as an “activist” or “woke” brand (Schmidt et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020) in news coverage, academic literature and business case study (e.g. Avery and Pauwels, 2019; Boren, 2018; Chadwick and Zipp, 2018; Price et al., 2018).

*Sub-theme Sponsorship of NGOs.* In their expressions, participants also recognise *sponsorship of NGOs* as another effective means of activist branding. NGOs have long been acknowledged for their active role in raising awareness about socio-political issues and initiating, promoting, and supporting social movements aimed at changing or maintaining the status quo (Claus et al., 2020). For instance, P23 shares instances where commercial brands partner with Stonewall for its LGBTQ+ rights campaign, *Rainbow Laces*:

*“It (a brand) probably would have partnerships with them (NGOs). I’m just trying to think of any of that. I can think of Nike has [having] partnered with Stonewall, you know, in relation to product X, Y, Z and with the rainbow. If you look at the good one, it is actually the Premier League so they have the “Rainbow Laces” on the shopping boots and rainbow colour flags and stuff.” (P23)*

Other participants recalled incidents where brands built their reputation for challenging animal testing by sponsoring NGOs:

*“[...] maybe it (a brand) can donate to some non-profit organisations which contribute to animal protection. Also, it can, uh, you know, organise activities like if you buy something we will donate something [related] to protecting animals.” (P03)*

*“The money they make could go to those NGOs to campaign on these issues [animal cruelty], right? So yeah, big brands, as well, put that money into it as well to help with a campaign.” (P32, British, female, in her 40’s, an executive assistant)*

In their accounts, they recognise that sales promotion for a cause as a form of sponsorship (Varadarajan, 1986; Menon and Kahn, 2001) enables the brand to generate funds for pro-animal NGOs and campaigns by stimulating revenue-producing exchange transactions between the brand and consumers (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). In these cases, sales promotion showcase the branded products and sponsored NGOs together, exposing consumer audiences to “relatively basic and automatic associative processes” (Berkowitz, 1993, p. 10), in which the sponsorship become part of “the set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory” (Keller, 1993, p. 2).

Similar to celebrity endorsement, McCracken’s (1986; 1989) cultural meaning model also applies to the transformation of meaning between sponsored NGOs and sponsoring brands (Cornwell and Coote, 2005). Through sponsoring activities, the pre-existing associations consumers hold regarding the sponsored NGO and the correspondent issue become linked in memory with the sponsoring brand (Cornwell et al., 2005; Gwinner and Eaton, 1999). Therefore, sponsorship of NGOs can be leveraged in the process of activist branding to transfer the established image of the sponsored NGOs to the sponsoring brands in the minds of consumers.

*Sub-theme Public Statement.* Apart from sponsorship of NGOs, the participants share their view that a brand’s *public statement* can also serve the process of activist branding, as reflected in P05’s articulations:

*“I think support doesn’t necessarily need to be like financial support or giving money to the LGBT community like charities and stuff, but just vocally supporting the community like LGBT or like Black Lives Matters by being so like an open company*



*like saying mission statements which gave to improve equality for these people. So make it a statement of your company too.” (P05, British, male, university student)*

According to P05, a brand can publicly express its support or opposition to a socio-political issue through public statements, without making financial or other tangible commitments to the issue. This view resonates with the concept of *corporate political/social advocacy* (Dodd and Supa, 2015; Hydock et al., 2020). Beyond mere verbal or written declarations, a brand can also declare its commitment to the issues through more resource-intensive actions (Bhagwat et al., 2020). This is exemplified by P15, a Chinese female studying in the UK, who provides an example of the Xinjiang cotton controversy, where both Western and indigenous brands issued public statements in response to concerns about production practices (Goodman et al., 2021):

*“Chinese brands have been posting announcements like ‘We have been using Xinjiang cotton since a long time ago and we will keep using the cotton and Xinjiang can produce the best cotton of the world like this’. And also another brand Peak [a Chinese sportswear brand] they even posted a contract with the Xinjiang government about purchasing cottons from Xinjiang, which is really good. [...] I think either Nike or H&M has to make another announcement saying that they have made a mistake (of not using Xinjiang cotton) and they will continue using cotton that is sourced from Xinjiang or at least China. [...] I think if they make the announcement, and they apologise for what they have said before and they admit that this is a mistake in China only. That’s not enough. They have to do it on Twitter and on Instagram and they have to make it like a proper worldwide announcement. Then maybe people will start purchasing again. [...] making the announcement on Twitter and Instagram is*

*way more important than making the announcement in China because you can't just tell Chinese people that you have made that wrong. You have to tell people from all over the world that you made a mistake. To be honest, when they made the announcement saying they will be a member of BCI (Better Cotton Initiatives) and they will stop using cotton from Xinjiang, they were already ignoring the Chinese market. They are deliberately ignoring Chinese people's feelings. So make [making] another announcement only to the Chinese people will not make us happy. We need it to be a global announcement.” (P15)*

In her account, indigenous brands, on the one hand, release their sourcing contracts in public statements to showcase the strong relationships they have with the cotton producers and local authorities, signalling a highly committed stance against accusations of forced labour, mass detentions, and actions against minorities in Xinjiang's cotton production (Helfenbein, 2021). P15 expresses her interpretation of these public statements of financial and relational commitment released by the indigenous brands as a signal of an activist stance (Bhagawat et al., 2020). On the other hand, Western brands with a global presence have announced their Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) statements to stop sourcing Xinjiang cotton. This, in her account, has evoked psychological reactance, that is “be(ing) aware of hostile and aggressive feelings” (Brehm, 1966, p. 9). As a member of the patriotic Chinese in-group, P15 expressed her conception of these statements as “a deliberate attempt to usurp government regulation” (Frynas and Stephens, 2015, p. 485), which she further interprets as an intentional attack on her and her country. Consequently, she views these statements as acts of transgression act or misconduct (Aaker et al., 2004; Huber et al., 2010), which shape her judgements about the brands' character (Altman and Taylor, 1973) and establish an activist image in her mind, depicting the brands as taking an immoral and betraying stance (Mukherjee and Althuizen,

2020). In response to the consumer backlash against their activist positioning in the cotton controversy, she reckons that, opposite-sided brands still have an opportunity to reposition their activist image by adopting a reactive strategy, issuing public statements retracting and apologising for their previous stance (Aaker et al., 2004; Coombs and Holladay, 2008), expressing sincere regret and demonstrating instrumental correction to their “mistaken” stance while aligning with the market country and its consumers (Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020).

As demonstrated above, the participants share their beliefs that public statements can enable brands to proactively communicate its position (Hambrick and Wowak, 2019; Klemm et al., 1991) or reactively disclose and/or justify their stance on socio-political issues (Murray and Vogel, 1997; Olson, 2022). Either way, in the process of activist branding, these publicly released statements conveying messages regarding the issues become subject to consumer interpretation of the brand’s socio-political positioning (Waldman et al., 2006; Beauchamp and O’Connor, 2012), ultimately shaping and changing the brand’s image as a formal communication output (Dodd and Supa, 2014; Park and Berger, 2004).

*Sub-theme Market Entry Decisions.* In their expressions, participants share their views that a brand can also establish an brand image associated with socio-political issues through its selection of places to market its branded offerings, as illustrated in the example shared by P03:

*“Recently, I just found out that The Body Shop has no stores in China. I have heard this story - I don’t know whether it’s true – [that] they don’t have any store in China because the Chinese government doesn’t have policies that protect the animals and*

*they don't fight against the animal testing, so they [The Body Shop] want to show the attitude on this issue and they just gave up the Chinese market. [...] I'm surprised because [the] Chinese market is quite a huge market and I know lots of English brand[s] like Mark and Spencer's just opened their branch in China. The Body Shop is not such a luxury that people can't afford. I don't believe [that] it can miss a great market share in China, so I just search[ed] some information online and I notice[d] that okay because of the animal testing they just give[gave] up running stores in China. In many cases, you know, the brands want to make more money, so they develop the Chinese market. The Body Shop gave up such a piece of fat meat because of its values against testing on the animals.” (P03, a Chinese female studying in the UK)*

The existing literature on market entry decisions has traditionally emphasised government policy as a significant barrier for brands seeking to enter new country markets (Karakaya and Stahl, 1989; Huang and Sternquist, 2007). Specifically, the mandatory animal testing requirements for general sale in China have posed regulatory restrictions on the entry of animal-free cosmetics brands into the Chinese market (Baird-Murray, 2016). From an economic perspective (North, 1990), commercial brands are expected to be primarily driven by financial objectives, prompting them to reactively adapt their business practices to comply with entry regulations (Pellegrini, 1991). For example, McDonald's eliminated meat from its menu when expanding in India (Vida et al., 2000). However, according to P03's viewpoint, the British brand The Body Shop under discussion has developed a self-conception of its socio-political role (Huber and Schormair, 2021) in proactively addressing animal testing in the global marketplace. Consequently, this socio-political identity (Wilts, 2006) motivates the brand to embrace values aligned with the stance against animal testing (Wettsein and Baur,

2016), transcending conventional economic considerations (Livengood and Reger, 2010). Therefore, P03 expresses her belief that the brand's decision based on its identity serves as a politicised means to protest against the Chinese government's position on animal testing. Her interpretation aligns with the notion that brands can adopt an activist stance on socio-political issues through the decisions related to "whether or not to conduct business in certain localities" (Hydock et al., 2020, p. 1136), as exemplified by recent incidents where global brands suspended their operations in Russia over the Russia-Ukraine conflict (Tosun and Eshraghi, 2022). Therefore, by choosing not to enter the Chinese market, The Body Shop signals to P03 its prioritisation of socio-political stance above the market growth, thus establishing in her mind the brand's firm stance and commitment to fight against animal testing. As illustrated above, the participants expressed the belief that market entry decisions can associate the brand with socio-political issues in the process of activist branding.

#### **4.6.2 2<sup>nd</sup> BAA Dimension: Brand Transformative Influence**

The second dimension of BAA, *brand transformative influence*, that emerged from the analyses encapsulates the participants' perception of a brand's capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues. This dimension consists of five themes that present how brands could enact influence on the issues: 1) *raising awareness*, 2) *facilitating discussions*, 3) *swaying opinions*, 4) *shaping behavioural and habitual shifts*, and 5) *normalising transformative changes*. The following subsections elaborate on these themes.

##### **4.6.2.1 Raising Awareness**

The first theme *raising awareness* captures participants' acknowledgement of the brands' capability to generate public awareness of socio-political issues. The participants recognise that brands, especially popular and global ones due to their extensive reach, have the potential

to raise public awareness:

*“[...] brands have become so big and important. I think it’s good if they raise awareness. So if there’s some injustice in the world, I think that is right and it should be...it should be there to bring awareness. [...] I feel that there were probably people in there who were just very insensitive to what was going on, and they had the power for Nike to get involved. [...] Ultimately, as long as what they do actually improves things, then that’s good if it makes a change.”* (P17, the information specialist)

*“I think it can raise awareness among the public because, you know, sometimes if you just speak out of something yourself, it is very hard to be heard by the public but brand activities can have a larger effect on the topic or the social issues. It can be heard by, you know, most of the people so it can build awareness among the public too. And people might come to recognise that, like ‘Okay, we should pay our attention to this issue’. There is an inequality here between, you know, between women and men. I think this kind of brand activity can help us to build awareness among the public.”* (P03, female, in her 20’s)

*“I’m just talking about things I have seen on social media. For example, you know, they do quite a lot of Instagram stories promoting the LGBT societies, kind of posting pictures of crime against the LGBT community, for example, or, you know, forwarding other people’s pictures stories, really. I think they might not be doing so much, but I... for me, those posts, even like one or two every month, that’s [are] helpful to raise awareness, and then they are trying to kind of help getting more and more people to know about it.”* (P29, a Chinese-British female in her 30’s who works as international

student advisor)

For another instance, P07, a female international student from Thailand, comments on how Costa's rainbow cups as a manifestation of diversity-and-inclusivity-engaged marketing (Kipnis et al., 2021, p. 143) can help raise awareness on social media through "constituency building" (Johnson et al., 2022, p. 42), thereby advocating for consumer support of the brand's stance on LGBTQ+ rights:

*"I would feel very positive with the brand and it can also raise the awareness and kind of promote the brand itself because Costa cups are not in rainbow colour all the time, right? So people there post rainbow cups on social media. I was one of those who posted the Costa rainbow cup on Instagram."* (P07)

Whilst individual efforts may be limited, well-known brands can leverage the high awareness they have already established in the local and/or global markets when reaching out to the public (Batra et al., 1995). Furthermore, participants express their belief that messages conveyed by highly recognised brands are more likely to draw attention - the cognitive allocation process towards an object or task (Kahneman, 1973):

*"They campaign [against animal cruelty] on the streets - more posters and things like that on bus stops surfaced so while people are standing waiting, they just... they look at it more and they can think more of it."* (P32, an executive assistant)

*"I feel like it helps. Yeah, it will help. [...] I can't deny the value of the influence. [...] Yeah, it's like Nike supports Black Lives Matters. It's a big deal. It makes a big deal"*

*because they've got the name of the brand and this makes the issue more relevant. More people will then have more knowledge about it. [...] I suppose it is [brands are] bringing the consciousness to the public more in general. So it is a combination of doing more and talking more about it more widely and in the media. Make it a priority.” (P13, female, Latino, in her 40’s)*

*“I think the global reputation and the status of the brand... I mean, Nike’s presence in the whole world [supporting Black Lives Matter] will kind of make a huge influence and make a huge impact on this campaign, you know, [in] a lot of countries. [...] I guess because they have acquired a bigger, you know, kind of reputation worldwide and, therefore, they have a huge group of supporters in a lot of countries. [...] I think Nike kind of supports the campaign, and then they could really call for people who are influential to get more involved [...] I think that the reason why there is such inequality in our society is that people do not really talk about it enough. And often, I feel that's because people do not share their personal experiences and life experiences enough. So therefore, there is a need for, you know, raising the awareness of everybody in our community, you know. To start with, I don't have many black friends or colleagues and I don't know what they have experienced, so I need to learn and that's kind of the process. I need to educate myself and once I've learned more, then, I can help other people so the more we talk about, you know, other people's experiences, the more will people have that general awareness.” (P29)*

These illustrative examples of how brands raise awareness highlight the selective aspect and intensive aspect of attention (Kahneman, 1973; Lynch and Srull, 1982) that brands draw from the public to socio-political issues. With regard to selectivity, participants share their view



that the public would be more attentive to the messages conveyed by highly recognised brands (e.g. advertisements) in their environments (Lee and Faber, 2007). Once attention is captured by the brand messages, the audience is more likely to sustain their attention, both in terms of duration and intensity, and allocate greater cognitive capacity to process the visual and textual elements of those messages (Bergkvist and Taylor, 2022; Pieters and Wedel, 2004). As illustrated with the participants' accounts, they express the belief that brands can help raise awareness by encouraging the public to inspect the information related to socio-political issues conveyed in brand messages.

#### 4.6.2.2. Facilitating Discussions

The theme *facilitating discussions* captures the participants' expressed conception of brands as facilitators to discussions on socio-political issues. P06 points out the similarities between activist celebrities (McCurdy, 2013) and brands in their capability to position themselves as opinion leaders on socio-political issues (Nisbet and Kotcher, 2009), thus engaging in public discussions:

*“Everyone is contributing to dialogue like the parts of the conversation. So if something that a designer brand does gets into the newspapers, people can sit and talk about it. It becomes part of the debate about particular issues. You don't know who you're influencing because you don't know who's reading about what you're doing or seeing it on the television. Some people have more influence than others. Russell T. Smith has carved himself a place because his TV shows consistently address gay issues and [he] do [does] it in a way that's absolutely memorable and usually very entertaining too. So he has his own place; he has his own platform. And some of the designer brands can do the same.” (P06)*

P06 shares his belief that brands have the power to engage the public in everyday talk (Graham, et al., 2015) about socio-political issues. Specifically, brand engagement with socio-political issues can trigger informal political talk through which citizens can participate in emerging discussions, become informed, and develop opinions (Graham et al., 2015; Graham and Wright, 2014; Mansbridge, 1999). P28 adds that brands can also facilitate political deliberation on social media (Lundgaard and Etter, 2022):

*“So I think it is a brand like Ben and Jerry’s because they are also committed to and spending time on... on the civil discourse side of things and engaging with people who respond to their messages and their messaging. [...] It is actually all about generating conversation, then, maybe even discourse. I feel as if I... I find value in discourse. [...] I think the positive outcome here is to start conversations and maybe start conversations with people that wouldn’t normally be interested in these social and political issues. Automatically, there [are] a lot of people that, you know, buy Ben and Jerry’s ice-creams because it is cheap, but wouldn’t be aware of some of the issues that they talk about, if it were talking about them.” (P28)*

P28 shares his view that brands participate in democratic deliberation by responding to and appropriately engaging with a heterogeneity of “norms, values, expectations, and concerns” (Etter et al., 2018, p. 61) on social media. In this process, participating brands and consumers express their preferences and discuss their ideas, which others might observe, become informed through, develop their own opinions (Brooker et al., 2018; Graham and Wright, 2014; Mansbridge, 1999), and become motivated to further engage in the democratic process (Schmitt-Beck and Grill, 2020). In summary, our participants express their belief that brands’ public engagement in civil disclosure, whether through mass or social media, can stimulate

everyday talk of socio-political issues and thereby contributing to advancing social deliberation on these issues.

#### 4.6.2.3 Swaying Opinions

The theme of *swaying opinions* encapsulates the participants' expressed belief that activist brands have the ability to shape public opinions on socio-political issues. P22's comment beautifully illustrates how consumers perceive brands and activist celebrities (McCurdy, 2013) as parallel in their socio-political influence:

*“I think it's the same with celebrities, to be honest. It's like they have a platform and a voice, and usually, if they say something then people follow, you know. [...] So like for instance in America, a lot of people were pro-Biden, and so therefore if their favourite celebrity was pro-Biden, they were voting without knowing anything about it. I think there's quite a lot of swaying areas and it's the same with big brands.”* (P22)

In the case of Brexit, P14 and P27 share the sentiment that CEO activism—brand leaders speaking out on socio-political issues not directly related to their brands' core business (Chatterji and Toffel, 2019)—by the British pub chain *wetherspoons* holds great sway on Brexit:

*“I think they had an influence certainly because you got a guy (the Boss of Wetherspoons), a self-made British millionaire going on Question Time sending out messages about how Brexit will be, you know. Nobody knows if it would be good or bad leaving the EU like that.”* (P14)

*“I think people do listen to this. It depends on who they are. I mean I think the guy, I forgot his surname, called Tim, the chairman of Wetherspoons, I think he did...he did have quite a lot of influence because he speaks to every man. He’s very down to earth and he doesn’t wear suits. He’s got a crystal accent. Well, it’s almost a way of validating that point of view. If you think for whatever reason you want to leave the EU and he’s a businessman and he says: ‘It’ll be right... they’ll be alright.’ you know. I think there is probably more trust in, ironically, successful business people than politicians because they [successful business people] can be a bit more, bit more authentic, I guess, in what they say. I think his appearance on TV programmes and the media will have reassured a lot of people that it’s okay to vote [for] Brexit. We see a lot of business people saying that ‘It’s [Brexit] going to be terrible.’ But, you know, those are people in more suits and worked for finance companies and they are that kind of people who people don’t trust, whereas, I think, Tim was probably seen [as] more trustworthy because he is the one who runs a pub that people go into because he sells cheap beers. So he probably did have quite a bit of influence. Yeah.” (P27)*

P14 and P27’s discussions speak to the findings of Chatterji and Toffel’s (2019) that brands and their CEOs can effectively engage and influence audience members regarding their expressed stances. In this specific case, the “down-to-earth” image, frequent media appearances, and the accessibility of the pub brand contribute to the heightened celebrity status of the CEO (Hambrick and Wowak, 2019), thus enhancing the brand’s influence in swaying public opinions on Brexit and the referendum.

In response to Nike’s advertisement featuring Colin Kaepernick in support of Black Lives Matters, P16 expresses optimism about its potential to exert extensive and profound influence

in countering racism:

*“Clearly, brand recognition is so important in our society that these gestures do have an impact on the values and beliefs of millions of people. [...] Potentially, it could have an impact on politics, couldn’t it? If people see these brands changing, that could lead the way for other people to change their values.” (P16)*

His discussion resonates with the argument that advertising has the power to mould and shape the values of its target audience (Pollay, 1986; 1987). Specifically, cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 2002) posits that brand advertising can gradually and significantly cultivate audiences’ perceptions and beliefs. In this line, P15 shares her viewpoint that the portrayal of women in brand advertisements perpetuates archaic stereotypes across generations:

*“I think the style is more like a 1950 one, and by that time, I will say they will probably do more like the one on the left because at the time when women get married then she would become a housewife. She shouldn't have her own career and she should be the one who served the family, which, by the time, people will say: ‘Okay, this is the right thing to do’. And older women who want to work after marriage are considered as a rebellion, like the rebel one on the right side seems to support gender equality more; like they are equal with each other. They sit together, they hold a beer together. They probably did the same work while moving in because they have a similar amount of boxes next to each other. So yeah, I would definitely say this. This will make the public feel different. The left advert will probably make people feel like ‘Okay, females should stay at home and serve the family.’ And the right one will make people say: ‘Females are the same and there is no difference between males and*

*females. They contribute equally to society.” (P15)*

In responses to a comparison of two beer advertisements (one traditional and one contemporary), P15 points out that these advertisements adapt widely accepted images and reflect social expectations regarding gender at the time. The traditional advertisement incorporates gender-based stereotypes, while the contemporary one aligns with a more liberal view of gender role in society, indicating that advertising is the reflection of the socio-political values that already exist at the time (Holbrook, 1987). More importantly, she also embraces the idea that gender roles in advertising can create, shape, and reinforce beliefs and values related to genders in societies (Ganahl et al., 2003). This view is also echoed in the accounts of P20 and P22:

*“Ahhh...it was just the time...it was...it was...it was a bad joke which reinforced the stereotype the first time [...] So reinforcing women being in the kitchen, so that joke about women’s place being in the kitchen, you know, is reinforcing that there is a place where women should be and therefore gave voice to a great deal of others...many other 53-year-olds who come from an age when that was the right thing to say, or believe. [...] it is reinforcing stereotypes and reinforcing sexy women in our underwear cooking. That’s what you get. This is not nice. [...] Well, absolutely, it is pervasive. The advertising and the messages that are coming out like this normalise how we think. It’s very, very much so. So yes, negative images that reinforce stereotypes, in certain ways, have an impact on how we are as...as a society. [This should] be discouraged. More recent rules about the advertising of...advertising and stereotypes are a good thing. They do make, you know, cleaning product adverts with women really contrived. It’s only men mopping the floor because they can’t show a*

*woman doing that, isn't it interesting? But at least it's moving. It's not just allowing the same things to persist because the things we see affect how we think. So yeah, it makes a difference.” (P20)*

*“[...] it just sends out the wrong message; it gives like the wrong sort of view of what woman should do and what sex is like [...] I think, you know, advertising like that is meant to trigger a certain audience, especially young people. But it is not the case for someone like me who has got more of my own views about what I like and what I don't like, whereas when you're young and you don't know much about anything, you know; you haven't decided on where you stand on issues yet or how you feel about certain things; you get triggered by the mass stuff. So why [do] quite a lot of youngsters wear Puma? Because they [brands] are their masks. Until you find your own path and your own brain and your own thoughts, you go with the crowd.” (P22)*

The accounts of P20 and P22 speak to Kilbourne's (1999) statement: “Advertising is our environment. We swim in it as fish swim in the water. We cannot escape it... advertising messages are inside our intimate relationships, our home, our hearts, our heads” (pp. 57–58). Specifically, they express the view that brands are capable of either reinforcing or challenging gender-stereotypical beliefs and values by reflecting and contributing the cultural meaning associated with genders through advertising as a system of visual representation (Grau and Zotos, 2016).

#### 4.6.2.4 Shaping Behavioural and Habitual Shifts

The analysis and interpretation suggest another theme *shaping behavioural and habitual shifts* that activist brands can influence and change social behaviours and habits in relation to

socio-political issues. For instance, P24 and P26 share the view that branding efforts can shape consumer actions and habits in the context of alcoholism and vegetarianism, respectively:

*“Guinness, you know, the habit associated with Guinness is incorporated into all the stuff you see in the country or the merchandise posters everywhere. And pubs are all over. The branding is incredible, so it very much, you know, supports Ireland and Irish people drinking, you know. When you're in Ireland, you have Guinness, you know. [...] Like the football... football and then the place got Carlsberg across there. So immediately, the brand's trying to get in the face of people that might drink a lot of beer which is people watching football.” (P24)*

*“I think if more fashionable brands promoted it (vegetarianism), people would do it because they just like that brand. So they'll be persuaded by that brand because a lot of people are in love with certain brands and they are convinced that no one else can do it better. So they've never dreamed of buying a different label. Always buying like, with chocolates for Easter, my son's told me that he only wants Cadbury's and, you know, he doesn't want something from Sainsbury's or whatever because he's convinced it's not going to taste as good. So they are being persuaded by the brands of what's fashionable and my son is convinced by advertising that that's best.” (P26)*

In their accounts, participants express the belief that branding techniques, such as merchandise posters and advertising, serve as persuasive communication to encourage specific types of actions and habits. In particular, P24 condemns how brands popularise alcohol consumption through repetitive exposure to brand communications (Tellis, 1988).



Similarly, P26 shares her observations of how certain brands have succeeded in “programming” the minds of consumers to embrace cruelty-free and sustainable lifestyles through consumption practices. These disclosures speak to Holt’s (2002) idea of brands as cultural engineers capable of organising how consumers think and feel through their branded offerings in the marketplace. A more extreme view of this cultural authority hold by brands is illustrated in P21’s account, which highlights the influence of brands on voting in the Brexit referendum:

*“There are people who were not sure perhaps and then they’ve been convinced to vote Brexit as a result, yeah. I mean, Dyson and Wetherspoons, they were both very vocal, weren’t they, during the campaign of Brexit. And I think it probably helped some people make the decision to vote for Brexit [...] Companies are able to influence that for people.” (P21)*

#### 4.6.2.5 Normalising Transformative Changes

Participants further elaborate on their views that brands are facilitative to the normalisation of ideas and behaviours related to socio-political issues. Indeed, exposure to brands is almost inevitable, and such exposure shapes consumers’ opinions without their conscious awareness (Keller, 2020). For instance, P24 highlights that diversity-and-inclusivity-engaged advertisements (Licsandru and Cui, 2019) expose audiences to diverse minority communities, leading to the accumulation of impressions that gender and racial dynamics are normal parts of society:

*“I mean when I look at adverts now, quite often... this was another day, for a dating site, it had two women kissing on it. So I think a lot of brands have tried to support by*

*normalising. [...] I think, probably 20 years ago, all I have just seen was a man running and doing weight training and all the rest of it. Nowadays, you're gonna see a black guy; you're gonna see women in the apparel. They may show something like two gay men holding hands or kissing after running in the game... looking great and kissing afterwards. So that makes a difference because, in people's heads, it's like "Oh right." So yeah, that's an option, you know. That's a normal thing to see. It is part of the culture now. It is culturally acceptable now. And sort of like... that's reinforced when you see that. It seems to be normal in the brand advert or something." (P24)*

P31 is a fervent believer that brand commercials expose audiences to diverse minority communities, and through repetitive exposure, create the impression that gender and racial dynamics are a normal part of society:

*"I think people who haven't really got a strong view either way by seeing people from different backgrounds in adverts on website[s] will then normalise that. And so I guess it does. It probably has good positive effects. The number one is because everyone feels represented by it. Yeah. And the second consequence or positive effect is that it will, even the majority, you know if you have an ethnic majority, and let's say white British in the UK, makes those people more comfortable or get some people who might live in little village[s] and never see anybody who looks different to see people from the minority backgrounds. So... so at least if it's presented in the media, then at least that's a way of exposing people to different cultures and normalising it, basically." (P31)*

### 4.6.3 3<sup>rd</sup> BAA Dimension: Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent

The third dimension of BAA emerged from the data analysis, *brand as consumer-empowering agent*, reflects participants' views on the brand's role as an agent of consumer empowerment. The dimension was informed by two themes: *empowerment through activist brands to "vote"* and *empowerment through activist brands to voice out*. Together, this dimension captures the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them.

#### 4.6.3.1 Empowerment through Activist Brands to "Vote"

The theme of *empowerment through activist brands to "vote"* reflects participants' conception that activist brands can serve as empowering agents by offering politically-encharged products and services as alternative choices for consumers to "vote" for or against socio-political issues beyond electoral contexts. P28's reflection illustrates this process of "voting" where he feels empowered to influence party elections and express his position on Brexit in the marketplace:

*"I think me and my partner have been quite frustrated with politics for the last few years living in the UK, you know, like Brexit and Trump and Boris Johnson and so on. I also don't particularly feel as if I have much agency or control over that, you know. I vote but I keep on voting but not getting in. And, you know, the issues that I'm voting on and not going the way that I'd like them to. [...] I've got a young family. So in lockdown, I'm trying to contribute to childcare. So between that and my job, there's... there's not much time for me really and also, you know, seeing recently, you know,*

*there [are] people who aren't able to do it like protests because of social distancing and lockdown, for instance. I think that in part we boycotted because it's... it's examples like things that we can do. [...] During the last election campaign in the UK, Boris Johnson spent a lot of time visiting companies and doing like photo opportunities. And I think like for people who set the fight against Boris Johnson, whenever they saw a company that was like hosting him, they were like 'Oh, right, okay, I don't like that company now.' So for me, an example would be a butcher company. They make sausages and they are called Egg. And then when I saw that Boris Johnson was like... they were being hosted by this company called Egg, I was like 'Well, I'm not gonna buy their sausages anymore.' [...] So I think, you know, like saying: 'well, that's it. I'm not gonna... I'm not gonna buy your sausages' is - even though it sounds pathetic and small-minded, when I describe it - it's an example of me just doing something. [...] I feel as if, like I said, there would not be my option in terms where I can see it in a fairly limited line. So when... so yeah, I guess it's possible understandable. Boycotting sausages is an example of me doing what I can do in this case.' (P28)*

Concerning Brexit and electoral outcomes, P28 expresses disappointment with his ineffectual votes and develops an alternative vision that “the world should be different from the way it is” (Jasper, 2011, p. 291). However, due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 Pandemic and his occupational and domestic responsibilities, his engagement in traditional forms of political participation is limited. Thus, his frustration of being rather powerless and marginalised in the electoral context and low expectation of the newly-elected government to fix their problems motivates him to take more “individualised actions (that) may lead to the solution of political grievances” (Stolle et al., 2005, p. 261). Through the politicisation of

objects (Huff et al., 2021) in the marketplace, the brands he used for mundane consumption (Kleine et al., 1993), accomplishing family-related tasks, become associated with socio-political choices. Consequently, these brands and their offerings are seen as means of symbolical expression and realisation of his vision through the mechanism of “voting with his dollars” in the marketplace as an alternative form of civic and political engagement (Willis and Schor, 2012, p. 166). Through this consumer empowerment through choice (Kozinet et al., 2021), brands serve as empowering agents that provide consumers increased control and agency over socio-political issues in the marketplace.

#### 4.6.3.2 Empowerment through Activist Brands to Voice Out

The another theme, *empowerment through activist brands to voice out*”, reflects participants’ conception that socio-political empowerment can also be enacted through voice (Kozinet et al., 2021), as P04, the office administrator, states: “*It (Adidas’ anti-racism advertisement) is not just about a slogan but to me, it almost seems like in this country today who will speak out for me?*” Echoing this sentiment, P03, a female football fan who values work-and-life balance, shares how brands empower her to voice her views:

*“Okay, I think, you know, sometimes I do buy and wear T-shirts with some slogans on it [them], like, to show my attitude to something, for example, I used to have a T-shirt with the slogan like Girls-Can-Do-It. I also have a T-shirt saying ‘We [females] also like football.’ Yeah, because, you know, we [females] often hear words like ‘Football is a boys’ game’. And, you know, if you are [a] girl [who] watch[es] football games, somebody will, you know, say something to you. For me, I have been watching football games since middle school with my grandpa. So I just want to show my attitude ‘We are girls but we watch football games. We have the right to watch the*

games and [football] is not a boys' game.' [...] some boys will go to watch the games, so I want to join them, but they didn't welcome me because they just thought that girls watching football games is quite strange. I ponder why because I [have been] watching the game since I was quite young with my grandpa. There was a football team in my hometown in Shandong Province (China). So I [have been] watching them since I was 11 or 12 years old. Although most of the audiences are, you know, males, I [also] noticed [that there were] children and the girls who watch[ed] matches as well. It was quite strange to me that most of the boys think [that] the football is the game [that] belongs to them, not for us [females]. I also met a boy who was really, really, really rude, like when we walked out from the match and we come [came] together and discussed about the players, like, about their strategy. That boy was very rude, and he said: 'You are a girl. You know nothing about football! You should listen to us [males] and we have valuable opinions about this. You don't know this game and we don't want to listen to you speaking here.' [...] As a girl who watch[es] football, I just think it helped me to show my attitude. I think it also helped me to build my self-confidence too because, you know, sometimes, when I hear very strange opinions about a certain topic, I just can't be bothered. I don't have the time or energy to, you know, explain to them why I am watching football games and why I want to engage in a conversation about the match. If I wear this T-shirt they will just know that this girl has her own personality and attitude. [...] I think it is the I-don't-give-a-f\*\*k spirit, like we don't care [about] how you think or criticise us watching football games. We don't care about your opinions. We have the, you know, fair opportunities to watch the football games and come up with our opinions, to share our opinions about the strategies about [of] the players from different teams and we also have the right to enjoy the game. Watch the game and contribute [our opinions] similarly as the boys

*do.*” (P03)

In her account, she strategically consumes socio-political brands to counter stigmatisation in sports entertainment. As a female, she perceives a masculine environment that is incompatible with and exclusive to females due to gender stereotypes regarding expertise in sports (Hamilton and Sherman, 1994). In particular, she expresses the view that male audiences often hold gender-biased assumptions of expertise in sports, leading to automatic judgments of her lack of expertise in the domain traditionally assigned to and dominated by males (Hollingshead and Fraidin, 2003). Being a female in this context becomes a stigmatised identity that is undervalued (Chaney et al., 2019) and inconsistent with the stereotype of “*football is a boys’ game*”. As a member of the stigmatised female group, she strategically consumes brands to cope with and resist her stigmatisation (Eichert and Luedicke, 2022). By wearing politically conspicuous T-shirts, she publicly expresses her firm belief in gender equality. Her conspicuous consumption of politically charged brands can be seen as displaying ambient identity cues (Cheryan et al., 2009) to challenge stereotype-informed assumptions and devaluation of females in sports. As such, her political views are voiced through the socio-political brands she possesses, and her vision is enacted by introducing a female-inclusive component to the masculine environment, thereby enhancing the social status and rights of females in sports (Ordabayeva and Chandon, 2011). In this sense, her conspicuous or socially visible consumption (Kumar et al., 2021) of socio-political brands is her empowering means of countering gender stereotypes and stigmatisation. Similarly, in her job setting, where employees are expected to work long hours, she eagerly wears a T-shirt that expresses opposition to prioritising monetary benefits over employees’ well-being.

Beyond empowerment at the individual level demonstrated above, brands can also empower consumer voices at a collective level:

*“Like I will feel it (T-shirt opposing the 996 work schedule in China which requires employees to work from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, 6 days per week) is so cool [and] I might buy the brand and I will wear it every day to tell my boss that I don’t want to work 996. [...] Yeah, so I think if there is a brand or there is a company to enable us to express our wish to work 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week, we will take the opportunity and show our attitude, you know. I just feel that that’s quite cool. [...] I think, if I have a hoodie or T-shirt with the slogan against 996, I will have the opportunity to show my attitude to the... to the people around me that I think work-and-life-balance is quite important. We should live in the world, you know, [where] money is important, but it’s not [the] most important. We should live like humans, not machines. We should pay more attention to our family and our children.”*

(P03)

In the accounts of P10 and P12, the 2019-2021 Yellow Economy in Hong Kong exemplifies how socio-political brands serve as empowering agents that help voice out public resistance and expression:

*“[...] at that time, the Hong Kong government [was] like ignoring our opinions and our concerns because we are the minority. [...] So at that time, we were trying to enlarge the Yellow population just to show the government that a lot of us care and a lot of us [are] against you. And we don’t like what you did or what you are doing or what you will do to us.”* (P12)



*“I mean like they... they (the younger generation in Hong Kong) actually would like to voice their opinions even though... even though actually it is useless that they voice their opinions right now [...] a lot of people know that well, actually, no matter what they do, it won't... won't change any... like it won't change anything right now [...] but they do... they do want to...they do want to show a bit of resistance. So you won't...you won't spend your own....you you won't pay something or you won't spend on the organisations that are opposite to your political stance. [...] So they would like to use their own power to create their own Yellow Cycle and to take this into action. They wouldn't want their money to go into the organisations that are supporting the government or that are... that are having an opposite political stance. [...] People, nowadays, know that they can't do anything to change, to change, to change the politics, or to change anything about the government. [...] What they can do right now is actually to support the Yellow Economy on a day-to-day basis and, yeah, that's actually what they can do right now. [...] So I think that's what makes people want to form somehow like power and then create their own cycle, yeah?” (P10)*

P10 and P12, among other young Hong Kongers, perceive a disproportionate distribution of power between governmental authorities and citizens, leading to a realisation of their political marginality (Trevisan, 2020) and limited influence in shaping policy implementation. They share a collective grievance that motivates them to seek alternative agents to voice their frustration and challenge the status quo. Through collective consumer efforts (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004; Weijo et al., 2018), they mobilise brands as economic tools to promote their stance (Gollnhofer et al., 2019) and transform these brands into socio-political agents (Varman and Belk, 2009) that distance themselves from the government's advocacy and

policies. Consequently, the Yellow Economy, as a politically homogeneous assemblage of socio-political brands, becomes an empowering agency that combines individual powers into an influential force, enabling public resistance and amplifying their democratic appeals in the marketplace, with the aim of transforming transcendent political goals. Thus, for consumers who perceive themselves as politically powerless in traditional political domains, they now possess the capacity and agency to make effective choices aligned with their political preferences in the marketplace.

In a similar vein, P02 (the Chinese lady who teaches in the UK) also embraces the idea that brands empower consumers to transcend individual limitations by uniting collective power to bring about socio-political changes collectively:

*“We do have people who need... who need help and we can...like if we can do that by... I don't know, it's just this is something I can't do. And if there is a brand that [is] doing something, I would like to do it. But out of my control... I feel that... I feel that it's out of my control. If I'm supporting that brand and maybe I'm supporting something I should have done but I didn't have the chance to do. But by supporting the brand, I feel like, in a twisted way, I'm doing so. [...] Personally, I don't like Disneyland, but maybe I will after having a better impression and try to go there because I [see it] as [a] part of the support. [...] I guess part of my ticket fee will go to that programme. That makes me feel a little bit better. They may feel better by buying their ticket because I will know that some of the money, although it might be a very little portion of it, will go to that programme and supporting [support] the people I want to support.” (P02)*

In her account, she expresses the belief that brands can empower consumers to transcend individual limitations by harnessing collective power to prompt socio-political changes collectively. These politicised consumption practices demonstrate a transformative dedication to issues of concern and act as catalysts for change.

#### **4.6.4 Conceptual Distinction of BAA from Other Constructs**

As defined previously, BAA refers to the consumer conception of the extent to which a brand's activist branding meets consumers' expectation of brand transformative influence and satisfies their needs for empowerment concerning socio-political issues. This section elaborates on two key characteristics of BAA and how BAA is conceptually related to and distinct from related marketing constructs (summarised in Table 4-3).

Table 4-3. Conceptual Distinction of BAA from Related Marketing Constructs (Study 1)

Construct	Definition	Characteristics		Source
		Countering Controversy	Fulfilment of Needs	
<i>Brand activist attributes (BAA)</i>	BAA refers to the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to enact influence on the status quo of socio-political issues and empower consumers to engage with these issues in the marketplace.	✓	✓	Conceptualised in this thesis
<i>CSR</i>	The various forms of company involvement with charitable causes and the non-profits that represent them.			Lichtenstein et al. (2004)
<i>Brand utilitarian attributes</i>	Brand utilitarian attributes concern the brand's utilitarian qualities and characteristics essential in providing a solution to a specific problem the consumer seeks to resolve.		✓	Fennel (1978); Park et al. (1986)
<i>Brand hedonic attributes</i>	Brand hedonic attributes concern the offerings of hedonic pleasure, cognitive stimulation or variety to meet consumer desire for more sensory and emotional aspects of experience.		✓	Babin et al. (1994); Keller, (1993)
<i>Brand symbolic attributes</i>	Brand symbolic attributes concern offerings that serve as a symbolic means for consumers to externally communicate their self-concepts to others.		✓	Banister and Hogg, (2004); Escalas and Bettman (2003).
<i>Brand activism</i>	A brand's public speech or actions to demonstrate support for or opposition to one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue.	✓		Bhagwat et al. (2020); Moorman (2020)

“Countering controversy” is one distinct characteristic that distinguishes BAA from CSR and other brand attributes. While CSR primarily addresses brand obligations and contribution to stakeholders and society, its initiatives typically revolve around widely favoured issues such as sustainability, education, and poverty alleviation. In contrast, BAA incorporates controversial issues, such as same-sex marriage and racial equality, into its marketing communications (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Hydock et al., 2020), making it distinct from CSR.

Additionally, other brand attributes (i.e. utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic) primarily address consumer needs in the private domain, which are largely apolitical, rather than addressing needs related to socio-political issues. Therefore, while BAA is related to these constructs, it stands apart due to its controversy-embracing nature and incorporation of controversial issues into marketing strategies.

The other characteristic distinguishing BAA is “fulfilment of needs”, which conceptually sets it apart from brand activism. Both BAA and brand activism relates to the phenomenon of brands taking stances and actions on controversial socio-political issues. However, while brand activism describes the activities of “taking stances and actions” by brands without a clear theoretical perspective (Moorman, 2020), BAA takes a consumer-based perspective of brand attributes to understand these activities described in brand activism. BAA conceptualises how these activities manifest in the marketplace from a consumer perspective (1<sup>st</sup> dimension: activist branding), how consumers conceive the consequent influence of these activities on socio-political issues (2<sup>nd</sup> dimension: brand transformative influence, and the ways in which and the extent to which consumer needs regarding socio-political issues are met through these activities (3<sup>rd</sup> dimension: brand as consumer-empowering agent). In sum, BAA is related to CSR, brand activism, brand utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic attributes,

but is also a distinct construct that has yet to be clearly elucidated by prior research.

In summary, the data analysis and interpretation presented in this section support the participants' envisaging of *activist branding* and their subsequent conceptions of *brand transformative influence* and *brand as empowering agent*. Together, these participant conceptions provide evidence for the existence of *brand activist attributes* (BAA) as a phenomenon and inform the BAA conceptualisation. Furthermore, this section highlights the key characteristics of BAA and delineates its conceptually relation to and distinction from related marketing constructs.

## 4.7 Study 1 Findings - Antecedents of BAA

---

This section presents findings that inform the initial conceptual model of BAA. The initial model identifies the relationship between BAA and other constructs, and it stipulates a set of propositions and hypotheses to be tested in the quantitative phase as a part of the theory-building process regarding BAA. The propositions are developed based on participant articulations, with a specific focus on the relationship between BAA and relevant concepts, such as the antecedents and consequences of BAA. Subsequently, hypotheses are deduced from the relational propositions in consultation with the existing literature to identify representative constructs/measures for the concepts and to specify the relationships between them.

### 4.7.1 Issue-Brand Fit and BAA (H1)

The data analysis also reveals the consumer perception of fit between the issue and the brand and its influence on BAA. For instance, P06, a fashionista and activist who has been fighting for gay rights since the 70s, highlights the role of issue-brand fit in BAA using fashion brands as examples:

*“You know [there are] situations or cases [in which] people would care more about or listen to the cause the brand promotes. [...] It’s challenging when they [fashion brands] take stances on issues that aren’t directly to do with [the] factory. [...] They are on a strong ground if they’re tackling things that actually function within fashion. I think there are some things where [there is] the value[s] to the brand of espousing a cause of saying this cause. So gay rights would be a good example. And that like not employing 13-year-olds on the catwalk; not having models who are too thin, all those*

*sorts of things seem directly parts of fashion. [...] People [are] doing what they're good at, they have the relevance of their concerns to be usefully involved in a debate. If they're just being stroppy and arguing about everything, they're not going to make a big contribution. They have to choose the things that they [are] keen on working so that you have consistency in your political connections. [...] So if some well-established noticed designers like Vivienne Westwood (an English fashion designer and designer brand) says something now, people listen to it because they know she's been attached to those causes for a long time. [...] She has been mixing fashion and politics all her career. [...] The brand can get a name for itself by attaching itself to those issues rather than just carrying on making clothes and not saying anything. But you get other brands like Dsquared2: it was so facetious and silly in what... in what they do. If they try to assure public statements about some political issue, no one will believe them. Like Moschino too because her shows are deliberately entertaining, not really serious. [...] they are not in a good place from which to issue political statements.” (P06)*

P06 shares the view that not all instances of brand involvement in socio-political issues are socially influential or positively perceived. However, drawing from his lifelong devotion to fashion brands and experience in activism, he concludes with confidence that issue-brand fit is crucial. Specifically, when a brand aligns with the issue it supports in terms of brand category and brand image, consumers are more likely to attribute legitimacy to the brand's support for that issue, and the brand's actions become more effective in influencing others. Reiterating this view, P07 expresses her expectation for “*brands that sell condoms*” to be vocal in gender issues because “*it represents people having sex, whether between men and*



women or between guys. They all have to use condoms. It's simply representative of gender issues.”

Additionally, participants share their view that audiences may respond positively when they perceive an overlap between the brand's target market and the target market of the issue. This is illustrated in P30's, a scholar in Eastern studies, discussion on brand involvement in gender equality, drawing on his cross-cultural experience living and researching the topic in the UK and Japan:

*“Gender equality, I mean, we have to start from the understanding of gender equality. Men and women are not equal in the workplace in the UK. So gender inequality in the UK is systemic; it's pervasive; It hasn't been resolved. But the situation is worse in Japan, as you probably understand. And certainly, Japanese corporations need to do much, much more to change their work systems. The thing about gender inequality in Japan is more than in the UK. And gender inequality in Japan harms men as well as women. The majority of men, I mean, not only the corporate executives, because what gender inequality in Japan produces is a situation where men generally have to work much harder than they need to. They have to work much longer hours and they endure really difficult circumstances through long periods of their lives. If there was greater gender equality in Japan, maybe men would have a little bit less stressful or difficult working life, and then would have more time and more opportunity to contribute to family formation. Gender inequality in Japan actually harms men as much as it harms women because it prevents men from being involved in their own families. And it makes them work much longer hours than they should do, and it harms their health, mental health and physiological health and so on. So greater gender equality in*

*Japan would actually benefit both genders. [...] Yeah, I think brands that promote gender equality in Japan, I would support them. [...] I think a lot of women in Japan would support those companies. And then, you know, a company like Shiseido, for example, a cosmetic company is quite well known for promoting gender equality within their [its] own workplace. I mean they're a cosmetics company and their primary market is women and professional women. So of course, you know, it absolutely ties in with their brand image. And because their primary consumer market is... I'd say it's all working women, you know.... Most working women in Japan would want greater gender equality in the workplace. So of course, they would seem to sympathise more with a company like Shiseido than a company that doesn't promote those issues. And if she said I'll use that as an opportunity to sell more products, okay, fair enough. But yes, I think one of the tricky things are there other brands that would promote gender equality for both women and men. That is a more tricky sell. [...] It depends on what they're producing and what their product is really. In most cases, I don't think it would be harmful. I'm not sure, you know, it's very hard to tell because you don't know what type of product they're trying to sell.” (P30)*

In the similar vein, P17 points out the role of fit between issue and the brand's target market, using the instance of Nike's campaign for BLM:

*“Yeah, I think that is a good thing because Nike it's very tied to the black community. It's a very popular trainer. It's something that black people have. In fact, it's probably the most popular footwear that is worn by black Americans, I would imagine, over Puma and Adidas. [...] There are certain brands that are tied to certain, certain people, you know. You think about basketball and things like Air Johnson's and stuff*

*like that. They're kind of...they're sort of just iconic tied to black athletes. I think that we're going to do that. And I probably feel like it was probably one of the more intuitive and natural alliances to have given how tight they are to the black community, you know. It's always been a very popular trainer whether you're an athlete or a dancer or, you know, a rapper or whatever. So that's one of the ones where I feel that is...I would imagine that Nike...I don't know ...but I would imagine that Nike is one of those American corporations that will have more black people at the top of the corporation than a typical one in a bank, you know, a US bank Goldman Sachs probably doesn't have many black people on the corporate board. And I'd like to think that Nike does. So probably that was possibly easier to happen because of that. I could be wrong, but that's just my feelings, really.” (P17)*

In sum, the analysis presented above suggests that a brand is more likely to meet a consumer's expectations regarding socio-political issues when the brand takes actions on issues that align with the overall brand image. Thus, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 1:** When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers evaluate the extent to which the issue fits with the brand and have a more positive perception of the association if they perceive a fit between the issue and the brand.

Proposition 1 is consistent with the existing literature, which highlights that, in response to alliances between a social issue and a non-profit or for-profit brand, individuals evaluate to what extent the brand-sponsored subject aligns well with the sponsoring brand (Zdravkovic et al., 2010), a construct referred to as *issue/cause-brand fit/match* by scholars (e.g. Cheron et al., 2012; Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006). Previous studies posit that an issue-brand

alliance is viewed more favourably when the image of an issue aligns with the image of the sponsoring brand because such well-aligned alliances are consistent with consumers' expectations of brands (Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006; Mirzaei et al., 2022; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Together with Proposition 1, it is hypothesised that:

**Hypothesis 1:** Issue-brand fit relates positively to BAA.

#### **4.7.2 Brand Values-Driven and Egoistic Motives and BAA (H2 and H3)**

The analysis uncovers that consumers interpret and evaluate the motives behind a brand's BAA initiatives, and these perceived motives play a role in their response to BAA brands in different directions. Specifically, they tend to categorise brand motives into two distinct types: values-driven and egoistic. This dichotomy is explicit in the narratives provided by P21 and P08:

*“So I think companies can use issues, you know, and they do use issues, but you have to then sort of have a filter and, you know, look cynically maybe a big massive mega-corporation is using issues just to get more market share or if they are genuinely, you know, sort of trying to live up to that brand reputation.” (P21)*

*“[...] they can do it (campaigns against animal cruelty) from two points of view, depending on what their main goal is. So they could do it from a purely ethical or social point of view whereby they truly believe in the ideology that they are supporting. [...] And, you know, there [are] different companies which are making an effort to try and support it obviously from an ethical point of view and also for the company like they need money and customers.” (P08)*

#### 4.7.2.1 Perceived Brand Values-Driven Motives

Consumers tend to be less sceptical when a brand prioritises its commitment to the issue over marketing performance. In contrast to the perceived egoistic motives, other interviewees share instances of brands that are genuinely driven by values and care about contributing to the issue:

*“They are also taking a risk (given Nike’s campaign with Colin Kaepernick) because if you just observe, you know, how people are in America, it (racial equality) seems to be a very divisive issue. There is [are] also lots of white people who buy trainers and, you know, the easiest thing for them to do would have been to be more kind of like sitting in the middle and not to say too much. They obviously couldn’t ignore the issue or maybe just be less vocal about it. I think the fact that they are being vocal about it, you know, is good and is admirable, because there’s less and less of me that instinctively think that “Well, that’s just because they want to sell more trainers” because, you know, he could potentially go either way if you look at the... you know, the American football player, probably it was Colin Kaepernick or somebody, you know. I mean, if you look at somebody like him, he basically sacrificed his career to make [take] a stand against racism. I mean...I suppose that for me is the ultimate in being authentic and being willing to lose out personally for brands to support a bigger cause. I think that was...things like that...you kind of know that they are doing the right thing there.” (P27)*

*“They are also taking a risk (given Nike’s campaign with Colin Kaepernick) because if you just observe, you know, how people are in America, it (racial equality) seems to*

*be a very divisive issue. There is [are] also lots of white people who buy trainers and, you know, the easiest thing for them to do would have been to be more kind of like sitting in the middle and not to say too much. They obviously couldn't ignore the issue or maybe just be less vocal about it. I think the fact that they are being vocal about it, you know, is good and is admirable, because there's less and less of me that instinctively think that "Well, that's just because they want to sell more trainers" because, you know, he could potentially go either way if you look at the... you know, the American football player, probably it was Colin Kaepernick or somebody, you know. I mean, if you look at somebody like him, he basically sacrificed his career to make [take] a stand against racism. I mean...I suppose that for me is the ultimate in being authentic and being willing to lose out personally for brands to support a bigger cause. I think that was...things like that...you kind of know that they are doing the right thing there." (P27)*

#### 4.7.2.2 The Impact of Brand Values-Driven Motives

The analysis reveals that consumers tend to respond more positively to activist branding when they believe it as being driven by the brand's values. P03 and P16 express their conviction in the brand's willingness to sacrifice potential market opportunities, while others are swayed by the brand's actions even at the risk of losing half of their domestic market share:

*"In many cases, you know, the brands want to make more money, so they develop the Chinese market (where mandatory animal testing is required for general cosmetics in her view). The Body Shop gave up such a piece of fat meat because of its values of against testing on the animals. [...] I respect this brand so much. It was something like*

*“I will buy, you know, lots of items from The Body Shop because it [puts] values and what it believes in front of making money.” So I guess it’s one of my reasons to respect this brand so much because, from my perspective, I think the businesses are going to make money and [they] hope to be successful and a brand is all about how much profit it makes, but The Body Shop is such a brand that respects others: it just gave up a huge market (China) because of its values (against animal testing). [...] I respect this brand so much. It was something like “I will buy, you know, lots of items from The Body Shop because it [puts] values and what it believes in front of making money.” So I guess it’s one of my reasons to respect this brand so much because, from my perspective, I think the businesses are going to make money and [they] hope to be successful and a brand is all about how much profit it makes, but The Body Shop is such a brand that respects others: it just gave up a huge market (China) because of its values (against animal testing).” (P03)*

*“That story (Nike’s campaign with Colin Kaepernick). I’d forgotten about that story but you’re right. So Nike has actually risked that gesture. They risk losing sales by other consumers. I completely admire that, assuming it’s genuine. Yeah, I really admire that. That’s something that is genuine because it actually lost money.” (P16)*

In the view of P08, brands must substantiate their advertised dedication to the issues by financially supporting the issue and displaying opposition to their oppose-sided counterparts:

*“I like a brand and they start advertising to support some sort of social issue, movement or culture, whatever. Then for me, if it was one that I supported, for example, [anti-]animal testing? Yeah, that’s great. I need them to prove to me that*

*they do actually support it. So for example, The Body Shop if they said, you know we're starting funds to start this sort of action to prevent this sort of problem. Everywhere you go, you see that it's advertising it, you know, against animal testing etc. And if they started themselves as a company to maybe boycott the companies who do animal testing. The look shows that they are actively trying to rectify the issue, or they are actively taking part in that movement so that made me trust them.” (P08)*

#### 4.7.2.3 Perceived Brand Egoistic Motives

In addition to values-driven motives, participants also associate egoistic motives with BAA initiatives, as illustrated in the following accounts of P24 and P22:

*“And maybe they do because they know what their customer already wants. I imagine Wetherspoons's customers... because it's very cheap. Alcohol [there] is cheap. I imagine that their customers have less money to spend. They might be a more traditional white working-class British people. They already were pro-Brexit. Wetherspoons knows that most of their customers probably like that. So maybe they say that because that's their customer base already.” (P24)*

*“I think the thing is that it (Windex's 'until-these-isn't-a-glass-ceiling-to-clean' advertisement) is sending a good message. Obviously, that's quite recent. They've obviously realised that, you know, women should get paid the same as men and women should have the same opportunities. And so, that's sort of capitalising on that window cleaning product and putting that [the slogan] together. And that's quite clever. Again, it still kind of aimed at women, you know, women buy this product, saying that 'You know, we want you to do better and we want you to achieve what you*



*want to achieve'. But essentially, it's still kind of doing it for profit, you know. It's quite interesting what they've done."* (P22)

Regarding brands' support for BLM, P25 and P26 express sentiments that brands are exploiting the movement for self-serving purposes. These interpretations serve as a defence mechanism against brand persuasion attempts:

*"For me, when I look at it (Nike's campaign with Colin Kaepernick), I think again that goes back to the political agenda there. The brands might be doing it for marketing purposes, you know. It's...it's building that reputation of the brand. [...] it's for its own good; it's for maximising its own profit; It's for their own games, ultimately. So that's why, for me, I always feel that the message is a bit cynical, you know. [...] Before the movement, why didn't you say anything? So yeah, almost like riding with the tide [...] they only do this when this become[s] an issue."* (P25)

*"I think they're jumping on the bandwagon. I feel like they know that (BLM) is popular at the moment. And that will help sell their brand. If they look to be supporting what everybody is supporting, you know, what is the trend, they go in with it and they're hoping that that will promote their sales. So for me, that doesn't make me think that they're a better company. For me, I think it's a selling point a lot of times. [...] And when I see, let's say Formula One [replacing silver cars into black ones], to me, I just think they're just jumping on the bandwagon because they want to be popular."* (P26)

Saturated in the above extracts are participants' doubts and distrust towards brands' involvement in BLM, as these two interviewees perceive such support as self-serving tactic aimed at enhancing brand publicity and sales.

#### 4.7.2.4 The Impact of Perceived Brand Egoistic Motives

The analysis reveals that consumers tend to respond more negatively to activist branding when they perceive egoistic motives behind. For instance, P24 shows strong reluctance to support a brand-led pro-LGBTQ+ campaign due to its sales-oriented motive and the perceived lack of significant transformative influence:

*“I think they called it the ‘Pink Pound’, didn’t they? I think it was a process where companies realised that they were missing out. I think...I think brands... corporate companies... for yeah you know this brand. I think it is probably in America where, you know, Gay men, who never got married or kids, which is expensive, they had got good jobs, they’ve got big incomes and good spending, they’d like nice design and things. I think it was called Pink Pound. So companies realised that they needed to get money from those people; realised that that was the market they needed to tap. [...] In this country, in October, it is the Pink Awareness Month and everything’s pink where every single product is branded with the pink ribbon saying we make a donation. [...] Yeah, I wouldn’t support them. So again, we’d look... if somebody says: ‘You know, come buy this pink pen because we will give out some money.’ I would go and have a look and see how much of it actually goes to the cause. Back to that again, so if it’s just a penny and they’ve sold something for eight pounds then that’s not a big donation. They shouldn’t really be doing that, should they?” (P24)*

In response to Mercedes' support for BLM, P26 considers this practice as a tactic adopted by the brand to boost sales and brand awareness, leading to reluctance in considering such support as a genuinely act of doing good:

*“I think they’re jumping on the bandwagon. I feel like they know that that (BLM) is popular at the moment. And that will help sell their brand. If they look to be supporting what everybody is supporting, you know, what is the trend, they go in with it and they’re hoping that that will promote their sales. So for me, that doesn’t make me think that they’re a better company. For me, I think it’s a selling point a lot of times. [...] And when I see, let’s say Formula One [Mercedes replacing silver cars into black ones], to me, I just think they’re just jumping on the bandwagon because they want to be popular.” (P26)*

*“I think a lot of brands are actually doing these kinds of things like they hire black models or they hire plus-size models to emphasise that they care about equality - like beauty is not about... is not only about skinny girls or like white girls only. I think...I think, um...they are doing a good job, but sometimes I do think that our brands do it because they...they know that it’s going to be good for their business. [...] like Calvin Klein, if they are promoting equality and nationality and race, but then their employees in their shops [are not equally represented] or [if they are] actually discriminating [against] people [...] people in the UK might be like posting it on social media and maybe like it hurts the brand image of Calvin Klein. And then maybe that business drops and something like that. Yeah, so I think for the business they really do have to think a lot before they really do this kind of campaign.” (P10)*

In summary, the analysis reveals that consumer's perception of values-driven (versus egoistic) motives enhances (versus undermines) the merit of BAA initiatives. Consumers are more likely to be persuaded by BAA initiatives when they perceive that the brand prioritises its commitment to the issue over profit maximisation. Thus, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 2:** When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers interpret and evaluate the motives behind the association and these perceived motives influence their perception of the association.

Proposition 2 aligns with previous research on consumer behaviours, which demonstrates that consumers assign egoistic values (exploiting rather than supporting the issue) or values-driven (brand engagement in the issue because of its values and standards) motives to brands, and these attributions influence their responses to the brands (Ellen et al., 2000, 2006). Empirical studies provide evidence that brand evaluation is lower (versus higher) when the perception of egoistic (versus values-driven) motives to be salient (Forehand and Grier, 2003; Skarmeas et al., 2013; Yoon et al., 2006). Recent research on brand activism suggests that unsubstantiated claims and egoistic practices in relation to divisive socio-political issues can lead to a negative perception termed as *woke washing* (Vredenburg et al., 2020, p. 444), which harms consumer attitudes towards the brand. Conversely, consumers are more receptive to practices that align with the brand's purpose and values, leading to favourable responses. Hence, it is hypothesised that:

**Hypothesis 2:** Brand values-driven motives relate positively to BAA.

**Hypothesis 3:** Brand egoistic motives relate negatively to BAA.

## 4.8 Study 1 Findings - Outcomes of BAA

---

### 4.8.1 Self-Brand Values Congruence (H4)

Values can be defined as enduring beliefs and desirable principles that form the foundation for individuals' attitudes and behaviours (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Sagiv and Schwartz, 2022). The analysis reveals that a brand's BAA initiatives serves as a reference point from which consumers interpret brand values and assess the extent to which such values are congruent with their own personal values. This process of drawing inferences about brand values and self-brand congruence is exemplified in P06's reflection on his interpretation of a left-wing brand's activist stance and activities:

*“I’ve got a huge great list of causes that I represent and embody, like gay rights, which I’ve been working for... well, all my life. [...] (Vivienne) Westwood (an English fashion designer and designer brand) was doing that kind of thing at the same time and also makes [making] that sort of clothing with big political statements. [...] She was not happy. She was just part of a social group that was firmly left-wing and she was always part of the politics of the left. [...] I belong to that generation nicely - politics and everything. [...] when you wear something, you feel that it embodies what you want to say about yourself to the world. [...] I don’t wear that sort of thing anymore these days. My T-shirts with slogans have been forgotten. [...] I think the risk of becoming involved in the politics of fashion is quite high. I don’t want to be knocked off from the street. I am obviously operative. [...] British people are xenophobic, and they think that the EU has been trying to get over them for years. The way in which the EU has been managing its vaccine has been a source of great pleasure to those right-wing English people. [...] There is a level of legitimacy that*

*has been given to what I regard as right-wing activism. For example, the way that Trump was allowed to whip up crowds to go and invade the Capital Building. That's also presented in Austria, which I know a little in Hungary, which I don't know at all in Spain. It's all over the place. They think it's okay to go and beat up people who've [from whom] they've heard saying something they don't approve of. [...] So I have been very active[ly] campaigning for a long time. But that experience taught me to be careful about which... which causes I come out fighting for. [...] So it was just a shame that I couldn't show my support by buying her clothes.” (P06)*

P06 feels that the political statement made by the left-wing brand closely aligns with his own views. He previously purchased and wore branded products as an act of conspicuous political consumption (Marder et al., 2018), allowing him to communicate his values to others (Ferraro et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2021). Furthermore, he expresses the belief that the values expressed by the brand or his consumption of the brand would signal opposition to the values held by right-wing supporters. Consequently, those with opposing views would resent what P06 and the brand's values due to conflicting value priorities (Osuna Ramírez et al., 2019; Wang and Griskevicius, 2014), considering the brand as rivals against their values (Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018). Therefore, being aware of the potential risks associated with conspicuous consumption in the context of “consumer animosity” (Abraham and Reitman, 2018, p. 412), such as violent incidents arising from legitimate right-wing activism, P06's fear of being targeted by politically opposite-minded individuals outweighs the potential benefits of constructing and expressing his political views through conspicuous political consumption.

Similarly, P20 identifies herself as a member of left-leaning liberal groups who prioritise the

welfare of all people and the environment. The ideological preference of these liberal consumers manifests in the marketplace that they resonate and appreciate the liberal values signalled by a brands' active contribution to progressive issues:

*“What could they (brands) do? Well...because I’m a left-leaning liberal. It’s about social justice; It’s about being fair; it’s about doing good for people. And those are the ones that I try to avoid [which are] purely interested in massive money and don’t have...for being...don’t have a good mission. Just to that area. There are so many different ways in which you can try and do something better: whether that is creating a new organisational structure so that workers get a better deal; or whether it’s environmental issues; or whether it is about social injustice; whether it’s about quality education; whether it’s about saving lives and reducing hardship or poverty or... If those are all things that organisations are aiming for, then I would think that’s great and that’s a good thing. [...] So there’s lots and lots of great brands and I applaud Sainsbury’s for portraying non-white families in adverts and then standing up for themselves when they get criticised for it. [...] To me, it is the same stuff - making the world a slightly better place. There’s a wide range of stuff, whether it’s within energy or transport, or gender diversity or whether it’s Black Lives Matter or any of that they are trying to make the world a better place and trying to make money. [...] That’s the kind of thing that would influence me: whether hiring more women or investing a lot of money in...in dealing with the source of the problem and creating a better record of diversity. [...] In my...my, generally, left-leaning liberal...liberal groups, yes, quite a lot of people who care about this, , particularly, things on Twitter, very, very much so, you know, you get a fishbowl bubble going on.” (P20)*

In response to Calvin Klein's (CK, an American fashion brand) advertisement featuring a black transgendered plus-sized model Jari Jones, P15, a female researcher from an ethnic minority background, comments:

*“We see it (CK advertisement with a black transgendered plus-sized model Jari Jones) as a really good way to show that beauty is not a unique type of appearance. [...] Some people can understand more about others, and they sympathise with other people; They have empathy and they accept all the differences of people. [...] And the other half of them will say this is disgusting [...] because they're very old-fashioned and homophobic to start with. They think all the models should be thin and tall, maybe with better skin, or at least, no chubby arms or chubby face. And she is trans. That's another thing. She was a man and then she became a woman. Maybe they will say this is some kind of rebellions of [against] patriarchy. [...] They have a really clear mindset of the it's-either-right-or-wrong standard about a lot of stuff. [...] I think it is about the definition of beauty which has been restricted to one type of appearance for a long time. [...] But she is pretty to me. She is confident and she is not afraid of showing her body to other people. This is courage. [...] I will say it's really good because we have the stereotype in models, especially [expecting] female models to be slim, thin and with good figures, and it has [they have] to be with good skin and to be pretty. And to be honest, in that way this model is nowhere close to the stereotype because she's not as “pretty” as other models, and she is not even biologically female, but now she is here as a model for CK!” (P15)*

The values orientation mentioned in this quote align well with Schwartz et al.'s (2012) universalism-tolerance values, which involves “acceptance and understanding of those who



are different from oneself” (p. 664). In P15’s account, some individuals perceive the brand’s diverse and inclusive advertisement as a challenge to obligations associated with biological sex, if not an attack on the traditional standards of model selection and cultural norms related to heterosexual marriage. Thus, they view the brand as opposing their preference for the current status quo of existing cultural obligations, traditions and norms. In contrast, P15 perceives herself and the others as having a values orientation towards an understanding, sympathy, and acceptance of individual differences. They interpret CK’s advertisement as an attempt to promote individual differences by illustrating that beauty does not adhere to a singular appearance. This interpretation aligns with their values and leads to a sense of self-brand congruence in terms of values.

In the similar vein, P29, the Chinese-British student advisor, reflects on Nike’s support for BLM:

*“Overall speaking, I think I was really glad to see this. It’s almost that I felt my personal values, you know. It is aligned with the brand’s kind of value in supporting the campaign. [...] I think that (Nike’s support to Black Lives Matter) is a really good initiative to kind of provide support, especially, you know, Black Life Matters [Black Lives Matter] is such a big topic. I think this is something that... that people should pay more attention [to] and have [been having] a wider discussion [on] for quite a while, but, unfortunately, it doesn’t really come up... come up to our... to our lives until the tragedy (the murder of George Floyd) happened. So I really appreciate [it]. And I was really glad to see the brand I support supports such a great initiative. [...] I think this particular campaign is more about inequality in our societies - everybody is equal; everybody should be treated the same, especially the minority group or any*

*people should be treated equally, you know. We need to voice our concern. [...] I think this is something people should pay more attention [to] and have a wider discussion on [...] So I really appreciate [it]. And I was really glad to see the brand I support supports such a great initiative.” (P29)*

P29 firmly holds the belief that people, regardless of their ethnic background, should be treated respectfully, fairly and equally. Guided by such values, she evaluates whether Nike’s campaign supports equality, justice and the well-being of all individuals. In this case, she expresses the interpretation of Nike’s campaign as an effort to voice her concerns, raise social awareness, and facilitate public discussion about social injustice. As a result, her interpretation of the brand contributing to an issue of her concern strengthens her alignment with the brand’s values.

P29 also shares her conception of another instance where a brand offers support to LGBTQ rights:

*“I think I’m a very, very open-minded person. And then, you know, whatever decision other people make is their personal life, you know. There is no place for other people’s business, so why some people are kind of pointing their fingers at the LGBT community, I just don’t get it. [...] if companies or brands do not support LGBTQ, I could not really understand it. I don’t know why they are not doing that. [...] I think the brand could kind of use their influence to join in supporting them, and, especially, I think... I personally feel that brands in Western countries have been doing it quite well. And I really think that brands in China are not supporting them. I think probably it’s just not something people talk about that often. I think the more you talk about it,*

*there... there will be more brands, you know, joining it. I see that kind of positive movement in China, you know, a lot of brands as well, which is really good.” (P29)*

In her account, she identifies herself as open-minded and expresses the view that individuals should be supported and given the freedom to live their own lives. Her disclosures suggest that her openness values might have guided her expectation for brands to support the LGBTQ community and elicited positive responses when brands do so. Additionally, she expresses her belief that the brand demonstrates to her a support for sexual minority groups in cultivating their own preferences and making their own choices that differ from the majority in society. Such support aligns with her values of self-direction (openness to change). Together with the previous illustrations:

**Proposition 3:** When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers draw inferences from the association about the brand’s values and evaluate the extent to which the brand’s values are congruent with their own values.

Proposition 3 finds support in multidisciplinary literature, which suggests that individuals infer values from others’ interpretations and views on socio-political issues. Social psychology has established a theoretical and empirical connection between values and individuals’ interpretations and attitudes towards socio-political issues (Goren et al 2016; Kristiansen and Zanna, 1994). In an interpersonal context, individuals draw inferences from others’ values from their opinions on socio-political issues. As such, similar political opinions and stances may be interpreted as indicative of shared values, leading to similar interpretations of socio-political issues. Applying personal impression theory—the notion that an individual’s behavioural incidents automatically translate into more abstract personality

and value traits (Srull and Wyer, 1989)—to consumer-brand relationships, Fournier and Alvarez (2012) argue that consumers infer brand abstract traits from observable brand statements and behaviours. In the socio-political context, consumers' observations of BAA initiatives (e.g. Nike's anti-racism campaign) serve as brand behaviours that shape the consumer perception of brand values-related traits. In this sense, Consumer perceptions of brand values are therefore related to the congruence between consumer values and brand values. When a brand shares similar views and takes actions that support consumers' desired stance, they may interpret such actions as a signal of shared socio-political preferences and thus consider the brand as embodying the values they resonate with (Shepherd et al. 2015). Together with Proposition 3, it is hypothesised that:

**Hypothesis 4:** BAA relates positively to self-brand values congruence.

#### **4.8.2 Brand Love and Purchase Intention (H5 and H6)**

When interviewees share their responses to brands that take actions on socio-political issues, they reflect on how their brand evaluations and purchase decisions are influenced by perceiving that the brand meets their expectations regarding issues of concern. For instance, P21, who enjoy wearing colourful rainbow clothes and supporting the LGBTQ community, shares how a brands' visual support for her stance on LGBTQ topics would likely "bias" her purchase decision by reducing the cognitive burden of brand evaluation:

*"So I think it's a good thing to have lots of visual LGBTQ symbols for people to make everyone feel welcome by organisations. [...] So all the stories around it seem positive so that makes it easier to weigh up the decision of 'shall I buy some very colourful dungarees from there?' So it will be an easier decision [...] I think it's more*

*a personal decision that is not going to make you think like ‘oh, yes! I’m gonna get that!’ But, whether, on a subconscious level, it influences us? I’m not sure, you know, whether we think they must be a good brand or a good company overall because they obviously care about social and political things.” (P21, female, British, career advisor, in her 40’s)*

P02, who identifies herself as a firm believer in women’s independence and racial equality, shares that she has been “*expecting some brands to do something*” to stand with and empower similar-minded to fight against domestic violence and social injustice. Her account highlights her certainty that meeting consumer expectations for brands to support their stance will result in a sense of emotional connection and a stronger desire for the brand:

*“For example, if we have a brand... um like trying to drop a line and trying to support women's individuality or women being independent in marriage and being respected by their partners... if they bring these lines in their products, advertisements or campaigns, that will be brilliant and everyone in China will buy it. And they will trust the advertisement and this is like something [that] will attract more customers. [...] And so if they have some certain stances like standing for females and that will make a good impression for Chinese female customers like we might feel that we are supported by you, by this brand. And maybe next time we will buy something from you.*

*I think that’s the biggest thing I’ve learned from living in a different culture as an outsider is being respectful. It is quite important and this is the way of how I treat the British people and I really want the people who are like non-Chinese and brands*

*treating Chinese people the same way: in a respectful way yeah. [...] If we don't care about the campaign (Nike's campaign with Colin Kaepernick) or the movement (Black Lives Matter) related to another or different ethnic groups, then perhaps when one day we will face the same issue, who's going to help us? So we do need to care about different issues even though it's [they're] not that related to our life. Like the society... nowadays, everything is connected so we should be helping each other. Helping others is helping yourself, I would say. [...] Yeah, I definitely will have a better impression (because Nike supports the Black Lives Matter movement), although I have already got a good impression about [of] Nike. It will definitely improve the brand in like... in... in... in terms of the publicity and like how the public see it. And I think that is really not just about a good impression as a global brand. If they do something about it, they are raising awareness of the public and trying to draw more attention to the social issue. So I will definitely see it as positive. Brands should promote anything that could help the world a little... to become a little bit better.”*

(P02)

Another support for the effect of BAA on positive CBRs could be found on P31's reflection:

*“But if I become aware that the company, let's say Nike or a company, supports it (racial equality), it will make me even more like the brand, but I wouldn't actively go out and choose a brand for that matter. [...] Yeah, I think, subconsciously, even though it's not something, you know. You would consciously look out for but subconsciously I think it is definitely something I would feel more attractive to the brand for being white myself. It's not the sort of thing that I would look for from a company that I've 100% identified myself with because I would identify myself as white and also I don't*

*identify myself as somebody who wants to live in a purely wide environment if that makes sense. [...] So I identify myself as somebody who is open and likes to make people from all backgrounds and cultures. I have a mixed-race family myself, and, therefore, that is still part of my identity even though it's not my personal ethnic identity, but it is important for me, I think. So I definitely feel more attracted to adverts on websites where you see people from different backgrounds and cultures.”*

(P31, the German lady who is proud of the diverse in her family)

The above expression from P31 suggests that participants respond more positively to brands that share their views and stance on socio-political issues, whether consciously, subconsciously, or unconsciously. Together with the previous illustrations:

**Proposition 4:** When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers respond more positively to the brand if the association is perceived as positive.

Proposition 4 resonates with consumer research suggesting that when consumers' actual perception matches ideal expectations, they experience a sense of congruence that positively influences cognitive evaluation and brand choice (Sirgy, 1982). Dodd and Supa (2014) found that perceived self-brand congruence on socio-political issues leads to significantly greater purchase intentions. Drawing from the self-brand congruence/identification theory (e.g. Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Escalas and Bettman, 2003; Sirgy, 1982), recent studies posited and found that consumers are more inclined to and more likely to purchase brands that take their side on socio-political issues (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Hydock et al., 2020). In summary, the findings from this research, along with existing literature, suggest that when a brand meets consumers' expectations regarding socio-political issues, consumers tend to respond

positively to the brand in terms of attitude, emotions, and behaviour, resembling an overall consumer experience conceptually similar to what Batra et al. (2012) refer to as *brand love*, a higher-order construct including positive cognitions, emotions, and behaviours. Therefore:

**Hypothesis 5:** BAA relates positively to brand love.

**Hypothesis 6:** BAA relates positively to purchase intention.



## 4.9 Study 1 Findings - The Role of Issue Salience (H7a, H7b, and H7c)

---

Analysis reveals that the salience of an issue for consumers influences their response to BAA. Issue salience can be defined as the importance individuals attach to different issues (Berelson et al., 1954; Rabinowitz et al., 1982). Participants emphasise the significance of issue salience in their evaluation of brands involved in socio-political matters, as illustrated in the account of P04:

*“Some things are obvious like maybe you underpay your workers like you should be paying £10 but only paying £6. Slaughtering all these animals when you could just use alternatives. I think people they’d be more likely to get and relate to that story when people think that’s [something that people] should be doing. In other cases, they don’t have an emotional involvement with them. So maybe it depends on how much people feel about the issue or there, how they respond to issues. Like when you’re angry about something you really want to do something about animal cruelty.”* (P04, the office administrator)

In the similar vein, P02, the teacher and believer in women’s independence, discusses her varying responses based on the salience of the issues, using the cases of brand involvement in BLM and civil protests against the government:

*“[...] you need to see how far you are from these topics. So personally, I really care about the equality between genders so that’s why I picked gender issues (in photo elicitation). And from my education, I did teach English to young learners (for a degree) and I’m like... I’m teaching young people, that’s why I took the topic of child*

*well-being. So it is all depends on how like your personal experience. [...] There might be some brands like being disrespectful to my gender and something like that. [...] as a female, I sometimes find adverts like 'Why you like... you have that kind of seducing gesture? This is just something I don't like.' But maybe people will have different opinions on that one. I would say you don't have to... well, personally, I don't want to be too sensitive about it, but just like when you feel offended, you feel offended. [...] Personally, I will find that a brand supporting global... like trying to... trying to build a sustainable society will affect [affecting] me more compared to like supporting Black... Black Life Matters [Lives Matter]. But I would say if I am [was] a black, I would definitely see it differently from I do now. So I would say it depends on how far or how close that social issue [is] to you as an individual. [...] It's a good thing, definitely. I don't see the reason why we don't do so or why the brand doesn't do so. And perhaps, for example, for the campaign or the movement itself, I feel like I do support them, but the impact it has on me is not as big as other issues that I care about more or are closer to me." (P02)*

P02 highlights her concern for gender equality and child well-being, as these issues closely relate to her gender and professional identities. She further discusses the psychological distance between brand support for the black community and her Chinese identity, highlighting the role of issue salience in her responses. In this line, P05, a British male who used to live and study in China, pointed out his view that consumers responses to BAA initiatives are contingent on issue salience:

*"I think, in China, the whole kind of (Black Lives Matter) movement kind of doesn't have the same effect in their purchase because the country is a lot less racially*

*diverse, with 91% of Chinese people being Han Chinese and only a small amount of like minority Chinese groups in China. So I think the whole concept of racial segregation or difference between races isn't a prolific phenomenon in China because like the racial diversity of the population in the big cities is just not that high. So I think the idea of political movement just doesn't have as big as [an] effect in China. If Nike stops sponsoring this one (Colin Kaepernick an American civil rights activist and former football quarterback), I don't think it would have too much effect on their business in China, especially because it was American football, which is not a sport heavily followed in China. Maybe if it was like American basketball, which is more popular in China, I think [it] would have more effect because the sport and the issue it's just not [an] very political thing in China. Because they just don't have that same kind of situation, so they don't empathise with it. So I think the business should be less affected in China and Nike is a giant when it comes to selling shoes in China... like people who wear like Jordans.” (P05)*

P12, a Hong Konger living in the UK, shares that brand stance on local protests, compared to BLM, is far more “relevant” and influential to his consumption practices:

*“To me, I would say... because ethnicity and Black Lives Matter is not a very popular issue or like it doesn't raise a lot of concern in Hong Kong. [...] it is not really relevant to me. But I think that reminds me of some of the issues in Hong Kong now. [...] So we have the social-tiering separating Hong Kong people into two [tiers/groups]. So one is the Yellow Party and the other one is the Blue Party. The Blue Party is basically just like the government supporters and the Yellow Party is just like anti the government. At that moment, we'll just like... will ask different*

*companies, especially, the local or the small companies to just say which side you're on. So that we know if we should purchase or buy your products or not just based on which side you are on. So I think it's kinda like similar to... to the Nike issue (BLM campaign)in [at] that time.” (P12)*

Discussing the same phenomenon, P10, another Hong Konger, also shared her beliefs that issue salience matters in consumer responses to activist brands and their BAA initiatives:

*“I mean, if you are local Hong Kong people, I think, it is a good thing that you see whether a shop or restaurants have their own stances so that you can easily make your judgement of whether you would go and do consumption, but of course, there would be people that they won't...they won't look at it. [...] I always do and people around me like most people around me, they do. But if you're a tourist or a foreigner that [is] new to Hong Kong or [doesn't] know much about Hong Kong or the situation, maybe you will find these concepts complicated [...] I think for people who are 40 plus, it doesn't mean that they don't care about whether it's Yellow or Blue. I mean they... they do have their own stances but they probably won't do it on a day-to-day basis to really check whether it's a Yellow or Blue shop that they go to probably because, well, they have already established a career, and everything's been very stable so... so it doesn't harm them as much as whichever their political stances are. [...] But what the government has done or the changed situation harms the future of the younger generation.” (P10)*

P10 expresses that indigenous consumers, especially younger generations who are, in her view, most “*harmed*” by the governmental administration, place greater importance on brand

support for the demonstrations compared to their immigrant or tourist counterparts. Consequently, indigenous younger consumers are more likely to consider the brands' stances in their brand evaluations and consumption. In conjunction with the aforementioned illustrations:

**Proposition 5:** When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, the salience of the issue to consumers influences their response to the association.

Proposition 5 aligns with the established literature on political science, suggesting that individuals base their evaluation and preference for political entities, at least partially, on the salience of relevant issues (e.g. Edwards et al., 1995; Epstein and Segal, 2000). Consumer research also demonstrates that consumers orient their relationships with brands to achieve salient issue-related goals at various levels (Fournier, 1998), including individual (e.g. healthy diet), relational (e.g. happy family), and collective (e.g. political, ideological, and cultural changes) goals (e.g. Chartrand et al., 2008; Epp and Price, 2011; Gollnhofer et al., 2019). When socio-political issues become salient to individuals, they become more susceptible and inclined towards brands that help maintain the status quo or facilitate desirable socio-political changes (Weber et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2022). In conjunction with Proposition 5, it is hypothesised that:

**Hypothesis 7a:** Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and self-brand values congruence.

**Hypothesis 7b:** Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and brand love.

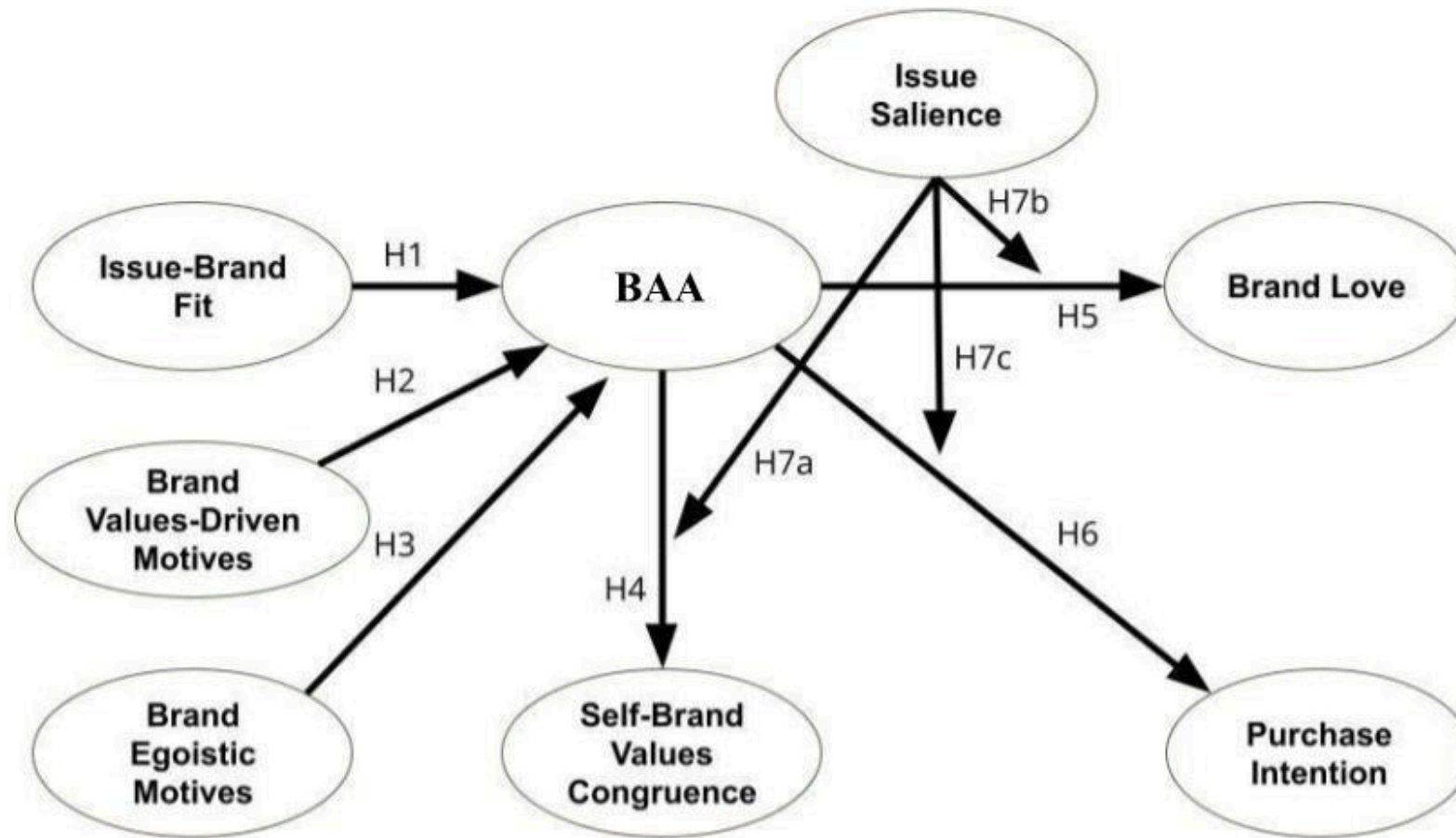
**Hypothesis 7c:** Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and purchase intention.

The propositions and relationship hypotheses are summarised in Table 4-4 and the conceptual model to be tested in the quantitative phase is visualised in Figure 4-2 below.

Table 4-4. Summary of the Propositions and Hypotheses (Study 1)

<b>Issue-Brand Fit and BAA</b>	
<b>P1</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers evaluate the extent to which the issue fits with the brand and have a more positive perception of the association if they perceive a fit between the issue and the brand.
<b>H1</b>	Issue-brand fit relates positively to BAA.
<b>Perceived Brand Motives and BAA</b>	
<b>P2</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers interpret and evaluate the motives behind the association and these perceived motives influence their perception of the association.
<b>H2</b>	Brand values-driven motives relate positively to BAA.
<b>H3</b>	Brand egoistic motives relate negatively to BAA.
<b>BAA and Values</b>	
<b>P3</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers draw inferences from the association about the brand's values and evaluate the extent to which the brand's values are congruent with their own values.
<b>H4</b>	BAA relates positively to self-brand values congruence.
<b>BAA and Positive CBRs</b>	
<b>P4</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers respond more positively to the brand if the association is perceived as positive.
<b>H5</b>	BAA relates positively to brand love.
<b>H6</b>	BAA relates positively to purchase intention.
<b>Issue Salience and Response to BAA</b>	
<b>P5</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, the salience of the issue to consumers influences their response to the association.
<b>H7a</b>	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and self-brand values congruence.
<b>H7b</b>	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and brand love.
<b>H7c</b>	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and purchase intention.

Figure 4-2. Visual Presentation of Conceptual Model (Study 1)





## 4.10 Chapter 4 Concluding Remarks

---

This chapter presented the procedures and findings of the qualitative phase of this thesis. Specifically, Section 4.2 and 4.3 justified the adoption of grounded theory as the research approach and the theories-in-use strategy employed in conducting grounded theory. Section 4.4 outlined the design and implementation of semi-structured in-depth interviews as the data collection method and presented the detailed non-identifiable information of 32 interview participants. Hence, Section 3.5 presented and justified the grounded, constant and comparative method adopted for the data analysis.

Section 3.6 presented the findings of the conceptualisation of BAA and its three dimensions, namely, activist branding, brand transformative influence, and brand as consumer-empowering agent. These findings achieved Research Objective 1, which intends to define the nature and key attributes of BAA. The subsequent Sections 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 presented the findings on the antecedents and outcomes of BAA, as well as the boundary condition of issue salience in the effect of BAA on CBRs. These findings achieve Research Objective 2, which is to develop a marketing theory of BAA comprising a set of propositions and hypotheses that posits the antecedent(s), consequence(s) of BAA, as well as mediator(s) and moderator(s) of the BAA effect (summarised in Table 4-4 and visualised in Figure 4-2). Lastly, this section provided a brief summary of the chapter.

# **Chapter 5: Quantitative Phase - Study 2 Scale Item**

## **Generation and Initial Refinement**

### **5.1 Overview of Chapter 5**

---

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, the quantitative phase of this thesis aims to develop and validate a scale to measure brand activist attributes (BAA) and test the initial conceptual model of BAA informed by the findings in Chapter 4.

Justification for developing a new measurement scale should precede the development process (Churchill, 1979). The literature review presented in Chapter 2 confirmed the absence of a conceptually or mathematically valid scale for BAA or brand activism. Prior studies on brand activism adopted experimental approaches to examine how consumers respond to specific instances of brands taking a stance or taking actions on polarised socio-political issues (e.g., Dodd and Supa, 2014; Hydock et al., 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020). However, a psychometrically valid scale for measuring consumers' perceptions of brand activism is absent in the extant literature. Therefore, the development of a conceptually adequate and valid BAA scale is a high priority to facilitate the empirical examination of the role of BAA in consumer-brand relationships.

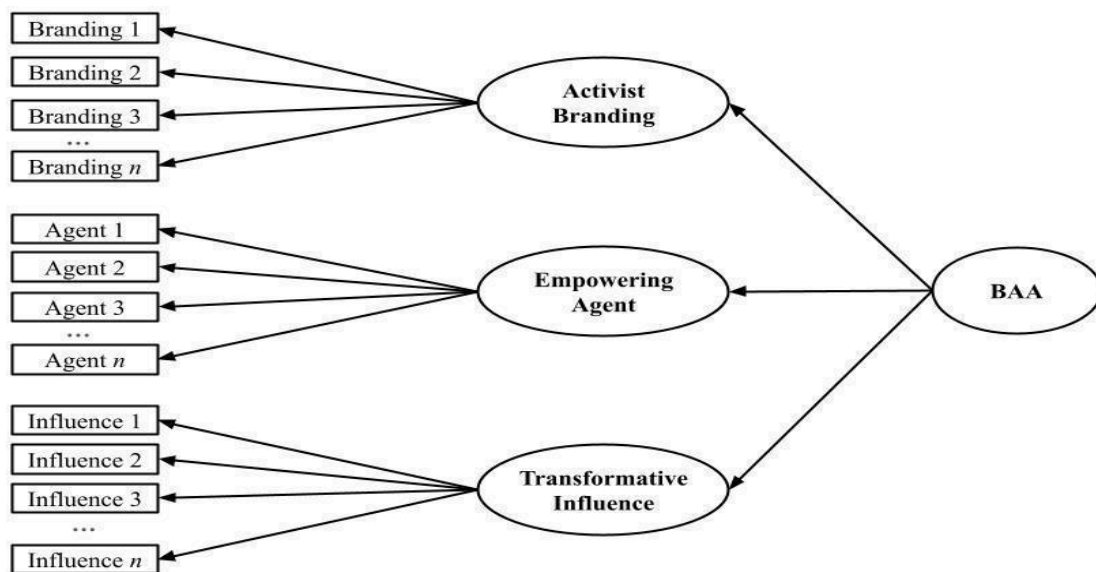
Chapters 5 and 6 present the scale development and validation process following the well-established recommendations (Churchill, 1979; Boateng et al., 2018; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Netemeyer et al., 2003) and prior scale-development studies in consumer research (e.g. Bottger et al., 2017; Freling et al., 2010; Golossenko et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 204

2018; Price et al., 2018; Warren et al., 2019; Vandecasteele and Geuens, 2010; Walsh and Beatty, 2007). In particular, the process includes three main phases: 1) scale item generation; 2) scale refinement; and 3) scale validation. In this chapter, Section 5.2 describes the process of identifying and developing the initial BAA scale items. Section 5.3 discusses the steps taken to develop the scale judgement survey sent to the academic experts for initial scale refinement. Section 5.4 presents the development and results of an EFA survey to evaluate the dimensionality, reliability and validity of the BAA scale items, with the aim of further refining the scale. Section 5.5 summarises this chapter.

## 5.2 Specifying BAA as A Reflective-Reflective Higher-Order Construct

BAA is specified as a reflective-reflective, three-dimensional, higher-order construct (Crocetta et al., 2021; Law et al., 1998), as visualised in Figure 5-1 on this page. This specification better fits the conceptualisation of BAA: the three BAA dimensions derived from the qualitative research are more appropriately considered as different manifestations of the same construct rather than formative measures that define it (Wong et al., 2008). An example of such a specification is brand coolness (Warren et al., 2019), which describes a consumer's perceptions of a set of characteristics typically associated with a cool brand. Similarly, BAA describes a consumer's perceptions of various characteristics typically associated with an activist brand. This reflective-reflective specification assumes that the higher-order construct BAA exists independent of the first-order dimensions, and causality flows from the higher-order construct to the first-order dimensions (Coltman et al., 2008). At the first-order level, the specification assumes that a change in the first-order constructs causes changes in their respective indicators that are interchangeable (Coltman et al., 2008). To generate reflective indicators for the dimensions of BAA, established scale development procedures are followed, and the BAA scale is subject to rigorous reliability and validity testing using several consumer samples (Churchill, 1979; Netemeyer et al., 2003). The following outlines major steps of the scale development process in detail.

Figure 5-1. Visualising the Specification of BAA



Note: The candidate and final indicators for the BAA dimensions could be less or more than three items, subject to empirical examinations in the following studies.

### 5.3 Study 2a Scale Item Generation

---

Following well-established procedures (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2017; Netemeyer et al., 2003), Study 2a aims to develop a broad set of scale items that would encompass all potential aspects of the three dimensions of BAA. Based on conceptualisation of the BAA construct and its dimensions developed in Chapter 4, prospective scale items can be developed through both literature review and qualitative data, such as individual interviews (DeVellis, 2017). In line with Boateng et al.'s (2018) recommended best practice and prior studies (e.g. Bottger et al., 2017; Freling et al., 2010; Vandecasteele and Geuens, 2010), the multidisciplinary literature review developed in Chapter 2 and transcripts from the 32 semi-structured interviews conducted in the qualitative phase serve as the data source from which prospective BAA scale items can be identified.

Relevant information identified from the data was processed using a combination of meaning categorisation and meaning condensation approaches (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Meaning categorisation involves gathering data under relevant BAA dimensions, while meaning condensation entails an abridgement of meanings into concise formulations (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Based on categorised and condensed meanings, the initial items were developed following item writing recommendations for wording accessibility, clarity and redundancy (Boateng et al., 2018; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Clarity is a key consideration, adhering to the principle that the language used should be comprehensible to the target population, avoiding complex words, jargon, and trendy slang (Netemeyer et al., 2003). In terms of redundancy, the initial item pool should allow redundancy for successive evaluation in the later scale purification phase (Fowler, 1995; Kline, 1993). Thus, the items should express the aspects of the BAA dimensions in various ways by employing different words

and grammatical structures, while unnecessary wordiness to prevent compromising some psychometric properties (Furr, 2014).

These measures above were implemented to ensure that the scale items are easily understood, relatively clear, concise, simple and unambiguous, aimed at achieving an universal understanding by all respondents in the same fashion. As a result, a total of 45 candidate items were generated for the initial scale item pool, based on data from 32 semi-structured interviews and the multidisciplinary literature review. Appendix 4 provides detailed information on the wording, example quotes, and source of items for each of the BAA dimensions. The 45 initial scale items will undergo elimination and refinement through an expert judgement survey, as elaborated on in the following section.

## 5.4 Study 2b Expert Judgement Survey - Initial Scale Refinement

---

### 5.4.1 Survey Design

With the aim of initially purifying the scale items and ensuring their validity and allocation to the appropriate BAA dimension, the initial items underwent examination by a panel of academic experts (DeVellis, 2017; Mackenzie et al., 2011; Rossiter, 2002). Following the widely adopted guidelines for expert judgement in scale development (Hardesty and Bearden, 2004), academic experts were consulted to assess the initial BAA scale items for their face and content validity. Face validity refers to the extent to which a measure's items represent a proper sample of the theoretical content domain of a construct, while content validity is achieved when a measure reflects what it is intended to measure (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

A total of six marketing faculty members with experience in consumer research, scale development, or quantitative methods participated in the expert judgement survey. Consistent with the recommendations of Hardesty and Bearden (2004) and procedures adopted in prior studies (e.g. Freling et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2018; Price et al., 2018; Reich et al., 2018; Walsh and Beatty, 2007), the experts were asked to review the working definition of BAA and its dimensions at the time and then assign each item to the respective dimensions or to a category labelled "non-applicable/NA". Additionally, experts were asked to evaluate each item on its representativeness (the degree to which the item reflects and represents the dimension; 1 = "not representative," 2 = "somewhat representative," and 3 = "clearly representative") and quality (the degree to which the item is a good item that is understandable, well-written and not poorly written, confusing or double-barreled; 1 = "not good", 2 = "somewhat good", 3 = "good"). Experts were also given the option to provide



open-ended comments on each item and the general scale. The initial items were eliminated or refined based on the results of the expert judgement survey, as presented in the following section.

#### **5.4.2 Results of Expert Judgement Survey**

The items were refined based on responses from five/six judges who passed all three attention-check questions (Hardesty and Bearden, 2004). Out of 45 items, 28 were retained following the widely-adopted criteria suggested by Hardesty and Bearden (2004), requiring that at least 80% of judges (four out of five) correctly assigned the item to the hypothesised dimension, rated the item as “somewhat” or “clearly representative”, and rated the item as “somewhat good” or “good”. For the retained items, there is an 87.1% agreement (concordant responses/total responses) among the judges. Additionally, the Light’s Kappa, an extension of Cohen’s kappa for multiple raters and the arithmetic mean of kappa for all judge pairs (Light, 1971), is .81, indicating almost perfect inter-judge agreement (Landis and Koch, 1977). Based on the provided open-ended comments, two additional items were included, and slight modifications were made to a few items’ wordings (e.g. replacing “I could help improve” with “I (can) help improve...”; Devellis, 2017). Thus, a total of 30 items were included for further assessment, with 10, 9 and 11 items allocated to Dimension 1 (activist branding), Dimension 2 (brand transformative influence), and Dimension 3 (brand as consumer-empowering agent), respectively. Table 5-1 below provides detailed information on the elimination and revision of items based on the result of expert judgement.

Table 5-1. Initially Refined Scale Items Based on Expert Judgement (Study 2b)

<p><i>Activist branding</i>, as the first BAA dimension, refers to the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints.</p>	
1	*[The brand]’s products or services take [the issue] into account.
2	*[The brand] keeps its distance from [the issue]. (Reverse-worded, hereafter R)
3	*[The brand] campaigns about [the issue]. Original: [The brand] campaigns about [the issue] <u>in a good way</u> .
4	*[The brand] conveys messages about [the issue] in its adverts. Original: [The brand] conveys <u>good</u> messages about [the issue] in its adverts.
5	*[The brand]’s communications take [the issue] into account.
6	*[The brand]’s workplace policies are in line with my stance on [the issue]. Original: [The brand]’s <u>work</u> policies are in line with my stance on [the issue].
7	*[The brand] takes my side on [the issue]. (Influence Item)
8	*[The brand] supports activists campaigning on [the issue]. (Influence Item) Original: [The brand] supports activists <u>who share my stance on</u> [the issue].
9	*[The brand] declares support for my stance on [the issue]. (Influence Item)
10	*[The brand] displays products or slogans in (online) stores that reflect my stance on [the issue]. Original: [The brand] displays products or slogans in stores that <u>signal</u> my stance on [the issue].
Eliminated By Experts (8 Items)	
-	[The brand] advocates detrimental views of [the issue]. (R)
-	[The brand] cuts ties with activists who oppose my stance on [the issue].
-	[The brand]’s view of [the issue] is similar to mine.
-	[The brand] represents my view of [the issue].
-	[The brand] donates to non-profits that support [the issue].
-	[The brand] takes positive actions on [the issue].
-	[The brand] donates to political parties which share my views of [the issue].
<p>Note: Items with “*” included for further assessment are in bold. Revisions made to the initial items were underlined.</p>	

Table 5-1. (continue)

Brand transformative influence, as the second BAA dimension, pertains to the consumer's perception of a brand's capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues.	
11	*[The brand] has a positive influence on [the issue].
12	*Some good behaviours around [the issue] are motivated by [the brand].
13	*The situation surrounding [the issue] is improving due to the involvement of [the brand].
14	*[The brand] (can) draw(s) people's attention to [the issue].
	[The brand] <u>could</u> draw(s) people's attention to [the issue].
15	*[The brand] (can) help(s) more people understand that [the issue] is real and important.
	[The brand] <u>could</u> help more people understand that [the issue] is real and important.
16	*[The brand] has a negative influence on [the issue]. (R)
17	*Peoples' view of [the issue] is influenced positively by [the brand].
18	*[The brand] (can) help(s) people become aware of [the issue].
	[The brand] <u>could</u> help(s) people become aware of [the issue].
19	*[The brand] is important in normalising [the issue].
Eliminated By Experts (4 Items)	
-	When people view [the brand]'s adverts, they might think more about [the issue].
-	Positive messages about [the issue] reach more people with [the brand].
-	Some people are inspired by [the brand] to take my stance on [the issue].
-	When people view [the brand]'s adverts, they might talk more about [the issue].
Note: Items with "*" included for further assessment are in bold. Revisions made to the initial items were underlined.	

Table 5-1. (continue)

<i>Brand as consumer-empowering agent</i> concerns a brand's capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse and gain a sense of control.	
20	*[The brand] serves as a platform for me to help [the issue].
21	*I (can) positively contribute to [the issue] through [the brand]. Original: I <u>could</u> positively contribute to [the issue] through [the brand].
22	*I (can) make a positive difference in relation to [the issue] by supporting [the brand]. Original: I <u>could</u> make a positive difference in relation to [the issue] by supporting [the brand].
23	*I (can) have a say on [the issue] by buying [the brand]. Original: I <u>could</u> express my stance on [the issue] by buying [the brand].
24	*Supporting [the brand] is one of the ways I (can) help [the issue]. Original: Supporting [the brand] is one of the ways I help [the issue].
25	*Spending my money on [the brand] (can) help(s) [the issue]. Original: Spending my money on [the brand] <u>could</u> help [the issue].
26	*Boycotting [the brand] is one of the ways I (can) take my stance on [the issue]. (R) Original: Boycotting [the brand] is one of the ways I <u>could</u> take my stance on [the issue]. (R)
27	*I (can) help improve [the issue] if I choose [the brand] over other brands. Original: I <u>could</u> help improve [the issue] if I choose [the brand] over other brands.
28	*I (can) help [the issue] by buying [the brand]. I <u>could</u> support [the issue] by buying [the brand].
Suggested by Expert Judges	
29	*I (can) use [the brand] to feel a sense of control over [the issue].
30	*I (can) use [the brand] as a "vote" in relation to [the issue].
Eliminated By Experts (5 Items)	
-	Not buying [the brand] is what I can do for [the issue]. (R)
-	Boycotting [the brand] helps me vent my frustration with [the issue]. (R)
-	My purchase of [the brand] does matter to [the issue].
-	I could do good to [the issue] if I buy [the brand].
-	I could help improve [the issue] by avoiding [the brand]. (R)

## **5.5 Study 2c Exploratory Factor Analysis - Further Scale Refinement**

---

The initially refined scale items, based on the result of the expert judgement survey, were subjected to a series of exploratory factor analyses (EFA), following the procedure recommended by Churchill (1979). EFA was considered suitable as it allows for the verification of the hypothesised dimensionality and item allocation to respective dimensions, examination of psychometric properties of the items, and inspection of further scale refinement (Henson and Roberts, 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2003). The following sections provide details on the sampling, procedure, analysis, and results of the EFA survey.

### **5.5.1 Sampling**

The target population for this study was defined as consumers in politicised marketplaces. Politicised marketplaces were conceptualised as environments where brands and consumers interact with each other and other actors in the process of deliberating possible solutions to socio-political issues. In light of this conceptualisation, inclusion criteria for the sampling frame required consumers to have at least one socio-political issue of personal concern and the awareness of brand involvement in the issue. However, as it is largely unknown whether the majority of consumers would be aware of and/or able to recall instances where brands engage in socio-political issues (i.e. unknown sample size), it is particularly challenging to outline the target population with the characteristics listed above based on the sampling frame (Levy and Lemeshow, 1999). Therefore, the application of probability sampling, which relies on the existence of a sampling frame, does not seem to be feasible (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, the practical challenge of recruiting participants characterised by the aforementioned parameters motivates the use of non-probability sampling, that is the non-random selection of respondents based on an element of subjective judgement (Saunders

215

et al., 2015). In particular, this study adopted the quota sampling technique, which involves dividing the entire population into relevant strata, such as gender, age, class, political orientation etc, which can be thus chosen according to their relevance to the topic of interest (Yang and Banamah, 2014). Previous consumer research has successfully employed quota sampling to recruit survey participants based on the relevance of their characteristics to the research topic. For instance, Paharia and Swaminathan (2019) employed quota sampling and chose political orientation as the stratum to recruit large numbers of participants who are more liberal or conservative. In this line, participants with knowledge and experience of brand engagement with socio-political issues are believed to be more capable of providing meaningful patterns of co-variation during the EFA. Therefore, study 2c utilised quota sampling and pre-screened participants who had at least one socio-political issue of concern, were over 18 years old, and were aware of brand engagement with socio-political issues.

### **5.5.2 Survey Administration**

Consumer research has increasingly turned to Internet-based crowdsourcing platforms for data collection. For instance, in the 2015-2016 volume of the *Journal of Consumer Research*, over 40% of studies outsourced their questionnaires through crowdsourcing platforms, and this figure is expected to grow further (Goodman and Paolacci, 2017). These platforms enable researchers to recruit and compensate participants for completing online surveys hosted on third-party websites (e.g. Qualtrics; <https://www.qualtrics.com/uk/>). Researchers can specify participant criteria (e.g. age, gender, religions) and pre-screen the target population to determine eligibility for survey participation (Peer et al., 2017). Potential participants are free to choose and participate in surveys that match their characteristics. Researchers review the submissions and to approve or reject them based on predefined conditions, such as passing attention check (Peer et al., 2017). The use of online

crowdsourcing platforms for data collection offers several advantages, including reduced costs, flexibility, rapid response, and participant diversity (Hulland and Miller, 2018). These advantages are elaborated on below .

Firstly, crowdsourcing platforms can significantly reduce or even eliminate the administrative costs associated with commuting, marketing, recruitment, taxation and so on (Aguinis et al., 2021). allowing researchers to allocate their limited research budget more effectively towards compensating participants, increasing sample size, and conducting more studies (Hulland and Miller, 2018). Secondly, crowdsourcing platforms offer flexibility and speed in data collection, allowing researchers to quickly launch and administer surveys to a large pool of potential participants, and enabling participants to access and complete surveys online without physical attendance at a specific research setting (Hulland and Miller, 2018). Once released and made available, surveys can be accessed and completed by participants immediately online without physical attendance in a specific research setting (Goodman and Paolacci, 2017). Therefore, researchers can recruit a sufficient sample of participants (e.g. hundreds of participants) within a short period, typically within hours or days (Goodman and Paolacci, 2017). According to Aguinis et al. (2021), most surveys launched on crowdsourcing platforms are completed within 12 hours or less. Thus, the use of crowdsourcing platforms can accelerate the data collection process. Thirdly, crowdsourcing platforms provide access to a more diverse participant pool compared to traditional student or convenience samples (Gleibs, 2017; Hulland and Miller, 2018). Researchers can leverage this diversity by the using specific characteristics (e.g. gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, and ideology) as filters for participant recruitment, allowing the development of participant panels whose background or experience knowledge fit well with the research purpose (Aguinis et al., 2021; Goodman and Paolacci, 2017).

Nevertheless, the use of online crowdsourcing platforms is not without disadvantages. Although researchers can adopt specific characteristics to recruit target subpopulation of research interest, participants are free to accept or reject a survey assigned to them on crowdsourcing platforms. Their decisions are largely influenced by the payment rate of surveys along with survey length, attractiveness, and novelty (Goodman and Paolacci, 2017). In order to gain access to more appealing surveys, participants may purposefully misrepresent their characteristics to meet eligibility criteria (Aguinis et al., 2021). Indeed, individual misrepresentation, the deceitful claims of characteristics to be eligible to take part in and get paid for completing a survey (Wessling et al., 2017), is one of the greatest threats of online crowdsourcing platforms. By crossing data across studies, the estimated percentage of imposters range from 10% to 24% (Chandler and Paolacci, 2017; Wessling et al., 2017). For instance, a study found that 17% of the participants who self-described as over-50 smokers in a lung cancer study also claimed to be under-35 athletes to qualify as participants in another study (Hulland and Miller, 2018). Even if the overall percentage of imposters is relatively small, studies that target rare subpopulations (e.g. loyal customers of a specific luxury brand) are particularly vulnerable towards individual misrepresentation. In the unfortunate case of high misrepresentation rate, the systematic difference in response pattern between eligible and ineligible participants might be a threat to the validity of a study (Goodman and Paolacci, 2017).

Another concern when using online crowdsourcing platforms is the lack of participant naivety. Due to the high demand for research participation on these platforms, highly active participants might have become professional survey-takers who are familiar with research materials (e.g. measures, stimuli) and survey designs (Goodman and Paolacci, 2017; Peer et al., 2017). Recent research suggests that a high rate of participant non-naivety has the



potential to affect the validity of research instruments and reduce the effect sizes of findings (Chandler et al., 2014). However, further evidence is needed to establish the effect of non-naivety (Aguinis et al., 2021).

Another disadvantage is the potential inattention of participants recruited from online crowdsourcing platforms. Since researchers can not monitor the participation process, crowdsourced participants often complete surveys in distracting environments and tend to rush through the surveys to maximise efficiency. As a result, many participants may pay less attention to the survey instructions and questions compared to student samples, due to factors such as being in conversations, being distracted by electronic devices, and internet surfing (Aguinis et al., 2021). Although inattentive responses can be identified through attention check questions, high elimination rates due to failing attention checks raise concern about data quality (Thomas and Clifford, 2017).

To mitigate the aforementioned disadvantages of crowdsourcing platforms, the choice of appropriate platform is crucial for data collection (Peer et al., 2017). Although *Amazon Mechanical Turk* (MTurk; <https://www.mturk.com/>) is widely used, it has been criticised for its high level of non-naivety, inattention, and individual misrepresentation among participants (Hulland and Miller, 2018; Peer et al., 2017). On the other hand, platforms specifically designed for academic research, such as *Prolific Academic* (<https://www.prolific.co/>) and *CrowdFlower* (<https://www.crowdfLOWER.com>), offer better alternatives. In comparative studies, Prolific Academic demonstrated superior data quality, including low dropout rates, fast response rates, high pass rates on attention check questions, higher participant naivety, and lower levels of dishonesty (Peer et al., 2017; Aguinis et al., 2021). Therefore, in line with recent consume research (e.g. Dunn et al., 2020; Nunes et al., 2021; Rodas et al., 2021; Sipila

et al., 2021), survey studies in the quantitative phase used Prolific Academic for participant recruitment participants, who are willing to participate in a series of online surveys in exchange for compensation. At the beginning of the surveys, participants were asked to read the participant information sheet (in Appendix 13) and sign the consent form (in Appendix 14).

### **5.5.3 Survey Design and Procedure**

In the pre-screen survey ( $n = 1,321$ ), participants were recruited through Prolific Academic. They were asked to name a socio-political issue most important to them and then asked the pre-screen question: “Do you know a brand that gets involved in the issue you put down?” Out of the participants, 608 individuals who responded “Yes” to the pre-screen question and successfully named a valid issue were deemed eligible for the EFA survey and invited to participate. Others were disqualified from taking the EFA survey and were compensated for their participation in the pre-screen task. Appendix 3 presents the design of the pre-screen survey.

In the EFA survey ( $n = 355$ ), participants were asked to specify a socio-political issue of the most personal importance and name a brand that engages with that issue. Keeping the named brand in mind, they were asked to rate 30 BAA items and two attention-check questions on a 7-point likert scale. Previous studies have shown that the order of item questions can influence consumers’ end-of-sequence choice (e.g. Philp and Mantonakis, 2020; Tzeng and Huang, 2011). To minimise potential order effects, the BAA scale items were presented in random order, following widely-adopted recommendations (Groves et al., 2004; Tourangeau et al., 2000). Appendix 5 presents the design of the EFA survey.

### 5.5.4 Data Preparation

To ensure data quality (Chandler et al., 2014; Hulland and Miller, 2018; Peer et al., 2017), 20 responses in the EFA survey were excluded from further analysis due to failure in passing the attention-check questions or not naming a valid brand. Following the recommendations by Hair et al. (2013), Mahalanobis distance was examined to determine outliers. Ten cases (Table 5-2) were identified as both univariate ( $z$ -score exceeding  $\pm 4/3$ ) and multivariate outliers (Mahalanobis  $D(30) > 59.7, p < .001$ ) and were subsequently removed (Hair et al., 2013). The final sample of the EFA survey comprises 325 responses.

Table 5-2. Examination of Outliers (Study 2c)

Univariate and Multivariate Outlier Detection Results		
Univariate Outliers		Multivariate Outliers
Cases with Standardised Value Exceeding $\pm 4$		Cases with Mahalanobis $D(30) > 59.7 (p < 0.01)$
Branding 1(2)	38, 46, 302	36, 65*, 67, 125, 167,
Branding 5	94, 263, 324, 329, 334	170*, 176, 177*, 179,
Influence 4	139, 170, 222, 270, 297, 298, 302, 316, 327	222*, 265, 296, 302*, 309,
Influence 5	65, 135, 170, 177, 313, 314, 324, 327, 328, 335	313*, 315, 328*, 329*,
Influence 8	170, 297, 313, 314, 327, 328 329, 330	330*, 334, 335*
Other items	No cases detected	
* Cases identified as both univariate and multivariate outliers. Considering the number of 30 item variables, bivariate methods were not used considering the overwhelming number of 900 graphs to interpret.		

## 5.5.5 Data Analysis and Results

### 5.5.5.1 Factorability

Prior to conducting the EFA, assessment should be conducted on factorability, which concerns the sampling adequacy that there are some degree of correlations among items that allow for the identification of coherent factors (Hair et al., 2013). Thus, it indicates the extent to which a correlation matrix actually contains factors or simply chance correlations between a small subset of variables (Worthington and Whittaker, 2006). The factorability of the data was assessed using Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity (Hair et al., 2013). Bartlett’s chi-square yield a significant result ( $\chi^2(435) = 7485.752$ ), and KMO value exceeded the recommended threshold of .70 (KMO = .964; Hair et al., 2013; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012), indicating that the correlation matrix was “marvellous” for principal axis analysis (Kaiser, 1974).

### 5.5.5.2 Factor Extraction

Factor extraction was performed to identify the dimensionality of the BAA scale items (Costello and Osborne, 2005). The 30 BAA items, refined through the expert judgement survey, were subject to EFA, specifically principal axis factoring with Promax rotation (oblique rotation). Principal axis factoring was chosen as it enables the identification of the simplest factor structure that accounts for the most common variance (correlation) while excluding variable-specific variance (Walsh and Beatty, 2007). Additionally, as it is expected that the three BAA dimensions correlate with each other, Promax rotation (oblique rotation) was employed to allows for such inter-factor correlations (Netemeyer et al., 2003), consistent with prior scale-development studies (e.g. Golossenko et al., 2020; Price et al., 2018; Walsh and Beatty, 2007).

During the EFA, eigenvalues were examined to determine the variances of the latent variables derived from the correlation matrix (Henson and Roberts, 2006). Each latent variable, or factor, has an associated eigenvalue, with higher eigenvalues indicating greater amounts of variance explained by the factor (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). The initial EFA (Table 5-3) revealed four factors with eigenvalues  $> 1$  (Kim and Mueller, 1978), of which the first three factors explained more than 5% of total variance each, explaining a cumulative 62.21% of the total variance explained ( $> 60\%$ ), indicating strong factors (Hair et al., 2013).

Table 5-3. Examination of Eigenvalues (Study 2c)

Initial Eigenvalues				Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings		
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.732	58.662	58.662	11.429	57.144	57.144
2	1.516	7.581	66.242	1.199	5.995	63.140
3	1.344	6.718	72.961	1.008	5.040	68.180
4	.596	2.980	75.941			
5	.568	2.839	78.780			
6	.481	2.407	81.187			
7	.442	2.208	83.394			
8	.387	1.935	85.329			
9	.372	1.859	87.188			
10	.348	1.738	88.926			
11	.318	1.588	90.513			
12	.286	1.429	91.942			
13	.263	1.316	93.259			
14	.249	1.245	94.503			
15	.236	1.181	95.684			
16	.222	1.109	96.794			
17	.219	1.094	97.887			
18	.173	.864	98.751			
19	.126	.632	99.383			
20	.123	.617	100			

### 5.5.5.3 Item Examination

Following the factor extraction, scale items underwent examination for potential elimination based on psychometric properties, including inter-item correlations, item-to-total correlations and communality values. A cutoff criteria of .40 for factor loadings and cross-loadings and .50 for communality (Hair et al., 2013) was adopted for this examination. The initial EFA revealed seven items that had lower communality ( $< 0.5$ ) and two items that had low factor loading ( $< 0.4$ ; Hair et al., 2013). These items were subjected to removal on a one-by-one basis, and the resulting changes in the factorial solution were examined following the item removal. The item-removal procedure resulted in a three-factor solution with a significant chi-square value for the Bartlett's test of Sphericity ( $\chi^2(190) = 5685.58, p < 0.01$ ) and a KMO value of 0.963, indicating "mavellous" factorability (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). The three factors accounted for 72.961% of the variance (all with an Eigenvalue  $> 1$ ) consisting of 20 items (all with an communality  $> 0.5$  and factor loading  $> 0.4$ ), see Table 5-4.

Table 5-4. Results of Factor Extraction with Principal Axis Factoring (Study 2c)

Items	Factor		
	1	2	3
Agent 9	1		
Agent 6	.911		
Agent 4	.868		
Agent 2	.858		
Agent 5	.829		
Agent 3	.823		
Agent 8	.819		
Agent 10	.734		
Agent 11	.659		
Branding 7*		.893	
Branding 9*		.888	
Influence 1		.716	
Influence 5		.690	
Influence 7		.584	
Influence 2		.527	
Branding 4			.950
Branding 3			.838
Branding 5			.602
Branding 10			.477
Branding 1			.477

\*Items reclassified as Influence items in the subsequent analyses



The remaining items were then examined to check if they loaded on the hypothesised dimensions of BAA: first dimension (activist branding), second dimension (brand transformative influence), and third dimension (brand as consumer-empowering agent). Two branding items, branding 7 (“the brand takes my side on the issue”) and branding 9 (“the brand declared support for my stance on the issue”), exhibited low factor loadings on the hypothesised activist branding dimension but consistently high loadings ( $> 0.5$ ) on the influence dimension (branding 7 = .893 and branding 9 = .888; see Table 5-4). This pattern suggests that these two items, along with other influence items (e.g. “the brand has a positive influence on the issue”), are confounded by the alignment between the brand's influence and one's expectation of issue development. In other words, consumers who perceive the brand's influence as aligning with their expectations are more likely to believe that the brand shares their stance and has a positive influence on the issue. This potential explanation is supported by the clustering of the remaining branding items, which do not reflect valence but pertain to different types of brand activities (e.g. “the brand campaigns about the issue” “the brand conveys messages about the issue in its adverts”), within the branding dimension. Consequently, these two items were reclassified as influence items. The 18 out of 20 remaining items all loaded as expected on their hypothesised dimensions.

#### 5.5.5.4 Reliability

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the factors, and all factors demonstrated high Cronbach's alpha values ( $\alpha = .87$  for Branding,  $\alpha = .91$  for Influence, and  $\alpha = 0.96$  for Agent), surpassing the threshold of .70 suggested by Nunnally (1978) and the more conservative threshold of .80 (Clark and Watson, 1995). Additionally, the inspection of scree plot (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965) confirmed the extraction of three factors, as presented in Figure 5-1 and Table 5-5, respectively.

Figure 5-2. Result of Scree Plot (Study 2c)

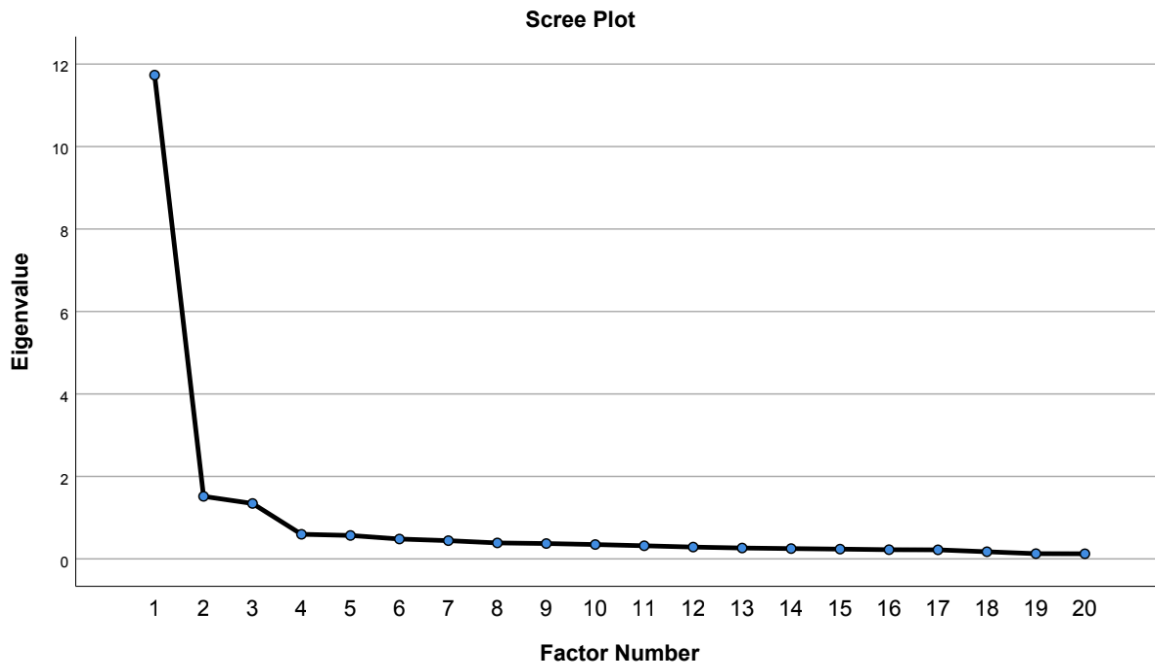


Table 5-5. Results of Parallel Analysis with Principal Axis (Study 2c)

Eigenvalues		
Root	Means	Percentile
1	.711	.800
2	.617	.672
3	.554	.610
4	.499	.549
5	.449	.489
6	.402	.438
7	.357	.397
8	.315	.352
9	.276	.315

## 5.6 Chapter 5 Concluding Remarks

---

This chapter focused on the development and refinement of the BAA scale. Initially, 45 initial scale items were generated based on the semi-structured interviews conducted during the qualitative phase, along with input from a multidisciplinary literature review. Subsequently, the judgement of five academic experts in Study 2a led to the refinement of the scale to 30 items. Data collected from consumers who were attentive to brand engagement with socio-political issues was then subjected to a series of EFAs using the refined 30 items. As a result, 20 items with adequate psychometric properties remained, affirming the hypothesised three-dimensional structure of the BAA. Furthermore, the BAA scale and its factors exhibited satisfactory reliability, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha values. These scale items will be further examined through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), as detailed in the next chapter.

# **Chapter 6: Quantitative Phase - Study 3 Scale Validation**

## **6.1 Overview of Chapter 6**

---

This chapter aims to further validate the BAA scale as part of the scale development process. The chapter contains four sections including overview, Study 3a, Study 3b, and concluding remarks. The objectives of this Study 3a were as follows: 1) to further purify the scale; 2) to validate the second-order three-factor structure of the BAA scale; 3) to establish convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity of the scale; and 4) to establish known-group validity of the scale. Subsequently, Study 3b aims to assess the test-retest reliability of the BAA scale. The validated scale will be utilised in model testing (Study 4) as part of the theory development process.

## 6.2 Study 3a Confirmatory Factor Analysis- Scale Purification and Validation

---

### 6.2.1 Sample, Procedure and Measures

For Study 3a, a total of 804 participants from the United Kingdom were recruited through *Prolific Academic* (2023; <https://www.prolific.co/>) to participate in an online survey. During the study, participants were asked to identify a socio-political issue of personal importance. Based on Hydock et al. (2020), 57% of the nominated issues were categorised as more divisive, while 43% were considered less divisive. Participants were then required to indicate whether they were aware of a commercial brand that is involved in the issue they named. The results showed that 53% of participants were aware, while 47% were unaware of such brands. Subsequently, participants who indicated awareness (versus unawareness) were asked to nominate and evaluate a brand that gets (versus does not get) involved in the issue. They were then asked to respond to the 20 BAA items that survived from the EFA study, along with established measures of CSR (Lichtenstein et al., 2004), brand symbolic attributes (Malär et al., 2011), brand hedonic attributes (Voss et al., 2003) to examine the discriminant validity of the BAA scale. Additionally, they responded to measures—brand attitude (Holbrook and Batra, 1987), brand affect (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), positive Word of Mouth (WoM; Walsh and Beatty, 2007), purchase intention (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021)—for the subsequent examination of the predictive validity of the BAA scale. These established measures were selected because they align closely with the conceptualisation of the constructs adopted in this thesis. Further, the measures have been extensively applied and proven to be valid and reliable in previous studies. Appendix 6 contains a comprehensive list of definitions, scale items, and alphas for the established measures. Participants answered the item questions along a 7-point Likert or semantic scale. The survey also included

231

demographic questions (i.e. gender, age and education), two marker variables (“blue is my favourite colour” and social desirability; Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021), three attention-check questions, and a condition-check question (to what extent does this brand get involved in the issue?). Appendix 7 presents the design of the CFA survey. 93 participants (11.56%) who failed any of the attention-check or condition-check questions or did not provide a valid issue or a commercial brand were excluded from the analyses. As a result, the final sample for analysis consisted of 711 participants (female 50%, modal age = 35-44).

The normality testing was performed by calculating the absolute value of the skewness and kurtosis for each item variable. The results indicated that the skewness values ( $-1.34 < \text{all skewness values} < 0.48$ ) and kurtosis values ( $-1.36 < \text{all kurtosis values} < 0.72$ ) fell within the range of  $\pm 3$  and  $\pm 10$ , respectively, indicating a normal distribution of the data (Hair et al., 2013). No cases were determined as both univariate ( $z$ -score exceeding  $\pm 4$ ) and multivariate outliers (Mahalanobis  $D(49) > 85.35$ ,  $p < .01$ ; Hair et al., 2013).

### **6.2.2 Examining Non-Response Bias and Common Method Variance**

To investigate potential non-response bias, Armstrong and Overton’s (1977) comparison of early versus late respondents was conducted. As the questionnaires were both administered and collected online on the same day, late respondents were defined as the latter half of the respondents (Lindner et al., 2001). An independent  $t$ -test was employed to compare early and late respondents for the research variables. As shown in Appendix 15, the results revealed no significant differences in the variables between the two groups, indicating that the data does not suffer from a significant non-response bias.

Common method variance biases can be defined as “a systematic error variance that stems

from a common method used to measure the constructs of the study”, the occurrence of which “can affect the reliability and validity of the empirical results” (Kock et al., 2021; p. 104330). The survey was designed to minimise potential common method variance biases a priori following recommendations by MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012) and Podsakoff et al., (2012). Consistent with previous studies (e.g. Price et al., 2018; Oberecker and Diamantopoulos, 2011), outcome-related constructs (e.g. brand attitude) were displayed before evaluation-related (e.g. BAA and CSR) to avoid priming effects. Additionally, the order of constructs and items within constructs were randomised across participants.

Consistent with previous studies (e.g. Price et al., 2018; Warren et al., 2019), the CFA marker variable technique recommended by Williams et al. (2010) was employed, considering its superiority over Harman’s one-factor test (Baumgartner et al., 2021). Potential common method variance biases were assessed by considering whether and the extent to which the substantive correlations between constructs of interest are significantly biased by either of the marker variables (Blue and Social Desirability). For each of the two marker variables, a CFA model, a baseline model, and Method-U, Method-C, Method-R models were performed (for a detailed description and explanation of analyses, see Williams et al., 2010; for detailed results of model comparison tests see Table 6-1).

The CFA models (models where marker variable loadings on the indicators of the substantive variables were fixed to zero) showed that neither marker variables correlated significantly or at a meaningful high level ( $r \geq |.5|$ ) with any of the substantive variables i.e. factors representing the variables of interest (e.g. BAA, brand attitude, or purchase intention) . The chi-square difference test indicated no significant difference between the baseline models (models identical to CFA models but with marker variable

loadings on substantive latent variables forced to zero, and the variances of marker variable (d) fixed at non-zero values obtained from the initial CFA model) and the Method-C models (models identical to baseline models, but the marker variable loadings on substantive factors were constrained to be equal),  $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3.65$ ;  $.1 < 3.84$ , n.s (with the Blue; Social Desirability marker variable). This means that the null hypothesis can not be rejected that the method factor loadings (assumed to be equal) associated with the marker variable were not related to each of the substantive indicators. In other words, this finding supports the restriction of the marker variable loadings to zero in the baseline models. Therefore, these comparisons between the baseline and Method-C models indicate that markers were not significantly related to any of the indicators of the substantial constructs, the constructs of interest in this study (Williams et al., 2010).

Subsequently, significant differences were observed between the Method-C models and Method-U models (models identical to the Method-C models, except that the marker variable loadings on substantive factors were not constrained),  $\Delta\chi^2(38) = 58.39$ ;  $66.64 > 53.38$ , significant (with the Blue; Social Desirability marker variable). This result indicates that the null hypothesis of equal marker variable loadings can be rejected, supporting the rejection of equal restrictions in the Method-C Models. In sum, the comparison between the Method-C model and Method-U model indicates that the effect of the marker variables on the substantial variables are not equal. The Method-U Model, therefore, was considered the most appropriate for accounting for marker variance on substantive indicators (Williams et al., 2010).

Finally, the Method-U models were compared to the Method-R models (models identical to the Method-U models, except that the correlations between substantive variables were



constrained to their values obtained from the Baseline Model) to assess whether correlations between substantive variables were significantly biased by common method variance effects. The chi-square difference tests showed no significant differences,  $\Delta\chi^2(28) = .14; 0 < 56.89$ , n. s (with Blue Marker; Social Desirability Marker), indicating that all correlations between substantive variables remained the same with and without considering the marker variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that the correlations between substantive variables were not significantly biased by common method variance effects (Williams et al., 2010).

Table 6-1. Model Comparison Tests with Marker Variables (Study 3a)

<b>Model</b>	<b><math>X^2</math></b>	<b><i>df</i></b>	<b>CFI</b>
1. CFA	2932.74; 4126.42	704	.95; .92
2. Baseline	2947.50; 4139.76	712	.94; .92
3. Method-C	2943.85; 4139.66	711	.94; .92
4. Method-U	2885.46; 4073.02	673	.95; .92
5. Method-RU	2885.60; 4073.02	701	.95; .92
<b>Chi-Square Model Comparison Tests</b>			
<b><math>\Delta</math>Model</b>	<b><math>\Delta X^2</math></b>	<b><math>\Delta df</math></b>	<b>Chi-Square Critical Value;</b>
Baseline vs. Method-C	3.65; .1	1	3.841
Baseline vs. Method-U	62.03*; 66.73*	37	52.19
Method-C vs. Method-U	58.39*; 66.64*	38	53.38
Method-U vs. Method-R	.14; 0	28	56.89
*Significance at $p < .001$ . Results with the blue marker are displayed before the colons, while results with the social desirability marker are displayed after the colons.			

### 6.2.3 Scale Purification

Using AMOS 27, the BAA measurement model was fitted with the second-order BAA, predicting the three first-order factors of Branding, Influence, and Agent, with the 20 items derived from the EFA. Three samples were used: aware ( $n = 378$ ), more divisive ( $n = 405$ ), and pooled ( $n = 711$ ). The second-order three-factor CFA demonstrated high factor loadings (all above .60; DeVellis, 2017; see Table 6-2 for factor loadings, means, and SDs), good reliability and convergent validity (see Table 6-3), and good model fit with respect to various indices (Hu and Bentler, 1999; see Table 6-6; Table 6-7; Table 6-8), though further improvements were possible (e.g. respective RMSEA = .084; .077; .066, see Table 6-6; Table 6-7; Table 6-8).

Through an iterative process involving the inspection of items with relatively lower factor loading for their domain representativeness and modification indices ( $> 30$ ; Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Bottger et al., 2017), seven items were eliminated. The remaining 13 items (three for Branding; four for Influence; six for Agent) underwent another CFA, resulting in improved values across the three samples with high factor loadings (see Table 6-4), reliability and convergent validity (see Table 6-5), and good model fit (see Table 6-6; Table 6-7; Table 6-8).

Table 6-2. Factor Loadings, Mean and Standardised Deviation (20 Items; Study 3a)

Measurement Model Factors and Items	Factor Loading			Mean			Standardised Deviation		
	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711
<i>Activist Branding</i> (5 Items)	.81	.89	.93	5.01	3.44	3.66	1.10	1.83	1.80
1. This brand's products or services take the issue into account.*	.72	.89	.90	5.23	3.60	3.87	1.44	2.06	2
2. This brand campaigns about the issue.	.61	.88	.88	4.94	3.40	3.5	1.4	2.08	1.98
3. This brand conveys messages about the issue in its adverts.*	.69	.87	.89	4.94	3.36	3.6	1.52	2.03	2
4. This brand's communications take the issue into account.*	.70	.91	.90	5.34	3.69	3.9	1.2	2.06	1.97
5. This brand displays products or slogans in (online) stores that reflect my stance on the issue.	.75	.82	.86	4.60	3.15	3.4	1.63	1.95	1.9
Measurement Model Factors and Items	Factor Loading			Mean			Standardised Deviation		
Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	
<i>Brand Transformative Influence</i> (6 Items)	.93	.98	.99	4.99	3.59	3.79	1.31	1.83	1.76
1. This brand takes my side on the issue.	.82	.87	.86	5.14	3.83	3.96	1.65	2.08	1.96
2. This brand declares support for my stance on the issue.*	.80	.93	.92	5.08	3.50	3.69	1.61	2.18	2.08
3. This brand has a positive influence on the issue.*	.91	.95	.95	5.05	3.47	3.71	1.54	2.06	2
4. Some good behaviours around the issue are motivated by this brand.*	.79	.88	.87	4.80	3.49	3.72	1.50	1.87	1.85
5. This brand (can) help(s) more people understand that the issue is real and important.*	.81	.82	.81	5.11	3.85	4.04	1.40	2.05	1.93
6. Peoples' view of the issue is influenced positively by this brand.	.80	.89	.89	4.74	3.42	3.63	1.40	1.86	1.81

\*Items were included in the reduced 13-item BAA scale. All factor loadings are significant at the  $p < .001$  level.

Table 6-2. (continue)

Measurement Model Factors and Items	Factor Loading			Mean			Standardised Deviation		
	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711
<i>Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent (9 Items)</i>	.91	.94	.95	4.33	3.01	3.27	1.50	1.76	1.73
1. This brand serves as a platform for me to help the issue.*	.86	.92	.90	4.12	2.90	3.10	1.66	1.83	1.80
2. I (can) positively contribute to the issue through this brand.*	.92	.95	.94	4.41	3.06	3.30	1.67	1.89	1.87
3. I (can) make a positive difference in relation to the issue by supporting this brand.*	.92	.95	.95	4.53	3.18	3.40	1.63	1.93	1.9
4. I (can) have a say on the issue by buying this brand.	.82	.89	.85	4.2	3.00	3.26	1.65	1.89	1.84
5. Supporting this brand is one of the ways I (can) help the issue.*	.93	.95	.95	4.46	3.05	3.3	1.76	1.97	1.95
6. Spending my money on this brand (can) help(s) the issue.	.89	.92	.92	4.35	2.99	3.22	1.62	1.81	1.84
7. I (can) help improve the issue if I choose this brand over other brands.*	.87	.93	.92	4.42	3.04	3.31	1.72	1.90	1.89
8. I (can) help the issue by buying this brand.*	.92	.93	.93	4.40	3.06	3.29	1.74	1.95	1.93
9. I (can) use this brand to feel a sense of control over the issue.	.81	.883	.89	4.10	2.84	3.13	1.62	1.77	1.78
*Items were included in the reduced 13-item BAA scale. All factor loadings are significant at the $p < .001$ level.									

Table 6-3. Convergent Validity and Reliability (20 Items; Study 3a)

<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Aware n = 378</b>	<b>More Divisive n = 405</b>	<b>Pooled n =711</b>
Structural Coefficients (Betas; > .7)	Branding → BAA	.81	.89	.93
	Influence → BAA	.93	.98	.99
	Agent → BAA	.91	.94	.95
Criterion Reliability (CR; > .7)	Branding	.82	.94	.95
	Influence	.93	.96	.96
	Agent	.97	.98	.98
	Second-Order BAA	.92	.96	.97
Average Variance Extracted (AVE; > .5)	Branding	.48*	.76	.79
	Influence	.70	.79	.78
	Agent	.78	.86	.84
	Second-Order BAA	.78	.88	.92
Cronbach's Alpha (CA; > .7)	Branding	.95	.94	.95
	Influence	.96	.96	.96
	Agent	.98	.98	.98
	Second-Order BAA	.97	.98	.98

All factor loadings are significant at the  $p < .001$  level. \*Value falls below the recommended threshold.

Table 6-4. Factor Loadings, Mean and Standardised Deviation (13 Items; Study 3a)

Measurement Model Factors and Items	Factor Loading			Mean			Standardised Deviation		
	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711
<b>Activist Branding</b> (3 Items)	.75	.88	.91	5.17	3.55	3.79	1.14	1.90	1.86
1. This brand's products or services take the issue into account.*	.78	.90	.90	5.23	3.60	3.87	1.44	2.06	2
3. This brand conveys messages about the issue in its adverts.*	.62	.84	.88	4.94	3.36	3.60	1.52	2.03	2
4. This brand's communications take the issue into account.*	.74	.92	.91	5.34	3.69	3.90	1.20	2.06	1.97
<b>Brand Transformative Influence</b> (4 Items)	.96	.99	.99	5	3.58	3.79	1.34	1.88	1.8
2. This brand declares support for my stance on the issue.*	.94	.93	.91	5.08	3.50	3.69	1.61	2.18	2.08
3. This brand has a positive influence on the issue.*	.91	.95	.95	5.05	3.47	3.71	1.54	2.06	2
4. Some good behaviours around the issue are motivated by this brand.*	.81	.88	.88	4.80	3.49	3.72	1.50	1.87	1.85
5. This brand (can) help(s) more people understand that the issue is real and important.*	.81	.82	.81	5.11	3.85	4.04	1.40	2.05	1.93
All the correlations are significant at the $p < .001$ level.									

Table 6-4. (continue)

Measurement Model Factors and Items	Factor Loading			Mean			Standardised Deviation		
	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711	Aware <i>n</i> = 378	Divisive <i>n</i> = 405	Pooled <i>n</i> = 711
<b>Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent</b> (6 Items)	.89	.94	.94	4.39	3.05	3.30	1.56	1.81	1.78
1. This brand serves as a platform for me to help the issue.*	.86	.92	.90	4.12	2.90	3.10	1.66	1.83	1.80
2. I (can) positively contribute to the issue through this brand.*	.92	.95	.94	4.41	3.06	3.30	1.67	1.89	1.87
3. I (can) make a positive difference in relation to the issue by supporting this brand.*	.92	.95	.95	4.53	3.18	3.40	1.63	1.93	1.90
5. Supporting this brand is one of the ways I (can) help the issue.*	.93	.95	.95	4.46	3.05	3.30	1.76	1.97	1.95
7. I (can) help improve the issue if I choose this brand over other brands.*	.87	.93	.92	4.42	3.04	3.31	1.72	1.90	1.89
8. I (can) help the issue by buying this brand.*	.92	.93	.93	4.40	3.06	3.29	1.74	1.95	1.93
All the correlations are significant at the $p < .001$ level.									



Table 6-5. Convergent Validity and Reliability (13 Items, Study 3a)

<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Aware <i>n</i> = 378</b>	<b>More Divisive <i>n</i> = 405</b>	<b>Pooled <i>n</i> =711</b>
Structural Coefficients (Betas; > .70)	Branding → BAA	.75	.88	.91
	Agent → BAA	.89	.93	.94
	Influence → BAA	.96	.99	.99
Criterion Reliability (CR; > .70)	Branding	.76	.92	.93
	Agent	.96	.98	.98
	Influence	.91	.94	.94
	Second-Order BAA	.90	.95	.97
Average Variance Extracted (AVE; > .50)	Branding	.52	.79	.81
	Agent	.82	.88	.87
	Influence	.71	.80	.79
	Second-Order BAA	.75	.87	.90
Cronbach's Alpha (CA; > .70)	Branding	.76	.92	.93
	Agent	.96	.98	.98
	Influence	.91	.94	.94
	Second-Order BAA	.95	.98	.98

#### 6.2.4 Validation of Second-Order Three-Factor Structure

Using the aware ( $n = 378$ ), more divisive ( $n = 405$ ) and pooled ( $n = 711$ ) samples, alternative models were compared to evaluate the second-order structure of the 13-items BAA scale. The second-order three-factor model was contrasted with alternative models consisting of a model in which all items loaded on the single factor and the series of models, combining different pairs of the constructs.

The one-factor and two-factor factor models demonstrated poor fit ( $\chi^2/df > 5$ ; RMSEA  $> .08$ ; Hu and Bentler, 1999), while the three-factor model does exhibit superior and the best fit based on various fit indices across the three samples (Table 6-6, Table 6-7, and Table 6-8). Additionally, the comparison between the second-order three-factor model and the three-factor correlated model showed that the second-order structure did not compromise the fit of the three-factor model ( $\Delta CFI < .01$ ; Cheung and Rensvold, 2002). The second-order model demonstrated good convergent validity and internal consistency, as indicated by high second-order factor loadings ( $> .7$ ;  $p < .001$ ; DeVellis, 2017), composite reliability (CR;  $> .7$ ; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), average variance extracted (AVE;  $> .5$ ; Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and Cronbach's Alpha (CA;  $> .7$ ; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) of the second-order factor across the three samples. These results provide sufficient evidence for the second-order structure of the BAA model comprising three factors.

Table 6-6. Model Fit Indices and Model Comparison (Aware Sample; Study 3a)

Model Comparison		Aware, <i>n</i> = 378								
Model	Merged Factors	<i>X</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>df</i>	<i>X</i> <sup>2</sup> / <i>df</i>	NFI	CFI	TLI	PNFI	RMSEA	SRMR
<b>With Full 20 Items</b> (Five Items for Branding; Nine Items for Agent; Six Items for Influence)										
Second-Order three-factor model	-	614.6	167	3.68	.92	.94	.93	.81	.084	.058
<b>With 13 Remained Items</b> (Three Items for Actor; Six Items for Agent; Four Items for Influence)										
<i>Second-Order three-factor model</i>	-	159.17	62	2.57	.97	.98	.97	.77	.065	.032
Three-factor correlated model	-	159.17	62	2.57	.97	.98	.97	.77	.065	.032
Second-order two-factor model	Branding and Agent	-	64	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Second-order two-factor model	Branding and Influence	-	64	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Second-order two-factor model	Agent and Influence	435.82	64	6.81*	.91	.92	.90	.74	.124*	.055
1 Factor	All	566.11	65	8.71*	.88	.89	.87	.73	.143*	.071

\*Values fall below or above the recommended threshold.

Table 6-7. Model Fit Indices and Model Comparison (More Divisive Sample; Study 3a)

Model Comparison		More Divisive, <i>n</i> = 405								
Model	Merged Factors	<i>X</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>df</i>	<i>X</i> <sup>2</sup> / <i>df</i>	NFI	CFI	TLI	PNFI	RMSEA	SRMR
<b>With Full 20 Items</b> (Five Items for Actor; Nine Items for Agent; Six Items for Influence)										
Second-Order three-factor model	-	570.23	167	3.42	.95	.97	.96	.84	.077	.037
<b>With 13 Remained Items</b> (Three Items for Branding; Six Items for Agent; Four Items for Influence)										
<i>Second-Order three-factor model</i>	-	95.92	62	1.55	.99	1	.99	.78	.037	.015
Three-factor correlated model	-	95.92	62	1.55	.99	1	.99	.78	.037	.015
Second-order two-factor model	Branding and Agent	457.02	64	7.14*	.94	.95	.93	.77	.123*	.047
Second-order two-factor model	Branding and Influence	309.02	64	4.83	.96	.97	.96	.79	.097*	.030
Second-order two-factor model	Agent and Influence	391.44	64	6.12*	.95	.95	.94	.78	.113*	.033
1 Factor	All	671.34	65	10.33*	.91	.92	.90	.76	.152*	.047

\*Values fall above the recommended threshold.

Table 6-8. Model Fit Indices and Model Comparison (Pooled Sample; Study 3a)

Model Comparison		Pooled, <i>n</i> = 711								
Model	Merged Factors	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2/df$	NFI	CFI	TLI	PNFI	RMSEA	SRMR
<b>With Full 20 Items</b> (Five Items for Branding; Nine Items for Agent; Six Items for Influence)										
Second-Order three-factor model	-	677.9	167	4.06	.97	.97	.97	.95	.066	.026
<b>With 13 Remained Items</b> (Three Items for Actor; Six Items for Agent; Four Items for Influence)										
<i>Second-Order three-factor model</i>	-	149.35	62	2.41	.99	.99	.99	.79	.045	.013
Three-factor correlated model	-	149.35	62	2.41	.99	.99	.99	.79	.045	.013
Second-order two-factor model	Branding and Agent	761.34	64	11.9*	.94	.94	.93	.77	.124*	.040
Second-order two-factor model	Branding and Influence	406.86	64	6.36*	.97	.97	.97	.79	.087*	.023
Second-order two-factor model	Agent and Influence	569.8	64	8.9*	.95	.96	.95	.78	.106*	.029
1 Factor	All	989.36	65	15.22*	.92	.93	.91	.77	.142*	.039

\*Values fall above the recommended threshold.

### 6.2.5 Discriminant, Predictive, and Known-Group Validity

The discriminant, predictive, and known-group validity of the BAA were assessed using the aware ( $n = 378$ ), more divisive ( $n = 405$ ) and pooled ( $n = 711$ ) samples. The discriminant validity concerns whether a newly-developed scale diverges from other existing scales whose underlying construct is not supposed to be closely related to the one measured by the new scale (Churchill, 1979). The discriminant validity of BAA was assessed in relation to three conceptually relevant yet distinct constructs—CSR, brand hedonic attributes, brand symbolic attributes (discussion on their conceptual similarities and distinctions was presented in Section 4.6.4)—using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. As reported in Table 6-9, BAA exhibited discriminant validity with the square root of AVE greater than the correlation between the respective constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and HTMT below the threshold of .90 (Henseler et al., 2015).

The predictive validity concerns whether a newly-developed scale predicts criterion variables (Churchill, 1979). The predictive validity of BAA was assessed in relation to constructs concerning brand-related outcomes by conducting regression analyses. Consumer research has well established that the satisfaction of consumer needs and expectations is the key pathway to achieve positive brand-related outcomes (e.g. Park et al., 1986; Batra et al., 2012). BAA is conceptualised as the extent to which activist branding confirms and caters to consumers' needs and expectations in relation to socio-political issues. Theoretically, BAA should be able to exhibit predictive power to constructs concerning positive brand-related outcomes. Indeed, as shown in Table 6-10, BAA significantly predicted brand attitude ( $\beta > .60, p < .001$ ), brand affect ( $\beta > .60, p < .001$ ), WoM ( $\beta > .60, p < .001$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta > .50, p < .001$ ). The overall results provided sufficient evidence for the discriminant and predictive validity of BAA.

The known-group validity concerns the content validity of a scale by demonstrating that the output of the scale systematically varies, based upon known performance of the construct that the scale is intended to measure (MacKenzie et al., 2011). A known-group comparison was performed between the two conditions used in the study, as they were a priori expected to differ with respect to BAA and its three dimensions Branding, Influence, and Agent. It was anticipated that the “aware” condition ( $n = 378$ ) significantly differs from the “unaware” condition ( $n = 333$ ). As anticipated, the “aware” condition scored significantly higher than the “unaware” condition on the Branding ( $M_{\text{aware}} = 5.17$ ,  $M_{\text{unaware}} = 2.23$ ;  $t(709) = 34.7$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Influence ( $M_{\text{aware}} = 5.01$ ,  $M_{\text{unaware}} = 2.4$ ;  $t(709) = 27.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Agent ( $M_{\text{aware}} = 4.39$ ,  $M_{\text{unaware}} = 2.05$ ;  $t(709) = 23.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the overall BAA ( $M_{\text{aware}} = 4.76$ ,  $M_{\text{unaware}} = 2.2$ ;  $t(709) = 29.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ), providing evidence for known-group validity of BAA and its dimensions.

Table 6-9. Discriminant Validity of the BAA Scale (Study 3a)

Sample	Aware, <i>n</i> = 378; More Divisive, <i>n</i> = 405; Pooled, <i>n</i> = 711					
Construct	CA	CR	AVE	BAA	CSR	Hedonic Attributes
BAA (13 Items)	.95; .98; .98	.90; .95; .98	.75; .87; .90	<b>.87; .93; .95</b>	-	-
CSR (5 Items)	.87; .90; .90	.87; .90; .90	.58; .64; .64	.68 (.65); .62 (.60); .67 (.66)	<b>.76; .80; .80</b>	-
Hedonic Attributes (5 Items)	.95; .96; .95	.95; .86; .95	.79; .82; .80	.78 (.71); .65 (.64); .61 (.60)	.51 (.49); .54 (.54); .51 (.51)	<b>.89; .91; .89</b>
Symbolic Attributes (2 Items)	.93; .94; .94	-	-	.81 (.57); .71 (.70); .70 (.68)	.56 (.57); .62 (.62); .59 (.59)	.71 (.67); .79 (.79); .75 (.75)

Note: The  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  of each construct is in bold and reported on the diagonal; HTMT ratios are reported in the parentheses. Correlations are significant at  $p < .001$  level. Results using the aware (more divisive) sample are displayed before the first (second) colons, while the results with the pooled sample are displayed after the second colons.

Table 6-10. Predictive Validity of the BAA Scale (Study 3a)

Samples	Aware, <i>n</i> = 378; More Divisive, <i>n</i> = 405; Pooled, <i>n</i> = 711			
Construct	CA	AVE	CR	BAA
Brand Attitude (Three Items)	.98; .98; .98	.92; .94; .93	.98; .98; .98	.81; .61; .63
Brand Affect (Four Items)	.94; .96; .95	.83; .88; .86	.94; .96; .95	.79; .64; .61
WoM (Three Items)	.95; .97; .97	.87; .92; .90	.95; .97; .97	.84; .61; .71
Purchase Intention (Four Items)	.96; .98; .97	.85; .91; .90	.96; .98; .97	.72; .50; .53

Standardised correlations are significant at  $p < .001$  level. Results using the aware (more divisive) sample are displayed before the first (second) colons, while the results with the pooled sample are displayed after the second colons.



## 6.3 Study 3b - Test-Retest Reliability

---

### 6.3.1 Sample, Procedure, and Measures

Study 3b aimed to assess the test-retest reliability of BAA and its three dimensions: Branding, Influence, and Agent. The test-retest reliability concerns “the correlation between the same individual’s score on the same set of items at two points in time” (Netemeyer et al., 2003, p. 5). A total of 220 participants from study 3a were recruited to participate in the test-retest study from Prolific, 40 days after completing study 3a (CFA survey). Following the same procedure adopted in study 3a, participants were asked to name a social and political issue of importance to them and then indicated whether they were aware of a commercial brand that gets involved in the issue they named. Hence, participants who were aware (versus unaware) were then asked to nominate and evaluate a brand that gets (versus does not get) involved in the issue. Subsequently, participants were asked to respond to the 13-items BAA scale and two attention check questions. Six participants were excluded for failing the attention check questions, resulting in 143 valid responses where participants provided consistent answers regarding their awareness or unawareness across both measurement occasions. These responses were included in the examination, and the responses to the BAA scale on both occasions were correlated for assessment.

### 6.3.2 Test-Retest Reliability

The test–retest reliability of BAA and its dimensions was demonstrated by the substantial and statistically significant correlations between two occasions ( $r_{BAA} = .80$ ;  $r_{Branding} = .77$ ;  $r_{Influence} = .78$ ;  $r_{Agent} = .79$ ; all significant at  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, paired sample t-tests were conducted to investigate changes in the scores of BAA and its dimensions over time. The results revealed no significant differences in scores across the two occasions for BAA ( $M_{1st} = 3.9$ ,

251

$SD_{1st} = 1.77$ ;  $M_{2nd} = 3.73$ ,  $SD_{2nd} = 1.79$ ;  $t(142) = 1.46$ ,  $p > .001$ ), Branding ( $M_{1st} = 4.24$ ,  $SD_{1st} = 1.9$ ;  $M_{2nd} = 3.9$ ,  $SD_{2nd} = 1.91$ ;  $t(142) = 3.1$ ,  $p > .001$ ), Influence ( $M_{1st} = 4.1$ ,  $SD_{1st} = 1.9$ ;  $M_{2nd} = 4.1$ ,  $SD_{2nd} = 1.83$ ;  $t(142) = 1.1$ ,  $p > .001$ ), and Agent ( $M_{1st} = 3.53$ ,  $SD_{1st} = 1.87$ ;  $M_{2nd} = 3.42$ ,  $SD_{2nd} = 1.9$ ;  $t(142) = 1.1$ ,  $p > .001$ ). Furthermore, the intraclass correlation coefficients ( $ICC$ ;  $ICC_{BAA} = .8$ ;  $ICC_{Branding} = .77$ ;  $ICC_{Agent} = .79$ ;  $ICC_{Influence} = .78$ , all significant at  $p < .001$ ) indicated excellent test-retest reliability (Cicchetti, 1994). The Cronbach's Alpha of BAA and its dimensions at the second occasion also indicated good internal consistency ( $a_{BAA} = .98$ ;  $a_{Branding} = .90$ ;  $a_{Influence} = .93$ ;  $a_{Agent} = .98$ ). Based on these overall results, it can be concluded that the BAA and its dimensions exhibit good test-retest reliability.

## 6.4 Chapter 6 Concluding Remarks

---

This chapter presented the procedures and results of Study 3, which aimed to validate the BAA scale by further refining the scale items, validating the scale structure, and establishing validity. First, taking into account the potential influence of common method variance biases, Study 3a reduced the number of items from 20 to 13 based on factor loadings and model fits. The refined scale demonstrated high factor loadings, good model fit, reliability, and convergent validity. Second, examination of model fit indices and model comparison provided sufficient evidence for the second-order three-factor structure of the BAA scale. Third, Study 3a established the discriminant validity of BAA by demonstrating its empirical distinction from three related scales: CSR, brand symbolic attributes, and brand hedonic attributes. Fourth, the regression analysis in Study 3a provided sufficient evidence for the predictive validity of BAA by showing its predictive power to four brand-related constructs: brand attitude, brand affect, WoM, and purchase intention. Fifth, known-group comparisons indicated that the score of BAA and its dimensions is significantly higher in the condition where the construct should be more salient than the less salient condition, offering support for the known-group validity of the scale. Lastly, Study 3b performed paired sample t-tests, which found no significant differences in the scores of BAA and its dimensions across the two measurement occasions (i.e. 40 days), offering support for known-group validity. The validated BAA scale will be utilised and subject to further examination in the model testing survey, as elaborated upon in Chapter 4.

# **Chapter 7: Quantitative Phase - Study 4 Model Testing**

## **7.1 Overview of Chapter 7**

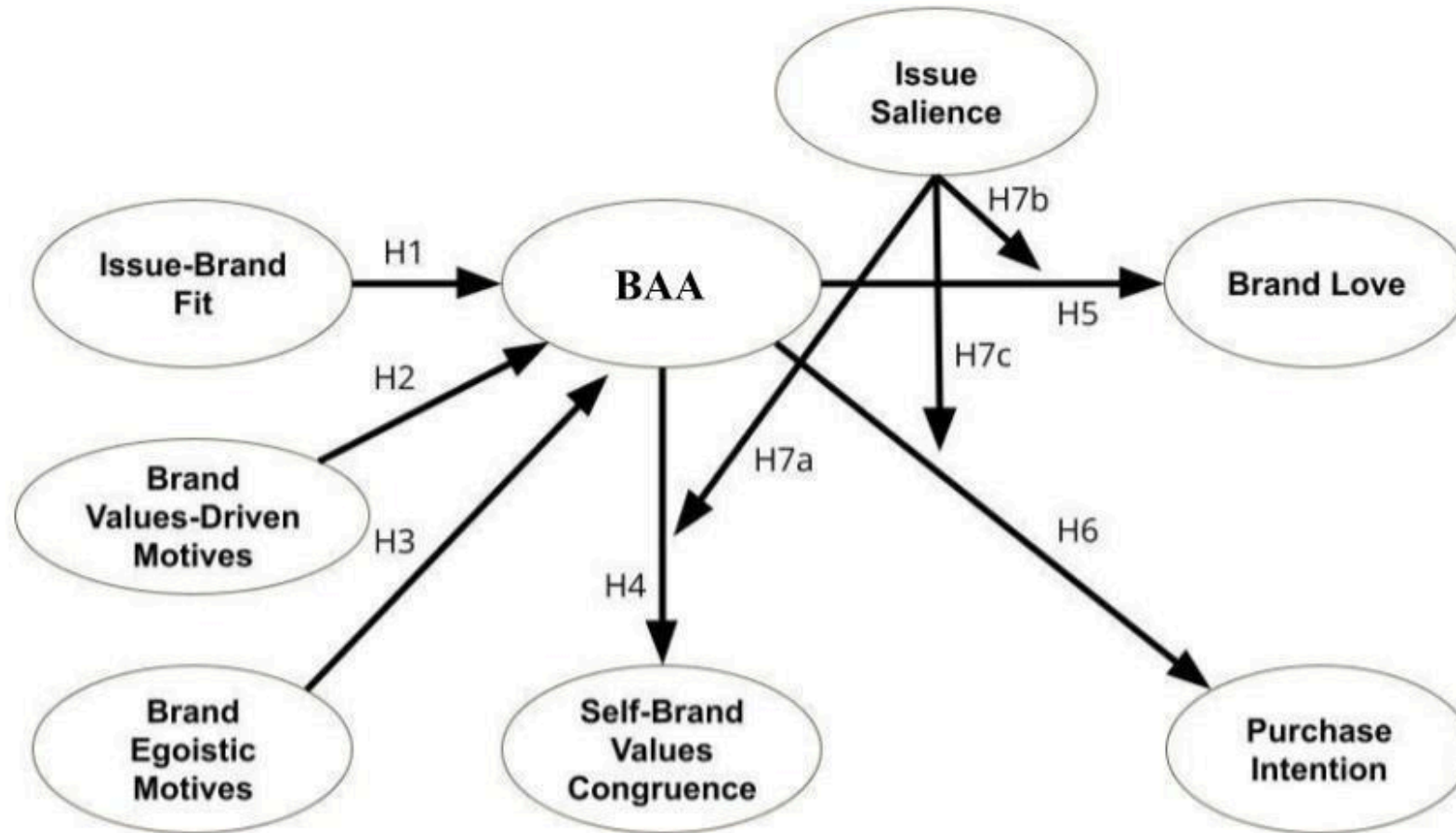
---

This chapter aims to test the initial conceptual model developed in the qualitative phase (for a summary and visual presentation, please refer to Table 7-1 and Figure 7-1). Section 7.2 presents the procedure and results of a pretest conducted to identify appropriate subject brand and socio-political issues for inclusion in the main survey design. The sampling and procedure of the main survey, Study 4, are outlined in Section 7.3. Data examination regarding outliers, multicollinearity, and normality prior to model testing is presented in Section 7.4. The procedure and results of examining potential common method bias variances are outlined in Section 7.5. Sections 7.6, 7.7, and 7.8 provide detailed results of the measurement and structural model testing, while Section 7.9 offers a brief summary of this chapter.

*Table 7-1. Summary of Hypotheses (Study 4)*

H1	Issue-brand fit relates positively to BAA.
H2	Brand values-driven motives relate positively to BAA.
H3	Brand egoistic motives relate negatively to BAA.
H4	BAA relates positively to self-brand values congruence.
H5	BAA relates positively to brand love.
H6	BAA relates positively to purchase intention.
H7a	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and self-brand values congruence.
H7b	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and brand love.
H7c	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and purchase intention.

Figure 7-1. Visual Presentation of Conceptual Model



## 7.2 Pretest

---

In the pretest ( $n = 100$ ), participants were presented with various socio-political issues paired with well-known brands (see Table 7-2). The selection of the 43 issue-brand combinations was informed by frequently discussed/-nominated issues and brands from previous qualitative (i.e. participant articulations from in-depth interviews) and quantitative studies (issue and brand nominations in study 2c pre-screening survey, study 3a CFA survey, study 3b test-retest survey), as well as relevant literature on the topic (e.g. Bhagwat et al., 2020; Ciske and Logan, 2018; Moorman, 2020). Participants were asked to rate to what extent the brand gets involved in the paired issue (1 = not at all to 7 = very much) and rate these brands in terms of familiarity (1 = not at all familiar to 7 = very much familiar). The design of the pretest is included in Appendix 8. From the pretest, 26 issue-brand combinations were identified with high involvement and brand familiarity (mean above 3.95 on a 7-point scale). Among these, 14 combinations were selected for inclusion in the main survey, considering brand category (e.g. tech, cosmetics, sportswear) and issue representativeness. These combinations were: Nike/racial issues, Twitter/racial issues, Twitter/freedom of speech, Facebook/Brexit, Wetherspoon/Brexit, Netflix/LGBTQ issues, Netflix/gender issues, Dove/gender issues, Dove/body positivity, Google/freedom of speech, Google/LGBTQ issues, The Body Shop/Body Positivity, The Body Shop/animal welfare, and Lush/animal welfare.

Table 7-2. Pretesting Results of Issue-Brand Combinations (Study 4)

Candidate Brands (Category)	Brand Familiarity	Brand Involvement Score ("To what extent [the brand] gets involved in [the issue]?")						
		LGBTQ Issues	Gender Issues	Racial Issues	Body Positivity	Freedom of Speech	Animal Welfare	Brexit
Nike (Sportswear)	5.3	3.68	3.84	4.22**	4.27*	/	/	/
Adidas (Sportswear)	5.23	3.47	3.69	3.93	4.04*	/	/	/
The Body Shop (Cosmetics)	4.93	3.70	3.77	3.37	4.76**	/	5.48**	/
Lush (Cosmetics)	4.15	3.81	3.51	3.33	4.36*	/	5.23**	/
Dove (Personal Care)	5.16	3.38	3.97**	3.78	5.49**	/	4.13	/
Twitter (Tech)	5.03	4.29*	4.06*	4.32**	/	5.05**	/	4.01*
Facebook/Meta (Tech)	5.59	4.05*	3.77	4.01*	/	4.78*	/	3.98**
Google (Tech)	6.25	4.13**	3.90	4.01*	/	4.66**	/	3.36*
Netflix (Entertainment)	5.94	4.47**	4.11**	4.12*	/	/	/	/
Wetherspoons (Hospitality)	5.21	/	/	/	/	/	/	4.43**
Dyson (House Appliance)	5.12	/	/	/	/	/	/	3.68

Sample size = 100;  
 \*Issue-brand combinations with a high involvement score;  
 \*\*Issue-brand combinations with a high involvement score, which are included in the main survey design.



### 7.3 Sampling and Procedure

---

Study 4 tested the hypotheses (see Table 7-1 for a summary of the hypotheses, Figure 7-1 for a visual presentation of the conceptual model), using a national representative sample of the United Kingdom in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. An online survey was conducted, and 1,085 participants were recruited through Prolific. After eliminating 43 responses which failed one of the attention check questions, the final sample consisted of 1,042 participants (see Table 7-3 for participant information).

Participants were randomly assigned one of the 14 pretested issue-brand combinations and responded to questions related to BAA, issue-brand fit, brand values-driven motives, brand egoistic motives, self-brand values congruence, brand love, purchase intention and issue salience. BAA was measured using the scale developed and validated in the previous studies in this thesis. Other constructs were measured using established scales from the literature. The established measures were adopted because they largely reflect the conceptualisation of the constructs adopted in this thesis. Furthermore, the measures have been widely applied in prior studies and proven to be valid and reliable. The complete list of definitions, sources, scale items, and alpha values for the established measures is provided in Appendix 9. The design of the model testing survey is included in Appendix 10.

Table 7-3. Information of Participants (Study 4)

Sample Breakdown	<i>n</i> = 1,042	Sample	Census
<b>Age</b>			
18-39	411	39.4%	37%
40-59	350	33.6%	35%
60 or older	281	27%	28%
<b>Ethnicity (Simplified)</b>			
Asian	71	6.8%	7%
Black	28	2.7%	3%
Mixed	19	1.8%	2%
Other	13	1.2%	1%
White	911	87.4%	87%
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	522	50.1%	51%
Male	508	48.8%	49%
Non-binary	8	.8%	—
Prefer not to say	4	.4%	—
<b>Education</b>			
Primary school or below	1	.0001%	—
Secondary school	131	12.6%	—
Sixth Form/College	233	22.4%	—
Undergraduate degree	449	43.1%	—
Postgraduate degree or above	216	20.7%	—
<b>Type of Community Living in</b>			
Rural area	203	19.5%	—
Suburb near a large city	232	22.3%	—
Small city or town	410	39.3%	—
Large city	197	18.9%	—
<b>Income</b>			
Less than £14,999	276	26.5%	—
£15,000-29,999	362	34.7%	—
£30,000-45,000	247	23.7%	—
£45,000-59,999	81	.8%	—
More than £60,000	76	.7%	—

## 7.4 Data Examination

No cases were identified as both univariate (z-score exceeding  $\pm 4$ ) and multivariate outliers (Mahalanobis D (30) > 59.7,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 7-4). Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factors (VIF) for all predictor variables of BAA, which indicated no presence of multicollinearity ( $VIF_{\text{issue-brand fit}} = 1.06$ ,  $VIF_{\text{self-brand values congruence}} = 1.57$ ,  $VIF_{\text{brand egoistic motives}} = 2.51$ ,  $VIF_{\text{brand values-driven motives}} = 2.1$ ;  $VIF < 10$ ; Hair et al., 2013). Normality testing involved examining the absolute value of the skewness and kurtosis for each construct variable. The results of the skewness ( $-.405 < \text{all skewness values} < .469$ ) and kurtosis ( $-.797 < \text{all kurtosis values} < .147$ ) fell within the acceptable range of  $\pm 3$  and  $\pm 10$ , respectively, indicating normal data distribution (Hair et al., 2013).

Table 7-4. Univariate and Multivariate Detection Results (Study 4)

Univariate Outliers		Multivariate Outliers
No cases with standardised value exceeding $\pm 4$		Cases with Mahalanobis D (8) > 15.507 ( $p < 0.01$ )
Construct	z score	886, 113, 98, 1029, 962, 995, 989, 986, 935, 936, 730, 865, 846, 1024, 970, 813, 533, 755, 192, 815, 717, 845, 1018, 1020, 406, 978, 856, 48, 47, 710, 557, 157, 799, 25, 313, 792, 43, 849, 658, 930, 165, 4, 5, 1036, 706, 1041, 361, 727, 981, 951, 200, 560, 523, 186, 839, 959, 238, 24, 784, 447, 940, 597, 808, 944, 919, 1028, 298, 1001, 763, 525, 667, 754, 166, 873, 840, 46, 162, 943, 870, 990, 1031, 14
BAA	-2.28, 2.62	
Self-brand values congruence	-1.90, 2.29	
Values-driven motives	-2.17, 2.28	
Egoistic motives	-3.12, 2.12	
Issue-brand fit	-2.64, 1.57	
Brand love	-1.54, 2.89	
Purchase intention	-2.10, 1.49	
Issue salience	-2.64, 1.57	

## 7.5 Examining Non-Response Bias and Common Method Variance

---

In line with the CFA survey, Armstrong and Overton's (1977) comparison of early versus late respondents was conducted to investigate potential non-response bias. As the questionnaires were both administered and collected online on the same day, late respondents were defined as the latter half of the respondents (Lindner et al., 2001). An independent t-test was employed to compare early and late respondents for the research variables. As shown in Appendix 16, the results revealed no significant differences in the variables between the two groups, indicating that the data does not suffer from a significant non-response bias.

Moreover, the model testing survey was designed to minimise potential common method variance biases a priori by displaying outcome-related constructs (e.g. brand love and purchase intention) before evaluation-related (e.g. BAA and self-brand values congruence) and randomising the order of constructs and items within constructs were randomised across participants (MacKenzie and Podsakoff 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2012).

The CFA marker variable technique (Williams et al., 2010) was also employed to assess potential common method variance biases. The results (see Table 7-5) indicated no significant or meaningful high correlations ( $r \geq |.5|$ ) between the marker variables and substantive variables, and the correlations between substantive variables were not significantly biased by common method variance effects.

Table 7-5. Model Comparison Tests with Marker Variable (Study 4)

<b>Model</b>	$X^2$	<i>df</i>	<b>CFI</b>
1. CFA	4842.241	865	.90
2. Baseline	4850.867	874	.90
3. Method-C	4850.852	873	.90
4. Method-U	4842.241	866	.90
5. Method-R	4850.9	901	.90
<b>Chi-Square Model Comparison Tests</b>			
$\Delta$ Model	$\Delta X^2$	$\Delta df$	<b>Chi-Square Critical Value;</b>
Baseline vs. Method-C	.015 (n.s.)	1	3.841
Inference: Marker is not significantly related to each of the construct indicators.			
Method-C vs. Method-U	8.611 (n.s.)	7	14.067
Inference: marker's loading on each item is equal.			
Method-C vs. Method-R	.048 (n.s.)	28	41.337
Inference: correlations between substantive variables are the same with and without taking into account the marker variables.			

## 7.6 Measurement Model

---

Prior to estimating the full structural model and testing the research hypotheses, the measurement model was estimated. One item of the values-driven motives scale was eliminated due to its low standardised loading (.368), while the remaining items demonstrated substantial and highly significant loadings. Moreover, construct reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of .60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), and all average variances extracted (AVEs) were above .50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Detailed results can be found in Table 7-6. Additionally, the measurement model, incorporating all research constructs, exhibited satisfactory overall fit ( $\chi^2/df = .394$ ; SRMR = .0664; RMSEA = .0531; NFI = .919; CFI = .938; PNFI = .844; PCFI = .861).

Table 7-6. Construct Measures and Psychometric Properties (Study 4)

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Standardised Loading</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>BAA</b> Developed and validated in previous studies in this thesis	—	.95	.93	.81
<b>Activist Branding</b>	.86	.85	.85	.66
Item 1	.86	—	—	—
Item 2	.75	—	—	—
Item 3	.82	—	—	—
<b>Brand Transformative Influence</b>	.97	.87	.87	.63
Item 1	.78	—	—	—
Item 2	.87	—	—	—
Item 3	.77	—	—	—
Item 4	.74	—	—	—
<b>Consumer-Empowering Agent</b>	.86	.94	.94	.74
Item 1	.78	—	—	—
Item 2	.84	—	—	—
Item 3	.90	—	—	—
Item 4	.89	—	—	—
Item 5	.86	—	—	—
Item 6	.88	—	—	—
<b>Brand Love</b> Batra et al. (2012; 2017)	—	.89	.89	.57
Item 1	.62	—	—	—
Item 2	.84	—	—	—
Item 3	.79	—	—	—
Item 4	.82	—	—	—
Item 5	.64	—	—	—
Item 6	.80	—	—	—
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Standardised loading</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha</b>	<b>Composite reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Purchase Intention</b> Diamantopoulos et al. (2021)	—	.94	.94	.80
Item 1	.97	—	—	—
Item 2	.78	—	—	—
Item 3	.95	—	—	—
Item 4	.87	—	—	—
<b>Self-Brand Values Congruence</b> Cable and DeRue (2002)	—	.93	.93	.80
Item 1	.88	—	—	—
Item 2	.90	—	—	—
Item 3	.90	—	—	—

Table 7-6. (continued)

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Standardised loading</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha</b>	<b>Composite reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Issue-brand fit</b> Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006)	—	.96	.96	.79
Item 1	.90	—	—	—
Item 2	.89	—	—	—
Item 3	.86	—	—	—
Item 4	.90	—	—	—
Item 5	.90	—	—	—
Item 6	.91	—	—	—
Item 7	.86	—	—	—
<b>Brand Values-Driven Motives</b> Skarmeas and Leonidou (2013)	—	.79	.80	.51
Item 1	.74	—	—	—
Item 2	.86	—	—	—
Item 3	.37*	—	—	—
Item 4	.79	—	—	—
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Standardised loading</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha</b>	<b>Composite reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Values-Driven Motives</b> <b>(after removing one item)</b>	—	.84	.84	.64
Item 1	.74	—	—	—
Item 2	.87	—	—	—
Item 4	.78	—	—	—
<b>Brand Egoistic Motives</b> Skarmeas and Leonidou (2013)	—	.78	.78	.55
Item 1	.80	—	—	—
Item 2	.75	—	—	—
Item 3	.66	—	—	—
<b>Issue Salience</b> Johnson et al. (2022)	—	.88	.88	.65
Item 1	.88	—	—	—
Item 2	.92	—	—	—
Item 3	.64	—	—	—
Item 4	.73	—	—	—
*Value falls below the recommended threshold.				



## 7.7 Structural Equation Model

---

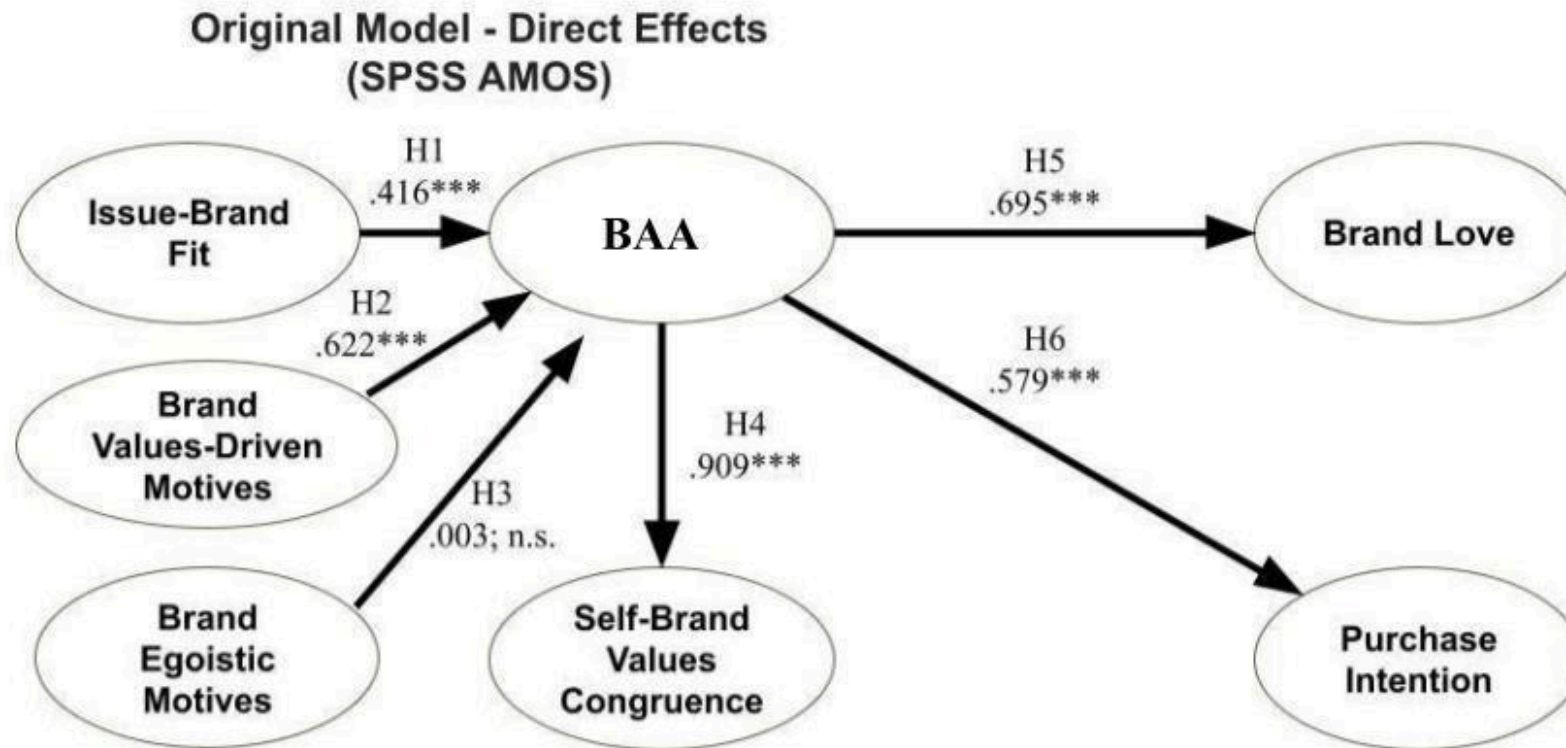
To test hypotheses H1 to H6, a structural equation model was estimated (Figure 7-2), yielding acceptable overall fit indices ( $X^2 = 3743.284$ ;  $df = 690$ ;  $X^2/df = 5.43$ ; NFI = .901; TLI = .912; CFI = .918; PNFI = .839; PCFI = .855; RMSEA = .0652; SMRM = .0893). The  $R^2$  (coefficient of determination) were estimated for the endogenous variables in the original model, with the respective value being 0.845 for BAA, 0.826 for self-brand values congruence, 0.483 for brand love, and 0.335 for purchase intention.. The relevant parameter estimates are displayed in Figure 7-2 and Table 7-7. Findings revealed that issue-brand fit had a significant positive effect on BAA ( $\beta = 0.416$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H1. Values-driven motives had a significant positive effect on BAA ( $\beta = 0.622$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H2. Egoistic motives had a marginally positive but non-significant effect on BAA ( $\beta = .003$ ,  $p > .05$ ), thus not supporting H3. Moreover, BAA had a significant and positive effect on self-brand values congruence ( $\beta = .909$ ;  $p < .001$ ), brand love ( $\beta = .695$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta = .579$ ;  $p < .001$ ), supporting H4, H5 and H6 respectively.

To examine the mechanism by which BAA influences purchase intention, the original model was compared with a nested model that incorporated the effects of self-brand values congruence on brand love and purchase intention, and the effect of brand love on purchase intention (see Figure 7-3). The nested model demonstrated a satisfactory model fit ( $X^2 = 3140.14$ ;  $df = 687$ ;  $X^2/df = 4.571$ ; NFI = .917; TLI = .929; CFI = .934; PNFI = .85; PCFI = .866; RMSEA = .056; SMRM = .0724).The  $R^2$  were also estimated for the endogenous variables in the nested model, with the respective value being 0.859 for BAA, 0.773 for self-brand values congruence, 0.539 for brand love, and 0.642 for purchase intention.

Moreover, a chi-square difference test produced a significant result ( $\Delta X^2 = 603.144$ ,  $\Delta df = 3$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that the nested model provided a significantly better fit to the data than the original model.

The results indicated that BAA had a positive and significant effect on self-brand values congruence ( $\beta = .882$ ;  $p < .001$ ), as well as a positive and significant effect of self-brand values congruence on brand love ( $\beta = .812$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Notably, self-brand congruence did not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = .097$ ; n.s.), but rather an indirect effect through brand love ( $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .616$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Moreover, BAA did not have a significant direct effect (BAA  $\rightarrow$  brand love:  $\beta = -.09$ ; n.s.; BAA  $\rightarrow$  purchase intention:  $\beta = -.05$ ; n.s.), but rather indirect effects on brand love ( $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .716$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .56$ ;  $p < .05$ ) through self-brand values congruence. The relevant parameter estimates can be found in Table 7-7. These results demonstrate that self-brand values congruence fully mediates the relationship between BAA and brand love, while brand love fully mediates the relationship between self-brand values congruence and purchase intention.

Figure 7-2. Visual Presentation of Structural Model (Direct Effects; Study 4)



**Model Fit:**  $\chi^2 = 3743.284$ ;  $df = 690$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 5.43^*$ ; NFI = .901; TLI = .912; CFI = .918; PNFI = .839; PCFI = .855; RMSEA = .0652; SMRM = .0893. \*Value falls above recommended threshold.

Figure 7-3. Visual Presentation of Nested Model (Direct and Indirect Effects; Study 4)

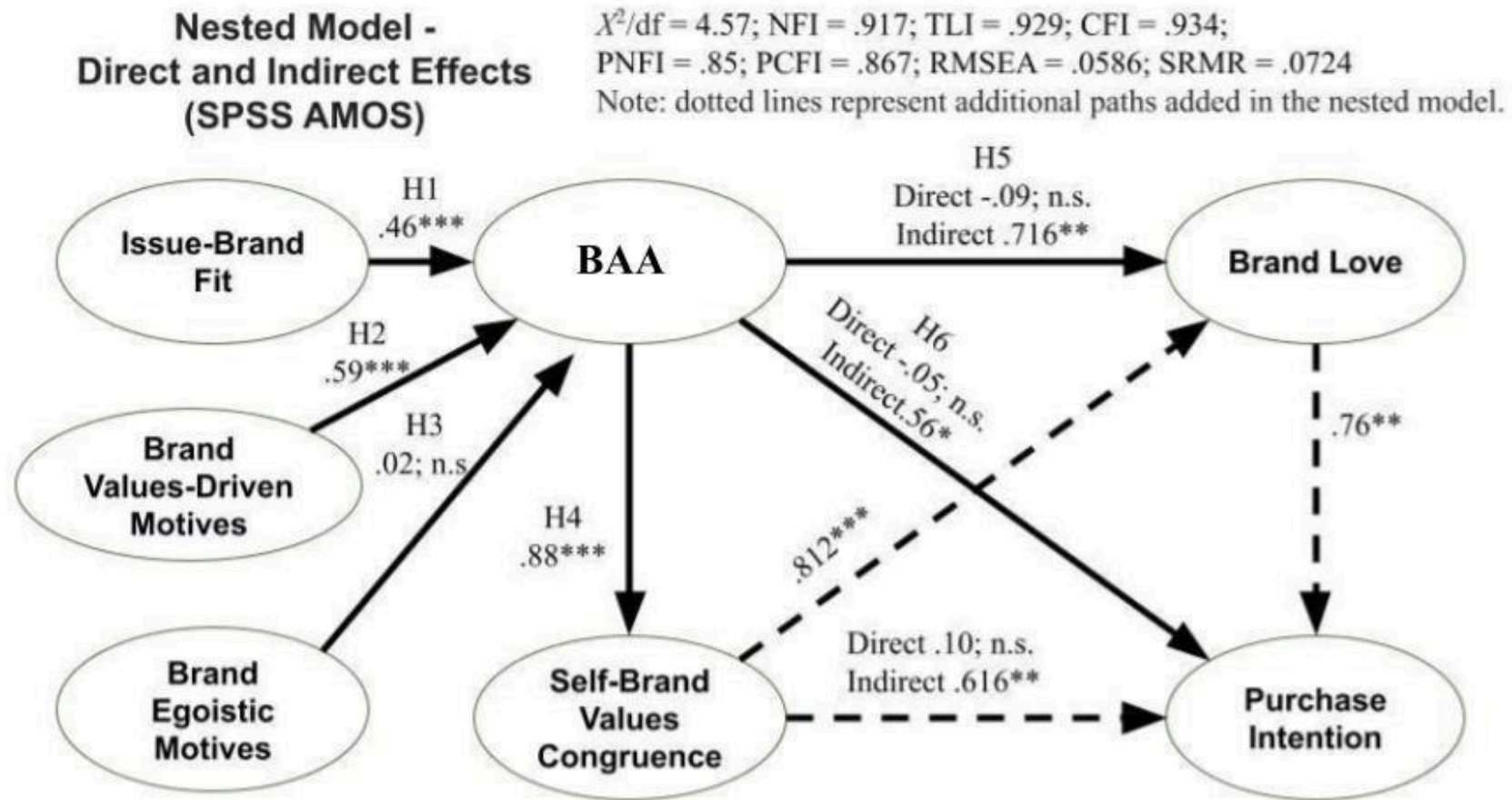


Table 7-7. Structural Model Estimation Results (Study 4)

Path	Parameter Estimate	Hypothesis	Supported
<b><i>Original structural model</i></b>			
<i>Direct effects</i>			
Issue-brand fit → BAA	.416***	H1	Yes
Values-driven motives → BAA	.622***	H2	Yes
Egoistic motives → BAA	.003	H3	No
BAA → self-brand values congruence	.909***	H4	Yes
BAA → brand love	.695***	H5	Yes
BAA → purchase intention	.579***	H6	Yes
<b><i>Nested structural model</i></b>			
<i>Direct effects</i>			
BAA → self-brand values congruence	.882***	—	—
BAA → brand love	-.090	—	—
BAA → purchase intention	-.050	—	—
Self-brand values congruence → brand love	.812***	—	—
Self-brand values congruence → purchase intention	.097	—	—
Brand love → purchase intention	.758***	—	—
<i>Indirect effects</i>			
BAA → brand love	.716**	—	—
BAA → purchase intention	.560*	—	—
Self-brand values congruence → purchase intention	.616**	—	—
Values represent standardised coefficients ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; n = 1,042			

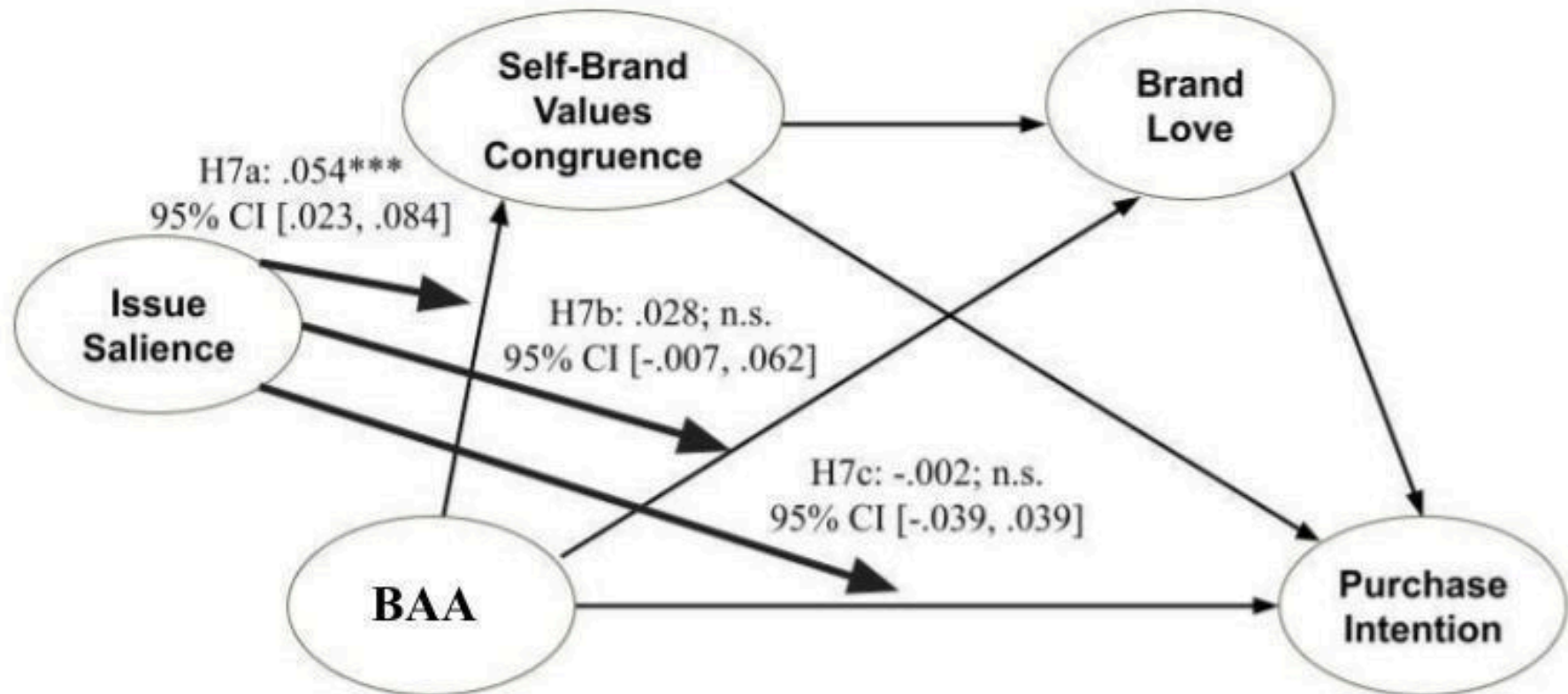
## 7.8 Testing Moderating Effects

---

To examine the potential conditioning effects of issue salience (H7a, H7b, and H7c), a moderated mediation model using *PROCESS* (model 85; Figure 7-4) was performed with 5,000 bootstraps (Hayes, 2018). Firstly, the results indicated that the interaction between BAA and issue salience was statistically significant and positively related to self-brand values congruence ( $\beta = .054$ ,  $t = 3.47$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% *CI*: .023, .084). Therefore, issue salience exhibited a positive moderating effect on the relationship between BAA and self-brand values congruence, thus supporting H7a. However, the interaction between BAA and issue salience was not significantly related to brand love ( $\beta = .028$ ,  $t = 1.55$ , *n.s.*, 95% *CI*: -.007, .063) or purchase intention ( $\beta = 0$ ,  $t = -.011$ , *n.s.*, 95% *CI*: -.039, .039). Therefore, the null hypotheses stating that the interaction does not moderate the relationship between BAA and brand love or purchase intention were not rejected, leading to the rejection of H7b and H7c.

Figure 7-4. Visual Presentation of the Moderation Effects (Study 4)

### Conceptual Model - Moderating Effects (Hayes' Process Model 85)



## 7.9 Chapter 7 Concluding Remarks

---

This chapter presented the data collection procedures and the results of data analysis conducted in Study 4. Study 4 aimed to achieve the research objective 4, that is to empirically test the conceptual model comprising hypotheses developed in the qualitative phase. Firstly, the chapter outlined the purpose of the pre-test and presented the obtained results, which informed the selection of brands and socio-political issues included in the main survey. Subsequently, the data collection procedures were described and justified. Prior to the analysis, the data underwent careful examination for outliers, multicollinearity, and normality. Detailed characteristics are provided regarding the final nationally representative sample, consisting of a total of 1,042 participants from the UK. Additionally, potential common method bias variances were considered and assessed, with the results indicating that the variables and their correlations were not significantly influenced by method biases.

Hence, the examination of the measurement model suggested the elimination of one item. The subsequent analysis revealed high item loadings, high scale reliability, and a satisfactory overall model fit. The results of structural equation modelling provide support for the hypothesised direct effects in the conceptual model (H1, H2, H4, H5, and H6), except for the effect of brand egoistic motives on BAA (H3), which was found to be insignificant. Intriguingly, further investigation of nested models uncovered two instances of full mediation: self-brand values congruence fully mediated the relationship between BAA and brand love, while brand love fully mediated the relationship between self-brand values congruence and purchase intention. Lastly, the examination of the moderated mediation model using *PROCESS* (model 85) revealed that issue salience positively moderated the



relationship between BAA and self-brand values congruence (supporting H7a), but did not moderate the relationship between BAA and neither brand love nor purchase intention, thereby rejecting H7b and H7c.

# **Chapter 8: Discussion of Findings**

## **8.1 Overview of Chapter 8**

---

This chapter outlines the key findings derived from previous studies conducted in the present research and discusses their implications for extant theory and practice. The chapter includes four main sections. Specifically, Section 8.2 discusses the conceptualisation BAA and its dimensions, while Section 8.3 discusses results obtained from the empirical testing of the conceptual model. The discussion delves into specific findings, such as particular dimensions of BAA and tested hypotheses, thus laying the groundwork for subsequent discussions on theoretical contributions, managerial implications and recommendations in the final chapter, Chapter 9. Section 8.4 concludes this chapter with concluding remarks.

## **8.2 Discussion of Results Obtained for the Conceptualisation of BAA and its Dimensions**

---

The present research employs a multi-methods approach to conceptualise nascent yet significant brand attributes in socio-political contexts known as brand activist attributes (BAA). Furthermore, the findings provide robust support for and validation of three distinct dimensions of BAA: activist branding, brand transformative influence, and brands as consumer-empowering agents. Subsequent sections thoroughly examine these dimensions and the implications of BAA for both existing theory and practice.

### **8.2.1 Discussion of Activist Branding**

Existing literature provides a general definition of brand activism, characterising it as a brand's public demonstration, through statements and/or actions, of either support or opposition to one side of a polarising socio-political issue (e.g. Bhagwat et al., 2020; Hydock et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020). While this definition provides an understanding of brand activism as a phenomenon, empirical investigations are scarce delineating the practices of brand activism and conceptualising how brand activist initiatives can serve to drive strong and positive CBRs, similar to the role played by brand utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic attributes (for a detailed discussion, please refer to Section 2.6).

The results in the present research provide support and validation for activist branding, the first dimension of BAA, which is defined as the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints. The findings of activist branding endorse

the consumer perception of the association between issues and brands as an outcome of brand activist initiatives. Moreover, these findings shed light on the branding process involved in establishing the issue-brand association in consumers' minds through marketing communications. In particular, consumers differentiate among various channels and practice through which brands communicate their stance on and contribution to socio-political issues.

The qualitative study in the present research reveals a wide range of channels and practices (e.g. products, advertisements, physical environment, social media, celebrity endorsement, sponsorship of NGOs, public statements, market entry decisions). Sequentially, the quantitative studies validate the salience of products, campaigns, advertisements, communications, and (online) stores as the primary channels through which BAA is communicated to consumers. However, the exclusion of certain channels, such as sponsorship with NGOs, celebrity endorsement, and market entry decisions, does not diminish their importance in the branding process. Instead, it is argued that these are meaning-creating techniques and activities that enable brands to acquire cultural meanings through culturally-rich sources and alliances (Batra, 2019; Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; MacInnis et al., 2019). These meaning-creating activities are subsequently conveyed by the validated activist branding channels, such as tangible branded objects and intangible messaging works, from which consumers receive and understand the brand association with socio-political issues. Indeed, while the specific meaning-creating activities may vary across brands, many brands employ similar media to convey their associations with issues to consumers. For instance, Nike associates itself with the activist image of Colin Kaepernick through celebrity endorsement, while McDonald's demonstrates its stance against Russia's invasion into Ukraine by withdrawing from the Russian market. Although Nike and McDonald's differ in their techniques for associating the brand with the relevant issues, they

both communicate these association-creating activities to consumers through brand advertisements.

### **8.2.2 Discussion of Brand Transformative Influence**

The second dimension of BAA, brand transformative influence, is defined in this thesis as the consumer's perception of a brand's capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues. The finding of brand transformative influence sheds light on the potential impact of brands within the expanded political system, an area that has been garnering increasing attention and interest among both academics and practitioners. Specifically, it offers empirical evidence from a consumer perspective that aligns with Korschun et al.'s (2020) proposition, indicating that brand activism can have an influence on diverse outcomes, including societal outcomes (e.g. election results), collective outcomes (e.g. social movements), and individual outcomes (e.g. issue awareness, voting behaviour, behavioural change). Furthermore, the findings of brand transformative influence provide an integrated view of how brand activism can achieve various transformative outcomes, such as raising awareness, shaping opinions, facilitating discussions, and fostering shifts in behaviour and habits. Ultimately, these outcomes contribute to the elicitation of transformative changes in the existing socio-political status quo concerning the targeted issues, thereby normalising such transformative changes.

Moreover, the consumer perception of brand transformative influence highlights to brand managers that consumers not only consider the issue-brand association but also evaluate whether the brand's activist practice genuinely makes a difference. This entails an examination of whether the brand effectively raises awareness, influences public opinions, and motivates positive behaviours related to the focal issues. Thus, successful brand activist

initiatives require not only the establishment of a strong connection between the brand and the issues but also the consumer perception of a brand's capability to elicit cognitive and behavioural changes regarding socio-political issues among the public.

### **8.2.3 Discussion of Brand as Consumer Empowering Agent**

The third dimension of BAA, brand as consumer-empowering agent, is defined in this thesis as the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them. Empowerment, in general, involves the process through which individuals obtain or are given ways to gain "control over the factors which affect their lives" (Connelly et al. 1993, p. 300). In the marketplace, consumer empowerment pertains to the consumer's capability to exert power and influence within the domain of consumption (Adkins and Ozanne, 2005), implying "a strengthening or enabling, the granting of abilities, rights, or authority to perform certain acts or reach particular objectives" (Kozinet et al., 2021, p. 429). Consumer research on empowerment has predominantly focused on empowerment through choices (McShane and Sabadoz, 2015), where consumers are empowered by an increased range and depth of consumption choices (Broniarczyk and Griffin, 2014; Shankar et al. 2006; Wathieu et al. 2002). For instance, Davies and Elliott's (2006) examined post-war changes in branded choices based on the oral history of women born between 1910 and 1950, highlighting the role of brands in navigating the expanding market choices and empowering consumers to symbolically construct their self-identity in a more dynamic manner. The findings of brand as empowering agent support and validate the conception that consumers can symbolise their support to a same-sided activist brand as a "vote" for their desire to challenge or maintain the status quo. This consumer conception

highlights the consumer's state of being (Klucarova and He, 2022; Thøgersen, 2005), indicating that they are empowered by the brand to gain psychological control over socio-political issues.

Moreover, the consumer perception of brand as consumer-empowering agent highlights to brand managers that brands can empower consumers by providing an alternative form of unconventional political participation that grants a sense of control over socio-political issues beyond the traditional political domain. Therefore, they should consider and evaluate whether and how communications of brand activism can elicit a sense of empowerment in consumers. Individuals feel empowered when they experience being in control and able to master change (de Young, 2000). In particular, consumer empowerment "can be achieved through the provision of possibilities for acquiring a sense of competence and self-determination" (Thøgersen, 2005, p. 168). Therefore, in the case where individual's pursuit of the status quo may be limited or constrained in the traditional political domain (e.g. restricted ability to exhibit control or unrealised socio-political preferences), brands can signal to consumers that the brand can serve as an alternate instrument for pursuing their socio-political interests in the marketplace. In the other words, brands can make efforts to curate a consumer perception of the brands being an enabling agent that creates conditions for them to accomplish their socio-political pursuits (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Klucarova and He, 2022).

#### **8.2.4 Discussion of BAA**

Informed by its three dimensions, BAA is defined, in this thesis, as the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to enact transformative influence on socio-political issues and empower the consumer to engage with these issues in the marketplace. The existing literature on brand attributes establishes that desirable brand attributes are crucial for building strong and

positive consumer-brand relationships. Brand attributes involve the extent to which perceived brand attributes align with consumer expectations and needs (Page and Herr, 2002; Keller, 2021). Previous research has identified three primary types of brand attributes: utilitarian (e.g. quality), hedonic (e.g. aesthetic and experiential features) and symbolic (e.g. means for self-expression). These attributes play a vital role in meeting consumer expectations and fostering desirable CBRs (e.g. Batra et al., 2012; Keller, 2012; Khamitov et al., 2019). Recent industrial and academic research suggests that CBRs have now evolved to include the expectation of brand engagement with socio-political issues (Alldredge et al., 2021; Edelman, 2021; 2022). However, it remained largely unknown whether and how brand attributes are perceived by consumers in a socio-political context.

The findings of BAA support and empirically validate the consumer perception that commercial brands can actively incorporate socio-political issues in its marketing communications, encompassing both tangible branded products and intangible messages. These efforts can lead to various transformative changes in the status quo, offering consumers an alternative means of engaging with and gaining control over socio-political issues, in contrast to traditional forms of political participation such as voting or participating in demonstrations. Furthermore, the findings of BAA and its dimensions offers empirical support to the consumer conception of commercial brands as legitimate and powerful actors capable of directly influencing socio-political issues, and as empowering agents through which consumers can attain a sense of participation in and control over these issues.



## **8.3 Discussion of Results Obtained for Examining BAA's Role in Conceptual Model and its Facilitating Condition**

---

### **8.3.1 Discussion of Issue-Brand Fit and BAA**

The results in the present research demonstrated that issue-brand fit has a significant positive effect on BAA, indicating that when a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers evaluate the extent to which the issue fits with the brand. Hence, they form a more positive perception of the association if they perceive a fit between the issue and the brand. However, Bhagwat et al. (2020) found that issue-brand fit does not moderate investors' reaction to brand activism in their investigation on the impact of brand activism on investors. They suggested the explanation that achieving a high degree of fit is challenging due to the controversial nature of socio-political issues. The disparity in findings may be attributed to the differing audiences and underlying motives driving their responses to brand activism. For instance, investors may be more primarily motivated by financial considerations as more economically driven actors, while consumers may be more susceptible to the emotional responses to brand activism.

Additionally, the finding of the effect of issue-brand fit on BAA speaks to prior studies on brand activism and CSR. Prior studies suggest that an issue-brand association is viewed more positively when the image of an issue aligns with that of the brand, as it is consistent with consumers' the expectation of brands (Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006; Mirzaei et al., 2022; Vredenburg et al., 2020). In particular, the finding provides empirical evidence supporting the proposition put forward by scholars in the field of brand activism that issue-brand fit positively influences consumer's perception of the brand and alliance (e.g. Mirzaei et al., 2022; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Moreover, this finding aligns with empirical

studies on CSR, which demonstrate that brand initiatives supporting widely desirable issues and causes have a positive effect on consumer perception and response. Together, the findings of the effect of issue-brand fit on BAA and CSR brands highlight that consumer perception of issue-brand association is contingent on the perceived image fit between the brand and the subject issue, regardless of their level of controversy.

### **8.3.2 Discussion of Brand Values-Driven Motives and BAA**

The results indicate that consumers are able to reconcile values-driven motives behind brand activism, and these perceived motives significantly affect BAA in a positive direction. This finding suggests that consumers perceive and evaluate brand activist initiatives more positively when they believe that such practice is driven by the brand's values. This finding provide empirical evidence to support the proposition by scholar in the field of brand activism that consumers develop a positive perception of authenticity when brands stay true to a consistent position (Moorman, 2020), aligning its messaging and practice around polarising socio-political issues with its core values (Mirzaei et al., 2022; Sibai et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020). This finding also extend the research on CSR by revealing that consumers attribute values-driven motives and respond more positively not only to widely desirable causes (Ellen et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2021; Skarmeas and Leonidou, 2013) but also to more polarised socio-political issues, as long as they perceive the issue-brand association as stemming from the brand's societal ideals and standards.

The finding of positive effect of values-driven motives on BAA, in conjunction with prior studies, highlights that brand managers should invest considerable effort in ensuring that consumers attribute values-driven motives to the brand's activist efforts. This can be achieved by aligning activist messages, conveyed through tangible branded objects or intangible

messaging, with the brand's purpose and values (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Thus, brand managers should clearly define the brand's core values and purpose and provide quantifiable evidence from past activities to convince consumers. Additionally, when making decisions about engaging with socio-political issues and determining which stance to take, brand managers should consider the relevance of the issue to the brand's values. Communicating activist efforts and motivations to the public should be carried out within the framework of the brand's core values.

### **8.3.3 Discussion of Brand Egoistic Motives and BAA**

The results unveiled an intriguing finding regarding the insignificant effect of brand egoistic motives on BAA. This finding suggests that although consumers recognise egoistic motives behind brand engagement with socio-political issues, they do not necessarily perceive brands more negatively due to these egoistic motives. The perception of egoistic motives aligns with previous academic studies and industrial reports that consumers are sceptical of brand involvement in socio-political issues and evaluate where such practices are driven by egoistic motives (e.g. Vredenburg et al., 2020; Mirzaei et al., 2022; WARC, 2021). However, the insignificant effect of egoistic motives found in the present research does not support certain claims proposed by brand activism research. For instance, Vredenburg et al. (2020) argue that egoistic activist practices may result in the consumer perceiving brand activism as inauthentic. Similarly, Mirzaei et al. (2022) suggest that egoistic-driven brand activism initiatives can lead to backlash. The insignificant effect also differs from previous CSR studies, which demonstrate that perceived egoistic motives have a negative impact on brand evaluation (Drumwright, 1996; Ellen et al., 2000; Webb and Mohr, 1998).

Three potential explanations to the insignificant effect of brand egoistic motives come to mind. First, this finding may be explained by Holt's (2002) proposition that post-postmodern consumers may no longer expect brands to keep a distance from profit motives or penalise brands that do the opposite. Instead, consumers may conceive brands as commercially-motivated entities. Indeed, profit-motivated brand actions inherent in the brand's survival are widely-accepted (Vlachos et al., 2009). Similarly, Schmidt et al. (2021) argue that consumers are becoming more tolerant of the co-existence of profit pursuit and activist initiatives.

Second, Forehand and Grier's (2003) proposed and experimentally demonstrated that egoistic motives lower brand perception only when they are inconsistent with the brand's expressed motives. Their research sheds light on the process that leads to the negative reactions to brand egoistic motives, challenging the belief that consumers prefer to see pure public-serving motives behind brand actions and view any deviation from this expectation negatively. Thus, their proposition and findings that only the deception of brand egoistic motives triggers negative reaction could explain why consumers do not lower their brand evaluation (i.e. BAA) due to brand egoistic motives.

Third, while many prior studies have provided evidence of the negative effect of brand egoistic motive on brand perception, these studies have primarily focused on widely-accepted issues in line with the research tradition of CSR and cause-related marketing (e.g. Ellen et al., 2000; 2006; Skarmeas and Leonidou, 2013). However, the unexpected finding in the present research may be explained by the polarising nature of socio-political issues. In politically-polarised contexts, consumers may be more tolerant of egoistic motives because brand engagement with socio-political issues is likely to elicit negative responses (Hydock et

al., 2020; Bhagwat et al., 2020), thus masking the perceived connection between issue engagement and the potential benefits the brand may gain. Future research should substantiate these conjectures.

#### **8.3.4 Discussion of BAA and Self-Brand Values Congruence**

The results indicated a significant positive effect of BAA on self-brand values congruence. This finding provides empirical evidence to the theoretical foundations of consumer-brand relationship theory, which posit that consumers perceive brands as possessing human-like characteristics (for a detailed discussion, please refer to Section 2.2.1). The finding extends the contextual applicability of the proposition that consumers infer a brand's abstract traits from observable brand actions (Fournier and Alvarez, 2012; MacInnis and Folkes, 2017). In the context of symbolic consumption, prior research has well established that consumers attribute human personality traits to brands (e.g. Aaker, 1997; Kervyn et al., 2012; Sung and Tinkham, 2005). The present research extends and validates this proposition in a socio-political context, by demonstrating consumers derive brand values-related traits based on observed BAA actions (e.g. Nike's anti-racism campaign). In particular, the finding supports the proposition that consumers can perceive brands as having human values and respond to brand values based on the congruence with their own personal values (Batra et al., 2017; Torelli et al., 2012; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008). Following upon this proposition, prior studies has mostly treated self-brand values congruence as an exogenous variable to predict brand-related outcomes (e.g. Johnson et al., 2022; Michel et al., 2022; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008) or as a moderator in the effect of relationship-building actions on brand-related outcomes (e.g. Baskentli et al., 2019; Duman and Ozgen, 2018; Kidwell et al., 2013). Surprisingly, only insufficient efforts have been dedicated to investigating the factors that develop or facilitate the perception of brand values in consumers' minds (MacInnis and

Folkes, 2017). The finding in the present research adds to these studies by conceptually and empirically identifying BAA as an antecedent to self-brand values congruence, highlighting the promise of BAA as a relationship-building action through values congruence.

### **8.3.5 Discussion of Self-Brand Values Congruence Effect**

The results indicated that self-brand values congruence has a significant positive effect on purchase intention under the full mediation of brand love, highlighting that consumers do not buy from a brand congruent with their values without the establishment of brand love. This finding speaks to self-brand congruence theory, especially in terms of values congruence (e.g. Sirgy et al., 1982; 1991; 1997).

Prior research posits and has established that consumers respond more favourably towards a brand when they perceive a match between their self-concept and the brand image or symbolic attributes (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Landon, 1974; Solomon, 1983). Previous studies predominantly examine the direct positive effect of self-brand congruence on emotion-based CBR constructs, such as brand attachment, brand identification, brand loyalty and brand love (e.g. Kressman et al., 2006; Lam et al., 2012; Malär et al., 2011; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), as well as purchase intentions, respectively (Landon, 1974; Michel et al., 2022; Sirgy et al., 1991), as demonstrated in meta-analysis (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012). Additionally, some studies have explored how emotion-based CBR constructs mediate the effect of self-brand congruence on consumer's behavioural intentions/responses. For instance, prior findings indicate that emotion-based CBR constructs, such as brand satisfaction, brand attachment, and brand love, partially mediate the relationship between self-brand congruence and brand recommendation intentions (e.g. Hosany and Martin, 2012; Wallace et al., 2017) and fully mediate the congruence effect on impulsive buying behaviours

(Japutra et al., 2018; 2019). However, it remained unclear whether and how emotion-based CBR constructs mediate the self-brand congruence effect on purchase intention. The present research extends these studies by establishing brand love as a full mediator between self-brand congruence and purchase intention.

More specifically, this finding adds to literature on the role of self-brand values congruence in CBRs. Previous empirical research suggests that consumers respond more favourably when the brand values align with their own values (e.g. Batra et al., 2001; 2017; Torelli et al., 2012). Focusing on the construct of self-brand values congruence, Michel et al. (2022) found that self-brand values congruence has a direct positive effect on brand attitudes, brand recommendation, and brand purchase respectively. Zhang and Bloemer (2008) examined the mediating role of various variables and found that values congruence has a significant direct positive effect on brand satisfaction, trust, affective commitment, and both direct and indirect effects on brand loyalty (measured by positive word of mouth, willingness to pay more and purchase intention) through these variables. This thesis extends these studies that self-brand values congruence has a significant direct positive effect on brand love but only an indirect effect on purchase intention through brand love. Together with Zhang and Bloemer (2008), these previous findings suggest that self-brand values congruence directly influences consumer's recommendation intentions but only indirectly influences purchase intentions. As such, there is a difference, between Zhang and Bloemer's (2008) work and the present research, in the mediation type (full versus partial) of emotion-based CBR constructs on the self-brand values congruence effect on purchase intention. This difference may be attributed to the use of different measures of self-brand congruence. Zhang and Bloemer (2008) employed an indirect measure based on discrepancy values scores between the brand and the consumer values score using 46 value items from the *Schwartz Value Survey* (Schwartz 1992;

Schwartz and Boehnke 2004). They then calculated absolute discrepancy scores between the brand values and consumer values (the lower the absolute discrepancy score, the higher is the value congruence). Concerning the shortcoming of the indirect measure that it “does not incorporate any reference to the psychological congruence experience” (Sirgy et al., 1997, p. 231), the present research employed the direct measure to capture such an experience, aimed at better validity over the indirect measure, following prior studies (Johnson et al., 2022) and the recommendation by Sirgy et al. (1997). Regardless, this thesis establishes the validity of self-brand congruence theory in the context of brand involvement in polarising socio-political issues.

### **8.3.6 Discussion of Self-Brand Values Congruence as a Full Mediator**

The results indicated that BAA has an indirect positive effect on brand love and purchase intention under the full mediation of self-brand congruence. These findings shed light on the mechanism of self-brand congruence effect in socio-political contexts. In the broader context of a political system where various actors interact to deliberate on solutions to critical socio-political issues, the effect of self-brand congruence may manifest as the pursuit of shared values. By advocating for socio-political issues, brands may employ BAA as a branding strategy to establish the perception among consumers that the brand, as a socio-political actor, shares their values and perspectives on maintaining or challenging the status quo. Consequently, consumers may view BAA as a signal of doing something appropriate as it aligns with their personal values and desired goals regarding socio-political issues.

According to values theory, people are naturally attracted to, prefer, and support relationships with others who share similar values (Smith, 1998). In interpersonal contexts, individuals



who share the same values tend to have greater similarity in cognitive processing and interpretation of events, leading to reduced uncertainty in their interactions (Cable and Edwards, 2004; Kalliath et al., 1999) and the development of positive attitudes towards each other (Arthur et al., 2006; Aron et al., 2006). Similarly, congruence plays an important role in political realm (Dalton, 2017; Miller et al. 1999; Thomassen, 2012), where voters position themselves and prospective political parties on the left-right ideological spectrum (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976; Sartori, 2005) and evaluate parties' ideological congruence with their preferences (Kim, 2009; Lau and Redlawsk, 1997). Voter-party congruence reflects the closeness between individual voters and parties in terms of their political ideologies (Boonen et al., 2017; Carmines and Stimson, 1980). As a result, voters tend to prefer and emotionally attach themselves to ideologically congruent parties that they conceive as more representative of their stances on key socio-political issues (Belchior, 2010; Dolný and Baboš, 2015; Kim, 2009). In this sense, self-brand values congruence implies a greater similarity in interpretations and preferences and less uncertainty regarding potential conflicts and oppositions on socio-political issues between the brand and consumer. Within the theoretical foundation developed in Section 2.7 where a wide range of actors participates in the process of democratic deliberation, the findings in the present research suggest an alternative mechanism through which the effect of self-brand congruence takes place: consumers, driven by their values, become more inclined to brands that share similar goals in addressing critical socio-political issues, as both parties are aligned in their pursuit of solutions.

### **8.3.7 Discussion of Issue Salience as a BAA Facilitating Condition**

The results indicated that issue salience positively moderates the effect of BAA on self-brand values congruence. This finding speaks to the literature on political science, which posits that individuals base their evaluation of and preference for political entities (e.g. political parties,

leaders, candidates) partially on the salience of subject issues (e.g. Edwards et al., 1995; Epstein and Segal, 2000). For instance, Keim and Zeithaml (1986) argue that political entities are more likely to attract voters' attention and build constituencies when the subject issue is salient to the constituents. In the case of brands advocating consumer support for socio-political issues (e.g. Apple advocating consumer support in its legal battle against the FBI regarding unlocking a terrorist suspect's phone; Tsukayama, 2016), Johnson et al. (2022) found empirical evidence that consumers are more likely to take actions on behalf of the brand when the advocated issue is salient to the target consumers. This thesis extends this proposition to the context of consumer-brand relationships, suggesting that consumers' reactions to brands are also contingent on the salience of subject issues. Prior consumer research demonstrates that consumers orient their relationships with brands to pursue salient goals related to critical social and political issues (e.g. Chartrand et al., 2008; Epp and Price, 2011; Gollnhofer et al., 2019). Indeed, CSR research found empirical evidence that issue salience positively moderates the effect of CSR efforts (e.g. donations to charitable organisations) on consumer's perception and responses to the CSR brand (e.g. Samu and Wymer, 2014). This thesis adds to the prior studies that consumers are more likely to positively perceive and respond to brand efforts around polarising issues when the subject issue is salient to the consumers. Additionally, the finding offers empirical evidence supporting Weber et al.'s (2021) proposition that issue salience increases the importance of political meanings in CBRs and the likelihood of purchasing brands with political symbolism.

### **8.3.8 Discussion of BAA Scale**

The present research developed and validated a new scale for measuring BAA and its three dimensions. The scale provides academics, brand managers and policymakers with a robust and valid instrument for measuring consumer's perceptions of BAA and its dimensions.

From an academic perspective, the scale enables future investigation of an expanded BAA conceptual model, including constructs related to well-being, political efficacy, and brand intentions. For brand management, the BAA scale, as a whole, can serve as a powerful tool for monitoring whether and how well the resources allocated into brand activism translate into a consumer perception that drives strong and positive CBRs and ultimately profits. Additionally, the BAA scale can help brand managers identify the socio-political issues that consumers associate with the brand, serving as a diagnostic tool for planned or unexpected associations. This information can be used to develop a positioning map, compare the brand's activist position with that of competitors, and inform strategic planning by identifying current market competition and positioning gaps. Moreover, official organisations such as NGOs and government authorities, can also utilise the BAA scale to identify influential activist brands for potential partnership in promoting transformative changes. Further implications of the BAA scale will be discussed in Chapter 9.

## **8.4 Chapter 8 Concluding Remarks**

---

This chapter discussed the findings presented in the present research for their implications for theory and practice. In particular, Section 8.2 discussed the conceptualisation of BAA and its dimensions, while Section 8.3 the results of model testing. These discussions set up the arguments for contribution statements to be presented in the last Chapter.

# **Chapter 9: Summary, Contributions, Implications, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research**

## **9.1 Overview of Chapter 9**

---

This chapter concludes this thesis by revisiting the research aim and main objectives, and providing an overview of how they have been addressed and achieved through the keying findings. Then, the chapter discusses theoretical contributions as well as managerial implications and recommendations. Furthermore, the chapter reflects on the limitations of this thesis and suggests potential directions for future research. Finally, the chapter closes with concluding remarks.

## 9.2 Summary of Research Motivation, Aim, and Objectives

---

It is well established that brand attributes can fulfil various consumer needs, encompassing utilitarian (e.g. quality, convenience), symbolic (e.g. coolness, social status), and experiential (e.g. sensory stimulation) aspects. However, recent academic and industry research indicates the evolution of consumer-brand relationships to include the consideration of divisive socio-political issues, such as abortion rights, racial and gender equality. For instance, recent industry reports indicate that as many as 89% of consumers now expect brands to address these challenges (Alldredge et al., 2021; Edelman, 2021; 2022). However, due to the ongoing debate and inconsistent consumer outcomes of brand activism, many managers are uncertain about whether to risk mismanaging brand activist initiatives or potentially miss the opportunity to enhance brand perception and performance (He, 2022; Moorman, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Indeed, scholars acknowledge that changes in consumer needs necessitate the logical adaptation of branding strategy (e.g. Park et al., 1986), yet, the current theorisation of brand attributes lacks a comprehensive understanding of consumer's considerations regarding socio-political issues. These knowledge gaps hinder the advancement of branding in benefiting consumers, brands and societies (Chandy et al., 2021; de Ruyter et al., 2022), and impede a better understanding of consumer-brand relationships (CBRs) in a socio-political context (e.g. Huff et al., 2021; Price and Coulter, 2019; Shultz et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Thus, the question of whether and how brand activism can meet consumer needs for engaging with socio-political issues in the marketplace, which this thesis refers to as *brand activist attributes* (BAA), is managerially and theoretically critical yet the answer to it remains elusive and uncertain.

Given these knowledge gaps, the aim of this thesis is to contribute to the advancement of the literature on brand attributes, brand activism, and consumer-brand relationships, while also providing practical insights into whether and how brand engagement with socio-political issues can benefit brands, consumers, and societies. The aim of this thesis is to develop the construct of BAA. Accordingly, four research objectives were formulated to achieve the aim of construct development: 1) to conceptualise BAA; 2) to conceptualise an initial conceptual model of BAA capturing its role in CBRs; 3) to develop a scale to measure BAA; and 4) to validate BAA on the conceptual model.

To address these objectives, this thesis adopted a mixed-methods sequential exploratory approach, consisting of two phases. Phase 1 involved a qualitative exploration of consumer perceptions and responses to brand activism, encompassing in-depth interviews with 32 participants who were aware of brand engagement with socio-political issues. Subsequently, Phase 2 empirically examined and validated the initial findings from Phase 1 through four main surveys, including sample sizes of 355, 804, 143, and 1,085, respectively. The key findings are briefly discussed below with respect to the corresponding research objective(s) they addressed.

## 9.3 Summary of Key Findings

---

### 9.3.1 Research Objective 1: Conceptualise BAA

Research Objective 1 aims to conceptualise BAA. To facilitate this, Chapter 2 conducted a multidisciplinary literature review, encompassing topics such as CBRs, brand activism, political consumerism, social movements, consumer movements, political marketing, and deliberative democracy. Based on this review, theoretical foundations were developed, elucidating, within an expanded political system, how various actors engage in deliberation regarding solutions towards critical and divisive socio-political issues, potentially leading to individual benefits and socio-political outcomes. In consultation with this multidisciplinary review and the theoretical foundations, the analysis and interpretation of 32 interviews suggested that BAA comprises three dimensions, namely, *activist branding*, *brand transformative influence*, and *brands as consumer-empowering agents*, achieving Research Objective 1.

### 9.3.2 Research Objective 2: Explore an Initial Conceptual Model of BAA

Research Objective 2 aims to explore an initial model of BAA for testing, comprising a set of propositions and hypotheses regarding the role of BAA in CBRs. In Phase 1, propositions were formulated to articulate the relationships of BAA with other concepts identified in the qualitative analysis. In consultation with related literature, these propositions were further developed into testable hypotheses, thereby achieving Research Objective 2. The development of these propositions and hypotheses were presented in detail in Chapter 4, and are summarised in Table 9-1.



### **9.3.3 Research Objective 3: Develop a Scale to Measure BAA**

Research Objective 3 relates to empirically validating the conceptualisation of BAA, requiring the development of a scale to measure BAA. The scale development process followed the widely-adopted recommendations (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Boateng et al., 2018; Churchill, 1979; Netemeyer et al., 2003). Firstly, Study 1 generated 45 scale items based on the qualitative data collected from Phase 1 and related streams of literature (e.g. brand activism, political consumerism, consumer empowerment, and consumer movement). In Study 2, five academic experts assessed the face and construct validity of the initial items, based on which some items were eliminated and modified, resulting in 30 items. Hence, the analysis of EFA ( $n = 325$ ) confirmed the 3-factor structure of BAA and further reduced the item number to 20. Finally, Study 4 ( $n = 711$ ) assessed the reliability and validity of the scale and validated the higher-order structure of BAA comprising three dimensions and 13 scale items, achieving Research Objective 3.

### **9.3.4 Research Objective 4: Validate BAA on Consumer-Brand Relationships**

To test the hypotheses captured in the BAA model, Study 4 adopted a national representative sample ( $n = 1,042$ ) from the UK. The results of model testing reveal several findings. Firstly, it found that while the effect of brand egoistic values is not significant, issue-brand fit and brand values-driven motives have a positive, significant effect on BAA. Secondly, the results indicated that BAA has a significant, positive effect on self-brand values congruence, brand love, and purchase intention respectively. Additionally, a post-hoc analysis further revealed that the effect of BAA on brand love is fully mediated by self-brand values congruence under the moderation of issue salience. Furthermore, the analysis indicates another full mediation that the effect of self-brand values congruence on purchase intention is fully mediated by brand love. These results, summarised in Table 9-1, contributed to the achievement of

Research Objective 4. These findings provide both theoretical contributions to a body of multidisciplinary literature and managerial implications for brand managers and policymakers, as discussed in the next section.

Table 9-1. Summary of the Propositions and Hypotheses

<b>Issue-Brand Fit and BAA</b>		<b>Results</b>
<b>P1</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers evaluate the extent to which the issue fits with the brand and have a more positive perception of the association if they perceive a fit between the issue and the brand.	Supported
<b>H1</b>	Issue-brand fit relates positively to BAA.	Supported
<b>Perceived Brand Motives and BAA</b>		<b>Results</b>
<b>P2</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers interpret and evaluate the motives behind the association and these perceived motives influence their perception of the association.	Partially supported
<b>H2</b>	Brand values-driven motives relate positively to BAA.	Supported
<b>H3</b>	Brand egoistic motives relate negatively to BAA.	Not supported
<b>BAA and Values</b>		<b>Results</b>
<b>P3</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers draw inferences from the association about the brand's values and evaluate the extent to which the brand's values are congruent with their own values.	Supported
<b>H4</b>	BAA relates positively to self-brand values congruence.	Supported
<b>BAA and Positive CBRs</b>		<b>Results</b>
<b>P4</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, consumers respond more positively to the brand if the association is perceived as positive.	Supported
<b>H5</b>	BAA relates positively to brand love.	Supported
<b>H6</b>	BAA relates positively to purchase intention.	Supported
<b>Issue Salience and BAA</b>		<b>Results</b>
<b>P5</b>	When a brand associates itself with a socio-political issue, the salience of the issue to consumers influences their response to the association.	Partially supported
<b>H7a</b>	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and self-brand values congruence.	Supported
<b>H7b</b>	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and brand love.	Not supported
<b>H7c</b>	Issue salience positively moderates the relationship between BAA and purchase intention.	Not supported
<b>Additional Information</b>		
<b>Full mediation 1:</b> Self-brand values congruence fully mediates the effect of BAA on Brand love;		
<b>Full mediation 2:</b> Brand love fully mediates the effect of self-brand values congruence on purchase intention.		

## **9.4 Theoretical Contributions**

---

### **9.4.1 Contributions to brand attributes: Fulfilling Needs Regarding Socio-Political**

#### **Issues**

Brand attributes concern the extent to which perceived brand attributes fulfil consumer needs and expectations (Page and Herr, 2002; Keller, 2021). Prior research has established three primary types of brand attributes: utilitarian (e.g. quality), hedonic (e.g. aesthetic and experiential features) and symbolic (e.g. means for self-expression) (Batra et al., 2012; Keller, 2012; Khamitov et al., 2019). However, the current conceptualisation and theorisation overlook the growing consumer expectation for brands to engage with socio-political issues. Indeed, new or emerging consumer needs for addressing unsolved problems within a broader social context, or restructuring the situation (Fennell, 1978; Epp and Price, 2011) necessitate corresponding changes in the strategic management of branding (Park et al., 1986). This thesis contributes to the literature on branding the construct of BAA, as an emerging yet underexplored form of brand attributes within socio-political contexts. Specifically, BAA pertains to the extent to which activist branding can enact transformative influence on the status quo of socio-political issues and empower consumers to engage with these socio-political issues in the marketplace.

### **9.4.2 Contributions to Brand Activism: Consumer Perception and Response**

#### **9.4.2.1 Consumer Perceptions of Brand Activism**

Existing literature defines brand activism as a phenomenon of brands taking a public stance and actions on divisive socio-political issues (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020). This thesis advances this stream of literature by approaching brand activism as a branding strategy from a consumer perspective. Specifically, the qualitative phase conceptualises the process of

activist branding, where associations between a brand and socio-political issues can be established in consumers' minds through various channels and media as part of marketing communications. Additionally, it suggests that activist branding benefits consumers by meeting their expectations of brand transformative influence and satisfying their needs of empowerment over socio-political issues. The subsequent quantitative phase empirically validates this consumer perception, thereby advancing the literature on brand activism by shedding lights into how the incorporation of brand activism in marketing communications can enact transformative influence on and empower individuals over socio-political issues.

#### 9.4.2.2 The Effect of Brand Activism and its Underlying Mechanism

Drawing from moral theory (Aquino and Reed, 2002; Graham et al., 2009) and the self-brand congruence theory (Sirgy et al., 1991; 1997), recent research on brand activism proposes that consumers adopt a moral lens to interpret and respond to brand activism. Specifically, Bhagwat et al. (2020) and Hydock et al. (2020) proposed the symmetric effect of brand activism and found support that consumers are more likely to choose and buy (versus avoid) a same-sided (versus opposed-sided) activist brand for being a moral in-group (versus out-group) to the consumer. In contrast, Mukherjee and Althuizen's (2020) argue that consumers assume an moral obligation of activist brands and expect them to take a morally-desirable stance, leading to punishment for opposed-sided brands and no rewards for same-sided brands. Thus, they hypothesised an asymmetric negative effect of brand activism, and a series of experiments consistently supported their hypotheses, showing that this asymmetric effect holds not only for brand attitude but also for brand purchase intentions and actual choices.

These studies on brand activism share theoretical foundations in moral theory and self-brand congruence theory, but they reveal contradictory findings. Moreover, while these studies examined the direct effect of brand activism on brand-related outcomes, such as brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and actual brand choices, they do not explicitly examine or empirically validate the theoretical assumption of the self-brand (moral) congruence as the underlying mechanism of these effects. The contradictory findings and the lack of validation regarding the underlying mechanism hinder our understanding of how brand activism impacts CBRs. This thesis found that the effect of BAA (i.e. consumer perception and interpretation of brand activism) on brand love and purchase intention is fully mediated by self-brand values congruence. This finding helps address the above gaps by highlighting the crucial role of self-brand values congruence as an underlying mechanism through which brand activism can drive strong and positive CBRs, ultimately leading to increased purchase intention towards activist brands.

#### **9.4.3 Contribution to Debates on Brand's Role in Society: An Activist, Transformative, and Empowering Actor**

The conceptualisation and validation of BAA and its dimension contributes to the ongoing debate about the role of commercial brands in society. While the literature has long been dominated by the conventional view of brands as apolitical and purely economic actor (Singer, 2019), multiple streams of literature (e.g. political CSR, corporate political activities, and brand activism, as reviewed in Chapter 2) have been putting forward alternative perspectives, suggesting that commercial brands also play an active role in the broader political system, underpinned by the theory of deliberative democracy (e.g. den Hond et al., 2014; Scherer et al., 2016; Moorman, 2020). Sections 2.4 to 2.7 has developed the theoretical foundations that a wide range of socio-political actors (e.g. government authorities, NGOs,

consumers, and brands) interact with each other around debates and discussions of possible solutions towards socio-political issues. Positioning within these theoretical foundations, the conceptualisation and validation of BAA supports the latter view of brands as socio-political actors, indicating that consumers perceive commercial brands as legitimate and powerful actors capable of directly influencing socio-political issues. These brands are seen as empowering agents that enable consumers to gain a sense of control over these issues.

#### **9.4.4 Contribution to Political Consumerism and Social/Consumer Movements: The Mechanism of Buying for Socio-Political Reasons**

The results obtained from testing the conceptual model of BAA indicated that the effect of BAA on purchase intention is fully mediated by self-brand values and brand love. These findings advance the literature on political consumerism and social/consumer movements, which hold that consumers would simply buy from values-congruent brands for social and political reasons, by unveiling the complex mechanism in the decision-making of socio-political conscious consumers.

Scholars in political consumerism theorise and provide empirical evidence that individuals with value priorities related to the environment, the inclusion of minorities, gender equality, human rights and other similar issues are more likely to consider their preferences for favourable social and political changes in their consumption practice, purchasing branded products or brands for political reasons (Copeland, 2014; Inglehart, 1981; 1997). This behaviour can be arguably seen as a means for individuals to express and vent their social and political grievances in the marketplace as an alternative to the traditional political domain (Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). Scholars in social movements argue that individuals evaluate whether and the extent to which commercial brands or a social movement organisations align

with their personal values in terms of political preferences, activities, and goals. They are more inclined to support values-congruent entities out of non-material concerns for socio-political issues and in pursuit of their own values (Snow et al., 1986; Stern et al., 1999; Wood and Hayes, 2012). Similarly, the literature on consumer movement suggests that consumers evaluate whether a brand's engagement with socio-political aligns with their desired values and tend to support brands that demonstrate improved practice as a means to enact changes in the status quo (Figueiredo et al., 2016; Gollnhofer et al., 2019; King and Pearce, 2010).

Together, this body of multidisciplinary literature suggests that individuals' interactions with other actors are guided by their values and value priorities. Furthermore, individuals tend to gravitate towards values-congruent others while keeping a distance from values-incongruent others in the pursuit of their values. In a broad sense, the findings in the present offer support for these propositions, indicating that consumers interpret brand associations with socio-political issues through the lens of values and are likely to develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards brands that share their views and personal values.

However, the findings also highlight that this body of multidisciplinary literature may have taken a somewhat simplistic view that consumers will simply buy from commercial brands or social movement organisations for socio-political reasons, as a form of lifestyle-oriented and loosely organised political participation in the marketplace (Stolle and Micheletti, 2013; Willis and Schor, 2012), or as a means to challenge or maintain the status quo (e.g. Akemu et al., 2016; King and Pearce, 2010; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004). In line with these studies, Edelman (2020; 2022) reports that 68% of consumers avoid or boycott a brand based on its stand on societal issues, while 58% buy or advocate for brands based on their beliefs and



values. The full mediation of brand love on the relationship between BAA and purchase intention found in the present study highlights the complex mechanism through which consumers are willing to purchase a brand for socio-political reasons. Specifically, the findings reveal that while consumers do evaluate activist brands and their engagement with socio-political issues through the lens of values, consumers would not necessarily buy a brand for its contributions to such issues or for the brand's values in the absence of brand love. Therefore, the present research contributes to the literature on political consumerism and social/consumer movements by unveiling the complex yet underexplored mechanism of the decision-making of socio-politically conscious consumers in their purchase behaviours.

#### **9.4.5 Contributions to Self-Brand Congruence Theory: Pursuit of Values an Alternative Mechanism**

Together with the body of multidisciplinary literature examined in Chapter 2 (i.e. values theories, political consumerism, social/consumer movement, and deliberative democracy), the findings in the present suggest an alternative mechanism through which self-brand congruence influences CBRs. Prior research on self-brand congruence posits that consumers tend to prefer brands with symbolic attributes (e.g. brand personality or brand-user image) because these symbolically congruent brands enable them to construct and express their self-concepts, aiming to maintain and improve their self-conceptions.

The aforementioned finding of the full mediation of self-brand values congruence on the effect of BAA on brand love also contributes to the self-brand congruence theory (Sirgy et al., 1991; 1997). Prior research primarily positioned self-brand congruence in the context of symbolic consumption. These research posits that consumers evaluate brands on symbolic attributes (e.g. brand personality or brand-user image; Sirgy, 1991; 1997) and prefer

symbolically-congruent brands that enable them to construct and express their self-concepts, aiming to maintain and improve their conceptions of who they are (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; Malär et al., 2011). In a socio-political context, the findings in the present research suggest an alternative mechanism through which the effect of self-brand congruence on CBRs occurs. In particular, this mechanism is rooted in the theoretical foundation of a broader political system, where various actors interact with each other to deliberate on solutions towards critical socio-political issues (developed and presented in the Literature Review Chapter 2). Within this socio-political context, the effect of self-brand congruence on CBRs underlies the mechanism of values pursuit: consumers evaluate activist brands and their BAA initiatives through the interpretive lens of values. In the pursuit of values, they become more inclined to values-congruent brands because the consumer-brand dyad shares similar goals for addressing critical socio-political issues.

## 9.5 Implications and Recommendations for Brand Managers

---

A critical question for brand managers is whether and how brand engagement with polarising socio-political issues can drive strong and positive consumer-brand relationships. This thesis provides insights to help managers better understand this question by examining how consumers perceive and respond to such engagement. The findings offer empirical evidence supporting the promise of brand activist attributes (BAA) as a branding strategy. Furthermore, the testing of the conceptual model reveals the mechanism through which the BAA effect occurs and the conditions under which the effect is more pronounced. The following elaborates on the key findings for their implications.

### 9.5.1 1<sup>st</sup> BAA Dimension: Activist Branding

The first dimension of BAA, activist branding, is defined in this thesis as the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints. Firstly, the consumer perception of activist branding indicates that consumers differentiate among various channels through which brands communicate their stance on and contribution to socio-political issues. As discussed in Section 8.2.1.1, the multi-methods studies reveal a wide range of channels and touchpoints, among which some can be seen as meaning-creation techniques (e.g. celebrity endorsement and sponsorship of NGOs), while the others can be viewed as meaning-conveying communications (advertisements, products, and social media). Brand managers are recommended to leverage meaning-creating techniques and activities that enable brands to acquire cultural meanings through culturally-rich sources and alliances (Batra, 2019; Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; MacInnis et al., 2019). These meaning-creating

activities can be subsequently conveyed by the validated activist branding channels, such as tangible branded objects and intangible messaging works, from which consumers receive and understand the brand association with socio-political issues. In particular, brand managers considering or planning to use BAA as part of their branding strategy are recommended to pay special attention to integrating meaning-creating activities (e.g. sponsorship and endorsement) with meaning-conveying communications (e.g. product packaging and store design) during their design and implementation of marketing communications. For instance, the ice cream brand Ben and Jerry's launched a flavour called "Justice Remix'd" to symbolise its campaign against systemic racism, including advocacy for the reinstatement of the Civil Rights Division in the U.S. Department of Justice and urging President Donald Trump to publicly denounce white supremacists (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

### **9.5.2 2<sup>nd</sup> BAA Dimension: Brand Transformative Influence**

The second dimension of BAA, brand transformative influence, is defined in this thesis as the consumer's perception of a brand's capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues. The consumer conception of brand transformative influence suggests that activist branding efforts should extend beyond potential and loyal consumers to reach wider audiences, including non-target market segments, in order to achieve broader influence. Consequently, the design and implementation of brand activism should prioritise a brand's contribution to wider public interest and societal goals (The British Academy, 2019) and emphasise the delivery of social and environmental benefits (Bocken et al., 2014). For instance, the British designer brand Vivienne Westwood has earned an activist image for its outspokenness on political matters related to LGBTQ+ rights and its credited contribution to the advancement of equality (Smith, 2022).

Furthermore, while successful direct communication of transformative outcomes should facilitate consumers' perception of brand transformative influence, brands should avoid making broad and unqualified claims about outcomes, such as "pushing forward gay rights", "working for gender equality", or "fighting against racism". Instead, brands should communicate with substantial and qualifiable support regarding specific influence outcomes identified and validated in the study. This involves demonstrating how the brand has contributed to changing or reinforcing the public's cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural responses to the focal issues. For instance, to substantiate its claimed transformative influence, a brand might highlight the volume of reads on its digital literature pertaining to the focal issues or the number of petitions signed by consumers in response to the brand's advocacy.

### **9.5.3 3<sup>rd</sup> BAA Dimension: Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent**

The third dimension of BAA, brand as consumer-empowering agent, is defined in this thesis as the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them. This consumer perception has several managerial implications.

Firstly, managers can draw aspirations from the metaphor of "consumption as voting" (Shawn et al., 2006, p. 1049) in their communications. This metaphor is expected to facilitate the belief that consumers can leverage their economic power to make self-determined choices in the marketplace as an alternate form of political participation that exhibits influence on socio-political issues. Secondly, the feeling of empowerment can also be nurtured by a sense of belonging (e.g. de Young, 2003; Speer et al., 2001). Brand managers can consider

portraying activist brands as similar-minded partners sharing the same socio-political vision and portraying consumer support for the brand as a collective consumer effort to realise their desired vision. Thirdly, a meta-analysis by Copeland (2022) also found a positive relationship between internal political efficacy positively and politically-driven consumption. This finding suggests that internal efficacy, which refers to “beliefs about one’s own competence to understand, and to participate effectively in, politics (Niemi et al., 1991, p. 1408), gives people a sense of agency or empowerment. In this sense, brand managers can remind consumers of their competence in symbolising brand choices as a form of political participation and imply the symbolism of activist brands as an empowering agent through which they can exhibit socio-political influence.

#### **9.5.4 Issue-Brand Fit on BAA**

The finding of the positive significant effect of issue-brand fit on BAA indicates that consumer perception of BAA is contingent on the perceived image fit between the brand and the subject issue. The positive effect corroborates the expectations that consumers have a more positive perception and evaluation of brand activism when the brand engages with issues that make sense. As such, brand managers should take into account the issue-brand fit in the decision of whether and which issue to engage the brand with. Regardless of other factors, engagement with an issue that makes sense to the consumers would elicit a more positive perception of the activist effort. In practice, brand managers can conduct a survey to its target segments to understand whether and the extent to which the brand fits with a list of prospective issues and take into account the score of fit in the decision-making process alongside with considerations.

### **9.5.5 The Insignificant Effect of Brand Egoistic Motives on BAA**

The results indicate that while consumers are able to reconcile brand egoistic motives, these motives do not have a significant negative effect on BAA. This finding has several managerial implications for brand managers. Firstly, the insignificant impact of egoistic motives suggests that consumers do not perceive brand activist practises more negatively for egoistic motives. Arguably, this may be because consumers often view activist brands as socio-political actors driven by economic interests and recognise the sequential influence of brand activism, regardless of the egoistic nature of BAA being a means for pursuit of brand-related interests. Therefore, brand managers do not have to hide their egoistic motives but could proactively acknowledge them to prevent consumer scepticism and brand hypocrisy. Denying egoistic motives can lead to perceptions of inconsistency in information and behaviour, resulting in a high level of perceived brand hypocrisy that undermines consumer evaluation of brand engagement with socio-political issues (Wagner et al., 2009). Indeed, prior research suggests that brand engagement with social and political issues is often viewed with suspicion by consumers (Barone et al. 2007), especially in the context of brand activism (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Mirzaet al., 2022; Hydock et al., 2020). In such a high-suspicion context, activist brands are advised not to deny their egoistic motives, but rather openly acknowledge them in a socially acceptable manner, highlighting the potential benefits for the brand as a proactive strategy to prevent scepticism and distrust. (Forehand and Grier, 2003).

### **9.5.6 The Significant Positive Effect of Values-Driven Values on BAA**

The results indicate that consumers are able to reconcile values-driven motives behind brand activism, and these perceived motives significantly affect BAA in a positive direction. This finding suggests that consumers perceive and evaluate brand activist practice more positively

when they believe that such practice is driven by the brand's values. Therefore, brand managers should invest considerable effort in ensuring that consumers attribute values-driven motives to the brand's activist efforts. This can be achieved by aligning activist messages conveyed through tangible branded objects or intangible messaging with the brand's purpose and values (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Thus, brand managers should clearly define the brand's core values and purpose and provide quantifiable evidence from past activities to convince consumers.

Additionally, when deciding whether to contribute to a socio-political issue and which stance to take, brand managers should consider the relevance of the issue to the brand's values. Communicating activist efforts and motivations to the public should be done within the framework of the brand's core values.

#### **9.5.7 Self-Brand Values Congruence Fully Mediates the Effect of BAA on Brand Love**

The results of model testing reveal that the effect of BAA on brand love is fully mediated by self-brand values congruence. This finding has important implications for the strategic management of BAA. Overall, this finding suggests that BAA can be a promising relationship-building strategy, but only when self-brand congruence in terms of values is established. This highlights that BAA actions can be seen as observable "self-relevant relationship-building action" (Park and MacInnis, 2018) that imbue brands with cultural meanings (e.g. Batra et al., 2019; Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; Price and Coulter, 2019) and instil values-related attributes in consumers' minds.

Furthermore, to generate positive reactions to the brand values (e.g. Gutman, 1982; Keller, 1993), brand managers can use BAA to build specific brand values that align with the values



priority of their target consumers, such as openness to change and self-transcendence. However, it is important to consider that different values may be more or less compatible with each other (Schwartz et al., 2006; 2012), and building a certain type of brand values may disappoint consumers who hold opposing values (Batra et al., 2017; Torelli et al., 2012). Therefore, the effectiveness of BAA as a branding strategy depends on achieving a net benefit as a calculation of loss and gain. For new or emerging brands with marginal market share, the potential customer loss is relatively low, making BAA a viable strategy to attract consumers based on human values. On the other hand, well-established (global) brands with a large market share can use BAA to establish widely-accepted brand values across different markets. However, these brands should be cautious as they risk losing market share if their existing customers have heterogeneous values. In contrast, brands with a highly homogenous consumer base in terms of values may benefit from achieving a high level of identification with the brand's values among their ideologically-homogeneous consumers, outweighing the potential loss.

#### **9.5.8 The Moderating Role of Issue Salience**

The results indicate that the effect of BAA on self-brand values congruence is contingent on issue salience. In other words, the more salient the subject issue is to the consumer, the stronger their identification with the brand's values for its BAA efforts. Therefore, brand managers are encouraged to engage with more salient issues to enhance the effectiveness of BAA as a congruence-building strategy. Popular brands can consider engaging with widely-salient issues, while niche brands can focus on issues specifically salient to their target market niche(s).

### **9.5.9 Brand Love Fully Mediates the Effect of Values Congruence on Purchase Intention**

The results indicate that brand love fully mediates the relationship between self-brand values congruence and purchase intention. The finding of this full mediation suggests that while values congruence is necessary for driving purchase intention, it is not sufficient on its own without the establishment of brand love. While it is unrealistic for brand managers to treat self-brand values congruence as a magical means to directly boost sales, values congruence should be organically incorporated as part of a comprehensive portfolio of relationship-building strategies that cater to all aspects of consumer expectations (i.e. expected brand utilitarian, hedonic, symbolic attributes and social performance), aiming to drive brand love and, ultimately, increase purchase intention.

### **9.5.10 Overall Managerial Implications and Recommendations**

Overall, the findings shed light on whether a brand should engage with divisive socio-political issues and help to determine which issues to associate with the brand. The findings in the present research provide encouragement to brands that have been strategically planning and implementing their activist activities based on a consistent framing of values that align with their target consumers. It is clear that consumers respond more favourably to brand activist initiatives that align with their stance, deliver transformative influence, and empowers them to gain control over socio-political issues. However, it is crucial to avoid joining the bandwagon solely for immediate brand benefits (e.g. financial performance, sales volume). The findings strongly suggest that BAA is very unlikely to directly increase consumer purchase intention in the absence of self-brand values congruence and brand love. Therefore, BAA should be viewed as a long-term branding strategy to improve brand image and build positive relationships with specific values-based market segments, rather than a short-term marketing technique to boost sales among general consumers.

For brands with no prior engagement, managers should exercise caution before engaging with polarising socio-political issues, ensuring a clear understanding of the brand's core values and purpose. Past efforts committed to socially-accepted issues, such as sustainability and child well-being, can serve as a foundation, along with the core values of brand loyalty and potential consumers. Framing BAA efforts based on the values priority of the target market segment, such as self-transcendence, can guide communication and reflect the brand's values-driven practice in a politically-polarised era.

In particular, brand managers should consider the fit between the brand and the issues, the salience of issues to target consumers, the core values of their potential and existing consumers, and whether the intended perception of BAA-eliciting brand values aligns with the core values of their target consumers. To facilitate this decision making, brand managers should conduct thorough market research to identify the core values of their target consumers and the major issue they are concerned about. Based on this information, a reference framing of values and issues should be developed to guide the strategic decisions and tactical implementation of BAA in a consistent manner.

The scale developed and validated in the present research for measuring BAA and its dimension can enable managers to identify various aspects of consumer perception and diagnose any gaps between strategic branding goals and consumer's actual perception as the branding outcome. Regarding activist branding, the scale developed to measure this dimension enables managers to measure consumer awareness of the activist branding initiatives, both in a general sense and with respect to specific channels of marketing communications, such as advertisements, product packages, and (online) store environment.

Upon consumer awareness of activist branding, brand managers can examine the effectiveness of activist branding in translating perceived brand transformative influence and consumer empowerment. It is worth noting that differences may exist between the perception scores across the three dimensions of BAA. For instance, consumers may be aware of activist branding but not recognise the sequential influence or feel empowered by such practices. Therefore, the identification of gaps between dimension scores suggests the need for responsive actions to address these gaps.

## 9.6 Implications and Recommendations for Policymakers

---

The conceptualisation and validation of BAA and its three dimensions highlight the influential role of commercial brands in socio-political issues from a consumer perspective. The consumer perception of BAA has important implications for policymakers from governmental institutions and NGOs.

For policymakers from governmental institutions, it is crucial for them to recognise and harness the growing potential of commercial brands in mobilising consumers to support or oppose agenda initiatives, shaping public deliberation, and driving progress in advancing socio-political issues. As the effectiveness of democratic deliberation depends on meaningful interactions among socio-political actors, official authorities are recommended to consider working not only with NGOs but also with activist brands to help frame the public deliberation and advance the status quo of socio-political issues. policymakers can utilise the BAA scale to identify influential activist brands and form partnerships with these brands to help drive the framing of deliberation and generate debates that aim towards potential solutions.

For policymakers from NGOs, they should be aware of the growing ability of activist brands to serve as an empowering agent. While prior research suggests that activist brands can help draw consumer attention and/or monetary support to NGOs as change agents (Lee et al., 2018; Nardini et al., 2021), the findings in this thesis highlight that consumers also perceive activist brands as having an agentic role in delivering transformative outcomes and empowering consumers. While it is unlikely that activist brands would replace the traditional role of NGOs as change agents, NGOs should evaluate and proactively prepare for potential

loss of constituencies due to competition from activist brands, which are viewed as relatively more competent according to prior research (e.g. Aaker et al., 2010). In preparation for this threat, the development and validation of the BAA scale provide them an effective tool for identifying influential activist brands by measuring prospective brands' transformative influence from a consumer perspective.

## 9.7 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

---

### 9.7.1 The Dynamic and Fluid Nature of CBRs

Aligned with the research aim of understanding how brand activism can build strong and positive CBRs, the conceptualisation of BAA and the testing conceptual model focus on satisfaction of consumer needs and expectations and its impact on brand love, a temporarily stable relationship structure. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 indicates that CBRs are not only dynamic in form but also in their development as a process phenomenon (Fournier, 1988; Alvarez and Fournier, 2021). Given the polarising nature of socio-political, future research needs to investigate whether and how brand activism may be perceived as a form of brand misconduct/transgression or corporate social irresponsibility, and its potential negative effect on CBRs.

Additionally, individuals' opinions and attitudes towards socio-political issues are contingent on values (Purko et al., 2011), which are dynamic and subject to contextual change over time within historical contexts (Brangule-Vlagsma et al., 2002). While this thesis uses cross-sectional data to examine consumer perception and response to BAA, future research can adopt a longitudinal approach to understand whether and how changes in consumer values and status quo impact BAA and CBRs. Such investigation is considered fruitful for generating insights into the strategic management of branding in an era characterised by polarisation and confrontation in an ever-evolving socio-political landscape (Weber et al., 2021).

### **9.7.2 Contextual Validity of BAA**

The conceptualisation and empirical examination of BAA and its conceptual model are deeply rooted in the theoretical foundation of deliberative democracy, within which various socio-political actors (e.g. individual consumers, brands, social movement organisations) are legitimate and willing to engage in discussions towards solutions to critical socio-political issues. For instance, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>) is a social movement organisation and non-departmental public body, which devotes to the promotion and enforcement of equality and human rights throughout the UK. Another well-known example is Stonewall (<https://www.stonewall.org.uk>), the largest social movement organisation in the UK that advocates for the equal rights, dignity, and increased visibility of the LGBTQ+ community. Stonewall has established close partnerships with prominent commercial brands, including Adidas and Coca-Cola (Stonewall, 2023a). These partnerships can take various forms, ranging from advertising to sponsoring Stonewall initiatives in support of social movement events such as Pride Parades and LGBTQ+ History Month (Stonewall, 2023b). Through these partnerships, social movement organisations, commercial brands, and consumers are interconnected in their efforts to support LGBTQ+ communities. Furthermore, Ingerthart (1981; 1997) argues that individuals from post-materialist cultures are more inclined to consider socio-political issues in their consumption and daily lives. Therefore, it is likely that this thesis has benefited from a high level of democracy and post-materialist values of the UK, as the chosen research site. Therefore, the findings in this thesis are deemed contingent on the level of democracy and post-materialist values in the research site. In particular, findings are expected to be more (versus less) applicable to and consistent in other countries characterised by a high level of democracy and post-materialist values, compared to authoritarian countries/regions that may restrict freedom of speech and other democratic



rights, or materialist countries/regions where individuals may exhibit lesser concern for socio-political issues. Future research should validate the conceptualisation and theoretical model of BAA by exploring the influence of contextual factors on consumer perception and response to brand activist initiatives.

### **9.7.3 The Effect of BAA in a Cross-Cultural Context**

This thesis, along with previous studies, provide initial findings of how consumers perceive and respond to brand engagement with socio-political issues in single-country contexts (e.g. Hydock et al., 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020). However, little attention has been devoted to the cross-cultural context, where values and political preferences vary both individual and national levels (e.g. Barnea and Schwartz, 1998; Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Considering the cultural differences between nations, responses to BAA are likely to differ significantly not only within nations but also across nations. With only limited generalisable information, marketers risk mismanaging BAA and damaging consumer well-being and brand equity, particularly for global brands targeting consumers with diverse cultural profiles (Torelli and Rodas, 2016). For instance, Nike and Adidas faced intense criticism and boycott in China, resulting in a significant share loss of 24% in the Chinese market when they boycotted Xinjiang cotton over human rights concerns in western countries (Hong et al., 2022). This highlights the need for future research to validate or challenge prior findings in a cross-cultural context and shed light on the design and implementation of BAA in a global context.

## 9.8 Chapter 9 Concluding Remarks

---

Overall, adopting a mixed-methods sequential exploratory approach, this thesis has conceptualised, validated, and operationalised the emerging yet under-investigated construct *brand activist attributes* (BAA) and its three dimensions, namely: *activist branding*, *brand transformative influence*, and *brand as consumer-empowering agent*. Moreover, the thesis has developed and empirically tested the conceptual model involving the antecedents and outcomes of BAA, as well as the mediators and moderators of the BAA effect on CBRs.

Theoretically, this thesis has contributed to the advancement of our understanding of brand attributes, brand activism, and CBRs in a polarised socio-political context, especially how brand activism can meet consumer needs and expectations regarding socio-political issues. More broadly, the thesis has contributed to the ongoing debate of the role of brands, especially commercially-charged activist ones, in the process of democratic deliberation and in society at large. Managerially, the results from this thesis suggested that BAA is a promising branding strategy that benefits consumers, brands, and societies, especially by building brand love through the mechanism of self-brand values congruence, and ultimately leading to an increased purchase intention in the long term. Additionally, the thesis provided insights for brand managers in their decision-making regarding the selection and incorporation of socio-political issues in their branding strategy. Lastly, limitations and future research directions were discussed.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Summary of the Literature Review: Key Tenets, Findings, Research Gaps and Future Opportunities

Section 2.2 Consumer-Brand Relationships (CBRs): How Consumers See and Interact with Brands	
<i>Seeing Brands with Human-Like Characteristics</i>	
Summary of Key Tenets and Findings	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Debates and counter evidence exist regarding whether consumers perceive brands with human-like characteristics.</li> <li>● Most studies explicitly or implicitly assume that consumers perceive brands with human-like characteristics to varying degrees, such as personality, values, and intentions.</li> <li>● Bibliometrics and meta-analytic reviews also examine the conditions under which these perceptions become more salient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avis et al. (2012); Yoon et al. (2006)</li> <li>● Aaker (1997); Torelli et al. (2012); Kervyn et al. (2012)</li> <li>● Eisen and Stokburger-Sauer (2013); Macinnis et al. (2017); Radler (2018)</li> </ul>
<i>The Dynamic of CBRs: Diversity, Key Constructs, and Theoretical Muddling</i>	
Summary of Key Tenets and Findings	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CBR-related constructs are deeply rooted in psychology constructs regarding interpersonal relationships, such as trust, attachment, and love.</li> <li>● CBRs are dynamic in form, as reflected by over 50 different typologies.</li> <li>● Dominant CBR constructs include brand trust, consumer-brand identification/connection, brand attachment, and brand love, among others.</li> <li>● Arguably, CBR-related constructs inherit from their interpersonal counterparts fuzzy definitions and conceptual overlaps, resulting in notable similarities in their conceptualisation, measurement and predictive power to CBR outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mael and Ashforth (1992); Rotter (1967); Sternberg (1986)</li> <li>● Fournier (1998; 2009)</li> <li>● Fetscherin et al. (2019); MacInnis and Folkes (2017)</li> <li>● Khamitov et al. (2019)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CBR is better to be described as prototypes, that is, an overall consumer perception of cognitive, affective, and behavioural brand experience, referred to as brand love.</li> <li>● Empirical research supports the satisfactory validity and reliability of brand love.</li> <li>● This thesis refers to strong and positive relationships as brand love, in line with the general description in the field of CBRs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Batra et al. (2012); Carroll and Ahuvia (2006)</li> <li>● Khamitov et al. (2019)</li> <li>● Fetscherin et al. (2019)</li> </ul>
<i>CBRs as a Process Phenomena: Initiation, Development, and Dissolution</i>	
<b>Summary of Key Tenets and Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CBRs are fluid as a process phenomenon and undergo various temporarily stable stages such as development, maintenance, and termination.</li> <li>● CBRs change over time due to fluctuations in personal, brand-related, and contextual factors.</li> <li>● Positive CBRs occur when the perceived benefits outweigh instrumental costs. Thus, brands should enable consumers to overcome the challenges and achieve desired goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fournier (1998); Gobe (2002); Russell and Schau (2014)</li> <li>● Coulter et al. (2003); Coulter and Ligas (2000)</li> <li>● Alvarez and Fournier (2021); Thomson et al. (2005)</li> </ul>
<i>How Consumers Perceive and Interact with Brands in Socio-Political Contexts</i>	
<b>Research Gap and Research Opportunities</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CBRs are primarily driven by the contextual meanings consumers derive from brands and their offerings.</li> <li>● Brand love can be cultivated by enabling consumers to achieve their desirable goals through the design, implementation, and delivery of brand offerings.</li> <li>● The effectiveness of brand offerings depends on the broader context in which the consumer, the brand, and their relationships are situated.</li> <li>● Research on CBRs in socio-political contexts, especially the politically-polarised context of brand activism, remains scarce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fennell (1978); Fournier (1998; 2009)</li> <li>● Epp and Price (2011); Tuli et al. (2007)</li> <li>● Fournier and Alvarez (2019); MacInnis et al. (2019)</li> <li>● Huff et al. (2021); Hydock et al. (2020)</li> </ul>

<b>Section 2.3 brand attributes: Building Strong and Positive CBRs</b>	
<i>Three Types of Brand Attributes (Utilitarian, Hedonic, and Symbolic)</i>	
<b>Summary of Key Tenets and Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● brand attributes refers to the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand’s attributes align with their needs and ideal expectations.</li> <li>● Academics identify, specify and clarify three primary types of consumer needs: utilitarian (e.g. solving a practical daily-life problem); hedonic (e.g. enjoying sensory pleasure), and symbolic (e.g. identifying with social groups).</li> <li>● Marketers aim to fulfil these needs by proposing, curating and implementing brand attributes, which have a positive impact on CBBs, supported by numerous meta-analyses.</li> <li>● Research indicates the boundary conditions of brand attributes that their effects depend on the salience of specific consumer needs and expectation within embedding consumption context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keller (1993; 2021); Park et al. (1986)</li> <li>● Chitturi et al. (2008); Fennell (1978); Sirgy et al. (1991; 1993); Voss et al. (2003)</li> <li>● Aguirre-Rodríguez et al. (2012); Liu-Thompkins et al. (2022); Weingarten and Goodman (2021)</li> <li>● Schade et al. (2016)</li> </ul>
<i>Brand Attributes and its Impact in a Socio-Political Context</i>	
<b>Research Gap and Opportunities</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Socio-political contexts shape consumers’ life tasks, themes and broader concerns, influencing the needs they expect brands to fulfil and their evaluation of brand attributes.</li> <li>● Brands exist to provide consumers with critical attributes, but the specific attributes they serve are contingent on ever-evolving consumer needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fournier (1998); Holt (1997)</li> <li>● Keller (1993; 2021)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current understanding of brand utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic attributes may fall short to address consumer needs regarding unsolved socio-political issues.</li> <li>• The evolution of brand attributes is necessary in response to the evolved and unsolved consumer needs within socio-political contexts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fennell (1978); Epp and Price (2011)</li> <li>• Keller (2021); Chandy et al. (2021); de Ruyter et al. (2022)</li> </ul>
<b>Section 2.4 Democratic Deliberation as Political Participation</b>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal democracy emphasises a vote-centric view, considering democracy as the arena where fixed preferences and conflicting interests are channelled through the mechanism of vote aggregation, representation, and elections.</li> <li>• However, this vote-centric perspective has been criticised for overlooking political participation beyond electoral context.</li> <li>• Deliberative democracy highlights communicative processes of opinion and will-formation that precede voting.</li> <li>• Deliberative democracy takes a talk-centric view and argues that political participation also involves debates and discussions that provoke and generate reasonable opinions, such as everyday talks on social media.</li> <li>• This thesis adopts the talk-centric view of political participation that goes beyond the electoral context and includes the deliberation process, where various actors interact with each other to debate and deliberate towards possible solutions to critical socio-political issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friedman (1962)</li> <li>• Stolle et al. (2005)</li> <li>• Dalton (2004)</li> <li>• Chambers (2003); Fung (2005); Lundgaard and Etter (2022)</li> </ul>

<b>Section 2.5 Consumers as Political Actors</b>	
<i>Consumers Responsively and Actively Engage in Political Participation</i>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Literature on participation in social movements often portray consumers as reactive resources, waiting to be mobilised by activists and social movement organisations.</li> <li>● Research on consumer movements highlights that consumers can be active actors in taking individual and collective actions to induce societal changes by leveraging their purchasing power.</li> <li>● Literature on political consumerism argues that politically-driven consumption practices represent an unconventional and informal form of political participation</li> <li>● Together, the multidisciplinary review suggests that consumers engage with and exert influence on socio-political issues through interaction with brands and other actors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Colli (2020); Tajfel (1981); Tajfel and Turner (1986)</li> <li>● Kozinet (2004); Varman and Belk (2009)</li> <li>● Stolle and Micheletti (2013)</li> <li>● Copeland (2014); Lee et al. (2018); Nardini et al. (2021)</li> </ul>
<i>Motivations for Consumer Political Participation</i>	
<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consumers engage in political participation to vent socio-political grievances and reduce internal tension.</li> <li>● Consumers who feel limited in electoral contexts may empower themselves through their participation in movements or political consumerism to advance and achieve collective goals in maintaining or challenging the status quo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Simon et al. (1998); Stolle and Micheletti (2013)</li> <li>● Simon et al. (1998); Talukdar et al. (2005); Tajfel and Turner (1986)</li> </ul>

<b>Section 2.6 Brands as Political Actors</b>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The multidisciplinary review (e.g. CSR, political CSR, brand activism, corporate political activities) challenges the conventional view of commercial brands as purely economic actors and suggests the perspective of commercial brands as a type of active actor within the deliberative political system.</li> <li>● Brands exist largely to increase economic efficiency through both market activities (e.g. performance of brand attributes) and non-market activities (e.g. CPA).</li> <li>● Regardless of motives behind, the social and political meanings and consequences of brand political activities should not be neglected.</li> <li>● Within the deliberative political context, when brands take stance and actions on socio-political issues, they play an active role in reinforcing or reshaping opinions and preferences regarding socio-political issues and thus help maintain or challenge the status quo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moorman (2020); Scherer and Palazzo (2007); Singer (2019)</li> <li>● den Hond et al. (2014); Hambrick and Wowak (2019)</li> <li>● Barnett et al. (2020); Singer (2019); Wickert (2016)</li> <li>● Dalton (2004); Nardini et al. (2020); Scherer et al. (2016)</li> </ul>
<b>Key Findings, Research Gap, and Future Opportunities</b>	<b>References</b>
<p>Recent research on brand activism has examined how consumers respond to brands that take stance and actions on polarised socio-political issues. These studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● share the similar root in moral theory and self-brand congruence theory.</li> <li>● reveal contradictory findings regarding the asymmetric negative or symmetric effect of brand activism on CBRs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bhagwat et al. (2020); Hydock et al. (2020); Moorman (2020); Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020); Vredenburg et al. (2021)</li> </ul>



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have not empirically validated the theoretical assumption of the self-brand (moral) congruence as the underlying mechanism.</li><li>• overlook the examination of whether the impact of independent brand activism incidents persists over time or whether and how a series of consistent activism incidents translate into a long-term brand perception.</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

These gaps hinder the understanding of whether and how brand activism fulfils consumer needs and expectations regarding socio-political issues.

Appendix 1. (continue)

<b>Section 2.7 A Political Marketing Perspective on Value Creation</b>	
<i>Ideas and Opinions of Socio-Political Issues are Need-Satisfying Offerings</i>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Political marketing applies the concept of marketing to understand how the creation, communication and persuasion of political ideas influence partisan commitment, votes, and electoral change. Political parties and candidates create, communicate and persuade voters with their political ideas regarding socio-political issues, which can be seen as political offerings from a marketing perspective.</li>   <li>● These political offerings aim to address voter’s needs of solving the “who/what-should-I-vote-for” problem. The alignment between these political offerings and voters’ preferences can satisfy voters’ needs, leading to their commitment to and votes for the political parties and candidates. This voters’ psychological consumption of political ideas is referred to as “voter value”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Butler and Collins (1994); Henneberg (2002).</li>   <li>● Brennan and Henneberg (2008); Reid (1988).</li> </ul>
<i>Multi-Actor Interactions Generate Ideas and Satisfy Needs</i>	
<b>Development of Theoretical Foundations</b>	<b>References</b>
<p>The previous sections have established that political participation goes beyond electoral contexts and encompasses the democratic deliberation process, where both consumers and brands play an active political role in shaping opinions and preferences regarding crucial yet unsolved socio-political issues.</p> <p>Multi-actor interactions in the process of democratic deliberation generate ideas and opinions regarding possible solutions to the issues.</p> <p>According to a comprehensive triadic-interaction framework, three sets of actors—consumers, brands and political entities (e.g. elected officials, legislative bodies, and non-governmental organisations with a political mission)—interact around socio-political issues to benefit the actors involved and the society at large.</p> <p>The triad-interaction framework is deemed facilitative to the research aim and objectives in this thesis, that is to understand how brands meet consumer needs and expectations regarding socio-political issues.</p>	<p>Sections 2.4 to 2.6 in this thesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Peterson and Godby (2020)</li>   <li>● Korschun et al. (2020)</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2. Semi-Structured Interview Protocol (Study 1)

<b>Purpose</b>
<p>The interviews aim to gather consumer articulations regarding the conceptualisation of BAA and an initial conceptual model of BAA, in particular, the interviews intend to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) To explore the nature and key attributes of BAA (<b>BAA conceptualisation</b>);</li><li>2) To identify factors that influence consumer perception of and responses to BAA (<b>Antecedents of the BAA</b>);</li><li>3) To understand consumers perceive and respond to BAA incidents and BAA brands (<b>Outcomes of the BAA</b>);</li><li>4) To understand the mechanism through which BAA influences consumer-brand relationships (<b>Mediators for the BAA effect</b>);</li><li>5) To identify the conditions under which the effect of BAA becomes more/ less pronounced on consumer-brand relationships (<b>Moderators for the BAA effect</b>).</li></ol>
<b>Introduction</b>
<p>Hello there! Thank you for your willingness to participate and be interviewed here.</p> <p>We'll be running through a few questions, and then have you talk about some brands. When you are thinking about the brands, I'd like you to speak out loud and tell me about everything you're thinking/ feeling to the extent that you feel comfortable doing so.</p> <p>This discussion is confidential – your name or identifiable answers won't be used publicly so please don't hesitate to speak your mind.</p> <p>There are no right or wrong answers – it's very important to say what you are actually thinking/ feeling.</p> <p>The interview will be recorded if you give (as you have given) your consent for me to do so and any identifiable information will be deleted before the interview transcription to protect your confidentiality.</p> <p>Kindly ask the participant to sign off the consent form on Google Drive if she/he has not done so.</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the consent and may I ask how much time you have for today's interview? It normally lasts between 30-45 mins to cover the questions.</p> <p>In the interview, my role is a listener and I very much look forward to hearing and learning from you.</p> <p>Before we start, do you have any questions concerning the interview?</p>

Appendix 2. (continue)

<b>Section 1 - Warm-up &amp; General Brand Perception</b>
<p>Tell me a little bit about yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are your hobbies? Where (city) do you live?</li> <li>- Do you have a <u>favourite</u> brand, and if so what is it and <u>why</u>?</li> <li>- Do you have a brand that you <u>dislike</u>?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What <u>other attributes</u> would you consider with regard to brands?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Section 2 - Perception of BAA</b>
<p>Off the top of your head, can you recall a brand that speaks out or acts on socio-political issues (such as human rights and social justice)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could you please <u>describe the instance</u> to me as detailed as possible?</li> <li>- Could you please tell me how you/ the public <u>feel and think about the issue</u>?</li> <li>- Do you think brands <u>can influence</u> the issue?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there anything else brands can do?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Do you think brands <u>should influence</u> the issue?</li> <li>- In your opinion, <u>why</u> do brands engage with the issue?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 3 – Response to BAA</b>
<p><i>Self-recalled instances</i></p>
<p>What do you/others <u>feel about</u> the brand (instance) you just mentioned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Why</u> do you feel this way?</li> </ul> <p>What do you/others <u>think about</u> the brand (instance)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Why</u> do you think so?</li> </ul> <p>Would the stance affect your brand <u>purchase decision</u>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (If no) <u>why</u> not?/ (If yes) <u>why</u> and <u>how</u>?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Photo-elicitation</i></p>
<p>I want you to pick two issues from the list and hence I want to show you a collection of images related to that issue and ask a few questions. [After the interviewee has browsed the collection]:</p> <p>What do you <u>feel about</u> these images?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Why</u> do you feel this way?</li> </ul> <p>What do you <u>think about</u> the images?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Why</u> do you think so?</li> </ul> <p>Would these images, by any means, affect your brand purchase decision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (If no) <u>why</u> not?/ (If yes) <u>why</u> and how?</li> </ul> <p>What if the images tell an <u>opposite</u> story?</p>
<b>Section 4 – Factors in Perception and Response regarding BAA</b>
<p>Do you think that there are <u>situations</u> where your responses (e.g. feelings, thoughts and purchase intentions) would be <u>different</u> (in extent/ direction)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could you please <u>describe</u> the situation to me?</li> <li>- <u>Why</u> would such a situation change your responses?</li> <li>- Are there <u>any other</u> situations you would like to talk about as well?</li> </ul>

Appendix 2. (continue)

<b>Personal Information</b>	
Age:	Could you please tell me which bracket your age falls into: 18-25, 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66-70, 70+
Gender:	If you feel comfortable, could you please tell me with regard to gender how you identify?
Ethnicity	If you feel comfortable, could you please tell me with regard to ethnicity how you identify?
Occupation:	Could you please tell me what your occupation is?
Nationality:	Could you please tell me what your nationality is?
<b>Ending</b>	
Okay – are there any more things you would want to say before we end the interview?	
Thank you so much for your cooperation.	
How did you experience being interviewed about the topic today?	
<b>Probes</b>	
Verifying	I'm sorry, could you repeat what you just said? I didn't quite hear you.
Direct probes	What do you mean when you say . . .? Why do you think . . .? How did you feel about . . .? Can you tell me more? Can you please elaborate? I'm not sure I understand X. . . .Would you explain that to me? How did X affect you? Can you give me an example of X?
Indirect probes	Neutral verbal expressions such as “uh-huh,” “interesting,” and “I see”; Verbal expressions of empathy, such as, “I can see why you say that was difficult for you...” Mirroring technique, or repeating what the participant said, such as, “So you were shopping at . . .

### Appendix 3. Design Survey Questionnaire (Study 2c - Pre-Screening Survey)

#### Section 1 Introduction and Consent

---

Many thanks for your interest!!

You are invited to take a 1-min prescreening survey. This survey is part of a research about consumer awareness of brand involvement in social and political issues. Participants who meet certain criteria might receive an invitation to a longer 5-mins survey.

Your responses will be completely anonymous and protected under The General Data Protection Regulation (EU). Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Junan He (jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk).

\*Your participation is greatly valued, but we emphasise that participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, please read and understand the Participant Information Sheet and agree to the Consent Form by ticking “Yes” below.

Yes  No

\*\*Prolific IDs: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 2 Issue and Brand Nomination

---

\*Question 1: Are there any socio-political issues that are important to you? Socio-political issues are unresolved and polarising issues involving both social and political factors. Example issues include, but are not limited to, human rights, social justice, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, immigration, LGBTQ rights, gender/racial equality, abortion rights and animal welfare:

Yes  No

Display logic: The survey will terminate if the participant answers “No” to Question 1. The following questions will be displayed ff the participant answered “Yes” to Question 1:

**\*\*Please name below the issue of most importance to you:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Question 2:** Do you know a commercial brand that gets involved in the issue you put down above? If you do, please pick “Yes” or, alternatively, pick “I don't know”.

Yes  I don't know

Display logic: The survey will terminate if the participant answers “I Don't Know” to Question 2. The following questions will be displayed ff the participant answered “Yes” to Question 2:

**\*\*Please name One brand below:** \_\_\_\_\_

**End of Survey**

Thank you! Your answers have been recorded - your time in completing this survey is much appreciated!

The sections are presented in the order as shown in this appendix

\*Single-choice questions with force response

\*\*Open-ended questions with force response

#### **Appendix 4. Definition, Sources, Scale Items (Study 2b - Expert Judgement Survey)**

<b>Definition of brand activist attributes (BAA)</b>
BAA is defined in this thesis as the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to meet consumer needs and expectations of transformative influence and empowerment regarding socio-political issues through activist branding. It encompasses three dimensions: activist branding, brand transformative influence, and brand as consumer-empowering agent.
<b>Summary of Sources</b>
Study 1 conducted in the present research: 520 pages of recording transcripts from 32 interviews.
Literature review on <i>Brand Activism</i> : Bhagwat et al., (2020); Dodd and Supa (2014); Hydock et al. (2020); Mirzaei et al. (2022); Moorman (2020); Mukherjee and Althuizen, (2020); Vredenburg et al (2020); Schmidt et al. (2021); Sibai et al (2021); Wettstein and Baur (2016).
Literature review on <i>Political CSR</i> : Fröhlich and Knobloch (2021); Frynas and Stephens, (2015); Huber et al. (2021); Scherer et al. (2016); Wickert (2016).
Literature review on <i>Consumer Empowerment</i> : Brennan and Henneberg, (2008); Denegri-Knott et al. (2006); Kozinets et al (2021); McShane and Sabadoz, (2015); Shankar et al. (2006); Shaw et al. (2006); Wathieu et al. (2002).
Literature review on <i>Political Consumerism</i> : Copeland, (2014); Holzer, (2006); Stolle et al. (2005).



Appendix 4. (continued)

**Activist Brand**, the first dimension of BAA is defined in this thesis as the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints.

36 Items	Sources
<p>1. The brand takes my side on [the issue].</p> <p>2. The brand's view of [the issue] is similar to mine.</p> <p>3. The brand shares my belief about [the issue].</p> <p>4. The brand declares support for my stance on [the issue].</p> <p>5. The brand disagrees with what I think about [the issue]. (Reverse-Coded, hereafter R)</p> <p>6. The brand takes positive actions on [the issue].</p> <p>7. The brand campaigns about [the issue].</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sources from Literature Review</b></p> <p>Bhagwat et al. (2020):            “Many stakeholders now <u>expect firms to demonstrate their values by expressing public support for or opposition to one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue. [...] firms to take sides on hot-button socio-political issues. [...] Firms are increasingly taking activist stances on sociopolitical issues. [...] Starbucks committed to [...] Nike supported [...] Papa John’s Pizza took the opposite stance on [...] firm’s public demonstration (statements and/or actions) of support for or opposition to one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue. (p. 1) [...] Firms have a long history of engaging in political activities, including campaign contributions, lobbying, and donations to political action committees. (p. 3) [...] CSA in the form of actions (vs. statements), many of which pertain to the marketing mix such as introducing new products, redesigning packaging, and creating or terminating advertising campaigns.” (p. 16).</u></p> <p>Ciszek and Logan (2018):            “Organisations <u>publicly communicate their positions on social issues and try to engage publics on difficult subjects (p. 118). [...] The company declares its commitment to [...] Ben &amp; Jerry’s lends its voice and assets to support causes (p. 119). [...] Ben &amp; Jerry’s is one of few corporations to declare racism a serious social problem and explicitly express a commitment to fighting for racial justice. [...] Ben &amp; Jerry’s posted its support for Black Lives Matter. [...] Ben &amp; Jerry’s uses multiple social media platforms to disseminate content” (p. 120).</u></p> <p>Dodd and Supa (2014):            “Public declarations surrounding social-political issues may be proactive organisational initiatives [...] The organisation has become <u>aligned with these positions (p. 2) [...] Stakeholder perceptions regarding organisational engagement in and stances on social-political issues may differ (p. 3). [...] An organisation making a public statement or taking a public stance on social-political issues. [...] the organisation is linked in some way with the issue. [...] Starbucks’ recent public stance in support of gay marriage, or Chick-fil-A, which has publicly taken the opposite stance on the issue. [...] Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz announced support for the legalization of same-sex marriage. [...] the company’s</u></p>

8. The brand remains silent on [the issue]. (R)	support for the ‘traditional family’, <u>opposition to</u> gay marriage legislation, and <u>support for</u> anti-gay marriage advocacy groups” (p. 5).
9. The brand keeps a distance from [the issue]. (R)	Fröhlich and Knobloch (2021, p. 102113): “A company/its official representative (CEO) personally <u>takes a clear position on a socio-political issue.</u> ”
10. It is okay for the brand to engage in [the issue].	Frynas and Stephens (2015, p. 483): “Companies can use traditional political activities such as <u>lobbying</u> and CSR activities such as strategic philanthropy interchangeably in the pursuit of business objectives. [...] At the same time, studies have suggested that companies continue to exercise political pressure by <u>affecting regulatory changes in relation to social and environmental issues</u> [...]”
11. The brand has the right to freedom of opinion on [the issue].	Huber and Schormair. (2021, p. 467): “ <u>Advocating collaborative and inclusive approach to problem-solving.</u> [...] <u>Maintaining the status quo.</u> [...] <u>Approaching competitors and NGOs to find common solutions.</u> ”
12. The brand is entitled to express its view of [the issue].	Hydock et al. (2020): “Consumers increasingly expect brands to “ <u>pick a side</u> ” on divisive sociopolitical issues. [...] Brands are increasingly <u>taking public stances on divisive social and political issues</u> [...] the National Football League <u>instituted a controversial policy</u> [...] Nike <u>featured Colin Kaepernick, the polarising face of the protests, in a prominent ad campaign</u> (p. 1135).
13. I do not have a problem with the brand picking a side on [the issue].	[...] The <u>taking of a public stance on a controversial socio-political issue</u> [...] A brand takes a <u>public stance on a controversial socio-political issue.</u> [...] The <u>vocal promotion of controversial values and ideals</u> (p. 1136). [...] had <u>recently taken a stance on Brexit</u> (p. 1142). [...] The target brand had recently <u>taken a position on...</u> (p. 1145) [...] The target brand had <u>taken a stance on the issue of abortion</u> (p. 1147). [...] <u>the brand had taken a stance on abortion</u> ” (p. 1148).
14. The brand should be constrained from responding to [the issue]. (R)	Mirzaei et al. (2022, p. 1): “Many brands are moving toward <u>embedding social and political issues in their marketing campaigns by taking a stance and addressing major issues.</u> [...] the corporate world is taking a proactive approach to <u>addressing social issues.</u> ”
15. The brand ought to keep away from [the	

issue]. (R)	Moorman (2020): “Public speech or actions focused on partisan issues made by or on behalf of a company using its corporate or individual
16. The brand advances its practice considering [the issue].	brand (p. 388). [...] There will be firm stakeholders who want to <u>maintain the status quo on these issues and those who seek a changed world</u> . As a result, when brands <u>engage on these topics</u> , they need to <u>pick a side and either challenge or defend the status quo</u> . [...] <u>contribute to the world in which they operate</u> (p. 389). [...] Brand political activism is <u>justified</u> because brands are powerful cultural actors. This status imbues brands with cultural authority and this authority, in turn, offers the licence to or establishes an expectation of involvement in social issues. [...] Social change is the company’s
17. The brand implements changes in its operation to improve [the issue].	raison d’être. <u>Products and services are viewed as tools for creating change in the world</u> (p. 390). [...] However, new entrants and small companies can also play the teacher role, such as <u>packageless groceries and nontoxic baby care products</u> . [...] <u>Build the best product</u> , cause no unnecessary harm, use business to <u>inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis</u> ” (p. 391).
18. The brand updates its policy in line with my view of [the issue].	Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020): “Brands <u>take a stand on controversial socio-political issues</u> (p. 772) [...] <u>taken a public stand on divisive social or political issues</u> . [...] the act of <u>publicly taking a stand on divisive social or political issues</u> ” (p. 773).
19. The brand’s policy on [the issue] is wrongful. (R)	Scherer et al. (2016): “Businesses not only influence politics via <u>lobbying</u> [...] They turn into <u>political actors</u> themselves – i.e. they co-create their institutional environment (p. 274). [...] <u>turn corporations into political actors</u> [...] This includes corporate contributions to different areas of governance [...] <u>the enforcement of social and environmental standards</u> along supply chains or the <u>fight against</u> [...] they <u>are directed to the effective resolution of public issues</u> in a legitimate manner (p. 276). [...] Firms influence their regulatory environment or public policy by way of <u>lobbying, establishing relationships with government officials</u> , political inducements and ‘soft money’ contributions, or corruption (p. 277) [...] They can avoid strict regulation or even <u>negotiate regulation with governments</u> and force them into a race to the bottom (p. 278) [...] <u>Corporations started to behave as political actors</u> (p. 279). [...] PCSR rather tries to <u>formulate conditions of legitimate political will-formation</u> and rule enforcement in particular in contexts” (p. 283).
20. The brand discourages employees from speaking out on [the issue]. (R)	Schmidt et al. (2021): “Stakeholders <u>expect firms to demonstrate</u> their values by taking socio-political stances. [...] Brands can <u>stand for a purpose</u> (p. 1). [...] Individuals <u>give greater moral approval to acts</u> , which demonstrate a concern for the welfare of others or a conscious desire to do what is perceived as right, than to acts rooted in self-interest. [...] <u>Brands becoming socio-politically active</u> (p. 2). Commercial intent can co-exist with a <u>commitment to a sociopolitical cause</u> (p. 3).
21. The brand conveys positive messages about [the issue] in its commercials.	
22. The brand censors information about [the issue] in its public	

displays or communications. (R)	Companies <u>adopt causes</u> [...] brand managers do not want to <u>become involved in contentious issues</u> ” (p. 4).
23. The brand’s advertisements feature those activists who share my view of [the issue].	Sibai et al. (2021): “Many brands strive to <u>position themselves as activists</u> , that is, <u>moral actors promoting social, legal, business, economic, political, and environmental reform through their communication and practice</u> . Ben & Jerry’s <u>giving a voice to [...]</u> Starbucks <u>condemning</u> Donald Trump’s attacks on Muslims [...] (p. 1651). [...] A brand aims to ‘ <u>promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to make improvements in society</u> ’ [...] activist brands explicitly aim to <u>promote social benefits</u> [...] They can promote those benefits through both <u>intangible messaging work and the implementation of tangible changes in the way the organisation they are embedded</u>
24. The brand supports activists who share my stance on [the issue].	in operates (p. 1652) They create objects (e.g. products, ads, press releases, or statements) whose elements are part of <u>several orders of worth and/ or hold different moral standing simultaneously</u> . [...] Benetton has <u>spoken up through its advertising about various social problems</u> , such as racism and religious hate. <u>Across its campaigns</u> , Benetton's images <u>motivate viewers to respond to the social problems at hand</u> (p. 1656). [...] activist brands often choose to <u>support other</u>
25. The brand cuts ties with activists who share my stance on [the issue]. (R)	<u>actors viewed as moral leaders, such as nongovernmental organisations</u> [...] provide them financial assistance through <u>sales redistribution partnerships</u> . [...] Activist brands <u>help these moral leaders disseminate their messages through their products, shops, and communications</u> [...] (p. 1658) The company <u>fostered the movement via its social media and media relations</u> ” (p. 1659).
26. The brand displays objects in stores that signal my stance on [the issue].	Vredenburg et al. (2020): “Consumers <u>want brands to take a stand on sociopolitical issues</u> . [...] Stakeholders are pushing companies to <u>wade into sensitive social and political issues</u> —especially as they see governments failing to do so effectively. [...] We <u>publicly stated our support for [...]</u> <u>take concrete steps to dismantle [...]</u> Brand activism involves both <u>intangible (messaging) and tangible (practice) commitments to a sociopolitical cause</u> [...] <u>tangible (practice) commitments to a sociopolitical cause</u> .
27. The brand’s products or services take account of [the issue].	[...] Brand activism goes beyond merely <u>advocacy/messaging and involves alignment with corporate practices</u> ... (p. 444) [...] Consumers increasingly <u>expect big brands to enter the sociopolitical domain</u> (p. 445). [...] Messages are backed up by <u>tangible changes within the organisation</u> to support employees, customers, and stakeholders through, for example, <u>modifications to corporate practice and organisational policies</u> [...] <u>partnerships aimed at facilitating social change</u> ” (p. 448).
28. The brand makes positive changes to products and services in response to [the issue].	Wettstein and Baur (2016): “ <u>Voicing or showing explicit and public support for certain individuals, groups, or ideals and values with the aim of convincing and persuading others to do the same</u> . (p.200) [...] Lobbying is an activity, ‘by which corporations attempt to

<p>29. The brand has connections with politicians or policymakers who share my stance on [the issue].</p>	<p>shape government policy in ways favourable to the firm'. [...] Thus, <u>lobbying for good</u> denotes a company's adoption of <u>common (ethical) lobbying strategies for the promotion of social policy, public goods [...] and basic rights</u> [...] to <u>advance social change</u> then individuals or other institutions, including non-profit." (pp. 201-202). Wickert (2016, p. 792): "Businesses <u>taking a political role to address 'regulatory gaps' ...</u>"</p>
<p><b>Source from Interviews</b></p>	
<p>30. The brand donates to political parties which oppose my view of [the issue]. (R)</p>	<p>"I think the brands could <u>communicate their marketing campaigns that related to standing out for [others on] the political issues.</u>" (P01) "Maybe it can <u>donate to some non-profit organisations</u> which contribute to..." (P03)</p>
<p>31. The brand lobbies for better public policy on [the issue].</p>	<p>"In Wetherspoons, they make like a <u>little magazine</u> that they put out inside the pubs every month and [there are] always pro-Brexit stuff in there. [...] Like have a <u>diverse workplace</u> at every level – like the proportion of men and women, like black, white, Asian and African people, like gay, straight and bi people at work at every level of the company, not just CoO or CEO. [...] I think <u>paying employees a reasonable wage</u> has far more of an impact on changing lives. That's more like a cultural change in the business. [...] <u>Making our bottles out of plastics</u> that can easily be recycled more. [...] They change the packaging of the product. [...] They could be <u>entitled to</u> display their own opinions. [...] He and his companies are entitled to his opinions. [...] Yeah, I think it's definitely completely fine for UK businesses to have a political opinion about this" (P05)</p>
<p>32. The brand defends bad public policy on [the issue]. (R)</p>	<p>"They are <u>entitled to their point of view</u>. They can make that choice. [...] <u>I don't think you should constrain anyone from expressing their points of view.</u> [...] Within reason, I think people should be able to say what their point of view is. [...] She [Vivienne Westwood] continues with Catherine Hammett, who was the very first person to <u>do T-shirts printed with slogans</u>. Westwood was doing that kind of thing at the same time and also makes [making] that sort of clothing <u>with big political statements</u>. [...] It's pretty unusual for her to not to make political points." (P06)</p>
<p>33. The brand works with non-governmental organisations that help [the issue].</p>	<p>"So when Black Lives Matter started up, they thought they'd promote it by having two black Mercedes instead of silvers. So, they <u>changed the car to the colour of the issue at hand.</u>" (P08)</p>
<p>34. The brand donates to non-governmental organisations that contribute to [the issue].</p>	<p>"So once they said that they want to ban animal testing, I think they will do more things like <u>innovate the testing</u></p>

<p>35. The brand is in partnership with the wrong non-governmental organisations in terms of [the issue]. (R)</p>	<p>technique or the testing process.” (P09)</p> <p>“They <u>have their stances</u>. [...] They <u>voice out their opinions</u>. [...] They <u>don’t really support</u> what the government is doing. [...] ““They can <u>hire</u> different people. [...] Part of <u>my money goes into the fund [to NGOs]</u> and the fund is actually <u>going to help</u> [...] A shop could put a lot of <u>memos on a wall</u> and then the memos are filled with words like ‘Keep-It-On-Hong-Kong’ or ‘Hang-In-There-Hong-Kong-People’. (P10)</p>
<p>36. The brand’s selection of partners aligns with my stance on [the issue].</p>	<p>“I guess it is <u>his right</u> if he wants it.” (P14)</p> <p>“In a democratic society, <u>both positions (on a certain issue) are legitimate</u>. Okay, so ultimately, I wouldn’t censor either of them. [...] They are just kind of a <u>central marketing operation</u> that’s part of a sort of bigger supply chain and <u>some of their practices are questionable there from an ethical standpoint</u>.” (P16)</p> <p>“Brands like Facebook and Google <u>have been involved in political issues</u>. [...] <u>through their traditional marketing: through social media but also through traditional TV marketing</u>. Use social media and TV media because TV News, commercials and adverts. [...] Conservative <u>government takes money from these companies</u>. [...] These ministers are very much in touch with some of these business owners. [...] <u>Corporations advise governments</u>. [...] They’ll make a donation, or <u>make a donation</u> to a party to influence the party. [...] Lots of banks <u>have been aligned with a charity</u>.” (P17)</p> <p>“And they should be <u>working together with NGOs</u> and other charitable organisations.” (P18)</p> <p>“<u>Hiring more women</u>.” (P20)</p> <p>“I <u>don’t have a problem with them doing [having stances on issues] it</u>.” (P21)</p> <p>“I think <u>everyone’s entitled to their opinion</u>. [...] “I can think of Nike has [having] <u>partnered with Stonewall</u>.” (P23)</p> <p>“<u>Make a donation</u> [...] Brands set up and run NGOs, which xxx. [...] I know Wetherspoons <u>produces some sort of magazines</u> in the pub. And they are quite political and quite biased as well, you know. [...] Also, you know, those organisations can <u>donate to political parties that support Brexit</u>. They are <u>lobbying MPs</u>. [...] <u>The government was caved into pressure from the brand to legislate and subsidise to facilitate those activities</u>.” (P24)</p>

“They are still entitled to have an alternative view.” (P27)

“The UK government criticised them for having a view on assertion fiscal issues. [...] A company that basically produces ice-cream was sharing its views and having views on social and political issues. [...] A large multinational that appears to have progressive views. [...] The brand has values. [...] I'm aware that Nike has long been a vocal, and possibly the highest-profile player in terms of a brand being vocal and expressing its views on socio-political issues. [...] And they do respond to news directly. [...] The brand spends time engaging with people around [the issue] on their social media channels. [...] Ben & Jerry's I've seen them on social media and they do... they do appear to be interested in engaging in conversation. [...] There was literally like... like mock newspapers on the... on the tables or like, you know, complaining about Brexit. [...] They treat the employees incredibly poorly and resist unionisation for instance.” (P28)

“They do quite a lot of Instagram stories in promoting the LGBT societies, kind of posting pictures of crime against the LGBT community.” (P29)

“They change their own stance within their own company in terms of employment and treatment of employees/workforce within the workplace. [...] We can change what we're doing, and we can show other people that we're changing too. And we can educate other people. They change their own workplace to make it genuinely equal participation amongst people from all different minorities. [...] Brands are associated with NGOs which are trying to promote xxx.” (P30)

“The money they make could go to those [non-governmental] organisations to campaign on these issues [animal cruelty], right. So yeah, big brands, as well, put that money into it as well to help with a campaign.” (P32)

*Appendix 4. (continue)*

**Brand Transformative Influence**, the second dimension of BAA, captures the consumer’s perception of a brand’s capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues.

30 Items	Sources
<p>1. Scientific knowledge about [the issue] is advanced by the brand.</p> <p>2. Research for solutions to [the issue] is supported by the brand.</p> <p>3. Scientific knowledge about [the issue] is undermined by the brand. (R)</p> <p>4. The brand could draw people's attention to [the issue].</p> <p>5. Positive messages about [the issue] reach more people with the brand.</p> <p>6. The brand could help people become aware of [the issue].</p> <p>7. When people look at the brand or its commercials, they might think more about [the issue].</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Source from Literature Review</b></p> <p>Ciszek and Logan (2018):  “[...] the public support for individuals, groups, ideals, or values that is intended to <u>persuade others to do</u> the same. (p.118) [...] Ben &amp; Jerry's has <u>used the power of its business to motivate fans and promote policies that advance the cause of social justice</u> (p.119). [...] Ben &amp; Jerry's <u>challenges dominant ideologies about</u> race that govern a social order. [...] the company seeks to <u>motivate members of its publics</u> who may be against racism [...] Ben &amp; Jerry's <u>asks fans to support</u> [...] <u>increase public awareness of</u> the reality of racism. Ben &amp; Jerry's corporate discourse asserts that if <u>more individuals understood</u> that racism is real, then more people would <u>understand why anti-racism efforts are important</u>. [...] In essence, to <u>increase public understanding about the need for</u> racial justice, Ben &amp; Jerry's attempts to <u>educate its publics about racism</u>. It aims to <u>inform its audiences about issues related to</u> racism in the United States by <u>discussing key impacts of systemic racism on its website</u>” (pp. 121 - 122).</p> <p>Denegri-Knott et al. (2006, p. 961):  “[...] an internalisation of an external discourse of normalcy and conduct. Internalisation of norms and codes of conduct take place via iterative and co-evolving processes of “objectivisation” where <u>truths are established to effect normalising behaviour</u>, and “subjectivation” where appropriate practices of the self results in the constitution of a subject as a known, free and empowered agent. Hence, individuals are simultaneously objectivised by institutional discourses and disciplinary power and subjectivised by the practices of the self.”</p> <p>Frynas and Stephens (2015, p. 483):  “[...] <u>companies can be proactive actors engaged in changing the institutional environment in which they operate.</u>”</p> <p>Huber and Schormair. (2021, p. 467):  “<u>Aiming for a change of industry standards.</u>”</p> <p>Moorman (2020):  “Companies like Nike have a responsibility to <u>help shape social awareness and action around important issues</u> because they have a lot of cultural power [...] brands are <u>powerful social actors that embody ideas and meanings important to society</u>. (p. 389) [...] Brands as educators view: In this view, the company uses its marketing prowess</p>



8. The brand could help more people understand that [the issue] is real and important.	to move consumers in a direction that is better for society. [...] Brand political activism <u>teaches customers new ideas and behaviours in order to bring about social change.</u> (p. 390) [...] <u>Participate in important social debates and to be involved in activities important to the world.</u> [...] Coca-Cola should <u>use its marketing prowess to shift consumer preferences.</u> Just like Coca-Cola ‘ <u>taught the world to sing</u> ’, it has the ability to <u>create social change</u> on this important sustainability topic. [...] <u>addressing important social issues in ways that can help society move forward</u> ” (p. 391).
9. Part of people’s doubt about [the issue] is due to the brand. (R)	Schere et al. (2016, p. 276): “[...] <u>engaging in public deliberations, collective decisions</u> [...]”
10. Some positive discussions about [the issue] are sparked by the brand.	Schmidt et al. (2021, p. 2): “Brands can adopt a sociopolitical stance either because they perceive an opportunity to <u>create a point of difference</u> [...] <u>activist brands promote the common good by trying to change society.</u> ”
11. When people look at the brand or its commercials, they might talk more about [the issue].	Sibai et al. (2021): “ <u>Activist brands commonly engage in controversies to redefine which opinions and ideas are acceptable to express publicly.</u> [...] Brand activism can <u>transform markets and society by shaping what is considered right/wrong, good/bad, or worthy/unworthy in the industries in which [brands] operate</u> (p. 1651). Brands demonstrate high sensitivity <u>by raising burning moral issues.</u> [...] We suggest that brands and market actors can <u>contribute to</u> (re)defining the boundaries of free speech [...] Specifically, we highlight the role of activist brands as social actors who can influence free speech boundaries by shaping what is considered acceptable to be said in public. [...] A brand aims to “ <u>promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to make improvements in society</u> ” [...] <u>activist brands reform moral judgments, challenging existing judgments and promoting alternative ones</u> (p. 1652). Brands can focus on <u>nurturing existing controversies</u> by <u>demonstrating support or opposition to</u> one side of a partisan issue. Brands can also focus on <u>generating new controversies</u> by making shocking <u>statements or revelations around societal issues.</u> In both cases, brands are <u>orchestrating public discussions of</u> what ideas and opinions are “right/wrong, good/bad, or worthy/ unworthy” to
12. The situation of [the issue] is better off with the brand.	express in the public space. [...] <u>disseminating ads with sexually explicit content</u> or disrespecting religious beliefs (p. 1653). [...] They <u>pioneer new social norms</u> delineating what can be said in public spaces. (p. 1658) [...] During controversies, <u>brand judgments are shaped and reflected in public opinion debates taking place in the press and on social media.</u> <u>These judgments are promoted by</u> journalists, bloggers, cultural intermediaries, competitor representatives, and other experts (e.g. lawyers, regulators, and marketing consultants)” (p. 1659).
13. The brand adds value to the current conversation about [the issue].	judgments and promoting alternative ones (p. 1652). Brands can focus on <u>nurturing existing controversies</u> by <u>demonstrating support or opposition to</u> one side of a partisan issue. Brands can also focus on <u>generating new controversies</u> by making shocking <u>statements or revelations around societal issues.</u> In both cases, brands are <u>orchestrating public discussions of</u> what ideas and opinions are “right/wrong, good/bad, or worthy/ unworthy” to
14. Public debates about [the issue] are hindered by the brand. (R)	express in the public space. [...] <u>disseminating ads with sexually explicit content</u> or disrespecting religious beliefs (p. 1653). [...] They <u>pioneer new social norms</u> delineating what can be said in public spaces. (p. 1658) [...] During controversies, <u>brand judgments are shaped and reflected in public opinion debates taking place in the press and on social media.</u> <u>These judgments are promoted by</u> journalists, bloggers, cultural intermediaries, competitor
15. The brand could help	representatives, and other experts (e.g. lawyers, regulators, and marketing consultants)” (p. 1659).

correct wrong judgements on [the issue].	Vredenburg et al. (2020):
16. Some people are inspired by the brand to take my stance on [the issue].	“Support a cause, raise awareness, <u>change behaviour</u> , and encourage sociopolitical change (p. 447). [...] brands may also see their very purpose as <u>educators for a better society</u> (i.e. shifting consumer behaviour) or see themselves as significant and legitimate sources of cultural power, thus providing them the responsibility to incite societal change” (p. 448).
<b>Source from Interviews</b>	
17. People’s view of [the issue] is positively influenced by the brand.	“The brand <u>raises awareness of the public and tries to draw more attention to the social issue.</u> ” (P02) “The brand <u>builds awareness among the public too.</u> ” (P03)
18. Some people are misled on [the issue] by the brand. (R)	“I think the Body Shop is actually doing it [anti-animal-testing] right and that <u>other companies in the same field should learn from it.</u> [...] like if one brand says no to something or they stop doing something then it kind of <u>puts pressure on other brands</u> [...] There will be <u>someone that acts first like a leader, and when others see it, they might follow, or they might feel the pressure to [follow].</u> [...] <u>other brands can start doing so (anti-racism advertisement) even if they are only doing it to keep [an] image.</u> Yeah, actually, [it] would do something good to how business practices. <u>It's like people are starting to buy Adidas because they're doing this [anti-]racism campaign.</u> Then maybe we should do something similar and they're doing it because of [the] image, right? Actually, the fact is that they're actually doing good stuff too even though they don't mean to. [...] So say Nike’s racism campaign. Yeah, because Adidas saw Nike was doing it. I [Adidas] don't wanna fall behind and they make people think that they are good. Then obviously, they're doing it for that reason. But campaigning stuff still helps people, right?” (P04)
19. People do not think straight about [the issue] partially because of the brand. (R)	“ <u>It is culturally accepted for these companies in the West to do it as a business practice.</u> They do and consumers are then going to buy it. So the cultural change would be a big leading brand like Nike, Adidas, Zara or TopMan making one of <u>these distinct changes in the way that business operates</u> , so it's not like a short-term change. And the business culture is not like the wider culture, but <u>the business culture of how we operate as a business. It is like taking out those standards that we can't accept and we're going to do it in a better way.</u> ” (P05)
20. The brand is important in a process where [the issue] becomes normal.	“Because if brands do not speak out for this kind of thing, no one will raise awareness. [...] It's also good that <u>it educates people that not only [women] stay at home and do the housework. [...] If the brand advertisements educate</u>
21. The brand has contributed to the process where [the issue] has become a more regular thing to see.	<u>children or the young generation in the wrong way, people will be growing up with that kind of thoughts.</u> ” (P07)
22. The brand has mostly	

been positive for social norms of [the issue].	“The cosmetic products they sell always need some tests and most of the tests or <u>the process involve animals</u> . So once they said that they want to ban animal testing, I think they will <u>do more things like innovate the testing technique or the testing process.</u> ” (P09)
23. [The issue] becomes less acceptable to people partially because of the brand. (R)	“I think that once <u>one company starts to do something</u> [...] they were actually against animal testing [...] I think that made a difference because now most companies would be promoting the same kind of thing. I guess in this country anyway.” (P11)
24. The brand is influential in people’s good behaviours around [the issue].	“The brand <u>spreads the information about</u> [...] When people <u>look at the brand, they will think more about...</u> ” (P12) “Its advertising is important, and perhaps they could even put a reminder or bigger reminders. [...] When you <u>expose people to the problem more on their faces, it could be something they could perhaps do in terms of small changes</u> , but that could lead to bigger, bigger, hopefully, bigger changes like more people would remember to recycle. [...] It sounds to me like they try and do the same across the countries. <u>They try to bring the culture, the Swedish culture everywhere they go</u> , yeah. [...] Well, yeah, I feel like that they want to try to be a bit better in the supply chain like if you look at the IKEA report, they talked about not only the people but the environment” (P13)
25. The brand could help people behave better around [the issue].	“If people see <u>these brands changing that could lead the way for other people to change their values</u> . [...] “[...] like The Body Shop, where the whole package was about presenting products that are sustainable, environmentally sustainable, healthy, and ethical, in terms of the production prep practices but <u>that’s kind of like a model for other companies to follow, isn’t it?. How many other companies have been able to sort of replicate that?</u> ” (P16)
26. Bad habits around [the issue] are reinforced by the brand. (R)	“[...] we also see where Facebook, kind of, worked, a couple of years ago, to <u>affect how people saw what they saw on their timelines to affect their kind of opinions and thoughts.</u> ” (P17)
27. Industrial standards regarding [the issue] have been improved by the brand.	“[...] they always use that typical type of model but the difference here is that it is trans. It’s not male or female. It’s transgender. Well, in the modern world, all these movements like the LGBT movements are becoming very prominent. So <u>it’s becoming a norm. I think it’s sort of normalised now. They will think it’s normal.</u> [...] It will have some effect because if people never see that they will not think about it, if they see them [being portrayed] in a positive way, I think they will be more positive towards it. Some people may not be positive, but if it’s sort of presented in this way then <u>it will become normal. It’s just what we consider normal.</u> ” (P19)
28. The brand has mostly been positive for the industrial practice around [the issue].	
29. The brand innovates industrial practice around	

<p>[the issue].</p> <p>30. Industrial practice around [the issue] might be worse with the brand. (R)</p>	<p>“The brand <u>helps get the messages across to a wider section of the public.</u> [...] There are people who were not sure perhaps and then they’ve been convinced to vote Brexit as a result, yeah. I mean, Dyson and Wetherspoons, they were both very vocal, weren’t they, during the campaign of Brexit. And I think it probably helped some people make the decision to vote for Brexit.” (P21)</p> <p>“The brand can <u>change social habits.</u> [...] <u>The message [...] gets to far more people with the brand.</u> [...] It just sends out the wrong message; <u>it gives like the wrong sort of view of what woman should do and what sex is like.</u> [...] “I think one person starts it and then the other companies and the other brands get their passes to get on board because otherwise, they’ll be seen as animal unfriendly. So you know, I think now, I can’t think of many brands that aren’t animal friendly because people just got conscious about products.” (P22)</p> <p>“<u>They would have more sort of crowd and sway, you know, in supporting any sort of LGBT,</u> for example.” (P23)</p> <p>“I think <u>they influence people coming into the pub and they might have thoughts like, you know ‘Let’s get Brexit done!’ ‘Make Britain Better.’</u> [...] <u>People are persuaded by the brand about</u> [...] They pay... <u>they actually pay some universities, so the alcohol research is funded by the alcohol industry. So they’ll pay the researchers to carry out a bit of research,</u> but the research is to show it’s got a health benefit or something like that, so, it’s not real proper academic research. [...] Because <u>the alcohol industry will fund it to answer your question</u> [...] adverts would just show maybe two men together; two men buying a house; two men with a baby, you know. <u>I feel like that’s normalising it and saying this is normal British life,</u> you know. You might be straight, or you might be gay, but <u>you just got to see a range of things and that’s kind of a normal society. So it’s a process where people don’t see it as weird or different or shocking.</u> They just see ‘All right, so that’s two gay men buying a house.’ you know. That’s about the cultural changes. [...] I suppose if their brands with an image of somebody being gay, or gay people being together. <u>That is part of normalising it, isn’t it? That’s how they do it and they have to advertise it around the brand.</u> [...] So that makes a difference because, in people’s heads, it’s like ‘Oh right.’ So yeah, that’s an option, you know. That’s a normal thing to see. It is part of the culture now. It is culturally acceptable now. And sort of like... that’s <u>reinforced when you see that. It seems to be normal in the brand advert or something.</u> [...] Guinness, you know, the habit associated with Guinness is incorporated into all the stuff you see in the country or the merchandise posters everywhere. And pubs are all over. The branding is incredible, so it very much, you know, <u>supports Ireland and Irish people drinking,</u> you know. [...] Like the football... football and then the place got Carlsberg across there. So immediately, the brand’s trying to get in the face of <u>people that might drink a lot of beer which is people watching football.</u>” (P24)</p>
--	--

	<p>I think if more fashionable brands promoted it (vegetarianism), people would do it because they just like that brand. So they'll be persuaded by that brand because a lot of people are in love with certain brands. [...] “I think they were <u>revolutionary</u> in [at] the time. But I think they've educated them and they brought it to people's attention about cruelty. [...] And then <u>other companies are allowed to get on board</u>, maybe partly because they realised that they want to keep the sales going so they have to.” (P26)</p> <p>“The brand engages in the conversation about... [...] The brand is committed to and spending time on the civil discourse about... [...] The brand is contributing to dialogue around... [...] The brand adds value to the conversation about the issue. [...] The brand generates conversation, then, maybe even discourse.” (P28)</p> <p>“The brand helps <u>get more and more people to know about it</u>.” (P29)</p> <p>“[...] some oil and gas companies have consistently <u>lied to the public about their knowledge of processes of global warming</u> and their effects on the atmosphere... [...] you'll find that ExxonMobil deliberately <u>concealing their own research about their own projects</u> for planetary warming [...] they actually <u>engaged in actively lying to the public so producing false and misinformation</u>. [...] they continued for decades not only to <u>conceal their knowledge of the harmful effects of tobacco and human health</u> but also to <u>produce misinformation and disinformation to manufacture doubt among amongst populations</u>, about the harmful effects of tobacco. [...] Well, what they do is that they undermine the certitude of scientific knowledge. They actively produce doubt in the minds of people who are not experts themselves so that ordinary members of the public to doubt the truth of scientific knowledge.” (P30)</p> <p>“So I mean <u>if the advertisement deliberately uses a lot of [racial] diversity, that it would then impact people's attitude towards diversity</u>. [...] adverts on website[s] will then normalise that. [...] so at least if it's presented in the media, then at least that's a way of exposing people to different cultures and normalising it, basically.” (P31)</p>
--	---

*Appendix 4. (continue)*

**Brand as Consumer-Empowering Agent**, the third dimension of BAA, is defined in this these as the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them

to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them.	
Items	Sources
	<b>Source from Literature Review</b>
1. The brand connects me with [the issue].	Brennan and Coppack (2008): “ <u>Enable consumers to make more effective decisions and be aware of the wider impact on society of some of those individual decisions (p. 307).</u> [...] Consumers will <u>be enabled to make informed choices</u> between different goods and services (p. 308). [...] It aims to <u>enable members to share and discuss ideas</u> [...] provide a central voice for consumers (p. 309).”
2. The brand acts on [the issue] for my benefit.	
3. The brand speaks out for me on [the issue].	Copeland (2014, p. 174): “Enables individuals to <u>address personal and political problems related to quality of life concerns outside the realm of electoral politics.</u> ”
4. I could contribute to [the issue] through the brand.	
5. My choice of the brand does matter to [the issue].	Denegri-Knott et al. (2006, p. 955): “[...] aggregate sums of well informed, autonomous <u>consumer agents possess greater power than individual producers.</u> [...] power as the ability of A to make B do something that B would not otherwise do.”
6. Not buying the brand is what I can do for [the issue]. (R)	Holzer (2006): “Consumers wield some kind of power that they can <u>use to effect social change through the marketplace (p. 405).</u> [...] <u>Individual consumers ‘lend’ their purchasing power to them and thus enable them to establish effective threats on the marketplace.</u> [...] It makes sense for the individual to <u>lend support to an organisation if that appears to be an effective venue for collective action (p. 412).</u> ”
7. I express my stance on [the issue] by not buying the brand. (R)	Huber and Schormair. (2021, p. 467): “ <u>Portraying oneself as innovative change-agent in comparison to other companies.</u> ”
8. Boycotting the brand helps me vent my frustration with [the issue]. (R)	Kozinet et al. (2021): “ <u>Providing increased consumption choice and the expanded ability to exercise or make better consumption choices</u> [...] <u>Enabling expression</u> [...] or other forms of public resistance. [...] opportunities [...] for consumers to collectively
9. The brand serves its	affect organizations, markets, or systems (p.431). [...] <u>Affording individual consumers with the ability to</u> [...] effect

<p>owner to exhibit good influence on [the issue].</p>	<p>change in organizations, markets, or among other consumption related factors or actors. [...] Increasing consumers' awareness of the <u>connections between their own consumption and marketplace behaviours to wider social and/or environmental issues</u> [...] providing consumers with... (p.431-432). [...] provide consumers with opportunities to</p>
<p>10. The brand represents its owner's rightful ideology about [the issue].</p>	<p>[...] provide consumers with tools allowing them to [...] empowerment is considered to be a process in which <u>people either assert, or are provided, ways to gain 'control over the factors which affect their lives'</u>. Empowerment implies <u>a strengthening or enabling, the granting of abilities, rights, or authority to perform certain acts or reach particular objectives.</u> [...] empowerment is considered to be <u>a more agentic process in which a person gains more freedom,</u></p>
<p>11. The CEO vocalises her/his wrong judgements on [the issue] through the brand. (R)</p>	<p><u>capacity, or control without necessarily needing to engage in any sort of structural or activist system change.</u> [...] the ability to exert power and influence in the market. [...] We therefore conceptualise consumer empowerment as <u>the strengthening of a person's abilities, rights, or authority to consume or otherwise fulfil their objectives as a marketplace actor"</u> (p. 429).</p>
<p>12. The brand shares its owner's wrongful view of [the issue] (R).</p>	<p>McShane and Sabadoz (2015, p. 548):  <u>"Consumer empowerment is a state of being whereby consumers are free to enact and even privilege citizenship roles in the marketplace in such a way that they are cognitively able to pursue both economic/rational interests [...] the ability to make choices within the existing marketplace to one based on the consumer's state of being. Specifically, it focuses on the extent to which consumers are free to enact citizenship roles in the marketplace."</u></p> <p>Moorman (2020, p. 390):  <u>"Brand political activism fulfils company responsibility to contribute across stakeholders to the world in which they operate. [...] From the perspective of brand activism, it offers a natural bridge to involvement in related societal-level debates, and this view should heighten its occurrence."</u></p> <p>Stolle et al. (2005, p. 246):  <u>"When people engage in boycotts or "buycotts" with the aim of using the market to vent their political concerns [...] consumer choice of producers and products based on political or ethical considerations, or both. Political consumers choose particular producers or products because they want to change institutional or market practices. They make their choices based on considerations of justice or fairness, or on an assessment of business and government practices. [...] their market choices reflect an understanding of material products as embedded in a complex social and normative context, which can be called the politics behind products."</u></p> <p>Schmidt et al. (2021):</p>

“Consumers [...] engage with brands they feel make a difference (p. 1). [...] Managers recognize that brands exist in a social context and should deliver value to different stakeholders. It has been argued that the adherence to the latter, often reflects the beliefs of a founder or leader. (p. 2) [...] Consumers can be motivated to express their sociopolitical orientation and belonging, through ethical behaviour that includes both boycotting and promoting products. [...] Consumers act politically through consumption, they also believed that they could influence society through their actions. [...] This argues that there is an opportunity for organisations to embrace sociopolitical issues as a way of meeting peoples’ desires for participation (p. 4).”

Shankar et al. (2006, p. 1014):

“Moreover, people when conceptualised as consumers, have been given, or alternatively have acquired more power, control and influence over what they consume. [...] empowerment is thus equated to the power to exercise choice. [...] Choice as a manifestation of people’s ability to exercise free-will.

Shaw et al. (2006):

“Consumers can be seen as creating the societies of which they are a part by their purchases just as they may influence their environments by their votes in political elections. [...] The act of buying is a vote for an economic and social model, for a particular way of producing goods. [...] James sees his market vote as enabling him to “influence another country.” (p. 1051) [...] political consumption to describe consumption activities which use the market system as a channel for political participation (p. 1057). [...] An opportunity to signal her ethical values and concerns [...] through considered consumption choices. The adoption of voting strategies emphasises consumer citizenship and feelings of responsibility to enact change. [...] The need to act, however, was perceived as imperative as individuals embraced the notion of responsibility in their consumption choices (p. 1059). [...] consumers who view their engagement in consumption both in terms of individual responsibilities for its wider effects and often vaguely conceived collective actions for the common good (p. 1061).”

Wathieu et al. (2002):

“The perception of empowerment will be driven less by the size of the provided choice set than by the consumer’s ability to specify and adjust the choice context (p. 299). [...] the ability to shape (i.e. to expand as well as to constrain) the composition of one’s choice set is a key determinant of the experience of empowerment” (p. 303).

**Source from Interviews**

“If I consume products from those brands, I feel like that I can help...” (P01)



“My money will support what I want to support. [...] I can contribute a little bit to the topic that I care like the environmental issue. So I am going to support it by buying. [...] By supporting the brand, I am supporting something that is out of my control.” (P02)

“The brand gives me a feeling like I’m personally doing something meaningful to help... [...] That’s an active case of me trying to protect human rights when it comes to brands.” (P03)

“If I’m buying from them then I’m implicitly supporting that sort of practice. [...] It’s a feeling that you’re doing the right thing. [...] The brand speaks out for me.” (P04)

“He (the owner of Wetherspoons) is a very pro-Brexit person, so he obviously used his business to vocalise this [Brexit] to the working-class kind of customers.” (P05)

“Westwood was doing that kind of thing at the same time and also makes [making] that sort of clothing with big political statements. [...] She was just part of a social group that was firmly left-wing and she was always part of the politics of the left.” (P06)

“Make sure that I won’t spend my money on the organisations that are opposite to your political stance. [...] What they can do right now is actually to support those brands on their day-to-day basis.” (P10)

“I feel like I’m doing my little bit by not buying the brand.” (P11)

“Maxim’s is connected with the Chinese government and even the owner is showing a strong political stance supporting the Chinese government. [...] Starbucks had never said anything about the political things, but we found out [that] there’s a connection between the Starbucks and the Maxim Company.” (P12)

“Walt Disney was possibly racist. So that it is a sort of saying that Disney is a racist corporation. So that’s something that, when I see Disney, I do think of.” (P17)

“I don’t want to give my financial support to things like pro-Brexit [...] Because I don’t want to give my money to support it. I think it makes things worse, you know.” (P24)

	<p><u>“International brands represent the interest or the ideology or the values from a certain particular kind of subset of people.” (P25)</u></p> <p><u>“Buying the brand it's an example of me just doing something on an issue over which I don't feel like having much agency or control. [...] Boycotting the brand is an example of me doing what I can do in this case.” (P28)</u></p>
--	--

## **Appendix 5. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 2c - EFA Survey)**

### **Section 1 Introduction and Consent**

Many thanks for your interest! In the survey, you will be instructed to name and answer questions about a brand that gets involved in a social and political issue of importance to you. It will take approx. 5 minutes to complete.

This survey is part of an ethically-approved PhD project that aims to investigate consumer response to brand involvement in social and political issues. Your responses will be completely anonymous and protected under The General Data Protection Regulation (EU). Please note that the survey contains attention check questions and payment for participation is subject to response quality. Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Junan He ([jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)).

\*Your participation is greatly valued, but we emphasise that participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, please read and understand the Participant Information Sheet and agree to the Consent Form by ticking “Yes” below.

Yes  No

### **Section 2 Issue and Brand Nomination**

\*\*Please name below ONE socio-political issue of importance to you (Socio-political issues are unresolved social or political matters under public debate. Example issues include, but are not limited to, human rights, social justice, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, immigration, LGBTQ rights, gender/ racial equality, abortion rights and animal welfare): \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Please think of and name ONE commercial brand that gets involved in the issue you put down above: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Prolific ID: \_\_\_\_\_

You have done a great job so far!

Before continuing please know that people have different opinions about the following questions and there are no right or wrong answers. It is your personal opinions that we value. Only your personal experience or knowledge is important and required to answer the questions. Your accurate and honest answers will help the researchers to progress and approve your submission as soon as possible. Although some questions may seem similar, each is unique in important ways. Now, let's begin!

**\*\*\*Section 3 Response to the 30 BAA Scale Items**

From now, please keep [the issue] and [the brand] you named earlier in mind and answer to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
[The brand]'s products or services take [the issue] into account.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] keeps its distance from [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] campaigns about [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] conveys messages about [the issue] in its adverts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand]'s communications take [the issue] into account.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand]'s workplace policies are in line with my stance on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] takes my side on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] supports activists campaigning on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[The brand] declares support for my stance on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] displays products or slogans in (online) stores that reflect my stance on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] serves as a platform for me to help [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I (can) positively contribute to [the issue] through [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I (can) make a positive difference in relation to [the issue] by supporting [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I (can) have a say on [the issue] by buying [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting [the brand] is one of the ways I (can) help [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending my money on [the brand] (can) help(s) [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boycotting [the brand] is one of the ways I (can) take my stance on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I (can) help improve [the issue] if I choose [the brand] over other brands.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I (can) help [the issue] by buying [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I (can) use [the brand] to feel a sense of control over [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I (can) use [the brand] as a "vote" in relation to [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] has a positive influence on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some good behaviours around [the issue] are motivated by [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The situation surrounding [the issue] is improving due to the involvement of [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] (can) draw(s) people's attention to [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] (can) help(s) more people understand that [the issue] is real and important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] has a negative influence on [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peoples' view of [the issue] is influenced positively by [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] (can) help(s) people become aware of [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[The brand] is important in normalising [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you paying attention? Please click "Strongly Agree" to this question.

I swim across the Atlantic Ocean to get to work every day.

**Section 4 Demographic**

**\*Education**

- Primary school or below     Secondary school  
 Sixth Form/College     Undergraduate degree     Postgraduate degree or above

**\*Gender**

- Male     Female     Non-binary     Prefer not to say

**\*Age**

- 18-24     25-34     35-44     45-54     55- 64     65 or older

**End of Survey**

Thank you! Your answers have been recorded - your time in completing this survey is much appreciated!

The sections are presented in the order as shown in this appendix

\*Single-choice questions with force response

\*\*Open-ended questions with force response

\*\*\*Within this section, all questions require force response to a single-choice option and are presented in randomised order within that section

### Appendix 6. Definition, Source, Scale Items, and Alpha Values (Study 3a - CFA Survey)

Construct	Definition and Scale Items	Sources and Applications	Alpha
<b><i>Brand Activist Attributes (BAA) with 3 Factors and 20 Items</i></b>			
<b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to enact transformative influence on the status quo of socio-political issues and empower the consumer to engage with these issues in the marketplace.			
1st BAA Factor: <i>Activist Branding</i> (5 Items)	<b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints.  <b>Scale items</b> (developed in this thesis, 7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding the issue and [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements. 1. [The brand]'s products or services take [the issue] into account. 2. [The brand] campaigns about [the issue]. 3. [The brand] conveys messages about [the issue] in its adverts. 4. [The brand]'s communications take [the issue] into account. 5. [The brand] displays products or slogans in (online) stores that reflect my stance on [the issue].	Study 2c conducted in the present thesis	.87
2nd BAA Factor: <i>Brand Transformative Influence</i> (6 Items)	<b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of a brand's capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues.  <b>Scale items</b> (developed in this thesis, 7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding the issue and [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements. 1. [The brand] takes my side on [the issue]. 2. [The brand] declares support for my stance on [the issue]. 3. [The brand] has a positive influence on [the issue]. 4. Some good behaviours around [the issue] are motivated by [the brand]. 5. [The brand] (can) help(s) more people understand that [the issue] is real and important. 6. Peoples' view of [the issue] is influenced positively by [the brand].	Study 2c conducted in the present research	.91



<p>3rd BAA Factor: <i>Brand as Consumer- Empowering Agent</i> (9 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them.</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (developed in this thesis,7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding the issue and [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [The brand] serves as a platform for me to help [the issue].</li> <li>2. I (can) positively contribute to [the issue] through [the brand].</li> <li>3. I (can) make a positive difference in relation to [the issue] by supporting [the brand].</li> <li>4. I (can) have a say on [the issue] by buying [the brand].</li> <li>5. Supporting [the brand] is one of the ways I (can) help [the issue].</li> <li>6. Spending my money on [the brand] (can) help(s) [the issue].</li> <li>7. I (can) help improve [the issue] if I choose [the brand] over other brands.</li> <li>8. I (can) help [the issue] by buying [the brand].</li> <li>9. I (can) use [the brand] to feel a sense of control over [the issue].</li> </ol>	<p>Study 2c conducted in the present research</p>	<p>.96</p>
<p><b>Constructs Related to Predictive Validity (Four Constructs, 14 Items)</b></p>			
Construct	Definition and Scale Items	Previous Applications	Alpha
<p><i>Brand Attitude</i> (4 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> “the sum of salient beliefs a consumer holds about a product or service, multiplied by the strength of evaluation of each of those beliefs as good or bad” (Pitta and Katsanis, 1995, p. 55).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point semantic differential scale) Please tell us what you think about [the brand] you named.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bad/Good</li> <li>2. Dislike/Like</li> <li>3. Negative/Positive</li> <li>4. Unfavourable/Favourable</li> </ol>	<p>Holbrook and Batra (1987)</p> <p>Grohmann (2009)</p> <p>Diamantopoulos et al. (2012)</p>	<p>.87</p> <p>.94</p> <p>.92</p>

<p><i>Brand Affect</i> (3 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> “a brand’s potential to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer as a result of its use” (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, p. 82).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I feel good when I use this brand.</li> <li>2. This brand makes me happy.</li> <li>3. This brand gives me pleasure.</li> </ol>	<p>Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001)</p> <p>Grohmann (2009)</p> <p>Halkias and Diamantopoulos (2020)</p>	<p>.96</p> <p>.89</p> <p>.96</p>
<p><i>Positive Word of Mouth</i> (WoM, 3 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> informal, person-to-person communication between private parties concerning the evaluation of a brand, a product, or a service, which might include bringing one’s awareness to a brand, making positive recommendations to other about a brand, and so on (Anderson, 1998; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Walsh and Beatty, 2007).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b>(7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I’m likely to say good things about this brand.</li> <li>2. I would recommend this brand to my friends and relatives.</li> <li>3. If my friends were looking for a new brand of this type, I would tell them to try this brand.</li> </ol>	<p>Walsh and Beatty (2007)</p> <p>Maxham and Netemeyer (2002)</p>	<p>.95</p> <p>.83 - .96</p>
<p><i>Purchase Intention</i> (4 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the consumer’s propensity to buy a product or service (Dodds et al., 1991; Morrison, 1979).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is very likely that I will buy this brand.</li> <li>2. I will definitely try this brand.</li> <li>3. The probability that I will purchase this brand is very high.</li> <li>4. I am willing to buy this brand.</li> </ol>	<p>Diamantopoulos et al. (2021)</p> <p>Dodds et al., (1991)</p> <p>DeCarlo et al. (2013)</p>	<p>.97</p> <p>.96 - .97</p> <p>.98</p>

**Constructs Related to Discriminant Validity (Three Constructs, 12 Items)**

Construct	Definition and Scale Items	Sources and Applications	Alpha
<p align="center"><i>Corporate Social Responsibility</i> (CSR, 5 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> “the various forms of company involvement with charitable causes and the non-profits that represent them” (Lichtenstein et al, 2004, p. 16).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [The brand] is committed to using a portion of its profits to help non-profits.</li> <li>2. [The brand] gives back to the communities in which it does business.</li> <li>3. Local non-profits benefit from [the brand]’s contributions.</li> <li>4. [The brand] integrates charitable contributions into its business activities.</li> <li>5. [The brand] is involved in corporate giving.</li> </ol>	<p>Lichtenstein et al. (2004)</p> <p>Lacey et al. (2014)</p> <p>Homburg et al. (2013)</p>	<p>.90</p> <p>.94 - .95</p> <p>.90</p>
<p align="center"><i>Brand Hedonic Attributes</i> (5 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the extent to which the offerings of hedonic pleasure, cognitive stimulation or variety meet consumer desire for more sensory and emotional aspects of experience (Babin, 1994; Keller, 1993).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Please tell us what you think about [the brand] you named.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not fun/Fun</li> <li>2. Dull/Exciting</li> <li>3. Not delightful/Delightful</li> <li>4. Not thrilling/Thrilling</li> <li>5. Unenjoyable/Enjoyable</li> </ol>	<p>Voss et al. (2003)</p> <p>Chitturi et al. (2008)</p> <p>Melnyk et al. (2012)</p> <p>Diamantopoulos et al. (2012; 2021)</p>	<p>0.95</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>.88 - .93</p>

<p><i>Symbolic/ Self- Expressive Attributes (2 Items)</i></p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the extent to which offerings serve as a symbolic means for consumers to externally communicate their self-concepts to others (Banister and Hogg, 2004; Escalas and Bettman, 2003).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Take a moment to think about [the brand] you named. Describe this person using personality characteristics such as reliable, smooth, etc. Now think about how you would like to see yourself (your ideal self). What kind of person would you like to be? Once you've done this, indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements: 1. The personality of [the brand] is consistent with how I would like to be (my ideal self). 2. The personality of [the brand] is a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self).</p>	<p>Malär et al. (2011)</p> <p>Sirgy et al. (1997)</p> <p>Sirgy and Su (2000)</p> <p>Nam et al. (2011)</p>	<p>.94 - .95</p> <p>.82 - .90</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>
<b>Measurement of Attention Check, Marker Indicator, Demographics (9 Items)</b>			
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Definition and Scale Items</b>	<b>Previous Applications</b>	<b>Alpha</b>
<p>Attention Check (3 Items)</p>	<p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) 1. Are you paying attention? Please click “Strongly Agree” to this question. 2. Are you paying attention? Please click “Strongly Agree” to this question. 3. Are you paying attention? Please click “Strongly Agree” to this question.</p>	<p>Viglia et al. (2021)</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Marker Indicator (3 Items)</p>	<p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) 1. Blue is my favourite colour. (tapping into acquiescence bias) 2. I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable. 3. There have been occasions where I took advantage of someone. (Reversed)</p>	<p>Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares (2021)</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Education</p>	<p>1. Primary school or below. 2. Secondary school. 3. Sixth Form/College. 4. Undergraduate degree. 5. Postgraduate degree or above</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Gender</p>	<p>1. Male. 2. Female. 3. Non-binary. 4. Prefer not to say</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>(1) 18-24; (2) 25-34; (3) 35-44; (4) 45-54; (5) 55-64; (6) 65 or older</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>

## **Appendix 7. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 3a - CFA Survey)**

### **Section 1 Introduction and Consent**

Many thanks for your interest! We really appreciate your help!

During the survey, you will be instructed to name, and answer questions about, a brand that (does not) get(s) involved in a social and political issue of importance to you. It will take approx. 8 minutes to complete.

This survey is part of an ethically-approved PhD project. Your responses will be completely anonymous and protected under The General Data Protection Regulation (EU). Please note that the survey contains attention check questions and payment for participation is subject to response quality in line with Prolific's attention check policy.

\*Your participation is greatly valued, but we emphasise that participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, please read, and ensure you understand, the Participant Information Sheet and agree to the Consent Form by ticking "Yes" below.

Yes  No

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Junan He (jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)

### **Section 2 Issue and Brand Nomination**

\*\*Please name ONE socio-political issue of most importance to you (Socio-political issues are unresolved and polarising issues involve both social and political factors. Example issues include, but are not limited to, human rights, social justice, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, abortion rights, LGBTQ+ rights, gender equality, racial equality, animal welfare, cost of living, climate change and immigration.): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Do you know a commercial brand (for example Nike, The Body Shop, Ben & Jerry's, Lush, McDonald's, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Wetherspoon, Apple, Innocent, Dove, Adidas, etc) that gets involved in the issue you put down above?

Yes  No

Display logic - display the question below if answer **YES** to the previous question:

**\*\*Please name a commercial brand that gets involved in the issue you put down above. The brand can be one that you come up with or one of the brands we mentioned (Nike, The Body Shop, Ben & Jerry's, Lush, McDonald's, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Wetherspoon, Apple, Innocent, Dove, Adidas, etc):** \_\_\_\_\_

Display logic - display the question below if answer **NO** to the previous question:

**\*\*Please name a commercial brand that DOES NOT get involved in the issue you put down above. The brand can be one that you come up with or one of the brands we mentioned (Nike, The Body Shop, Ben & Jerry's, Lush, McDonald's, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Wetherspoon, Apple, Innocent, Dove, Adidas, etc):** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Prolific IDs:** \_\_\_\_\_

Before carrying on please know that people have different opinions about the questions. It is your personal opinions that we value, and only your personal experience or knowledge is important and required to answer the questions. There are no right or wrong answers! Although some questions may seem similar, each is unique in different ways. We will be grateful if you could please read each of the questions carefully.

Appendix 7. (continue)

**\*\*\*Section 3 Predictive Constructs**

Please keep the brand you named in mind while answering the following questions.

What do you think about this brand?

<i>Brand Attitude</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
Dislike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Like
Negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positive
Unfavourable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Favourable
Constructs: <i>Brand affect, WoM, Purchase Intention</i>		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<i>Brand Affect 1</i> I feel good when I use this brand.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Brand Affect 2</i> This brand makes me happy		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Brand Affect 3</i> This brand gives me pleasure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>WoM 1</i> I'm likely to say good things about this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>WoM 2</i> I would recommend this brand to my friends and relatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>WoM 3</i> If my friends were looking for a new brand of this type, I would tell them to try this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Purchase 1</i> It is very likely that I will buy this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Purchase 2</i> I will definitely try this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Purchase 3</i> The probability that I will purchase this brand is very high.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Purchase 4</i> I am willing to buy this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Attention Check</i> Are you paying attention? Please click "Strongly Agree" to this question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Section 4 Condition Check**

---

Please keep the brand and the issue you named in mind while answering the following questions.

\*To what extent does this brand get involved in the issue?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much

**\*\*\*Section 5 Judgement Items**

---

Please keep the brand and the issue you named in mind while answering the following questions.

Constructs: <i>BAA (Branding, Influence, Agent), CSR, Hedonic Attributes, Symbolic Attributes, Marker Items, Attention Check Questions</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<i>Branding 1</i> This brand's products or services take the issue into account.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Branding 2</i> This brand campaigns about the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Branding 3</i> This brand conveys messages about the issue in its adverts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Branding 4</i> This brand's communications take the issue into account.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Branding 5</i> This brand displays products or slogans in (online) stores that reflect my stance on the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 1</i> This brand takes my side on the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 2</i> This brand declares support for my stance on the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 3</i> This brand has a positive influence on the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 4</i> Some good behaviours around the issue are motivated by this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 5</i> This brand (can) help(s) more people understand that the issue is real and important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 6</i> Peoples' view of the issue is influenced positively by this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Agent 1</i> This brand serves as a platform for me to help the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 2</i> I (can) positively contribute to the issue through this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 3</i> I (can) make a positive difference in relation to the issue by supporting this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 4</i> I (can) have a say on the issue by buying this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 5</i> Supporting this brand is one of the ways I (can) help the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 6</i> Spending my money on this brand (can) help(s) the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 7</i> I (can) help improve the issue if I choose this brand over other brands.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 8</i> I (can) help the issue by buying this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 9</i> I (can) use this brand to feel a sense of control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

over the issue.

<i>CSR 1</i>								
This brand is committed to using a portion of its profits to help non-profits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>CSR 2</i>								
This brand gives back to the communities in which it does business.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>CSR 3</i>								
Local non-profits benefit from this brand's contributions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>CSR 4</i>								
This brand integrates charitable contributions into its business activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please keep the brand and the issue you named in mind while answering the following questions.

<i>Hedonic Attributes</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Fun
Dull	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exciting
Not delightful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Delightful

Not thrilling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Thrilling
Unenjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Enjoyable

Take a moment to think about this brand. Describe this person using personality characteristics such as reliable, smooth, etc. Now think about how you would like to see yourself (your ideal self). What kind of person would you like to be? Once you've done this, indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements:

<i>Symbolic Attributes</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<p><i>Symbolic 1</i></p> <p>The personality of this brand is consistent with how I would like to be (my ideal self).</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p><i>Symbolic 2</i></p> <p>The personality of this brand is a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self).</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p><i>Attention Check and Marker Items</i></p> <p><i>Attention Check 2</i></p> <p>Are you paying attention? Please click "Strongly Agree" to this question.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Attention Check 3</i>							
Are you paying attention? Please click “Strongly Agree” to this question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Marker 1</i>							
Blue is my favourite colour.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Marker 2</i>							
I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Marker 3 (R)</i>							
There have been occasions where I took advantage of someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Section 4 Demographic**

---

**\*Education**

- Primary school or below     Secondary school  
 Sixth Form/College     Undergraduate degree     Postgraduate degree or above

**\*Gender**

- Male     Female     Non-binary     Prefer not to say

**\*Age**

- 18-24     25-34     35-44     45-54     55-64     65 or older

## End of Survey

---

Thank you!

Your answers have been recorded - your time in completing this survey is much appreciated!

The sections are presented in the order as shown in this appendix

\*Single-choice questions that require force response

\*\*Open-ended questions that require force response

\*\*\*Within this section, all questions require force response to a single-choice option and are presented in randomised order within that section.

## Appendix 8. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 4 - Pretest Survey)

### Section 1 Introduction and Consent

Hi there,

We would like to know from you to what extent commercial brands get involved in social and political issues (for example, LGBTQ/gender issues and Brexit). It will take approx. 6 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be completely anonymous and protected under The General Data Protection Regulation (EU). Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Junan He ([jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)).

\*Your participation is greatly valued, but we emphasise that participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, please read and understand the Participant Information Sheet and agree to the Consent Form by ticking “Yes” below.

Yes  No

\*\*Prolific IDs: \_\_\_\_\_

### \*\*\*Section 2 Consumer Awareness of Issue-Brand Combination and Brand Familiarity

Q1: To what extent does Nike get involved in LGBTQ issues?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much

Q2: To what extent does Nike get involved in gender issues?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much



Q3: To what extent does Nike get involved in racial issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q4: To what extent does Nike get involved in body positivity?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q5: To what extent does Adidas get involved in LGBTQ issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q6: To what extent does Adidas get involved in gender issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q7: To what extent does Adidas get involved in racial issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q8: To what extent does Adidas get involved in body positivity?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q9: To what extent does The Body Shop get involved in LGBTQ issues?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q10: To what extent does The Body Shop get involved in gender issues?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q11: To what extent does The Body Shop get involved in racial issues?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q12: To what extent does The Body Shop get involved in animal welfare?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q13: To what extent does The Body Shop get involved in body positivity?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much

Q14: To what extent does Lush get involved in LGBTQ issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q15: To what extent does Lush get involved in gender issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q16: To what extent does Lush get involved in racial issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q17: To what extent does Lush get involved in body positivity?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q18: To what extent does Lush get involved in animal welfare?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q19: To what extent does Dove get involved in LGBTQ issues?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q20: To what extent does Dove get involved in gender issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q21: To what extent does Dove get involved in racial issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q22: To what extent does Dove get involved in body positivity?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q23: To what extent does Dove get involved in animal welfare?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q24: To what extent does get involved in?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q25: To what extent does Twitter get involved in LGBTQ issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q26: To what extent does Twitter get involved in gender issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q27: To what extent does Twitter get involved in racial issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q28: To what extent does Twitter get involved in freedom of speech?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q29: To what extent does Twitter get involved in Brexit?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q30: To what extent does Meta/Facebook get involved in LGBTQ issues?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q31: To what extent does Meta/Facebook get involved in gender issues?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q32: To what extent does Meta/Facebook get involved in racial issues?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q33: To what extent does Meta/Facebook get involved in Brexit?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q34: To what extent does Google get involved in LGBTQ issues?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q35: To what extent does Google get involved in gender issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q36: To what extent does Google get involved in racial issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q37: To what extent does Google get involved in freedom of speech?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q38: To what extent does Google get involved in Brexit?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q39: To what extent does Netflix get involved in LGBTQ issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q40: To what extent does Netflix get involved in gender issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q41: To what extent does Netflix get involved in racial issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q42: To what extent does Wetherspoons get involved in Brexit?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q43: To what extent does Dyson get involved in Brexit?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q44: How familiar are you with Nike?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		



Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q45: How familiar are you with Adidas?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q46: How familiar are you with The Body Shop?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q47: How familiar are you with Lush?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q48: How familiar are you with Dove?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q49: How familiar are you with Twitter?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q50: How familiar are you with Meta/Facebook?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q51: How familiar are you with Google?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q52: How familiar are you with Netflix?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q53: How familiar are you with Wetherspoons?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much
Q54: How familiar are you with Dyson?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much	
			<i>Attention Check</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Are you paying attention? Please click “Strongly Agree” to this question.			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you paying attention? Please click “Strongly Agree” to this question.			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>End of Survey</b>										
Thank you! Your answers have been recorded - your time in completing this survey is much appreciated!										
<p>The sections are presented in the order as shown in this appendix</p> <p>*Single-choice questions that require force response</p> <p>**Open-ended questions that require force response</p> <p>***Within this section, all questions require force response to a single-choice option and are presented in randomised order within that section.</p>										

**Appendix 9. Definition, Source, Scale Items, and Alpha Values (Study 4 - Model Testing Survey)**

Construct	Definition and Scale Items	Sources and Applications	Alpha
<p><i>BAA</i> (Comprising Three Factors)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to enact transformative influence on the status quo of socio-political issues and empower the consumer to engage with these issues in the marketplace.</p>	<p>Study 3a and 3b in this thesis</p>	<p>.95 - .98</p>
<p>1<sup>st</sup> BAA Factor: <i>Activist Branding</i> (3 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of the conditionally legitimate process employed by a brand to incorporate socio-political issues into its marketing communications across and communicate its stance and engagement with these issues through various channels and touchpoints.</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (developed in this thesis, 7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding the issue and [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [The brand]’s products or services take [the issue] into account.</li> <li>2. [The brand] conveys messages about [the issue] in its adverts.</li> <li>3. [The brand]’s communications take [the issue] into account.</li> </ol>	<p>Study 3a in this thesis</p> <p>Study 3b in this thesis</p>	<p>.76 - .93</p> <p>.90</p>
<p>2<sup>nd</sup> BAA Factor: <i>Brand Transformative Influence</i> (4 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to advance desirable changes and make improvements in the status quo of socio-political issues.</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (developed in this thesis, 7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding the issue and [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [The brand] declares support for my stance on [the issue].</li> <li>2. [The brand] has a positive influence on [the issue].</li> <li>3. Some good behaviours around [the issue] are motivated by [the brand].</li> <li>4. [The brand] (can) help(s) more people understand that [the issue] is real and important.</li> </ol>	<p>Study 3a in this thesis</p> <p>Study 3b in this thesis</p>	<p>.96 - .98</p> <p>.93</p>

<p>3<sup>rd</sup> BAA Factor: <i>Brand as Consumer- Empowering Agent</i> (6 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the consumer perception of a brand’s capacity to empower consumers as a means of expressing their opinions and exerting influence on socio-political issues, thereby enabling them to actively participate in shaping the discourse surrounding these issues and gain a sense of control over them.</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (developed in this thesis, 7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding the issue and [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [The brand] serves as a platform for me to help [the issue].</li> <li>2. I (can) positively contribute to [the issue] through [the brand].</li> <li>3. I (can) make a positive difference in relation to [the issue] by supporting [the brand].</li> <li>4. Supporting [the brand] is one of the ways I (can) help [the issue].</li> <li>5. I (can) help improve [the issue] if I choose [the brand] over other brands.</li> <li>6. I (can) help [the issue] by buying [the brand].</li> </ol>	<p>Study 3a in this thesis</p> <p>Study 3b in this thesis</p>	<p>.91 - .94</p> <p>.98</p>
<p><i>Issue-Brand Fit</i> (7 items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the extent to which there is a fit/match between the brand and the issue the brand engages with (Robinson et al., 2012; Simmons and Becker-Olsen, 2006).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point semantic differential scale) Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue]:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dissimilar/Similar.</li> <li>2. Inconsistent/Consistent.</li> <li>3. Atypical/Typical.</li> <li>4. Unrepresentative/Representative.</li> <li>5. Not complementary/Complementary.</li> <li>6. Low fit/High fit.</li> <li>7. Does not make sense/Makes sense.</li> </ol>	<p>Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006)</p>	<p>.99</p>

<p><i>Brand Values-Driven Motives</i> (4 items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> consumer beliefs that the brand engages in social issues purely because of its moral, ethical, and societal ideals and standards (Ellen et al., 2000; 2006).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [The brand] has a long-term interest in the society.</li> <li>2. [The brand] is trying to give back something to the society.</li> <li>3. [The brand] has an ethical responsibility to help society.</li> <li>4. [The brand] feels morally obligated to help society.</li> </ol>	<p>Skarmeas et al. (2013; 2014)</p>	<p>.91</p>
<p><i>Brand Egoistic Motives</i> (3 items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> consumer beliefs that the company is exploiting rather than supporting the social cause/issue (Ellen et al., 2000; 2006).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [The brand] is trying to capitalise on the growing social movement.</li> <li>2. [The brand] is taking advantage of social causes.</li> <li>3. [The brand] is trying to benefit from the increased awareness of social problems.</li> </ol>	<p>Skarmeas and Leonidou (2013)</p> <p>Skarmeas et al. (2014)</p>	<p>.82</p> <p>.82</p>
<p>Self-Brand Values Congruence (3 items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the extent to which the perception of the brand's values is congruent with the consumer's own personal values (Johnson et al., 2022; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that [the brand] values.</li> <li>2. My personal values match [the brand]'s values and culture.</li> <li>3. [The brand]'s values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.</li> </ol>	<p>Abdalla et al. (2018)</p> <p>Hoffman et al. (2011)</p>	<p>.86</p> <p>.93</p>
	<p><b>Definition:</b> an overall positive consumer experience with the brand that includes multiple cognitions, emotions, and behaviours (Batra et al., 2012).</p>		

<p><i>Brand Love</i> (6 items)</p>	<p><b>Scale items</b> (Items 1 - 5 using 7-point scale: not at all-very much)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what extent do you feel that wearing/using of [the brand] says something “true” and “deep” about whom you are as a person?</li> <li>2. To what extent do you feel yourself desiring to wear/use [the brand]?</li> <li>3. Please express the extent to which you feel emotionally connected to [the brand]?</li> <li>4. Please express the extent to which you believe that you will be using [the brand] for a long time.</li> <li>5. Suppose [the brand] was to go out of existence, to what extent would you feel anxiety.</li> <li>6. On the following scales, please express your overall feelings and evaluations towards the brand (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree)</li> </ol>	<p>Batra et al. (2017)</p>	<p>.83</p>
<p><i>Purchase Intention</i> (4 Items)</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> the consumer’s propensity to buy a product or service (Dodds et al., 1991; Morrison, 1979).</p> <p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree) Regarding [the brand] you named, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is very likely that I will buy this brand.</li> <li>2. I will definitely try this brand.</li> <li>3. The probability that I will purchase this brand is very high.</li> <li>4. I am willing to buy this brand.</li> </ol>	<p>Diamantopoulos et al. (2021)</p> <p>Dodds et al., (1991)</p> <p>DeCarlo et al. (2013)</p>	<p>0.97</p> <p>0.96 - 0.97</p> <p>0.98</p>
	<p><b>Definition:</b> Consumer concern for a given issue, especially regarding the importance of the issue (Johnson et al., 2022; Obermiller, 1995).</p>	<p>Johnson et al. (2022)</p>	<p>.88 - .92</p>

<p><i>Issue Salience</i> (4 Items)</p>	<p><b>Scale items</b> (7-point Likert and semantic differential)</p> <p>1. [The issue] is something about which I have no clear feeling. (R) (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree)</p> <p>2. [The issue] is something I rarely think about. (R) (7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree)</p> <p>3. How important is [the issue] to you personally? (7-point semantic scale: very unimportant-very important);</p> <p>4. How much do you personally care about [the issue]? (7-point semantic scale: not at all-very much)</p>	<p>Arnett et al. (2003)</p>	<p>.86</p>
--	--	---------------------------------	------------



## Appendix 10. Design of Survey Questionnaire (Study 4 - Model Testing Survey)

### Section 1 Introduction and Consent

---

Many thanks for your interest! We really appreciate your help!

During the survey, you will be instructed to name, and answer questions about, a brand that (does not) get(s) involved in a social and political issue of importance to you. It will take approx. 8 minutes to complete. This survey is part of an ethically-approved PhD project. Your responses will be completely anonymous and protected under The General Data Protection Regulation (EU). Please note that the survey contains attention check questions and payment for participation is subject to response quality in line with Prolific's attention check policy.

\*Your participation is greatly valued, but we emphasise that participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, please read, and ensure you understand, the Participant Information Sheet and agree to the Consent Form by ticking "Yes" below.

Yes  No

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Junan He ([jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)).

\*\*Prolific IDs:

### Section 2 Instruction

---

Before carrying on, it is important for you to realise that people have different opinions about the questions. It is your personal opinions that we value, and only your personal experience or knowledge is important and required to answer the questions. There are no right or wrong answers! Although some questions may seem similar, each is unique in different ways. We will be grateful if you could please read each of the questions carefully.

Survey design: participants were presented one of the 14 protested issue-brand combinations e.g. [Nike] as [the brand ] and racial issues as [the issue]

Please keep [the brand] and [the issue] in mind while answering the questions below.

**\*\*\*Section 3 Purchase Intention Construct**

Please keep the brand in mind while answering the following questions.

<b>Construct:</b> <i>Purchase Intention</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<i>Purchase 1</i> It is very likely that I will buy this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Purchase 2</i> I will definitely try this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Purchase 3</i> The probability that I will purchase this brand is very high.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Purchase 4</i> I am willing to buy this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\*\*\*Section 4 Affect Construct**

Please keep the brand in mind while answering the following questions.

<b>Construct:</b> <i>Brand Love</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<i>Brand Love 1</i> To what extent do you feel that wearing/ using of [the brand] says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Brand Love 2</i>								
To what extent do you feel yourself desiring to wear/use [the brand]?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Brand Love 3</i>								
Please express the extent to which you feel emotionally connected to [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Brand Love 4</i>								
Please express the extent to which you believe that you will be using [the brand] for a long time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Brand Love 5</i>								
Suppose [the brand] was to go out of existence, to what extent would you feel anxiety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Brand Love 6</i>								
On the following scales, please express your overall feelings and evaluations towards [the brand].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>***Section 5 Judgement Constructs</b>								
Please keep the brand and the issue you named in mind while answering the following questions.								
<b>Constructs:</b> <i>BAA, Issue-Brand Fit, Value Congruence, Values-Driven Motives, Egoistic Motives, Marker Items, Attention Check Question</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
<i>Branding 1</i>								
This brand's products or services take the issue into account.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Branding 2</i> This brand conveys messages about the issue in its adverts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Branding 3</i> This brand's communications take the issue into account.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 1</i> This brand declares support for my stance on the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 2</i> This brand has a positive influence on the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 3</i> Some good behaviours around the issue are motivated by this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Influence 4</i> This brand (can) help(s) more people understand that the issue is real and important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 1</i> This brand serves as a platform for me to help the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 2</i> I (can) positively contribute to the issue through this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 3</i> I (can) make a positive difference in relation to the issue by supporting this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Agent 4</i> Supporting this brand is one of the ways I (can) help the issue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 5</i> I (can) help improve the issue if I choose this brand over other brands.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Agent 6</i> I (can) help the issue by buying this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Value Congruence 1</i> The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that [the brand] values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Value Congruence 2</i> My personal values match [the brand]'s values and culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Value Congruence 3</i> [The brand]'s values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Issue-Brand Fit 1</i> Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Issue-Brand Fit 2</i> Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Issue-Brand Fit 3</i> Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Issue-Brand Fit 4</i> Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Issue-Brand Fit 5</i> Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Issue-Brand Fit 6</i> Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Issue-Brand Fit 7</i> Please indicate the degree of fit or match between [the brand] and [the issue].	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Attention Check 1</i> Are you paying attention? Please click "Strongly Agree" to this question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Attention Check 2</i> Are you paying attention? Please click "Strongly Agree" to this question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Marker 1:</i> Blue is my favourite colour.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Marker 2:</i> I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Marker 3 (R):</i> There have been occasions where I took advantage of someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\*\*\*Section 6 Moderation Construct**

Please keep the issue in mind while answering the following questions.

<b>Constructs:</b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
<i>Issue Salience</i>								
<i>Issue Salience 1</i> [The issue] is something I always think about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<i>Issue Salience 2</i> [The issue] is something about which I have clear feeling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<i>Issue Salience 3 (R)</i> [The issue] is something I rarely think about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<i>Issue Salience 4 (R)</i> [The issue] is something about which I have no clear feeling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
How important is [the issue] to you personally?								
<i>Issue Salience 5</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important
How much do you personally care about [the issue]?								
<i>Issue Salience 6</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much

## Section 6 Demographics

### \*Education

- Primary school or below     Secondary school  
 Sixth Form/College     Undergraduate degree     Postgraduate degree or above

### \*Gender

- Male     Female     Non-binary     Prefer not to say

### \*Age

- 18-24     25-34     35-44     45-54     55-64     65 or older

### \*Ethnicity

- Asian     Black     Mixed     Other     White

### \*Income

Which of the following best describes your personal income last year?

- Less than £14,999     £15,000-29,999     £30,000-44,999     £45,000-59,999     More than £60,000

## End of Survey

Thank you! Your answers have been recorded - your time in completing this survey is much appreciated!

The sections are presented in the order as shown in this appendix

\*Single-choice questions that require force response

\*\*Open-ended questions that require force response

\*\*\*Within this section, all questions require force response to a single-choice option and are presented in randomised order within that section.



## Appendix 11. Participant Information Sheet (Interviews)

### Participant Information Sheet

#### Understanding consumer attitudes towards brands that take stances and actions on sociopolitical issues

You are being invited to participate in the above research project, thank you for considering taking part. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

#### Background Information and Purpose of Research

Increasingly consumers consider the sociopolitical impact of their purchase decisions and expect brands to take stances and actions on sociopolitical issues of concern to them. Against this backdrop, this project aims to understand consumer attitudes towards brands that take stances and actions on sociopolitical issues (e.g. abortion ban). The project is being carried out as part of the researcher's doctoral study to be completed by September 2023.

#### Why Have I Been Chosen?

For the project the researcher is looking for consumers who consider that it is important for brands to take stances and actions on sociopolitical issues. This is the only reason.

#### Do I Have to Take Part?

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. A copy of the signed consent form will be available for you to retain if you wish. You can still withdraw at any time within a cooling period of two weeks from participation without any negative consequences. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please inform the researcher ([Junan He, jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:Junan.He.jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)).

#### What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

If you agreed to take part, this will involve a one-to-one interview with the researcher lasting for around an hour. Interviews will be conducted online using Google Meet. You will be asked to enable your microphone though you should disable your video. If you agree the interview will be recorded by the researcher (audio). During the interview, you will firstly be asked to think of and name sociopolitical issues that are of most concern to you and brands that take stances and actions on the mentioned issues. Hence, you will be asked to verbally delineate your perceptions on issue-related brand activities and your attitudes towards the above-mentioned brands. You are encouraged to talk freely in as much depth as you wish.

#### What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

One possible disadvantage of taking part in this project is that you will have to allocate some time (around an hour) to take part. Interviews can be arranged at a time to suit you, preferably between 8am and 5pm although should this be inconvenient alternative arrangements may be possible and the researcher will endeavour to accommodate requests. You will also need to

have a safe space to carry out the interview where you will be comfortable discussing the topics. In the unlikely event that the researcher needs to re-arrange a session they will email to notify you of this at the earliest possible opportunity.

Another possible risk is that the topics to be discussed are potentially sensitive. If at any time during, or after, the interview you experience any discomfort and wish to pause or forego answering a particular question please let the researcher know. Should you wish to discontinue, or withdraw from, the interview please do not hesitate to inform the researcher. Additionally, if after completing the interview you decide you no longer want to take part in the study you can withdraw by contacting the researcher. You will not be expected to give any reason for this. Withdrawal is possible within a cooling period of two weeks from participation.

Should taking part in this study compromise your wellbeing, please do not hesitate to inform the researcher. Procedures for raising concerns to the University are detailed later in the information sheet and contact details are provided at the end of the document.

#### What are The Possible Benefits of Taking Part?

You will be given a £10 Amazon gift voucher as financial compensation for your time taken on the interview, if you agree to accept. Alongside the financial compensation, it is hoped that the project will contribute to increasing understanding of consumer attitudes towards brands that take stances and actions on sociopolitical issues.

#### Will my Taking Part in This Project be Kept Confidential?

The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) applies to and gives you control over your personal data. The GDPR requires that organisations processing data for research purposes have appropriate organisational and technical measures in place to ensure that data is processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner and are kept to a minimum and secure in the research context. The following appropriate safeguards to keep your taking part in this project confidential will be taken:

- All directly identifiable information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team.
- Pseudonyms will be used in everything related to the project with the exception of written consent. You will not be identified directly in any reports or publications. If you agree to us sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g. by making it available in a data archive) then your personal details will not be included.
- Safeguards are in place to protect the security and storage of data including password protection of files, anti-virus software and firewalls on all computers, and secure storage on the University's file store.

#### What is the Legal Basis for Processing my Personal Data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>. As we will be collecting

some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about political opinions), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is ‘necessary for scientific or historical research purposes’ 9(2)(j).

#### What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The pseudonymised data will be shared with the research team and, if considered necessary for the verification of results, with the assessors and auditors of the PhD and editors of journals. You will not be directly identifiable from the pseudonymised data. The results of this project will be submitted for publication in academic journals from September 2021 onwards. Publications will include illustrative excerpts and direct quotes from some interviews. If you are also interested in the study’s results, please keep in touch and we will keep you updated. If you wish to be notified of any publications please inform the researcher. The raw data will be securely stored for a period of 10 years (i.e. year 2031). If you give permission this data will be archived as other researchers may find it useful in answering future research questions. Identifiable personal information (i.e. the consent form) will be destroyed one year after the award of the PhD or three years after publications, whichever is longer.

#### Who is Organising or Funding the Research?

Funding is provided by Sheffield University Management School.

#### Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

#### Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield’s Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Management School. The University of Sheffield’s Research Ethics Committee is responsible for monitoring the application and delivery of the University’s Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

#### What if Something Goes Wrong and I Wish to Complain About the Research?

Should you wish to make a complaint you should contact the principal investigator or member of the supervision team. Following this, if you feel that your complaint has not been handled satisfactorily you can contact the research administrator, who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can contact Anne Cutler, The University of Sheffield Data Protection Officer [dataprotection@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@sheffield.ac.uk). Further information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University’s Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>. If you are still unhappy with the handling of your complaint you can contact the Information Commissioner’s Office.

Contact details:

Principal Investigator:	Junan He	<a href="mailto:jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk">jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk</a>
Supervisors:	Dr. Eva Kipnis	<a href="mailto:eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk">eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk</a>
	Dr. Lien Le Monkhouse	<a href="mailto:l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk">l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk</a>
	Prof. Fraser McLeay	<a href="mailto:fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk">fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk</a>
Research Administrator:	Mandy Robertson	<a href="mailto:m.robertson@sheffield.ac.uk">m.robertson@sheffield.ac.uk</a>

**Thank you for your interest in this project**

Sheffield University,  
Broomhall, Sheffield, S10 2TG  
0114 222 2000

Sheffield University Management School  
Conduit Road, Sheffield, S10 1FL  
0114 222 3373

## Appendix 12. Consent Form (Interviews)

### Consent Form

#### Understanding Consumer Response to Brand Involvement in Social and Political Issues

<i>Please tick the appropriate boxes</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Taking Part in the Project</b>		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated day/month/year or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)	x	x
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	x	x
I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include being interviewed by the researcher.	x	x
I agree to be shown a collection of brand advertisements and news stories.	x	x
I give my consent for the interview to be recorded (audio).	x	x
I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.	x	x
I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time from the study without any negative consequences within a cooling period of two weeks from participation (that is day/month/year). I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.	x	x
<b>How my information will be used during and after the project</b>		
I understand my personal details such as phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.	x	x
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs.	x	x
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	x	x
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	x	x

I give permission for the transcription of the interview to be deposited in ORDA (The university's data repository) so it can be used for future research and learning	x	x
<b>So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers</b>		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.	x	x

Name of Participant

Signature

Date day/month/year

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date day/month/year

**Project Contact Details for Further Information**

Principal Investigator:

Junan He (E-mail: [jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk))

Supervisors:

Dr Eva Kipnis (e-mail: [eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk))

Dr Lien Le Monkhouse (e-mail: [l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk))

Prof. Fraser McLeay (e-mail: [fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk))

**In the Event of a Complaint**

Research Administrator:

Mandy Robertson (e-mail: [m.robertson@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:m.robertson@sheffield.ac.uk))

**Thank you for your interest in this project**

Sheffield University,  
Broomhall, Sheffield, S10 2TG  
0114 222 2000

Sheffield University Management School  
Conduit Road, Sheffield, S10 1FL  
0114 222 3373

## Appendix 13. Participant Information Sheet (Surveys)

### Participant Information Sheet

#### Understanding Consumer Response to Brand Involvement in Social and Political Issues

You are being invited to participate in the above research project, thank you for considering taking part. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

#### Background Information and Purpose of Research

Increasingly consumers consider the socio-political impact of their purchase decisions and expect brands to take stances and actions on socio-political issues of concern to them. Against this backdrop, this project aims to understand consumer attitudes towards brands that take stances and actions on socio-political issues (e.g. abortion rights). The project is being carried out as part of the researcher's doctoral study to be completed by September 2023. As part of the project, the survey you are invited to take part aims to test whether a series of questions about consumer attitudes towards brands is representative of the intended concept of interest.

#### Why Have I Been Chosen?

For the project the researcher is looking for consumers who are aware of brand involvement in socio-political issues. This is the only reason.

#### Do I Have to Take Part?

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw at any time within a cooling period of two weeks from participation without any negative consequences. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please inform the researcher ([Junan He, jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:Junan.He.jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)).

#### What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

If you agreed to take part, this will involve an online survey where you will be asked to name an issue of concern to you and a brand that is involved in the issue, and thus to numerically rate your perceptions of the brand.

#### What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

One possible disadvantage of taking part in this project is that you will have to allocate some time to take part. Another possible risk is that some questions to be answered are potentially sensitive. If at any time during, or after, the survey you experience any discomfort and wish to pause or forgo answering a particular question please return the survey by clicking the "stop and without completing" button. Should you wish to discontinue, or withdraw from, the survey please do not hesitate to inform the researcher. Additionally, if after completing the survey you decide you no longer want to take part in the study you can withdraw by

contacting the researcher. You will not be expected to give any reason for this. Withdrawal is possible within a cooling period of two weeks from participation.

Should taking part in this study compromise your wellbeing, please do not hesitate to inform the researcher. Procedures for raising concerns to the University are detailed later in the information sheet and contact details are provided at the end of the document.

#### What are The Possible Benefits of Taking Part?

If you complete the study satisfactorily, you will receive payment (as indicated in the survey description) to compensate you for your participation. You will be paid via Prolific's payment system. Please note that this study contains several checks to make sure that participants are finishing the tasks honestly and completely. In accordance with the policies set by Prolific, we may reject your work if you do not complete the task correctly or if you do not follow the relevant instructions.

Although it may not directly benefit you, this study may benefit society by improving our knowledge of brands' role in social and political issues. There are no risks for participating in this study beyond those associated with normal use of digital devices.

#### Will my Taking Part in This Project be Kept Confidential?

The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) applies to and gives you control over your personal data. The GDPR requires that organisations processing data for research purposes have appropriate organisational and technical measures in place to ensure that data is processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner and are kept to a minimum and secure in the research context. The following appropriate safeguards to keep your taking part in this project confidential will be taken:

- Directly identifiable information (i.e. the consent form) that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team.
- You will not be identified directly in any reports or publications. If you agree to us sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g. by making it available in a data archive) then your personal details will not be included.
- Safeguards are in place to protect the security and storage of data including password protection of files, anti-virus software and firewalls on all computers, and secure storage on the University's file store.

#### What is the Legal Basis for Processing my Personal Data?

According to the GDPR, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the [University's Privacy Notice](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general) <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>. As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about religion and sexual orientation), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes' 9(2)(j).



### What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The non-identifiable data will be shared with the research team and, if considered necessary for the verification of results, with the assessors and auditors of the PhD and editors of journals. The results of this project will be submitted for publication in academic journals from May 2022 onwards. The raw data will be securely stored for a period of 10 years (i.e. year 2031). If you give permission this data will be archived as other researchers may find it useful in answering future research questions. Identifiable personal information (i.e. the consent form) will be destroyed one year after the award of the PhD or three years after publications, whichever is longer.

### Who is Organising or Funding the Research?

Funding is provided by Sheffield University Management School.

### Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

### Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Management School. The University of Sheffield's Research Ethics Committee is responsible for monitoring the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

### What if Something Goes Wrong and I Wish to Complain About the Research?

Should you wish to make a complaint you should contact the principal investigator or member of the supervision team. Following this, if you feel that your complaint has not been handled satisfactorily you can contact the research administrator, who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can contact Anne Cutler, The University of Sheffield Data Protection Officer [dataprotection@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@sheffield.ac.uk). Further information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>. If you are still unhappy with the handling of your complaint you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

Contact details:

Principal Investigator:  
Junan He

[jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)

Supervisors:

Dr. Eva Kipnis

[eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk)

Dr. Lien Le Monkhouse

[l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk)

Prof. Fraser McLeay

[fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk)

In the event of complaint:

[sums-pgr@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:sums-pgr@sheffield.ac.uk)

**Thank you for your interest in this project**

Sheffield University,  
Broomhall, Sheffield, S10 2TG  
0114 222 2000

Sheffield University Management School  
Conduit Road, Sheffield, S10 1FL  
0114 222 3373

## Appendix 14. Consent Form (Surveys)

### Consent Form

#### Understand Consumer Response to Brand Involvement in Socio-Political Issues

<i>I agree with the following statements below</i>
<b>Taking Part in the Project</b>
<p>I have read and understood the participant information sheet. (If you will answer No to this question, please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)</p> <p>I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.</p> <p>I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include completing a questionnaire.</p> <p>I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.</p> <p>I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study within a cool period of two weeks from participation. I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.</p>
<b>How my information will be used during and after the project</b>
<p>I understand my personal details such as phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.</p> <p>I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs.</p> <p>I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.</p> <p>I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.</p> <p>I give permission for the answers that I provide in the survey to be deposited in ORDA (The university's data repository) so it can be used for future research and learning.</p>
<b>So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers</b>
<p>I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.</p>

Project Contact Details for Further Information

Principal Investigator:

Junan He [jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jhe45@sheffield.ac.uk)

Supervisors:

Dr. Eva Kipnis [eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:eva.kipnis@sheffield.ac.uk)

Dr. Lien Le Monkhouse [l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:l.l.monkhouse@sheffield.ac.uk)

Prof. Fraser McLeay [fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:fraser.mcleay@sheffield.ac.uk)

**In the Event of a Complaint**

Research support team: [sums-pgr@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:sums-pgr@sheffield.ac.uk)

**Thank you for your interest in this project**

Sheffield University,  
Broomhall, Sheffield, S10 2TG  
0114 222 2000

Sheffield University Management School  
Conduit Road, Sheffield, S10 1FL  
0114 222 3373

**Appendix 15. Study 3 Independent T-Test for Examining Non-Response Bias**

Variable	Respondent Group	Mean (Standardised Deviation)	<i>t</i> Value	Degree of Freedom	<i>p</i> Value
Activist Branding	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	3.81 (1.89)	.192	709	.379
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	3.78 (1.83)			
Brand as Empowering Agent	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	3.32 (1.78)	.418	709	.624
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	3.27 (1.79)			
Brand Transformative Influence	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	3.8 (1.81)	.171	709	.771
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	3.78 (1.8)			
BAA	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	3.58 (1.73)	.302	709	.65
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	3.54 (1.71)			
Brand Attitude	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	5.1 (1.73)	1	709	.155
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	4.96 (1.81)			
Brand Affect	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	4.71 (1.6)	.648	709	.336
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	4.63 (1.65)			
WoM	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	4.92 (1.71)	.342	709	.517
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	4.88 (1.75)			
Purchase Intention	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	5.3 (1.79)	-.160	709	.754
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	5.32 (1.75)			
Hedonic Attributes	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	4.55 (1.52)	1.257	709	.482
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	4.41 (1.56)			
Symbolic Attributes	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	3.68 (1.6)	.11	709	.198
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	3.67 (1.69)			
CSR	Early ( <i>n</i> = 356)	4.29 (1.27)	1.08	709	.509
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 355)	4.19 (1.27)			

**Appendix 16. Study 4 Independent T-Test for Examining Non-Response Bias**

Variable	Respondent Group	Mean (Standardised Deviation)	<i>t</i> Value	Degree of Freedom	<i>p</i> Value
Activist Branding	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.27 (1.25)	.888	1040	.213
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.2 (1.3)			
Brand as Empowering Agent	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.4 (1.42)	.696	1040	.676
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.34 (1.45)			
Brand Transformative Influence	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.09 (1.29)	.116	1040	.672
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.08 (1.28)			
BAA	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.81 (1.21)	.627	1040	.547
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.77 (1.24)			
Self- Brand Values Congruence	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.74 (1.42)	.546	1040	.701
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.69 (1.44)			
Brand Love	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.12 (1.32)	.828	1040	.375
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.05 (1.38)			
Purchase Intention	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.56 (1.67)	1	1040	.950
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.46 (1.67)			
Issue Salience	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.76 (1.39)	-.125	1040	.16
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.76 (1.46)			
Issue- Brand Fit	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.15 (1.44)	.64	1040	.998
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.09 (1.44)			
Brand Values-Driven Motives	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.96 (1.33)	1.02	1040	.532
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	3.88 (1.37)			
Brand Egoistic Motives	Early ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.59 (1.13)	.32	1040	.532
	Late ( <i>n</i> = 521)	4.56 (1.17)			

**Appendix 17. Studies 3a, 3b, and 4: Correlation Matrix for First-Order Factors of BAA**

First-Order Factors	1. Activist Branding			2. Brand Transformative Influence		
	Study 3a <i>n</i> = 711	Study 3b <i>n</i> = 143	Study 4 <i>n</i> = 1,042	Study 3a <i>n</i> = 711	Study 3b <i>n</i> = 143	Study 4 <i>n</i> = 1,042
2. Brand Transformative Influence	0.913	0.879	0.822	–	–	–
3. Brand as Empowering Agent	0.855	0.884	0.739	0.934	0.927	0.84
All correlations are significant at $p < 0.001$ .						

## List of Abbreviations

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BAA	brand activist attributes
CBR	Consumer-Brand Relationship
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CI	Confidence Interval
CMIN/DF	Minimum Discrepancy Divided by Degree of Freedom
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DF	Degree of Freedom
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GFI	Goodness of-Fit Index
HTMT	Heterotrait–Monotrait
NFI	Normed Fit Index
NNFI	Non-Normed Fit Index
MTURK	Amazon Mechanical Turk
PCFI	Parsimony Comparative Fit Index
PNFI	Parsimony Normed Fit Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SRMR	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual
TLI	Tucker–Lewis Index
UK	United Kingdom
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WoM	Word-of-Mouth



## References

---

- Aaker, J. L. (1997) "Dimensions of brand personality", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34 (3), pp. 347–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3151897>
- Aaker, J., Fournier, S. and Brasel, S. A. (2004) "When good brands do bad", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (1), pp. 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1086/383419>
- Aaker, J., Vohs, K. D. and Mogilner, C. (2010) "Non-profits are seen as warm and for-profits as competent: Firm stereotypes matter", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (2), pp. 224–237. <https://doi.org/10.1086/651566>
- Abdalla, A., Elsetouhi, A., Negm, A. and Abdou, H. (2018) "Perceived person-organisation fit and turnover intention in medical centres: The mediating roles of person-group fit and person-job fit perceptions", *Personnel Review*, 47 (4), pp. 863–81.
- Abraham, V. and Reitman, A. (2018) "Conspicuous consumption in the context of consumer animosity", *International Marketing Review*, 35 (3), pp. 412–28. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-03-2015-0051>
- Achen, C. and Bartels, L. (2016) "Democracy for realists: Holding up a mirror to the electorate" *Juncture*, 22 (4), 269–75.
- Ackerman, R. and Bauer, R. (1976) *Corporate social responsiveness: Modern dilemma*. Reston: Reston Publishing.
- Adkins, N. R. and Julie L. O. (2005) "Critical consumer education: Empowering the low-literate consumer," *Journal of Macromarketing*, 25 (2), pp. 153–62.
- Aggarwal, P. and McGill, A. L. (2007) "Is that car smiling at me? Schema congruity as a basis for evaluating anthropomorphized products", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (4), pp. 468–79. <https://doi.org/10.1086/518544>
- Aguinis, H., Villamor, I. and Ramani, R. S. (2021) "MTurk research: Review and recommendations", *Journal of Management*, 47 (4), pp. 823–37.
- Aguirre-Rodriguez, A., Bosnjak, M. and Sirgy, M. J. (2012) "Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making: A meta-analysis", *Journal of Business Research*, 65 (8), pp. 1179–88. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.031>
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M., Waters, E. and Wall, S. (1978) *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ajzen, I. (2005) *Attitudes, personality and behavior*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Ajzen, I. and Fishbein, M. (1980) *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Akemu, O., Whiteman, G. and Kennedy, S. (2016) “Social enterprise emergence from social movement activism: The Fairphone case”, *Journal of Management Studies*, 53 (5), pp. 846-77.

Albert, N., Merunka, D. and Valette-Florence, P. (2008) “When consumers love their brands: Exploring the concept and its dimensions”, *Journal of Business Research*, 61 (10), pp. 1062–75. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2007.09.014>

Allredge, K., Jacobs, J. and Teicher, W. (2021) “Great expectations: Navigating challenging stakeholder expectations of brands Kari”, *McKinsey and Company*, 09 December 2021. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/great-expectations-navigating-challenging-stakeholder-expectations-of-brands> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Altman, I. and Taylor, D. (1973) *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Alvarez, C. and Fournier, S. (2016) “Consumers’ relationships with brands”, *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 10, pp. 129–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.12.017>

Alvarez, C., Brick, D. J. and Fournier, S. (2021) “Doing relationship work: A theory of change in consumer–brand relationships”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48 (4), pp. 610–32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab022>

American Marketing Association. (2023) *Branding*. Available at: <https://www.ama.org/topics/branding/> (Accessed: June 29 2023).

Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso.

Anderson, E. W. (1998) “Customer satisfaction and word of mouth”, *Journal of Service Research*, 1 (1), pp. 5–17.

Anderson, J. C. and Gerbing, D. W. (1988) “An updated paradigm for scale development incorporating unidimensionality and its assessment”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25 (2), pp. 186–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3172650>

Anderson, E. W. and Sullivan, M. W. (1993) “The antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction for firms”, *Marketing Science*, 12 (2), pp. 125–43.

Aplin, J. C. and Hegarty, H. (1980) “Political influence: strategies employed by organisations to impact legislation in business and economic matters”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 23 (3), pp. 438–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/255510>

Aquino, K. and Reed, A. (2002) “The self-importance of moral identity”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, pp. 1423–40. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.83.6.1423>

Argyris, C. and Donald, S. (1974) *Theory in practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Armstrong, J. S. and Overton, T. S. (1977) “Estimating non-response bias in mail surveys”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14 (3), pp. 396–402. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3150783>
- Arnett, D. B., German, S. D. and Hunt, S. D. (2003) “The identity salience model of relationship marketing success: The case of non-profit marketing”, *Journal of marketing*, 67 (2), pp. 89–105.
- Arnould, E. J. and Price, L. L. (1993) “River magic: extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20 (1), pp. 24–45. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209331>
- Arnould, E. J. and Thompson, C. J. (2005) “Reflections twenty years of research”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (4), pp. 868–82. <https://doi.org/10.1086/426626>
- Arnould, E. J. and Thompson, C. J. (2015) “Introduction: Consumer culture theory: Ten years gone (and beyond)”, *Consumer Culture Theory*, 17, pp. 1–21. doi:10.1108/S0885-211120150000017001
- Arnould, E. J. and Wallendorf, M. (1994) “Market-oriented ethnography: Interpretation building and marketing strategy formulation”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31 (4), pp. 484–504. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3151878>
- Arnould, M. J. and Reynolds, K. E. (2003) “Hedonic shopping motivations”, *Journal of Retailing*, 79 (2), pp. 77–95. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359\(03\)00007-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359(03)00007-1)
- Aron, A., Jodie L. S., Todd, B. K. and Max, P. (2006) “When similars do not attract: Tests of a prediction from the self-expansion model”, *Personal Relationships*, 13, pp. 387–96.
- Arthur, W Jr., Suzanne, T. B., Anton, J. V. and Dennis, D. (2006) “The use of person-organisation fit in employment decision making: An assessment of its criterion-related validity”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91 (4), pp. 786–801.
- Ashmore, R. D. and Del Boca, F. K. (1981) “Conceptual approaches to stereotypes and stereotyping”, in Hamilton, D. L. (ed.) *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior*. New York: Psychology Press, pp. 1–35.
- Astedt-Kurki, P. and Heikkinen, R. L. (1994) “Two approaches to the study of experiences of health and old age: The thematic interview and the narrative method”, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 20, pp. 418–21. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.1994.tb02375.x
- Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (2001) *Handbook of ethnography*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Avery, J. and Pauwels, K. (2019) “Branding and politics: Nike and Colin Kaepernick”, *Harvard Business School Case*, December 2018 (Revised September 2019). Available at: <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=55349> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Avis, M., Aitken, R. and Ferguson, S. (2012) “Brand relationship and personality theory: Metaphor or consumer perceptual reality?”, *Marketing Theory*, 12 (3), pp. 311–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593112451396>

Azorin, J. M. and Cameron, R. (2010) “The application of mixed methods in organisational research: A literature review”, *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 8 (2), pp. 95–105.

Babbie, E. R. (2020) *The practice of social research*. Boston: Cengage learning.

Babin, B. J. and Attaway, J. S. (2000) “Atmospheric affect as a tool for creating value and gaining share of customer”, *Journal of Business Research*, 49 (2), pp. 91–99. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(99\)00011-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00011-9)

Babin, B. J., Darden, W. R. and Griffin, M. (1994) “Work and/or fun: Measuring hedonic and utilitarian shopping value”, *Journal of Consumer research*, 20 (4), 644–56.

Bächtiger, A. and Parkinson, J. (2019) *Mapping and measuring deliberation: Towards a new deliberative quality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bagozzi, R. P. and Youjae, Y. (1988) “On the evaluation of structural equation models”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 16 (1), pp. 74–94.

Baird-Murray, K. (2016) “Testing times for animal welfare”, *Financial Times*. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/2fd3ffd6-3158-11e6-bda0-04585c31b153> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Bairrada, C. M., Coelho, F. and Coelho, A. (2018) “Antecedents and outcomes of brand love: utilitarian and symbolic brand qualities”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 52 (3/4), pp. 656–82.

Bajac, H., Palacios, M. and Minton, E. A. (2018) “Consumer-brand congruence and conspicuousness: an international comparison”, *International Marketing Review*, 35 (3), pp. 498–517. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-12-2016-0225>

Banister, E. N. and Hogg, M. K. (2004) “Negative symbolic consumption and consumers’ drive for self-esteem”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 38 (7), pp. 850–68. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560410539285>

Barnea, M. F. and Schwartz, S. H. (1998) “Values and voting”, *Political Psychology*, 19 (1), pp. 17–40.

Barnes, S. and Kaase, M. (1979) *Political action: Mass participation in five Western democracies*. Beverly Hills, California: SAGE Publications.

Barnett, M. L., Henriques, I. and Husted, B. W. (2020) “Beyond good intentions: Designing csr initiatives for greater social impact”, *Journal of Management*, 46 (6), pp. 937–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206319900539>

Baron, D. (1995) “Integrated strategy: Market and non-market components”, *California Management Review*, 37 (3), pp. 47–65.

Barone, M. J., Norman, A. T. and Miyazaki, A. D. (2007) “Consumer response to retailer use of cause-related marketing: Is more fit better?”, *Journal of Retailing*, 83(4), pp. 437–45.

- Barriball K. L. and While, A. (1994) “Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: A discussion paper”, *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 19 (2), pp. 328–35. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.1994.tb01088.x
- Bartsch, F., Zeugner-Roth, K. P. and Katsikeas, C. S. (2022) “Consumer authenticity seeking: Conceptualization, measurement, and contingent effects”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 50 (2), pp. 296–323. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-021-00813-y>
- Baskentli, S., Sen, S., Du, S. and Bhattacharya, C. B. (2019) “Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility: The role of CSR domains”, *Journal of Business Research*, 95, pp. 502–13. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.046>
- Batra, R. (2019) “Creating brand meaning: A review and research agenda”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 29 (3), pp. 535–46. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1122>
- Batra, R., Ahuvia, A. and Bagozzi, R. P. (2012) “Brand love”, *Journal of Marketing*, 76 (2), pp. 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.09.0339>
- Batra, R., Donald, R., Lehmann, J. B. and Jae, P. (1995) “When does advertising have an impact? A study of tracking data”, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 35 (September/October), pp. 19–32.
- Batra, R., Pamela, H. and Lynn, R. K. (2001) “Values, susceptibility to normative influence, and attribute importance weights: A nomological analysis”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 11 (2), pp. 115–28.
- Batra, R., Zhang, Y. C., Aydinoglu, N. Z. and Feinberg, F. M. (2017) “Positioning multicountry brands: The impact of variation in cultural values and competitive set”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54 (6), pp. 914–31. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.13.0058>
- Baumgartner, H., Weijters, B. and Pieters, R. (2021) “The biasing effect of common method variance: Some clarifications”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49, pp. 221–35.
- Beauchamp, L. L. and O’Connor, A. (2012) “America’s most admired companies: A descriptive analysis of CEO corporate social responsibility statements”, *Public Relations Review*, 38 (3), pp. 494–97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.03.006>
- Beech, H. (2020) “Yellow or blue? In Hong Kong, businesses choose political sides”, *The New York Times*, 19 January. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/19/world/asia/hong-kong-protests-yellow-blue.html> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Belchior, A. M. (2010) “Ideological congruence among European political parties”, *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 16 (1), pp. 121–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330903542191>
- Belk, R. W. (1988) “Possessions and the extended self”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (2), pp. 139–62. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209154>
- Belk, R. W. (2013) “Extended self in a digital world”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (3), pp. 477–500. <https://doi.org/10.1086/671052>

- Belkaoui, A. and Belkaoui, J. M. (1976) “A comparative analysis of the roles portrayed by women in print advertisements: 1958, 1970, 1972”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 13 (2), pp. 168–72. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3150853>
- Bell, E. (2014) “Rethinking quality in qualitative research”, *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 22 (3), pp. 90–91. doi:10.1111/ajr.12119
- Bennett, L. (2014) “If we stick together we can do anything: Lady Gaga fandom, philanthropy and activism through social media”, *Celebrity Studies*, 5 (1/2), pp.138–52.
- Bennett, W. L. (1998) “The uncivic culture: Communication, identity, and the rise of lifestyle politics”, *Political Science and Politics*, 31 (4), pp. 741–61. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096500053270>
- Bennett, W. L. (2012) “The personalisation of politics: Political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 644 (1), pp. 20–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716212451428>
- Berelson, B. R., Lazarsfeld, P. F. and Mcphee, W. N. (1954) *Voting: A study of opinion formation in a presidential campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berger, J. (2014) “Word of mouth and interpersonal communication: A review and directions for future research”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 24 (4), pp. 586–607. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2014.05.002>
- Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1966) *The social construction of reality*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bergkvist, L. and Taylor, C. R. (2022) “Reviving and improving brand awareness as a construct in advertising research”, *Journal of Advertising*, 51(3), pp. 294–307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2022.2039886>
- Bergkvist, L. and Zhou, K. Q. (2019) “Cause-related marketing persuasion research: An integrated framework and directions for further research”, *International Journal of Advertising*, 38 (1), pp. 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2018.1452397>
- Berkowitz, L. (1993) *Aggression: Its causes, consequences, and control*. New York: McGraw-Hill Books.
- Berlin, D. (2011) “Sustainable consumers and the State: Exploring how citizens’ trust and distrust in institutions spur political consumption”, *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 13 (3), pp. 277–97.
- Berman, S. L., Wicks, A. C., Kotha, S. and Jones, T. M. (1999) “Does stakeholder orientation matter? The relationship between stakeholder management models and firm financial performance”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 42, pp. 488–506.
- Bhagwat, Y., Warren, N. L., Beck, J. T. and Watson, G. F. (2020) “Corporate socio-political activism and firm value”, *Journal of Marketing*, 84 (5), pp. 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242920937000>

Bhat, S. and Reddy, S. K. (1998) “Symbolic and functional positioning of brands”, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 15 (1), pp. 32–43.

Bhattacharya, C. B. and Sen, S. (2003) “Consumer-company identification: A framework for understanding consumers’ relationships with companies”, *Journal of Marketing*, 67 (2), pp. 76–88. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.67.2.76.18609>

Bhattacharya, C. B., Rao, H. and Glynn, M. A. (1995) “Understanding the bond of identification: An investigation of its correlates among art museum members”, *Journal of Marketing*, 59 (4), pp. 46–57. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1252327>

Bitner, M. J. (1992) “Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees”, *Journal of Marketing*, 56 (2), pp. 57–71.

Blocker, C. P., Houston, M. B., and Flint, D. J. (2012) “Unpacking what a “relationship” means to commercial buyers: How the relationship metaphor creates tension and obscures experience”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38 (5), pp. 886–908. <https://doi.org/10.1086/660916>

Boateng, G. O., Neilands, T. B., Frongillo, E. A., Melgar-Quiñonez, H. R. and Young, S. L. (2018) “Best practices for developing and validating scales for health, social, and behavioural research: A primer”, *Frontiers in Public Health*, 6 (June), pp. 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00149>

Bocken, N.M., Short, S.W., Rana, P. and Evans, S., (2014) “A literature and practice review to develop sustainable business model archetypes”, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 65, pp. 42–56.

Bohman, J. (1998) “The coming of age of deliberative democracy”, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 6 (4), pp. 400–25.

Bonsu, S. K. (2009) “Colonial images in global times: consumer interpretations of Africa and Africans in advertising”, *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 12 (1), pp. 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253860802560789>

Boonen, J., Pedersen, E. F. and Hooghe, M. (2017) “The effect of political sophistication and party identification on voter–party congruence. A comparative analysis of 30 countries”, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 27 (3), pp. 311–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2016.1273226>

Boren, C. (2018) “Nike’s Colin Kaepernick ad campaign gets more yeas than nays from young people”, *The Washington Post*, 14 September. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2018/09/13/colin-kaepernicks-nike-ad-campaign-gets-more-yeas-than-nays-from-young-people/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Bottger, T., Rudolph, T., Evanschitzky, H. and Pfrang, T. (2017) “Customer inspiration: Conceptualization, scale development, and validation”, *Journal of Marketing*, 81 (6), pp. 116–31.

Boulding, W., Kalra, A., Staelin, R. and Zeithaml, V. A. (1993) “A dynamic process model of service quality: From expectations to behavioural intentions”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30 (1), pp. 7–27.

Bowen, H. R. (1953) *Social responsibilities of the businessman*. New York: Harper & Row.

Bowlby, J. (1980) *Loss: Sadness and depression*. New York: Basic Books.

Brakus, J. J. J., Schmitt, B. H. and Zarantonello, L. (2009) “Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty?” *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (3), pp. 52–68. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.73.3.052>

Branch, J. (2020) “The anthem debate is back. But now it’s standing that’s polarising”, *New York Times*, 04 July. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/sports/football/anthem-kneeling-sports.html> (Accessed: 30 November, 2024).

Brangule-Vlagsma, K., Pieters, R. G. M. and Wedel, M. (2002) “The dynamics of value segments: Modelling framework and empirical illustration”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 19(3), pp. 267–285. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-8116\(02\)00079-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-8116(02)00079-4)

Brasel, S. A. A. and Hagtvedt, H. (2016) “Living brands: Consumer responses to animated brand logos”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44 (5), pp. 639–53. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-015-0449-2>

Brechan, I. (2006) “The different effect of primary and secondary product attributes on customer satisfaction”, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 27 (3), pp. 441–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2005.10.003>

Brehm, J. W. (1966) *A theory of psychological reactance*. New York: Academic Press.

Brennan, R. and Henneberg, S. C. (2008) “Does political marketing need the concept of customer value?” *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 26 (6), pp. 559–72. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634500810902820>

Brinkmann, S. and Kvale, S. (2015) *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. 3rd edn. California: SAGE Publications.

Broniarczyk, S. M. and Griffin, J. G. (2014) “Decision difficulty in the age of consumer empowerment”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 24(4), pp. 608–25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2014.05.003>

Brooker, P., Barnett, J., Vines, J., Lawson, S., Feltwell, T., Long, K. and Wood, G. (2018) “Researching with Twitter timeline data: A demonstration via “everyday” socio-political talk around welfare provision”, *Big Data and Society*, 5 (1), pp. 1–13.

Bryman, A. (2016) *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bublitz, M., Chalplin, L., Peracchio, L. A., Cermin, A. D., Dida, M., Escalas, J. E. and Miller, E. G. (2020) “Rise up: Understanding youth social entrepreneurs and their ecosystems”, *Journal of Public Policy*, pp. 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620937702>



- Buchanan, L., Bui, Q. and Patel, J. K. (2020), “Black Lives Matter may be the largest movement in U.S. history”, *New York Times*, 03 July. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html> (Accessed: 30 November, 2024).
- Burroughs, J. E. and Mick, D. G. (2004) “Exploring antecedents and consequences of consumer creativity in a problem-solving context”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (2), pp. 402–11. <https://doi.org/10.1086/422118>
- Buss, D. M. and Craik, K. H. (1983) “The act frequency approach to personality”, *Psychological review*, 90 (2), pp. 105–26.
- Butler, P. and Collins, N. (1994) “Political marketing: Structure and process”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 28 (1), pp. 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569410049154>
- Cable, D. M. and Edwards, J. R. (2004) “Complementary and supplementary fit: a theoretical and empirical integration”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89 (5), pp. 822–34. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.5.822>
- Campbell, A. (1960) “Surge and decline: A study of electoral change”, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 24 (3), pp. 397–418. <https://doi.org/10.1086/266960>
- Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C. and Guido, G. (2001) “Brand personality: How to make the metaphor fit?”, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 22 (3), pp. 377–95. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870\(01\)00039-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870(01)00039-3)
- Carberry, E. J., Bharati, P., Levy, D. L. and Chaudhury, A. (2019) “Social movements as catalysts for corporate social innovation: Environmental activism and the adoption of green information systems”, *Business and Society*, 58 (5), pp. 1083–1127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650317701674>
- Carmines, E. G. and Stimson, J. A. (1980) “The two faces of issue voting”, *American Political Science Review*, 74 (1), pp. 78–91.
- Carpara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C. and Gianluigi, G. (2001) “Brand personality: How to make the metaphor fit”, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 22 (3), pp. 377–95.
- Carroll, A. B. (1979) “A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate social performance”, *Academy of Management Review*, 4, pp. 497–505.
- Carroll, A. B. (1999) “Corporate social responsibility: Evolution of a definitional construct”, *Business and Society*, 38, pp. 268–95.
- Carroll, A. B. (2021) “Corporate social responsibility: Perspectives on the CSR construct’s development and future”, *Business and Society*, 60 (6), pp. 1258–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503211001765>
- Carroll, B. and Ahuvia, A. (2006) “Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love”, *Marketing Letters*, 17 (2), pp. 79–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-006-4219-2>

- Castelló, I. and Lopez-berzosa, D. (2021) “Affects in online stakeholder engagement: A dissensus perspective”, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 33 (1), pp. 180–215, <https://doi.org/10.1017/beq.2021.35>
- Cattell, R. B. (1966) “The scree test for the number of factors”, *Multivariate Behavioural Research*, 1 (2), pp. 245–76.
- Celsi, R. L., Rose, R. L. and Leigh, T. W. (1993) “An exploration of high-risk leisure consumption through skydiving”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20 (1), pp. 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209330>
- Cerne, A. (2012) “Market communication as socio-political activity in emerging markets”, *International Business and Management*, 28, pp. 85–103, [https://doi.org/10.1108/S1876-066X\(2012\)0000028012](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1876-066X(2012)0000028012)
- Chadwick, A. (2008) “Web 2.0: New challenges for the study of e-democracy in an era of informational exuberance”, *A Journal of Law and Policy for the Information Society*, 5 (1), pp. 9–41.
- Chadwick, S. and Zipp, S. (2018) “Nike, Colin Kaepernick and the pitfalls of ‘woke’ corporate branding”, *The Conversation*. 14 September. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/nike-colin-kaepernick-and-the-pitfalls-of-woke-corporate-branding-102922> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Chambers, S. (2003) “Deliberative democratic theory”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6, pp. 307–26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085538>
- Chandler, J., Mueller, P. and Paolacci, G. (2014) “Nonnaïveté among Amazon Mechanical Turk workers: Consequences and solutions for behavioural researchers”, *Behavior Research Methods*, 46, pp. 112–30.
- Chandler, J. J. and Paolacci, G. (2017) “Lie for a dime: When most prescreening responses are honest but most study participants are impostors”, *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 8 (5), pp. 500–08.
- Chandy, R. K., Johar, G. V., Moorman, C. and Roberts, J. H. (2021) “Better marketing for a better world”, *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (3), pp. 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224292111003690>
- Chaney, K. E., Diana, T. S. and Melanie R. M. (2019) “Stigmatised-identity cues in consumer spaces”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 29 (1), pp. 130–41.
- Chaplin, L. N. and John, D. R. (2005) “The development of self-brand connections in children and adolescents”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (1), pp. 119–29. <https://doi.org/10.1086/426622>
- Chartrand, T. L., Huber, J., Shiv, B. and Tanner, R. J. (2008) “Nonconscious goals and consumer choice”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (2), pp. 189–201. <https://doi.org/10.1086/588685>

- Chatterji, A. K. and Toffel, M. W. (2019) “Assessing the impact of CEO activism”, *Organization and Environment*, 32 (2), pp. 159–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026619848144>
- Chaudhuri, A. and Holbrook, M. B. (2001) “The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: The role of brand loyalty”, *Journal of Marketing*, 65 (2), pp. 81–93. doi: 10.1509/jmkg.65.2.81.18255.
- Chaudhuri, S. (2022) “Ben & Jerry’s should avoid geopolitics, Unilever boss says amid Israel spat”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 26 July. Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ben-jerrys-should-avoid-geopolitics-unilever-boss-says-amid-israel-spat-11658840299> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Chen, Y. P., Nelson, L. D. and Hsu, M. (2015) “From “where” to “what”: Distributed representations of brand associations in the human brain”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 52 (4), pp. 453–66.
- Chernev, A. and Blair, S. (2015) “Doing well by doing good: The benevolent halo of corporate social responsibility”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (6), pp. 1412–25. <https://doi.org/10.1086/680089>
- Chernev, A., Hamilton, R. and Gal, D. (2011) “Competing for consumer identity: Limits to self-expression and the perils of lifestyle branding”, *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (3), pp. 66–82. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.75.3.66>
- Cheron, E., Kohlbacher, F. and Kusuma, K. (2012) “The effects of brand-cause fit and campaign duration on consumer perception of cause-related marketing in Japan”, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29, pp. 357–68.
- Cheryan, S., Plaut, V. C., Davies, P. G. and Steele, C. M. (2009) “Ambient belonging: How stereotypical cues impact gender participation in computer science”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97, pp. 1045–60. doi:10.1037/a0016239
- Cheung, G. W. and Rensvold, R. B. (2002) “Evaluating goodness-of-fit indexes for testing measurement invariance”, *Structural Equation Modelling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 9 (2), pp. 233–55.
- Chitturi, R., Raghunathan, R. and Mahajan, V. (2008) “Delight by design: The role of hedonic versus utilitarian benefits”, *Journal of Marketing*, 72 (3), pp. 48–63. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.72.3.48>
- Choi, W. J. and Winterich, K. P. (2013) “Can brands move in from the outside? How moral identity enhances out-group brand attitudes”, *Journal of Marketing*, 77 (2), pp. 96–111.
- Chon, K. S. and Olsen, K. (1991) “Functional and symbolic congruence approaches to consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction in consumerism”, *Journal of the International Academy of Hospitality Research*, 3, pp. 2–18.
- Churchill, G. A. (1979) “A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16 (1), pp. 64–73.

Churchill, G. A. and Iacobucci, D. (2006) *Marketing research: Methodological foundations*. New York: Dryden Press.

Cicchetti, D. V. (1994) “Guidelines, criteria, and rules of thumb for evaluating normed and standardised assessment instruments in psychology”, *Psychological Assessment*, 6 (4), pp. 284–90.

Ciszek, E. and Logan, N. (2018) “Challenging the dialogic promise: How Ben and Jerry’s support for Black Lives Matter fosters dissensus on social media”, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 30 (3), pp. 115–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2018.1498342>

Clark, A. E. and Kashima, Y. (2007) “Stereotypes help people connect with others in the community: A situated functional analysis of the stereotype consistency bias in communication”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, pp. 1028–39. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.6.1028>

Clark, L. A. and Watson, D. B. (1995) “Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development,” *Psychological Assessment*”, 7, pp. 309–19. doi: 10.1037/1040-3590.7.3.309

Claus, L. and Tracey, P. (2020) “Making change from behind a mask: How organisations challenge guarded institutions by sparking grassroots activism”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 63 (4), pp. 965–96. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2017.0507>

Cobb, J. (2016) “The matter of black lives”, *The New Yorker*, 06 March. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/14/where-is-black-lives-matter-headed> (Accessed: 30 November, 2024).

Cochran, P. L. and Wood, R. A. (1984) “Corporate social responsibility and financial performance”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 27, pp. 42–56

Coelho, F. J. F., Bairrada, C. M. and de Matos Coelho, A. F. (2020) “Functional brand qualities and perceived value: The mediating role of brand experience and brand personality”, *Psychology and Marketing*, 37 (1), pp. 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21279>

Cohen, R. J. (2014) “Brand Personification: Introduction and Overview”, *Psychology and Marketing*, 31 (1), pp. 1–30.

Cohn, N. and Quealy, K. (2020) How public opinion has moved on Black Lives Matter, *New York Times*, 10 June. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/10/upshot/black-lives-matter-attitudes.html> (Accessed December 11, 2023).

Colli, F. (2020) “Indirect consumer activism and politics in the market”, *Social Movement Studies*, 19 (3), pp. 249–67.

Coltman, T., Devinney, T. M., Midgley, D. F. and Venai, S. (2008) “Formative versus reflective measurement models: Two applications of formative measurement”, *Journal of Business Research*, 61 (12), pp. 1250–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.013>

Conger, J. A. and Kanungo, R. N. (1988) “The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice”, *Academy of Management Review*, 13 (3), pp. 471–82. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1988.4306983>

- Connelly, L. M., Keele, B. S., Kleinbeck, S. V., Schneider, J. K. and Cobb, A. K. (1993) "A place to be yourself empowerment from the client's perspective", *Image*, 25 (4), pp. 297–303.
- Coombs, W. T. and Holladay, S. J. (2008) "Comparing apology to equivalent crisis response strategies: Clarifying apology's role and value in crisis communication", *Public Relations Review*, 34 (3), pp. 252–57.
- Cooper, D. R. and Schindler, P. S. (2003) *Business research methods*, 8th edn. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill School Education Group.
- Copeland, L. (2014) "Value change and political action: Postmaterialism, political consumerism, and political participation", *American Politics Research*, 42 (2), pp. 257–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X13494235>
- Copeland, L. and Boulianne, S. (2022) "Political consumerism: A meta-analysis", *International Political Science Review*, 43 (1), pp. 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512120905048>
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. L. (2008) *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Corley, K. G. and Gioia, D. A. (2004) "Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off", *Administrative science quarterly*, 49 (2), pp. 173–208.
- Corley, K., Bansal, P. and Yu, H. (2021) "An editorial perspective on judging the quality of inductive research when the methodological straightjacket is loosened", *Strategic Organization*, 19 (1), pp. 161–75.
- Cormack, P. (2008) "True stories' of Canada: Tim Hortons and the branding of national identity", *Cultural Sociology*, 2 (3), pp. 369–84.
- Cornwell, T. B. and Coote, L. V. (2005) "Corporate sponsorship of a cause: The role of identification in purchase intent", *Journal of Business Research*, 58, pp. 268–76.
- Cornwell, T. B., Weeks, C. and Roy, D. (2005) "Sponsorship-linked marketing: opening the black box", *Journal of Advertising*, 34 (2), pp. 23–45.
- Costello, A. B. and Osborne, J. W. (2005) "Best practices in exploratory factor analysis: Four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis", *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 10, pp. 1–9.
- Coulter, R. A. and Ligas, M. (2000) "The long good-bye: The dissolution of customer-service provider relationships", *Psychology and Marketing*, 17 (8), pp. 669–95. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6793\(200008\)17:8<669::AID-MAR2>3.0.CO;2-T](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6793(200008)17:8<669::AID-MAR2>3.0.CO;2-T)
- Coulter, R. A., Price, L. L. and Feick, L. (2003) "Rethinking the origins of involvement and brand commitment: Insights from postsocialist central Europe", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30 (2), pp. 151–69.

Coupland, C. J. (2005) “Invisible brands: An ethnography of households and the brands in their kitchen pantries”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (1), pp. 106–18.

Courtney, A. E. and Whipple, T. W. (1983) *Sex stereotyping in advertising*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

Cova, B. (2020) “To change the law, defy the law: Hijacking the cause and co-opting its advocate”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 39 (4), pp. 430–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620943855>

Creswell, J. W. and Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. London: SAGE publications.

Creswell, J. W. and Plano Clark, V. L. (2018) *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, 3rd edn. California: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. and Poth, C. N. (2016) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.

Crocetta, C., Antonucci, L., Cataldo, R., Galasso, R., Grassia, M. G., Lauro, C. N. and Marino, M. (2021) “Higher-order pls-pm approach for different types of constructs”, *Social Indicators Research*, 154 (2), pp. 725–54. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02563-w>

Crockett, D. (2008) “Marketing blackness: How advertisers use race to sell products”, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8 (2), pp. 245–68.

Crockett, D. (2022) “Racial oppression and racial projects in consumer markets: A racial formation theory approach”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 49 (1), pp. 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab050>

Crotty, M. (1998) *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: SAGE Publications.

Crow, K., Galande, A. S., Chylinski, M. and Mathmann, F. (2021) “Power and the tweet: How viral messaging conveys political advantage”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 40 (4), pp. 505–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915621999036>

Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T. and Glick, P. (2007) “The BIAS map: Behaviours from intergroup affect and stereotypes”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92 (4), pp. 631–48. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.4.631>

D’Innocenzio, A. (2020) “Aunt Jemima brand retired by Quaker due to racial stereotype”, *The New York Times*, 17 June 2020. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/ap-online/2020/06/17/business/bc-us-aunt-jemima.html> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Dahl, D. W. and Page, M. C. (2007) “Thinking inside the box: Why consumers enjoy constrained creative experiences”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44 (3), pp. 357–69. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.44.3.357>

Dalton, R. J. (2002) *Citizen Politics: Public opinion and political parties in advanced industrial democracies*, 3rd ed. New York: Chatham House Publishers.

- Dalton, R. J. (2008) "Citizenship norms and the expansion of political participation", *Political Studies*, 56 (1), pp. 76–98. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00718.x>
- Dalton, R. J. (2017) "Political trust in North America", in Zmerli, S. and van der Meer, T. W. G (eds.) *Handbook on political trust*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 375–94.
- Dalton, R. J., Farrell, D. M. and McAllister, I. (2011) *Political parties and democratic linkage: How parties organise democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dalton, R. J., Scarrow, S. E. and Cain, B. E. (2004) "Advanced democracies and the new politics", *Journal of Democracy*, 15 (1), pp. 124–38. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2004.0004>
- Davies, A. and Elliott, R. (2006) "The evolution of the empowered consumer", *European Journal of Marketing*, 40 (9/10), pp. 1106–21. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560610681032>
- Davies, G., Chun, R., Mis, M. and Tel, E. (2003) "The use of metaphor in the exploration of the brand concept", *Journal of Marketing Management*, 19 (1/2), pp. 45–71.
- de Bakker, F. G. A. and den Hond, F. (2007) "Ideologically motivated activism: How activist groups influence corporate social change activities", *Academy of Management Review*, 32 (3), pp. 901–24.
- de Keersmaecker, J., Bostyn, D. H., Van Hiel, A. and Roets, A. (2021) "Disliked but free to speak: Cognitive ability is related to supporting freedom of speech for groups across the ideological spectrum", *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 12 (1), pp. 34–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619896168>
- Demby, G. (2020) "How the recent Black Lives Matter Movement gained increased white support", *National Public Radio*, 17 June. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/17/879682823/how-the-recent-black-lives-matter-movement-gained-increased-white-support> (Accessed: 30 November, 2024).
- de Ruyter, K., Keeling, D. I., Plangger, K., Montecchi, M., Scott, M. L. and Dahl, D. W. (2022) "Reimagining marketing strategy: driving the debate on grand challenges", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 50 (1), pp. 13–21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-021-00806-x>
- de Young, R. (2000) "Expanding and evaluating motives for environmentally responsible behaviour", *Journal of Social Issues*, 56, pp. 509–26.
- de Young, R. (2003) "If we build it, people will want to help: The management of citizen participation in conservation psychology", *Human Ecology Review*, 10, pp. 162–63.
- Deaux, K. and Lewis, L. L. (1984) "Structure of gender stereotypes: interrelationship among components and gender label", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46 (5), pp. 991–1004.
- DeCarlo, T. E., Laczniak, R. N. and Leigh, T. W. (2013) "Selling financial services: The effect of consumer product knowledge and salesperson commission on consumer suspicion and intentions", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41 (4), pp. 418–35. doi: 10.1007/s11747-012-0319-0.

Delgado-Ballester, E. and Fernandez, S. E. (2015) “Brand experimental value versus brand attributesal value: Which matters more for the brand?” *European Journal of Marketing*, 49 (11/12), pp. 1857–79. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2014-0129>

Delgado-Ballester, E. and Jose, M. (2001) “Brand trust in the context of consumer loyalty”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 35 (11/12), pp. 1238–58.

Delmas, M. A. and Montes-Sancho, M. (2010) “Voluntary agreements to improve environmental quality: Symbolic and substantive cooperation”, *Strategic Management Journal*, 31, pp. 576–601.

den Hond, F., Rehbein, K. A., de Bakker, F. G. A. and Lankveld, H. K. Van. (2014) “Playing on two chessboards: Reputation effects between corporate social responsibility (csr) and corporate political activity (CPA)”, *Journal of Management Studies*, 51 (5), pp. 790–813. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12063>

Denegri-Knott, J., Zwick, D. and Schroeder, J. E. (2006) “Mapping consumer power: An integrative framework for marketing and consumer research,” *European Journal of Marketing*, 40 (9/10), 950–71.

Deshpande, R. (1983) “Paradigms lost: On theory and method in research in marketing”, *Journal of Marketing*, 47 (4), pp. 101–10. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251403>

Deshpande, R. and Webster, F. E. (1989) “Organisational culture and marketing: Defining the research agenda”, *Journal of Marketing*, 53 (1), pp. 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251521>

Desmichel, P. and Kocher, B. (2020) “Luxury single- versus multi-brand stores: The effect of consumers’ hedonic goals on brand comparisons”, *Journal of Retailing*, 96 (2), pp. 203–219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2019.09.002>

DeVellis, R. F. (2017) *Scale development: Theory and applications*. 4th edn. London: SAGE Publications.

Di Placido, D. (2022) “Elon Musk dismisses Netflix as ‘woke’ and ‘unwatchable’”, *Forbes*, 20 April. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danidiplacido/2022/04/20/elon-musk-dismisses-netflix-as-woke-and-unwatchable/?sh=5791f169611b> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Diamantopoulos, A., Sarstedt, M., Fuchs, C., Wilczynski, P. and Kaiser, S. (2012) “Guidelines for choosing between multi-item and single-item scales for construct measurement: A predictive validity perspective”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40, pp. 434–49.

Diamantopoulos, A., Szöcs, I., Florack, A., Kolbl, Ž. and Egger, M. (2021) “The bond between country and brand stereotypes: Insights on the role of brand typicality and utilitarian/hedonic nature in enhancing stereotype content transfer”, *International Marketing Review*, 38 (6), pp. 1143–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-09-2020-0209>

DiCicco-Bloom, B. and Crabtree B. F. (2006) “The qualitative research interview”, *Medical Education*, 40 (4), pp. 314–21. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x



Digman, J. M. (1990) “Digman 1990 Five Factor Model”, *Annual Reviews Psychology*, 41, pp. 417–40.

Dodd, M. D. and Supa, D. W. (2014) “Conceptualising and measuring ‘corporate social advocacy’ communication: Examining the impact on corporate financial performance”, *Public Relations Journal*, 8 (3), pp. 1–23.

Dodds, W. B., Monroe, K. B. and Grewal, D. (1991) “Effects of price, brand, and store information on buyers’ product evaluations”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 28 (3), pp. 307–19. doi: 10.2307/3172866.

Dolich, I. J. (1969) “Congruence relationships between self images and product brands”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 6 (1), pp. 80–84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3150001>

Dolný, B. and Baboš, P. (2015) “Voter–representative congruence in europe: A loss of institutional influence?” *West European Politics*, 38 (6), pp. 1274–1304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2015.1053180>

Donaldson, T. (1982) *Corporations and morality*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Drumwright, M. E. (1994) “Socially responsible organisational buying: Environmental concern as a noneconomic buying criterion”, *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (3), pp. 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1252307>

Drumwright, M. E. (1996) “Company advertising with a social dimension: The role of noneconomic criteria”, *Journal of Marketing*, 60 (4), pp. 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251902>

Dryzek, J. S. (2001) “Legitimacy and economy in deliberative democracy”, *Political theory*, 29 (5), pp. 651–69.

Duman, S. and Ozgen, O. (2018) “Willingness to punish and reward brands associated to a political ideology (BAPI)”, *Journal of Business Research*, 86, pp. 468–78. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.05.026>

Dunn, L., White, K. and Dahl, D. W. (2020) “A little piece of me: When mortality reminders lead to giving to others”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 47 (3), pp. 431–53. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucaa020>.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P. (2015) *Management and business research*. London: SAGE Publications.

Eckhardt, G. M., Belk, R., Bradford, T. W., Dobscha, S., Ger, G. and Varman, R. (2022) “Decolonising marketing”, *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 25 (2), pp. 176–86.

Edelman. (2020) *Edelman Trust Barometer 2020*. Available at: <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2020-trust-barometer> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Edelman. (2021) *Edelman Trust Barometer 2021*. Available at: <https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2021-01/2021-edelman-trust-barometer.pdf> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

- Edelman. (2022) *2022 Edelman trust barometer special report: brands and the coronavirus*. Available at: <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2022-trust-barometer> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Edwards III, G. C., Mitchell, W. and Welch, R., (1995) “Explaining presidential approval: The significance of issue salience”, *American Journal of Political Science*, pp. 108–34.
- Eichert, C. A. and Luedicke, M. K. (2022) “Almost equal: consumption under fragmented stigma”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 49 (3), pp. 409–29. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab077>
- Eisend, M. (2010) “A meta-analysis of gender roles in advertising”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38 (4), pp. 418–40. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-009-0181-x>
- Eisend, M. and Stokburger-Sauer, N. (2013) “Brand personality: A meta-analytic review of antecedents and consequences”, *Marketing Letters*, 24 (3), pp. 205–16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-013-9232-7>
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989) “Building theories from case study research”, *The Academy of Management Review*, 14 (4), pp. 532–50.
- Eisenhardt, K. M., Graebner, M. E. and Sonenshein, S. (2016) “Grand challenges and inductive methods: Rigour without rigour mortis”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 59 (4), pp. 1113–23. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.4004>
- Ellen, P. S., Mohr, L. A. and Webb, D. J. (2000) “Charitable programs and the retailer: Do they mix?” *Journal of Retailing*, 76 (3), pp. 393–406. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359\(00\)00032-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359(00)00032-4)
- Ellen, P. S., Webb, D. J. and Mohr, L. A. (2006) “Building corporate associations: Consumer attributions for corporate socially responsible programs”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34 (2), pp. 147–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009207030528497>
- Elster, J. (1986) “The market and the forum: Three varieties of political theory”, in Elster, J. and Hylland, A. (eds.), *Foundations of social choice theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 249–65.
- Elster, J. (1998) *Deliberative democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Epley, N. and Waytz, A. (2010) “Mind perception”, in Fiske, S. T., Gilbert, D. T. and Lindzey, G. (eds.) *Handbook of social psychology*. 5th edn. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 498–541.
- Epley, N., Waytz, A. and Cacioppo, J. T. (2007) “On seeing human: A three-factor theory of anthropomorphism”, *Psychological Review*, 114 (4), pp. 864–86.
- Epp, A. M. and Price, L. L. (2011) “Designing solutions around customer network identity goals”, *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (2), pp. 36–54. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.75.2.36>
- Epp, A. M. and Otnes, C. C. (2021) “High-quality qualitative research: Getting into gear”, *Journal of Service Research*, 24 (2), pp. 163–67.

- Epstein, L. and Segal, J. A. (2000) “Measuring issue salience”, *American Journal of Political Science*, 44 (1), pp. 66–83. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669293>
- Esau, K., Friess, D. and Eilders, C. (2017) “Design matters! An empirical analysis of online deliberation on different news platforms”, *Policy and Internet*, 9 (3), pp. 321–42.
- Escalas, J. E. (2004) “Narrative processing: Building consumer connections to brands”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14 (1/2), pp. 168–80.
- Escalas, J. E. and Bettman, J. R. (2003) “You are what they eat: The influence of reference groups on consumers’ connections to brands”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13 (3), pp. 339–48. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327663JCP1303\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327663JCP1303_14)
- Eskine, K. J. and Locander, W. H. (2014) “A name you can trust? Personification effects are influenced by beliefs about company values”, *Psychology and Marketing*, 31, pp. 48–53.
- Etter, M., Colleoni, E., Illia, L., Meggiorin, K. and D’Eugenio, A. (2018) “Measuring organisational legitimacy in social media: Assessing citizens’ judgments with sentiment analysis”, *Business and Society*, 57 (1), pp. 60–97.
- Evan, W. and Freeman, R. E. (1988) “A stakeholder theory of the modern corporation: Kantian capitalism”, in Beauchamp, T. and Bowie, N. (eds.) *Ethical theory and business*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, pp. 75–93.
- Evanschitzky, H., Emrich, O., Sangtani, V., Ackfeldt, A. L., Reynolds, K. E. and Arnould, M. J. (2014) “Hedonic shopping motivations in collectivistic and individualistic consumer cultures”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 31 (3), pp. 335–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2014.03.001>
- Fan, X., Deng, N., Qian, Y. and Dong, X. (2022) “Factors affecting the effectiveness of cause-related marketing: A meta-analysis”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 175 (2), pp. 339–360. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04639-6>
- Fehr, B. (2006) “A prototype approach to studying love”, in Sternberg, R. J. and Weis, K. (eds.) *The new psychology of love*. Connecticut: Yale University Press, pp. 225–46.
- Feilzer, M. Y. (2010) “Doing mixed methods research pragmatically: Implications for the rediscovery of pragmatism as a research paradigm”, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4 (1), pp. 6–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689809349691>
- Feldmann, M. and Morgan, G. (2021) “Brexit and British business elites: business power and noisy politics”, *Politics and Society*, 49 (1), pp. 107–31.
- Feldmann, M. and Morgan, G. (2022) “Business elites and populism: Understanding business responses”, *New Political Economy*, 27 (2), pp. 347–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2021.1973397>
- Fennell, G. (1978) “Consumers’ perceptions of the product—use situation: A conceptual framework for identifying consumer wants and formulating positioning options”, *Journal of Marketing*, 42 (2), pp. 38–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224297804200207>

- Fennis, B. M. and Pruyn, A. T. H. (2007) “You are what you wear: Brand personality influences on consumer impression formation”, *Journal of Business Research*, 60 (6), pp. 634–39. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2006.06.013>
- Ferguson, J. H., Kreshel, P. J. and Tinkham, S. F. (1990) “In the pages of ms: Sex role portrayals of women in advertising”, *Journal of Advertising*, 19 (1), pp. 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673179>
- Ferraro, R., Kirmani, A. and Matherly, T. E. D. D. (2013) “Look at me! Look at me! Conspicuous brand usage, self-brand connection, and dilution”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 50 (4), pp. 477–88. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.11.0342>
- Ferrier, W. J., Smith, K. G. and Grimm, C. M. (1999) “The role of competitive action in market share erosion and industry dethronement: A study of industry leaders and challengers”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 42, pp. 372–88.
- Fetscherin, M. and Heinrich, D. (2014) “Consumer brand relationships: A research landscape”, *Journal of Brand Management*, 21 (5), pp. 366–71. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2014.22>
- Fetscherin, M., Guzman, F., Veloutsou, C. and Cayolla, R. R. (2019) “Latest research on brand relationships: Introduction to the special issue”, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 28 (2), pp. 133–39. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-12-2018-2167>
- Figueiredo, B. and Daiane, S. (2016) “The systemic creation of value through circulation in collaborative consumer networks”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43 (4), pp. 509–33.
- Fischer, E. and Otnes, C. C. (2006) “Breaking new ground: Developing grounded theories in marketing and consumer behaviour”, in Belk et al. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 19–30.
- Fishbein, M. and Ajzen, I. (1975) *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P. and Xu, J. (2002) “A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82 (6), pp. 878–902. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.6.878>
- Flint, D. J., Woodruff, R. B. and Gardial, S. F. (2002) “Exploring the phenomenon of customers’ desired value change in a business-to-business context”, *Journal of Marketing*, 66 (4), pp. 102–17. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.66.4.102.18517>
- Forehand, M. R. and Grier, S. (2003) “When is honesty the best policy? The effect of stated company intent on consumer scepticism”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13 (3), pp. 349–56. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1303\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1303_15)
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981) “Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18 (1), pp. 39–50.

Fournier, S. (1998) “Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (4), pp. 343–53. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209515>

Fournier, S. (2009) “Lessons learned about consumers’ relationships with their brands”, in D. J. MacInnis, D. J., Park, C. W. and Priester, J. R.(eds.), *Handbook of brand relationships*. Armonk, New York: M E Sharpe, pp. 5–23.

Fournier, S. and Alvarez, C. (2012) “Brands as relationship partners: Warmth, competence, and in-between”, *Journal of consumer psychology*, 22 (2), pp. 177–85.

Fournier, S. and Alvarez, C. (2019) “How brands acquire cultural meaning”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 29 (3), pp. 519–34. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1119>

Fournier, S., Srinivasan, S. and Marrinan, P. (2021) “Turning socio-political risk to your brand’s advantage”, *Marketing Intelligence Review*, 13 (2), pp. 18–26. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2478/nimmir-2021-0012>

Fowler, F. J. (1995) *Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation*. California: SAGE Publications.

Francis, J. N. P. and Robertson, J. T. F. (2021) “White spaces: How marketing actors (re)produce marketplace inequities for Black consumers”, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 37 (1/2), pp. 84–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1863447>

Frederick, W. C. (2006) *Corporation be good: The story of corporate social responsibility*. Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing.

Freling, T. H., Crosno, J. L. and Henard, D. H. (2010) “Brand personality appeal: Conceptualization and empirical validation”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. Boston, 39 (3), pp. 392–06.

Friedman, M. (1962) *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Friedman, M. (1970) “The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits”, *New York Times*. 13 September. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/09/13/archives/a-friedman-doctrine-the-social-responsibility-of-business-is-to.html> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Friedman, M. (1999) *Consumer boycotts*. New York: Routledge.

Fröhlich, R. and Knobloch, A. S. (2021). “Are they allowed to do that?” Content and typology of corporate socio-political positioning on TWITTER. A study of DAX-30 companies in Germany,” *Public Relations Review*, 47 (5), 102113.

Frynas, J. G. and Stephens, S. (2015) “Political corporate social responsibility: Reviewing theories and setting new agendas”, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 17 (4), pp. 483–509.

Fung, A. (2005) “Deliberation before the revolution: Toward an ethics of deliberative democracy in an unjust world,” *Political Theory*, 33 (3), 397–419.

- Furnham, A. and Mak, T. (1999) "Sex-role stereotyping in television commercials: A review and comparison of fourteen studies done on five continents over 25 years", *Sex Roles*, 41(5/6), pp. 413–37.
- Furr, R. M. (2014) "Response formats and item writing", *Scale Construction and Psychometrics for Social and Personality Psychology*, pp. 16–24.
- Ganahl, D. J., Prinsen, T. J. and Netzley, S. B. (2003) "A content analysis of prime time commercials: A contextual framework of gender representation", *Sex Roles*, 49, pp. 545–51.
- Gebhardt, G. F., Gregory, S. C. and John S. Jr. (2006) "Creating a market orientation: A longitudinal, multifirm, grounded analysis of cultural transformation", *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (4), pp. 37–55.
- Gephart, R. (2004) "Qualitative research and the academy of management journal", *Academy of Management Journal*, 47 (4), pp. 454–62.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., Signorielli, N. and Shanahan, J. (2002). Growing up with television: Cultivation processes. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 2 (1), 43–67.
- Gilly, M. C. (1988) "Sex roles in advertising: a comparison of television advertisements in Australia, Mexico, and the United States", *Journal of Marketing*, 52 (2), pp. 75–85. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251266>
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G. and Hamilton, A. L. (2013) "Seeking qualitative rigour in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology", *Organisational research methods*, 16 (1), pp. 15–31.
- Gioia, D., Corley, K., Eisenhardt, K., Feldman, M., Langley, A., Lê, J., Golden-Biddle, K., Locke, K., Mees-Buss, J., Piekkari, R. and Ravasi, D. (2022) "A curated debate: On using 'templates' in qualitative research", *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 31(3), pp. 231–52.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gleibs, I. H. (2017) "Are all 'research fields' equal? Rethinking practice for the use of data from crowdsourcing marketplaces", *Behavior Research Methods*, 49 (4), pp. 1333–342. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-016-0789-y>.
- Gobe, M. (2002) *Citizen brand: 10 commandments for transforming brand culture in a consumer democracy*. New York: Allworth Press.
- Goffman, E. (1979) *Gender advertisements*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gollnhofer, J. F., Weijo, H. A. and Schouten, J. W. (2019) "Consumer movements and value regimes: Fighting food waste in Germany by building alternative object pathways", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46 (3), pp. 460–82. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucz004>

Golossenko, A., Pillai, K. G. and Aroean, L. (2020) “Seeing brands as humans: Development and validation of a brand anthropomorphism scale”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 37 (4), pp. 737–55.

Gonzalez-Jimenez, H., Fastoso, F. and Fukukawa, K. (2019) “How independence and interdependence moderate the self-congruity effect on brand attitude: A study of east and west”, *Journal of Business Research*, 103, pp. 293–300. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.01.059>

Goodman, J. K. and Paolacci, G. (2017) “Crowdsourcing consumer research”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (1), pp. 196–210. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx047>.

Goodman, P., Goodman, S., Wang, V. and Paton, E. (2021) “Global brands find it hard to untangle themselves from Xinjiang cotton”, *The New York Times*, 06 April. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/business/xinjiang-china-cotton-brands.html> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Goren, P., Schoen, H., Reifler, J., Scotto, T. and Chittick, W. (2016) “A unified theory of value-based reasoning and US public opinion”, *Political Behaviour*, 38 (4), pp. 977–97.

Graeff, T.R. (1996) “Using promotional messages to manage the effects of brand and self-image on brand evaluations”, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 13 (3), pp. 4–18.

Graham, J., Haidt, J. and Nosek, B. A. (2009) “Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96 (5), pp. 1029–46. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015141>.

Graham, T. and Wright, S. (2014) “Discursive equality and everyday talk online: The impact of “superparticipants”, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19 (3), pp. 625–42.

Graham, T., Jackson, D. and Wright, S. (2015) “From everyday conversation to political action: Talking austerity in online ‘third spaces’”, *European Journal of Communication*, 30 (6), pp. 648–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323115595529>

Graham, T., Jackson, D. and Wright, S. (2016) “We need to get together and make ourselves heard’: Everyday online spaces as incubators of political action”, *Information, Communication & Society*, 19 (10), pp. 1373–89.

Grau, S. L. and Zotos, Y. C. (2016) “Gender stereotypes in advertising: A review of current research”, *International Journal of Advertising*, 35 (5), pp. 761–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1203556>

Grier, S.A., Thomas, K.D. and Johnson, G.D. (2019) “Re-imagining the marketplace: Addressing race in academic marketing research”, *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 22 (1), pp. 91–100.

Grohmann, B. (2009) “Gender dimensions of brand personality”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 46 (1), pp. 105–19. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.46.1.105>

Groves, R. M., Couper, M. P., Lepkowski, J. M., Singer, E. and Tourangeau, R. (2004) *Survey methodology*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) “Competing paradigms in qualitative research”, in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE Publications, pp. 105–17.

Guha, M. and Korschun, D. (2023) “Peer effects on brand activism: Evidence from brand and user chatter on Twitter”, *Journal of Brand Management*, pp. 1–15.

Gutman, Jonathan (1982) “A means-end chain model based on consumer categorization processes”, *Journal of Marketing*, 46 (April), pp. 60–72.

Gutmann, A. and Thompson, F. (2004) *Why deliberative democracy?* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Gwinner, K. P. and Eaton, J. (1999) “Building brand image through event sponsorship: The role of image transfer”, *Journal of Advertising*, 28 (4), pp. 47–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1999.10673595>

Habel, J., Alavi, S., Schmitz, C., Schneider, J. V. and Wieseke, J. (2016) “When do customers get what they expect? Understanding the ambivalent effects of customers’ service expectations on satisfaction”, *Journal of Service Research*, 19 (4), pp. 361–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670516662350>

Habermas, J. (1990) *Moral consciousness and communicative action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1992) *The structural transformation of the public sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1998) “Three normative models of democracy”, in Habermas, J. (ed.) *The inclusion of the other*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 239–52.

Haddon, H. (2022) “Howard Schultz says Starbucks is seeking fresh blood in CEO search”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 06 June. Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/howard-schultz-says-starbucks-is-seeking-fresh-blood-in-ceo-search-11654488060> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M. and Sarstedt, M. (2013) “Partial least squares structural equation modelling: Rigorous applications, better results and higher acceptance”, *Long range planning*, 46 (1/2), pp. 1–12.

Halpern, D. and Gibbs, J. (2013) “Social media as a catalyst for online deliberation? Exploring the affordances of Facebook and YouTube for political expression”, *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29 (3), pp. 1159–68.

Ham, C. D. and Kim, J. (2019) “The role of CSR in crises: Integration of situational crisis communication theory and the persuasion knowledge model”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 158, pp. 353–72.

Hambrick, D. C. and Wowak, A. J. (2019) “CEO socio-political activism: A stakeholder alignment model”, *Academy of Management Review*, 46 (1), pp. 33–59. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2018.0084>



- Hamilton, D. L. and Sherman, J. W. (1994) “Stereotypes”, in Wyer Jr. R. S. and Srull, T. K. (eds.), *Handbook of social cognition*, 2nd edn. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Erlbaum, pp. 1–68.
- Hannan, M. T. and Glenn. R. C. (1992) *Dynamics of organisational populations: Density, legitimation and competition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hardesty, D. M. and Bearden, W. O. (2004) “The use of expert judges in scale development. Implications for improving face validity of measures of unobservable constructs”, *Journal of Business Research* , 57 (2), pp. 98–107.
- Harrison III, R. L. (2013) “Using mixed methods designs in the Journal of Business Research, 1990-2010”, *Journal of Business Research*, 66, pp. 2153–62.
- Harrison-Walker, L. J. (2001) “The measurement of word-of-mouth communication and an investigation of service quality and customer commitment as potential antecedents”, *Journal of Service Research*, 4 (1), pp. 60–75.
- Haupt, M., Wannow, S., Marquardt, L., Graubner, J. S. and Haas, A. (2023) “Who is more responsive to brand activism? The role of consumer-brand identification and political ideology in consumer responses to activist brand messages!”, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 8 (June), pp. 1248–73. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-10-2022-4193>
- Hayes, A. F. (2018) “Partial, conditional, and moderated moderated mediation: Quantification, inference, and interpretation”, *Communication monographs*, 85 (1), pp. 4–40.
- Hazan, C. and Shaver, P. R. (1994) “Attachment as an organisational framework for research on close relationships”, *Psychological Inquiry*, 5, pp. 1–22.
- He, H. (2022) “Brand activism: Why it’s no longer sufficient for businesses to remain reactive to societal issues”, *Forbes*, 09 February. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alliancembs/2022/02/09/brand-activism-why-its-no-longer-sufficient-for-businesses-to-remain-reactive-to-societal-issues/?sh=2129ddad6fef> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Heisley, D. D. and Levy, S. J. (1991) “Auto-driving: A photo-elicitation technique”, *Journal of consumer Research*, 18 (3), pp. 257–72.
- Helfenbein, R. (2021) “When China rings the bell in Xinjiang, retail crumbles”, *Forbes*. 11 April 2021. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rickhelfenbein/2021/04/11/when-china-rings-the-bell-in-xinjiang-gretail-crumbles/?sh=25e13af27944> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Henderson, G. R., Rank-Christman, T., White, T. B., Grantham, K. D., Ostrom, A. L. and Lynch, J. G. (2018) “Intercultural competence and customer facial recognition”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 32, pp. 570–80. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-07-2017-0219>
- Henneberg, S. C. (2002) “Understanding political marketing”, in O’Shaughnessy, N. J. and Henneberg, S. C. (eds.) *The idea of political marketing*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, pp. 93–170.

Henneberg, S. C., Scammell, M. and O'Shaughnessy, N. J. (2009) "Political marketing management and theories of democracy", *Marketing Theory*, 9 (2), pp. 165–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593109103060>

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M. and Sarstedt, M. (2015) "A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modelling", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43 (1), pp. 115–35.

Henson, R. K. and Roberts, J. K. (2006) "Use of exploratory factor analysis in published research: Common errors and some comment on improved practice", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66, pp. 393–416.

Hill, R. P. and Martin, K. D. (2014) "Broadening the paradigm of marketing as exchange: A public policy and marketing perspective", *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 33 (1), pp. 17–33. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.13.023>

Hillman, A. J. and Hitt, M. A. (1999) "Corporate political strategy formulation: A model of approach, participation, and strategy decisions", *Academy of Management Review*, 24 (4), pp. 825–42. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1999.2553256>

Hillman, A. J., Keim, G. D. and Schuler, D. (2004) "Corporate political activity: A review and research agenda", *Journal of Management*, 30 (6), pp. 837–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.003>

Hinde, R. A. (1995) "A suggested structure for a science of relationships", *Personal Relationships*, 2 (March), pp. 1–15.

Hirschman, E. C. and Holbrook, M. B. (1982) "Hedonic consumption: Emerging concepts, methods and propositions", *Journal of Marketing*, 46 (3), pp. 92–101.

Hoffman, B. J., Bynum, B.H., Piccolo, R. F. and Sutton, A. W. (2011) "Person-organisation value congruence: How transformational leaders influence work group effectiveness", *Academy of Management Journal*, 54 (4), pp. 779–96.

Holbrook, M. B. (1987) "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, what's unfair in the reflections on advertising?" *Journal of marketing*, 51 (3), pp. 95–103.

Holbrook, M. B. and Batra, R. (1987) "Assessing the role of emotions as mediators of consumer responses to advertising", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14 (3), pp. 404–20. doi: 10.1086/209123.

Hollingshead, A. B. and Fraudin, S. N. (2003) "Gender stereotypes and assumptions about expertise in transactive memory", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 39 (4), pp. 355–63. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-1031\(02\)00549-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-1031(02)00549-8)

Holt, D. B. (1997) "Poststructuralist lifestyle analysis: Conceptualising the social patterning of consumption", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 23 (4), pp. 326–50.

Holt, D. B. (2002) "Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (1), pp. 70–90. <https://doi.org/10.1086/339922>

Holt, Douglas B. (2004) *How brands become icons: The principles of cultural branding*. Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press.

Holt, D. B. (2006) "Toward a sociology of branding", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 6 (3), pp. 299–302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540506068680>

Holzer, B. (2006) "Political consumerism between individual choice and collective action: Social movements, role mobilization and signalling," *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 30 (5), 405–15.

Homburg, C., Jan, W. and Wayne, D. H. (2009) "Social identity and the service-profit chain", *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (2), pp. 38–54.

Homburg, C., Stierl, M. and Bornemann, T. (2013) "Corporate social responsibility in business-to-business markets: How organisational customers account for supplier corporate social responsibility engagement", *Journal of Marketing*, 77 (6), pp. 54–72. doi: 10.1509/jm.12.0089.

Hong, J., Saito, Y. and Leung, A. (2022) "How nationalism in China has dethroned Nike, Adidas", *Bloomberg*, 15 February. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2022-china-nationalistic-online-shoppers/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Hopf, C. (2000) "Qualitative interviews: An overview", in Flick, U., von Kardorff, U. and Steinke, I. (eds.) *A companion to qualitative research*. California: SAGE Publications, pp. 203–08.

Horn, J. L. (1965) "A rationale and test for the number of factors in factor analysis", *Psychometrika*, 32, pp. 179–218.

Hosany, S. and Martin, D. (2012) "Self-image congruence in consumer behaviour", *Journal of Business Research*, 65 (5), pp. 685–691. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.03.015>

Hu, L. and Bentler, P. M. (1999) "Cut-off criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives", *Structural Equation Modelling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6 (1), pp. 1–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118>.

Huang, Y. and Sternquist, B. (2007) "Retailers' foreign market entry decisions: An institutional perspective", *International Business Review*, 16 (5), pp. 613–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2007.06.005>

Huber, F., Vollhardt, K., Matthes, I. and Vogel, J. (2010) "Brand misconduct: Consequences on consumer–brand relationships", *Journal of Business Research*, 63 (11), pp. 1113–20. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.10.006>

Huber, K. and Schormair, M. J. L. (2021) "Progressive and conservative firms in multi-stakeholder initiatives: Tracing the construction of political CSR identities within the

accord on fire and building safety in Bangladesh”, *Business and Society*, 60 (2), pp. 454–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650319825786>

Huberman, A. M. and Matthew, B. M. (1994) “Data management and analysis methods”, in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, pp. 428–44.

Huff, A. D., Humphreys, A. and Wilner, S. J. S. (2021) “The Politicisation of objects: Meaning and materiality in the U.S. Cannabis market”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48 (1), pp. 22–50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucaa061>

Hulland, J. and Miller, J. (2018) “Keep on Turkin”? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 46 (5), pp. 789–94. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-018-0587-4>

Hung, K. and Petrick, J. F. (2011) “The role of self- and functional congruity in cruising intentions”, *Journal of Travel Research*, 50 (1), pp. 100–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509355321>

Hur, J. D., Koo, M. and Hofmann, W. (2015) “When temptations come alive: How anthropomorphism undermines self-control”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42 (2), pp. 340–58.

Hydock, C., Paharia, N. and Blair, S. (2020) “Should your brand pick a side? How market share determines the impact of corporate political advocacy”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 57 (6), pp. 1135–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243720947682>

Inglehart, R. (1981) “Post-Materialism in an environment of insecurity”, *The American Political Science Review*, (75) 4, pp. 880–900.

Inglehart, R. (1997) *Modernisation and postmodernisation: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Inglehart, R. and Baker, W. E. (2000) “Modernisation, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values”, *American sociological review*, pp. 19–51.

Inglehart, R. and Klingemann, H. D. (1976) “Party identification, ideological preference and the left-right dimension among Western mass publics”, *Party identification and beyond*, pp. 243–73.

International Monetary Fund (2022) *World economic outlook database*. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2022/October/weo-report?c=112,ands=NGDPD,PPPGDP,NGDPDPC,PPPPC,andsy=2022andey=2027andssm=0andscsm=1andscc=0andssd=1andssc=0andsic=0andsort=countryands=.andbr=1> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Ivie, R. L. (2005) “Savagery in democracy’s empire”, *Third World Quarterly*, 26 (1), pp. 55–65.

Izberk-Bilgin, E. (2010) “An interdisciplinary review of resistance to consumption, some marketing interpretations, and future research suggestions”, *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 13 (3), pp. 299–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253861003787031>

- Jackson, S. J. and Foucault W. B. (2015) “Hijacking# myNYPD: Social media dissent and networked counterpublics”, *Journal of Communication*, 65 (6), pp. 932–52.
- Japutra, A., Ekinici, Y. and Simkin, L. (2018) “Positive and negative behaviours resulting from brand attachment”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 52 (5/6), pp. 1185–1202.
- Japutra, A., Ekinici, Y. and Simkin, L. (2019) “Self-congruence, brand attachment and compulsive buying”, *Journal of Business Research*, 99, pp. 456–63. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.08.024>
- Jasper, J. M. (2011) “Emotions and social movements”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37 (August), pp. 285–303.
- Johar, G. V., Sengupta, J. and Aaker, J. L. (2005) “Two roads to updating brand personality impressions: Trait versus evaluative inferencing”, *Journal of Marketing research*, 42 (4), pp. 458–69.
- Johar, J. S. and Sirgy, J. M. (1991) “Value-expressive versus utilitarian advertising appeals: When and why to use which appeal”, *Journal of Advertising*, 20 (3), pp. 23–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1991.10673345>
- Johns, G. (1981) “Difference score measures of organisational behaviour variables: A critique”, *Organisational Behaviour and Human Performance*, 27 (3), pp. 443–63.
- Johnson, C. D., Bauer, B. C. and Carlson, B. D. (2022) “Constituency building: Determining consumers’ willingness to participate in corporate political activities”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 39 (1), pp. 42–57.
- Johnson, G. D., Thomas, K. D., Harrison, A. K. and Grier, S. A. (2019) *Race in the marketplace: Crossing critical boundaries*. Cambridge: Springer.
- Joy, A. and Sherry, J. F. (2003) “Speaking of art as embodied imagination: A multisensory approach to understanding aesthetic experience”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30 (2), pp. 259–82. <https://doi.org/10.1086/376802>
- Jung, J. and Mittal, V. (2020) “Political identity and the consumer journey: A research review”, *Journal of Retailing*, 96 (1), pp. 55–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2019.09.003>
- Kahneman, D. (1973) *Attention and effort*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Kaiser, H. F. and Rice, J. (1974) “Little Jiffy, Mark Iv”, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 34 (1), pp. 111–17.
- Kalliath, T. J., Bluedorn, A. C. and Strube, M. J. (1999) “A test of value congruence effects”, *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 20 (7), pp. 1175–98.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M. and Kangasniemi, M. (2016) “Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide”, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72 (12), pp. 2954–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>

- Kang, C., Germann, F., Grewal, R., Charles, K., Germann, F. and Grewal, R. (2016) “Washing away your sins? Corporate social responsibility, corporate social irresponsibility, and firm performance”, *Journal of Marketing*, 80 (2), pp. 59–79. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0324>
- Kang, J., Tang, L. and Lee, J. Y. (2015) “Self-congruity and functional congruity in brand loyalty”, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 39 (1), pp. 105–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012471377>
- Karababa, E. and Ger, G. (2011) “Early modern Ottoman coffeehouse culture and the formation of the consumer subject”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (5), pp. 737–60. <https://doi.org/10.1086/656422>
- Karakaya, F. and Stahl, M. J. (1989) “Barriers to entry and market entry decisions in consumer and industrial goods markets”, *Journal of Marketing*, 53 (2), pp. 80–91. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251415>
- Kates, S. M. (2004) “The dynamics of brand legitimacy: An interpretive study in the gay men’s community”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (2), pp. 455–64. <https://doi.org/10.1086/422122>
- Keim, G. D. and Zeithaml, C. P. (1986) “Corporate political strategy and legislative decision making: A review and contingency approach”, *Academy of Management Review*, 11 (4), pp. 828–43.
- Keller, K. L. (1993) “Conceptualising, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity”, *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (1), pp. 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1252054>
- Keller, K. L. (2012) “Understanding the richness of brand relationships: Research dialogue on brands as intentional agents”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (2), pp. 186–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.11.011>
- Keller, K. L. (2020) “Consumer research insights on brands and branding: A JCR curation”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46 (5), pp. 995–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucz058>
- Keller, K. L. (2021) “The future of brands and branding: an essay on multiplicity, heterogeneity, and integration”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48 (4), pp. 527–40. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab063>
- Kervyn, N., Fiske, S. T. and Malone, C. (2012) “Brands as intentional agents framework: How perceived intentions and ability can map brand perception”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (2), pp. 166–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.09.006>
- Khamitov, M., Grégoire, Y. and Suri, A., (2020) “A systematic review of brand transgression, service failure recovery and product-harm crisis: Integration and guiding insights”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48, pp. 519–42.
- Khamitov, M., Wang, X. (Shane), Thomson, M., Morwitz, V. G., Inman, J. J. and Hoegg, J. (2019) “How well do consumer-brand relationships drive customer brand loyalty? Generalisations from a meta-analysis of brand relationship elasticities”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46 (3), pp. 435–59. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucz006>

Kidwell, B., Farmer, A. and Hardesty, D. M. (2013) “Getting liberals and conservatives to go green: political ideology and congruent appeals”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (2), pp. 350–67. <https://doi.org/10.1086/670610>

Kilbourne, J. (1999) *Deadly persuasion. Why women and girls must fight the addictive power of advertising*. New York: The Free Press.

Kim, J. H. (2008) “Corporate lobbying revisited”, *Business and Politics*, 10 (2), pp. 1–23.

Kim, H. C., and Kramer, T. (2015) “Do materialists prefer the “brand-as-servant”? The interactive effect of anthropomorphized brand roles and materialism on consumer responses”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42 (2), pp. 284–99. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucv015>

Kim, J. C., Park, B. and Dubois, D. (2018) “How consumers’ political ideology and status-maintenance goals interact to shape their desire for luxury goods”, *Journal of Marketing*, 82 (6), pp. 132–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242918799699>

Kim, J., and Mueller, C. M. (1978) *Factor analysis: Statistical methods and practical issues*. Newbury Park, California: SAGE Publications.

Kim, M. (2009) “Cross-national analyses of satisfaction with democracy and ideological congruence”, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 19 (1), pp. 49–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457280802568402>

Kim, S. and McGill, A. L. (2011) “Gaming with Mr. Slot or gaming the slot machine? Power, anthropomorphism, and risk perception”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38 (1), pp. 94–107. <https://doi.org/10.1086/658148>

King, B. G. (2008) “A political mediation model of corporate response to social movement activism”, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 53, pp. 395–421.

King, B. G. and Pearce, N. A. (2010) “The contentiousness of markets: politics, social movements, and institutional change in markets”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, pp. 249–67.

Kipnis, E., Demangeot, C., Pullig, C. and Broderick, A. J. (2019) “Consumer multicultural identity affiliation: Reassessing identity segmentation in multicultural markets”, *Journal of Business Research*, 98, pp. 126–41. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.11.056>

Kipnis, E., Demangeot, C., Pullig, C., Cross, S. N. N., Cui, C. C., Galalae, C. and Williams, J. D. (2021) “Institutionalising diversity-and-inclusion-engaged marketing for multicultural marketplace well-being”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 40 (2), pp. 143–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620975415>

Kitzmueller, M. and Shimshack, J. (2012) “Economic perspectives on corporate social responsibility”, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50, pp. 51–84.

Kivunja, C. and Kuyini, A. B. (2017) “Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts”, *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6 (5), pp. 26–41. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>

Klandermans, B. (1984) "Mobilisation and participation: Social-psychological expansions of resource mobilisation theory", *American Sociological Review*, 49, pp. 583–600.

Klandermans, B. (1997) *The social psychology of protest*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kleine, S. S., Robert, E. K. III and Jerome, B. K. (1993) "Mundane consumption and the self: A social identity perspective", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2 (June), pp. 209–35.

Klemm, M., Sanderson, S. and Luffman, G. (1991) "Mission statements: Selling corporate values to employees", *Long Range Planning*, 24 (3), pp. 73–78.

Kline, P. A. (1993) *Handbook of psychological testing*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

Klucarova, S. and He, X. (2022) "Status consumption and charitable donations: The power of empowerment", *Psychology and Marketing*, 39 (6), pp. 1116–28. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21658>

Kock, F., Berbekova, A. and Assaf, A. G. (2021) "Understanding and managing the threat of common method bias: Detection, prevention and control", *Tourism Management*, 86, pp.1–10.

Kohli, A. (2009) "From the Editor", *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (1), pp. 1–2.

Kohli, A. and Bernard J. J. (1990) "Market orientation: The construct, research propositions, and managerial implications", *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (2), pp. 1–18.

Kolbl, Ž., Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, M. and Diamantopoulos, A. (2019) "Stereotyping global brands: Is warmth more important than competence?" *Journal of Business Research*, 104, pp. 614–21. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.12.060>

Kolbl, Ž., Diamantopoulos, A., Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, M. and Zabkar, V. (2020) "Do brand warmth and brand competence add value to consumers? A stereotyping perspective", *Journal of Business Research*, 118 (June), pp. 346–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.048>

Kopalle, P. K. and Lehmann, D. R. (2001) "Strategic management of expectations: The role of disconfirmation sensitivity and perfectionism", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38 (3), pp. 386–94. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.38.3.386.18862>

Korschun, D., Martin, K. D. and Vadakkepatt, G. (2020) "Marketing's role in understanding political activity", *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 39 (4), pp. 378–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620949261>

Kotler, P. and Sarkar, C. (2017) "Finally, Brand Activism!" *Marketing Journal*. 09 January 2017. Available at: <http://www.marketingjournal.org/finally-brand-activism-philip-kotler-and-christian-sarkar> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Kotler, P. and Levy, S. J. (1969) "Broadening the concept of marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, 33 (1), pp. 10–15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1248740>



- Kozinets, R. V, Ferreira, D. A. and Chimenti, P. (2021) “How do platforms empower consumers? Insights from the affordances and constraints of reclame aqui”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48 (3), pp. 428–55. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab014>
- Kozinets, R. V. and Handelman, J. M. (2004) “Adversaries of consumption: Consumer movements, activism, and ideology”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (3), pp. 691–704. <https://doi.org/10.1086/425104>
- Krauss S. E., Hamzah A., Omar Z., Suandi T., Ismail I. A. and Zahari M. Z. (2009) “Preliminary investigation and interview guide development for studying how Malaysian farmers form their mental models of farming”, *The Qualitative Report*, 14 (2), pp. 245–60.
- Krauss, S. E. (2005) “Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer”, *The Qualitative Report*, 10 (4), pp. 758–70.
- Kressmann, F., Sirgy, M. J., Herrmann, A., Huber, F., Huber, S. and Lee, D. J. (2006) “Direct and indirect effects of self-image congruence on brand loyalty”, *Journal of Business Research*, 59 (9), pp. 955–64. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2006.06.001>
- Krishna, A. (2012) “An integrative review of sensory marketing: Engaging the senses to affect perception, judgement and behaviour”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (3), pp. 332–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.08.003>
- Kristiansen, C. M. and Zanna, M. P. (1994) “The rhetorical use of values to justify social and intergroup attitudes”, *Journal of Social Issues*, 50 (4), pp. 47–65.
- Kumar, B., Bagozzi, R. P., Manrai, A. K. and Manrai, L. A. (2021) “Conspicuous consumption: A meta-analytic review of its antecedents, consequences, and moderators”, *Journal of Retailing*, 98 (3), pp. 471–85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2021.10.003>
- Kvale, S. (2008). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* . 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications.
- Lacey, R., Kennett-Hensel, P. A. and Manolis, C. (2014) “Is corporate social responsibility a motivator or hygiene factor? Insights into its bivalent nature”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43 (3), pp. 315–32. doi: 10.1007/s11747-014-0390-9.
- Lam, S. K., Ahearne, M., Hu, Y. and Schillewaert, N. (2010) “Resistance to brand switching when a radically new brand is introduced: A social identity theory perspective”, *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (6), pp. 128–46. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.74.6.128>
- Lam, S. K., Ahearne, M. and Schillewaert, N. (2012) “A multinational examination of the symbolic-instrumental framework of consumer-brand identification”, *Journal of International Business Studies*, 43 (3), pp. 306–31. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2011.54>
- Lampikoski, T., Westerlund, M., Rajala, R. and Moller, K. (2014) “Green innovation games: Value-creation strategies for corporate sustainability”, *California Management Review*, 57: pp. 88–116.
- Landis, J. R. and Koch, G. G. (1977) “The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data”, *Biometrics*, 33 (1), pp. 159–74. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2529310>

- Landon, E. L. (1974) "Self concept, ideal self concept, and consumer purchase intentions", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1 (2), pp. 44–51.
- Lau, R. R. and Redlawsk, D. P. (1997) "Voting correctly", *American Political Science Review*, 91 (3), pp. 585–98.
- Law, K., Wong, C. S. and Mobley, W. (1998) "Toward a taxonomy of multidimensional constructs", *Academy of Management Review*, 23 (4), pp. 741–55.
- Lawton, T., Mcguire, S. and Rajwani, T. (2013) "Corporate political activity: A literature review and research agenda", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15 (1), pp. 86–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2012.00337.x>
- Lecky, P. (1945) "Self-consistency: A theory of personality", *The American Journal of Psychology*, 48 (6), pp. 80–811. doi: 10.1002/1097-4679(199211)48:6<807::aid-jclp2270480615>3.0.co;2-c.
- Lee, M. and Faber, R. J. (2007) "Effects of product placement in online games on brand memory: A perspective of the limited-capacity model of attention", *Journal of Advertising*, 36 (4), pp. 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.2753/JOA0091-3367360406>
- Lee, M., Ramus, T. and Vaccaro, A. (2018) "From protest to product: Strategic frame brokerage in a commercial social movement organization", *Academy of Management Journal*, 61 (6), pp. 2130–58.
- Lee, S. Y., Kim, Y. and Kim, Y. (2021) "Engaging consumers with corporate social responsibility campaigns: The roles of interactivity, psychological empowerment, and identification", *Journal of Business Research*, 134 (June), pp. 507–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.062>
- Lenz, I., Wetzels, H. and Hammerschmidt, M. (2017) "Can doing good lead to doing poorly? Firm value implications of CSR in the face of CSI", *Official Publication of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45 (5), pp. 677–97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0510-9>
- Levinger, G. (1983) "Development and change", in Kelley, H. H. et al. (eds.) *Close relationships*. New York: Freeman, pp. 315–35.
- Levitt, T. (1970) "The dangers of social responsibility", in Melon, T., Smith, S. and Wheatly, J. (eds.) *Managerial marketing policies and decisions*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 461–75.
- Levy, P. and Lemeshow, S. (1999) *Sampling of Populations: Methods and Applications*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Levy, S. J. (1959) "Symbols for Sale", *Harvard Business Review*, (July/August), pp. 117–24.
- Lewis, P. V. (1985) "Defining business ethics: Like nailing Jello to a wall", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 4 (5), pp. 377–83.

Lichtenstein, D. R., Drumwright, M. E. and Braig, B. M. (2004) “The effect of corporate social responsibility on customer donations to corporate-supported non-profit”, *Journal of Marketing*, 68 (4), pp. 16–32. doi: 10.1509/jmkg.68.4.16.42726.

Licsandru, T. C. and Cui, C. C. (2019) “Ethnic marketing to the global millennial consumers: Challenges and opportunities”, *Journal of Business Research*, 103 (February), pp. 261–74. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.01.052>

Lieven, T. and Hildebrand, C. (2016) “The impact of brand gender on brand equity”, *International Marketing Review*, 33 (2), pp. 178–95. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-08-2014-0276>

Light, R. J. (1971) “Measures of response agreement for qualitative data: Some generalisations and alternatives”, *Psychological Bulletin*, 76 (5), pp. 365–77. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0031643>

Liljedal, K. T., Berg, H. and Dahlen, M. (2020) “Effects of non-stereotyped occupational gender role portrayal in advertising how showing women in male-stereotyped job roles sends positive signals about brands”, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 60 (2), pp. 179–96. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2020-008>

Lindner, J. R., Murphy, T. H. and Briers, G. E. (2001). Handling non-response in social science research, *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 42 (July), pp. 1–23.

Liu-Thompkins, Y., Khoshghadam, L., Attar Shoushtari, A. and Zal, S. (2022) “What drives retailer loyalty? A meta-analysis of the role of cognitive, affective, and social factors across five decades”, *Journal of Retailing*, 98 (1), pp. 92–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2022.02.005>

Livengood, R. S. and Reger, R. K. (2010) “That’s our turf! Identity domains and competitive dynamics”, *The Academy of Management Review*, 35, pp. 48–66.

Locke, R. M., Qin, F. and Brause, A. (2007) “Does monitoring improve labour standards-lessons from Nike?” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 61, pp. 3–31.

Lucarelli, A., Fuschillo, G. and Chytikova, Z. (2021) “How cyber political brands emerge: A socio-material analysis of the Italian Five Star movement and the Czech pirate party”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 55 (4), pp. 1130–54. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-04-2019-0336>

Lundgaard, D. and Etter, M. (2022) “Everyday talk on twitter: Informal deliberation about (ir-)responsible business conduct in social media arenas”, *Business and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503221139838>

Lux, S., Crook, T. R. and Woehr, D. J. (2011) “Mixing business with politics: A meta-analysis of the antecedents and outcomes of corporate political activity”, *Journal of Management*, 37, pp. 223–47.

Lynch, J. G. Jr. and Srull, T. K. (1982) “Memory and attentional factors in consumer choice: Concepts and research methods”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9 (June), pp. 18–37

- Maciel, A. F. and Wallendorf, M. (2021) “Space as a resource in the politics of consumer identity”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48 (2), pp. 309–32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab002>
- MacInnis, D. J. and Folkes, V. S. (2017) “Humanising brands: When brands seem to be like me, part of me, and in a relationship with me”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 27 (3), pp. 355–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2016.12.003>
- MacInnis, D. J., Morwitz, V. G., Botti, S., Hoffman, D. L., Kozinets, R. V., Lehmann, D. R. and Pechmann, C. (2020) “Creating boundary-breaking, marketing-relevant consumer research”, *Journal of Marketing*, 84 (2), pp. 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919889876>
- MacInnis, D. J., Torelli, C. J. and Park, C. W. (2019) “Creating cultural meaning in products and brands: a psychological perspective”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 29 (3), pp. 555–62. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1118>
- MacKenzie, S. B. and Podsakoff, P. M. (2012) “Common method bias in marketing: Causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies”, *Journal of Retailing*, 88 (4), pp. 542–55.
- MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M. and Podsakoff, N. P. (2011) “Construct measurement and validation procedures in MIS and behavioural research: Integrating new and existing techniques”, *MIS Quarterly*, pp. 293–334.
- Mael, F. and Ashforth, B. E. (1992) “Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organisational identification”, *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 13 (2), pp. 103–23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030130202>
- Magee, C. (2002) “Do political action committees give money to candidates for electoral or influence motives?” *Public Choice*, 112, pp. 373–99.
- Magnusson, P., Krishnan, V., Westjohn, S. A. and Zdravkovic, S. (2014) “The spillover effects of prototype brand transgressions on country image and related brands”, *Journal of International Marketing*, 22 (1), pp. 21–38.
- Malär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. D. and Nyffenegger, B. (2011) “Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: The relative importance of the actual and the ideal self”, *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (4), pp. 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.75.4.35>
- Manin, B. (1987) “On legitimacy and political deliberation”, *Political Theory*, 15 (3), pp. 338–68.
- Mano, H. and Oliver, R. L. (1993) “Assessing the dimensionality and structure of the consumption experience: Evaluation, feeling, and satisfaction”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20 (3), pp. 451–66. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209361>
- Mansbridge, J. (1999) “Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? a contingent ‘yes’”, *Journal of Politics*, 61 (3), pp. 628–57.

- Marder, B., Marchant, C., Archer-Brown, C., Yau, A. and Colliander, J. (2018) “Conspicuous political brand interactions on social network sites”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 52 (3/4), pp. 702–24.
- Martin, D. M. and Schouten, J. W. (2014) “Consumption-driven market emergence”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (5), pp. 855–70. <https://doi.org/10.1086/673196>
- Maxham, J. G. and Netemeyer, R. G. (2002) “A longitudinal study of complaining customers’ evaluations of multiple service failures and recovery efforts”, *Journal of Marketing*, 66 (4), pp. 57–71. doi: 10.1509/jmkg.66.4.57.18512.
- Mayer, R. (2002) *Artificial Africas: Colonial images in the times of globalisation*. Hanover: University Press of New England.
- Mazodier, M. and Dwight, M. (2012) “Achieving brand loyalty through sponsorship: the role of fit and self-congruity”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40 (6), pp. 807–20.
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. (2001) *Dynamics of contention*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McCambridge, J., Mialon, M. and Hawkins, B. (2018) “Alcohol industry involvement in policy making: A systematic review”, *Addiction*, 113 (9), pp. 1571–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.14216>
- McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (1977) “Resource mobilisation and social movements: A partial theory”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 82 (6), pp. 1212–41. <https://doi.org/10.1086/226464>
- McCracken, G. S. (1986) “Culture and consumption: A theoretical account of the structure and movement of cultural meaning of consumer goods”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13, pp. 71–84.
- McCracken, G. S. (1988) *The long interview (qualitative research methods series)*, London: SAGE Publications.
- McCracken, G. S. (1989) “Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (3), pp. 310–21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209217>
- McCurdy, P. (2013) “Conceptualising celebrity activists: The case of Tamsin Omond”, *Celebrity Studies*, 4 (3), pp. 311–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2013.831627>
- McShane, L. and Sabadoz, C. (2015) “Rethinking the concept of consumer empowerment: Recognizing consumers as citizens”, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 39 (5), pp. 544–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12186>
- Medearis, J. (2005) “Social movements and deliberative democratic theory”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 35 (1), pp. 53–75. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123405000037>

- Melnyk, V., Klein, K. and Völckner, F. (2012) “The double-edged sword of foreign brand names for companies from emerging countries”, *Journal of Marketing*, 76 (6), pp. 21–37. doi: 10.1509/jm.11.0349.
- Mende, M. and Scott, M. L. (2021) “May the force be with you: Expanding the scope for marketing research as a force for good in a sustainable world”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 40 (2), pp. 116–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07439156211000741>
- Menon, S. and Kahn, B.E. (2001) “Corporate sponsorships of philanthropic activities: Do they help the sponsor?” *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 7 (3), pp. 76–79.
- Miao, F., Kozlenkova, I. V., Wang, H., Xie, T. and Palmatier, R. W. (2022) “An emerging theory of avatar marketing”, *Journal of Marketing*, 86 (1), pp. 67–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242921996646>
- Michel, G., Torelli, C. J., Fleck, N. and Hubert, B. (2022) “Self-brand values congruity and incongruity: Their impacts on self-expansion and consumers’ responses to brands”, *Journal of Business Research*, 142 (December 2021), pp. 301–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.12.032>
- Micheletti, I. (2004) “Political virtue and shopping: Individuals, consumerism, and collective action”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 34 (1), pp.47–48, <https://doi.org/10.1086/428330>
- Miller, W. E., Pierce, R., Thomassen, J., Herrera, R., Esaisson, P., Holmberg, S. and Webels, B. (1999) *Policy representation in Western democracies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mirzaei, A., Wilkie, D. C. and Siuki, H. (2022) “Woke brand activism authenticity or the lack of it”, *Journal of Business Research*, 139 (September 2021), pp. 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.09.044>
- Molner, S., Prabhu, J. C. and Yadav, M. S. (2019) “Lost in a universe of markets: Toward a theory of market scoping for early-stage technologies”, *Journal of Marketing*, 83 (2), pp. 37–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242918813308>
- Moon, S. and Song, R. (2015) “The roles of cultural elements in international retailing of cultural products: An application to the motion picture industry”, *Journal of Retailing*, 91 (1), pp. 154–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2014.12.002>
- Moorman, C. (2020) “Commentary: Brand activism in a political world”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 39 (4), pp. 388–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620945260>
- Moorman, C., Deshpande, R. and Zaltman, G. (1993) “Factors affecting trust in market research relationships”, *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (1), pp. 81–101.
- Morgan, N. A. and Rego, L. L. (2009) “Brand portfolio strategy and firm performance”, *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (1), pp. 59–74.
- Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. D. (1994) “The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing”, *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (3), pp. 20–38.

Morrison, D. G. (1979) "Purchase intentions and purchase behaviour", *Journal of Marketing*, 43 (2), pp. 65–74.

Mukherjee, S. and Althuizen, N. (2020) "Brand activism: Does courting controversy help or hurt a brand?" *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 37 (4), pp. 772–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2020.02.008>

Muniz, A. M. and Thomas, C. O. (2001) "Brand community", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27 (4), pp. 412–32.

Murray, K. B. and Vogel, C. M. (1997) "Using a hierarchy-of-effects approach to gauge the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility to generate goodwill toward the firm: Financial versus nonfinancial impacts", *Journal of Business Research*, 38 (2), pp. 141–59. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(96\)00061-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(96)00061-6)

Nam, J., Ekinci, Y. and Whyatt, G. (2011) "Brand equity, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction", *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38 (3), pp. 1009–30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.01.015>

Narayandas, D. and Rangan, V. K. (2004) "Building and sustaining buyer-seller relationships in mature industrial markets", *Journal of Marketing*, 68 (3), pp. 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.3.63.34772>

Nardini, G., Rank-Christman, T., Bublitz, M. G., Cross, S. N. N. and Peracchio, L. A. (2021) "Together we rise: how social movements succeed", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 31 (1), pp. 112–45. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1201>

Netemeyer, R. G. (2003) *Scaling procedures: Issues and applications*. California: SAGE Publications.

Newman, K. P. and Brucks, M. (2018), "The influence of corporate social responsibility efforts on the moral behaviour of high self-brand overlap consumers", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 28, pp. 253–271. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1027>

Nguyen, H. T. and Feng, H. (2021) "Antecedents and financial impacts of building brand love", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 38 (3), pp. 572–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2020.10.001>

Nguyen, H. T., Zhang, Y. and Calantone, R. J. (2018) "Brand portfolio coherence: Scale development and empirical demonstration", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*. Elsevier B.V., 35 (1), pp. 60–80.

Nickerson, R. S. (1998) "Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises", *Review of General Psychology*, 2 (2), pp. 175–220.

Nie, D., Lamsa, A. M. and Pucetaite, R. (2018) "Effects of responsible human resource management practices on female employees' turnover intentions", *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 27, pp. 29–41.

Niemi, R. G. and Craig, S. C. (1991) "Measuring internal political efficacy in the 1988 national election study", *The American Political Science Review*, 85 (4), pp. 1407–13.

- Nisbet, M. C. and Kotcher, J. E. (2009) “A two-step flow of influence? Opinion-leader campaigns on climate change”, *Science Communication*, 30 (3), pp. 328–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547008328797>
- North, D. C. (1990) *Institutions, institutional change, and economic performance*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunes, J. C., Ordanini, A. and Giambastiani, G. (2021) “The concept of authenticity: What it means to consumers”, *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (4), pp. 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242921997081>.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978) *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Nunnally, J. C. and Bernstein, I. H. (1994) *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- O’Barr, W. M. (1994) *Culture and the ad: Exploring otherness in the world of advertising*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Oberecker, E. M. and Diamantopoulos, A. (2011) “Consumers’ emotional bonds with foreign countries: Does consumer affinity affect behavioural intentions?” *Journal of International Marketing*, 19 (2), pp. 45–72. doi: 10.1509/jimk.19.2.45.
- Obermiller, C. (1995) “The baby is sick/the baby is well: A test of environmental communication appeals”, *Journal of Advertising*, 24(2), pp. 55-70.
- Ogilvie, D. M. (1987) “The undesired self: A neglected variable in personality research”, *Journal of Personal and Social Psychology*, 52 (2), pp. 379–85.
- Oliver, R. L. (1980) “A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17 (4), pp. 460–69. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3150499>
- Oliver, R. L. and Burke, R. R. (1999) “Expectation processes in satisfaction formation: A field study”, *Journal of Service Research*, 1 (3), pp. 196–214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109467059913002>
- Oliver, R. L. and Swan, J. E. (1989) “Equity and disconfirmation perceptions as influences on merchant and product satisfaction”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (3), pp. 372–83. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209223>
- Olson, E. L. (2022) “Advocacy bias in the green marketing literature: Where seldom is heard a discouraging word”, *Journal of Business Research*, 144 (August), pp. 805–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.02.052>
- Olson, J. C. and Dover, P. A. (1979) “Disconfirmation of consumer expectations through product trial”, *Journal of Applied psychology*, 64 (2), pp. 179–89.
- Ordabayeva, N. and Chandon, P. (2011) “Getting ahead of the Joneses: When equality increases conspicuous consumption among bottom-tier consumers”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38 (1), pp. 27–41.



Orlitzky, M., Schmidt, F. L. and Rynes, S. L. (2003) “Corporate social and financial performance: A meta-analysis”, *Organization Studies*, 24, pp. 403–441.

Osuna Ramírez, S. A., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas, A. (2019) “I hate what you love: brand polarisation and negativity towards brands as an opportunity for brand management”, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 28 (5), pp. 614–32. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-03-2018-1811>

Ozanne, J. L., Corns, C. and Saatcioglu, B. (2009) “The philosophy and methods of deliberative democracy: Implications for public policy and marketing”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 28 (1), pp. 29–40. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.28.1.29>

Page, C. and Herr, P. M. (2002) “An investigation of the processes by which product design and brand strength interact to determine initial affect and quality judgments”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 12 (2), pp. 133–47. <https://doi.org/10.1207/153276602760078668>

Paharia, N. and Swaminathan, V. (2019) “Who is wary of user design? the role of power-distance beliefs in preference for user-designed products”, *Journal of Marketing*, 83 (3), pp. 91–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919830412>

Palazzo, G. and Scherer, A. G. (2006) “Corporate legitimacy as deliberation: A communicative framework”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 66 (1), pp. 71–88. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9044-2>

Pansari, A. and Kumar, V. (2017) “Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45 (3), pp. 294–311.

Parasuraman, A., Valarie A. Z. and Leonard, L. B. (1985) “A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research”, *Journal of Marketing*, 49 (4), pp. 41–50

Parcha, J. M. and Kingsley, W. C. Y. (2020) “How corporate social advocacy affects attitude change toward controversial social issues”, *Management Communication Quarterly*, 34 (3), pp. 350–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318920912196>

Park, C. S. and Kaye, B. K. (2019) “Expanding visibility on Twitter: Author and message characteristics and retweeting”, *Social Media+ Society*, 5 (2), pp. 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051198345>

Park, C. W. and MacInnis, D. J. (2018) “Introduction to the Special Issue: Brand Relationships, Emotions, and the Self”, *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 3 (2), pp. 123–29. <https://doi.org/10.1086/696969>

Park, C. W., Eisingerich, A. B. and Park, J. W. (2013) “Attachment-aversion (AA) model of customer-brand relationships”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23 (2), pp. 229–48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2013.01.002>

Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J. and MacInnis, D. J. (1986) “Strategic brand concept-image management”, *Journal of Marketing*, 50, pp. 135–45.

- Park, C. W., MacInnis, D. J., Priester, J., Eisingerich, A. B. and Iacobucci, D. (2010) “Brand attachment and brand attitude strength: Conceptual and empirical differentiation of two critical brand equity drivers”, *Journal of marketing*, 74 (6), pp.1–17.
- Park, D. J. and Berger, B. K. (2004) “The presentation of CEOs in the press, 1990-2000: Increasing salience, positive valence, and a focus on competency and personal dimensions of image”, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16 (1), pp. 93–125.
- Pattie, C., Seyd, P. and Whiteley, P. (2003) “Citizenship and civic engagement: Attitudes and behaviour in Britain”, *Political Studies*, 51 (3), pp. 443–68. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00435>
- Peer, E., Brandimarte, L., Samat, S. and Acquisti, A. (2017) “Beyond the Turk: Alternative platforms for crowdsourcing behavioural research”, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 70, pp. 153–163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.01.006>
- Pellegrini, L. (1991) “The internationalisation of retailing and 1992 Europe”, *Journal of Marketing Channels*, 1 (2), pp. 3–27.
- Peter, J. P., Churchill Jr, G. A. and Brown, T. J. (1993) “Caution in the use of difference scores in consumer research”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19 (4), pp. 655–62.
- Peterson, M. and Godby, R. W. (2020) “Citizen participation in political markets: Extending service-dominant logic to public policy”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 39 (4), 412–29.
- Peterson, R. M., Malshe, A., Friend, S. B. and Dover, H. (2021) “Sales enablement: conceptualising and developing a dynamic capability”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49 (3), pp. 542–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00754-y>
- Pettigrew, A. M. (1990) “Longitudinal field research on change: Theory and practice”, *Organisation science*, 1 (3), pp. 267–92.
- Philp, M. and Mantonakis, A. (2020) “Guiding the consumer evaluation process and the probability of order-effects-in-choice”, *Journal of Business Research*, 112, pp. 13–22.
- Pieters, R. and Wedel, M. (2004) “Attention capture and transfer in advertising: Brand, pictorial, and text-size effect”, *Journal of marketing*, 68 (2), pp. 36–50.
- Pimentel, P. C., Bassi-Suter, M. and Didonet, S. R. (2023) “Brand activism as a marketing strategy: an integrative framework and research agenda”, *Journal of Brand Management*, [Preprint]. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-023-00335-8>
- Pitta, D. A. and Katsanis, L. P. (1995) “Understanding brand equity for successful brand extension”, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 12 (4), pp. 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363769510095306>
- Piurko, Y., Schwartz, S. H. and Davidov, E. (2011) “Basic personal values and the meaning of left-right political orientations in 20 countries”, *Political Psychology*, 32 (4), pp. 537–561. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2011.00828.x>

- Podsakoff, Philip M., MacKenzie, S. B. and Podsakoff, N. P. (2012) “Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it”, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63, pp. 539–69.
- Pollay, R. W. (1986) “The distorted mirror: Reflections on the unintended consequences of advertising”, *Journal of Marketing*, 50 (April), pp. 18–36.
- Pollay, R. W. (1987) “On the value of reflections on the values in ‘the distorted mirror’”, *Journal of Marketing*, 51 (3), pp. 104–09. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251651>
- Polletta, F. and Jasper, J. M. (2001) “Collective identity and social movements”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, pp. 283–305.
- Polonsky, M. and Coulter, R. A. (2009) “Does the devil really wear prada? social relations analysis of brand and human personalities”, *Advances in Consumer Research*, 36 (1933), pp. 988–90.
- Poole, S. M., Grier, S. A., Thomas, K. D., Sobande, F., Ekpo, A. E., Torres, L. T. and Henderson, G. R. (2021) “Operationalising critical race theory in the marketplace”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 40 (2), pp. 126–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620964114>
- Prasso, S. (2020) “Hong Kong’s businesses show their pro-democracy colours”, *Bloomberg*, 20 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2020-05-20/hong-kong-protesters-helped-local-businesses-survive-coronavirus?leadSource=uverify%20wall> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).
- Price, L. L. and Coulter, R. A. (2019) “Crossing bridges: assembling culture into brands and brands into consumers’ global local cultural lives”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 29 (3), pp. 547–54. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1121>
- Price, L. L., Coulter, R. A., Strizhakova, Y. and Schultz, A. E. (2018) “The fresh start mindset: transforming consumers’ lives”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45 (1), pp. 21–48. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx115>
- Putnam, R. D. (2000) *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of the American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Puzakova, M. and Aggarwal, P. (2018) “Brands as rivals: Consumer pursuit of distinctiveness and the role of brand anthropomorphism”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45 (4), pp. 869–888. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucy035>
- Puzakova, M. and Kwak, H. (2017) “Should anthropomorphized brands engage customers? The impact of social crowding on brand preferences”, *Journal of Marketing*, 81 (6), 99–115. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.16.0211>
- Puzakova, M., Kwak, H., Rocereto, J. F., Hyokjin, K. and Rocereto, J. F. (2013) “When humanising brands goes wrong: The detrimental effect of brand anthropomorphization amid product wrongdoings”, *Journal of Marketing*, 77 (3), pp. 81–100. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.11.0510>

Rabinowitz, G., Prothro, J. W. and Jacoby, W. (1982) “Salience as a factor in the impact of issues on candidate evaluation”, *The Journal of Politics*, 44 (1), pp. 41–63.

Radler, V. M. V. (2018) “20 Years of brand personality: A bibliometric review and research agenda”, *Journal of Brand Management*, 25 (4), pp. 370–83. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-017-0083-z>.

Ravald, A. and Gronroos, C. (1996) “The value concept and relationship marketing”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 30 (2), pp. 19–30.

Reed, A., Aquino, K. and Levy, E. (2007) “Moral identity and judgments of charitable behaviours”, *Journal of Marketing*, 71 (1), pp. 178–93. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.71.1.178>

Reich, B. J., Beck, J. T. and Price, J. (2018) “Food as ideology: Measurement and validation of locavorism”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45, pp. 849–68. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucy027>

Reid, D. M. (1988) “Marketing the political product”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 22 (9), pp. 34–47. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM00000000005299>

Reimann, M., Castaño, R., Zaichkowsky, J. and Bechara, A. (2012) “How we relate to brands: Psychological and neurophysiological insights into consumer-brand relationships”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (1), pp. 128–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.11.003>

Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (2003) *The applications of qualitative methods to social research*. London: SAGE Publications.

Ridge, J. W., Ingram, A. and Hill, A. D. (2017) “Beyond lobbying expenditures: How lobbying breadth and political connectedness affect firm outcomes”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 60 (3), pp. 1138–63. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.0584>

Robinson, S.R., Irmak, C. and Jayachandran, S. (2012) “Choice of cause in cause-related marketing”, *Journal of Marketing*, 76 (4), pp. 126–39.

Rodas, M. A., John, D. R. and Torelli, C. J. (2021) “Building brands for the emerging bicultural market: The appeal of paradox brands”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48 (4), pp. 633–50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab037>

Roggeveen, A. L., Grewal, D., Karsberg, J., Noble, S. M., Nordfält, J., Patrick, V. M., Schweiger, E., Soysal, G., Dillard, A., Cooper, N. and Olson, R. (2021) “Forging meaningful consumer-brand relationships through creative merchandise offerings and innovative merchandising strategies”, *Journal of Retailing*, 97 (1), pp. 81–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2020.11.006>

Rokeach, M. (1973) *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.

Rosenberg, M. (1979) *Conceiving the self*. New York: Basic Books.

- Rosenstone, S. J., and Hansen, J. M. (1993) *Mobilisation, participation, and democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Rossiter, J. R. (2002) “The C-OAR-SE procedure for scale development in marketing”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 19 (4), pp. 305–35.
- Rotter, J. B. (1967) “A new scale for the measurement of interpersonal trust”, *Journal of Personality*, 35 (4), pp. 651–65.
- Rucker, D. D., Tormala, Z. L., Petty, R. E. and Brinol, P. (2014) “Consumer conviction and commitment: An appraisal-based framework for attitude certainty”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 24, pp. 119–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2013.07.001>
- Russell, C. A. and Levy, S. J. (2012) “The temporal and focal dynamics of volitional reconsumption: A phenomenological investigation of repeated hedonic experiences”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (2), pp. 341–59. <https://doi.org/10.1086/662996>
- Russell, C. A. and Schau, H. J. (2014) “When narrative brands end: The impact of narrative closure and consumption sociality on loss accommodation”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (6), pp. 1039–62. <https://doi.org/10.1086/673959>
- Rust, R. T. (2006) “From the editor: The maturation of marketing as an academic discipline”. *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (3), pp. 1–2.
- Ryder, D. (2020) “The Hashtag #BlackLivesMatter First Appears, Sparking A Movement”, *History*. 10 July. Available at: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/blacklivesmatter-hashtag-first-appears-facebook-sparking-a-movement> (Accessed: 30 November, 2024).
- Sagiv, L. and Schwartz, H. (2022) “Personal values across cultures”, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 73 (5), pp. 517–46.
- Samu, S. and Wymer, W. (2014) “Cause marketing communications: Consumer inference on attitudes towards brand and cause”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 48 (7/8), pp. 1333–53. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-04-2012-0226>
- Sartori, G. (2005) *Parties and party systems: A framework for analysis*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2015) *Research methods for business students*, 7th edn. London: Pearson.
- Scaraboto, D. and Fisher, E. (2013) “Frustrated fatshionistas: An institutional theory perspective on consumer quests for greater choice in mainstream markets”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (6), pp. 1234–57.
- Schade, M., Hegner, S., Horstmann, F. and Brinkmann, N. (2016) “The impact of attitude functions on luxury brand consumption: An age-based group comparison”, *Journal of Business Research*, 69 (1), pp. 314–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.08.003>

Scherer, A. G. Rasche, A., Palazzo, G. and Spicer, A. (2016) “Managing for political corporate social responsibility: New challenges and directions for PCSR 2.0”, *Journal of Management Studies*, 53 (3), pp. 273–98. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12203>

Scherer, A. G. and Palazzo, G. (2007) Toward a political conception of corporate responsibility: Business and society seen from a Habermasian perspective, *Academy of Management Review*, 32 (4), 1096–1120. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2007.26585837>

Schlozman, K. L., Henry, B. and Sidney, V. (2018) *Unequal and unrepresented: Political inequality and the people's voice in the new gilded age*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Schmidt, H. J., Ind, N., Guzmán, F. and Kennedy, E. (2021) “Socio-political activist brands”, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, (January) <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-03-2020-2805>

Schmitt-Beck, R. and Grill, C. (2020) “From the living room to the meeting hall? Citizens’ political talk in the deliberative system”, *Political Communication*, 37 (6), pp. 832–51.

Schroeder, J. E. (2002) *Visual consumption*. New York: Routledge.

Schuler, D. A., Rehbein, K. and Cramer, R. D. (2002) “Pursuing strategic advantage through political means: A multivariate approach”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 45 (4), pp. 659–72. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3069303>

Schurr, P. H. and Ozanne, J. L. (1985) “Influences on exchange processes: Buyers’ preconceptions of a seller’s trustworthiness and bargaining toughness”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11 (4), pp. 939–53. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209028>

Schwartz, S. H. (1977) “Normative influences on altruism”, In *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 10, pp. 221–79.

Schwartz, S. H. (1992) “Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries”, In Zanna, M. (ed.) *Advances in experimental social psychology*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 1–65.

Schwartz, S. H. (2006) “A theory of cultural value orientations: Explication and applications”, *Comparative sociology*, 5 (2/3), pp. 137–82.

Schwartz, S. H. and Boehnke, K. (2004) “Evaluating the structure of human values with confirmatory factor analysis”, *Journal of Research in Personality*, 38 (3), pp. 230–55, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(03\)00069-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(03)00069-2)

Schwartz, S. H., Cieciuch, J., Vecchione, M., Davidov, E., Fischer, R., Beierlein, C., Ramos, A., Verkasalo, M., Lönnqvist, J.E., Demirutku, K. and Dirilen-Gumus, O. (2012) “Refining the theory of basic individual values”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103 (4), pp. 663–88.

Scotland, J. (2012) “Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive,

and critical research paradigms”, *English Language Teaching*, 5 (9), pp. 9–16.  
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p9>

Sen, S., Johnson, A. R., Bhattacharya, C. B. and Wang, J. (2015) “Identification and attachment in consumer-brand relationships”, in MacInnis, D. J. and Park, C. W. (eds.) *Brand Meaning Management*. Bingley: Emerald, pp. 151–74.

Shaffer, B., Quasney, T. J. and Grimm, C. M. (2000) “Firm level performance implications of non-market actions”, *Business and Society*, 39 (2), pp. 126–43.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/000765030003900202>

Shankar, A., Helene, C. and Robin, C. (2006) “Consumer empowerment: A foucauldian interpretation”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 40 (9/10), pp. 1013–30.

Shaw, D., Terry, N. and Roger, D. (2006) “Consumption as voting: An exploration of consumer empowerment”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 40 (9/10), pp. 1049–67.

Shepherd, S., Chartrand, T. L. and Fitzsimons, G. J. (2015) “When brands reflect our ideal world: the values and brand preferences of consumers who support versus reject society’s dominant ideology”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42 (1), pp. 76–92.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucv005>

Shimp, T. A. and Madden, T. J. (1988) “Consumer-object relations : A conceptual framework based analogously on Sternberg's triangular theory of love”, *Advances in Consumer Research*, 15, pp. 163–68.

Shultz, C., Hoek, J., Lee, L., Leong, W. Y., Srinivasan, R., Viswanathan, M. and Wertenbroch, K. (2021) “JPP&M ’s global perspective and impact: An agenda for research on marketing and public policy”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 41 (1), 074391562110492. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07439156211049216>

Sibai, O., Mimoun, L. and Boukis, A. (2021) “Authenticating brand activism: Negotiating the boundaries of free speech to make a change”, *Psychology and Marketing*, 38 (10), pp. 1651–69. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21477>

Sichtmann, C. and Diamantopoulos, A. (2013) “The impact of perceived brand globalness, brand origin image, and brand origin–extension fit on brand extension success”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41 (5), pp. 567–85.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-013-0328-7>

Simmons, C. J. and Becker-Olsen, K. L. (2006) “Achieving marketing objectives through social sponsorships”, *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (4), pp. 154–69.  
<https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.4.154>

Simon, B., Stürmer, S., Loewy, M., Weber, U., Freytag, P., Habig, C., Kampmeier, C. and Spahlinger, P. (1998) “Collective identification and social movement participation”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74 (3), pp. 646–58.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.3.646>

Singer, A. A. (2019) *The form of the firm: A normative political theory of the corporation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sipilä, J., Alavi, S., Edinger-Schons, L. M., Dörfer, S. and Schmitz, C. (2021) “Corporate social responsibility in luxury contexts: Potential pitfalls and how to overcome them”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49 (2), pp. 280–303. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00755-x>

Sirgy, M. J. (1982) “Self-concept in consumer behaviour: A critical review”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9 (3), pp. 287–300. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208924>

Sirgy, M. J. and Su, C. (2000) “Destination image, self-congruity, and travel behaviour: Toward an integrative model”, *Journal of Travel Research*, 38 (4), pp. 340–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728750003800402>

Sirgy, M. J., Grewal, D., Mangleburg, T., Park, J., Chon, K. S., Claiborne, C. and Berkman, H. (1997) “Assessing the predictive validity of two methods of measuring self-image congruence”, *Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science*, 25 (3), pp. 229–41.

Sirgy, M. J., Johar, J. S., Samli, A. C. and Claiborne, C. B. (1991) “Self-congruity versus functional congruity: Predictors of consumer behaviour”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 19, pp. 363–75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02726512>

Skarmeas, D. and Leonidou, C. N. (2013) “When consumers doubt, Watch out! The role of CSR scepticism”, *Journal of Business Research*, 66 (10), pp. 1831–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.02.004>

Sklar, K. K. (1998) “The consumers’ white label campaign of the national consumers’ league 1898–1919”, in Strasser, S. McGovern, C. and Judt, M. (eds.) *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the 20th Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, R. (2022) “How Vivienne Westwood’s legacy of activism inspired the LGBTQ+ community”, *The Pink News*, 30 December. Available at: <https://www.thepinknews.com/2022/12/30/vivienne-westwood-activism-lgbtq-climate/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Smith, T. (1998) “Value theory and dialectics”, *Science and Society*, pp. 460–70.

Snow, D. A. (2004) “Framing processes, ideology, and discursive fields”, in Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A., Kriesi, H. and McCammon, H. J. (eds.) *The Wiley Blackwell companion to social movements*. 2nd edn. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 380–412.

Snow, D. A., Rochford, E. B., Worden, S. K. and Benford, R. D. (1986) “Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation”, *American Sociological Review*, 51 (4), pp. 464–81.

Solomon, M. R. (1983) “The role of products as social stimuli: A symbolic interactionism perspective”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10 (3), pp. 319–29. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208971>

Speer, P., Jackson, C. and Peterson, N. (2001) “The relationship between social cohesion and empowerment: Support and new implications for theory”, *Health Education and Behavior*, 28, pp. 716–32.



Spielmann, N., Maguire, J. S. and Charters, S. (2020) “Product patriotism: How consumption practices make and maintain national identity”, *Journal of Business Research*, 121 (January), pp. 389–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.05.024>

Spiggle, S. (1994) “Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (3), pp. 491–503.

Strull, T. K. and Wyer, R. S. (1989) “Person memory and judgement”, *Psychological Review*, 96 (1), pp. 58–83. doi: 10.1037/0033-295x.96.1.58.

Stanley, V. (2020) “Commentary: Patagonia and the business of activism”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 39 (4), pp. 393–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620948864>

Steenkamp J. B. and de Jong M (2010) “A global investigation into the constellation of consumer attitudes toward global and local products”, *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (6), pp. 18–40.

Steenkamp, J. B. and Maydeu-Olivares, A. (2021) “An updated paradigm for evaluating measurement invariance incorporating common method variance and its assessment”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49 (1), pp. 5–29. doi: 10.1007/s11747-020-00745-z.

Sterbenk, Y., Champlin, S., Windels, K. and Shelton, S. (2022) “Is femvertising the new greenwashing? Examining corporate commitment to gender equality”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 177 (3), pp. 491–505. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04755-x>

Stern, P. C., Dietz, T., Abel, T., Guagnano, G. A. and Kalof, L. (1999) “A value-belief-norm theory of support for social movements: The Case of Environmentalism”, *Human Ecology Review*. 6 (2), pp. 81–97.

Sternberg, R. J. (1986) “A triangular theory of love”, *Psychological Review*, 93 (2), pp. 119–35. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.93.2.119>

Stokburger-Sauer, N., Ratneshwar, S. and Sen, S. (2012) “Drivers of consumer–brand identification”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 29 (4), pp. 406–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2012.06.001>

Stolle, D. and Michele, M. (2013) *Political Consumerism: Global Responsibility in Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stolle, D., Hooghe, M. and Micheletti, M. (2005) “Politics in the supermarket: Political consumerism as a form of political participation”, *International Political Science Review*, 26 (3), pp. 245–69.

Stonewall (2023a) *Become a corporate partner*. Available at: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/become-corporate-partner> (Accessed 11 December 2023).

Stonewall (2023b) *LGBT+ History Month 2023*. Available at: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/lgbt-history-month-2023> (Accessed 11 December 2023).

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Strizhakova, Y., Coulter, R. A. and Price, L. L. (2008) “The meanings of branded products: A cross-national scale development and meaning assessment”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 25 (2), pp. 82–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2008.01.001>

Stromer-Galley, J. (2007) “Measuring deliberation’s content: A coding scheme”, *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 3 (1). <https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.50>

Sturmer, S. (2018) “The dual-pathway model of social movement participation: The case of the fat acceptance movement”, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66 (1), pp. 71–82.

Sturmer, S. and Simon, B. (2004a) “Collective action: Towards a dual-pathway model”, *European review of social psychology*, 15 (1), pp. 59–99.

Sturmer, S. and Simon, B. (2004b) “The role of collective identification in social movement participation: A panel study in the context of the German gay movement”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30 (3), pp. 263–77.

Sturmer, S. and Simon, B. (2009) “Pathways to collective protest: Calculation, identification, or emotion? A critical analysis of the role of group-based anger in social movement participation”, *Journal of Social Issues*, 65 (4), pp. 681–705.

Sturmer, S., Simon, B., Loewy, M. and Jörger, H. (2003) “The dual-pathway model of social movement participation: The case of the fat acceptance movement”, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, pp. 71–82.

Suchman, M. C. (1995) “Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches”, *Academy of Management Review*, 20 (June), pp. 571–610.

Suddaby, R. (2006) “From the editors: What grounded theory is not”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 49 (4), pp. 633–42. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2006.22083020>

Sundar, A. and Noseworthy, T. J. (2016) “Too exciting to fail, too sincere to succeed: The effects of brand personality on sensory disconfirmation”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43 (1), pp. 44–67. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucw003>

Sung, Y. and Tinkham, S. F. (2005) “Brand personality structures in the United States and Korea: Common and culture-specific factors”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15 (4), pp. 334–50. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1504\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1504_8)

Sutton, T., Devine, R. A., Lamont, B. T. and Holmes, R. M. (2021) “Resource dependence, uncertainty, and the allocation of corporate political activity across multiple jurisdictions”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 64 (1), pp. 38–362. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2017.1258>

Tabachnick, B. G. and Fidell, L. S. (2012). *Using multivariate statistics*. 6th edn. New York: Harper and Row.

Tajfel, H. (1981) *Human groups and social categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. C. (1986) “The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour”, in Worchel, S. and Austin, W. (eds.) *Psychology of intergroup relations*. Chicago: Nelson, pp. 7–24.

Talukdar, D., Sumila, G. and Lawrence F. S. (2005) “Customer orientation in the context of development projects: Insights from the world bank”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 24 (1), pp. 100–11.

Tan, T. M., Salo, J., Juntunen, J. and Kumar, A. (2019) “The role of temporal focus and self-congruence on consumer preference and willingness to pay: A new scrutiny in branding strategy”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 53 (1), pp. 37–62. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-04-2017-0303>

Tellis, G. J. (1988) “Advertising exposure, loyalty, and brand purchase: A two-stage model of choice”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25 (2), pp. 134–44. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3172645>

The British Academy (2019) *Principles for purposeful business*. Available at: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/future-of-the-corporation-principles-for-purposeful-business/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

The CMO Survey (2022) *Highlights and insights report*. Available at: <https://cmosurvey.org/results/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2015) *Democracy Index 2015: Democracy in an age of anxiety*. Available at: <https://www.yabiladi.com/img/content/EIU-Democracy-Index-2015.pdf> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2021) *Democracy Index 2021: the China challenge*. Available at: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Thøgersen, J. (2005) “How may consumer policy empower consumers for sustainable lifestyles?” *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 28 (2), pp. 143–77. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10603-005-2982-8>

Thomas, K. A. and Clifford, S. (2017) “Validity and Mechanical Turk: An assessment of exclusion methods and interactive experiments”, *Computers in Human Behavior*, 77: pp. 184–97.

Thomas, T. C. and Epp, A. M. (2019) “The best laid plans: Why new parents fail to habituate practices”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46 (3), pp. 564–89. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucz003>

Thomassen, J. (2012) “The blind corner of political representation”, *Representation*, 48 (1), pp. 13–27.

Thompson, C. J. (1997) “Interpreting consumers: A hermeneutical framework for deriving marketing insights from the texts of consumers’ consumption stories”, *Journal of marketing Research*, 34 (4), pp. 438–55.

Thompson, C. J., Locander, W. B. and Pollio, H. R. (1989) “Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (2), pp. 133–46.

Thomson, M. and MacInnis, D. J. and Park, W. C. (2005) “The ties that bind: Measuring the strength of consumers’ emotional attachments to brands”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15 (1), pp. 77–91. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1501\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1501_10)

Tilly, C. (2005) *Social Movements, 1768–2004*. New York: Routledge.

Torelli, C. J. and Rodas, M. (2016) “Globalisation, branding and multicultural consumer behaviour”, in Jansson-Boyd, C. V. and Zawisza, M. J. (eds.) *Routledge International Handbook of Consumer Psychology*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 41–58.

Torelli, C. J., Özsomer, A., Carvalho, S. W., Keh, H. T. and Maehle, N. (2012) “Brand concepts as representations of human values: Do cultural congruity and compatibility between values matter?” *Journal of Marketing*, 76 (4), pp. 92–108. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.10.0400>

Tosi, H. and Einbender, S. (1985) “The effects of the type and amount of information in sex-discrimination research—A meta-analysis”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 28, pp. 712–23.

Tosun, O. K. and Eshraghi, A. (2022) “Corporate decisions in times of war: Evidence from the Russia-Ukraine conflict”, *Finance Research Letters*, 48 (March), p.102920. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2022.102920>

Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J. and Rasinski, K. (2000). *The psychology of survey response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trevisan, F. (2020) “Do you want to be a well-informed citizen, or do you want to be sane?” social media, disability, mental health, and political marginality”, *Social Media+ Society*, 6 (1), pp.1–11. DOI:10.1177/2056305120913909

Trinke, S. J. and Bartholomew, K. (1997) “Hierarchies of attachment relationships in young adulthood”, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15, pp. 603–25.

Tsukayama, H. (2016) “Apple’s open letter to consumers”, *The Washington Post*. 17 February. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2016/02/17/apples-open-letter-to-the-fbi-annotated/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Tuli, K. R., Kohli, A. K. and Bharadway, S. G. (2007) “Rethinking customer solutions”, *Journal of Marketing*, 71 (3), pp. 1–17.

Turner D.W. (2010) “Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice researcher”, *The Qualitative Report*, 15 (3), pp. 754–60.

- Turner, J. C. (1985) “Social categorization and self-concept: A social cognitive theory of group behaviour”, in Lawler, E. J. (ed.) *Advances in group process: Theory and research*. Connecticut: JAI Press, pp. 77–121.
- Tzeng, G. H. and Huang, J. J. (2011) *Multiple attribute decision making: Methods and applications*. New Jersey: Chapman and Hall/CRC.
- Unilever. (2022) *Annual Report and Accounts 2021 Highlights*. Available at: <https://www.unilever.com/investors/annual-report-and-accounts/> (Accessed: 29 June 2023)
- Vandecasteele, B. and Geuens, M. (2010) “Motivated consumer innovativeness: Concept, measurement, and validation”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 27 (4), pp. 308–18.
- Varadarajan, P. R. (1986) “Horizontal cooperative sales promotion: A framework for classification and additional perspectives”, *Journal of Marketing*, 50 (2), pp. 61–73.
- Varadarajan, P. R. and Menon, A. (1988) “Cause related marketing: A co-alignment of marketing strategy and corporate philanthropy”, *Journal of Marketing*, 52 (3), pp. 58–74.
- Varghese, N. and Kumar, N. (2022) “Feminism in advertising: Irony or revolution? A critical review of femvertising”, *Feminist Media Studies*, 22 (2), pp. 441–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1825510>
- Varman, R. and Belk, R. W. (2009) “Nationalism and ideology in an anti-consumption movement”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (4), pp. 686–700. <https://doi.org/10.1086/600486>
- Verba, S. and Norman H. N. (1972) *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L. and Brady, H. (1995) *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vida, I., Reardon, J. and Fairhurst, A. (2000) “Determinants of international retail involvement: the case of large US retail chains”, *Journal of International Marketing*, 8 (4), pp. 37–60.
- Viglia, G., Zaefarian, G. and Ulqinaku, A. (2021) “How to design good experiments in marketing: Types, examples, and methods”, *Industrial marketing management*, 98, pp. 193–206.
- Visconti, L. M., Sherry, J. F., Borghini, S. and Anderson, L. (2010) “Street art, sweet art? Reclaiming the “Public” in public place”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (3), pp. 511–29. <https://doi.org/10.1086/652731>
- Vlachos, P. A., Tsamakos, A., Vrechopoulos, A. P. and Avramidis, P. K. (2009) “Corporate social responsibility: Attributions, loyalty, and the mediating role of trust”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 37 (2), pp. 170–80. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-008-0117-x>

- Voss, K. E., Spangenberg, E. R. and Grohmann, B. (2003) “Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of consumer attitude”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 40 (3), pp. 310–20. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.40.3.310.19238>
- Vredenburg, J., Kapitan, S., Spry, A. and Kemper, J. A. (2020) “Brands taking a stand: Authentic brand activism or woke washing?” *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 39 (4), pp. 444–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620947359>
- Waddock, S. A. and Graves, S. B. (1997) “The corporate social performance—Financial performance link”, *Strategic Management Journal*, 18, pp. 303–19.
- Wagner, T., Lutz, R. J. and Weitz, B. A. (2009) “Corporate hypocrisy: Overcoming the threat of inconsistent corporate social responsibility perceptions”, *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (6), pp. 77–91. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.73.6.77>
- Wahyuni, D. (2012) “The research design maze”, *Journal of Applied Management Accounting Research*, 10 (1), pp. 69–80. [https://doi.org/10.1675/1524-4695\(2008\)31](https://doi.org/10.1675/1524-4695(2008)31)
- Waldman, D. A., Siegel, D. S. and Javidan, M. (2006) “Components of CEO transformational leadership and corporate social responsibility”, *Journal of Management Studies*, 43 (8), pp. 1703–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00642.x>
- Wallace, E., Buil, I. and de Chernatony, L. (2014) “Consumer engagement with self-expressive brands: Brand love and WOM outcomes”, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 23 (1), pp. 33–42.
- Wallace, E., Buil, I. and de Chernatony, L. (2017) “Consumers’ self-congruence with a “Liked” brand”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 51 (2), pp. 367–90.
- Walsh, G. and Beatty, S. E. (2007) “Customer-based corporate reputation of a service firm: Scale development and validation”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 35 (1), pp. 127–43.
- Wang, Q., Dou, J. and Jia, S. (2016) “A meta-analytic review of corporate social responsibility and corporate financial performance: The moderating effect of contextual factors”, *Business and Society*, (55), pp. 1083–1121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650315584317>
- Wang, Y. and Griskevicius, V. (2014) “Conspicuous consumption, relationships, and rivals: Women’s luxury products as signals to other women”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (5), pp. 834–854. <https://doi.org/10.1086/673256>
- Wannow, S., Haupt, M. and Ohlwein, M. (2023) “Is brand activism an emotional affair? The role of moral emotions in consumer responses to brand activism”, *Journal of Brand Management*, [Preprint]. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-023-00326-9>
- WARC. (2021) *What we know about brand purpose*. Available at: <https://www-war-c.com.simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/content/article/bestprac/what-we-know-about-brand-purpose/109945> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

- Warren, C., Batra, R., Loureiro, S. M. C. and Bagozzi, R. P. (2019) “Brand coolness”, *Journal of Marketing*, 83 (5), pp. 36–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919857698>
- Wathieu, L., Brenner, L., Carmon, Z., Chattopadhyay, A., Drolet, A., Gourville, J. T. and Wu, G. (2002) “Control and empowerment: A primer”, *Marketing Letters*, 13 (3), pp. 297–305.
- Waytz, A., Heafner, J. and Epley, N. (2014) “The mind in the machine: anthropomorphism increases trust in an autonomous vehicle”, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 52, pp. 113–17.
- Waytz, A., John, C. and Nicholas, E. (2010) “Who sees human? The stability and importance of individual differences in anthropomorphism”, *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5 (3), pp. 219–32.
- Webb D. J. and Mohr L. A. (1998) “A typology of consumer responses to cause related marketing: from sceptics to socially concerned”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 17(2), pp. 226–38.
- Weber, T.J., Hydock, C., Ding, W., Gardner, M., Jacob, P., Mandel, N., Sprott, D.E. and Van Steenburg, E. (2021) “Political polarisation: Challenges, opportunities, and hope for consumer welfare, marketers, and public policy”, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 40 (2), pp. 184–205.
- Weedon, C. (2004) *Identity and culture: Narratives of difference and belonging*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Weijo, H. A., Martin, D. M. and Arnould, E. J. (2018) “Consumer movements and collective creativity: The case of restaurant day”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45 (2), pp. 251–74. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucy003>
- Wellington, J. and Szczerbinski, M. (2007) *Research methods for the social sciences*. London: Continuum.
- Wessling, K. S., Joel, H. and Oded, N. (2017) “Character misrepresentation by amazon turk workers: Assessment and solutions”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, (44) 1, pp.211–30. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx053>
- Wettstein, F. and Baur, D. (2016) “Why should we care about marriage equality?” Political advocacy as a part of corporate responsibility”, *Journal of business ethics*, 138, pp. 199–213.
- Whiting, L. S. (2008) “Semi-structured interviews: Guidance for novice researchers”, *Nursing Standard*, 22 (23), pp. 35–40.
- Wilkie, W. and Moore, E. (2012) “Expanding our understanding of marketing in society”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40 (1), pp. 53–73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-011-0277-y>
- Williams, L. J., Hartman, N. and Cavazotte, F. (2010) “Method variance and marker variables: A review and comprehensive cfa marker technique”, *Organisational Research Methods*, 13 (3), pp. 477–514. doi: 10.1177/1094428110366036.

Williamson, J. (2002) *Decoding advertisements: Ideology and meaning in advertising*. 15th edn. New York: Marion Boyars Publishers.

Willis, M. M. and Schor, J. B. (2012) “Does changing a light bulb lead to changing the world? Political action and the conscious consumer”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 644 (1), pp. 160–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716212454831>

Wilts, A. (2006) “Identities and preferences in corporate political strategising”, *Business and Society*, 45, pp. 441–63.

Wolter, J. S. and Cronin, J. J. (2015) “Re-conceptualising cognitive and affective customer–company identification: the role of self-motives and different customer-based outcomes”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44 (3), pp. 397–413. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0421-6>

Wood, D. J. (1991) “Corporate social performance revisited”, *Academy of Management Review*, 16, pp. 691–718.

Wood, W. and Hayes, T. (2012) “Social influence on consumer decisions: Motives, modes, and consequences”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (3), pp. 324–28.

Wong, C. S., Law, K. S., and Huang, G. H. (2008) “On the importance of conducting construct-level analysis for multidimensional constructs in theory development and testing”, *Journal of Management*, 34 (4), pp. 744–64.

Worthington, R. L. and Whittaker, T. A. (2006) “Scale development research: A content analysis and recommendations for best practices”, *The Counselling Psychologist*, 34 (6), pp. 806–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006288127>

Wright, C. and Nyberg, D. (2017) “An inconvenient truth: How organisations translate climate change into business as usual”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 60, pp. 1633–61.

Yang, K. and Banamah A. (2014) “Quota sampling as an alternative to probability sampling? An experimental study”, *Sociological Research Online*, 19 (1), pp. 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.3199>

Yin, R. (1984) *Case study research*. Beverly Hills, California: SAGE Publications.

Yoon, C., Gutchess, A. H., Feinberg, F. and Polk, T. A. (2006) “A functional magnetic resonance imaging study of neural dissociations between brand and person judgments”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 33 (1), pp. 31–40. <https://doi.org/10.1086/504132>

Zald, M. N. and Ash, R. (1966) “Social movement organisations: Growth, decay and change”, *Social Forces*, 44, pp. 327–41.

Zaltman, G. (2003) “How customers think - The subconscious mind of the consumer (and how to reach it)”, *Harvard Business School Case*, 13 January. Available at: <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/how-customers-think-the-subconscious-mind-of-the-consumer-and-how-to-reach-it> (Accessed: 29 June 2023).



Zaltman, G. and Zaltman, L. H. (2008) "Marketing metaphoria: What deep metaphors reveal about the minds of consumers", *Harvard Business School Press*. Available at: <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=32422#:~:text=Marketing%20Metaphoria%20is%20a%20groundbreaking,hear%2C%20say%2C%20and%20do>. (Accessed: 29 June 2023).

Zarantonello, L., Jedidi, K. and Schmitt, B. H. (2013) "Functional and experiential routes to persuasion: An analysis of advertising in emerging versus developed markets", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 30 (1), pp. 46–56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2012.09.001>

Zdravkovic, S., Magnusson, P., Stanley, S. M. and Zdravkovic Srdan; Magnusson, P. S. S. M. (2010) "Dimensions of fit between a brand and a social cause and their influence on attitudes", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 27 (2), pp. 151–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2010.01.005>

Zeisler, A. (2016) *We were feminists once: from riot Grrl to CoverGirl, the buying and selling of a political movement*. New York: Public Affairs.

Zeithaml, V. A., Jaworski, B. J., Kohli, A. K., Tuli, K. R., Ulaga, W. and Zaltman, G. (2020) "A theories-in-use approach to building marketing theory", *Journal of Marketing*, 84 (1), pp. 32–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919888477>

Zeugner-Roth, K. P., Žabkar, V. and Diamantopoulos, A. (2015) "Consumer ethnocentrism, national identity, and consumer cosmopolitanism as drivers of consumer behaviour: A social identity theory perspective", *Journal of International Marketing*, 23 (2), pp. 25–54. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jim.14.0038>

Zhang, J. and Bloemer, J. M. M. (2008) "The impact of value congruence on consumer-service brand relationships", *Journal of Service Research*, 11 (2), pp. 161–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670508322561>

Zhang, Y. and Khare, A. (2009) "The impact of accessible identities on the evaluation of global versus local products", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (3), pp. 524–37. <https://doi.org/10.1086/598794>

Zhao, X. and Belk, R. W. (2008) "Politicising consumer culture: Advertising's appropriation of political ideology in China's social transition", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (2), pp. 231–44.

Zimmerman, A. and Dahlberg, J. (2008) "The sexual objectification of women in advertising: A contemporary cultural perspective", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 48 (1), pp. 71–79. <https://doi.org/10.2501/S0021849908080094>