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Kalmar Växjö

Master's Thesis

Analyzing the Effects of Brand Activism on
Consumer Loyalty:
Macro and Micro Perspective



Author: Nina Roques
Supervisor: Tatiana Anisimova
Examinator: Anders Pehrsson
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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate, from both macro and micro perspectives, the effect of brand activism on consumer loyalty.

The macro perspective examines the general relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty, whereas the micro perspective examines the specific context of companies' withdrawal from Russia as a form of brand activism.

The study conducts a comprehensive analysis of how the consumer receives information about brand activism. The macro-level literature review investigates the definition and evolution of brand activism, the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty, and the communication strategies' effect on consumer loyalty. On a micro level, the study concentrates on the decisions corporations made as part of their brand activism during the Russia-Ukraine conflict of 2022.

The purpose of this study is to thoroughly comprehend the intricate relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty.

The methodology section describes the hypotheses model as well as the research strategy based on surveys and interviews.

This study's findings provide new insights into the influence of brand activism on consumer loyalty and its three components (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) as well as brand activism communication strategies on the macro level, and into the specific context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the micro level. It highlights that brand activism shapes consumer loyalty differently through the three components and according to the context. Additionally, social media is the communication channel that influences the most the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty on both macro and micro perspectives.

This study contributes to the disciplines of marketing and consumer behavior by advancing the relationship among brand activism, consumer loyalty, and communication.

Keywords

Brand activism, consumer perception, consumer behavior, consumer loyalty, communication, Russia-Ukraine conflict



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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In the 21st century, the significance of political and social involvement for corporations is growing. With the growth of digital media and the ever-increasing importance of social media, businesses are under tremendous pressure to show their support for social and political concerns. Van Rekom et al. (2014) explain that for a business to be successful in today's climate, it must increase the amount of perceived authenticity of its brand via true social participation, which enhances both a company's reputation and its ethical branding initiatives. This signifies a new path for corporate brands to become genuine and sustainable (Balmer et al., 2011), via the "ethical corporate brand" (Gambetti et al. 2017; Alwi et al. 2017).

The concept of corporate activism or brand activism then refers to “a company’s willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic, and environmental issues to create societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviors of actors in its institutional environment.” (Elert & Cherup, 2020). It is a form of marketing that seeks to create an emotional connection with consumers, by demonstrating the company’s commitment to a particular cause.

Companies have realized that brand activism can have a positive effect on their bottom line, as more and more customers are willing to pay more for products from companies that are socially responsible. Indeed, customers today have become more conscious of the ethical and environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, and are more likely to support companies that take a stand on important issues (Kam & Deichert, 2020).

Brand activism has its detractors, As an illustration, a study by (Kumar, 2020) discovered that brand involvement on political topics might result in backlash among customers who disagree with the brand's viewpoint. One criticism of brand activism is also when companies are viewed as being inauthentic, opportunistic, or false, customers have the potential to accuse such firms of "greenwashing", or "woke-washing" (Sobande, 2019) where firms utilize social or ecological causes as



a means to market themselves, without really making significant adjustments to their company techniques. For example, a business might launch a "green" product that is marketed as eco-friendly, however, the product itself is not last. These practices can be seen as insincere as well as can hurt a firm's credibility if consumers perceive them as inauthentic (Key et al., 2021).

Since the Ukraine invasion on 24th February 2022 by Russia, global companies had to take a political stand. Indeed, more than a thousand companies decided to completely or partially stop their operations in Russia (Chief Executive Leadership Institute, 2023) resulting in an important loss for most of the companies. For instance, the car company Renault counts billions of dollars in losses from its withdrawal (Renault Group, 2022). These recent events lead to take an interest in the research gaps on the subject of brand activism to explore the impact such decisions has on companies. Indeed, there is a need for more research exploring the motivations and incentives behind brand activism. As well as an incomplete understanding of how brand activism affects consumer loyalty.

1.2 Problem Discussion

In recent years, the academic literature has paid more attention to the concept of brand activism as scholars investigate its relationship to consumer loyalty. Some studies consider brand activism to be a form of corporate social responsibility or marketing (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018), whereas others consider it to be a form of political activism (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). The effects of brand activism on consumer behavior have also been studied, with some indicating that it can boost brand reputation or contribute to consumer backlash (Mukherjee et al., 2020; Novelli, 2022).

Furthermore, effective communication is a crucial aspect of brand activism, especially in politically sensitive contexts. When engaging in brand activism, companies must carefully consider their communication strategies to avoid consumer backlash and preserve their brand reputation. Transparency and



authenticity in communication are essential for increasing the effectiveness of brand activism, according to research (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). In addition, social media and other digital channels can be an effective means of communicating a company's stance on social and political issues (Felix, et al., 2017). Notably, the effectiveness of communication strategies can vary depending on the cultural and political context in which a business operates (Eilert & Nappier Cherup., 2020). Companies seeking to engage in brand activism in politically sensitive contexts must therefore have a comprehensive comprehension of the local culture and political climate.

Through communication, companies tries to reach consumers to also develop consumers' loyalty. According to Oliver (1999) consumer loyalty can be categorized into cognitive, affective, and behavioral loyalty. Cognitive loyalty is based on the customer's perception that a brand is the best option available to them, considering factors like performance, quality, and value. Affective loyalty is driven by the customer's emotional attachment to a brand, including feelings of trust, affection, and love. Behavioral loyalty is characterized by repeated purchase behaviors and is often reinforced through rewards and promotions (Oliver, 1999; Back, & Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Anisimova, et al., 2017).

There is still a gap in the litterature using this interplay to explore how brand activism influences each aspect of loyalty. Bridging this gap will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty. The problem statement is, therefore, on a macro level understanding the relationship with consumers' loyalty and brand activism as well as how the the consumers receives information about brand activism. On a micro level, understanding this interplay in the politically charged context of the 2022 Ukraine war.



1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is in two-fold. Firstly, to analyze the effects of brand activism on consumer loyalty in western countries and understand how the relationship is being formed. The study will investigate consumers' loyalty by also exploring the relationship between consumers perceptions on macro level. In addition understand how the consumers receive information about brand activism. Secondly, on the micro level, the study analyzes the relationship between consumers behavior and brand activism in the context of the 2022 Ukraine war. By addressing this gap in the literature, this study seeks to provide empirical insights and theoretical and practical contributions to the disciplines of marketing and consumer behavior, as well as improving our understanding of the relationship between customer loyalty and brand activism on a macro level and in politically charged contexts on a micro level for companies operating in politically sensitive contexts.

1.4 Research questions

Given the support in the literature and the problem discussion formulation, the following research questions have been developed:

Q1: To what extent brand activism shapes consumers' loyalty?

Q2: To what extent do different communication channels influence the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty?



1.5 Delimitations

The following delimitations are made in this thesis study:

- The findings may not be applicable to other regions or cultural contexts, as the study concentrates on western nations.
- The sample size is 160. So, the results may not be representative of the entire population or provide a complete understanding of the topic.
- The research is based on quantitative and qualitative information collected through surveys and interviews. This study does not include other research methodologies, such as experimental studies or content analysis.
- The interviews were conducted through online platforms such as ZOOM and Teams Meeting. No face-to-face interviews or other data acquisition techniques were utilized.
- The survey was conducted online through Google forms, limiting the survey with its features.



2 Brand Activism on a Macro Perspective

2.1 Introduction to brand activism and its impact on consumer behavior

2.1.1 Definition and evolution of brand activism

According to Kotler et al (2010), the first phase of marketing was known as the Product-Centric Period. At this time, marketers attempted to sway the opinions of customers by appealing to their mental faculties. In the era known as Marketing 2.0, also known as the Consumer-Centric Age, marketers focused on making emotional connections with customers. Then came Marketing 3.0, also known as the Value-Centric Age, which is an era in which marketing, advertising, and businesses develop a profound relationship with their audience by being transparent and socially responsible.

Brand activism represents a circumstance in which an entity shares its principles and opinions on social, economic, environmental or political problems, a perspective that represents the importance of the company (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018; Mukherjee, et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020; Grants, 2023). Brand activism has become a more significant component of marketing strategy in recent years due to the growth of social media and the growing division of society (Gray, 2019). Others may take action to bring people together around an issue that is causing social or economic division, while other groups may make public statements about what they believe regarding issues that are causing division (Manfredi, 2019). For example, as part of the celebrations commemorating the 30th anniversary of Nike's iconic "Just Do It" ad (Penta, 2018), the company brought attention to Colin Kaepernick to show the "side" they took in the mobilization against police violence inflicted on black Americans in the US. And, in particular on social media, customers and marketers had a lot to say about the company taking a stand, it was however ultimately advantageous for Nike.



According to Kotler et al. (2010), this strategy is successful because it builds confidence in the brand and operates in line with certain values that are conveyed via the brand's identity and image. This may be accomplished by generating loyalty to the brand.

Sarkar & Kotler (2018), defined multiple types of brand activism, for example:

- Cause-related marketing

Cause-related advertising involves a business making a dedication to giving away a portion of the profits from the sale of an item to a charitable cause. For instance, a company could release a minimal version product with a portion of the proceeds going towards a particular charity or reason. This type of brand name advocacy can be an effective way to raise understanding for a reason and also construct brand name commitment amongst consumers that support the same reason (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018),.

- Corporate philanthropy

Business philanthropy involves a company contributing to a charitable reason without any straight advantage to the firm. This sort of brand name activism can be an effective way to construct a favorable track record as well as boost brand photo, particularly if the cause straightens with the company's values and also objectives (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).

- Campaigning for campaigns

Advocacy campaigns involve a business taking a public stance on a certain issue or cause. This kind of brand advocacy can be dangerous, as it can push away some consumers or stakeholders who do not agree with the business's position. Nonetheless, if done efficiently, advocacy campaigns can develop brand name commitment amongst consumers who share the business's values (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).

- Worker advocacy

Employee activism includes a business's employees promoting for a particular reason or problem. This kind of brand activism can be efficient in developing a favorable company society as well as boosting employee spirits. Nonetheless, it can also be testing for firms to take care of, as employees may have varying viewpoints on the reasons they wish to sustain (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).



However, Brand Activism, by becoming more and more political (Manfredi, 2019; Kumar, 2020), some individuals after learning about and judging the wrongdoing of brands are more likely to act against them. Advertisers in the modern day may benefit from changing and updating crucial dialogues about brand activism beyond large-scale strategy in order to include the correct tactics in social movements. Political activism, is playing an important role as a potent instrument for the long-term success of any company. Large companies are giving serious consideration to the political movements and are making positive efforts to rethink the brand activism strategy they have in place (Kumar, 2020).

2.1.2 Theoretical perspectives on the relationship between brand activism and consumer behavior

To comprehend the connection between brand activism and customer behavior, various theoretical stances can be taken. The social identification hypothesis, which contends that people identify with groups that hold like beliefs and values, is one of the most well-known (Turner, 1982; Hogg, 2006). When a brand expresses an opinion on a social problem, it can draw on the social identities that customers already have and reinforce their bond with the company (Kumar, 2020). Customers who share the brand's beliefs, however, may become more loyal if the company's position is viewed as genuine and compatible with those principles (Mukherjee & Althuisen, 2020). Overall, the research indicates that depending on the nature of the issue, the brand's level of involvement, and the perceived sincerity of the brand's viewpoint, brand activism can have both favorable and unfavorable effects on consumer behavior. Some of the research on this subject will be examined in the following part of this literature review.



2.2 The impact of brand activism on consumer loyalty

Customer loyalty, which is the attachment that a customer has to a particular company (Oliver, 1999), and brand activism are interconnected on multiple levels. Relevant to this topic is the social identification hypothesis, which posits that individuals identify with groups that share similar ideals and values. By adopting a stance on a social issue, a brand can appeal to consumers' existing social identities and increase their brand loyalty (Kubetzek, 2023). Moreover, Sen & Bhattacharya (2001) argue that consumers are generally more likely to purchase products from companies that engage in corporate social activities, the research of De Castro (2022) also highlights the impact of brand activism on consumer's loyalty. Furthermore, the researchers note that the relationship between purchase intention and certain types of products, such as environmentally-friendly or socially-conscious products, may be stronger than it is for other types of products. The research of Sevic (2022) indicates that Brand Activism can influence the Purchase Intention of utilitarian products. In other words, when a brand takes a stance on a social or environmental issue associated with the product, it can influence the likelihood that consumers will actually purchase the product. This indicates that consumers may be more likely to choose a product from a brand that correlates with their values and beliefs, even if the product does not differ from competitors in terms of utility or performance. This highlights the potential significance of brand activism in influencing consumer behavior, especially in the context of utilitarian products where functional benefits may be comparable across brands (Sevic, 2022).

Although there is a growing corpus of literature on the connection between brand activism and consumer behavior, the connection between brand activism and consumer loyalty is still not fully understood. Although some studies have indicated that adopting a stance on a social or environmental issue can increase consumer loyalty, the mechanisms underlying this relationship remain unknown. Moreover, while there is research on a variety of facets of consumer loyalty, there is still room for improvement in this area. There is a void between the cognitive, affective, and behavioral layers of consumer loyalty as defined by Oliver (1999).



- Cognitive Loyalty:

Cognitive loyalty is based on a client's idea that a brand is the best option available to them. This type of commitment is driven by a customer's perception of a brand's performance, top quality, and worth. Cognitive loyalty is typically seen in industries where customers rely on objective dimensions, such as monetary services or innovative products (Oliver, 1999; Back, & Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Anisimova, et al., 2017).

- Affective Loyalty:

Affective loyalty is based on a customer's emotional attachment to a brand name. This sort of loyalty is driven by a customer's favorable sensations and feelings in the direction of a brand name, such as trust, affection, and love. Affective loyalty is often seen in industries where clients have a psychological link to a product and services, such as deluxe brand names or lifestyle items (Oliver, 1999; Back, & Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Anisimova, et al., 2017).

- Behavioral Loyalty:

Behavioral loyalty is based on a client's duplicated purchase actions. This type of commitment is driven by a client's regular actions as well as is typically strengthened by rewards, rewards, as well as promotions. Behavioral loyalty is frequently seen in industries where clients have reduced participation or little emotional connection to a product and services, such as supermarkets or benefit items (Oliver, 1999; Back, & Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Anisimova, et al., 2017).

Then, to better understand the potential impact of brand activism on consumer loyalty on a macro level, it may be useful to consider a few relevant hypotheses that are going to be tested in this study.



According to the study's first premise, organizations that participate in brand activism activities would see a rise in their customers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral loyalty; driving this first hypothesis:

H1: Brand activism shapes consumers' loyalty.

To answer this main question, three hypotheses have to be taken in consideration:

H1(a): There is a positive relationship between brand activism and consumers' cognitive loyalty.

H1(b): There is a positive relationship between brand activism and consumers' affective loyalty.

H1(c): There is a positive relationship between brand activism and consumers' behavioral loyalty.

2.3 Communication strategies of brand activism

2.3.1 The role of communication in brand activism

Since it enables firms to convey their position on a social problem to their target audience, communication is essential to brand activism (Key et al., 2021). Consumer trust and loyalty can be increased and brand perception can be improved through effective communication. Accordingly, researchers who study brand management have primarily concentrated their attention on the capability of narratives to deliver a consistent interpretation of what the brand is and/or how it presents itself to consumers. In the context of brand activism, Key et al. (2021) propose that the employment of narratives, or storytelling, as a strong instrument in minimizing "some of the risk involved in the decision to take a stance on a socio-political issue" is an effective strategy.



Furthermore, strong communication can encourage people to take action on social concerns, resulting in beneficial social change. Strong brand reputations as ethical and socially conscious businesses can be developed with the use of effective communication (Landreth & Folse, 2007). Brands may develop a feeling of purpose and forge stronger connections with customers by expressing their opinions on crucial social topics. This can help the brand stand out from its rivals and give consumers a favorable impression of it. Effective communication can also contribute to the development of a sense of community among customers who hold similar values and viewpoints. Brands can encourage a sense of community and motivate customers to take up social causes by sharing their activism efforts on social media or through other channels. This can produce a ripple effect, leading to positive societal change and greater connection with the brand.

Moreover, effective communication may support holding companies responsible for their activism activities (Grunig, 2000). Brands may show their dedication to bringing about good change and hold themselves accountable to their stakeholders and the general public by sharing their social problem progress and results with the public. As a result, there may be enhanced loyalty and favorable consumer reactions as well as a sense of transparency and trust (Grunig, 2000). Overall, the function of communication in brand activism is essential for fostering consumer loyalty, credibility, and trust while also igniting constructive social change. Brands that effectively communicate their activism efforts to their target audiences can distinguish themselves from rivals, foster a sense of community among customers, and gain a positive reputation as socially conscious businesses (Yoon, et al., 2006). Understanding the significance of communication in brand activism allows businesses to create communication strategies that are more effective, resonate with their target market, and result in stronger consumer relationships.

According to Lee & Yoon (2020), businesses may increase their credibility and stakeholder and customer identification by using advertising to link their activism projects with their customers and other stakeholders.

Activism on the part of a brand may be conveyed through advertising and marketing in a number of different ways. For instance, a company may launch a marketing campaign that centers on a social or environmental issue that the company is



actively striving to solve and promotes the fact that it is doing so. This may contribute to a deeper comprehension of the matter, and it can also indicate the company's dedication to creating a positive first impression. On the other hand, a company may include message in its advertising and marketing or its branding that discusses the social and environmental efforts it is doing (Lee & Yoon, 2020).

In general, brand activism and marketing are strongly related to one another due to the fact that marketing may be utilized to engage with the activism objectives of a company with its customers and other stakeholders. However, businesses have a responsibility to ensure that their marketing accurately reflects their activism activities and does not come out as dishonest or self-centered (Vredenburg & Kapitan, 2020).

2.3.2 Different communication strategies for brand activism

Because of the proliferation of brand-new communication channels and technology in the 21st century, "brand activism" has seen significant development in recent years. Social media and traditional forms of media such as television and newspapers are two main platforms that have had a significant influence on the interaction between consumers and brands in the 21st century (Oliver 1999).

Gray (2019) explains that through the analysis of advertisements, it is evident that the rise of hyperconnectivity and social media has given individuals a platform to engage in activism. This has led to a shift in the power dynamics between consumers and brands, where consumers are no longer passive recipients of information but actively share their beliefs and values that brands must acknowledge. Furthermore, the use of social media and other digital channels can be an effective means of communicating a company's stance on social and political issues (Felix, et al., 2017). To demonstrate ethical responsibility, brands must align themselves with social causes and incorporate the principles of cause marketing and activism in line with their company's mission, vision, and values (Eyada, 2020).

Oliver (1999) argues that effective communication and advertising can lead to consumer trust and a sense of connection with a brand, which in turn can lead to long-term loyalty. The article highlights the importance of creating a strong brand identity and positioning, and using communication to build and reinforce that



identity in the minds of consumers. Additionally, the author emphasizes the role of customer satisfaction in building loyalty, and suggests that communication can be used to manage expectations and build trust with customers.

Brands can employ a variety of communication techniques, such as social media, advertising, public relations, and cause-related marketing, to interact with their target audience about social concerns. For brands to share their advocacy efforts, social media has become an increasingly popular medium (Kubetzek, 2023). Brands can communicate their position on social issues through the sharing of messages, photographs, and videos on social media sites like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. They can also interact in real-time with their followers. Additionally, social media enables businesses to communicate directly with their customers and reach a larger audience, fostering a sense of transparency and community (Gray et al., 2019). Advertising is also another popular kind of communication that corporations employ to promote their activism. A brand's activism efforts, its position on a particular topic, or social reasons can all be highlighted in advertisements. When combined with other communication tactics like public relations or social media, advertising can be especially powerful (Day & Wensley, 1988).

Public relations (PR) is another important communication tactic that brands utilize to promote their activism. Media relations, events, and CSR projects are just a few of the many things that PR might entail. Given that it involves direct communication with stakeholders and the public, PR can be particularly helpful in establishing the brand's credibility and fostering consumer trust (Waters et al., 2010). The use of cause-related marketing as a form of communication has also grown in popularity recently. Cause-related marketing entails a collaboration between a brand and a charitable organization or social cause in which a portion of the brand's profits are donated to the cause (Waters et al., 2010). Cause-related marketing can assist brands in developing a favorable reputation and foster a sense of social responsibility among customers.



2.3.3 Consumer reactions to brand activism and the effect of communication

The brand's communication strategy can have a big impact on how well brand activism initiatives turn out. Building trust and credibility with a target audience through effective communication can improve brand loyalty and produce favorable consumer reactions. For instance, a company may have a higher chance of winning consumers' trust and loyalty if it uses social media to transparently and honestly discuss its advocacy efforts (Gray, 2019). On the other hand, if a company is seen as being opportunistic or fake when communicating its activism efforts through advertising, it may encounter resistance and suspicion (Sobande, 2019). In addition, the manner of communication employed might influence how consumers react to brand activism. For instance, research has shown that social media is particularly effective in inspiring younger customers to take action on social concerns (Kubetzek, 2023). However, elder consumers might respond better to public relations or advertising that is more conventional in nature (Kubetzek, 2023). Brands that effectively communicate with their target market can enhance brand loyalty and favorable consumer reactions by establishing trust and credibility through social media, advertising, public relations, and cause-related marketing.

The literature indicates that it is important for brands to effectively communicate their activism efforts and values to their customers. Driving the second hypothesis:

H2: Different communication channels influence the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty.

2.4 Hypothesis model

Two main hypotheses, that examine the effects of brand activism on customer loyalty and the variables affecting consumer attitudes and behavior toward brand activism, are discussed in this chapter on hypotheses. These hypotheses will serve as the basis for the research study, and we will utilize empirical analysis to evaluate them against our research questions.

Figure 1, aims to answer H1, explained in the section 2.2 of the literature review. Figure 1 shows the basic parts of the model that have been suggested for the analysis and how they are related to each other. The "senders" are the first part of the equation which includes intended brand activism of companies and communication devived in two parts: the controlled media and word of mouth. This parts leads to the H2 hypothesis developed in the section 2.3.3 of the literature review that comes to the receivers that perceived brand activism. Perceived brand activism according to H1 has an impact on cognitive, affective and behavioral loyalty.

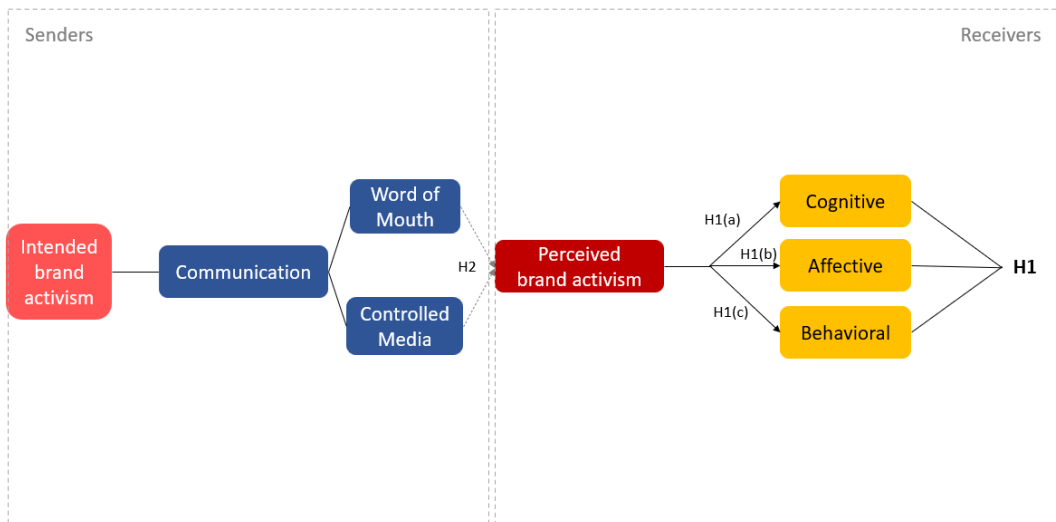


Figure 1: Hypothesis Model



3 Brand Activism on a Micro Perspective

2.5 Overview of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its impact on businesses operating in Russia

2.5.1 Historical and political context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict

The long-running political and territorial war between Russia and Ukraine has gotten worse recently. The history of the area, including centuries-old political and cultural ties between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the consequences of Soviet-era policies that set borders and political institutions that still influence the region today, all play a role in the origins of the war (Zapotichna, 2022). The Russia-Ukraine dispute has a long history that begins in the early 20th century, when Ukraine was a part of the Russian Empire. Ukraine declared independence following the 1917 Russian Revolution, but its freedom was short-lived. Ukraine joined the Soviet Union in 1922, and as a result, its political and economic future was strongly correlated with that of Russia. After the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991, Ukraine re-proclaimed its independence. Since then, the nation has struggled to maintain stable relations with its neighbors and define its political character. Conflicts over energy supply, trade, and military cooperation are just a few of the recent causes that have fueled tensions between Russia and Ukraine (Yurdagel & Baycur, 2023). When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014—a region that had historically been a part of Ukraine but had a majority-ethnic Russian population—the conflict erupted. Pro-Russian rebels have since created a self-declared republic in eastern Ukraine, where violence has persisted.

2.5.2 Economic sanctions and their impact on businesses operating in Russia

Businesses operating in Russia have been significantly impacted by the economic sanctions, especially those that depend on having access to international markets and financing. The sanctions have restricted Russian businesses' access to technology and equipment, financing markets, and global trade. Depending on the



industry and how heavily a company depends on international markets and finance, different enterprises will experience different effects from the sanctions (Deng et al., 2022). Companies in the energy industry, for instance, have been particularly hard hit because many of them depend on having access to Western technology and knowledge for the extraction and refinement of oil and gas. Businesses with indirect ties to Russia, such as global corporations with affiliates or partnerships there, have also been impacted by the sanctions. Customers or other stakeholders may put pressure on these businesses to leave the Russian market or to take a position on the war. Businesses who operate in Russia and have strong ties to the West or the Ukraine now face additional difficulties as a result of the sanctions. Some businesses have opted to completely leave the Russian market, while others have been under pressure to take a side in the battle (Götz, 2016). In general, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the sanctions that were put in place in response have made conducting a business in Russia difficult and complex. Research on the consequences of brand activism in this context is crucial, especially in light of the repercussions of business exodus from Russia and the example of the Ukraine War in 2022 (Mariotti, 2022).

2.6 Companies withdrawing from Russia as a form of brand activism

Depending on the organization and the unique conditions, different factors drive different enterprises' decisions to leave Russia. The desire to connect with the values and expectations of customers and stakeholders is one of the most prevalent issues, as are worries about financial loss and reputational harm. Businesses may also be swayed by pressure from governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders that are pushing for a certain position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In certain instances, firms may view their decision to leave Russia as a method to demonstrate their support for democracy and human rights, or to distance themselves from a government that they believe to be in violation of these ideals (Ratten, 2022). As a type of brand activism, the choice to leave the Russian market is a complicated and varied one overall. According to Novelli (2022) results of the analyze of the



responses of three companies - PlayStation, Armani, and McDonald's - to understand the impact of activism on corporate reputation in a time of war. It shows that companies that took a firm stance against the conflict and supported the Ukrainian people enjoyed a positive response. The article suggests that brand activism can have financial and reputational benefits for companies and that communicating the company's values and actions is essential to building a strong brand image

In the context of the Russia-Ukraine crisis, it is crucial to examine how brand activism effects consumer loyalty at the micro level, particularly given the challenges businesses face in operating in a fraught and dangerous political environment. Then, considering the literature, the study can analyze hypotheses H1 and H2 on a micro level.



3 Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perspectives of customers on brand activism and the degree to which it influences the consumers' loyalty on a Macro Perspective and in relation to the company's decision to withdraw from Russia in support of Ukraine in 2022 on a Micro Perspective.

This study will make use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, adopting a mixed-methods research strategy in the process. According to Timans et al, (2019) The use of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, as each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. Quantitative research can provide numerical data that can be analyzed statistically, while qualitative research can provide in-depth insights into individuals' experiences and perceptions. Adopting a mixed-methods research strategy can help overcome the limitations of each approach and provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon being studied. This approach can help enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, as the strengths of each approach can complement and reinforce each other.

To start with, the primary objective is to gather quantitative data from customers, aimed at gaining an empirical understanding of their views on brand activism and how a company's decision to exit Russia could influence their opinions (Lakshman, 2000). The questions in the survey will explore the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of consumers in relation to brand activism. In order to get a sample that is really representative of the population, the survey will be made available online to a wide range of participants.

The survey questions are divided in 5 different thematics: Brand Activism, Communication, Loyalty (Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral). These thematics will cover the general perception of Brand Activism effects on consumer loyalty as well as the specific example of consumer behavior since the Ukraine War. The topics will include the following: the level of awareness of brand activism; opinions



on companies getting involved in social, environmental, and political issues; the perception of brand activism as a marketing strategy or as part of a company's strategy; the impact of brand activism on customer loyalty. The poll will also investigate how customers' perceptions of the firm and their shopping patterns have changed as a result of the departure of some businesses from the Russian market as part of the brand activism activities that they have been engaged in.

The results of the survey will be examined using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, and regression analysis, among others. Insights into the linkages between factors and the ability to identify patterns and trends in consumer behavior in relation to brand activism will be provided as a result of the study.

3.2 Exploratory Stage

According to Ruslin et al. (2022), when doing qualitative research, the semi-structured interview is superior to other forms of interviews in terms of its usefulness. This is due to the fact that it enables researchers to obtain in-depth information and evidence from interviewees while also taking into consideration the topic of the study. Moreover, in comparison to an unstructured interview, in which the direction of the conversation is not completely explored, this method gives researchers the capacity to maintain their track while maintaining flexibility and adaptability (Ruslin et al., 2022). In order to get insight into the strategies and motives of companies who have adopted brand activism, in-depth semi-structured interviews have been carried out with representatives of international companies who have already included brand activism into their operations. The goal of the interviews is to gather information from such firms. These interviews helped shaping the survey questions, by understanding the companies motives for brand activism, their principal communication channels and by understanding how they are practicing brand activism. The interviews have been chosen based on their experience as well as their expertise in brand activism, and they give rich data to also support the findings of the survey.

3.3 Operationalization

Table 1. Operationalization summary

Constructs	Concepts	Items	Key authors
Brand activism	Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives Social issue advocacy Political advocacy Environmentally friendly practices	Brand activism awareness Support for social involvement Support for environmental involvement Support for political involvement Brand activism as marketing Brand activism as company strategy	Kotler et al. (2010) Sarkar & Kotler (2018) In depth interviews
Communication	Brand image Company's messaging Channel of communication	Attention to brand activism on TV Attention to brand activism in newspapers Attention to brand activism on social media Social media platforms for activism content Likelihood to share activism posts/videos Remembering brand activism through word of mouth	Zralek (2022) Kubetzek (2023) Key et al. (2021) Lee & Yoon (2020) In depth interviews
Consumer loyalty	Cognitive loyalty Affective loyalty Behavioral loyalty	Alignment of activism with values Activism consideration in purchases Activism consideration in recommendations Pride from brand activism Likelihood to purchase from activist brands Likelihood to boycott unethical firms Likelihood to switch to aligned brands Forgiveness for negative activism	Sen & Bhattacharya (2001) Oliver (1999) In depth interviews
Russia-Ukraine conflict	Political tensions Impacts on consumer behavior Impacts on consumer perception of companies operating in Russia/Ukraine	Perception of Russia withdrawal as activism Companies known to have withdrawn from Russia Companies known to have not withdrawn from Russia Sources of information on Russia withdrawal Impact of Russia withdrawal on personal view	Zapotichna (2022) Deng et al. (2022) Götz (2016) Ratten (2022) Novelli (2022) In depth interviews



		Impact of Russia withdrawal on purchasing habits Perception of effectiveness of boycotting remaining companies in Russia	
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The table explores the following concepts: brand activism, communication, consumer loyalty, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It delves into various items related to each concept, such as brand activism awareness, communication channels, attention to brand activism across different media, consumer loyalty dimensions, activism considerations in purchasing, and the perception of Russia withdrawal as activism. This table provides a comprehensive overview of these topics that are shaping the survey questions, highlighting the main references.

3.4 Pre test survey

For the purpose of data collection, a structured questionnaire was used. A pilot study with 5 participants was carried out in order to evaluate the appropriateness, readability, and length of time required to complete the questionnaire (Anisimova, T., 2016). The questionnaire was administered in a standardized manner and was not disguised in any way for any of the respondents. A preliminary investigation was carried out using a sample size of 30 participants. After the completion of the pilot test, a few minor adjustments were implemented.

3.5 Pilot survey

For the purpose of evaluating the efficacy of our research instrument and identifying any potential problems that may arise during data collection, we conducted a pilot survey with 30 participants. The pilot survey contained the same questions that will be used in the main study, but it was administered to a smaller and more diverse sample of participants in order to evaluate its clarity, validity, and reliability (Malmqvist, J., et al., 2018).



Participants in the pilot survey were solicited from a variety of sources, including social media platforms and personal networks, using convenience sampling. Participants were asked to complete the survey online, and a link to the survey was distributed via email or social media.

Based on the results of the pilot survey, the survey questions were revised to enhance the lucidity and precision of the collected data. Some participants were irritated by the number of inquiries (35 questions), which was deemed "too much." The researchers then eliminated four queries to shorten the survey: 31 questions. In addition, some participants did not comprehend that they could respond "I don't know" to some queries and other minor details needed to be clarified.

3.6 Survey data collection

3.6.1 Participants

The approach of convenience sampling, which does not include probability, will be used for the investigation as it can be helpful in obtaining a range of attitudes and opinions and in identifying tentative hypotheses (Alison Galloway, 2005). The volunteers will be recruited via social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, among others. People who live in Western countries and are at least 18 years old are eligible to participate in the research if they meet the inclusion requirements.

3.6.2 Sample size

The research gathered data from 160 participants to establish the sample size that is necessary to assure that there will be sufficient power for the analysis.

3.6.3 Structure of the Survey

The questionnaire includes a total of 31 questions, all of which are mostly given in the shape of multiple-choice likert scale (from 1 to 7). The following topics are covered by the questions: demographics, the awareness of brand activism, attitudes towards brand activism, the influence of brand activism on consumer behavior, and



the efficacy of boycotts as a tool of consumer activism. The poll is taken using Google forms, which is accessible online. Completing the survey should take between ten and fifteen minutes at the most.

3.6.4 Data Analysis

The results of the survey are examined using the SPSS program after they have been gathered.

H1: Brand activism shapes consumers loyalty. (Macro and micro perspective).

Null Hypothesis: Brand activism initiatives by businesses have no significant impact on consumer behavioral, emotional, and cognitive loyalty.

Alternative Hypothesis: Brand activism initiatives by businesses enhance consumer behavioral, emotional, and cognitive loyalty.

The strategy used in analyzing H1 involved examining the relationship between brand activism initiatives and consumer loyalty across three dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive loyalty.

To test H1, various statistical analyses were conducted, including regression analysis, and descriptive statistics. These analyses aimed to assess the internal consistency of the loyalty measures, explore the relationships between brand activism and each loyalty dimension, and provide a summary of the mean scores and standard deviations for each loyalty dimension.

H2: Different communication channels influence the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty. (Macro and micro perspective).

The null hypothesis: there is no significant relationship between communication about brand activism and consumer loyalty.

Alternative hypothesis: communication about brand activism has a significant impact on consumer loyalty.

To investigate this hypothesis, several steps were taken. First, the mean scores for different media channels (TV, newspaper, social media) were calculated based on



respondents' likelihood of paying attention to brand activism promotion in each channel. These mean scores provided insights into the effectiveness of each media channel in capturing consumers' attention. Regression analysis was also conducted in order to understand the relationship with the communication channels, brand activism and consumer loyalty.

3.6.5 Reliability

According to Roberts, et al. (2006), reliability is the consistency or stability of research findings or results over time, across various situations or conditions, and between researchers. In other words, if a research instrument is reliable, it should generate repeatable results or measurements under similar conditions. In the context of survey research, reliability refers to how consistently and accurately the survey instrument measures what it is intended to measure.

There are numerous methods for assessing reliability, including internal consistency measures, test-retest reliability, inter-rater reliability, and parallel forms reliability (Roberts, et al., 2006). Measures of internal consistency, such as Cronbach's alpha, evaluate the consistency of responses to elements within a single survey or questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges between 0 and 1, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. A value of 1 represents perfect internal consistency, while a value close to 0 suggests low consistency. In most social science and psychological research, a Cronbach's alpha value between 0.7 and 0.8 is generally considered acceptable for research purposes (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Internal consistency measures, specifically Cronbach's alpha coefficient, will be employed to evaluate the instrument's dependability. A minimum permissible value of 0.7 for Cronbach's alpha will be employed to determine the survey's reliability.

3.6.6 Considerations of an Ethical Nature

The research is carried out in accordance with the ethical standards that are required for studies that include human participants. Before giving their agreement to take part in the study, the participants are briefed about the objectives of the research, its



methods, and the rights that are being investigated. During the whole of the research, the participants' identities and confidentiality are protected at all times.

3.7 Interview data collection

The in-depth interviews that are conducted for qualitative analysis are semi-structured, which means that the researcher will have a set of questions prepared in advance, but also allow the participant to guide the conversation and bring up their own thoughts and experiences in relation to brand activism. This will be done in order to maximize the amount of information that can be gleaned from the interviews (Ruslin et al., 2022).

The sample for the interview consisted of 2 international companies' representatives that have brand activism included in their marketing strategy in some way. Purposive sampling is a kind of non-probability sampling that includes choosing participants on the basis of their unique qualities or experiences in relation to the research topic. This is the method that was used to select the participants to take part in the interview for the study.

The researcher first seek informed permission from each participant and then describe the aim of the study as well as the nature of the investigation before performing the interviews. The interviews took place by video conference, according the preferences of the participants.

During the interviews, the researcher ask open-ended questions on the role of brand activism in the participant's company, the advantages and obstacles of adopting brand activism, and the influence on customer behavior. During the interviews, the attitudes and perspectives of the participants on brand activism were also investigated. Their experiences in putting brand activism into practice and communicating it to their customers were also inquired. These topics additionally include the example of communication and risk assessment in light of the withdrawal from Russia.



For the sake of analysis, the interviews are both audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The significance of the patterns and themes found in the data are interpreted in connection to the survey findings.

The findings that were collected via the interviews are utilized to enhance and verify the results that were gained through the survey and the literature study. The qualitative information that is gleaned from the interviews assist to answering the research questions in a manner that is both more thorough and nuanced. This is because the information give a deep and detailed knowledge of the function that brand activism plays in international companies.

4 Data analysis and findings

4.1 Qualitative data analysis

The purpose of this section of the study is to deepen the understanding of the strategies and motives of international companies who have adopted brand activism as part of their strategy. Two international companies' representative have been interviewed.

4.1.1 Table 2. A summary of findings

Manually coded themed	Company A	Company B
Brand activism approach	<p>Brand Activism is part of company's identity.</p> <p>Focuses on promoting brand activism through events and campaigns related to social and environmental causes.</p> <p>They organize well-being weeks to prioritize the mental and physical well-being of their employees.</p> <p>The company participates in initiatives like "Veganuary" and visits universities to</p>	<p>Brand Activism is part of company's identity.</p> <p>Brand activism is seen as a native and genetic aspect of the company's multifaceted commercial business.</p> <p>Company's corporate cultures, has a strong sense of community and giving back to society.</p>



	<p>raise awareness about sustainability.</p> <p>They define key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of their brand activism efforts.</p>	
<p>Brand activism communication</p>	<p>External communication channel: Social media platforms (LinkedIn particularly mentioned)</p> <p>Internal communications are primarily conducted through email, Microsoft Teams, and a platform called "Yammer."</p>	<p>The company uses various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, to promote brand activism to their consumers.</p> <p>They also collaborate with university networks for specific projects.</p> <p>Communication efforts are aimed at consumers who appreciate the company's support for European and local businesses.</p>
<p>Brand activism and consumer loyalty</p>	<p>Customer loyalty is primarily driven by the satisfaction with the company's products and services (not brand activism).</p>	<p>The company hopes that its brand activism efforts resonate with consumers.</p> <p>There is a perception that consumers</p>



	<p>Sustainability and efficiency play a role in maintaining customer trust, as companies that perform poorly in these areas may deter customers.</p> <p>External schemes or platforms that showcase the company's sustainability efforts contribute to customer pride and trust.</p> <p>The success of projects delivered to customers is a key factor in measuring customer loyalty.</p>	<p>appreciate the company's activism, but specific figures or data are not available.</p> <p>Consumer loyalty and purchasing behavior may be influenced by the company's brand activism.</p>
Knowledge and impact of Russian withdrawal	<p>The interviewee is unaware of any specific decision or actions taken by the company regarding the Ukraine war or the Russian withdrawal.</p> <p>The company focuses on helping people in need through internal communications.</p>	<p>The interviewee is aware about the current operation of the company in Russia.</p> <p>Emphasizes the importance of understanding the details and taking a broader view of the situation, as press coverage may be politically motivated.</p>



4.1.2 Findings

Brand activism has emerged as a potent instrument for businesses to engage with their audience, demonstrate their values, and effect positive social change. In recent interviews with representatives of COMPANY A and COMPANY B, two prominent organizations considered for their brand activism efforts, valuable insights regarding their approaches, impact on consumer loyalty, and communication strategies were obtained.

Both COMPANY A and COMPANY B have a strong commitment to brand activism and view it as an integral element of their corporate identities. According to the representatives, brand activism is consistent with their fundamental values, and they view it as a natural extension of their commercial endeavors. COMPANY A emphasized that their brand activism initiatives stem from their mission to create a sustainable future and resolve urgent social and environmental issues.

Regarding measuring the effectiveness of brand activism campaigns, both businesses acknowledged the significance of consumer participation and response. The fact that COMPANY A's events are frequently oversubscribed demonstrates a positive level of participation, as reported by the company. While specific numbers were not disclosed, both companies expressed their optimism that brand activism influences consumer awareness and behavior, particularly among socially conscious consumers.

The impact of brand activism on consumer loyalty was discussed, albeit from a variety of angles. COMPANY A believed that their brand activism efforts had a positive impact on consumer loyalty, with consumers appreciating their commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices. However, COMPANY B acknowledged that evaluating the impact on consumer loyalty is difficult because they do not work directly in the commercial department. However, personal perceptions gleaned from interactions with consumers indicated that their brand activism initiatives were well received.



Communication played a crucial role in the brand activism strategies of both corporations. They utilized multiple channels, such as social media platforms, traditional press, and direct communication with clients and employees. COMPANY A and COMPANY B highlighted their use of multiple social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, in order to reach a large audience. In addition, COMPANY B emphasized the significance of comprehensive communication in order to counteract politically motivated press and provide accurate information regarding their operations and compliance with sanctions.

Moreover, the interviews shed light on the obstacles the companies confront in promoting brand activism. COMPANY B emphasized the reputational harm caused by unsubstantiated assumptions and politically motivated narratives.

In conclusion, the interviews with representatives from COMPANY A and COMPANY B yielded valuable insights into their approaches to brand activism, its effect on consumer loyalty, and their communication strategies. Brand activism is an integral part of the identities of both companies, which are shaped by their respective values and cultural perspectives. They intend to promote positive change and attract consumers who value their commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices. Their brand activism initiatives rely heavily on effective communication, with an emphasis on countering politically motivated narratives and providing accurate information. Nonetheless, external pressures and biases pose substantial risks.



4.2 Quantitative data analysis

4.2.1 Table 3. Reliability - Cronbach's alpha

Reliability			
	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of items
Cognitive loyalty	0,781	0,777	3
Behavioral loyalty	0,765	0,77	3
Loyalty	0,763	0,793	3
Brand activism valuation	0,767	0,768	7
Brand activism macro	0,752	0,748	10
Controlled media promotion	0,726	0,727	3
Brand activism micro	0,629	0,633	3

Cronbach's alpha quantifies the extent to which items within a scale or questionnaire are measuring the same underlying construct. Overall, most of the scales in the table exhibit acceptable to good levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.726 to 0.781. The Cronbach's alpha value for brand activism micro is 0.629, which is relatively low but fairly close to 0,7. This suggests a lower level of internal consistency among the three items in this scale.

4.2.2 Table 4. Regression analysis

Model summary						
Dependent variable	Predictor	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F change	Sig F change	Durbin-Watson
Cognitive Loyalty	Brand activism macro	0,652	0,649717	295,91889	<,001	2,104
Affective Loyalty	Brand activism macro	0,443	0,439	125,485	<,001	1,968
Behavioral Loyalty	Brand activism macro	0,692	0,69	355,685	<,001	2,434
Cognitive Loyalty	Brand activism micro	0,125	0,12	22,641	<,001	1,823
Affective Loyalty	Brand activism micro	0,223	0,218	45,223	<,001	2,172



Behavioral Loyalty	Brand activism micro	0,184	0,178	35,513	<,001	2,007
Loyalty	Brand activism macro	0,864	0,862	331,461	<,001	2,175
Loyalty	Brand activism micro	0,267	0,253	18,963	<,001	1,851
Loyalty	Controlled media promotion	0,256	0,251	54,35	<,001	2,023
Loyalty	Word of mouth promotion	0,295	0,291	66,199	<,001	1,862
Loyalty	TV promotion	0,196	0,191	38,584	<,001	1,994
Loyalty	Newspaper promotion	0,113	0,107	20,066	<,001	1,854
Loyalty	Social media promotion	0,381	0,378	97,442	<,001	1,971
Purchase habits micro	Brand activism valuation	0,09	0,084	15,536	<,001	1,902

The regression analysis table provides valuable insights into the relationship between brand activism, different communication channels, and consumer loyalty. By examining the coefficients, R-squared values, and F-change statistics, we can gain a deeper understanding of the significance and impact of these variables on consumer loyalty.

4.2.3 Brand activism impacts on consumer loyalty

Cognitive loyalty

A calculation of the mean and standard deviation values are to provide an overview of respondents' average opinions and the variability of responses for each question related to cognitive loyalty. [\(Table 5\)](#)

For the question related to the alignment of brand activism efforts with personal values, the average score of 4.78 suggests a moderate level of importance placed by respondents on this alignment. The standard deviation of 1.532 indicates some variability in opinions, with individuals rating the importance higher or lower than the average.



When considering the impact of brand activism efforts on purchase decisions, the average score of 3.86 suggests a moderate extent of consideration among respondents. The standard deviation of 1.670 indicates that there is variability in the degree to which individuals consider brand activism when making purchasing decisions.

Regarding the influence of brand activism efforts on recommendations to others, the average score of 3.79 indicates a moderate extent of consideration by respondents. The standard deviation of 1.691 suggests variability in how much individuals take brand activism into account when recommending a company to others.

Overall, these findings indicate that respondents, on average, perceive moderate importance and consider brand activism efforts to a moderate extent in their decision-making processes. However, the variability in responses highlights that individual opinions and considerations regarding brand activism may vary, indicating the presence of diverse perspectives among the respondents.

Regarding the regression analysis, brand activism has a significant positive impact on cognitive loyalty ($\beta = 0.652$, $p < 0.001$), albeit slightly lower than its impact on behavioral loyalty. This suggests that macro-level brand activism initiatives significantly contribute to customers' cognitive attachment to the brand. The regression model explained 65.2% of the variance in cognitive loyalty, indicating a strong relationship between brand activism macro and customers' cognitive loyalty.

Then the study rejects the null hypothesis for $H1_{\text{macro(a)}}$: There is a positive relationship between brand activism and consumers' cognitive loyalty.

Affective loyalty

The question regarding the impact of a company's brand activism on individuals' sense of pride yielded a mean score of 4.36, indicating a moderate level of pride associated with brands engaged in brand activism. The standard deviation of 1.703



suggests some variability in respondents' feelings of pride, with some individuals reporting higher or lower levels compared to the average. ([Table 6](#))

These findings suggest that brand activism efforts by companies do have an influence on the emotional connection and sense of pride individuals feel towards a brand. However, the moderate mean score implies that there is potential for improvement in strengthening affective loyalty through brand activism. Companies may consider further enhancing their brand activism initiatives to foster a stronger sense of pride and emotional attachment among consumers.

Brand activism also showed a significant positive impact on affective loyalty ($\beta = 0.443$, $p < 0.001$), but its influence was relatively lower compared to the two other loyalty measures. This indicates that macro-level brand activism efforts positively influence customers' emotional attachment to the brand. The regression model explained 44.3% of the variance in affective loyalty, suggesting a moderate impact of brand activism macro on shaping customers' emotional connection with the brand.

Then, the study rejects the null hypothesis $H1_{\text{macro}}$ (b): There is a positive relationship between brand activism and consumers' affective loyalty.

Behavioral loyalty

The calculation of the mean for behavioral loyalty regarding brand activism in [Table 7](#) indicates the following:

When asked about their likelihood of purchasing from a company that practices brand activism, respondents had an average score of 4.68, suggesting a moderate inclination towards making purchases from such companies. The standard deviation of 1.411 indicates some variability in respondents' preferences, with some individuals showing stronger inclination towards purchasing from brand activist companies compared to others.

Regarding the likelihood of boycotting a firm perceived as engaging in unethical actions, respondents had an average score of 5.01, indicating a slightly stronger



inclination towards considering a boycott. The standard deviation of 1.648 suggests some variability in the extent to which individuals are willing to boycott unethical companies.

When asked about their likelihood of switching to a brand that aligns with their values and engages in brand activism, respondents had an average score of 5.05, indicating a moderate willingness to make such switches. The standard deviation of 1.457 suggests variability in respondents' openness to switching brands based on values alignment and brand activism.

Overall, these findings suggest that respondents have a certain level of behavioral loyalty towards brands that practice brand activism. The average scores above the midpoint of the scale (4) indicate a positive inclination towards purchasing from, boycotting, or switching to brands based on their engagement in brand activism. However, the variability in responses indicates that individual preferences and behaviors may vary, highlighting the importance of considering diverse consumer perspectives in brand activism strategies.

According to the regression table, brand activism has the strongest and most significant impact on behavioral loyalty ($\beta = 0.692$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that macro-level brand activism initiatives have the greatest influence on shaping customers' actual behaviors toward the brand. The regression model explained 69.2% of the variance in behavioral loyalty, highlighting the substantial impact of brand activism macro on customers' behavioral loyalty.

Then the study rejects the null hypothesis $H1_{\text{macro}(c)}$: There is a positive relationship between brand activism and consumers' behavioral loyalty.

General findings

Based on the regression analyses conducted in this study, the order of significance of brand activism on each loyalty measure, from highest to lowest, is as follows:



Macro-level brand activism initiatives have the greatest influence on shaping customers' actual behaviors toward the brand. The regression model highlighted the substantial impact of brand activism on customers' behavioral loyalty.

Macro-level brand activism initiatives significantly contribute to customers' cognitive attachment to the brand. The regression model indicated a strong relationship between brand activism macro and customers' cognitive loyalty. Macro-level brand activism efforts positively influence customers' emotional attachment to the brand. The regression model suggest a moderate impact of brand activism macro on shaping customers' emotional connection with the brand. This shows that, when it comes to brand activism, people are firstly taking actions. Brand activism has a greter impact on people thinkings than people feelings.

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of brand activism strategies in shaping customer loyalty. Organizations should consider incorporating brand activism to effectively enhance cognitive, affective, and behavioral loyalty among customers.

Moreover, these findings are enhance according to the age. Indeed, Gen Z (18 to 25) places a higher value on brand activism. The analysis conducted using an independent-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the valuation of brand activism between Gen Z (18-25) and the other generations ($p < 0.05$) ([Table 8](#)). The mean score for Gen Z respondents was 39.0783, slightly higher than the mean score of 38.7783 for the other generations ([Table 9](#)). This suggests that, on average, Gen Z respondents have a slightly higher valuation of brand activism compared to the other generations. However, it's important to note that the effect size, as measured by Cohen's d , was very small (point estimate = 0.033) ([Table 10](#)) This indicates that while the difference in means is statistically significant, the practical significance of the observed difference is minimal.

Therefore, while Gen Z does exhibit a slightly higher valuation of brand activism compared to other generations, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. However, the effect size suggests that the difference is not substantial.



Overall, the study rejects the null hypothesis $H1_{macro}$: Brand activism shapes consumers loyalty.

4.2.4 Communication of brand activism

On a macro level, based on the [Table 11](#) findings, it appears that social media is the most efficient controlled media for brand activism promotion, as it has the highest mean score and indicates a greater likelihood of attention from the respondents. TV and newspapers have lower mean scores, suggesting relatively less attention from the respondents in those media channels.

According to the results of [Table 12](#), word of mouth is positioned after social media but is still more relevant than TV or Newspaper in this study.

Comparing these mean scores, it appears that individuals are more likely to pay attention to and remember brand activism messages when they are shared through social media compared to word of mouth. The higher mean score for social media suggests that it may be a more efficient and effective medium for promoting brand activism and reaching a wider audience. Further studies with a more important sample should be considered.

The regression analysis results indicate the impact of various communication channels, in combination with brand activism, on consumer loyalty.

The regression analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between controlled media promotion and brand activism on consumer loyalty ($R^2 = 0.256$). This suggests that utilizing controlled media channels, in conjunction with brand activism efforts, contributes to the variance in consumer loyalty. The F-change and its associated significance level further support the influence of this communication channel on consumer loyalty.

Word of mouth promotion brand activism: Similarly, the analysis demonstrates a significant positive impact of word of mouth promotion and brand activism on consumer loyalty ($R^2 = 0.295$). This indicates that leveraging word of mouth



channels, coupled with brand activism initiatives, plays a substantial role in shaping consumer loyalty. The significant F-change value reinforces the influence of this communication channel on consumer loyalty.

TV promotion brand activism: The regression analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between TV promotion and brand activism on consumer loyalty ($R^2 = 0.196$). This suggests that incorporating TV promotion alongside brand activism strategies impacts consumer loyalty. The significant F-change value indicates the relevance of TV promotion in influencing consumer loyalty.

Newspaper promotion brand activism: The analysis shows a significant positive impact of newspaper promotion and brand activism on consumer loyalty ($R^2 = 0.113$). This implies that utilizing newspaper promotion channels, in conjunction with brand activism, contributes to consumer loyalty. The significant F-change value reinforces the influence of this communication channel on consumer loyalty.

Social media promotion brand activism: The regression analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between social media promotion and brand activism on consumer loyalty ($R^2 = 0.381$). This suggests that leveraging social media channels, along with brand activism efforts, has a substantial impact on consumer loyalty. The significant F-change value confirms the relevance of social media promotion in influencing consumer loyalty.

Specifically, [Table 13](#) reveals that based on the valid percentages, we can determine that LinkedIn is the most efficient social media platform for content about brand activism, with 29.4% of respondents indicating that they are most likely to see such content on this platform. Instagram follows closely with 25.6%, and Facebook and YouTube are also notable with 16.9% and 20.0% respectively. Twitter and TikTok have lower percentages, suggesting that they are less efficient in terms of showcasing brand activism content.

The findings from the regression analysis provide evidence different communication channels influence the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty. The results shows that social media and word of mouth are the most influent way to influence consommer loyalty. Organizations should consider



these findings when developing their communication strategies and prioritize the channels that have a stronger correlation with consumer loyalty to effectively promote their brand activism initiatives. Even though the results reveal that people receive mostly information from social media, the [Table 14](#) statistics suggest that the majority of respondents reported a low likelihood of sharing social media posts or videos about brand activism. The mean and mode scores indicate that this behavior is not widespread among the respondents. It is important to note that these statistics provide a summary of the responses and do not capture the full range of individual preferences or reasons behind the likelihood of sharing brand activism content on social media.

According to the findings the null hypothesis is rejected for $H2_{macro}$: Different communication channels influence the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty

4.2.5 The Russia-Ukraine conflict micro level

Withdrawal awareness

Based on the findings in [Graph 1](#), it is evident that a significant portion of the participants in this study demonstrated awareness regarding companies that have withdrawn from Russia. Specifically, 67.5% of the participants indicated that they are aware of such companies. This suggests that the news or information regarding the withdrawal of companies from Russia has reached a considerable number of individuals. Additionally, the data also revealed that a considerable proportion of the participants (58.8%) exhibited awareness of companies that have not withdrawn from Russia. This indicates that a notable segment of the respondents has knowledge about the companies that have chosen to maintain their presence in the Russian market.

The high percentages of awareness in both cases imply that the topic of company withdrawal from Russia has garnered attention and visibility among the participants. It is worth noting that this awareness can have potential implications for consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward these companies, as well as their brand activism activities.



Communication

In this section, we explore the sources of information about company withdrawals from Russia during the specific context of the 2022 Ukraine war. The analysis focuses on the information received from TV, social media, newspapers, and word of mouth. The findings shed light on the prominence and effectiveness of each media source in disseminating information about company withdrawals.

The findings from (Table 15) show that TV is a less prominent source of information about company withdrawals from Russia, with only 25.0% of respondents reporting receiving such information through TV. On the other hand, social media emerges as a popular and effective medium, with 66.3% of respondents indicating that they received information about company withdrawals through social media. In comparison, newspapers have relatively low influence, with only 16.9% of respondents obtaining information about company withdrawals from newspapers. These results highlight the significant role of social media in disseminating information about company withdrawals, with a considerable proportion of respondents relying on social media for this purpose. Table 16 shows that approximately one-fifth of respondents (21.9%) reported receiving information about company withdrawals from Russia through word of mouth. The majority of respondents (78.1%) did not rely on word of mouth for obtaining information.

Overall, the results suggest that social media plays a significant role in disseminating information about company withdrawals from Russia, as it was the most frequently mentioned source. TV and newspapers were less prominent, while word of mouth had a relatively smaller impact. These findings highlight the importance of utilizing social media platforms to effectively communicate and raise awareness about company actions such as withdrawals. These findings are similar to the macro level findings about how people receive information about brand activism in section 4.2.4. Revealing that even in the specific context of the 2022 Ukraine war, the consumers got the information about companies' activism mostly on social media.



According to the findings the null hypothesis is rejected for H2_{micro}: Different communication channels influence the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty

Brand activism impacts

From the data of [Graph 2](#), we observe that the largest proportion of responses falls within the range of 4 to 5, with 38.1% of participants selecting 4 and 24.4% selecting 5. This suggests that a significant number of participants hold a neutral or slightly positive view regarding the impact of a company withdrawing from Russia as part of their brand activism activities.

Overall, these findings shows that the impact of a company withdrawing from Russia as part of their brand activism activities on participants' point of view is diverse. While a substantial portion of participants expressed a neutral stance, there were also respondents who perceived either a negative or positive impact. By analyzing the distribution of responses, we can better understand the range of perspectives and the overall sentiment regarding the company's withdrawal and its impact on participants' point of view.

To understand the relationship between consumers loyalty and brand activism on a micro level, the regression table indicates that even though there is a less important impact of brand activism on consumer loyalty on micro-level, the results still suggest a moderate positive relationship between brand activism micro and consumers' loyalty.

In order, the findings shows that people that the more people expressed mostly affective loyalty, then cognitive, then behavioral when it comes to the 2022 Ukraine war context while it was the opposite for the macro model. This is even more highlighted on the weak relationship between purchase habits and brand activism valuation in the regression analysis. In the context, the consumer is less willing to take action. The results demonstrate the importance of the context in shaping consumers' loyalty.



Overall, the study rejects the null hypothesis $H1_{\text{micro}}$: Brand activism shapes consumers loyalty.

5 Discussion and conclusion

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the influence of brand activism on consumer loyalty, communication strategies, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The discussion centers on key findings concerning cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, behavioral loyalty, communication of brand activism, and the micro-level impact of brand activism within the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Cognitive loyalty is the congruence of brand activism efforts with personal values (Oliver, 1999; Back, & Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Anisimova, et al., 2017), the influence of brand activism on purchase decisions, and its effect on recommendations to others. The study revealed that, on average, respondents perceived brand activism to be of moderate importance and consideration in their decision-making processes. However, there was variation in responses, indicating that respondents held diverse perspectives. The regression analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between brand activism and cognitive loyalty, indicating that macro-level brand activism initiatives contribute to consumers' cognitive attachment to the brand.

Affective loyalty, which pertains to the emotional connection (Oliver, 1999; Back, & Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Anisimova, et al., 2017), was discovered to be moderately impacted by brand activism efforts. The study suggests that companies can improve their brand activism initiatives to increase consumers' affective loyalty. The regression analysis revealed that brand activism has a significant positive effect on affective loyalty, albeit one that is slightly less pronounced compared to other loyalty measures.



Behavioral loyalty, alluding to actual consumer behaviors such as purchasing, boycotting, and switching brands (Oliver, 1999; Back, & Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Anisimova et al., 2017), exhibited a favorable disposition toward brands engaging in brand activism. On the macro level, the study revealed that brand activism had the strongest and most significant impact on behavioral loyalty compared to other loyalty measures. However, on the micro level, brand activism was the least significant measure.

In accordance with the findings of Gray (2019), social media has emerged as one of the most effective controlled medium for promoting brand activism at the macro and micro levels. It was found to be more effective than television and newspapers at attracting respondents' attention. In addition, word-of-mouth played a significant role in promoting brand activism, whereas television and newspapers had relatively less impact. The regression analysis confirmed the positive effect of various communication channels and brand activism on consumer loyalty. Even in the context of specific events such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, these findings highlight the significance of utilizing social media platforms to effectively communicate brand activism initiatives.

The qualitative and quantitative findings regarding the effect of brand activism on consumer loyalty are consistent. Both businesses were optimistic regarding the impact of brand activism on consumer awareness and behavior, especially among socially conscious consumers. Although numbers were not provided, their belief in the positive effect of brand activism on consumer loyalty supports the quantitative findings. The qualitative findings derived from the interviews then correspond with and support the quantitative analysis. They reinforce the significance of brand activism as an integral part of the identities of these organizations, emphasize the significance of effective communication strategies, and recognize the difficulties in promoting brand activism. These qualitative insights provide valuable context and enhance our comprehension of the connection between brand activism and consumer loyalty.

These findings highlight in accordance to the findings of Sen & Bhattacharya (2001) the significance of brand activism strategies in influencing consumer



loyalty. Companies should consider incorporating brand activism initiatives in order to effectively increase consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral loyalty. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of social media as a communication channel for promoting brand activism and raising awareness, taking into account the specific context and events that may influence consumers' perceptions and behaviors.

In conclusion, the study's findings provide companies and organizations interested in implementing brand activism strategies with valuable insights. They can benefit from comprehending the cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects of brand activism on consumer loyalty. The study emphasizes the significance of aligning brand activism initiatives with consumer values, strengthening emotive connections with consumers, and influencing their actual behaviors. These findings can be utilized by businesses to develop brand activism initiatives that resonate with their target audience and foster brand loyalty.

The findings of this study can be utilized by marketers and brand managers to inform their branding and communication strategies. The study emphasizes the importance of communication channels, such as social media and word-of-mouth, in promoting brand activism and influencing consumer loyalty. These channels enable marketers to effectively disseminate brand activism messages and engage consumers. The findings also highlight the importance of various media outlets, such as social media, television, and newspapers, in the dissemination of information regarding company actions, such as withdrawals. This information can assist marketers in choosing the most effective channels for communicating their brand activism initiatives.

The findings are beneficial for consumers and the general public who wish to comprehend the effects of brand activism and make informed decisions. The study sheds light on consumer attitudes and behaviors regarding brand activism, including their willingness to purchase, boycott, or switch brands based on activism efforts. This information can help consumers align their purchasing decisions with their values and support brands that engage in meaningful activism. Additionally, the



study offers insights into the sources of information about brand activism, enabling consumers to remain informed and evaluate the information they receive critically. This research adds to the existing corpus of knowledge regarding brand activism and consumer loyalty. Researchers and academics in the disciplines of marketing, branding, consumer behavior, and corporate social responsibility will find the methodology, data analysis, and findings of this study useful. The study provides a deeper comprehension of the connection between brand activism and various dimensions of consumer loyalty, as well as the impact of communication channels. It can serve as a basis for future research and academic discussions in these fields.

6 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between brand activism and consumer behavior, it is important to recognize several limitations that may affect the interpretation and generalizability of the results.

The study employed a convenience sampling strategy, predominantly recruiting participants through social media websites. Consequently, the sample may not be representative of the entire population, introducing potential biases and limiting the generalizability of the findings.

The study intended to include a total of 160 participants, which is a relatively small sample size. With a small sample size, the statistical power of the analysis may be constrained, impeding the ability to reach solid conclusions.

The study's sample may lack diversity in terms of demographic characteristics such as age the majority of respondent were under 30 years old, and socioeconomic background as the majority also had a high education level: master's degree or more. This limitation may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a more diverse population.



The qualitative component of the study consisted of interviews with employees from only two international firms engaging in brand activism. This small sample size may limit the documented diversity of perspectives and experiences, thereby limiting the generalizability of the qualitative findings.

Moreover, there is an absence of regression analysis for the control variables, such as detailed country of residence, age, and education level. These variables could potentially have an impact on the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty. By not including regression analysis for these control variables, the study may lack a comprehensive understanding of how these factors influence the relationship under investigation.

Recognizing these limitations is essential for preserving the reliability and validity of the research. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research outcomes, researchers and readers should consider these factors when interpreting and discussing the study's results.

7 Future researches

Despite the fact that this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between brand activism and consumer behavior, there are a number of research avenues that can further our understanding of this phenomenon. The following suggestions outline prospective future research directions:

Conduct large-scale surveys with a significantly larger sample size to further explore the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty. By increasing the sample size, researchers can obtain more representative and robust findings, allowing for more accurate generalizations about the population.

This study focused predominantly on Western countries; expanding the research to include a more diverse range of cultural contexts would contribute to a broader comprehension of the impact of brand activism. Comparing consumer responses to



brand activism across cultures and regions can reveal cultural nuances and variations in consumer behavior, casting light on the influence of cultural factors on consumer responses to brand activism.

Future research could also consider incorporating regression analysis to explore the potential influence of control variables such as age, education level and country of residence to provide a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty.

By investigating these areas of prospective research, scholars can increase our understanding of brand activism and its effects on consumer behavior, thereby contributing to the development of more effective strategies for businesses and organizations engaging in socially responsible practices.



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Annex

Survey Questions

Control variables:

1. How old are you? (18-25; 26-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61+)
2. What is your gender? (Female; Male; Other)
3. What is your education level? (Highschool or less; some college; associate's degree; bachelor's degree; master's degree; doctoral degree; professional degree)
4. Where do you currently reside? (Northern Europe; Western Europe Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, North America)

Brand activism awareness:

5. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how aware are you of what brand activism is?

Brand activism valuation:

6. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that companies should actively get involved in social issues? (#MeToo mouvement, Black Lives Matters...)
7. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that companies should actively get involved in environmental issues? (planting trees, becoming environmentally friendly...)
8. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that companies should actively get involved in political issues? (Engaging on policy)

Brand activism perception

9. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you think that Brand Activism is part of Marketing strategy?
10. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you think that Brand Activism is part of company's strategy?

Cognitive loyalty:

11. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you think a brand's activism efforts align with your personal values?



12. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, when considering purchasing a product, how often do you think about the brand's activism efforts?
13. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how often do you think about a brand's activism efforts when deciding whether to recommend it to others (friends, colleagues, family)?

Affective loyalty:

14. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how much do you feel that a brand's activism efforts make you feel proud to be associated with that brand?

Behavioral loyalty:

15. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely would you purchase from a company that practice Brand Activism?
16. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to boycott a firm that is, according to you, taking unethical actions?
17. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to switch to a brand that is more aligned with your values and engages in activism?

Communication:

18. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to forgive a brand that has engaged in negative activism, but has taken steps to make amends and improve its behavior?
19. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to pay attention to companies' brand activism promotion on TV?
20. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to pay attention to companies' brand activism promotion in the newspaper?
21. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to pay attention to companies' brand activism promotion on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, Youtube, LinkedIn) ?
22. Please indicate on which social media you are most likely to see content about brand activism? (scale 1-7 for each social media)
23. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to share a social media post/video about brand activism?
24. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to remember a company's brand activism if it is shared by a word of mouth?



The Russia-Ukraine conflict:

25. Do you consider companies withdrawing or not from Russia since the Ukraine war as being "Brand Activism"?
26. Please, name 1 or 2 companies that you know have withdrawn from Russia? (You can answer "I don't know")
27. Please, name 1 or 2 companies that you know have not withdrawn from Russia? (You can answer "I don't know")
28. Please indicate, how did you know that these companies withdrew or not from Russia? TV, News, Social Media, Others
29. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how much has a company withdrawing from Russia, as the part of their brand activism activities, has impacted your point of view on the company?
30. Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent has the withdrawal of companies you know from Russia impacted your purchasing habits?
31. Please indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how effective do you think boycotting companies that remain in Russia will be?



Interview guide

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. This study aims to explore the role of brand activism in organizations and how it is used to engage with customers and create meaningful relationships. The interview is recorded. Everything is strictly anonymous and will only be used within the context of this research.

Questions:

1. Can you present briefly your role in the organization?
2. Have you ever heard about Brand Activism? or Corporate Activism?
3. What do you think about the idea of brand activism?
4. How would you define it?

Int: explain brand activism: "Brand activism is the term used when a brand looks to have an effect on a social, economic, environmental or political issue."

Internal

5. Do you think that Brand Activism plays a role in your organization? Can you provide some examples of actions your company has taken as a part of brand activism strategy?
6. According to you, what role is Brand Activism plays in your organization? On the day-to-day branding practices?
7. What do you do concretely?
8. Would you consider brand activism being part of your company identity, mission, and vision?



Advertising

9. Do you know how your company promotes its activism to its clients?
Stakeholders? Inside the organization?

External impact

10. What do you know about your client's point of view on this/these action(s)?
11. Stakeholders?
12. Inside the organization?
13. What do you insure on shareholders?
14. Have you ever heard about negative reactions? Or even reactions that you found surprising?
15. Even through the backlash, have you continued with the brand activism?
16. Do you know if your company have been influenced by other companies to take this actions?
17. Do you think that your stand has an influence on your consumer awareness/behavior?



18. Do you know how the company measures the success of such campaigns?
19. Can you tell me if you know what strategies have been implemented to ensure the company reaches its goal in terms of Brand Activism?
20. Do you know if these actions had an Impact on consumer loyalty? Purchases?
21. Do you know what could have been the most challenging aspects of brand activism for your organization?

According to the Chief Executive Leadership Institute of the Yale School of Management.... Your company has Completely/Partially/Not withdrawn from Russia since the Ukraine invasion in 2022.

22. What do you know about the decision that has been taken?
What do you know about your company's current operation in Russia?
23. Do you know what measures have been set up to prepare for the potential impact of withdrawing from Russia? To minimize the risks associated?
24. According to you, what impact do you anticipate withdrawing from Russia will have on your organization in the long term?
25. Are your current operation in Russia been communicated to your clients?

Thank you for taking the time to share your insights and experiences with me. Your input is greatly appreciated and will help to better understand the role of brand activism in organizations.



Additional tables

Table 5 – Cognitive loyalty

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you think a brand activism efforts should align with your personal values?	4,78	1,532	160
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, when considering purchasing a product, how often do you think about the company's brand activism efforts?	3,86	1,670	160
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how often do you think about company's brand activism efforts when deciding whether or not to recommend it to others? (family, friends, colleagues)	3,79	1,691	160

Table 6 – Affective loyalty

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how much do you feel that a company's brand activism make you feel proud to be associated with that brand?	160	4,36	1,703
Valid N (listwise)	160		

Table 7 – Behavioral loyalty

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely would you purchase from a company that practice brand activism?	4,68	1,411	160
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to boycott a firm that is, according to you, taking unethical actions?	5,01	1,648	160
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to switch to a brand that is more aligned with your values and engages in brand activism?	5,05	1,457	160



Table 8 – GenZ T-test

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Significance Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
BA_Value	Equal variances assumed	4,785	,030	,205	158	,419	,838	,3009	1,46600	-2,59539	3,19557
	Equal variances not assumed			,197	120,802	,422	,844	,3009	1,52345	-2,71603	3,31621

Table 9 – GenZ Mean

Group Statistics					
	GenZ	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BA_Value	1,00	93	39,0783	8,16153	,84631
	,00	67	38,7783	10,36879	1,26675

Table 10 – GenZ Cohen's d

Independent Samples Effect Sizes					
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
BA_Value	Cohen's d	9,14855	,033	-,281	,347
	Hedges' correction	9,19226	,033	-,280	,345
	Glass's delta	10,36879	,029	-,285	,343

- a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.



Table 11 – Controlled media descriptive

	Descriptive Statistics							
	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to pay attention to companies' brand activism communication on TV?	160	3,66	1,866	3,483	,032	,192	-1,212	,381
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to pay attention to companies' brand activism communication in the newspaper? (Printed and online)	160	3,04	1,702	2,897	,442	,192	-,808	,381
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to pay attention to companies' brand activism communication on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, Youtube)?	160	4,77	1,861	3,462	-,701	,192	-,499	,381
Valid N (listwise)	160							

Table 12 – Word of mouth descriptive

	Descriptive Statistics							
	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to remember a company's brand activism if it is shared by a word of mouth?	160	4,22	1,733	3,002	-,269	,192	-,805	,381
Valid N (listwise)	160							

Table 13 – Social media brand activism content

Please indicate on which social media you are most likely to see content about brand activism? [Facebook]

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Likely	27	16,9	16,9	16,9
	More or less likely	27	16,9	16,9	33,8
	More or less unlikely	16	10,0	10,0	43,8
	Neutral	19	11,9	11,9	55,6
	Not used	15	9,4	9,4	65,0
	Unlikely	16	10,0	10,0	75,0
	Very likely	15	9,4	9,4	84,4
	Very unlikely	25	15,6	15,6	100,0
	Total	160	100,0	100,0	



Please indicate on which social media you are most likely to see content about brand activism? [Instagram]

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Likely	41	25,6	25,6	25,6
	More or less likely	20	12,5	12,5	38,1
	More or less unlikely	13	8,1	8,1	46,3
	Neutral	17	10,6	10,6	56,9
	Not used	11	6,9	6,9	63,7
	Unlikely	8	5,0	5,0	68,8
	Very likely	35	21,9	21,9	90,6
	Very unlikely	15	9,4	9,4	100,0
	Total	160	100,0	100,0	

Please indicate on which social media you are most likely to see content about brand activism? [Twitter]

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Likely	16	10,0	10,0	10,0
	More or less likely	17	10,6	10,6	20,6
	More or less unlikely	17	10,6	10,6	31,3
	Neutral	13	8,1	8,1	39,4
	Not used	42	26,3	26,3	65,6
	Unlikely	14	8,8	8,8	74,4
	Very likely	21	13,1	13,1	87,5
	Very unlikely	20	12,5	12,5	100,0
	Total	160	100,0	100,0	

Please indicate on which social media you are most likely to see content about brand activism? [Youtube]

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Likely	32	20,0	20,0	20,0
	More or less likely	22	13,8	13,8	33,8
	More or less unlikely	22	13,8	13,8	47,5
	Neutral	23	14,4	14,4	61,9
	Not used	5	3,1	3,1	65,0
	Unlikely	17	10,6	10,6	75,6



Very likely	20	12,5	12,5	88,1
Very unlikely	19	11,9	11,9	100,0
Total	160	100,0	100,0	

Please indicate on which social media you are most likely to see content about brand activism? [LinkedIn]

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	47	29,4	29,4	29,4
Likely	9	5,6	5,6	35,0
More or less likely	13	8,1	8,1	43,1
More or less unlikely	7	4,4	4,4	47,5
Neutral	19	11,9	11,9	59,4
Not used	20	12,5	12,5	71,9
Unlikely	10	6,3	6,3	78,1
Very likely	21	13,1	13,1	91,3
Very unlikely	14	8,8	8,8	100,0
Total	160	100,0	100,0	

Table 14 – Share brand activism content in social media

Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how likely are you to share a social media post/video about brand activism?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	56	35,0	35,0	35,0
2	22	13,8	13,8	48,8
3	21	13,1	13,1	61,9
4	24	15,0	15,0	76,9
5	17	10,6	10,6	87,5
6	13	8,1	8,1	95,6
7	7	4,4	4,4	100,0
Total	160	100,0	100,0	

Table 15 – Receiving information about the companies withdrawing from Russia controlled media

UW_TV_Computed					UW_Social_Media_Computed				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid ,00	120	75,0	75,0	75,0	Valid ,00	54	33,8	33,8	33,8
1,00	40	25,0	25,0	100,0	1,00	106	66,3	66,3	100,0
Total	160	100,0	100,0		Total	160	100,0	100,0	

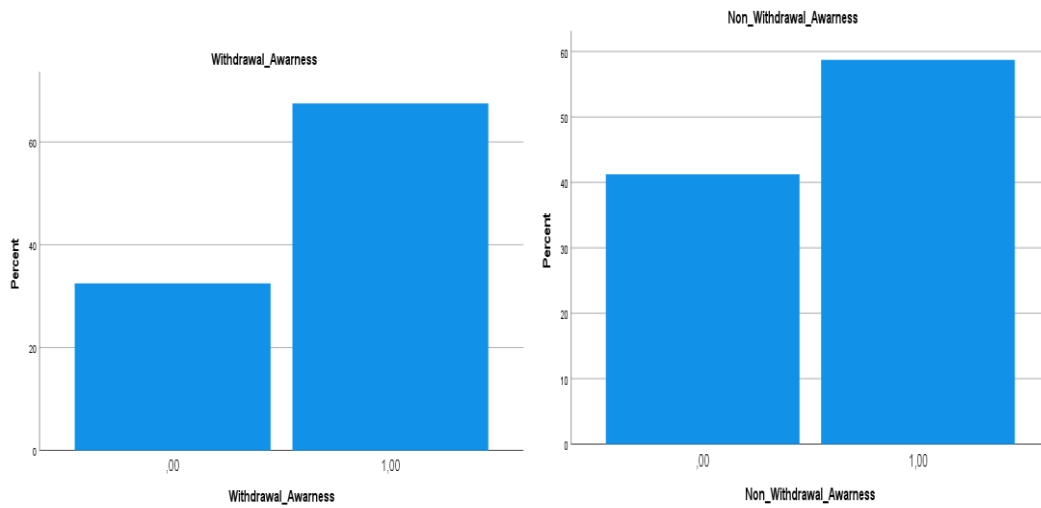


UW_Newspaper_Computed					UW_Words_Of_Mouth_Computed						
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	133	83,1	83,1	83,1	Valid	,00	125	78,1	78,1	78,1
	1,00	27	16,9	16,9	100,0		1,00	35	21,9	21,9	100,0
Total		160	100,0	100,0		Total		160	100,0	100,0	

Table 16 – Receiving information about the companies withdrawing from Russia Word of mouth

UW_Words_Of_Mouth_Computed					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	125	78,1	78,1	78,1
	1,00	35	21,9	21,9	100,0
Total		160	100,0	100,0	

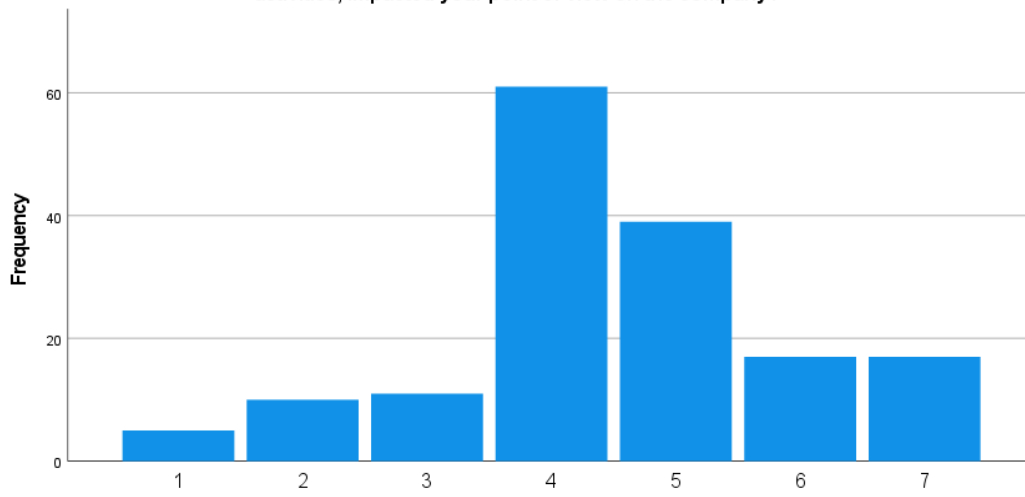
Graph 1 – Withdrawal awarness





Graph 2 – Impact on point of view

Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how a company withdrawing from Russia, as part of their brand activism activities, impacted your point of view on the company?



Please indicate, on a scale of 1-7, how a company withdrawing from Russia, as part of their brand activism activities, impacted your point of view on the company?