



LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Speak up or stay quiet

A Quantitative Study on the influence of CEO/brand activism on
brand equity and purchase intent in Sweden

by

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Abstract

Purpose and aim – The increased polarization in society results in the fact that companies are increasingly being called upon by consumers to take a stance on controversial socio-political issues. This contemporary phenomenon is defined as CEO/brand activism, and it is particularly prevalent in the United States. The purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of CEO/brand activism on building brand equity and the purchase intent in Sweden, through the level of agreement regarding Ben & Jerry’s stance on keeping nine thousand young refugees in Sweden. Moreover, our research provides a comparative analysis where the influence on purchase intent as well as the general perception of Swedish consumers on CEO/brand activism will be analyzed and compared to existent research prevalent in the United States to provide an international perspective and understanding of the concept.

Methods and procedures – A quantitative study is used to analyze the gathered results from our web-based questionnaire. A one-way ANOVA test was used to determine if mean differences exist between the treatment groups of agreement and disagreement to the activist stance for our 115 data sets. Respondents were divided into two different treatment groups based on their support toward Ben & Jerry’s refugee stance in Sweden. Moreover, to analyze the relationship between overall brand equity and purchase intent, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used.

Results – The results showed that agreeing to the stance leads to a significant increase in all brand equity’ dimensions except for brand community. Alternatively, disagreement to the stance does not lead to an increase for all brand equity’ dimensions. In addition, brand equity and purchase intent are highly correlated, indicating that agreeing to the stance leads to higher overall purchase intent. Our findings further suggest that the Swedish consumer expressed a more positive attitude to brand activism compared to the United States, indicating that Swedes are in general more acceptive toward CEOs and brands taking a stance on socio-political issues.

Implications – This study is the first in analyzing the influence of CEO/brand activism on brand equity and purchase intent. Moreover, it contributed to the field of comparative CSR by comparing our results to existent research in the United States. The findings of this thesis are particularly interesting both from a theoretical and managerial point of view. Hence, this thesis serves as a door-opener for future research in terms of comparative CSR, CSM, socio-political activism, and institutionalism.

Keywords: CSR, CSM, CEO activism, brand activism, comparative CSR, social activism, political activism, brand equity, brand awareness, brand image, brand credibility, brand feelings, brand engagement, brand community, purchase intent.

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1. Introduction

This chapter includes the background and problematization around CEO/brand activism, brand equity, and purchase intent in the Swedish market. The chapter continues with the purpose of the research. Lastly, the chapter ends by providing an outline of the remainder of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Until recently, firms have been reluctant to speak out on controversial issues that divide society in fear of offending and therefore losing potential customers (Winkler, 2018). However, today, taking a stance on controversial or hot-button social issues have become a major trend, especially in the United States (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). It is no longer enough to be socially responsible; companies are embracing the idea of corporate political responsibility (CPR) (Winkler, 2018) or CEO/brand activism. This is mainly caused by the inauguration of Trump in the United States, the so-called Trump era.

Over the last years, the climate in the United States has dramatically changed as business and politics are interrelated or intersected, now more than ever before (Gaines-Ross, 2018). Society has become significantly more polarized during this era, where public opinion is heavily divided and going to extremes without much neutrality. This is partly caused by the rise of identity-group politics, where both the Left and the Right are opposed. Left-wing opponents believe that racism and bigotry are tearing the country apart whereas Right-wing opponents believe that political correctness and identity politics are tearing the country apart. In other words, the Democrats and Republicans divide the United States into two different ways of thinking. As a result, businesses are increasingly being called upon by consumers to take a stance on important social concerns, and research indicates that not taking a stand on these concerns can potentially backlash on companies (Gaither, Austin & Collins, 2018). Taking a stance in controversial issues is by nature polarizing, and therefore, we can argue that we arrived at the dawn of CEO/brand activism.

Even though CEO/brand activism is a rather contemporary concept, research on the matter is already extensive. In the United States the public favors CEOs to speak out on controversial issues, however, if the issue is not directly linked to the company's business values, the reverse is true (Weber Shandwick, 2016). Hence, companies should align the issues they tackle with their core values in order to stay authentic and make more explicit connections to the bottom line (Zandan, 2018).

Another trend observed in current research is that CEO activism influences purchase intent. A study performed by Weber Shandwick (2016) in the United States shows that forty percent of customers are more likely to buy products from a company when they agree with the CEO's stance, while a more significant number of forty-five percent is less likely to buy said products if they disagree with this stance. Besides, Apple's CEO, Tim Cook, took an activist, which increased the purchase intent of proponents of his standpoint on same-sex marriage (Chatterji & Toffel, 2016). Therefore, if CEOs take a stance which corresponds to the majority of the public opinion, it leads to increased purchase intent, and thus to higher profitability. In contrast, disagreement with the majority of the public leads to a diminishing of sales. CEOs are capitalizing on this by using a more inclusive language than the average executive communicator (Zandan, 2018).

Moreover, some customers are either unsure or skeptical toward the intentions of CEO activists and believe that they are doing it primarily to get media attention (McGinn, 2017). Therefore, according to Weber Shandwick's study, CEOs need to be transparent about their rationale when engaging in a public debate in order to overcome this skepticism. Communication must be memorable, understandable, and last but not least repeatable (Weber Shandwick, 2016). Therefore, CEOs speaking out or writing on social issues use an authentic, more personal tone (Zandan, 2018).

1.2 Problematization

Where existing research focuses mainly on guidelines, roadmaps and the risks and rewards for CEOs and brands taking a stance, it lacks examining the influence it has on a company's brand, more specifically on brand equity. Hoeffler and Keller (2002) describe six means by which Corporate Societal Marketing (CSM) programs can build brand equity: (1) building brand awareness, (2) enhancing brand image, (3) establishing brand credibility, (4) evoking brand feelings, (5) creating a sense of brand community, and (6) eliciting brand engagement. We build upon this existing knowledge on the relationship between CSM and brand equity by taking this one step further into measuring the relationship between CEO/brand activism and brand equity. This type of activism is characterized as a natural evolution beyond CSM and CSR programs because of its transformative nature (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).

Moreover, the whole concept of CEO/brand activism and purchase intent has only been analyzed in the United States because of its highly polarized society, especially in recent years, with concern to the Trump era. We want to contribute by bringing this contemporary and relevant research dimension to Europe, and more specifically to Sweden. According to Keegan and Green (2015), this is defined as the "global marketplace versus local markets" paradox. An organization with a global marketing focus aligns its competences and resources on global market opportunities and threats (Keegan & Green, 2015). The fundamental

difference with regular marketing is the scope of activities, where a company engaging in global marketing conducts business activities outside of their home-country (Keegan & Green, 2015). Furthermore, we can distinguish that there is a difference between global marketing and international marketing. The international marketing orientation is characterized by an explicit international focus, treating markets as different, and therefore, separating positions and strategies (Ghauri & Cateora, 2014). In other words, international marketing views the world as a set of country markets where cultural differences are the main point in adapting to each market. Alternatively, global market orientation covers the world market, based on similarities across markets to achieve advantages of scale and global recognition (Ghauri & Cateora, 2014). In other words, global orientation views the world as one whole market and seeks standardization based on similar segments worldwide. Hence, it is of high relevance analyzing the effects of an international orientation on CEO/brand activism where companies choose to take a stance on a country-specific controversial topic.

1.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of CEO/brand activism on building brand equity in Sweden through the case of Ben & Jerry's stance and the level of support to this stance in a socio-political environment in terms of (1) building brand awareness, (2) enhancing brand image, (3) establishing brand credibility, (4) evoking brand feelings, (5) creating a sense of brand community, and (6) eliciting brand engagement. Using these six different dimensions seems to be a little too comprehensive. However, our research is mainly used as a door opener for future research to analyze these dimensions individually and more in-depth. Moreover, our research provides a comparative analysis where the influence on purchase intent as well as the general perception of Swedish consumers on CEO/brand activism will be analyzed and compared to existent research prevalent in the United States to provide an international perspective and understanding of the concept.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis begins with a literature review exploring previous research in the field of CSR, CSM, CEO/brand activism, and brand equity. Based on this research, we will identify and propose the seven research questions of our study. The next chapter discusses the research design and method to measure predefined beliefs. In the last chapters, a discussion of the results is provided as well as concluding remarks, managerial implications, theoretical contributions, and potential destinations for future research.

2. Literature Review

This chapter entails a literature review to gain an understanding of the concepts of brand-, and CEO activism, brand equity, and lastly purchase intent. The chapter begins by explaining how corporate social responsibility, brand-, and CEO activism are interrelated and evolved. Afterward, existent literature on CSR and branding is analyzed, and we argue the relevance of this relationship regarding this thesis. Furthermore, we outline the differences between CSR and activism between North America and Europe. Moreover, we present CSR and brand activism from the consumer's perspective. Followed by an extensive analysis of Keller's framework of customer-based brand equity. Lastly, we conclude this chapter by introducing the conceptual framework as well as the operationalization of the concepts.

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility, Brand Activism & CEO Activism

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has no general definition due to the high levels of controversy and ambiguity incorporated with the topic in general (Horrigan, 2010). However, almost all definitions of CSR include that businesses have obligations toward society beyond the financial commitments they have to their shareholders (Schwartz, 2011). In line with Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2011), CSR is now more used as a strategic imperative. The most forward-thinking firms across the globe are approaching CSR as a way to achieve their strategic objectives while at the same time increasing world welfare, instead of looking at it as solely an ethical responsibility to society and the environment (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2011). In other words, they create joint value for both the firm and society. Such initiatives of creating joint value are called corporate societal marketing (CSM), and Hoeffler and Keller (2002) define CSM as marketing initiatives that have at least one non-economic objective related to social welfare while using the resources of the company or its partners. These initiatives are labeled as ‘best of breed’ because of their ability to improve consumer well-being while simultaneously improving strategic goals such as increased sales or market development (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

However, according to Sarkar and Kotler (2018), CSR and CSM programs are too slow in transforming companies across the world. In general, the more closely tied a social issue is to a company's business, the greater the opportunity to benefit society and leverage the firm's resources (Porter & Kramer, 2007). Nevertheless, this is a myopic way to look at issues since it only takes an inside-out perspective on reality. A mindset that views reality from an

outside-in perspective is needed, now more than ever (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Millennials would like brands to show concern for the communities they serve, and the world we live in, which results in a yearning toward jobs that pursue a higher meaning rather than just profit-making (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). In accordance with Sarkar and Kotler (2018) these millennials, characterized as progressive customers, are demanding companies to make a difference in solving the most urgent issues like income equality, climate change, and corruption. Behavior of companies in this manner is defined as brand activism, ‘‘which consists of business efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to promote or impede improvements in society’’ (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018, p. 5 of chapter 3). Due to CSR and CSM not being transformative, brand activism is perceived as a natural evolution beyond these programs (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Similarly, Porter and Kramer (2011) argue that current CSR policies fall short in identifying and expanding connections between societal and economic progress. They define this as the concept of shared value which is defined as policies and operating practices that foster the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the social and economic conditions in the communities in which it operates (Porter & Kramer, 2011). This concept of shared value shows strong similarities with brand activism as both aim to improve competitiveness while improving social conditions at the same time.

As stated earlier, businesses are increasingly being called upon by consumers to take a stance on social concerns, especially by millennials (Gaither, Austin & Collins, 2018; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). In Larry Fink’s recent letter to CEOs, he states that the world needs the leadership of CEOs to make a positive contribution to society by not only focusing on delivering financial performance (BlackRock, 2019). Due to the fact that CEOs act as brand guardians, the language and tone used by a CEO directly reflect the company’s culture (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). Hence, this paper focuses solely on CEO activism, where CEOs speak out on behalf of the brand instead of their self-interests. In consonance with Sarkar and Kotler (2018), and in contrast with Milton Friedman’s view of maximizing return to a company’s owners and investors (Friedman, 2007), brand beneficence still occurs when brands are becoming more activists, and CEOs have to lead the charge.

2.2 CSR and Branding

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not a new concept to the business world, but it has become more critical for corporations to engage in CSR in recent years. One of the many reasons is that consumers are paying more attention to the ethical and sustainable practices of firms when purchasing products and services (Goworek & McGoldrick, 2015). According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), consumers have pushed firms toward more sustainable practices, for example, they are buying more organic, and Fairtrade labeled products, the consumers are also threatening to boycott brands and retailers that do not live up to their

expectations. This push for sustainable practices has put significant pressure on retailers to increase their CSR engagement, primarily since retailers can be held responsible for their suppliers and the products offered in-store to consumers (Elg & Hultman, 2011).

In 2017 Cone Communications conducted a CSR Study which revealed that 63% of Americans are hopeful that businesses will take the lead to drive environmental and social change moving forward, in the absence of government regulation (Cone Communications, 2017). The big question for companies today is not "whether" they should engage; it is "how" they should engage. This "how" is a major struggle for corporations when trying to align the corporate goals with its CSR goals to be successful and increase the firm's bottom line (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

Today's consumers are demanding more than "just a product" when purchasing from a brand, as well as when deciding what companies they would consider working for. Moreover, they are looking for brands with strong values that reflect their own. In addition, investors are more conscious when it comes to CSR related activities when investing in businesses. (Keegan & Green, 2015)

CSR can be used as a positioning strategy to humanize the company or brand; this can further develop into consumers being able to identify with the brand as they identify with other human beings (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). It goes beyond the single transactional value for the company as it sparks long-term benefits instead, e.g., loyalty and advocacy, which is the primary outcome wanted by companies (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002; Sen, Bhattacharya & Korschun, 2006). In other words, CSR, if utilized correctly, can positively affect brand equity in terms of awareness, image, credibility, feelings, community, and engagement (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

The motivation behind linking a brand with a cause is to strengthen and reinforce the already existing brand associations in the minds of consumers (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). However, when brands attempt to carry over specific associations from a cause to its brand, it is of utmost importance to measure the favorable associations currently held by consumers (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Moreover, the favorability of the associations connected with the cause will be grounded upon the recognized benefits associated with the cause, and it stems from the link between consumer's values and the values the cause advocates (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Besides, the more memorable a cause is, the easier it will be for consumers to link the cause to a specific brand (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

In this paper, we are going to measure the influence CEO/brand activism has on brand equity, as existent research neglected this relationship since brand equity has only been measured in relation to CSR (Guzmán & Davis, 2017). As activism tackles more controversial topics than CSR, there are usually strong opinions from the public on the stance taken by a brand, and the public expresses it through either praise and support or protests and boycotts. Therefore, we have established the need to measure the influence CEO/Brand activism has on brand equity.

2.3 CSR & Activism: North America vs. Europe (Sweden)

When analyzing the relative absence of CEO/brand activism in Europe compared to North America, we look back at how corporate social responsibility practices evolved differently over the years in the two continents. Matten and Moon (2008) observed two aspects regarding the differences of CSR between North America and Europe. Comparative research identified the remarkable difference between companies on each side of the Atlantic, and while many US corporations have been attributed social responsibilities, this has not been common in Europe (Matten & Moon, 2008). CSR in the United States has been embedded in a system which leaves more opportunity and incentive for corporations to take explicit responsibility, while CSR in Europe has been embedded in broader organizational systems of responsibility (Matten & Moon, 2008). CSR in Europe is described as implicit, referring to the corporation's role within more comprehensive institutions to address societal concerns (Matten & Moon, 2008).

The second observation shows that from 2008 onwards corporations in Europe began to adopt the language and practice of CSR (Matten & Moon, 2008). From this insight, we can see a pattern of CSR starting in the United States, which over time reaches Europe. As previously mentioned, brand activism is perceived as a natural evolution or extension beyond CSR as it tackles the arising controversial issues of society. Hence, we argue that brand activism follows the same trend, concerning the United States-Europe relationship, as CSR historically.

Firms compete to add value to their brands by incorporating social and political dimensions into their brands guided by principles of the branding paradigm (Holt, 2002; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). In short, the branding paradigm consists of a set of principles whereon firms base their brand building strategies. Aggressive firms that continuously blaze the trail contribute to an even more polarized society as these techniques of pushing principles to their extremes create contradictions in consumer culture as they aim to alter the branding paradigm (Holt, 2002). As a result, consumer culture evolves from something to live within, to something to talk about (Holt, 2002). When firms aggressively push their principles, and as consumers become more reflexive and knowledgeable about branding mechanics, conventional branding techniques gradually lose their efficacy (Holt, 2002). Holt (2002) describes this as postmodern branding techniques where firms pursue more aggressive, riskier practices to create and foster perceived authenticity. However, brands like the Body Shop, Benetton, and Ben & Jerry's were early scrutinized because of their explicitly politicized branding (Holt, 2002). In other words, society, in the first instance, was not acceptive toward brands being involved in political issues.

Until recently, it was seldom for brands and brand leaders to aggressively intervene into controversial social and political discussions about race, gender, environment, sexual orientation, and immigration (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). However, increasing polarization in

the United States resulted in political partisanship and discourse to grow into extremes. As an example, after Donald Trump's election, trust in news media became more undistributed than ever before, where people identifying on the left have almost three times as much trust in the news compared to those on the right (Reuters, 2018). Besides the decreasing trust in media, eighty percent of all Americans are angry or dissatisfied with how the governments act today (Winkler, 2018). This attitude is widely shared across all partisan circles, and regardless of party, Americans believe that politicians cannot be trusted (Winkler, 2018). This social and political disorder provoked outrage and frustration, which inspired brands and brand leaders to advocate for a range of societal issues (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). Subsequently, these brands have gotten lots of media attention lately, and inclusive practices are now built around it by public relation firms (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018).

Reuters (2018) performed a study measuring polarization in digital news consumption in 37 countries, including the United States and Sweden. Recently, the emergence of alternative, populist, or partisan websites have proliferated in several countries. In most cases, these alternative media have a political or ideological foundation where users passionately share their opinions. In consonance with the United States, these new, alternative media are gaining much traction in Sweden, indicating political polarization in digital news consumption (Reuters, 2018). These alternative media picture how Sweden has become a country of political correctness, where identity politics, feminism, and multiculturalism allegedly trump national welfare policy. This narrative, prevalent in Sweden Democratic party circles, argues that the response of Sweden to the European migrant crisis has brought national security and welfare institutions to the point of system failure. Hence, Ben & Jerry's stance on keeping the nine thousand young Afghan refugees in Sweden is by nature polarizing.

Although the phenomenon of socio-political brand activism largely circumscribes the United States, according to Chatterji and Toffel (2018), there is no reason to believe that this would not develop into a global force. Hence, there is a need to measure the general perception of society toward political activism of brands in Europe, and more specifically, in Sweden. Comparing the results of the public perception of the already existent results in the United States enables us to argue if Sweden is prepared and acceptive toward socio-political interference of brands.

2.4 CSR & Brand activism from the consumer's perspective

In today's capitalist society, consumers have the freedom to choose which products to buy, and from which companies they buy them. When companies decide to offend traditional notions of decency, consumers themselves can respond by choosing to purchase the product through different companies, not purchasing the product at all, and even informing other consumers to not purchase products from this particular company (MacKay, 2017). When

choosing between competing products, consumers are more willing to buy from the brand that actively engages in CSR programs (Pigors & Rockenbach, 2016). In the light of this, in an article from the Washington Post, George Belch, a professor in marketing at San Diego State University, stated that “Consumers have been judging companies more and more by their social policies, their economic policies; that’s become a big part of decision-making of where they spend their money” (The Washington Post, 2015). This is in line with Manning’s (2013) concept of a push/pull dynamic between consumers and corporations when it comes to CSR and CnSR (Consumer Social Responsibility). In this sense, consumers are pulling on corporate social, environmental, and financial responsibility through their purchasing actions (Manning, 2013).

Consumers turn to these businesses because of the previously mentioned disbelief in the political climate; they argue that companies have more influence on current societal topics than politicians do. These consumers who trust corporations to shape their socio-political behavior are, in essence, entrusting essential decisions to the marketplace (Winkler, 2018). In other words, consumers are now voting with their wallets by either boycotting or its antonym ‘buycotting’ (consumers intentionally purchase a company’s product or service to support them) specific products and companies (Weber Shandwick, 2018). These two behaviors, both passive (boycotting) and active (buycotting), are commonly referred to as conscious or political consumption. Consumers base their spending on the ethical stances of companies to bring social justice issues to the marketplace. According to a survey from Weber Shandwick, 83 percent of all participants argue that it is more important to show support for companies that “do the right thing” by purchasing from them whereas 59 percent say that it is vital to participate in boycotts. The main motives for boycotting and buycotting are firstly to change the way the company or brand does business, and secondly to either harm or help the company or brand’s reputation (Weber Shandwick, 2018).

Social media is being used by consumers to push their CSR activism agenda upon firms in an effort to exert influence on the CSR activities a firm will engage in. “Social media can empower moralization by enabling them to easily share social praise or social criticism of a firm’s CSR-related activity with many other consumers.” (Boyd, McGarry & Clarke, 2016). Kampf (2018) introduces the social media native approach to activism, contrasting activism approaches that only focus on ideology, which is communicated through many different channels amplified to the new digital media environment. He connects both CSR and CnSR activist movements where problem-solving, identity and dialogues between companies and consumers become transparent and visible for the general public (Kampf, 2018). In other words, social media native activism is based on a consumer-driven approach opening up possibilities for consumer action on businesses connected to, emerging from, and communicated via digital networks (Kampf, 2018).

The generation that is most in favor of CEO/brand activism are the millennials, this younger generation is more vocal on social media and therefore more likely to call upon brands to take a stand on contemporary socio-political issues (Winkler, 2018). In addition, millennials favor brands who take a stance and share their point of view, that’s why millennials “are more than twice as likely to buy from companies whose CEOs take positions they agree with, rather than from companies with CEO position they disagree with (46% vs. 19%, respectively)” (Weber Shandwick, 2016). Policy positions taken by companies in the United States on socio-political issues lean in the direction of inclusion to target and reach the highest amount of people (Winkler, 2018).

2.5 Activism and Brand Equity

In order to analyze the influence of CEO/brand activism on brand equity, it is important to define the different variables determining brand equity. Several viewpoints and models regarding brand building are prevalent in current research to understand how to build brand equity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Keller, 2001). Aaker and Joachimsthaler developed a model of brand equity consisting of four different dimensions: brand awareness; perceived quality; brand associations; brand loyalty. Alternatively, Keller’s model of brand equity discusses four steps in building a strong brand based on six brand-building blocks. In general, both theoretical perspectives on brand equity interpret the branding effects in terms of consumer knowledge and how this knowledge affects consumer behavior toward the brand (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Keller (2001) created the customer-based brand equity pyramid (See Figure 2.1) to measure the effect of brand knowledge on customer marketing response. Keller argues that the power of a brand lies in what resides in the minds of customers. A challenge for marketers here is to create the desired feelings, images, beliefs, thoughts, opinions, perceptions, and so on, and make them become linked to the brand.

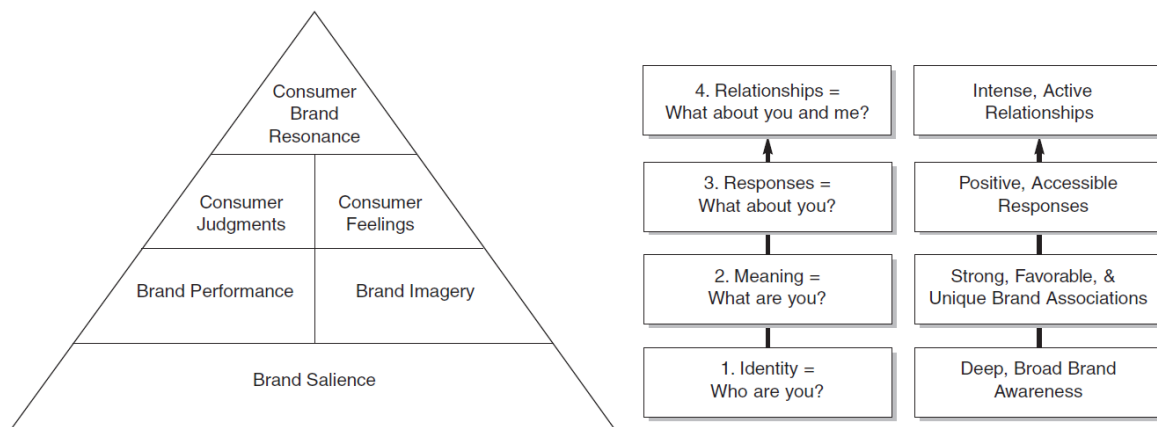


Figure 2.1 - Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid (Keller, 2001: 7)

According to the model, there are six different building blocks apparent to accomplish the four steps necessary to create a strong brand, and therefore, enhance brand equity. Creating

significant brand equity involves reaching the top of the pyramid and is only established when the other brand-building blocks are in place (Keller, 2001).



Figure 2.2 - Subdimensions of Brand-Building Blocks (Keller, 2001: 8)

Figure 2.2 illustrates the different subdimensions of each building block in detail. Based on Keller's customer-based brand equity pyramid and its subdimensions, we derived six dimensions to enhance overall brand equity.

2.5.1 From Brand Salience to Brand Awareness

Creating brand awareness (or brand salience) is connected to attaining the desired brand identity; in short, it refers to the customer awareness of the brand (Keller, 2001). Brand awareness refers to the capability of consumers to recognize and recall a particular brand, for example to what degree the brand comes to top-of-mind (Keller, 2001; Hoeffler & Keller, 2002; Torelli, 2013). Furthermore, brand awareness relates to the different associations in memory consumers have regarding the brand name, logo, color, and how it is linked to the brand. Besides, brand awareness is one of the most important factors of brand equity, and it can be seen as the foundation on which all the other factors develop from, such as brand image, association, and engagement (Christodoulides, Cadogan, Veloutsou, 2015). It is rather evident that consumers can not have any opinions regarding brand image and brand associations if they are not aware of the brand. In light of this, brand awareness is often measured in three ways (Laurent, Kapferer & Roussel, 1995; Aaker 1996a; Lee & Leh 2011, Torelli, 2013)

1. Spontaneous Awareness – is measured by the percentage of consumers that can mention the target brand when asked to name brands related to a specific product category. For example, consumers name all the soda brands they know, how many percents mentioned Pepsi.

2. Top-of-mind Awareness – is measured by the percentage of consumers who will mention the target brand first out of the brands in a specific product category.
3. Aided Awareness – is measured by the percentage of consumers who state that they recognize the brand if provided with extra input. For example, the consumers are provided with a list of soda brands and shall point out the brands they recognize. (Laurent, Kapferer & Roussel, 1995)

Hoeffler and Keller (2002) state that brand awareness can be separated into two different factors; depth of brand awareness, and breadth of brand awareness. The depth of brand awareness considers the easiness of recall and recognition of the brand in the consumers' mind. In contrast, the breadth of brand awareness deals with purchase and consumption conditions where the brand comes to mind (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

When a brand performs a marketing activity, it will always lead to an increase in brand awareness, the only question to be asked is to what extent the depth and breadth of brand awareness increases. Thus, when a brand takes a stance on a controversial topic and speaks out on its behalf, awareness will increase, regardless if it is positive or negative awareness because awareness always improves by the exposure of the brand's name and logo toward the consumer (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

RQ1a: Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand awareness index in terms of spontaneous awareness, top-of-mind awareness, and aided awareness?

RQ1b: Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand awareness index in terms of spontaneous awareness, top-of-mind awareness, and aided awareness?

2.5.2 From Brand Imagery to Brand Image

Brand imagery relates to the product or service attempt to satisfy the consumers psychological or social need through the extrinsic attributes, it can be simplified as how the consumer reflects upon the brands' image in an abstract fashion instead of what is believed that the brand simply does (Keller, 2001; Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Furthermore, the brand image is the sum of impressions that consumers have received from numerous sources in relation to the brand, and the impressions are made from several different factors that can influence the perceived brand image. Also, the factors can, for example, consist of testing the brands' products, packaging, the reputation of the manufacturer, associations linked to the brand, and promotional efforts. Therefore, the brand image seen from the consumers perspective is the grand total of emotional and aesthetical impressions that they have collected of the brand. (Pars & Gulsel, 2011)

When enhancing the brand image, it is essential for brands to develop brand meaning, as well as what the brand represents and what it symbolizes in the eyes of the consumer (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Keller (1993) states that it is important for brands to acquire strong, favorable, and unique brand associations when creating brand equity. In addition, the brand image should conform to the nature of market activities the company engages in, for example, be compatible with the mission and market strategy, intrigue partnership, and be easily understandable for consumers (Świtała, Gamrot, Reformat & Bilińska-Reformat, 2018). Moreover, to positively distinguish the brand from its competitors, the brand image must be approved by the broader community of the brand (Świtała et al., 2018).

Brands that are trying to enhance their brand image through CEO/brand activism should consider what their brand represents and what it symbolizes in the mind of the consumer before they act. Furthermore, the stance should add meaning to the brand and the cause to be effective. Aaker (1996b) firstly introduced the previously mentioned measurement scales of favorability, attractiveness compared to competitors, the difference from competitors, and consumer impressions.

RQ2a: Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand image index in terms of brand favorability, attractiveness compared to competitors, difference from competitors, and consumer impressions?

RQ2b: Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand image index in terms of brand favorability, attractiveness compared to competitors, difference from competitors, and consumer impressions?

2.5.3 From Consumer Judgments to Brand Credibility

Consumer judgment is relatively self-explanatory; it relates to how the customers respond to a brand and its marketing activities. Besides, how customers react to information about the brand from other third-party sources, as well as what they believe and feel about the brand (Keller, 2001). Thus, from consumer judgments, the question of credibility arises. Brand credibility refers to the perceived expertise, trustworthiness (Erdem & Swait, 2004), and attractiveness/likability, the brand has in the consumers' mind (Keller, 2001). With this in mind, brand credibility can further be analyzed in the perspective of source credibility (Wang & Yang, 2010), as it can be defined as the believability of the brands' intentions (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Furthermore, the connection between consumers purchase intent and the brands' credibility can fluctuate depending on if there is a high or low degree of brand awareness and brand image (Pae, Samiee, & Tai, 2002).

Brand credibility relates to the believability of information incorporated in a brand; also, brand credibility is proposed to contain three dimensions; trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness/likability (Keller & Aaker, 1998). First, the dimension of trustworthiness involves the levels of trust the receiver have in the sender (Wang & Yang, 2010), to what

extent the company is thought of being honest, reliable, and conscious of consumer needs (Keller & Aaker, 1998). Second, the dimension of expertise deals with the perceived skills, competence, and qualifications associated with the sender (Wang & Yang, 2010; Keller & Aaker, 1998). Lastly, the dimension of attractiveness/likability is relating to the perceived image of the source, e.g., how attractive, appealing, and respected a brand is perceived (Wang & Yang, 2010; Keller & Aaker, 1998). Furthermore, according to Herbig and Milewicz (1993), current and future brand credibility are affected by the marketing activities of the past and present. Therefore, the three dimensions of brand credibility reflect the consumers' perception or marketing activities performed in the past and present (Wang & Yang, 2010).

When brands take a stance on a controversial topic, consumers will take perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and likability into account when responding to the action of the brand. Consumers will link their earlier knowledge of the corporation and its practices before judging if the stance is credible enough to believe, whether it is just a marketing scheme for the brand to increase its brand equity selflessly or if it is an authentic and credible stance.

RQ3a: Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand credibility index in terms of brand expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness?

RQ3b: Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand credibility index in terms of brand expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness?

2.5.4 From Consumer Feelings to Brand Feelings

The consumer feelings, also known as brand feelings, are the consumers' emotional reaction toward a brand (Keller, 2001). Furthermore, it relates to the feelings a marketing activity can evoke in a consumer, and how a brand can affect the feelings of the consumer toward themselves along with their social relationships (Keller, 2001). In addition, these brand feelings can, for example, be strong or weak, positive or negative, or warm or cold. Furthermore, brands can evoke broader levels of feelings which are associated with the brand or the consumption experience itself, e.g., pleasure by feeling joy, pride by feeling special, arousal through excitement or surprise, warmth, and being dominated by experiencing helplessness or disgust (Torelli, 2013). Hence, the brand can, in some sense, create a type of currency, social currency, through brand feelings. Especially when looking into how the brand affects how customers feel about themselves and their relationships with others. (Keller, 2013)

According to Keller in the book *Strategic Brand Management* (2013), there are six essential types of brand-building feelings to consider:

1. Warmth
2. Fun
3. Excitement

4. Security
5. Social approval
6. Self-respect

Concerning CEO/Brand activism, there are two categories of feelings (Kahle, Poulos, & Sukhdial, 1988) that can be connected to the brand and the cause, which are social approval, security, and self- respect.

Social approval is defined as when the brand has an impact on the consumers positive feelings about the reactions of others, in other words, consumers perceive that others positively acknowledge their appearance or behavior through social approval (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Self-respect, on the other hand, deals with how consumers feel great about themselves, which is done when brands help the consumers feel a sense of pride, accomplishment, or fulfillment (Keller, 2013). This is where CEO/Brand activism can help consumers feel like they are contributing to a cause, that they are a part of something higher than just buying products.

In regards to CEO/brand activism, controversial issues in society evoke different, polarized feelings in people. Hence, when a brand decides to pick a side by taking a stance, they will be either praised or slandered by the consumers depending on if they agree or disagree with the stance. Another aspect to take into account is the social approval of the stance, and the perceived self-respect and security it can offer supporters.

RQ4a: Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand feelings index in terms of security, self-respect, and social approval?

RQ4b: Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand feelings index in terms of security, self-respect, and social approval?

2.5.5 From Consumer Brand Resonance to Brand Community

Brand resonance relates to the relationship and connections consumers feel that they have with a brand because they identify with the brand and what it stands for. Furthermore, the social phenomenon of brand communities is a concept in which consumers identifying with a brand and connects with other peers who are associated with the brand, and this creates a sense of a fraternal bond between the participants in a brand community (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

Brand communities are identified by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), as being based on social relationships between consumers of a brand, and it is not bound to a particular geographical area. They further point out that there is a shared consciousness and sense of moral responsibility between the members of a brand community, as well as certain rituals or traditions. To be involved in a brand community, it requires active engagement with the

brand from the consumer. However, the consumer can be actively engaged with a brand but not wanting to become a member of the brand community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) suggest that brand communities involve both cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component entails consumers to maintain self-awareness of their membership within the community and emphasizing the recognized similarities with other members of the community, as well as dissimilarities identified with outsiders. Also, the affective component refers to the emotional involvement "sense of kinship" within a specific group (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005).

When brands take a stance, it is important to recognize that it might go against what some consumers in their brand communities believe, which might lead to them disengaging in the community. However, the consumers who agree with the stance might proudly wear the brand as a badge of honor because the brand now supports an issue that is close to heart for them.

RQ5a: Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand community index in terms of identification, connection, and kinship?

RQ5b: Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand community index in terms of identification, connection, and kinship?

2.5.6 From Consumer Brand Resonance to Brand Engagement

Customers that go beyond the purchasing and consumption of a particular brand by investing their time, money, and energy, engage in what mainstream literature recognize as brand loyalty. For example, consumers can join brand community forums, brand clubs, and sign up to receive various updates from the company or other sources regarding the brand to stay updated (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002; Keller, 2013).

When brands are taking a stance on a controversial topic, it may lead to customers themselves actively seek to engage in the cause as well. We assume that if the stance on the cause is viewed positively by the consumer, it will lead to increased engagement in, for example, the form of brand evangelism. In contrast, if the stance on the cause is viewed negatively, it could lead to negative consumer engagement in the name of boycotting and slandering (Weber Shandwick, 2018).

RQ6a: Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand engagement index in terms of consumer's willingness to invest time, energy, and money?

RQ6b: Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand engagement index in terms of consumer's willingness to invest time, energy, and money?

2.6 Brand Equity and Purchase Intent

In general, an increase in brand equity leads to a rise in the associated purchase intent. In other words, there is a positive relationship between brand equity and purchase intent (Uthayakumar & Senthilnathan, 2012; Moradi & Zarei 2011; Lakshmi & Kavida, 2016). Some dimensions of brand equity have a stronger influence on purchase intent than other dimensions (Lakshmi & Kavida, 2016). However, all the individual dimensions of brand equity are positively related to purchase intent. In fact, earlier research indicates that if different types of brand associations are considered favorable by the consumer, it can directly affect the product evaluations, perception of quality, and purchase intents (Dacin & Smith, 1994; Day & Deutscher, 1982; Dodds, Monroe & Grewal, 1991; Leclerc, Schmitt & Dubé, 1994; Rao & Monroe, 1989). Furthermore, consumer confidence, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intentions has proven to increase through familiarity with the brand as there is a positive correlation between them (Laroche, Kim & Zhou, 1996) it has also shown to be sufficient in mitigating negative impact on the brand from unsatisfied and inadequate experiences (Smith, 1993).

Which dimension of the brand equity model that mostly influences the purchase intentions can vary depending on where in the world it is analyzed (Lee & Green, 1991). Lee and Green (1991) conducted a comparative study of brand intentions. It illustrated that consumers from the United States. are twice as likely to be affected by their own product beliefs and attitudes toward the brand itself, where Koreans, on the other hand, were more concerned about how others would perceive their purchase. Their purchase intents were grounded on social approval as they were eight times more likely to be influenced by social normative beliefs. Hence, we assume that the previously established six dimensions of brand equity are positively related to purchase intent.

Purchase intent generally is measured by statements as ‘I would buy the product of this brand rather than any other brands available’, ‘I would actively search for this brand in order to buy it’, ‘I actively encourage others to buy the products of this brand’, ‘I intend to purchase this brand in the near future’, and ‘I will not switch over to products of this brand for others as a gift’ (Algesheimer, Dholakia and Hermann, 2005; Lakshmi & Kavida, 2016). Additionally, because we measure purchase intent from an activist stance also, scales for boycotting and buycotting are useful measurements to analyze purchase intent.

RQ7a: Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to increased overall brand equity and therefore, to an increased purchase intent index in terms of search, future purchasing, boycotting, and buycotting?

RQ7b: Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to non-increased overall brand equity and therefore, to a non-increased purchase intent index in terms of search, future purchasing, boycotting, and buycotting?

2.7 Conceptual framework

The six dimensions of brand equity and purchase intent are defined as concepts, which are building blocks of the theory that determine the points around which business research is performed (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For a concept to be employed in quantitative research, they need to be measured. Concepts can be both independent or dependent variables, and once they are measured, concepts help to explain certain aspects of the social world, or in our case the relationship between CEO/brand activism, brand equity, and purchase intent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). To measure the influence of CEO/brand activism, we analyze its impact on the six dimensions of brand equity and purchase intent based on the consumer's support of the stance that a company has taken. A further elaboration on the stance is provided in Chapter 3 - Methodology. The conceptual model is defined underneath in Figure 2.3.

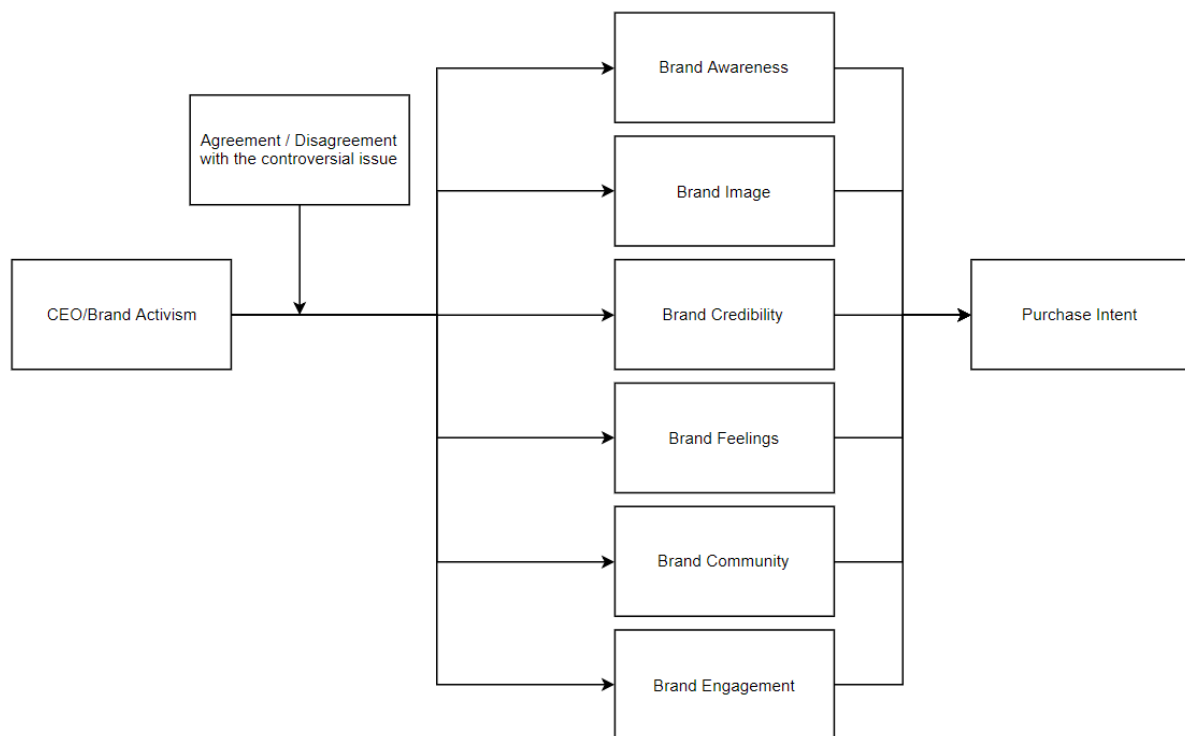


Figure 2.3 - Conceptual model

2.8 Operationalization of the concepts

In order to make concepts measurable, it is necessary to have indicators that will stand for the concepts; this process is referred to as operationalization (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In other words, indicators are used to tap concepts that are less directly quantifiable. The use only one indicator per concept may incorrectly classify many individuals may capture only a fraction of the underlying concept and does not allow the researcher to make finer distinctions multiple indicators per concepts are used (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hence, our research uses multiple-indicator measures per concepts to overcome these problems.

2.8.1 Brand Awareness

For measuring the concept of brand awareness, we distinguish between spontaneous, aided, and top of mind awareness as indicators. In order to measure brand awareness, Lee and Leh's (2011) statements of spontaneous, and aided brand awareness were adapted, and Aaker (1996a) one-item top of mind measure was used.

Brand awareness	Statement
Spontaneous awareness	I have no difficulty in imagining this brand in my mind (Lee & Leh, 2011)
Aided awareness	I can recognize this brand among competing brands (Lee & Leh, 2011)
Top of mind awareness	This brand comes up first in my mind when I need to make a purchase decision on the product of ice cream (Aaker, 1996a)

Table 2.1 - Brand awareness and its indicators

2.8.2 Brand Image

To measure the concept of brand image, The General Brand Image (GBI) scale by Aaker (1996b) was adopted. Aaker's GBI scale has been extensively used (Wang & Yang, 2010), and we selected four different statements to measure brand image.

Brand image	Statement
Favorability	I have a favorable image of the brand (Aaker, 1996b)
Attractiveness compared to competitors	The brand is more attractive than competing brands (Aaker 1996b)
Difference from competitors	The brand is different from competing brands (Aaker 1996b)
Consumer impression	I have a clear impression of the type of people who consume the brand (Aaker, 1996b)

Table 2.2 - Brand image indicators

2.8.3 Brand Credibility

Brand credibility is measured by adapting Wang and Yang (2010) scales of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.

Brand credibility	Statement
Expertise	Ben & Jerry's has the ability to deliver what it promises (Wang & Yang, 2010)
Trustworthiness	Ben & Jerry's has a name that I can trust (Wang & Yang, 2010)
Attractiveness	Ben & Jerry's is very attractive to me (Wang & Yang, 2010)

Table 2.3 - Brand credibility indicators

2.8.4 Brand Feelings

Brand feelings are measured through three of the six types of feelings that can be associated with the brand (Keller, 2013), the feelings of security, self-respect, and social approval.

Brand Feelings	Statement
Security	The brand produces a feeling of safety, comfort and self-assurance (Keller, 2004)
Self-Respect	I am proud of being one of Ben & Jerry's supporters/customers (Keller, 2004)
Social Approval	Others look favorably on my behavior, others approve of me using the brand (Keller, 2004)

Table 2.4 - Brand feelings indicators

2.8.5 Brand Community

In an effort to measure brand community, the questions of identification (Keller, 2004), connection (Keller, 2013), and kinship (Schouten, McAlexander & Koenig, 2007) are assessed.

Brand Community	Statement
Identification	I really identify with others using this brand (Keller, 2004)
Connection	I feel a connection with others who use this brand (Keller, 2013)
Kinship	I feel a sense of kinship with others who buy Ben & Jerry's (Schouten, McAlexander & Koenig, 2007)

Table 2.5 - Brand community indicators

2.8.6 Brand Engagement

Brand engagement is measured by the consumers' willingness to spend time, energy, and money on the brand itself.

Brand Engagement	Statement
Time	It is worth spending more time on the brand (or going out of the way for it) (Keller, 2013)
Energy	It is worth investing extra effort on the brand (Keller, 2013)
Money	It is worth spending more money on the brand (Keller, 2013)

Table 2.6 - Brand engagement indicators

2.8.7 Purchase Intent

Purchase intent is measured by adapting Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005) scales of search and future purchase. Besides, Weber Shandwick (2018) scales of boycotting and buycotting are utilized to measure purchase intent.

Purchase intent	Statement
Search	I would actively search for this brand in order to buy it (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005)
Future Purchase	I intend to buy this brand in the near future (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005)
Boycotting	I refrain from using, buying or dealing with Ben & Jerry's as an expression of protest (Weber Shandwick, 2018)
Buycotting	I show support for Ben & Jerry's by intentionally buying its products (Weber Shandwick, 2018)

Table 2.7 - Purchase intent indicators

3. Methodology

This chapter includes a thorough review of the methodology we applied in this thesis. Firstly, we present the research design, which includes the research purpose, the research philosophy, the research approach, and the research strategy. Secondly, we discuss the collection of empirical data and the general study, where we discuss the questionnaire design, sampling method, pilot study, and control questions. Furthermore, we highlight the data processing and analysis, as well as the quality of our research. We end this section by discussing the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

In this chapter, we present the research purpose and its connection to our research philosophy. Furthermore, we discuss our research approach and research strategy.

3.1.1 Research Purpose

As previously mentioned in the introduction, our aim of this research is to analyze the influence of CEO/brand activism on building brand equity and purchase intent through the level of support toward Ben & Jerry's activist stance in Sweden. Moreover, the influence on purchase intent as well as the general perception of Swedish consumers on CEO/brand activism will be analyzed and compared to existent research prevalent in the United States to provide an international perspective and understanding of the concept. The consequences for our point of departure regarding ontology and epistemology are discussed in the next section, where we introduce the research philosophy.

3.1.2 Research Philosophy

In this section, we discuss the research philosophy in our thesis. Philosophers have hotly debated the relationship between data and theory for many centuries (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p. 132). There are four main reasons why understanding philosophical issues is instrumental: (1) the researcher is obliged to understand the issues of epistemology to have a clear sense of the reflexive role they possess in research methods, (2) it helps to clarify research designs, (3) knowledge of philosophy helps researchers to recognize which research design succeeds and which will not succeed, (4) it helps researchers

to create and identify research designs outside of their experience (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The main philosophical debate in research concerns matters of ontology and epistemology (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Bryman & Bell, 2011). In short, ontology refers to the nature of reality and existence; epistemology refers to the theory and knowledge and helps researchers understand the best ways of analyzing the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Through the chosen position in both ontology and epistemology researchers develop their methodology approach, where methodology stands for a combination of techniques used to analyze a specific situation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The main debate in ontology has been between realism and relativism. Where realism claims that science can progress only through observations which have a direct correspondence to the phenomena, relativism argues that scientific laws are created by people and evolve when explaining patterns and phenomena (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Referring back to our research purpose, together with the quantitative approach of our research, we identify as a realist where science can only progress through observations which have a direct correspondence to the phenomena, in this case, a particular stance of CEO/brand activism. Moving on to the epistemology of our research, two contrasting views exist, which are positivism and social constructionism. Positivism is based on realist ontology of an existing outside world which can be measured objectively, whereas social constructionism is based on relativism and nominalist ontology where reality is not objective but socially constructed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Hence, our departure of research was a positivist philosophy characterized by independence, value-freedom, causality, hypothesis and deduction, operationalization, reductionism, generalization, and cross-sectional analysis (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Besides, the positivist epistemology is the most dominant epistemology when utilizing a questionnaire research method (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). This starting point philosophy of a positivist enables us to measure our study objectively.

3.1.3 Research Approach

In general, the process of deduction follows the order from theory to the revision of the theory, where hypothesis, data collection, findings, and hypotheses testing are intermediate steps in the process (Bryman, & Bell, 2011). Bryman and Bell (2011) distinguish two types of theory: deductive- and inductive theory. ‘Deductive theory represents the most common view of the nature of the relationship between theory and research' where the researcher uses what is already known about a particular subject area or theoretical considerations about that subject area to deduce hypotheses (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.11). In other words, a deductive approach starts from existing theory, and through hypotheses and observations, they either confirm or reject this existing theory. In contrast, an inductive theory approach includes drawing generalizable inferences out of observations where theory is the outcome (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hence, an inductive research strategy starts with observations and patterns to create new theory development. Since this thesis is guided by previous literature to generate research questions and make theoretical contributions, it is characterized as a deductive approach.



Figure 3.1 - Process of a deductive approach (adapted from Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.52)

3.1.4 Research Strategy

The first part of this research, both the introduction and the literature review, is grounded by using secondary data, in the form of books, reports, and articles from academic journals. These chapters created the starting point for our primary research study. In numerous previous studies, with the aim of analyzing the effect on customer-based brand equity, its individual dimensions (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005; Lee & Leh, 2011; Sharma, 2016, 2017), or on purchase intent (Uthayakumar & Senthilnathan, 2012; Moradi & Zarei 2011; Lakshmi & Kavida, 2016), the researchers have used a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research approaches are primarily used when analyzing consumer behavior and consumer's attitudes (Burns & Burns, 2008). Since this thesis aims to examine consumer's attitudes and purchase intent concerning CEO/brand activism, we demonstrate that this highly corresponds to Burns and Burns (2008). Hence, a quantitative research approach is used in this thesis, which coincides with the deductive approach we have taken (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Burns & Burns, 2008), since it seeks to explore the relationship between already existing research and empirical findings on CEO/brand activism and purchase intent in the United States, as well as, the relationship between CEO/brand activism and brand equity. Contrary to qualitative research, quantitative research facilitates the results with a more representable population and is, therefore, easier to generalize among the population (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The quantitative research approach has several other advantages. Since the steps in the process from theory to revision of theory are standardized, it reduces bias when collecting and analyzing data, or in other words, it has a low impact of subjective interpretations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition, it makes it possible for future researchers to potentially replicate our research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When considering that this research is the first of its kind measuring the influence that CEO/brand activism has on brand equity and its dimensions, we highly value a quantitative research approach. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), for a study to be capable of replication - it must be replicable, if a researcher does not spell out the procedures, replication is impossible. Additionally, in order to assess the reliability of concept measurements or indicators, the procedures constituting the measure must be replicable by someone else (Bryman & Bell, 2011), as we highlighted in Section 2.8 - operationalization of the concepts.

3.2 Collection of Empirical Data

There are two ways of collecting data that can be analyzed through quantitative methods, either through collecting primary data or utilizing secondary data stored in different databases (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Firstly, this paper focuses strongly on collecting primary data as it was essential to be able to analyze the Swedish consumers' opinions regarding brand activism due to the fact that there is no current research established on this subject. Furthermore, by collecting our research data, it let us control both the structure of the sample and the obtained data from each respondent (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Also, primary data offers greater confidence that the data collected matches with the aim of the study (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Secondly, we compared part of our primary data with secondary data in an effort to grasp a more significant understanding of how consumers in Sweden compared to the United States perceive brand activism. The method used to collect our data were electronic interviews; more specifically, we conducted a web-based survey. The survey was distributed to the participant via a link we provided them. After that, the participants went to the survey webpage, Google Forms, and completed the questionnaire. We have specifically chosen to conduct an internet survey because it is fast, inexpensive, and easily modified. Furthermore, it allowed us to create a complex questionnaire, where we could utilize logic checks, and include pictures when needed. However, we acknowledge that there are several disadvantages when conducting web-based surveys, e.g., the response rates for certain studies can be low, and it is only suitable for specific populations (Burns & Burns, 2008). In addition, when the data is collected, it requires some statistical adjustments, data cleaning, and editing illegible and ambiguous responses.

The platform used to spread the questionnaire for the data collection was primarily Facebook as it is the largest social media platform with 76% of the Swedish population utilizing their service (Internetstiftelsen i Sverige, 2018). In addition, our choice to use Facebook as our primary source to collect data is because it is a fast and inexpensive way to reach out to people, as well as an easy way for participants to share the survey, creating a snowball effect (Burns & Burns, 2008). Furthermore, we acknowledge that sharing the survey to friends, family, and acquaintances is a convenience sampling method. Even though it also spread through a snowball effect, which are forms of non-probability sampling, as the vast majority of the Swedish population will never have a chance to participate, and our data will have restricted possibilities of generalizing the opinion of the entire Swedish population (Burns & Burns, 2008). Besides Facebook, the questionnaire was also shared on LinkedIn, which 30% of the Swedish population use, and Reddit, with 10% of the Swedish population use (Internetstiftelsen i Sverige, 2018).

3.3 Study

In this part of the paper, the following will be presented: First, the questionnaire design and procedure will be explained in detail, followed by the process of our sampling method. Lastly, we will present our pilot study, as well as the control questions used.

In the first part of this study, we analyze and discuss the general perception of CEO/brand activism through a comparative study, more specifically, through a cross-cultural study. Hantrais (1996) defined the concept of cross-cultural or cross-national as research that examines particular issues or phenomena in different countries. Moreover, the research compares the phenomenon across different sociocultural settings by replicating the research process to conduct new empirical work or secondary analysis (Hantrais, 1996). As a result, studies of this sort can explain the similarities and discrepancies of the phenomena in different national contexts to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. Thus, in this study, the Swedish consumers' general perception of CEO/brand activism will be collected through new empirical data, and then compared to Weber Shandwick and KRC research (2018) report of the American consumers' perspective. Weber Shandwick is a public relations consultancy firm which is one of the world's leading communications and marketing services firms (Weber Shandwick, 2019). KRC Research is a full service global public opinion research consultancy firm, which offers global quantitative and qualitative market research (KRC Research, 2019). We acknowledge that Weber Shandwick and KRC Research are conducting their research as consultancy firms, and it could, therefore, be viewed as biased. However, they are the only ones conducting this type of research in the field of CEO/brand activism and have done so consecutively every year since 2016. Therefore, we consider their data to be credible secondary data for our research.

The influence that CEO/brand activism has on brand equity, and consequently purchase intent, was measured by using a contemporary cause in Sweden. Ben & Jerry's decided to speak out and influence the political debate regarding nine thousand young refugees in Sweden. By doing so, they are one of the first to take an activist stance on a controversial issue in Sweden. They created a "Refugee welcome" ice-cream to show their support of letting the refugees have a new opportunity to stay in Sweden. This led to Ben & Jerry's being both praised and criticized in various media for their campaign. Politicians on the right side of the political spectrum in Sweden immediately boycotted Ben & Jerry's, whereas the younger generation praised Ben & Jerry's for their efforts to help the refugees (SVT Nyheter, 2018). These differentiating views lead to an exciting case or stance to utilize for analyzing the influence that CEO/brand activism has on brand equity and purchase intent, and to what extent agreement or disagreement to the stance influences this relationship.

3.3.1 Questionnaire Design and Procedure

As modern technology advances so do survey techniques, the internet has become a taken-for-granted part of our everyday life, and web-based surveys are more common than mail-based ones (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The internet offers multiple different platforms for web-surveys, surveys that are customizable with pop-up instructions, questions that are personalized based on earlier responses, skip-logic and conditional branching (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). When conducting a survey, we believe that it is vital to choose a platform that is familiar and convenient for both the researchers and the respondents. Therefore, our choice of platform landed with Google Forms, as we are both familiar with it, and it provided us with a free and straightforward format. Furthermore, Google Forms is compatible with the statistical analysis software SPSS used to analyze the collected data, which helped us avoid the time and costs of data entry and transcription errors.

When developing the questionnaire, we decided that it would be in the English language for convenience purposes, instead of translating the questionnaire to Swedish. This is due to the fact that we are from different international backgrounds, and therefore have only English as a common language. In the development process of the questionnaire, it was, therefore, crucial to do the questionnaire in English, as well as in the data interpreting phase.

However, this is one of our limitations, as there could be a language barrier for some of our respondents. Therefore, in effort to prevent language barriers and miscommunications with our respondents, we conducted a pilot test of our survey, where we tested the wording and formulation of the content, this is further discussed in Section 3.3.3 - Pilot study. With the results from 10 participants of the pilot study, we adjusted and perfected the questionnaire. Furthermore, we received a time frame of how long it takes to complete the questionnaire, which we incorporated later in the introduction of the survey to inform the participants.

The survey starts by thanking the participants for taking the time out of their day to participate in the survey, followed by information about why the survey is conducted, by whom, and what the subject of the matter is. The next thing mentioned in the introduction of the questionnaire is some short information before the survey begins, information regarding the time frame, ethical considerations, and pointing out that there are no wrong answers. Lastly, we encourage the participants to carefully read the questions before answering to be able to respond as accurately as possible.

Segment one consisted of the demographics of our respondents. The questions asked in this segment of the questionnaire were: gender, age, level of education, current occupation, city size of current residency, and the political view generally favored. The results from this segment would provide us with the essential demographic characteristics to build a profile of our sample group, and further allow for a more excellent analysis of the data collected in the remaining segments. The first question in the demographic segment regarded the participants' gender identification and was asked as "I identify as:" with the response

alternatives were "Male", "Female", and "Other". We decided to ask it in the format of a closed question to not receive unvalidated data from the respondents by using the "Other" box as open-ended. The second question of the segment is age-related, we asked the respondents to answer "I am in the age between," using a nominal scale with the response alternatives being: "18-25", "26-35", "36-45", "46-55", and "None of the above." We decided to divide it up this way with a close-ended question instead of an open-ended to save time and make it easier to analyze. Furthermore, as our target group for this survey was consumers in the age between 18-55, we utilized the "None of the above" box to exclude participants that were both younger and older than our target group. If the box "None of the above" was checked, the respondent immediately progressed to the final page of the questionnaire using the submit form function that Google Forms offers. The choice to exclude participants based on age will be motivated in Section 3.3.2 - Sampling method. The third question of the segment asked participants for their "Highest level of education," using a nominal scale with the alternatives of: "Less than a high school diploma," "High school diploma," "Bachelor Degree", "Master's Degree", and "Post-Doctoral Degree". The fourth questions included "What is your current occupation?", with the following response alternatives: "Student", "Employed", "Self-employed", "Unemployed", "Parental leave", and "Other". The fifth question regards the size of the city or town they live in, "I live in a...", the alternative answers were: "Village, less than 1.000", "Town, 1.000 – 20.000", "Large Town, 20.000 – 100.000", and "City, 100.000+". Finally, the last question of the demographic segment regards a sensitive topic for some people; the question was, "My political views generally favor:". Because this question can be regarded sensitive for some people, the response alternatives did not contain the different political parties of Sweden, as we did not want people to refrain from participating due to this question. Instead, the alternatives ranged with a political views of "Left", "Middle-Left", "Middle", "Middle-Right", "Right".

Segment two included the general perception of brand activism. The goal of this segment was to collect data which would provide us with the Swedish consumers' general perception of brand activism. Here we described the phenomena of brand activism and then asked the participants if they had encountered CEOs or brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues, in where they had to answer yes, no, or maybe. This was followed by two questions (See Appendix A) where the respondents were asked to fill in their agreement with the statement on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" with "Neither Agree or Disagree" as a neutral point in the middle of the scale. Continuing, the next question contained a checklist response which let the respondents select one or more of the alternatives presented (Burns & Burns, 2005). The participants were asked, "What issues do you believe brands/business leaders should express an opinion on?". The response alternatives for this question are based on the 18 answers that Weber Shandwick (2018) used in their article. The results from this question are analyzed and compared to the results of Weber Shandwick (2018) to examine the differences between the Swedish and American opinions in Section 5.1 - Reflection on the general perception Sweden versus the United States. The next three questions were all based on a seven-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The three questions asked were: "Would you be more likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you agree with?",

“Would you be less likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you disagree with”, and “How would you react if the company/CEO you work for take a public position on a hotly debated issue?”.

The third segment starts with explaining the Ben & Jerry's case and the stance they took in the political debate in Sweden regarding 9.000 young refugees and their right to be reevaluated to stay. The first question of the segment, " Have you heard about the stance that Ben & Jerry's have taken in Sweden?" was asked to understand if the participants had earlier knowledge of the situation. The second question, "I support the stance they took" was regarding the stance Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden. Furthermore, the response alternatives were put in a six-point Likert scale with “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, and “Slightly Disagree” on the negative side of the spectrum, and “Slightly Agree”, “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree” on the positive side. The reason a six-point Likert scale was used was to be able to divide the participants into two different categories when analyzing the data, the people that disagreed with the stance and the people that agreed with the stance.

In segment four, the questions were asked to be able to analyze the influence of brand activism on brand equity. Based on the theoretical framework we developed the brand equity model which has six dimensions; (See Section 2.8 - operationalization of the concepts), brand awareness, brand image, brand credibility, brand feelings, brand community, and brand engagement. Each of the dimensions had three or four statements that originate from several different authors' work in the field of brand equity (See Section 2.8 - operationalization of the concepts). Moreover, the seven-point Likert scale was used for this segment, same as earlier in segment two, to let the participant feel like they did not have to pick a side if they wanted to stay neutral on certain statements. The question in this segment was “The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry’s took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that:”, in the brand engagement dimension one of the statements were “It is worth spending more money on the brand”, and the response alternatives would measure the participants agreeableness to the statement.

In the last segment, the influence of Ben & Jerry's brand activism on the participants' purchase intent was asked. Just as above in segment 4, the question regarding the stance taken was asked, followed by four statements regarding purchase intent with the participants filling in their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale. The statements regarded the purchase intent indicators of search, future purchase, boycotting, and boycotting (See Table 2.7).

3.3.2 Sampling Method

Based on our research goals, we have determined that our target group is rather generic, but it does have a few criteria that need to be fulfilled. Firstly, we need the participants to be at least 18 years old, because in Sweden it is highly recommended to have the parents' consent when interviewing participants under 18, this is set as an industry standard (SMIF, 2019).

Moreover, we believe that it is more relevant to survey people from 18 years of age and up. Since it is essential to have a developed mindset in order to understand the concept of CEO/brand activism and to be able to give reliable answers, as well as reflect upon our questionnaire. We further decided to put an age limit of 55 years old so that we could avoid outliers in the age group through exclusion. Secondly, participants need to be Swedish citizens, as our paper is trying to grasp the Swedish consumers' thoughts regarding CEO/brand activism. Lastly, it is crucial for participants to have access to the internet to be able to participate as the questionnaire was shared on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Reddit. According to Internetstiftelsen i Sverige (2018), 100% of the Swedish population in the ages between 16-25, and 99% in the ages 26-55 use the internet on a frequent base. Hence, the target population for our study consists of all Swedes within the age category of eighteen to fifty-five having access to the internet. In 2018 the total population within this age category consisted of 5.003.380 people, where 48,7% are females (Statistik Myndigheten, 2019).

Based on the scope of our research, we decided to use convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method, due to the cost- and time constraints involved in probability sampling (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Bryman & Bell, 2011), as convenience sampling is a relatively fast and low-cost method when collecting data and can provide reasonable estimates (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Regarding the sample size, it was critical to reach at least a capacity of 30 respondents in each group regarding the agree and disagree sides of the "I support the stance they took" question in segment three of the questionnaire, as 30 participants per group is a rule of thumb in research according to the Central Limit Theorem (Burns & Burns, 2008). Moreover, we are fully aware that utilizing convenience sampling could potentially result in biased data and further restrict the possibility of generalizing the analysis to the entire Swedish population (Burns & Burns, 2008).

3.3.3 Pilot Study

Before sending out our questionnaire, we conducted a small pilot study to receive feedback on how the questionnaire could be improved. The pilot study was done in a precautionary manner to identify any issues with the survey before the actual data collection process could begin (Malhotra, Birks & Wills, 2012), as it is especially necessary to conduct a pilot study when using a self-completion questionnaire, due to the interviewer not being present to straighten out any confusions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We gathered 10 participants with different demographics that fit our target group in an effort to receive feedback from people with different perspectives.

The feedback received from the pilot study indicated that the questionnaire needed to provide a more thorough explanation of the case and replace the case articles URL link with an image of the article due to some participants having to re-do the questionnaire after clicking the link. Furthermore, some smaller suggestions were made, such as correction of misspelling and showing a progress bar. Overall, the impression of the pilot study participants was in general positive, they highlighted that the subject was interesting and contemporary, most

questions and indicators were easy to understand, and they felt motivated to fill it in. However, most respondents indicated that the questionnaire was rather long.

3.3.4 Control Question

The web-based questionnaire used only one control questions regarding the age limit of our target sample. When asked to provide us with their age, the respondents checking the category ‘None of the above’ (See Appendix A) were redirected to the end of the survey and thanked for their participation. In total, fourteen respondents checked the ‘None of the above’ box and were excluded in the data processing and analysis stage.

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

3.4.1 Adjustments

When closing the questionnaire for the general public, we had a total of 129 respondents. However, fourteen of these respondents were under 18 or over 55 years old, and therefore, excluded from the results due to the age limitation. As a result, our final sample consists of 115 respondents. The first adjustment in the data analysis was the reverse scoring of the variable ‘boycotting’. This variable negatively affects purchase intent, whereas the other variables have a positive relationship toward purchase intent. Hence, we transformed this variable where 1 = ‘Strongly Disagree’ was transformed in 7 = ‘Strongly Disagree’, 2 = ‘Disagree’ in 6 = ‘Disagree’ and so forth. Additionally, after the coding and cleaning process in SPSS we split our respondents into two subgroups: 0 = ‘Disagree to the stance’ 1 = ‘Agree to the stance’. Respondents answering ‘Strongly Disagree’, ‘Disagree’, and ‘Slightly Disagree’ showing disagreement to Ben & Jerry’s stance (See Appendix A) were categorized into group zero, whereas respondents answering ‘Slightly Agree’, ‘Agree’, and ‘Strongly Agree’ were classified into group one.

3.4.2 Coding

During the process of exporting the results of our respondents from Google Forms into an Excel sheet, the responses were exported as text instead of numerical answers. Thence, there was a need to code these answers into numerical values to perform the statistical analysis at a later stage in SPSS. All the coded variables are found in Appendix B.

3.4.3 Method of Analysis

SPSS was used to analyze the results we gathered from our web-based questionnaire. Firstly, we conducted a Cronbach Alpha to test the internal reliability of the indicators (See Section 3.5.1 - Reliability). Secondly, in order to describe our sample and compare it to the target population, we performed a thorough descriptive analysis (See Section 4.1 - Descriptive statistics). Furthermore, we used the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine if mean differences exist for our treatment groups of agreement and disagreement to the activist stance (Burns, & Burns, 2008). ANOVA tests whether the mean difference between both treatment groups is simply due to chance or whether systematic effects caused the mean difference to be statistically significant. In other words, if the mean of the agreement treatment group is statistically significantly different and higher compared to the mean of the disagreement treatment group, we can positively answer our research question involved. An aspect favoring the use of ANOVA is that it reduces the chances of producing Type I and Type II errors, meaning either wrongfully rejecting a true null hypothesis or wrongfully accepting a false null hypothesis (Burns & Burns, 2008). We are testing the influence of the level of support toward an activist stance on only one dimension per time; hence we use a one way between groups ANOVA test (See Section 4.2 - Research questions). Moreover, to analyze the relationship between overall brand equity and purchase intent, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used (Burns & Burns, 2008). According to Burns and Burns (2008), correlation relates to the degree of correspondence between variables. Variables can be positively, negatively, or randomly correlated. In this research we have to analyze if brand equity and purchase intent are positively related to each other, meaning that an increase in one variable coincides with an increase in the other variable (Burns & Burns, 2008). Alternatively, a decrease of brand equity coincides with a decrease in purchase intent.

3.4.4 Correlation

When doing statistical research, it is of high importance to choose what level of probability we believe that a result is unlikely to be due to chance (Burns & Burns, 2008). According to Burns and Burns (2008), if the chosen probability is higher than the odds against the occurrence by chance, we can accept our alternative hypothesis, and the results are statistically significant. "In general, the lower the probability of a chance result, the more confidence the researcher has that the observation or score is not a chance variation around the mean of the distribution but is in fact statistically significantly different from the rest of the distribution" (Burns & Burns, 2008, p.214). The highest probability that is generally accepted and most commonly used in quantitative research is $p < 0,05$ which means that the result only occurs 5 in a 100 times by chance (Burns & Burns, 2008). Hence, in this thesis, we have chosen to accept a 95 percent confidence level, or a 5% level of significance.

3.5 Quality of Research

Reliability and validity are key components for assessing the quality of research (Burns & Burns, 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this section, we will reflect upon the reliability and validity of our research.

3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the results, which fosters the replicability of the results (Burns & Burns, 2008). Hence, it is concerned with the consistency of a measure of a concept (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), there are three prominent factors involved in assessing the reliability of measures; stability, internal reliability, and inter-observer consistency.

Stability refers to whether or not a measure is stable over time (Bryman & Bell, 2011), in other words, if you perform the same research in the future the findings will show little variation when having an acceptable level of stability. The most common way of testing stability of a measure in your research is the test-retest method (Bryman & Bell, 2011), where a high correlation between the first observation and the second observation is expected. In order to improve the stability of this research, we conducted a pilot study and compared several results to the actual results in the questionnaire that we used to conduct our research. However, the period between these responses was rather low, and together with the absence of multiple pre-tests on a larger sample, we cannot claim that our measures possess a high level of stability.

Internal reliability refers to measure the reliability of multiple-indicator measurements (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since we used multiple indicators for each dimension of brand equity and purchase intent, there is a compelling need to measure the internal reliability of our research. The most frequently used method to test the internal reliability of indicators is the split-half method, or in other words, the Cronbach Alpha (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In essence, this test calculates the ‘average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients’ (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 159). The results of this test vary between 0 (no correlation and no internal reliability) and 1 (perfect correlation between the indicators and a perfect score of internal reliability), and a score of 0.80 and above states an admirable or highly acceptable level of internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Burns & Burns, 2008). 0.70 is usually adopted as a rule of thumb stating an acceptable level of internal reliability (Cortina, 1993; Burns & Burns, 2008), and is, therefore, the limit of acceptability when computing for the Cronbach Alpha. The computed Cronbach Alpha’s of all brand equity dimensions, the overall brand equity, and purchase intent are above the threshold of 0.7. The Cronbach Alpha’s of brand awareness, brand image, and purchase intent are below 0.8, and therefore only above the limit of acceptability, whereas brand credibility, brand feelings, brand community, brand

engagement, and the overall brand equity exceed 0.8 indicating an excellent level of internal consistency.

Inter-observer consistency occurs when subjective judgment is involved in activities such as the translation of data into categories, the recording of observations where more observers are involved in these activities (Bryman & Bell, 2011). One of the main issues rises when interpreting and categorizing open-ended questions in a questionnaire. Since we did not provide our respondents with open-ended questions, we can neglect this issue. Moreover, during the process of designing the survey, we agreed on all the decisions we made, the questions and descriptions we created. Furthermore, due to the nature of our questionnaire, there was no need to categorize data where disagreement could arise. Therefore, the inter-observer consistency of our research is high.

Another factor that influences the reliability of a test is the length of assessment (Burns & Burns, 2008). By way of explanation, the more indicators or factors used for a concept, the higher the reliability of that concept. Using, for example, 20 indicators, instead of 3 or 4, for our brand equity dimensions would increase our reliability significantly. However, the law of diminishing returns becomes apparent, where a significant increase in factors only improves reliability a little (Burns & Burns, 2008). Hence, we chose to use between three and four factors per dimensions to make the length of the survey conceivable for our respondents while still having an adequate amount of indicators (Burns & Burns, 2008).

3.5.2 Validity

Validity concerns the issue of whether or not a measure of a concept measures that concept (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In consonance with Burns and Burns (2008), there are multiple ways of classifying validity, although the two most common types used in most prevalent research are external and internal validity. External reliability concerns the extent to which results of our sample are generalizable to a population (Burns & Burns, 2008), and according to Bryman and Bell (2011), the sample must possess the same characteristics as the target population. Besides, we have several sampling flaws that need to be taken into account. Firstly, we used convenience and snowball sampling, which means that our respondents possess more or less the same characteristics as we do, and are not entirely representative of the Swedish population. Furthermore, since our survey was web-based, only accessible through the Internet, and completely voluntary, could have likewise affected the external validity of our research. This is due to the fact that some respondents could not or did not want to complete the questionnaire. Thence, the generalization of our findings to the Swedish population or other context has to be done with some level of caution.

Internal validity includes the degree to which conditions in the experiment are stable and controlled, to prevent other factors influencing differences or relationships that are ascribed to the independent variables (Burns & Burns, 2008). Internal validity is affected by several factors such as; ‘the study’s design to control for unwanted variables, the administration of

the study and the extent to which research take into account alternative explanations for any causal relationship" (Burns & Burns, 2008, p.526). In designing the questionnaire, we took several actions to improve the internal validity of our study. The performed pilot study helped us rephrasing any questions that were difficult to understand as well as adding explanations if they felt a lack of information, making the questionnaire more concrete and comprehensible. Although our pilot study was a representable group of Swedes and internationals from different educational backgrounds, performing the questionnaire in English could have resulted in respondents having difficulty understanding the questions. This is a limitation in the internal validity of our questionnaire and therefore, our study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

When conducting a survey, or research in general, it is crucial to contemplate on the ethical factors that might have influenced research, according to Burns and Burns (2008) these ethical factors are called participant's rights. "Participants' rights revolve around many important issues, including the right to voluntary participation, the right of safety and freedom from harm, the right to be informed, the right to privacy and confidentiality" (Burns & Burns, 2008, p.64). In line with Bryman and Bell (2011) there are four general areas of ethical principles; whether there is harm to participants, whether there is a lack of informed consent, whether there is an invasion of privacy, and whether deception is involved.

The respondents were provided with a short introduction about the research and why we needed their help. Furthermore, we secured that all responses are completely anonymous and confidential. The respondents had to fill in their gender, age, level of education, current occupation, political view, and if they lived in either a village, town, large town or city. The questionnaire did not collect any additional information, such as email addresses, and it can, therefore, be ensured that the respondents cannot be traced back. Asking about the political view is a rather sensitive subject here in Sweden; consequently, we framed the questions as 'my political views generally favor', hence the respondents felt more comfortable answering this question. Moreover, we stated that we were not funded by any organization to get respondents and therefore, we hope that we are not provided with falsely reported answers. Additionally, during the whole process of data collection, the ethical principles were taken into account to avoid any significant ethical mistakes.

4. Empirical results and analysis

This chapter entails the descriptive statistics and analysis of the research questions. First, the descriptive statistics will cover the demographics and the Swedish consumers' general perception of brand activism. Following, the analysis of the research question will be analyzed through the six different dimensions of brand equity, as well as the purchase intent.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

4.1.1 Demographics

The demographic content of the data collected from our questionnaire will be discussed in this section. 129 participants completed the questionnaire, but because of the age limitation set by us, 14 participants' data were taken out due to invalidity. As a result, 115 participants data were considered valid and therefore, used in the data analysis. Of our sample of 115 respondents, 61.2% were male, and 38.3% were female (See Appendix C). When analyzing the age groups of our sample we could see that the majority of respondents were in the ages 18-25 (40.9%) and 26-35 (45.2%), and are often called the millennials, this is mainly due to the fact that the research was conducted through convenience sampling to peers of us. The other age groups were 36-45 (6.1%) and 46-55 (7.8%) (See Appendix C). Moreover, the participants highest level of education varied with bachelor's degree (42.6%), high school diploma (33%), and master's degree (20.9%) being the top answers (See Appendix C). In Sweden, 43% of the population have continued their studies after high school (Statistik Myndigheten, 2018). Thus, as we are university students and asked our peers to fill out the questionnaire, it is rather apparent that most of the respondents will have a university degree. The majority of the respondents are either employed (51.3%) or current students (38.3%) (See Appendix C). In addition, most of the respondents live in either a large town (41.7%) or in a city (41.7%) (See Appendix C). When it comes to the last question of the demographic content regarding the political view the participants generally favor, it was divided into 5 different categories, Left (6.09%), Middle-Left (30.43%), Middle (19.13%), Middle-Left (28.70%), and Right (15.65%) (See Appendix C). The outcome of this question roughly reflects the outcome of the Swedish election in the fall of 2018 (Valmyndigheten, 2018).

4.1.2 General Perception

The first question in the general perception of brand activism segment was "Have you heard/read about CEO's/brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues?", 84% of the participants answered "Yes" and 16.5% said, "Maybe", while 10.4% answered, "No" (See Table 4.1 below).

Have you heard/read about CEO's/brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	84	73.0
	No	12	10.4
	Maybe	19	16.5
	Total	115	100.0

Table 4.1 – Encountered CEO/brand activism

The question "Do you believe that CEO's and brands have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society?" received a higher number of participants agreeing with the statement than disagreeing. The side which agreed with the statement consisted of "Strongly Agree" (20%), "Agree" (16.5%), and "Slightly Agree" (28.7%) which cumulatively results in 65.7%. In contrast, the side of disagreement consisted of "Strongly Disagree" (5.2%), "Disagree" (4.3%), and "Slightly Disagree" (11.3%), while "Neither Agree or Disagree" received 13.9% (See Figure 4.1 below).

Do you believe that CEO's and brands have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society?

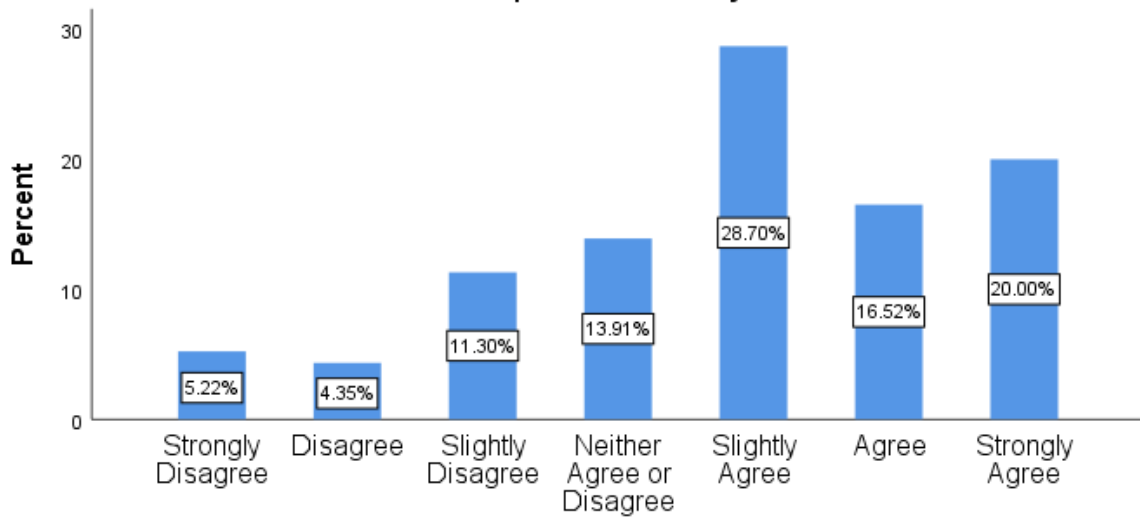


Figure 4.1 – Responsibility to society

Furthermore, the participants were asked if they believe that CEO's and brands that speak out on hotly debated current issues influence the government, almost 70% stated that they believed so by agreeing to the statement. On the contrary, roughly 12% reported that they disagree, while 18.3% said neither (See Figure 4.2 below).

Do you believe that CEO's and brands that speak out on hotly debated current issues have an influence on the government?

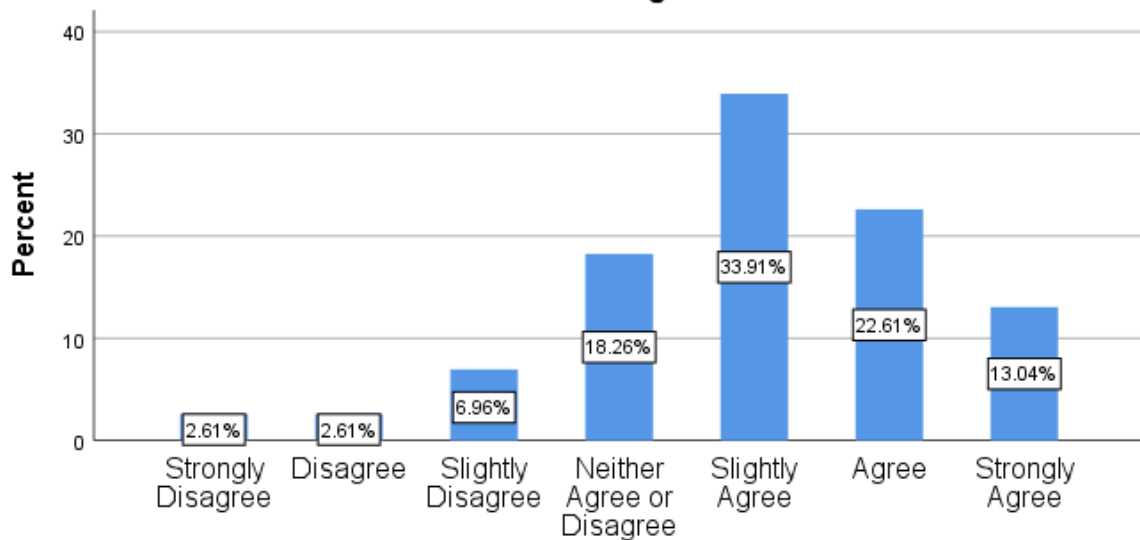


Figure 4.2 – CEO/brand influence on government

Regarding the issues that CEO's or brand should express an opinion on, climate change (74%), sexual harassment (61%), and equal pay in the workplace (61%) are among the top three according to Swedish consumers. On the other hand, legalization of marijuana (13%), nationalism, and abortion (both 10%) are the least essential issues to address according to

Swedish consumers. We will further elaborate on the relevant issues in Section 5.1 - Reflecting on the general perception of Sweden versus the United States, where we compare our results to the findings of Weber Shandwick (2018).

Moreover, the participants were asked to show their level of agreement with the statement "Would you be more likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you agree with?". The vast majority of 80% picked the agreeing side, almost one-third of the participants strongly agree with the statement (See Figure 4.3 below).

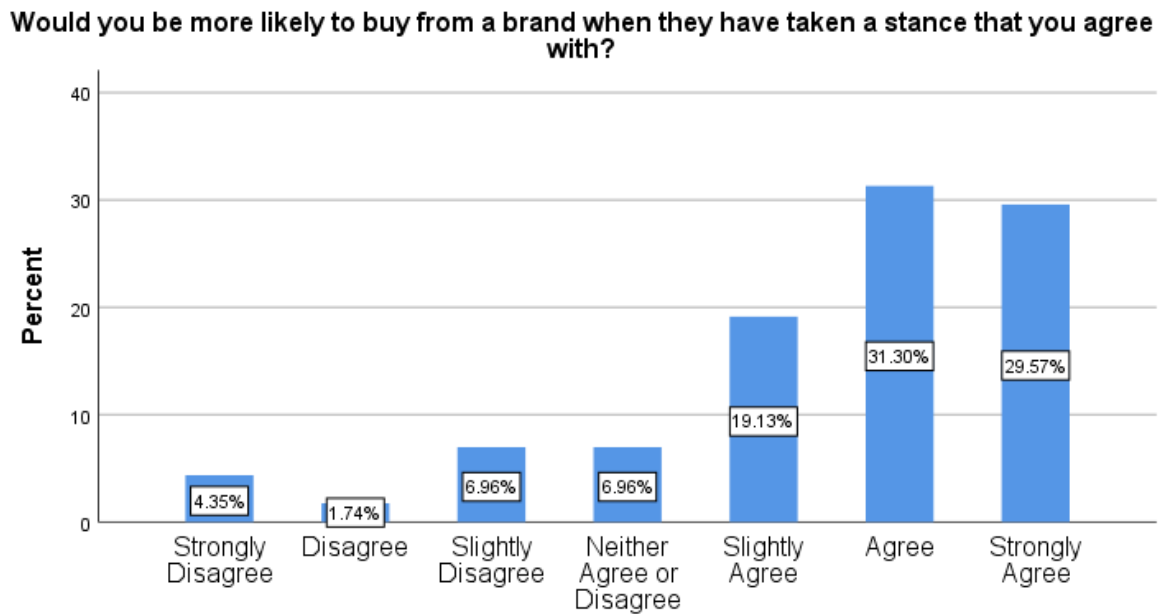


Figure 4.3 – More likely to buy if agree with the stance

Conversely, when asked "would you be less likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you disagree with?", The participants level of agreement was still strong but not as strong in the question above. This question received 70.44% that agreed in comparison to 20.1% that disagreed (See Figure 4.4 below).

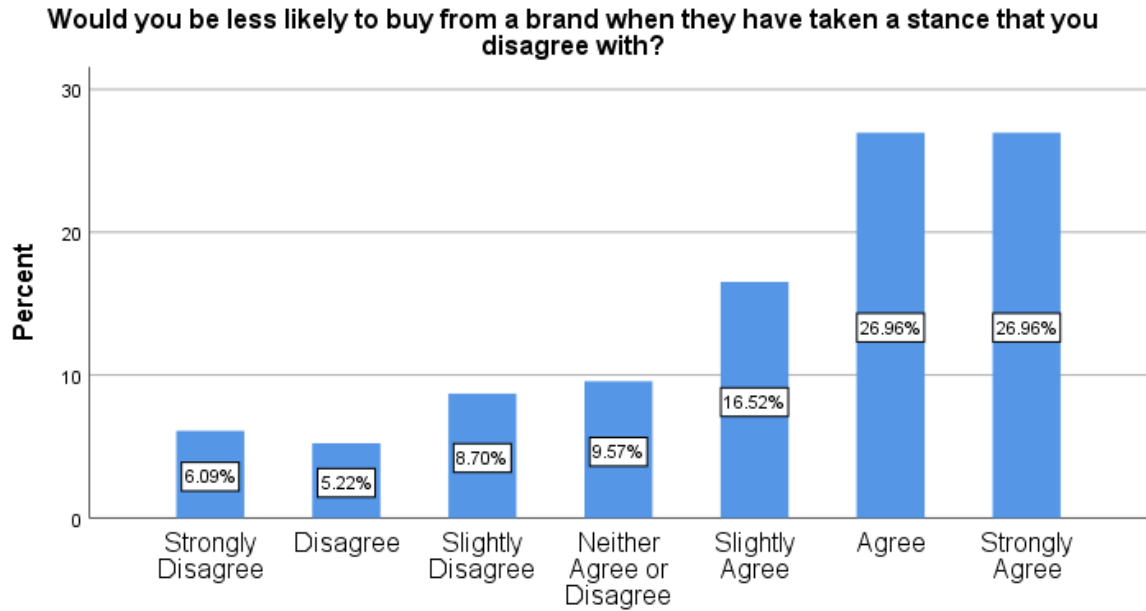


Figure 4.4 – Less likely to buy if disagree with the stance

The last question in this analysis segment of the Swedish consumers' general perception of CEO/brand activism asked if they would be more loyal to the company they work for if it would take a public position on hotly debated issues. A little more than half of the participants agreed with the statement, while roughly one third stated that they neither agree or disagree (See Figure 4.5 below).

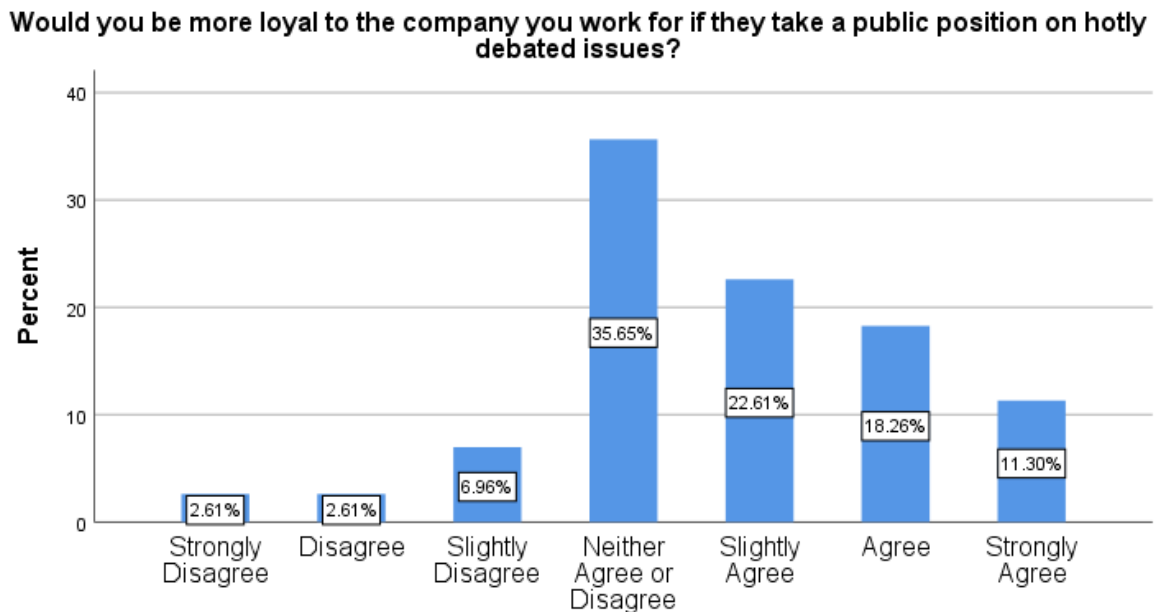


Figure 4.5 - Loyalty to the company

4.1.3 Support to Ben & Jerry's stance

In the third segment of the questionnaire the participants were presented with the case of Ben & Jerry's, the stance they as a company had taken regarding the right of nine thousand young refugees to have another opportunity to stay in Sweden. The first question "Have you heard about the stance that Ben & Jerry's have taken in Sweden?" indicated that only 27.8% of our respondents had heard about the stance (See Appendix C). In addition, the participants were asked to pinpoint their level of agreement to the statement "I support the stance they took". Here a six-point Likert scale was utilized to be able to group the participants into one group that agrees with the statement, and one group that disagrees with the statement. The disagreeing group consisted of participants that strongly disagree (13.9%), disagree (7.8%), and slightly disagree (8.7%). In contrast, the agreeing group consisted of participants that strongly agree (8.7%), agree (29.6%), and slightly agree (31.3%) (See Figure 4.6 below).

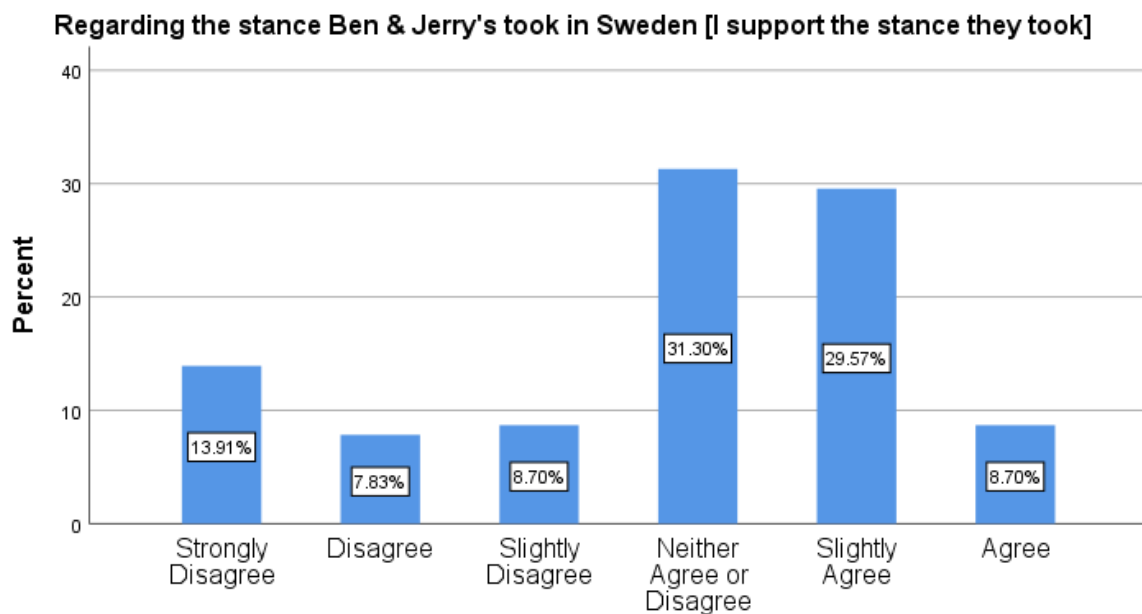


Figure 4.6 - Support Ben & Jerry's stance

4.2 Analysis of the Research Questions

In this section, we provide answers in a quantitative practice to the seven research questions we introduced at the beginning of this thesis. As mentioned in Section 3.4.3 - Method of Analysis, we grouped our respondents into two subgroups based on their support to the stance. The disagreement group consists of 35 respondents (n=35), and the agreement group entails 80 respondents (n=80), satisfying the rule of thumb according to the Central Limit Theorem (Burns & Burns, 2008). Consequently, we tested these two subgroups through performing a one-way ANOVA to the six different dimensions of brand equity, and to

purchase intent. The results from the one-way ANOVA show if mean differences exist for the two treatment groups, and if these differences are statistically significant or caused by random sampling error (Burns & Burns, 2008). ANOVA has three major assumptions, which are: normality, homogeneity of variance, and independence of errors. When checking for normality, there were slight deviations from a bell-shaped curve in the histogram; however, the Q-Q plots showed a relatively significant tightness to the normal distribution line. Hence the deviations from normality were not significantly large. Since ANOVA is fairly robust for departures from normality when deviations are not extreme (Burns & Burns, 2008), the assumption of normality is met. Moreover, we discovered slightly to moderate issues regarding the homogeneity of variance for brand credibility, brand feelings, and brand community. However, ANOVA is considered robust here as well when it comes to moderate departures from the homogeneity of variance assumption (Burns & Burns, 2008). The last assumption refers to the difference between each observation from its group mean, where each score should be independent of any other score (Burns & Burns, 2008), which we can fairly assume in our research.

4.2.1 Research Question 1: Brand Awareness

	Brand Awareness
RQ1a	<i>Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand awareness index in terms of spontaneous awareness, top-of-mind awareness, and aided awareness?</i>
RQ1b	<i>Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased in the brand awareness index in terms of spontaneous awareness, top-of-mind awareness, and aided awareness?</i>

Table 4.2 - RQ1 Brand Awareness

Descriptives		
	N	Mean
Disagree	35	3.85
Agree	80	4.90
Total	115	4.58
ANOVA		
	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17.775	.000

Table 4.3 - ANOVA results Brand Awareness

The mean score for our total respondents (n=115) indicates an overall moderately high level of brand awareness ($\bar{x} = 4.58$). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the agreement group ($\bar{x} = 4.90$) is higher compared to the mean of the disagreement group ($\bar{x} = 3.85$). The ANOVA shows statistically significant support for the differences in means between both treatment groups. The test produces a high F statistic of 17.775 together with an associated probability level (Sig.) below 0,05, in fact, near 0. Hence, μ Disagree \neq μ Agree, and therefore we argue that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an increase in the brand awareness index compared to those who disagree.

4.2.2 Research Question 2: Brand Image

	Brand Image
RQ2a	<i>Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand image index in terms of brand favorability, attractiveness compared to competitors, difference from competitors, and consumer impressions?</i>
RQ2b	<i>Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand image index in terms of brand favorability, attractiveness compared to competitors, difference from competitors, and consumer impressions?</i>

Table 4.4 - RQ2 Brand Image

Descriptives		
	N	Mean
Disagree	35	3.09
Agree	80	4.77
Total	115	4.26
ANOVA		
	F	Sig.
Between Groups	59.085	.000

Table 4.5 - ANOVA results Brand Image

The mean score for our total respondents (n=115) indicates an overall moderately high level of brand image ($\bar{x} = 4.26$). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the agreement group ($\bar{x} = 4.77$) is higher compared to the mean of the disagreement group ($\bar{x} = 3.09$). Besides, the mean of the agreement group is larger than the neutrality point of 4.0 indicating an overall increase in the brand image index, whereas the mean of the disagreement group is lower than the neutrality point not indicating an overall increase in brand image. The ANOVA shows statistically significant support for the differences in means between both treatment groups. The test produces a high F statistic of 59.085 together with an associated probability level (Sig.) below 0,05, in fact, near 0. Hence, $\mu \text{ Disagree} \neq \mu \text{ Agree}$, and therefore we argue that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an increased brand image index, and disagreement to the stance leads to a non-increased brand image index.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: Brand Credibility

	Brand Credibility
RQ3a	<i>Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand credibility index in terms of brand expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness?</i>
RQ3b	<i>Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand credibility index in terms of brand expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness?</i>

Table 4.6 - RQ3 Brand Credibility

Descriptives		
	N	Mean
Disagree	35	2.95
Agree	80	4.73
Total	115	4.19
ANOVA		
	F	Sig.
Between Groups	49.054	.000

Table 4.7 - ANOVA results Brand Credibility

The mean score for our total respondents (n=115) indicates an overall moderately high level of brand credibility ($\bar{x} = 4.19$). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the agreement group ($\bar{x} = 4.73$) is higher compared to the mean of the disagreement group ($\bar{x} = 2.95$). In addition, the mean of the agreement group is larger than the neutrality point of 4.0 indicating an overall increase in the brand credibility index, whereas the mean of the disagreement group is lower than the neutrality point not indicating an overall increase in brand credibility. The ANOVA shows statistically significant support for the differences in means between both treatment groups. The test produces a high F statistic of 49.054 together with an associated probability level (Sig.) below 0,05, in fact, near 0. Hence, $\mu_{\text{Disagree}} \neq \mu_{\text{Agree}}$, and therefore we argue that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an

increased brand credibility index, and disagreement to the stance leads to a non-increased brand credibility index.

4.2.4 Research Question 4: Brand Feelings

	Brand Feelings
RQ4a	<i>Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand feelings index in terms of security, self-respect, and social approval?</i>
RQ4b	<i>Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand feelings index in terms of security, self-respect, and social approval?</i>

Table 4.8 - RQ4 Brand Feelings

Descriptives		
	N	Mean
Disagree	35	2.80
Agree	80	4.40
Total	115	3.92
ANOVA		
	F	Sig.
Between Groups	62.655	.000

Table 4.9 - ANOVA results Brand Feelings

The mean score for our total respondents (n=115) indicates an overall moderately low level of brand credibility ($\bar{x} = 3.92$). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the agreement group ($\bar{x} = 4.40$) is higher compared to the mean of the disagreement group ($\bar{x} = 2.80$). In addition, the mean of the agreement group is larger than the neutrality point of 4.0 indicating an overall increase in the brand feelings index, whereas the mean of the disagreement group is lower than the neutrality point not indicating an overall increase in brand feelings. The ANOVA shows statistically significant support for the differences in means between both treatment groups. The test produces a high F statistic of 62.655 together

with an associated probability level (Sig.) below 0,05, in fact, near 0. Hence, μ Disagree \neq μ Agree, and therefore we argue that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an increased brand feelings index, and disagreement to the stance leads to a non-increased brand feelings index.

4.2.5 Research Question 5: Brand Community

	Brand Community
RQ5a	<i>Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand community index in terms of identification, connection, and kinship?</i>
RQ5b	<i>Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand community index in terms of identification, connection, and kinship?</i>

Table 4.10 - RQ5 Brand Community

Descriptives		
	N	Mean
Disagree	35	2.21
Agree	80	3.45
Total	115	3.08
ANOVA		
	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.713	.000

Table 4.11 - ANOVA results Brand Community

The mean score for our total respondents (n=115) indicates an overall low level of brand credibility ($\bar{x} = 3.08$). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the agreement group ($\bar{x} = 3.45$) is higher compared to the mean of the disagreement group ($\bar{x} = 2.21$). In addition, the mean of the agreement group is lower than the neutrality point of 4.0 not indicating an overall increase in the brand community index, whereas the mean of the disagreement group is also lower than the neutrality point indicating an overall non-increased brand community

as well. The ANOVA shows statistically significant support for the differences in means between both treatment groups. The test produces a high F statistic of 21.713 together with an associated probability level (Sig.) below 0,05, in fact, near 0. Hence, μ Disagree \neq μ Agree, and therefore the difference between both groups is significant, meaning that the agreement group to the Ben & Jerry's stance still leads to an increased brand community index compared to the disagreement group. However, Ben & Jerry's stance does not have a positive impact on the overall brand community index of both treatment groups.

4.2.6 Research Question 6: Brand Engagement

	Brand Engagement
RQ6a	<i>Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to an increased brand engagement index in terms of consumers' willingness to invest time, energy, and money?</i>
RQ6b	<i>Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to a non-increased brand engagement index in terms of consumer's willingness to invest time, energy, and money?</i>

Table 4.12 - RQ6 Brand Engagement

Descriptives		
	N	Mean
Disagree	35	2.29
Agree	80	4.29
Total	115	3.68
ANOVA		
	F	Sig.
Between Groups	51.017	.000

Table 4.13 - ANOVA results Brand Engagement

The mean score for our total respondents (n=115) indicates an overall moderately low level of brand credibility ($\bar{x} = 3.68$). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the agreement group ($\bar{x} = 4.29$) is higher compared to the mean of the disagreement group ($\bar{x} = 2.29$). In addition, the mean of the agreement group is larger than the neutrality point of 4.0 indicating an overall increase in the brand engagement index, whereas the mean of the disagreement group is lower than the neutrality point not indicating an overall increase in brand engagement. The ANOVA shows statistically significant support for the differences in means between both treatment groups. The test produces a high F statistic of 51.017 together with an associated probability level (Sig.) below 0,05, in fact, near 0. Hence, $\mu_{\text{Disagree}} \neq \mu_{\text{Agree}}$, and therefore we argue that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an increased brand engagement index, and disagreement to the stance leads to a non-increased brand engagement index.

4.2.6 Research Question 7: Purchase Intent

	Purchase Intent
RQ7a	<i>Does agreement to the activist stance taken lead to increased overall brand equity and therefore, to an increased purchase intent index in terms of search, future purchasing, boycotting, and buycotting?</i>
RQ7b	<i>Does disagreement to the activist stance taken lead to non-increased overall brand equity and therefore, to a non-increased purchase intent index in terms of search, future purchasing, boycotting, and buycotting?</i>

Table 4.14 - RQ7 Purchase Intent

In order to answer this research question, we have to take the correlation between overall brand equity and purchase intent into account. According to Burns and Burns (2008), correlation relates to the degree of correspondence between variables. Variables can be positively, negatively, or randomly correlated. In this research we have to analyze if brand equity and purchase intent are positively related to each other, meaning that an increase in one variable coincides with an increase in the other variable (Burns & Burns, 2008). Alternatively, a decrease of brand equity coincides with a decrease in purchase intent. The most widely used correlation index is the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Burns & Burns, 2008). The variable brand equity was created by computing the six brand equity dimensions in SPSS and transforming it into a new variable, namely "Brand Equity".

		Brand Equity	Purchase Intent
Brand Equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.668
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35

Table 4.15 - Pearson Correlation Brand Equity & Purchase Intent for 'Disagree'

Computing for the correlation in the disagreement group showed a Pearson Correlation of 0.668 between brand equity and purchase intent. This is interpreted as a high correlation statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

		Brand Equity	Purchase Intent
Brand Equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.727
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80

Table 4.16 - Pearson Correlation Brand Equity & Purchase Intent for 'Agree'

Regarding the correlation between brand equity and purchase intent in the agreement group, the Pearson Correlation showed a score of 0.727, which is statistically significant since the associated probability (0.00) is lower than 0.05. Hence, in both the treatment groups, there is a significant correlation between brand equity and purchase intent. Now that we have proven the correlation, the next step is to analyze if agreement leads to an increase in overall brand equity and purchase intent, and alternatively if disagreement leads to non-increased overall brand equity and purchase intent.

Descriptives		
	N	Mean
Disagree	35	2.64
Agree	80	4.42
Total	115	3.88
ANOVA		
	F	Sig.
Between Groups	64.271	.000

Table 4.17 - ANOVA results Purchase Intent

The mean score for our total respondents (n=115) indicates an overall moderately low level of purchase intent ($\bar{x} = 3.88$). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the agreement group ($\bar{x} = 4.42$) is higher compared to the mean of the disagreement group ($\bar{x} = 2.64$). In addition, the mean of the agreement group is larger than the neutrality point of 4.0 indicating an overall increase in the purchase intent index, whereas the mean of the disagreement group is lower than the neutrality point not indicating an overall increase in purchase intent. The ANOVA shows statistically significant support for the differences in means between both treatment groups. The test produces a high F statistic of 64.271 together with an associated probability level (Sig.) below 0,05, in fact, near 0. Hence, μ Disagree \neq μ Agree, and therefore we argue that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an increased purchase intent index, and disagreement to the stance leads to a non-increased purchase intent index.

		Brand Equity	Purchase Intent
Disagree	Mean	2.86	2.64
	N	35	35
Agree	Mean	4.43	4.42
	N	80	80
Total	Mean	3.95	3.88
	N	115	115

Table 4.18 - Compare means Brand Equity & Purchase Intent

The means of brand equity and purchase intent ($\bar{x} = 2.86$, and $\bar{x} = 2.64$) in the disagreement group, and the means of brand equity and purchase intent in the agreement ($\bar{x} = 4.43$, and $\bar{x} = 4.42$) are relatively similar, indicating the previously proven correlation between both variables. Moreover, both means in the disagreement group are lower than the neutrality point proving that disagreement to the activist stance does not lead to increased overall brand equity, and therefore, to a non-increased purchase intent index. Alternately, agreement to the stance leads to increased overall brand equity, and consequently an increased purchase intent index.

Last but not least, the total means of our sample show a value slightly lower value than the neutrality point for both brand equity and purchase intent. This indicates that both brand equity and purchase intent do not increase for Ben & Jerry's as a result of speaking out on the nine thousand refugees in Sweden based on our sample. This is mainly caused by the 'extremeness' of the answers provided by the disagreement group since they tended to answer "Strongly Disagree" on a more frequent basis than the agreement group answered "Strongly Agree" in our questionnaire.

5. Discussion

This chapter reflects on the research purpose stated in Chapter 1 - Introduction. Hence, we firstly reflect on general findings of the Swedish consumer on CEO/brand activism and compare those to existent research in the United States. Secondly, we provide a thorough discussion of the research questions presented in Chapter 2 - Literature Review. We ground this discussion on the empirical findings of the previous chapter in combination with the gathered theoretical knowledge presented in the literature review.

5.1 Reflecting on the general perception of Sweden versus the United States

In the first question, in the general perception of brand activism section, the participants were asked if they had heard or read about CEO's/brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues, where the vast majority answered yes (73%) (See Table 4.1). This is significantly higher than the results Weber Shandwick presented in their report "CEO Activism in 2018: The Purposeful CEO", where only 42% of the Americans who participated in the study indicated that they had encountered the phenomena, although, this is an increase from the 34% that answered "yes" back in 2016 (Weber Shandwick, 2018). Given the above, the Swedish consumer seems to have noticed more CEO/brand activism than their American counterpart. This result is peculiar as the phenomenon of socio-political brand activism largely encompasses American society (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). However, it has developed globally, and we did not specify the question of brand activism to occurrences on the Swedish market; therefore, the participants could have heard about brand activism happening in other countries.

When asking the Swedish consumers if they believe that CEO's and brands have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society 65.7% agreed with the statement, 20.8% disagreed, and 13.9% chose neither nor (See Figure 4.1). In comparison, Weber Shandwick (2018) results from asking the American consumers the very same question revealed a more polarized result as 39% agreed, 42% disagreed, and 19% were not sure. Our results show that the Swedish consumer is more accepting toward brand activism; they further believe that CEOs and brands have a responsibility to speak up on issues that are important to society.

Furthermore, regarding the question if the participants believe that CEO's and brands that speak out on hotly debated current issues influence the government, 69.59% of the Swedish consumers agreed in some level to the statement, 12.18% disagreed, and 18.26% answered neither nor (See Figure 4.2). Similarly, Weber Shandwick (2018) asked the same question, but the result showed that 48% of American consumers agreed and thought that it could influence the government in some sense, 18% disagreed and thought it would have no influence, and 34% neither agreed or disagreed as they stated that they 'don't know' or that 'it depends'. As can be seen, the Swedish consumers' perception of the influence that CEOs and brands have on the government is higher than the American consumers' perception.

Previously, our questions to the Swedish consumer asked them about their level of agreement regarding their belief of CEO's and brands having a responsibility toward society to speak up, and the believed level of influence brand activism has on the government. In addition to this, we wanted to identify the issues that the Swedish consumer considers of importance that CEO's and brands should express an opinion on, and consequently compare these issues to Weber Shandwick's (2018) results of the American consumers. First and foremost, the three most important issues for the Swedish consumer are climate change (74%), sexual harassment (61%), and equal pay in the workplace (61%) (See Figure 5.1 below). However, the results from the Swedish consumers could have potentially been higher since seven participants may have overlooked the fact that they could choose more than one issue. In similar fashion to the Swedish consumers, the participants in Weber Shandwick's (2018) study put equal pay in the workplace (79%), and sexual harassment (77%) in their top three issues they believe are important (See Figure 5.2 below). On the other hand, the Americans put job/skill training (80%) as the most critical issue, where the Swedish consumers placed issues pertaining to climate change the highest. Last but not least, the three issues that the Swedish consumer placed in the bottom were the legalization of marijuana (13%), nationalism (10%), and abortion (10%). Similarly, the American consumers chose these three issues as the least important for CEOs and brands to express an opinion on (See Figure 5.2 below). With this in mind, the issues that managers, business leaders, and brands in Sweden should consider speaking out on issues pertaining to climate change, sexual harassment, and equal pay in the workplace. Especially, speaking out on climate change as it is a hot topic in the Swedish media, with the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg being the front face in the battle against climate change.

When analyzing the data of the Swedish consumers' general perception of brand activism, and the issues they believe are the most important for business leaders to express an opinion on, along with, comparing it to the case of Ben & Jerry's support of the nine thousand young refugees, we can see that this issue is not as important as other issues for the Swedish consumer. In fact, only 27% of the participants stated that they wanted CEOs and brands to speak out on the issue. Moreover, out of the 18 issues the participants could choose from, immigration ended up on the lower half, more specifically, fourteenth place. Consequently, the stance Ben & Jerry's took might not have had as strong of an influence on the brand equity and purchase intent as if they would have chosen a stance on an issue that the Swedish consumers valued higher.

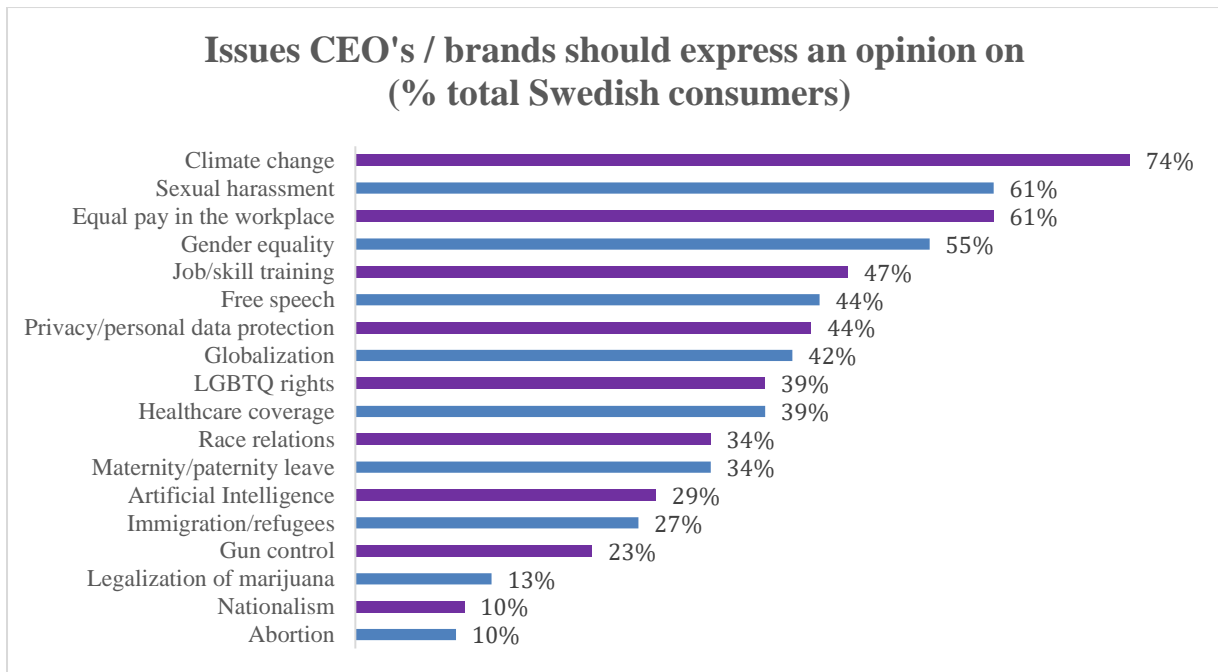


Figure 5.1 – Issues CEO's / brands should express an opinion on in Sweden

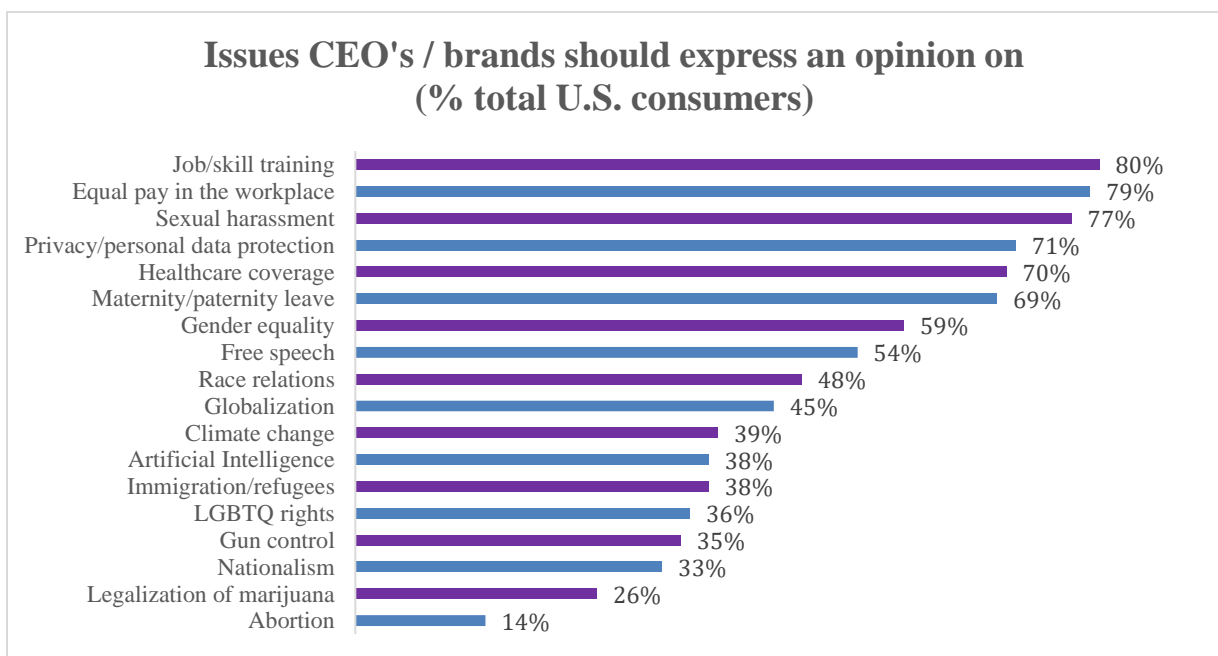


Figure 5.2 – Issues CEO's / brands should express an opinion on in the United States (adapted from Weber Shandwick, 2018)

Following, general purchase intent was measured through the questions "would you be more likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you agree with?" and "would you be less likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you disagree with?". The first question measured the likelihood of buying from a company that takes a stance that the participants agree with, 80% of the participants agreed that their purchase intent would increase if they agree with the stance of a company, in contrast, only 13.05% disagreed that they would be more likely to buy from the company. In comparison, 46% of the American

consumers in Weber Shandwick's (2018) study stated that they would be more likely to buy from a company whose CEO speaks out on hotly debated current issues they agree with. This result illustrates a critical insight for companies in Sweden which are inclined to speak out on current socio-political matters. As 80% stated that their purchase intent would increase if they agree with the stance taken, which is also proven in the empirical findings of the Ben & Jerry's stance regarding purchase intent of the agreement group (See Section 4.2.6 - Research Question 7: Purchase Intent). In addition, the next question regarding buying less if disagreeing with the stance of a CEO or brand, 70.44% of the Swedish consumers agreed with this statement (See Appendix C). With this in mind, Swedish business leaders have to be prepared to the fact that taking a stance involves high risks and high rewards, as our society is polarized, not all current consumers will agree with the position taken.

Apart from the above, the next question of the segment asked the participants if they would be more loyal to the company they work for if it would take a public position on a hotly debated issue. The participants of our questionnaire were more positive toward the idea of their employer taking a stance than their American counterpart, 52.17% stated that their loyalty would increase (See Appendix C), whereas 31% of the Americans stated the same (Weber Shandwick, 2018). This gives Swedish employers a clear indication that taking a stance will not only create good relationships with consumers but also with their employees, by creating more loyalty to the company.

5.2 Reflecting on the Research Questions

As stated in Section 1.2 – Problematization, existing research on CEO and brand activism mainly focuses on guidelines, roadmaps, and the risks and rewards for CEOs and brands taking a stance. It, therefore, lacks contributing to the influence taking a stance has on the brand itself in terms of the brand equity' dimensions. The predecessor of brand activism is corporate social responsibility or corporate societal marketing. Hoeffler and Keller (2002) introduced several propositions on how corporate societal marketing programs can build brand equity. Among those propositions were: (1) building brand awareness, (2) enhancing brand image, (3) establishing brand credibility, (4) evoking brand feelings, (5) creating a sense of brand community, and (6) eliciting brand engagement. These propositions motivated to research if CEO/brand activism, the natural evolution beyond CSR and CSM in a polarized society (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018), indeed positively affects brand equity.

5.2.1 Brand Awareness

The empirical findings show that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an increase in the brand awareness index compared to those who disagree. Brand awareness was measured through spontaneous awareness, top-of-mind awareness, and aided awareness

(Laurent, Kapferer & Roussel, 1995; Aaker 1996a; Lee & Leh 2011, Torelli, 2013) quantitatively. When reflecting on how we analyzed brand awareness, we would like to address a limitation with regards to the quantitative process. We measured brand awareness with the same technique as the other five dimensions, using multiple indicators on a seven-point Likert scale. We first presented the case of Ben & Jerry's and afterward asked them if their awareness increased in terms of the previously mentioned indicators. Hence, for brand awareness, open-ended questions, or a qualitative approach would have generated more accurate answers in terms of depth and breadth of brand awareness (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Moreover, Ben & Jerry's is already one of the most-known and leading ice cream companies in Europe, and therefore, it is questionable if brand awareness for such a company increases. Thence, it is interesting to analyze how a stance taken by a less known company influences the depth and breadth of brand awareness.

5.2.2 Brand Image

Empirical data showed that agreement to the stance leads to an increased brand image index, and disagreement leads to a non-increased brand image index. Moreover, the overall brand image of all our respondents increased for Ben & Jerry's. Hoeffler and Keller (2002) argue that it is important for brands to develop brand meaning, as well as what the brand represents and symbolizes in the eyes of the consumer. Brand image should conform to the nature of market activities the company engages in, and it should be easily understandable for consumers (Świtała, Gamrot, Reformat & Bilińska-Reformat, 2018). Furthermore, the brand should add meaning to the brand and the cause to be effective; hence it is important to align the core values of a company to the chosen cause (Chatterji & Toffel, 2018). Ben & Jerry's has a long history of standing up for refugees as they incorporated it in their core values. Hence, the Swedish respondents observed a perfect fit between the values of Ben & Jerry's and the issue of the nine thousand refugees. We argue that this is one of the main reasons speaking out on this issue truly leads to a significant increase in overall brand image. We also argue that companies addressing a cause that not aligns to their core values could potentially lead to a decrease in overall brand image, as consumers have a different image of what the brand represents and symbolizes compared to the issue. This is an interesting area for future research to examine how the fit between the company and the cause affects brand image.

5.2.3 Brand Credibility

Our findings demonstrate that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to an increased brand credibility index, whereas disagreement does not lead to an increase in brand credibility. Credibility relates to the believability of information incorporated in a brand in terms of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness (Keller & Aaker, 1998). Similarly to brand image, brand credibility is concerned with the perception that the brand already possesses in the consumers' mind. Brand credibility is affected by the marketing activities of

the past and present (Herbig & Milewicz, 1993). Hence, consumers apply their earlier knowledge of the company and its practices before judging if the stance they took is credible enough to believe, and not a marketing scheme to increase brand equity selflessly. Due to Ben & Jerry's high involvement in refugee issues, most respondents in the agreement group valued the issue they addressed credible enough to lead to an increase in the overall brand credibility. Thence, by the same token as brand image, we argue that companies addressing a particular socio-political issue should highly consider their past as well as the consumers' perception of their brand in order to effectively increase brand credibility, and consequently brand equity. As we neglected in the scope of our research, a thorough analysis of consumers' perception of image and credibility is of crucial importance.

5.2.4 Brand Feelings

Validated by our empirical findings, agreement to Ben & Jerry's stance on the nine thousand refugees in Sweden leads to increased overall brand feelings, whereas disagreement does not lead to an overall increase in brand feelings. Brand feelings were measured in terms of security, self-respect, and social approval. In the agreement group, Ben & Jerry's evoked significant positive brand feelings about the consumer themselves, and among the relationships they have with each other. Ben & Jerry's contributed to the agreement group by making consumers feeling part of something greater than merely purchasing their products. As presented in the empirical data, brand feelings are one of the dimensions with the highest polarized results, indicating that means between the agreement and disagreement group differed compellingly. The main reason for this is the disagreement group voting rather extreme toward "Strongly Disagree" resulting in low overall mean score for this group. Hence, when consumers disagree to the stance a company takes in a socio-political context, the feelings they possess about that company's brand will significantly decrease compared to the relative increase of consumers agreeing to the stance.

5.2.5 Brand Community

A brand community is identified as being based on social relationships between consumers of a brand which are not bound to a certain geographical area (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). We measured brand community in terms of identification, connection, and kinship. In contrast to the other brand equity dimensions, our findings showed that the stance does not increase overall brand community regarding both treatment groups. It can be argued that this is due to the Swedish consumers not feeling a sense of kinship (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005) with other people that are engaging with the brand of Ben & Jerry's and their products. Based on our analysis, Ben & Jerry's would not be considered a community brand in Sweden as the majority of the respondents, based on the stance, could not identify with others using the brand, furthermore, they did not feel a connection or sense of kinship with others who use the brand (See Appendix C). This can be verified from the data on both

the agreeing group, as well as the disagreeing group. However, the agreeing group scored a higher mean on the brand community index.

5.2.5 Brand Engagement

Brand engagement occurs when consumers go beyond purchasing and consumption of a brand by investing their time, money, and energy (Keller, 2013). A consumer can be actively engaged with a brand but not wanting to become a member of the brand community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Hence, brand engagement involves less involvement compared to brand community. Our findings showed that agreement to the stance leads to increased overall brand engagement, contrarily disagreement to the stance does not result in increased brand engagement. Similarly to the results of brand feelings, the results of the two treatment groups indicated a high level of polarization in the respondents' answers. In the case of Ben & Jerry's, consumers agreeing to the stance are truly motivated to invest their time, money, and energy in the brand, and likewise in the issue. Furthermore, the Swedish consumers that do agree with the statement are more likely to increase their engagement in, for example, the form of brand evangelism. However, the Swedish consumers that disagree with the statement could potentially participate in negative consumer engagement through boycotting and slandering (Weber Shandwick, 2018).

5.2.7 Overall Brand Equity & Purchase Intent

According to our findings, brand equity and purchase intent are significantly correlated, meaning that an increase in overall brand equity will lead to an increase in purchase intent. This shows consonance with previous research (Uthayakumar & Senthilnathan, 2012; Moradi & Zarei 2011; Lakshmi & Kavida, 2016), which already proven a positive relationship between brand equity and purchase intent. Moreover, the empirical results argue that agreement to the Ben & Jerry's stance leads to increased overall brand equity and thereupon increased purchase intent, whereas disagreement does not lead to overall increased brand equity and purchase intent. Although there is no increase prevalent in the total overall purchase intent of all respondents in the case of Ben & Jerry's, the average purchase intent of 80 out of the total of 115 increases, whereas on the other hand, the average purchase intent of only 35 respondents in the disagreement group does not increase. As a result, our research indicates that the choice of speaking out on the nine thousand refugees in Sweden resulted in beneficial outcomes for Ben & Jerry's in terms of increased brand equity, and increased purchase intent. However, there is a difference between an increase in purchase intent and an increase in purchase behavior. Therefore, we cannot draw grounded conclusions on the actual increase in sales of Ben & Jerry's products. We will further address this in Section 6.4 – Limitations and Future Research.

6. Conclusion and implications

This chapter entails the conclusion and implications of our research. We will discuss and answer the research questions we presented at the beginning of this study, and argue how the aim of this thesis is fulfilled. Furthermore, both the theoretical and managerial implications of the study are considered. Last but not least, we provide the limitations of our research together with potential future research destinations within the area of CEO/brand activism.

6.1 Conclusion

In the conclusion section, we provide a condensed answer to the research questions we introduced at the beginning of this paper. This thesis aimed to answer the following two main research questions:

What is the influence of CEO/brand activism on brand equity, and purchase intent in Sweden? What are the differences in the general perception, and purchase intent between Sweden and the United States?

CEO/brand activism was measured through Ben & Jerry's socio-political stance on the nine thousand young refugees in Sweden. Respondents agreeing or supporting Ben & Jerry's stance show a significant increase in their brand equity' dimensions. Brand awareness, brand image, brand credibility, brand feelings, and brand engagement all increased when Swedish consumers agreed to the stance. However, agreement to the stance does not lead to a higher brand community index, as discussed in Section 5.2.5 - Brand Community. Furthermore, according to our findings, brand equity and purchase intent are significantly correlated, meaning that an increase in overall brand equity will lead to an increase in purchase intent. Moreover, the results indicate that agreement to Ben & Jerry's stance leads to increased overall brand equity and thereupon increased purchase intent. Contrarily, disagreement to Ben & Jerry's stance does not lead to an increase in all brand equity dimensions, overall brand equity, and therefore purchase intent.

The Swedish consumers' general perception of brand activism is positive; the majority of the respondents believed that CEO's and brands have a responsibility to speak up on issues they deem important to society. Furthermore, they believe that brand activism influences the government, and therefore, can have a significant impact on society. The issues that are close to heart for the Swedish consumer, where they want CEOs and brands to speak up, are the issues related to climate change, sexual harassment, and equal pay in the workforce. Thus,

the Swedish consumer is more likely to buy from a company if they agree with the stance they have taken, this is seen as a type of boycott due to the increasing purchasing behavior as an expression for support of the stance. Also, they will buy less from a company if they disagree with the stance, which can, in extreme cases, lead to a full boycott of the company. Last but not least, more than half of the respondents stated that their loyalty toward their employer would increase if it would take a public position on hotly debated issues. Overall, the Swedish consumer expressed a more positive attitude to brand activism compared to their American counterpart. In conclusion, our research showed that in general Swedes are acceptive toward CEOs and brands taking a stance on socio-political issues. Therefore, we could ask ourselves why this phenomenon is not yet prevalent in Europe, and specifically in Sweden. We further reflect on this question in the theoretical contributions of this paper.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

We analyzed the influence of taking a socio-political stance on brand equity propositions that Hoeffler and Keller (2002) introduced in their paper on corporate societal marketing. In addition, earlier studies have measured the influence of CSR on brand equity (Guzmán and Davis, 2017), but the influence of brand activism on brand equity has never been measured, as well as, the impact it has on purchase intent. Moreover, we argue that CEO/brand activism is a natural evolution beyond current CSR and CSM practices. It is also viewed as a stronger approach than CSR since it especially partakes in controversial issues in polarized societies. Hence, we contributed to Hoeffler and Keller (2002) by both developing and examining part of their propositions. Moreover, this thesis aimed to function as a door-opener for future research and contribute to the emerging field of CEO and brand activism by linking it to brand equity.

We believe that the findings of our results have managed to contribute to the field of CEO and brand activism. Until now, research on the influence of CEO or brand activism was only performed in the context of the United States, making it non-generalizable and non-transferable to European settings. Furthermore, it lacks the possibility of cross-cultural comparisons in analyzing the influence of a particular stance. Hence, measuring the influence of CEO/brand activism in the Swedish national context enables cross-cultural comparisons between Sweden and the United States (Ghauri & Cateora, 2014), providing an international perspective to the phenomenon. As mentioned in Section 2.3 – CSR & Activism: North America vs. Europe (Sweden), the most compelling difference between CSR between the United States and Europe is due to the institutionalization of CSR in both continents. CSR in the United States has been embedded in a system which leaves more opportunity and incentive for corporations to take explicit responsibility, while CSR in Europe has been embedded in broader organizational systems of responsibility (Matten & Moon, 2008). Thence, CSR in the United States is more explicit, whereas its European counterpart is more implicit. However, CSR in Europe gradually became more explicit explained by new

institutionalism (Matten & Moon, 2008). The key argument here is that practices of companies change and become institutionalized because they are viewed as legitimate (Matten & Moon, 2008). This legitimization is caused by three different factors: coercive isomorphisms, mimetic processes, and normative pressures (Matten & Moon, 2008). In short, coercive isomorphisms refer to externally codified norms, laws or rules assigning legitimacy to new management practices, mimetic processes mean that managers tend to adopt practices if they are regarded as ‘best practice’ within their organizational fields, and normative pressures include third source isomorphic pressures in the form of educational and professional authorities. Hence, the organizational field the company exists in influences the corporation in how they form their corporate responsibility practice toward society. Arguably we contribute to Matten & Moon’s field of comparative CSR by analyzing its successor, namely CEO/brand activism in a comparative manner and therefore opening up to analyze the relationship between activist practices and institutionalism. Could it, for example, be that CEO’s and brands operating in Europe’s institutional environment expect other institutions rather than corporations to take the lead compared to CEO’s and brands existing in the United States? And in line with Matten and Moon (2008), whether different socio-political issues ask for different ways of effectively and efficiently addressing them in terms of explicit or implicit activism.

Furthermore, business is increasingly being called upon by consumers to take a stance on social concerns, especially by millennials (Gaither, Austin & Collins, 2018; Chatterji & Toffel, 2018; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018) characterized as progressive customers (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). The findings of this thesis contribute to previously mentioned research by highlighting the same results, namely, in general millennials have a positive perception toward CEO/brand activism. They believe and expect that CEOs and brand should, in this era, speak out on socio-political issues. This is where the phenomena of boycotting have been used by millennials to support brands they trust to shape the socio-political climate, and therefore entrusting crucial decisions to the marketplace (Winkler, 2018), in a sense, they are voting with their wallets. The results of our research showed an increase in purchase intent in the agreement group, and therefore Swedish consumers agreeing to a stance are to some extent inclined to boycott companies and brands that they agree with. In other words, they feel responsible for pushing their principles via the marketplace. Most studies regarding consumer responsibility view consumers as rational, autonomous, powerful agents who are able to exercise consumer behavior to realize certain positive societal outcomes (Caruana & Crane, 2008). Consequently, this applies to boycott behavior represented as a collective action to promote particular issues through withdrawal from the marketplace, hence consumer responsibility is an effective tool in order to achieve political outcomes or goals (Caruana & Crane, 2008). To take this one step further, we observe a shift from being a concerned citizen with democratic voting power to becoming a responsible consumer pushing their principles upon firms and corporations by exercising their monetary power. We can ask ourselves what influence this has on the traditional notions of democracy, where all votes are equally meaningful, or are we taking some significant steps back in time where the rich determine the political agenda?

6.3 Managerial Implications

From a managerial point of view, our findings show significant proof that speaking out on a socio-political issue in Sweden, and to an extent in Europe, positively influences your brand in terms of awareness, image, credibility, feelings, and engagement. Moreover, speaking out on an issue that most Swedish consumers agree with positively influences the purchase intent of those consumers. These findings can guide Swedish companies to make decisions on whether to speak out or not based on their target consumers. As shown, Swedish consumers are more acceptive toward companies speaking out on socio-political issues. As a matter of fact, they are even expecting companies to take responsibility on these issues. Therefore, it is advisable for managers to consider incorporating brand activist practices in their business portfolios to enhance overall brand equity, to increase purchase intent among consumers, and to strengthen the loyalty of their employees.

Furthermore, when business leaders are considering to engage in brand activism, it is of utmost importance to be prepared of the fact that it is a high risk, but it also offers high rewards if executed correctly. Therefore, it is necessary to understand which societal issues your customers find to be the most important, as for the Swedish consumer, these are climate change, sexual harassment, and equal pay in the workplace.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

This study is the first study in its kind analyzing the influence of CEO/brand activism on brand equity, and consequently on purchase intent. Moreover, it is the first study examining the general perception and purchase intent in terms of boycotting and buycotting in Sweden. As previously mentioned, our study mainly serves as a door-opener for future research, and therefore, there are several limitations to take into consideration.

The first limitation is the scope of our thesis. The comprehensiveness of the research questions, together with the usage of the six brand equity dimensions, resulted in trivial results. We used a maximum of four indicators per dimensions which is, although meeting the satisfactory minimum requirements, a limitation regarding the reliability of our study. Hence, there is a compelling need for future research to analyze the influence of taking a socio-political stance on each dimension individually to obtain a more in-depth understanding. Furthermore, we used an already proven activist company in Ben & Jerry's, where the stance they have taken perfectly aligns to their core values. Hence, respondents could have been more acceptive and positive toward the stance, knowing that it came from a company which they already had a positive image from. It would, therefore, be necessary for future research to replicate this study with a company that is to a lesser extent, or not at all,

socio-political active to analyze the consumer's attitudes toward the brand equity dimensions as well as purchase intent.

In addition, the secondary data we collected from Weber Shandwick and KRC Research (2018) report could be considered a limitation, as they conduct their research as consultancy firms which is bounded by generating profits and therefore not fully independent. However, they have consecutively conducted research in the field of CEO/brand activism every year since 2016, hence we consider them knowledgeable and reliable in this field. With this in mind, it opens up opportunities for future researchers to conduct comparative studies in other countries.

Another limitation is the non-probability sampling method we used, where not all individuals of the population have equal chances of being selected. Due to the use of convenience sampling, it is proven to be difficult to generalize the findings to the entire Swedish population or other contexts (Burns & Burns, 2008). Thence, to make the study generalizable to different populations and context, future research should replicate this study using a probability sampling method and obtaining a larger sample size, where all individuals in the population have equal chances of being selected (Burns & Burns, 2008). Additionally, Burns and Burns (2008) argue that a single case study cannot be generalized to different contexts. Hence, future research should measure different cases, or stances in a different context to improve the understanding and generalizability in the field of socio-political activism.

Furthermore, we analyzed the influence of CEO/brand activism on brand equity and purchase intent based on the consumer's support to the stance. Hence, we controlled for agreement or disagreement in our research. We would, therefore, welcome future research to control for different variables such as; the issue they address, they fit between the cause and the company, and the already perceived notion of brand image and brand credibility as highlighted in Section 5.2.2 - Brand Image and Section 5.2.3 - Brand Credibility.

Moreover, this research focused on purchase intent, which is different from actual purchase behavior. Thence, a destination for future research will be to analyze the relationship of socio-political activism on purchase behavior, which will result in more tangible results for companies in choosing whether or not to speak up on controversial socio-political topics.

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Appendix A

Online Questionnaire

Section 1 of 12

Brand Activism in Sweden

Thanks for taking the time to participate in this questionnaire about brand activism in Sweden

We are two students currently writing our master thesis at Lund University School of Economics and Management and we need your help! For this thesis, we do not receive any funding and the more respondents we get the better for our research.

Some short information before the survey begins: the questionnaire takes approximately 7 minutes to complete. All responses are completely anonymous and confidential. There are no wrong answers in this questionnaire. Please read the questions carefully before answering.

Thank you for participating,
Dennis Larsson and Jorg Burggraaf

Section 2 of 12

Demographics

1. I identify as:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
2. I am in the age between:
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-35
 - c. 36-45
 - d. 46-55
 - e. None of the above
3. Highest level of education:
 - a. Less than a high school diploma
 - b. High school diploma
 - c. Bachelor Degree
 - d. Master's Degree
 - e. Post-Doctoral Degree
4. What is your current occupation?
 - a. Student
 - b. Employed

- c. Self-employed
 - d. Unemployed
 - e. Parental leave
 - f. Other
5. I live in a ... :
- a. Village, less than 1.000 inhabitants
 - b. Town, 1.000 – 20.000 inhabitants
 - c. Large town, 20.000 – 100.000 inhabitants
 - d. City, 100.000+ inhabitants
6. My political views generally favor
- a. Left
 - b. Middle-left
 - c. Middle
 - d. Middle-right
 - e. Right

Section 3 of 12

Background to Brand Activism

Brand activism is when a company seeks to have an impact on a social, economic, environmental, or political problem. Companies might actively engage on behalf of an issue because it aligns with their core values and founder’s vision for the company, for good publicity, to help their businesses’ bottom line, or for any number of other reasons. In other words, brand activism enables brands and CEOs to take a stance on current controversial issues.

1. Have you heard/read about CEO’s/brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe

2. Do you believe that CEO’s and brand have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

3. Do you believe that CEO’s and brands that speak out on hotly debated current issues have an influence on the government?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

4. What issues do you believe brands/business leaders should express an opinion on?
(You can select more than one answer)

- a. Job/skill training
- b. Equal pay in the workplace
- c. Sexual harassment
- d. Privacy/personal data protection
- e. Healthcare coverage
- f. Maternity/paternity leave
- g. Gender equality
- h. Free speech
- i. Race relations
- j. Globalization
- k. Climate change
- l. Artificial intelligence
- m. Immigration/refugees
- n. LGBTQ rights
- o. Gun control
- p. Nationalism
- q. Legalization of marijuana
- r. Abortion

5. Would you be more likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you agree with?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

6. Would you be less likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you disagree with?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

7. Would you be more loyal to the company you work for if they take a public position on a hotly debated issues

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

Section 4 of 12

Background to Brand Activism

Ben & Jerry's decided to take a stance on the political debate in Sweden regarding 9000 young refugees. They created a "Refugee welcome" ice-cream to show their support of letting the refugees have a new opportunity to stay in Sweden. This led to Ben & Jerry's being both praised and criticized in various media for their campaign.

For additional information please refer to the article below:

Glassbolag ger sig in i flyktingdebatten – möter kritik

Publicerad 5 juni 2018

Ett välkänt glassföretag har återigen, med ett PR-grepp, gett sig in i den politiska debatten. På sin svenska sajt meddelar bolaget att man stödjer förslaget om att låta 9 000 ensamkommande möjlighet att stanna i Sverige. Bolaget har mött såväl hård kritik som hyllningar för kampanjen.

Tilltaget gjorde att varumärket Ben & Jerrys trendade [på Twitter](#) under förmiddagen. SD-riksdagsledamoten Paula Bieler lät snart meddela, via nämnda sociala medie-plattform, att hon bojkottar företaget.

Kritik [kommer](#) även från Göteborgs-Postens ledarskribent Jenny Sonesson:

"Är det ett skämt?! Ett glassföretag lägger sig i svensk migrationspolitik? Och är för en lag som sågats av Lagrådet? Absurt".

Centerpartiets kommunikationschef Ola Spännar [skriver att](#) det är "Modigt och smart av Ben & Jerry's. Finns så klart folk som blir förbannade, men B&J gör sin grej".

"Refugee welcome-glass"

Bakgrunden är det lagförslag från regeringen om att låta cirka 9 000 unga ensamkommande, som tidigare nekats asyl, få en ny chans till uppehållstillstånd. Lagen är tänkt att träda i kraft den 1 juli. Förslaget har bland annat mött hård kritik från Lagrådet och Polismyndigheten.

Glassbolaget Ben & Jerrys, som ägs av det multinationella jätteföretaget Unilever, har tidigare engagerat sig politiskt. På sin svenska hemsida redovisas att man driver kampanjer om allt från samkönade äktenskap, klimaträttvisa och flyktingar.

I flyktingdebatten lanserade glassbolaget 2017 bland annat med en "Refugees welcome"-glass.

Applåderar Ung i Sverige

"Tack vare outtröttligt arbete och engagemang från gräsrotsrörelser, som satt tryck på etablerade organisationer och beslutsfattarna, har det många trodde var omöjligt faktiskt blivit möjligt!" skriver glassbolaget på sin [webbsida](#).

Glassmakarna lyfter fram organisationen Ung i Sverige, med talesperonen Fatima Khavari, och skriver att de "gjort skillnad för att skapa medvind för unga ensamkommande."

1. Have you heard about the stance that Ben & Jerry's have taken in Sweden?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Regarding the stance Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden, I support the stance:

Strongly Disag... Disagree Slightly Disagr... Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

Section 5 of 12

Brand Awareness

Brand Awareness

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have no difficulty in imagining this brand in my mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can recognize this brand among competing brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand comes up first in my mind when I need to make a purchase decision on the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 6 of 12

Brand Image

Brand Image

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a favorable image of the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand is more attractive than competing brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand is different from competing brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a clear impression of the type of people who consume the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 7 of 12

Brand Credibility

Brand Credibility

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Ben & Jerry's has the ability to deliver what it promises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ben & Jerry's has a name that I can trust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ben & Jerry's is very attractive to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 8 of 12

Brand Feelings

Brand Feelings

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The brand produces a feeling of safety, comfort and self-assurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of being one of Ben & Jerry's supporters/customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others look favorably on my behavior, others approve of me using the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 9 of 12

Brand Community

Brand Community

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I really identify with others using this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a connection with others who use this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a sense of kinship with others who buy Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 10 of 12

Brand Engagement

Brand Engagement

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is worth spending more time on the brand (or going out of the way for it)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is worth investing extra effort on the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is worth spending more money on the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 11 of 12

Purchase intent

Purchase Intent

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would actively search for this brand in order to buy it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I intend to buy this brand in the near future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I refrain from using, buying or dealing with Ben & Jerry's as an expression of protest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I show support for Ben & Jerry's by intentionally buying its products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 12 of 12

End of the questionnaire

Brand Activism in Sweden

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey

BACK

SUBMIT

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Appendix B

Coding

Variable	Response Alternative	Coded
Segment 1: Demographics		
Gender	Male	1
	Female	2
	Other	3
Age	18-25	1
	26-35	2
	36-45	3
	46-55	4
Education	Less than a high school diploma	1
	High school diploma	2
	Bachelor Degree	3
	Master's Degree	4
	Post-Doctoral Degree	5
Current occupation	Student	1
	Employed	2
	Self-employed	3
	Unemployed	4
	Parental leave	5
	Other	6
Living situation	Village	1
	Town	2
	Large town	3
	City	4
Political view	Left	1
	Middle-left	2
	Middle	3
	Middle-right	4
	Right	5
Segment 2: General perception of brand activism		
Awareness of activism	Yes	1
	No	2
	Maybe	3
Section 3: Ben & Jerry's stance		
Awareness Ben & Jerry's stance	Yes	1
	No	2
Support toward stance	Strongly Disagree	1

	Disagree	2
	Slightly Disagree	3
	Slightly Agree	4
	Agree	5
	Strongly Agree	6
Section 4: Brand equity dimensions		
Q1-Q19	Strongly Disagree	1
	Disagree	2
	Slightly Disagree	3
	Neither Agree or Disagree	4
	Slightly Agree	5
	Agree	6
	Strongly Agree	7
Section 5: Purchase intent		
Q1-Q4	Strongly Disagree	1
	Disagree	2
	Slightly Disagree	3
	Neither Agree or Disagree	4
	Slightly Agree	5
	Agree	6
	Strongly Agree	7

Appendix C

SPSS Output

Section 1: Cronbach Alpha summarized

Brand Awareness

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.739	3	

Brand Image

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.769	4	

Brand Credibility

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.886	3	

Brand Feelings

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.881	3	

Brand Community

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.958	3	

Brand Engagement

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.930	3	

Purchase Intent

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.780	4	

Overall Brand Equity

Case Processing Summary		
Cases	N	%
Total	115	100
Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N	
.953	19	

Section 1: Cronbach Alpha SPSS output

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.739	.738	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [I have no difficulty in imagining this brand in my mind]	4.62	1.620	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [I can recognize this brand among competing brands]	5.04	1.672	115

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [This brand comes up first in my mind when I need to make a purchase decision on the product]	4.09	1.609	115
---	------	-------	-----

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [I have no difficulty in imagining this brand in my mind]	9.13	8.167	.540	.343
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [I can recognize this brand among competing brands]	8.70	7.052	.669	.450
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [This brand comes up first in my mind when I need to make a purchase decision on the product]	9.66	8.577	.490	.271

Item-Total Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [I have no difficulty in imagining this brand in my mind]	.681

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [I can recognize this brand among competing brands]	.522
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that... [This brand comes up first in my mind when I need to make a purchase decision on the product]	.736

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.769	.769	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I have a favorable image of the brand]	3.95	1.736	115

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand is more attractive than competing brands]	4.05	1.844	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand is different from competing brands]	5.02	1.606	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I have a clear impression of the type of people who consume the brand]	4.02	1.727	115

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I have a favorable image of the brand]	13.09	15.571	.709	.742
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand is more attractive than competing brands]	12.98	14.859	.706	.735
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand is different from competing brands]	12.02	17.140	.645	.418

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I have a clear impression of the type of people who consume the brand]	13.02	21.000	.273	.138
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Item-Total Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I have a favorable image of the brand]	.637
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand is more attractive than competing brands]	.634
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand is different from competing brands]	.678
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I have a clear impression of the type of people who consume the brand]	.858

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.886	.889	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's has the ability to deliver what it promises]	4.12	1.540	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's has a name that I can trust]	4.34	1.616	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's is very attractive to me]	4.11	1.805	115

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's has the ability to deliver what it promises]	8.45	10.460	.734	.603

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's has a name that I can trust]	8.23	9.076	.868	.754
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's is very attractive to me]	8.46	8.847	.748	.619

Item-Total Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's has the ability to deliver what it promises]	.877
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's has a name that I can trust]	.759
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Ben & Jerry's is very attractive to me]	.874

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.881	.881	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand produces a feeling of safety, comfort and self-assurance]	4.07	1.593	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I am proud of being one of Ben & Jerry's supporters/customers]	3.86	1.664	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Others look favorably on my behavior, others approve of me using the brand]	3.82	1.484	115

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand produces a feeling of safety, comfort and self-assurance]	7.68	8.290	.802	.658
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I am proud of being one of Ben & Jerry's supporters/customers]	7.89	7.926	.800	.657

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Others look favorably on my behavior, others approve of me using the brand]	7.93	9.486	.711	.506
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Item-Total Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [The brand produces a feeling of safety, comfort and self-assurance]	.800
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I am proud of being one of Ben & Jerry's supporters/customers]	.803
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [Others look favorably on my behavior, others approve of me using the brand]	.881

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.958	.958	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I really identify with others using this brand]	3.13	1.460	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I feel a connection with others who use this brand]	3.03	1.490	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I feel a sense of kinship with others who buy Ben & Jerry's]	3.07	1.526	115

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I really identify with others using this brand]	6.10	8.649	.896	.803
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I feel a connection with others who use this brand]	6.20	8.372	.915	.840
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I feel a sense of kinship with others who buy Ben & Jerry's]	6.16	8.133	.921	.850

Item-Total Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I really identify with others using this brand]	.948
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I feel a connection with others who use this brand]	.934
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I feel a sense of kinship with others who buy Ben & Jerry's]	.930

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.928	.930	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth spending more time on the brand (or going out of the way for it)]	3.62	1.620	115

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth investing extra effort on the brand]	3.67	1.800	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth spending more money on the brand]	3.76	1.904	115

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth spending more time on the brand (or going out of the way for it)]	7.43	12.510	.849	.748
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth investing extra effort on the brand]	7.37	10.973	.893	.804
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth spending more money on the brand]	7.29	10.873	.826	.691

Item-Total Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth spending more time on the brand (or going out of the way for it)]	.902

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth investing extra effort on the brand]	.861
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [It is worth spending more money on the brand]	.921

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.780	.781	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I would actively search for this brand in order to buy it]	3.25	1.680	115
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I intend to buy this brand in the near future]	3.69	1.847	115
Q7c Boycotting recoded	5.19	1.757	115

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I show support for Ben & Jerry's by intentionally buying its products]	3.38	1.735	115
---	------	-------	-----

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I would actively search for this brand in order to buy it]	12.26	16.809	.733	.716
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I intend to buy this brand in the near future]	11.83	15.408	.752	.681
Q7c Boycotting recoded	10.32	22.360	.258	.103
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I show support for Ben & Jerry's by intentionally buying its products]	12.13	17.202	.661	.504

Item-Total Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I would actively search for this brand in order to buy it]	.652
The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I intend to buy this brand in the near future]	.632
Q7c Boycotting recoded	.880

The refugee stance that Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden resulted in an increasing belief that: [I show support for Ben & Jerry's by intentionally buying its products]

.688

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	115	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	115	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.958	.958	23

Section 1: Demographics SPSS output

Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	71	61.7
	Female	44	38.3
	Total	115	100.0

Gender

		Frequency	Percent
	Male	71	61.7
	Female	44	38.3
	Total	115	100.0

I am in the age between:

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-25	47	40.9
	26-35	52	45.2
	36-45	7	6.1
	46-55	9	7.8
	Total	115	100.0

I am in the age between:

		Frequency	Percent
	18-25	47	40.9
	26-35	52	45.2
	36-45	7	6.1
	46-55	9	7.8
	Total	115	100.0

Highest level of education:

	Frequency	Percent
Less Than High School Diploma	4	3.5
High School Diploma	38	33.0
Bachelor's Degree	49	42.6
Master's Degree	24	20.9
Total	115	100.0

What is your current occupation?

	Frequency	Percent
Student	44	38.3
Employed	59	51.3
Self-Employed	8	7.0
Unemployed	2	1.7
Other	2	1.7

Total	115	100.0
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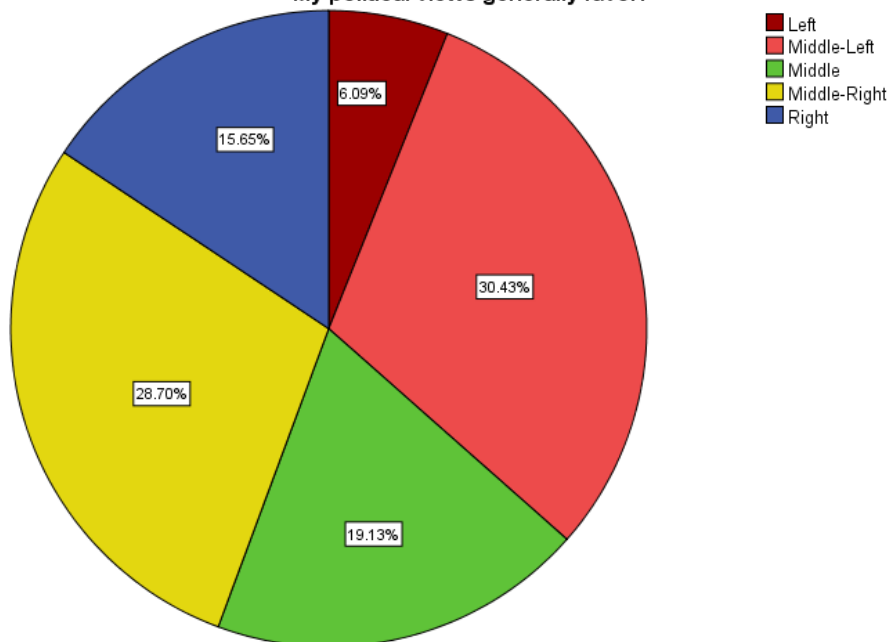
I live in a ...

	Frequency	Percent
Village	5	4.3
Town	14	12.2
Large Town	48	41.7
City	48	41.7
Total	115	100.0

My political views generally favor:

	Frequency	Percent
Left	7	6.1
Middle-Left	35	30.4
Middle	22	19.1
Middle-Right	33	28.7
Right	18	15.7
Total	115	100.0

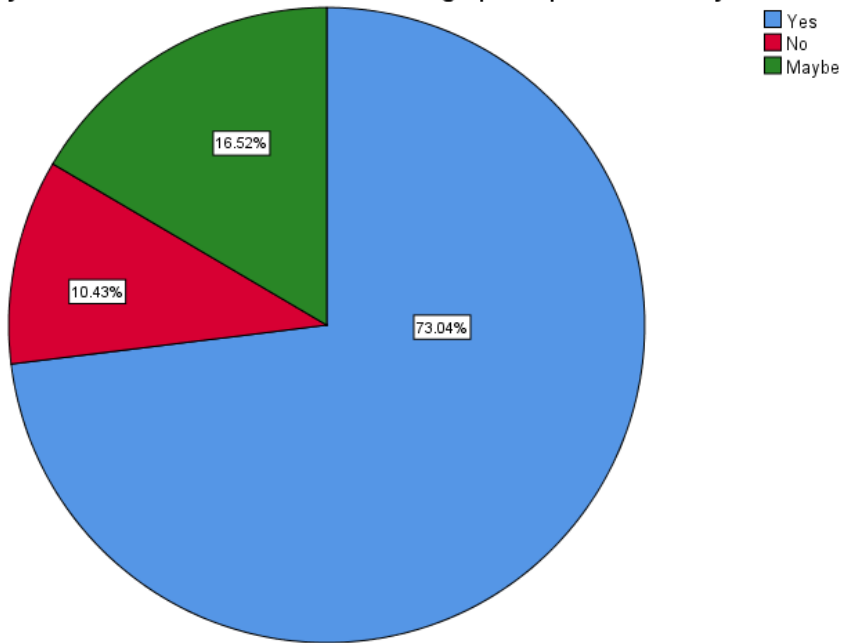
My political views generally favor:



Have you heard/read about CEO's/brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	73.0
No	12	10.4
Maybe	19	16.5
Total	115	100.0

Have you heard/read about CEO's/brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues?



Have you heard/read about CEO's/brands taking a public position on hotly debated current issues?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	73.0
No	12	10.4
Maybe	19	16.5
Total	115	100.0

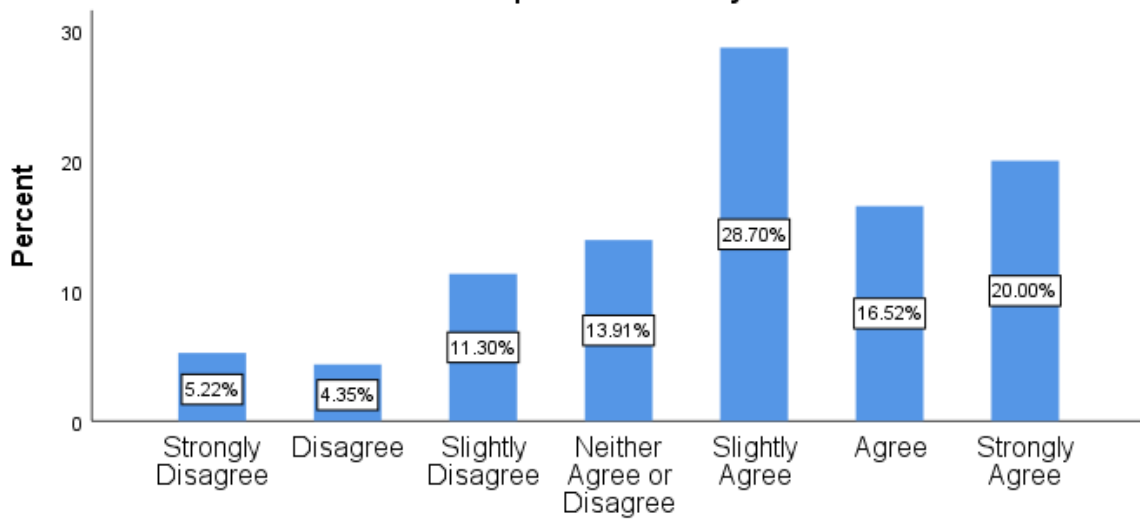
Do you believe that CEO's and brands have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	5.2
Disagree	5	4.3

Slightly Disagree	13	11.3
Neither Agree or Disagree	16	13.9
Slightly Agree	33	28.7
Agree	19	16.5
Strongly Agree	23	20.0
Total	115	100.0

Title

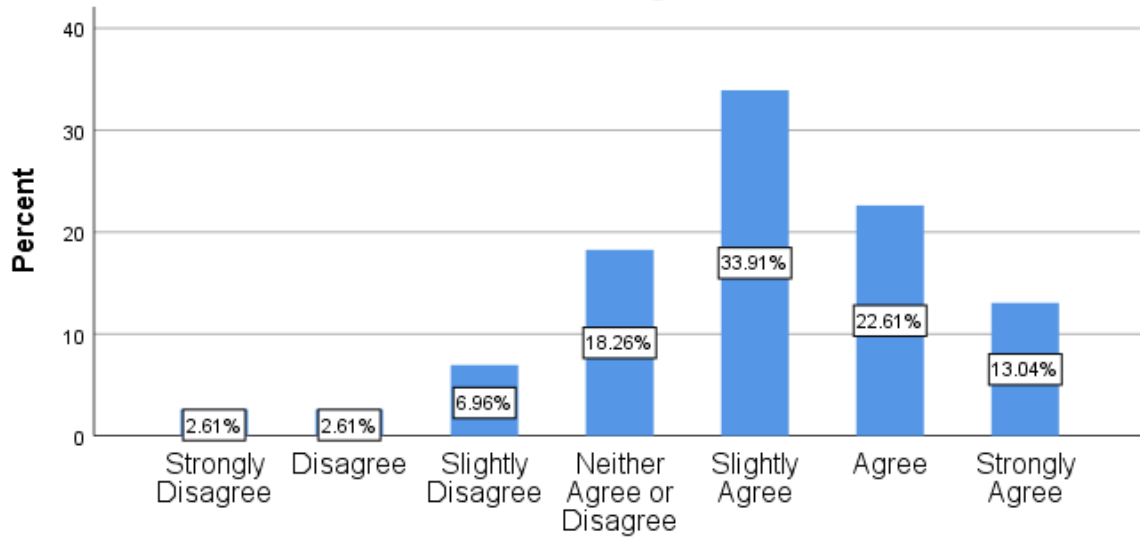
Do you believe that CEO's and brands have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society?



Do you believe that CEO's and brands that speak out on hotly debated current issues have an influence on the government?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	2.6
Disagree	3	2.6
Slightly Disagree	8	7.0
Neither Agree or Disagree	21	18.3
Slightly Agree	39	33.9
Agree	26	22.6
Strongly Agree	15	13.0
Total	115	100.0

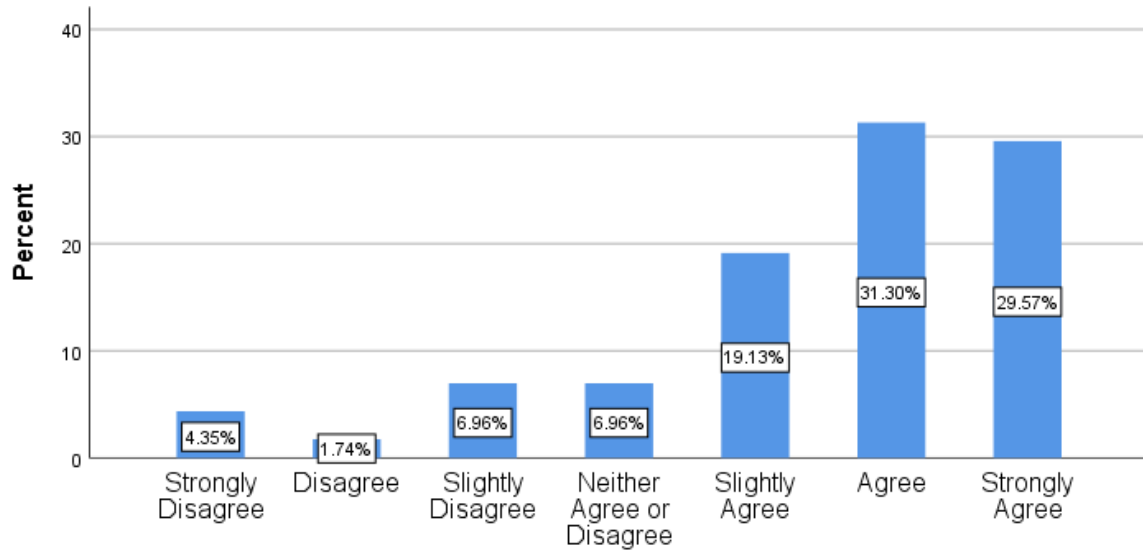
Do you believe that CEO's and brands that speak out on hotly debated current issues have an influence on the government?



Would you be more likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you agree with?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	4.3
Disagree	2	1.7
Slightly Disagree	8	7.0
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	7.0
Slightly Agree	22	19.1
Agree	36	31.3
Strongly Agree	34	29.6
Total	115	100.0

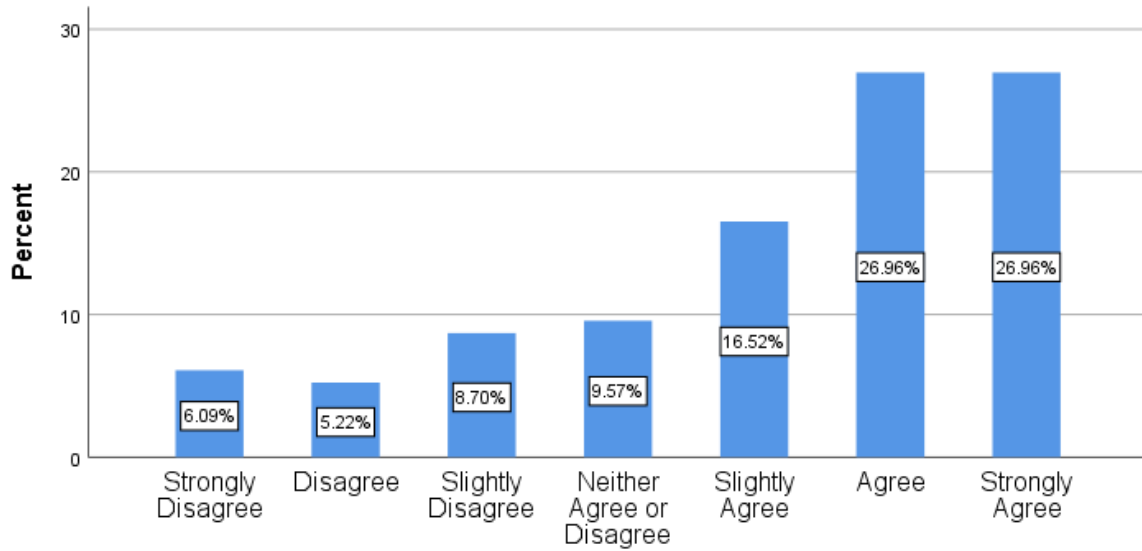
Would you be more likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you agree with?



Would you be less likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you disagree with?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	6.1
Disagree	6	5.2
Slightly Disagree	10	8.7
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	9.6
Slightly Agree	19	16.5
Agree	31	27.0
Strongly Agree	31	27.0
Total	115	100.0

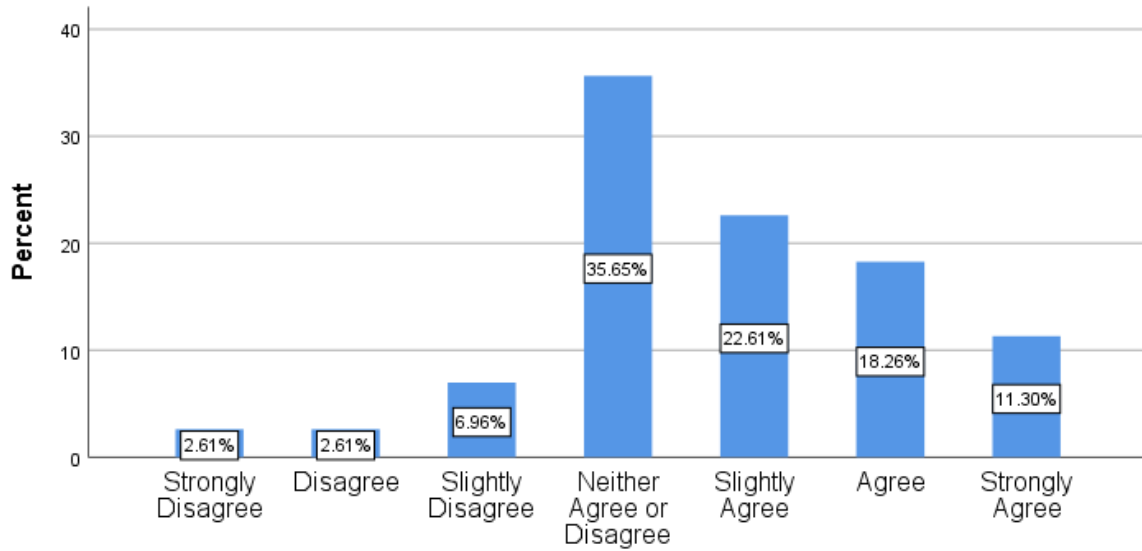
Would you be less likely to buy from a brand when they have taken a stance that you disagree with?



Would you be more loyal to the company you work for if they take a public position on hotly debated issues?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	2.6
Disagree	3	2.6
Slightly Disagree	8	7.0
Neither Agree or Disagree	41	35.7
Slightly Agree	26	22.6
Agree	21	18.3
Strongly Agree	13	11.3
Total	115	100.0

Would you be more loyal to the company you work for if they take a public position on hotly debated issues?



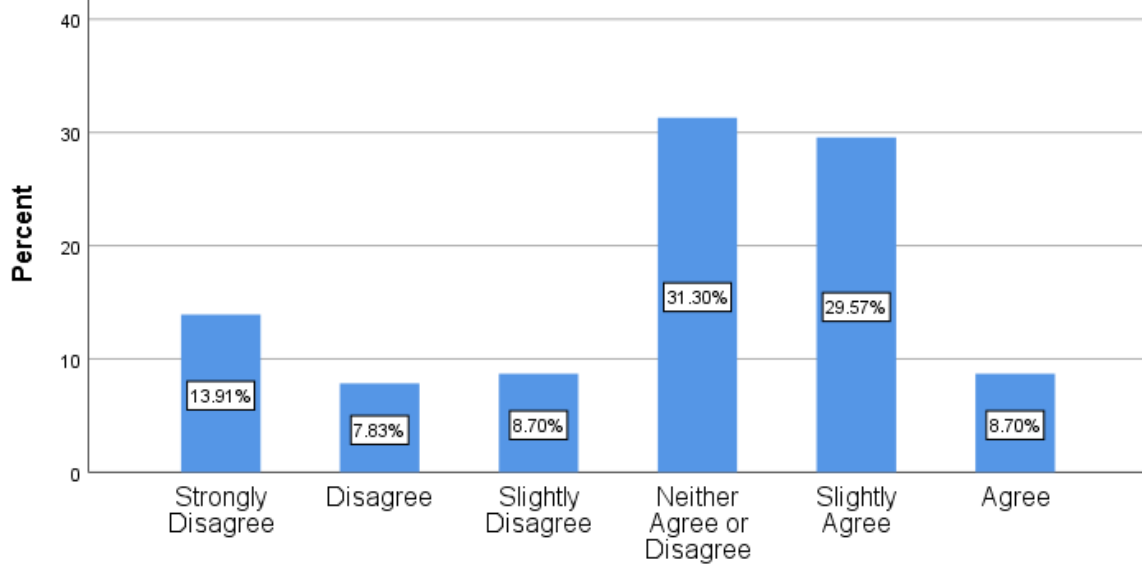
Have you heard about the stance that Ben & Jerry's have taken in Sweden?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	27.8
No	83	72.2
Total	115	100.0

Regarding the stance Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden [I support the stance they took]

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	16	13.9
Disagree	9	7.8
Slightly Disagree	10	8.7
Neither Agree or Disagree	36	31.3
Slightly Agree	34	29.6
Agree	10	8.7
Total	115	100.0

Regarding the stance Ben & Jerry's took in Sweden [I support the stance they took]



Section 3: ANOVA SPSS output

Descriptives

Awareness

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disagree	35	3.85	1.440	.243	3.35	4.34	1	7
Agree	80	4.90	1.138	.127	4.65	5.16	2	7
Total	115	4.58	1.324	.124	4.34	4.83	1	7

ANOVA

Awareness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	27.179	1	27.179	17.775	.000
Within Groups	172.786	113	1.529		
Total	199.965	114			

Descriptives

Image

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disagree	35	3.09	1.113	.188	2.70	3.47	1	5
Agree	80	4.77	1.069	.120	4.53	5.01	2	7
Total	115	4.26	1.330	.124	4.01	4.50	1	7

ANOVA

Image

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	69.224	1	69.224	59.085	.000
Within Groups	132.392	113	1.172		
Total	201.616	114			

Descriptives

Credibility

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disagree	35	2.95	1.564	.264	2.42	3.49	1	6
Agree	80	4.73	1.095	.122	4.49	4.98	2	7
Total	115	4.19	1.496	.140	3.91	4.47	1	7

ANOVA

Credibility

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	77.226	1	77.226	49.054	.000
Within Groups	177.898	113	1.574		
Total	255.125	114			

Descriptives

Feelings

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disagree	35	2.80	1.458	.246	2.30	3.30	1	6
Agree	80	4.40	1.099	.123	4.16	4.65	1	7
Total	115	3.92	1.422	.133	3.65	4.18	1	7

ANOVA

Feelings

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	62.655	1	62.655	42.205	.000
Within Groups	167.754	113	1.485		
Total	230.410	114			

Descriptives

Community

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disagree	35	2.21	1.419	.240	1.72	2.70	1	5
Agree	80	3.45	1.272	.142	3.17	3.74	1	7
Total	115	3.08	1.433	.134	2.81	3.34	1	7

ANOVA

Community

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	37.718	1	37.718	21.713	.000
Within Groups	196.295	113	1.737		
Total	234.014	114			

Descriptives

Engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disagree	35	2.29	1.449	.245	1.79	2.78	1	6
Agree	80	4.29	1.358	.152	3.99	4.59	1	7
Total	115	3.68	1.662	.155	3.37	3.99	1	7

ANOVA

Engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	97.972	1	97.972	51.017	.000
Within Groups	217.004	113	1.920		
Total	314.976	114			

Descriptives

Purchase

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disagree	35	2.64	1.128	.191	2.26	3.03	1	5
Agree	80	4.42	1.078	.120	4.18	4.66	2	7
Total	115	3.88	1.363	.127	3.63	4.13	1	7

ANOVA

Purchase

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	76.788	1	76.788	64.271	.000
Within Groups	135.008	113	1.195		
Total	211.796	114			

Section 3: Pearson Correlation SPSS output

Correlations

		Brand_Equity	Purchase
Brand_Equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.668**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
Purchase	Pearson Correlation	.668**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Brand_Equity	Purchase
Brand_Equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.727**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80
Purchase	Pearson Correlation	.727**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Section 3: Compare means Brand equity & Purchase intent SPSS output

Case Processing Summary

	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Brand_Equity * SS_Group	115	100.0%	0	0.0%	115	100.0%
Purchase * SS_Group	115	100.0%	0	0.0%	115	100.0%

Report

SS_Group		Brand_Equity	Purchase
Disagree	Mean	2.86	2.64
	N	35	35
	Std. Deviation	1.113	1.128
Agree	Mean	4.43	4.42
	N	80	80
	Std. Deviation	.922	1.078
Total	Mean	3.95	3.88
	N	115	115
	Std. Deviation	1.217	1.363