TRUST IN BRAND ACTIVISM: A look at self-love campaigns of beauty brands

NGOC BAO TRAN NGUYEN

Lund University
Department of strategic communication
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Abstract

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In recent years, brand activism has been mentioned as a new evolution in corporate sociopolitical involvement. From the customers' perspective, they expect brands to be more vocal and take a stance to tackle challenges. They do not want neutral brands anymore. However, in the rising trend of brands becoming activists, the debates of "trustwashing" also arise. Most existing research regard of brand activism mentioned this issue but there is a gap in understanding the problem from customers' insight. On the balance between messages and actions, what can increase the trust of customers in brand activism campaigns is still a gap to be studied. By adopting the theory of the Elaboration Likelihood Model by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) and research on brand trust, this research conceptualises a new model with more predictors for trust in brand activism. The purpose is to investigate which factors can affect customers' beliefs about brand activism. An online survey was conducted to ask female respondents to evaluate the self-love campaigns of two popular beauty brands: Dove and The Body Shop. Through calculating and analysing the opinions of 238 females, the research comes to a conclusion that the argument strength of brand activism messages is the most important element influencing customers' trust with brand activism campaigns. It contributes to the brand activism literature by examining the phenomenon from a new aspect with empirical results.

Keywords: brand activism, brand trust, activism campaign, beauty brands, controlled communication, argument strength, activism activities

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I. Introduction

This chapter introduces the background information and gives a statement of the problem in research. Then the purpose of the study and research questions is presented. There is also a section depicting the relevance of the study to the field Strategic Communication, followed by the delimitations part.

1.1 Background and Problem

In the contemporary world, the brand goes deeply into the cognition of consumers. Scholars have discussed brand and its impact on changing and shaping people's minds and behaviours, leading to changes in culture, politics and society. If we mention a brand, in our basic intuitive and subconscious mind, it is often associated with the tangible existence of a name, logo, or visual design materials like unique features or distinctive packaging. Coca-Cola has red package designs, Nike's logo is a swoosh, and "I'm buying McDonald's" means that you are buying a specific kind of fast food. They are the simplest forms of a brand. Going beyond surfaced expressions such as a logo or design, the brand is described as a complex social phenomenon that makes the commodity more personally connected with consumers (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p.4).

Acknowledging their influence on the consumers' mindset and decisions, brands adopt sociopolitical vision into their business strategy and deliver it to the consumers under multiple marketing and product consumption formats. Those societal aspects involved in the brand's model become a part of the brand's core value, which is not just focused on driving sales but instead on supporting the promise of the brand to its consumers, evoking their feeling and building a relationship (Urde, 2009). It is also a means for brands to identify themselves among countless names popping up in the modern market (Jones, 2017). IKEA prides itself on the vision of providing you with affordable home furnishing "to create a better everyday life for the many people". Beauty brand Innisfree sell nature skin-care products with an aim to "work in harmony with the environment; creating natural skin-caring products from the island, while still helping to preserve it". To put it in another way, brands are not simply selling a product and its function but also exchanging the meaning of the product (Jones, 2017).

Notwithstanding perceiving brands through what it promotes themselves, consumers are also involved in shaping the value that brands pursue. Today, in a global trust crisis, those progressive consumers like Millennials and Gen Z are demanding corporates and businesses make the world differently through real actions facing social issues (Sarkar & Kotler, 2021). 66% of consumers in a research conducted by Sprout Social (2017) want the brand to take stands on important issues and their credibility for that brand rise if they see the brand voice out about the issues on social media platforms. The survey also shows that consumers believe that it is important for brands to stand for labour law, LGBTQ+ rights, gender equality, poverty, human rights, race relations, education and the environment. A study by Cone Communications in 2017 also has a similar pattern in the result. 87% of respondents said that their purchase of a product is affected by the way a company advocated for a sociopolitical issue that the consumers believe, and 76% of them were ready to boycott the company if they found out their belief was betrayed. In the Accenture Strategy's global research in 2019, it is pointed out that consumers are increasingly interested in brand activism, as 47% of responders will be willing to switch to another brand if they feel unhappy with the social and political stance that a brand chose.

Companies made efforts to contribute to society under the concept of CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility and CRM - Caused-Related Marketing in which they use social issues for marketing purposes (Yoo et al., 2021; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Social marketing is also a concept that corporates and businesses apply. It is defined as a marketing method to advance the change in behaviour and attitudes (Spotswood et al., 2012) for the common social goods (Carvalho & Mazzon, 2015; Casais & Pereira, 2020). It includes different communications and marketing techniques to provide information, thus persuading consumers to adopt social changes (Casais & Pereira, 2020). Brand activism is a newly evolved format of brands in the process of connecting with consumers through social aspects. Adopting brand activism into the strategy requires brands to be more proactive and committed to their sociopolitical stance. While CSR, CRM or social marketing are marketing approaches to social issues, brand activism is more considered as an approach that starts from the root of social issues and in which the brand will take a stand and even alienate some group of consumers to address the issue, actualise their ideal and commitment to the social motto (Yoo et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). However, in the rising trend of brand activism, if the consumers think that the brand is not authentic and truthful in their activism, it results in boycotts, backlash or the credibility of the brand going down (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Mirzaei, 2022). On the one

hand, consumers demand and love to see brands involve in addressing the challenge of society. On the other hand, they are sceptical about it. In the context of a highly competitive environment, consumers are said not only to have a greater knowledge of the market but also simultaneously have a wide range of choices regarding products and services, which leads to their careful evaluation of brands advertisements (Raziq et al., 2018).

The problem in the focus of this thesis consists of the lack of understanding of the consumers' perspective on brand activism. In a world where consumers are more progressive and savvy with perceived information, how impactful brands can be in shaping consumers' cognition and awareness of social changes? With a closer look at the beauty industry, it is noteworthy to attain more knowledge about customers' attitudes towards brands' commitment to empowering their consumers. Brands run campaigns and projects annually and present themselves as activists on the front line with consumers to address social norms on gender equality. Brand activism is an emerging research field and an in-demand shift in the market; however, recent studies mostly address the phenomena from the theoretical perspective (Key et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020) or conduct descriptive analyses on brand activism campaign case studies and discuss suggestions for companies to develop brand activism (Yoo et al., 2020; Koch, 2020). Therefore, there is a need to explore comprehensively brand activism campaigns to see through the lens of consumers, how they evaluate the effectiveness of brands' efforts in social activism and which factors contribute to their trust in brands' promise to change the status quo.

1.2. Purpose of the study

This research's aim is to study brand activism as a strategy that companies commit to the sociopolitical causes in both tangible and intangible ways (Vredenburg et al., 2020). While the brand activism literature has indicated the vital role of messages and practices in companies' prosocial strategies and implementation, there is limited information on whether consumers consider these dimensions when they are displayed in the activism efforts of brands.

Linked to the global context of trust issues and advertisement scepticism, this study investigates the consumers' awareness of both messages and practices to see if they trust the brand and their involvement in social activism. Therefore, this study will fill a gap within the theory of brand activism, by examining what elements can affect the trust of consumers with brand activism campaigns in the chaos of trust and the rise of brand activism adoption.

1.3. Research Question

In the past analysis and arguments about brand activism and brand trust and utilising Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), there will be four factors to be argued to formulate the hypothesis, including the favourability of messages, argument strength of brand messages, continuity of brand activism activities and the credibility of brand activism activities. The purpose is to find out which factors have contributed to the increase in consumers' brand trust in activism and which of these have been most influential.

The research question expected to be answered with this analysis is as follows:

RQ: Which factor has contributed to brand trust in brand activism efforts?

1.4. Relevance of the study to the field of Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is an emerging interdisciplinary field that can be understood as the conscious efforts of organisations in communications to fulfil their goals (Falkheimer & Heide, 2018). From the perspective of the field, communication should not just be simply considered as an information publicising tool to perform its function. Rather than that, communication participated in building relationships with people. Considering the rising of brands as an evolved form of soft power in today's society, strategic communication can offer explanations and solutions for brand management. It is argued that brands turned faceless consumption into personal and emotional experiences; thus, corporates and organisations should not be anonymous anymore (Kornberger, 2010). Brands are now interpreted by their function and the people's perception of them.

This analysis approach to the process of how people form a perception about a brand and from that a customer-brand relationship is developed. It will shed light on observing brand communication as an effort with long-term goals and meaningful values. In a world with clear polarisation in politics, society and economy, brand activism emerged as an evolved form of corporate responsibility. It is indeed to explore the perception of this phenomenon and how the relationship with the brand can be influenced by the concept. Overall, the study will contribute to the understanding of brand, and since strategic communication is connected with the brand, it will also be a contribution to the strategic communication literature.

1.5. Delimitations

Brand activism is a new growing field in research; therefore, there might be a lack of direct and concrete arguments on this topic. Among many aspects of brand relationship, this study will focus only on brand trust through the lens of activism. Trust is broadly defined in various disciplines including psychology, sociology, marketing and political science. This research will approach the concept of cognitive brand trust presented by Johnson & Grayson (2005).

II. Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of previous research to define key concepts and dilemmas of brand activism and how it is considered by brands and experts as a new evolution. By presenting a comprehensive analysis, the section gains a better understanding of the exploration of consumers' mindset on brand activism. Since consumers are said to be more sceptical about brand activities, the concept of brand trust is clarified. A number of relevant theories are also discussed to argue for their contributions to brand trust.

2.1. Brand Activism

2.1.1. Brand activism as a new evolution

While activism has been mentioned in various research and areas before, brand activism is a new concept in marketing literature in a recent period of time. However, its potential for driving social changes is emphasised by many. It is described as a prominent strategy that more and more brands adopt.

Sarkar & Kotler (2018) are one of the first scholars who developed and conceptualised the definition of "brand activism" in their book "Brand Activism: From Purpose to Action". In the book, the authors compiled and gave a working definition of the concept as a combination of multiple aspects in business efforts to promote, obstruct, reform or against sociopolitical issues with a goal of promoting or impeding improvement in society (Sarker & Kotler, 2018, p.24). This definition is widely used and developed in research about brand activism lately, in which scholars support the concept of distinguishing between brand activism and other known forms of social engagement and involvement from business such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Cause-Related Marketing (CRM), Corporate Philanthropy and so on. It is called a natural evolved format or shift from past forms that are mainly marketing-driven and corporate-driven, while brand activism is value-driven (Yoo et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).

The top reason why brand activism is considered an evolution is that the concept is developed on the fundamental concern for the most urgent issues that the world is facing, which can be listed as environment, inequality and discrimination, and politics (Vredenburg et al., 2020;

Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Tackling those problems is believed to contribute to the changing humans' living environment and conditions.

Brand activism is not only about which messages the brands want to convey but also about what they do to actualise their sociopolitical ideal (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). It is emphasised by scholars that going beyond rhetoric advocacy with messages and advertising, brand activism consists of aligned actions to fight's social injustice (Yoo et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020). The difference between the phenomena and previous social engagements by brands such as CSR is that firms contribute and create social change through messages and practices (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Brands commit to values, and they implement their activism mission through products, campaigns and projects both short and long term.

If CSR is described as focusing on beneficial actions to major of society and their consequences on companies' reputation and sales (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Wettstein & Baur, 2015), brand activism is highlighted by its non-neutral stance on sociopolitical issues (Yoo et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Taking a stance means brands are willing to alienate some groups of consumers to prove their sociopolitical viewpoints, and that their messages and practices will support their ideal (Vredenburg, 2020; Moorman 2020; Wettstein & Baur; 2015). The strong move of taking a side and rooting for it in brand activism is believed to be the next logical step for companies, and if it fits the consumers' expectations, it boosts the brand's reputation and profits (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). The vast majority of data shows a significant increase in profit after brands take activist actions in which they pursue a specific stance. It is reported that Nike's stock had risen over 18 percent in 14 months after the brand endorsed Conlin Kaepernick in the "Just Do It" campaign as a part of their anti-discrimination and anti-racism movement (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). The company was also complimented as "courageous" in taking a stand (Creswell et al., 2018). The success of this activism action is that Nike showed their strong declaration in choosing Kaepernick even when they received the backlash at first (Bella, 2018). The slogan displayed in the "Just Do It" advertisement represents the spirit of brand activism as said in numerous research: "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything".

Scholars also developed models and typologies of brand activists. Vredenburg et al. (2020) introduce 04 types of brand activism including silent brand activism, authentic brand activism, absence of brand activism, and inauthentic brand activism. By measuring two dimensions in

brand activism activities, activist marketing messages and prosocial corporate practice, authentic brand activism is defined as a brand with high quality in both messages and practice.

The theoretical discussions over recent years have built a clear overview of brand activism as an evolved social engagement by brands and businesses. Primarily, the concept of brand activism is established separately from previous businesses' social involvement actions. There existed fundamentally theory-driven models to classify brands into different categories of activism (Vradenburg et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020; Sarker & Kotler, 2018). Empirical studies applying these theoretical frameworks can help to enhance the literature on the brand activism area.

2.1.2. Consumers' Response to brand activism

In researching brand activism, consumers' response to the phenomenon is at the centre. Data provides insights that consumers expect brands to take actions to change the world (Edelman, 2019; Accenture Strategy, 2018; Sprout Social, 2017). Taking a stand in the current global context can help brands gain trust, and despite the risk of alienating a group of consumers, researchers, marketers, and even CEOs argued that it does help to gain rewards for brands (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Sarkar & Kotler (2018) say that adopting brand activism is not necessarily progressive, but it can be aggressive as well. However, the sociopolitical stance of brands and how they perform can affect their business returns and brand equity in many ways. The authors critique that progressive brand activism fills in the value gap that we need and by this, they differentiate themselves from businesses across the world. Progressive brand activism promotes and actively pursues the policies to support the common goods, which can be understood as the benefits for the whole community. Romani et al. (2015) also emphasised that the empathy feeling contributed to how the consumer responds to the brand activism action. The research suggested that firms should segment the consumers on an empathy level to develop suitable strategies to minimise the negative effects of anti-brand activism - the term associated with negative perceptions of corporations.

Before the widespread use of the term brand activism, experts discussed the meaning of boycotting action against a brand in sociopolitical issues. Simon (2011) pointed out that when the government institutions seemed to be less effective than corporates in giving solutions to emerging issues over the past decade, it created the realm of purchasing to express political

concerns among citizens. To consumers, boycotting and stopping buying or supporting corporates was an easier and inexpensive way they can do, and they thought that it showed their power to influence on a macro level. The author said that brands attempted to fill in the void left to meet the consumers' expectations by showing their sociopolitical stand, but this also made them more vulnerable to political attack (Simon, 2011, p. 147).

Mukherjee & Althuizen (2020) implemented a series of research studies to explore how consumers perceived brand activism in the case consumers disagreed with the brand's stand on sociopolitical issues. The empirical studies showed that when consumers and the brands are opposite in the sociopolitical stand, the brand activism act can negatively affect the consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviours toward brands. The research concluded that if the consumers share the same viewpoint with the brand on sociopolitical issues, there is no significant difference in changing behaviours. Besides, it also provides a newly insightful challenge to what we have known about brand activism from the perspective of consumers. While practical reports and previous studies tend to suggest that consumers want brands to take activism and they are cynical with the term "woke washing" (Vradenburg et al., 2020; Edelman, 2019; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020), a recent study showed a new finding that consumers might not really be impressed with brand activism if it is not the case that their core belief is provoked (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). In other words, if consumers do not find the brand activism actions relevant to themself, they also do not find an urge to evaluate it. The authors also pointed out the limitations of the study, being it investigated consumers' perceptions of a single activism action in a short period of time. It came to a suggestion that there needs to be more exploration of brand activism in the long term to see how the regular enactment of activism can have positive effects on consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviours.

Whilter (2021) also shared a similar opinion when arguing about the way marketers approach brand activism studies. The author discussed that if consumers were asked whether a brand should take action against emerging issues like the environment, gender inequality, or racial injustice, most consumers would say that the brand should play a role in solving the causes. However, the gap in this investigation is that consumers might not have the same priority on the issues. They might expect different brands involved in tackling challenges that are closely related to corresponding industries or specific types of products.

To the best of my knowledge, prior research mostly illuminated consumers' viewpoints by asking them about specific activism activities while neglecting factors like long-term consciousness about brands. When being exposed to a brand activism campaign, the consumers might have a general evaluation connecting with their past experience with the brand; thus, it can contribute to their trust in activism. This approach remains briefly addressed in the literature. On this base, my research will explore consumers' response to brand activism on both two important aspects of the phenomenon: action and messages, combined with asking them about their awareness and experience with the continuity and credibility of brand activism in general.

2.2 Brand Trust

Studies of brand trust are well documented, and it is also well acknowledged that trust is a fundamental component in any social interaction (Portal et al., 2018). Brand trust is defined as the consumer's confident beliefs of relying on a brand's promises (Augustin & Singh, 2005) or the willingness of customers in the brand's ability to perform its function (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001) as well as its reliability and integrity (Xie et al., 2014). Brand trust can be conceptualised as the reliance or the feeling of security (Munuera-Aleman et al., 2003) that consumers have on the brand, which is based and enhanced on the perceptions that the brand will complete its promised mission and vision.

In marketing research, due to the growing of forming connections between brands and consumers, it is highly agreed among scholars that trust in the brand can have a significant impact on multiple aspects of consumer-brand relationships (CBR) including the consumption behaviours, brand attachment, the intention of purchasing goods and the positive referrals about the brand or the willingness to engage in open innovation projects for that brand (Molinillo et al., 2017, p. 170). It is said to be the key to maintaining the long-term CBR and manifesting the consumers' commitment to the brand (Wu & Liu, 2022)

Over time, extensive literature has developed on finding out the role and impact of brand trust. A number of authors have recognised brand activism as having a mediation role in contributing to the relationship between consumers and brands. Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka (2019) conducted research on over 300 participants to conclude that brand trust has a significant relation with brand experiences in utilitarian brands. The studies found that brand trust is more

likely to influence to cognition of consumers, and it plays an important role in influencing low and mid-income consumers. Brand trust is also indicated as the mediator leading to brand loyalty, and it is developed in a long-term experience (Huang, 2017). The strong influence of brand trust on brand loyalty is also supported by numerous early research (Sahin et al., 2011; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In the rising era of online marketing, social media also helps brands to gain the trust of consumers and thus, contributing to their loyalty with brands (Pusapaningrum, 2020; Irshad et al., 2020).

In reality, there has been a significant downward trend in corporate reputation because people believe that businesses are dishonest and prioritise profit over people (Sarker & Kotler, 2018). In a survey by Edelman (2019), 56% of consumers expressed that too many brands were "trustwashing", and consumers thought that brands took advantage of social issues as a marketing tool to gain profits while having no real actions. Sarkar & Kotler (2018) described that today the world had to face a trust crisis on a global scale, where governments and other institutions are criticised for failing to act. In this context, people are expecting brands to be the change agents. It is said that brands cannot change people's mindset on a social issue (Sprout Social, 2017); however, consumers believe that brands have the influence to affect the change. Not hard to find that trust becomes one of the major problems in brand activism, yet there are not enough insights about it.

In short, the literature pertaining to brand trust strongly suggests that it is nurtured over a long period of time and creates a strong connection between consumers and brands; this improves the loyalty feeling. However, take a closer look at the literature, brand trust is studied mostly in the context of consumption. This approach is a matter of course in marketing and brand research because the root cause of tightening the relationship with consumers is to gain their support tangibly and intangibly. While brand activism is becoming a strong and distinguished aspect, which is widely concerned and acknowledged by the consumers, there are some potentially open questions about the validity of brand trust in activism as a specific aspect. A new approach is therefore needed for brand trust. This research is focused on brand trust but asks the consumers in the specific case of brand activism, to see in reality, to what extent the consumers trust the brand and their efforts to contribute to society.

Due to the complexity and multi-dimensions of the trust component (Atkinson & Butcher, 2003; Johnson & Grayson, 2005), this research will adopt the two-dimensional approach of

brand trust proposed by Johnson & Grayson (2005) and supported by empirical research by Kim et al. (2019) to distinguish between affective and cognitive brand trust. Cognitive brand trust is defined as individuals' confidence or willingness to engage related to a service provider's reliability and competence CBR (Johnson & Grayson, 2005). While effective trust is correlated with feeling experience and emotional bonds, cognitive trust is measured by how the consumers consciously absorb to put their trust in brands. According to Shi & Chow (2015) and Kim et al. (2019), trust transfer theory indicated that the cognitive process in which consumers perceived existing information from brands can have effects on the brand. Considering brand activism as an effort to create changes in mindset (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018), this research will focus on the cognitive aspect of brand trust, in which consumers evaluate the brand activism activities depending on their consciousness. In the surveys of Elderman (2019), it is pointed out that the consumers' trust in brands with their activism agenda is built through the brand's words and their actions on their words (p.19; p.25). The consumers expect the brand to keep their words with actions, and the cause makes them question an activist agenda is that the brand just says and uses activism to sell products instead of taking action on the issues (Elderman, 2019, p. 14). It is clear that consumers perceive the way the brand says and promotes the idea (messages) and the way it actualised these words to solutions (practising) as two objects in the activist strategy.

A large number of existing studies in the broader literature have examined which factors can contribute to brand trust. By reviewing previous studies and arguing for the significant factors contributing to brand trust, hypotheses in this research will be presented in the next chapter.

2.3. Beauty brands and self-love/self-esteem promotion

There are several domains under the umbrella of brand activism in which brands will embed their activity to claim mission and carry out activism actions (Yoo et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020). The concept covers a wide range of areas such as education, consumer protection, healthcare and so on. Scholars have built up and categorised brand activism into sociopolitical aspects that direct the change. Sarkar & Kotler (2018) identified a concept of "The Wicked Seven" including 7 major problems that companies can work on if they want to adopt brand activism in the future. Social activism is among the pillars, which deal with equality and justice for groups like women, LGBT, race, and age,... (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). As a matter of concern, improving gender equality and women empowerment becomes a part of the strategy and

policies of many organizations and corporates. In a number of industries, this is an urgent issue to make a more inclusive environment for females to develop.

It is not a new problem that the beauty industry has a huge impact on the world. According to Statista (2021), the industry's value is assessed at 564 billion US dollars with an annual growth expectation of 4.76%. Beauty is one of the fastest-growing markets, and personal care accounts for the largest segment within the industry (Statista, 2021). The beauty industry's products embrace every aspect of human appearance, ranging from make-up, skincare, hair treatment, body treatment to perfume (Author, 2018). The empire is built on the fear of ugliness and thereby, it presents a discourse of seeking attractiveness, self-care and happiness. The name of the industry represents its nature, which is described as the idealised qualities of formal perfection (Hagman, 2002). Beauty brands sell the concept of ideal beauty and gain profits by maintaining the insecurity feelings. Despite the fact that beauty might vary, Author (2018) indicates that by setting up the perfect images, the beauty industry shapes and reflects the females' identity in aspects such as age and race. Beauty standard endorsement in the beauty industry is oppressive to the feminist movement (Forbes et al., 2007).

During the 1990s, the promise of "women empowerment" or "girl's power" was widely applied in promoting beauty products; however, the framing of purchasing products as involvement in the feminism movement has been criticised as a misguided PR choice (Repo, 2020). Numerous studies have investigated beauty and fashion brands and argued that despite the rational and meaningful attempts to combat gender inequality and discrimination in the purposes and messages, many marketing campaigns ultimately maintain traditional gender norms (Gibson, 2021; Sobande, 2019; Wallis & Shen, 2018). It is criticised that instead of a broader agenda and tackling the real challenges, corporates are just chasing feminist commodities activism - a concept in which we as consumers are suggested to buy products as political participation, social contribution or civic political engagement (Repo, 2020). The beauty and fashion industry sometimes restricts women's access to feminism and political awareness (Kenny, 2018). Crookston & Klonowski (2021) analysed *Teen Vogue*, a famous magazine in beauty, fashion and lifestyle for young females, and their participation in feminist activism with a new section on the magazine. The authors argued that historically, the magazine has focused on promoting the ideal of beauty and consumerism; thereby, it can be considered as an evolution when the magazine take efforts to develop a new section to encourage social activism and women empowerment. In spite of that, it is also pointed out that the magazine also simultaneously

exploits its empowerment rhetorically when continuing to keep up with motivating fashion as a component of females' "identity and empowerment".

It is recorded that in recent years, the beauty industry is more vocal about social activism, and it can be explained by their deep relationship with consumers, and the rising trend of belief-driven buyers (Chitrakorn & Maguire, 2021). Beauty brands acknowledge that there is a reality that consumers are now against discrimination and diversity. They, therefore, are said to be on the need to take a stand that is on the right side of history (Chitrakorn & Maguire, 2021). It is of interest to know whether the problem from the rooted nature of the beauty industry and their efforts to be a part of social activism still hold true. For that reason, the examination in this research is designed to revolve around promoting "self-love"/"self-esteem" campaigns by beauty brands, which are aligned with the idea of empowering women.

III. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

This chapter explains the theoretical framework and develops the hypotheses of the research. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which is developed by Petter & Cacioppo (1986), is chosen as the framework for the study. The theory is the pillar to develop hypotheses and the research model.

3.1. Elaboration Likelihood Model - ELM

The ELM approaches the persuasion process and its impacts to change an individual's attitude through cognitive response, thus leading to the outcomes of changing attitudes and behaviour (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The theory is originally rooted in social psychology science, and it argues that people had different levels in devoting cognitive mindset to processing persuasive messages, depending on their ability and motivation. In short, the ELM theory explains how the thinking process might occur in a persuasive communication situation.

It is emphasised that when a persuasion communication happens, there will be an "elaboration" process from the audience, and the amount of elaboration can vary continuously from very high to very low (Wagner & Petty, 2011). When receiving a persuasion message, the individual will use an amount of effort to process and evaluate, then decide to accept or reject the perceived message. The amount of elaboration effort will determine how an individual can be persuaded, and it is also influenced by a number of situational factors. This process varies with each individual; one can think a lot of the message or just process very little about it, and it is dependent on their ability or motivation (J. Kitchen et al., 2014; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

There are a number of factors contributing to the motivation to elaborate the message of a person, which can be listed as emotion, the need for cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982), or the psychological consistency (J. Kitchen et al., 2014). Among them, personal relevance is the most discussed. The motivation in the elaboration process can be impacted by personal relevance, which means to what extent the message is closely connected or appropriate to the audience. It is said that when the relevance is high, the recipients tend to relate directly to the messages' content and proposal in a way that impacts their life (J. Kitchen et al., 2014). To illustrate in the

context of advertising, if the audience knows that messages are targeted at them, or the promotion campaign will be launched in their living region, they will anticipate thinking carefully about the message (Petty et al., 1983). There are also a number of other findings pointing out characteristics of high personal relevance that will affect the consumers' elaboration efforts. If consumers know that the message's proposal might occur in a near time instead of a vague period of time, or if they know that their opinion can be concerned as a decision-changing factor, there is a high possibility that consumers will consider the advertisement more carefully (J. Kitchen et al., 2014). The relevance level of a message can also connect if the recipients feel that the message touches their identity and personality. On the ability ground, the elaboration likelihood process is more anticipated when the individual receives an increasing repeatedly amount of information (Cacioppo & Petty, 1980). It will also help them to recall and elaborate the messages better if they have certain knowledge or experience of the topic (Wood & Kallgren, 1988). No time limitation or distraction will also make the elaboration process more effective (J. Kitchen et al., 2014).

The ELM describes two routes when people approach persuasive messages, namely the central and peripheral routes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In the central route, at first, there is a high level of the elaboration process in which the audience will examine carefully the content messages due to the high motivation level. The process will continue based on the personal elaboration ability, and when they are finally persuaded, it will lead to consequent behaviour changes. Bhattacherjee & Sanford (2016) indicated 03 differences between the two routes of elaboration. First of all, they are distinguished by the type of information processing. While the central route focuses on processing message-related arguments, cues are the information processed in peripheral routes. It leads to the second difference: the central processing requires a higher level of effort to scrutinise the information. The consequence is that perception changes as a result of the central route are basically stable and predictable in the long-term behaviours because they are developed from comprehensive and thoughtful consideration.

The ELM theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study because it is closely and directly related to the information process and its impact on the individual's behaviour and perception change. In the context of marketing and communication, the theory can explain the process in which consumers are displayed to the messages in advertising and promotion campaigns and how they elaborate on the information. Take a closer look at brand activism, whose purpose is creating strong persuasion to make change through both messages and actions,

the theory is fit to evaluate the consumers' perception on this topic. The model also contributes to the formulation of a hypothesis in which the study measures the consumers' evaluation of the quality of messages.

3.2. The favourability of brand activism messages

In managing the CBR, communications are the primary element in creating positive brand attitudes including brand trust (Azize et al., 2012). Among concepts related to communications, there is a wide choice of using brand hearsay in marketing & brand literature. Brand hearsay refers to the way customers experience communication approaches by the brand in the stage of pre-purchasing, and this concept includes both controlled communications (advertisement, promotion campaign) and uncontrolled communications (word of mouth - WOM and publicity) (Grace & O'Cass, 2005; Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2014). It is indicated that that communication method can influence the expectations and satisfaction of consumers while they are in the stage of considering purchasing (Babin & Babin, 2001). Brand hearsays is an information source, and it can affect the consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards the brands (Grace & O'Cass, 2005).

While WOM and publicity are communications methods in which consumers receive information and shape their perceptions through other consumers and publicity events, advertising and promotions are directly conveyed by companies to consumers about their products and services (Kim et al., 2019). It was reported by Grace & O'Cass (2005) that the controlled communication have a significant weight on brand hearsay than the uncontrolled communication method, despite some prior studies arguing that elements like WOM have a stronger influence on consumers' decision in term of choosing (Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Mangold et al., 1999). It is explained that the consumers' experience with brands might reduce the influence of uncontrolled communication like WOM on consumers' perception of the brands. Kim et al. (2019) then utilised the Service Brand Verdict (SBV) framework by Grace & O'cass (2015) to extend the discussion of this topic by examining the effects of brand hearsay on brand attitudes and brand trust. It is evident that controlled communications strongly impact both dimensions of brand trust, affective and cognitive trust. The mediation role of brand trust contributes to changes in consumer attitudes. The research enhanced previous empirical findings that direct information from a brand plays an important role in raising consumers' trust and in forming positive attitudes toward a brand.

Within the framework of this study, I borrow the concept of controlled communications, which has been proved in literature as a key factor influencing brand trust. Vredenburg et al. (2020) concluded that consumers observe and evaluate the level of brand activism partly dependent on how the brand informs and delivers its activist messages. Consumers search for the match of the brand's messages and other values that the brand claims to their identity. In an activism campaign, messages and images are essential parts to express the brand's sociopolitical stand. Depending on the scale developed by Grace & O'cass (2005) and Kim et al., (2019) to measure the consumers' evaluation of the advertising and promotion campaign, this study will modify to examine consumers' mindset when they have displayed messages in brand activism campaign. This discussion leads to the hypothesis as follows:

H1. The favourability of customers on advertisements and messages by brands during their social activism campaigns contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.

3.3. The argument strength of brand activism messages

As mentioned above in brand activism literature, the consumers have a high expectation for the quality of content messages in the campaign (Vradenburg et al., 2020; Edelman, 2019; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). If they find there is "woke washing" - the term referring to dishonesty in disconnection in communication, it will jeopardise the brand activism effort (Vradenburg et al., 2020). The purpose of brand activism is to promote behaviours changes on social issues through persuading (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018); therefore, this study will use the Elaboration Likelihood Model - ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and research on perceived arguments strength in the message by Zhao et al. (2011) as a reference to develop hypotheses. A strong argument is defined as evoking positive and favourable thoughts (Zhao et al., 2011), and in contrast, a weak argument is one that is displayed in the individuals' perception with characteristics like negative or unfavourable. As indicated by Zhao et al. (2011), the argument strength in an umbrella term includes the audiences' perception of the quality, the strength and the persuasiveness of the persuasive communication.

A number of scholars have recognised that with the large amount of information that consumers receive every day, persuasion knowledge can motivate the evaluation of marketing messages. The quality of messages or the argument strength played a vital mediator in the persuasion

process, and it is proven to significantly impact brand trust in recent studies (Ahmad & Guzmán, 2020; Chen & Cheng, 2019). Isaac & Grayson (2016) also indicated that consumers who have access to persuasion knowledge and evaluated high-credibility tactics are more likely to mention the trust and belief in their evaluation of brands.

These discussions come up with the next hypothesis in this research:

H2. The argument strength of brand activism messages during their social activism campaigns contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.

3.4. Brand authenticity and brand activism practices

It is emphasised that when discussing how consumers perceived brand activism or brand engagement with sociopolitical issues (Schimid et al., 2021; Sarker & Kotler, 2018), authenticity and alignment are among the focused topics. The majority of prior research said that people are striving for authenticity for a long time (Grayson & Martinec, 2004) because the concept of authenticity is argued as something that is "positioned and understood as outside the crass realm of the market" (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p.10). Authenticity is examined in literature of various fields from sociology, anthropology to psychology. Fritz et al. (2017) indicated that the understanding of authenticity in marketing research is mostly influenced by the conceptual framework of authenticity developed by Grayson & Martinic (2004), in which the authors distinguished between indexical authenticity and iconic authenticity. The former refers to the connection of the brand with a factual connection while the latter emphasised that authenticity is formed by the consumers' imagination and feelings, or in other words, their own perceptions (Fritz et al., 2017). Napoli et al. (2014) also mentioned that a sense of nostalgic aura like long history or connection with tradition and cultural elements can add to the authenticity of a brand. From the mindset of a group of consumers, brands with a strong heritage can be perceived as legitimate and authentic (Kates, 2004). A more comprehensive description of authenticity can refer to the "true expression of core belief" (O'Connor et al., 2019), and consumers find that they will support a brand to be faithful and true to itself and its consumers (Schimid et al., 2021).

Understanding authenticity can help to explore consumers' insights because it is said that consumers search for authenticity as a part of brand identification (Napoli et al., 2014). In recent

years, there have been several studies revolving around the topic of authenticity and how it plays a role in brand activism. Most of them point out that authenticity does have a direct impact on brand activism, and by evaluating the authenticity of the brand activism strategy of a company, consumers will decide if they support the brand or not (Romani et al., 2015; Portal et al., 2019; Vredenburg et al., 2020; Yoo et al., 2021; Schmidt et al., 2022; Mirzaei et al., 2022). Authentic activism is the match of a brand's purposes and values with its messages and practices (Vredenburg et al., 2020), which means that when implementing activism as a part of brand values, there needs to be compromise in the way the brand acts and the brand commits to their consumers. Scholars also posit that from the consumers' perspective, brand authenticity is configured of continuity, credibility, integrity and symbolism (Schmid et al. 2021). Eggers et al. (2013) also indicated that consumers perceive the authenticity of a brand by reviewing its consistency and congruency in values and actions, and thereby, it is essential for firms to build a portfolio of values and be consistent with what they claim.

Brand authenticity is multidimensional, and several methods are reported in the literature to measure this issue. Napoli et al. (2014) conducted research in which brand authenticity is constructed from quality commitment, heritage, and sincerity. The authors argued that brand trust and brand authenticity are conceptually distinct constructs, yet also mentioned the opinion of Eggers et al. (2013) that if consumers experienced brand authenticity, it can contribute to their brand trust and help the companies achieve the long - term growth. Portal et al. (2018) argued that brand authenticity is a mediator to brand trust and in the study, brand authenticity is measured by 04 factors: continuity, integrity, originality, and credibility. The result showed that brand authenticity has a significant impact on brand trust and the 4 factors mentioned above shared similar importance to brand authenticity. The model is then adopted in some recent studies to investigate brand trust (Rodrigues et al., 2021; González Serrano et al., 2020;).

Borrowing from the conceptual framework by Portal et al. (2018), this study utilised two factors including continuity and credibility to evaluate the brand activism practices. The hypotheses can be presented as follows:

H3. The continuity of the brand activism activities contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.

H4. The credibility of brand activism activities contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.

3.5. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model representing the research question and hypotheses is visualised in Figure 01.
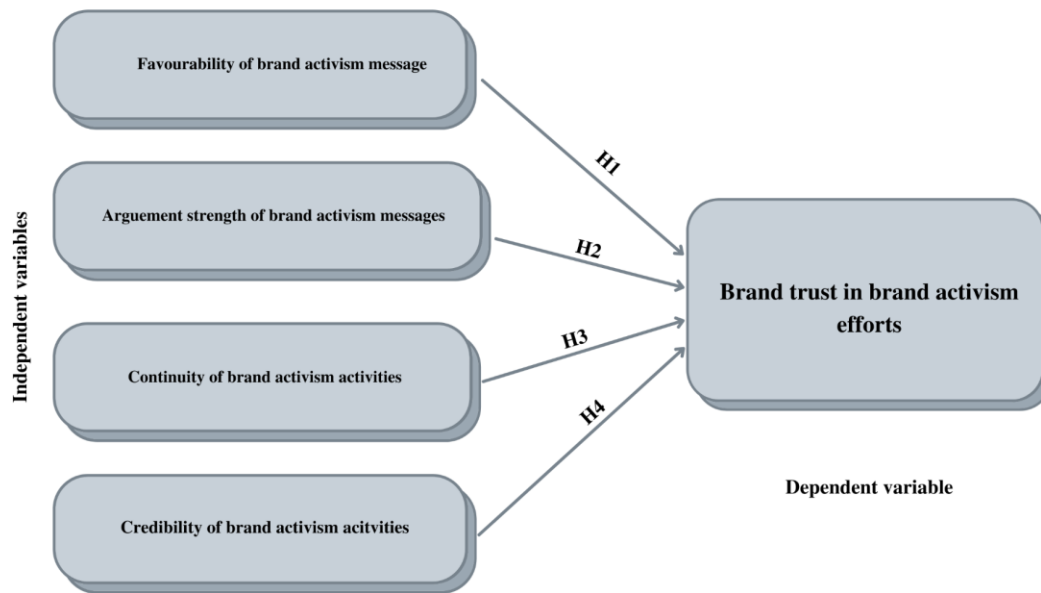

Figure 01: Research Model

The research model consists of two parts with four independent variables and a dependent variable. It is hypothesised that all the independent variables have a significant relation to the dependent variable "brand trust in brand activism efforts". Hypothesis one and two implied the perceived messages while hypothesis three and four are considered as consumers' perceptions of how brands implement activism activities as their commitment. As indicated in the literature review, a challenge arising in the domain of brand activism is that consumers becoming more cynical about the brand activism strategy (Edelman, 2019). Therefore, it is projected that there is a higher level of contribution by hypothesis three and four toward "brand trust in brand activism". The hypothesis is also developed on ELM theory and it is revealed that higher personal relevance can moderate the "argument strength" and "favourability of messages" towards the trust in brand activism. Within the bounds of this research, the target respondents

are females, and the aspects of sociopolitical issues that are exposed to them are the "self-love" messages, and it is expected that female consumers will have a basis to evaluate the problem critically.

IV. Research Design and Methodology

The following chapter contains the choice of the research paradigm and research design. The research method approach is quantitative research. Then the method of conducting the online survey and which scale of measurement was applied to evaluate the presented hypotheses are also explained in this chapter.

4.1. Research paradigm

Paradigm is referred to the worldview in research that represents the knowledge, values and a set of shared beliefs of researchers, and it guides how the problems will be solved (Iacob et al., 2015). Paradigm provides a conceptual lens through which researchers can determine the research methodology and how the data will be constructed and analysed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This study is conducted through the post-positivist research paradigm, which is a combination of positivism and interpretivism (Kock et al., 2008). The post-positivist approach allowed researchers to carry out the study in multiple research methods because the paradigm is a development to fill in social science research's requirements which the positivist paradigm cannot adapt (Pahnwar et al., 2017). Unlike positivist research, which is claimed to explore the absolute truth, the post-positivist paradigm reduces the personal bias and studies the problem by reflecting a need to examine causes that affect results (Lincoln et al. 2011; Pahnwar et al., 2017). Post positivism paradigm can be associated with both qualitative and quantitative methods. Approaching this paradigm, this study will examine consumers' perceptions through the quantitative research method. The research aims at figuring out the differences in the weight of factors contributing to the trust in brand activism campaigns, and the quantitative method can help to numerically describe the problem and measure the connection between variables (Stockemer, 2018). Choosing this method, the study's target is to establish empirical relationships instead of explaining the constituents or causal mechanism of the problem in the investigation (Stockemer, 2018).

4.2. Survey design

For the purpose of testing hypotheses and exploring the empirical relationship between variables, there is a survey conducted to gain data from consumers. The survey is a cross-sectional survey designed to collect information from individuals at one point in time

(Stockemer, 2018). The survey is conducted online on the Google Form platform, and it consists of different sections to collect the necessary data to answer the research question.

The first part of the survey asked the respondents basic information about their age and gender. These questions are collecting basic demographic data to oversee the process and control the normal distribution of the data. After filling in demographic data, respondents were asked to randomly select a number from 1 to 4. It then directs the respondents to different evaluation pages examining about two different brands: Doves and The Body Shop. This step is to ensure the balance in the number of respondents for each case. In the second part of the survey, participants were displayed to a number of advertisements, social media posts and promotion images in the brand activism campaigns depending on the page of the brand they are randomly navigated to. In this section, the questionnaire tested the four independent variables "the favourability of messages", "the argument strength of messages", "the continuity of activities", and "the credibility of activities". Lastly, there was a section to test the dependent variable "trust in brand activism". The detail of the advertisement used in the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2.1. Measurement

The questions in the survey are developed on the five-point Likert scale (1 = *I strongly disagree*, 5 = *I strongly agree*). The Likert scale is designed to measure individuals' attitudes and opinions in the format of the fixed choice (Stockemer, 2018). The fundamental tenet of the Likert scale depends on the assumption that the intensity of the experience is linear, and therefore, attitude can be measured by choosing pre-code responses (Kumar, 1999). Using the pre-validated scale from prior research, the measurement model in this research is a one-dimensional scale.

The favourability of brand activism messages: Starting from the discussion revolving around consumers' evaluation of brand hearsay (Kim et. al, 2019), the research adopted the experimented scales for controlled communications/Advertising by Grace and O'Cass (2005), Krystallis & Chrysochou (2014) and Kim et al. (2019). The original scale is a 7-point Likert scale; within the framework of this research, it is modified to a 5-point Likert scale. There will be 6 items on the scale.

The argument strength of brand activism messages: The purpose of brand activism is to promote behaviour changes on social issues through persuading. Therefore, the study investigates consumers' evaluation of the reliability of brand messages in the campaigns. The measurement is adopted from the research by Zhao et al. (2011) on testing the perceived argument strength. The scale is adjusted according to the framework of 9 items suggested by Zhao et al. (2011).

The continuity of brand activism activities: The study examines the consumers' evaluation of social engagement records by the brand in their activism vision. To do that, the survey utilises the scale of 3 items developed by Portal et al. (2018) on the continuity and consistency dimensions of brand authenticity, a significant factor that is proved to contribute to brand authenticity leading to brand trust.

The credibility of brand activism activities: This paper continues to use the measurement scale by Portal et al. (2018) as a reference to develop the measurement for the credibility of activism actions on a scale of 4 items.

Brand trust in brand activism: The cognitive brand trust is measured by modifying the scale of 5 items proposed by (Kim et al., 2019) and (Molinillo et al., 2017).

Table 01. Summary of Measurement

Constructs	No. of items	Sources
Favourability of brand activism messages	6	Grace and O'Cass (2005) Krystallis & Chrysochou (2014) Kim et al. (2019)
Argument strength of brand activism messages	9	Zhao et al. (2011)
Continuity of brand activism activities	3	Portal et al. (2018)
Credibility of brand activism activities	4	Portal et al. (2018)
Brand trust in brand activism	5	Molinillo et al., 2017 Kim et al., 2019

4.2.2. Experimental Design

To explore the consumers' evaluation of the trust brand activism, the research is designed to direct by exposing audiences to advertisements and actions.

Boyle & Schmierbach (2015) notified that in designing an effective survey, the researcher should not assume that the audience will understand the purpose of the study. Therefore, it is necessary to provide clear, precise and straightforward guidelines for respondents. Considering "brand activism" can be uncommon terminology to the vast majority of audiences, the survey replaced the term "brand activism" with simplifications such as "how the brands in the beauty industry take a stand and engage with social issues", "tackling social challenges through both communications and practical actions", "effort to promote good values". The intention is to ensure that respondents have an accurate understanding of the problems investigated. The survey applies a 5-points Likert scale, and then there is a detailed instruction to indicate the meaning of each point. There is a short introduction including the name of the brand activism campaign and its purpose quoting from the brand's official website. The aim of exposing this information to the respondents is to provide them with a context on the brand activism's commitment, stance, and activities. The purpose of the study is to examine individuals' perception of brand activism through both tangible (actions) and intangible (messages) aspects (Vredenburg et al. 2020); thus, the provided information can evoke the problems from respondents' minds and experiences.

There were a collection of advertisements and messages being displayed. With each case to be examined, 5 advertisements and social media posts taken from official platforms, both online and offline, of the brand are used. In some cases of survey design, filters question and contingency questions can be added (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015). Filter questions help direct participations to answer the question relevant to them, and contingency question is subsequent questions that are responded by a portion of respondents. In such way, these questions assist the researcher in determining whether a respondent is valid to the survey's purpose and framework. In the survey, respondents are asked to rate their familiarity with brands and products on a 5-point Likert scale from "I never use" to "I always use". The question is added as a contingency plan to see if the personal relevance and experiment with the brands will affect the evaluation of consumers.

Prior to launching the experiment survey, there is a small pilot test with 20 female respondents. During the process, pretest respondents give assessments and feedback. Based on their feedback, some small adjustments in grammar and the layout of the survey have been made before the online official launch.

4.2.3. Case

This study adopts the encouraging messages and practices for "self-love" and "self-esteem" from two big brands in the beauty industry which are well-known as pioneers in brand activism: Dove and The Body Shop.

Dove is founded in 1957 in the US and until now, the brand is valued at approximately 5.1 billion U.S. dollars (Statista, 2021). Dove introduces itself as a beauty brand which is working to make "beauty a source of confidence, not anxiety", and they have chased this mission for over 17 years (Unilever, 2022). The brand declares on its website that going beyond the product, Dove cares about "women, female-identifying and non-binary people". The purpose of the brand is to redefine what we have known about beauty standards, and its commitment is to bring positivity to everybody in experiencing beauty and body image. The brand shows its strong stance on women and says that "women have always been our inspirations", and in a world that always holds back women, Dove will be an alliance to help them increase their self-esteem. It is not simply an activity, but a long-term promise to create change for today and for the next generation.

The Body Shop started its business in the beauty industry in 1976 in the UK. The brand claims activism in its nature, "Activism is our DNA", and they fight for social and environmental injustice. Living upon this declaration, the brand shows its strong actions by creating activism teams around the world with the purpose of impacting law and policy systems if possible. The Body Shop's mission is identified as building "a world where women and girls truly thrive". The brand believes in the ability to encourage women to speak up and to help them to be heard through the power of confidence and self-love.

4.3. Sample selection and data collection

Since this study examines the case of beauty brands and their activism campaign in empowering women, the target population is women. As brand activism is a recent trend and it is argued in the literature that young generation like Millennials/Gen Y and Gen Z are more critical of sociopolitical issues, the survey aimed at collecting data from females who were born between 1981 and 2010 as stated of the demography of Gen Y and Gen Z (Francis & Hoefel, 2022; Finneman et al., 2020). It is mandatory for the respondents to state their age and gender to ensure their validity with the purpose of the study.

The sampling method used in this study is convenience sampling in which respondents are recruited based on their ability with no attempt to choose a representative group or to target specific types of individuals (Stockemer, 2018; Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015). The reason this study selected convenience sampling is because it helps to reach out to a part of the target population effectively and quickly. Data is collected during around 13 days, from April 25th, 2022 to May 06th, 2022. The survey is published online in multiple community groups on two social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram, by using the personal social media account of the researcher. It is stated that the research aims at finding female respondents when publishing the survey.

4.4. Considering biases

It is argued that the possibility of having bias in the sample is ubiquitous in research, and it likely occurs with a freely accessible survey on the Internet (Stockemer, 2018). Convenience sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique, which might be considered less representative because it eliminates the equal chance to participate in the surveys of the population; thereby, the inferential statistics can be biased (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015). Nonrandom sampling can cause a likelihood of systematic error in the data. To address this problem, a normality test will be run during the data examination process to check the normal distribution of variables.

Response bias might occur, more specifically social desirability bias in which respondents will try to answer the questions to fit the social norms instead of expressing their own judgement (Stockemer, 2018). In the light of a survey exposing them to social activism, the respondents might answer according to what they assume is likely to be perceived favourable by society. To

avoid this bias, the survey is anonymised, and it is notified that the data collected is purely used for research purposes. It is expected that by informing the participants about it, they would not feel the pressure to answer to fit any outside expectations.

V. Quantitative Analysis and Empirical Result

In this chapter, the quantivative analysis and empirical results are presented. To examine the hypothesis and answer the research question, the data collected are analysed using the software IBM SPSS Statistics (SPSS). The analysis starts with a section about demographic profile of respondents, then followed by the reliability and model assessment. The hypotheses are proved through multiple tests and analysis to weigh the contributions with brands trust in brand activism. This chapter ends with discussion and conclusion about findings.

5.1. Demography of respondents

After closing the survey recruitment, there is a total of 419 responses received. Since the target audience of beauty brands in the research and the purpose of their campaigns is to empower women and girls, all responses from males and people who did not state their gender are eliminated. After sorting out, there are 366 females who filled in the surveys. The recorded range of birthyear is from 1981 to 2009, which represents the cohort age of Millennials and Gen Z - the group is said to be sceptical about brand activism. Considering previous research related to EML in which young children were concluded to be naturally influenced and persuaded by advertising messages (McAlister & Bargh, 2016), it is decided to remove all respondents who stated to be born after 2004, equivalent to under 18 years old at the time of 2022.

Of all 238 valid responses that remained, the mean age of respondents is 22.0672 years old. The oldest age stated in the survey is 41, and the youngest is 18, which indicates that the respondents were born between 1981 and 2004. They represent the age cohort of Millennials and Gen Z population. Among them, only 15.13% of respondents stated that they never use any products of The Body Shop or Dove. 75.63% shared that they use beauty products of these brands rarely to usually. 9.24% of them always use products from these brands. The skewness value for age is 1.377, indicating a positively skewed distribution.

5.2. Reliability assessment

A reliability test was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scale used in this paper. It is said that the meaning of this procedure is to test if all the items are supposed to reflect the same underlying construct (Price et al., 2015). According to Pallant (2016), the value of Cronbach's α over 0.7 is considered reliable with the sample. In this study, the items under the category "Favourability of brand activism messages" and "Argument strength of brand activism messages" are reported at 0.850 and 0.913, respectively, therefore suggesting a very good internal consistency scale. "Continuity of brand activism activities" has a Cronbach's α coefficient at 0.717, which implies that the scale is reliable. The coefficient for the dependent variable "Brand trust in brand activism" is also strong, with a 0.849 value.

There spotted a considered issue with the independent variable "Credibility of brand activism activities" when the Cronbach's α is 0.663. There are no missing items and after checking Cronbach's α if items are deleted, the result still fluctuates nearly the 0.7 value. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) explained that a low value of Cronbach's α could happen in some situations, such as the low number of test items or the weak interrelatedness among items in the questionnaire. There are many debates around this number. It is agreed and proved in some research that Cronbach's α range from 0.6 to 0.7 can be indicated as adequate and good enough to use (Taber, 2017). An attempt to run factor analysis was implemented to weight the validity of items; however, the Kaiser's criterion for items shows a result under 1, which is not suitable for further investigation (Pallant, 2016). Scrutinising a risk of weak consistency among the items, it came to a conclusion of continuing the research by selecting the most direct item indicating the "Credibility of brand activism activities", which is "Through their actions, it can be said that the brand's commitment to self-esteem/self-love is credible".

Single-item measurement is argued to be problematic in reliability assessment mainly due to there being no parameter estimation if only one item is used for reflective indicators in structural equation models (Fusch & Diamantopoulos, 2009). However, the reliability of single-item measurement is confirmed by evidence in multiple studies from different areas. Fisher et al. (2016) say that on some occasions, a single item which is selected from multiple-item measurement based on the highest factor loading can perform a better convergence to reflect the problem being studied, especially compared to creating a new single-item scale for it. In marketing research, it is suggested that with an easy-to-understand or concrete concept, the

single-item measurement might be more effective to use than multiple-item measurement, and it is not limited to behaviour construct like evaluation and affecting response (Petrescu, 2013). With these supported arguments, this study will continue by using a single-item measurement for the "Credibility of brand activism action" and keep the developed scale for other variables.

5.3. Structural Model Assessment

A correlation analysis is conducted to investigate the strength in the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables through the Pearson correlation coefficient. The Pearson correlation coefficient interprets the evaluation of the relationship and direction between variables (Pallant, 2016). The range for this value is from -1 to 1, in which a negative value indicates a negative relationship (one variable increases and the other decrease) and a positive value indicates a positive relationship (both variable increases) (Pallant, 2016). It is detected positive relationships between the dependent variable "Brand trust in brand activism" with all independent variables "Favourability of brand activism messages", "Strength argument of brand activism messages", "Continuity of brand activism activities", "Credibility of brand activism activities". According to Pallant (2016), the value of Pearson correlation ranging from 0.5 to 1.0 or -0.5 to -1.0 suggests a strong relationship between two variables. All the values from bivariate analysis on SPSS are over 0.5, showing that high scores in each independent variable are associated with high scores of "Brand trust in brand activism". With the Pearson correlation coefficient, Pallant (2016) also suggests calculating the coefficient of determination by squaring the r value and then multiplying it with 100 to convert the result to a percentage. This result indicates the percentage of value in this variable can help to explain the other variables. With significant results of Pearson value found, there is a high proportion of shared value between each independent variable and dependent variable. The details of the result are presented in Table 03 below.

To further exploration into the relationships between variables, a multiple regression analysis was implemented to test whether the dependent variable is constructed by independent variables. The multiple regression will provide us with an insight into how well the conceptual model can explain the performance of brand trust and which variables can be the best indicator of the model to predict that outcome (Pallant, 2016).

Table 02. Measurement Model

N= 238

Construct and Items	Cronbach's α
Favourability of brand activisms messages	**0.850**

1. I like the messages of the advertisements in the campaign
2. I react favourably to the messages of the advertisements in the campaign
3. I feel positive about the messages of the advertisements in the campaign
4. The messages of the advertisements in the campaign are good
5. The messages of the advertisements in the campaign do a good job of promoting self-esteem/self-love
6. I am happy with the messages of advertisements in the campaign

Arguement strength of brand activism messages   **0.913**

1. The messages in the campaign are the reason for self-esteem/self-love that is believable
2. The messages in the campaign are the reason for self-esteem/self-love that is convincing
3. The messages in the campaign give a reason for self-esteem/self-love that is important to me
4. The messages in the campaign help me feel confident about self-esteem/self-love
5. The messages in the campaign help me and other peers increase self-esteem/self-love
6. The messages in the campaign put thoughts in my mind about wanting to improve self-esteem/self-love.
7. The messages in the campaign put thoughts in my mind about not wanting to obey so-called standard beauty trends
8. Overall, how much do you agree or disagree with the message about self-esteem that the brand promote?
9. The messages gave strong reasons to encourage self-esteem/self-love

Continuity of brand activism activities   **0.717**

1. The brand is consistent over time in promoting the self-esteem/self-love values
2. The brand offers continuity in promoting the self-esteem/self-love values
3. The brand has a clear concept of self-esteem/self-love that it pursues

Credible of brand activism activities   *0.663*

1. *The brand will not betray its messages about self-esteem/self-love and it is proven through its real actions to tackle the challenge**
2. *The brand is dishonest to promote self-esteem/self-love **
3. *My experience with the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises to promote self-esteem/self-love**
4. Through their actions, it can be said that the brand's commitment to the self-esteem/self-love is credible

Brand trust in brand activism efforts   **0.849**

1. The brand approaches the topic of self-esteem/self-love with professionalism and dedication
2. Given Dove's/TBS's contributions to the promotion of "self-esteem"/"self-love", I see no reason to doubt their competence in fighting for social issues
3. The brand is honest in tackling social challenges through both communications and practical actions
4. I can rely on Dove/TBS not to make their products and service going against their commitment to promoting diverse and equal values of "self-esteem"/"self-love"
5. It is safe to say that Dove/TBS is fighting for good values

Pallant (2016) presented a number of necessary conditions before running a multiple regression test, which included the sample size and the measurement of the scores. According to it, the result of multiple regression cannot be generalised to other samples if the sample size is too small. The author then suggested a formula to calculate the minimum size accounting for the number of independent variables in the model, which is N>50+8m, with m being the number of independent variables and N being the sample size. In this study, there are 4 independent variables developed to predict the dependent variable; thereby, the requirement for sample size should be larger than 82. The total sample size in the survey is 238, so it is a very strong sample to continue with the multiple regression test.

Pearson correlation is measured between two continuous variables, and the multiple regression requires that the dependent variable be a set of continuous variables. However, according to previous research (Stockemer, 2018; Pallant, 2016), the Likert scale should be considered an ordinal scale. There existed debates regarding this topic, and this study will accept the evidence provided in in-depth research supporting the recommendation to treat the Likert scale as a continuous scale (Robitzsch, 2020; H. Wu & Leung, 2017). Therefore, it is appropriate to continue to study with developed sets of 5-point Likert scales.

A screening of the data procedure is conducted by running the Descriptive Statistics test to assess the normality of the data set is necessary before the multiple regression analysis. Pallant (2016) indicated skewed distribution is represented by the symmetric distribution of scores, and kurtosis provides the present with the "peakedness" of distribution (p. 53). A perfect normal distribution is said to be equal to 0 value of skewed and kurtosis; however, it is not normal to have this result in real social science tests (Pallant, 2016). All variables are reported to be negatively skewed distributed. The variables "Favouribility of brand activism messages", "Argument strength of brand activism", "Continuity of brand activism activities", and "Credibility of brand activism activities" are received skewed scores of -.279, -.243, -.045 and -.081 respectively. The kurtosis distribution scores of these variables are -.142, -.175, -.528 and -.337 in the order mentioned above. The negative kurtosis value indicates a flat distribution with more data at the centre and less data on the tails. The dependent variable "Brand trust in brand activism" is also negatively skewed at -.242 but is the only variable with positive kurtosis distribution, with the value being .145, indicating scores clustering at the centre. There are also outliers detected; however, when comparing the original mean and 5% trimmed mean, the numbers are not extremely different, indicating the outliers are not too different to the remaining

distribution (Pallant, 2016). It comes to a decision of keeping all the data for multiple regression analysis.

Table 03. Descriptive statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	SD	Correlation				Tolerance	VIF
			(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**		
(1)	23.26	3.92					0.398	2.514
(2)	33.74	6.63	0.745				0.384	2.607
(3)	11.47	2.11	0.627	0.616			0.519	1.925
(4)	3.63	0.87	0.616	0.516	0.534		0.629	1.591
(5)	18.87	3.46	0.662	0.725	0.619	0.653		
Coeffecient of determination			41.17%	52.56%	38,31%	42,64%		
								N=238

(1) Favourability of brand activism messages
(2) Argument strength of brand activism messages
(3) Continuity of brand activism activities
(4) Credibility of brand activism activities
(5) Brand trust in brand activism efforts
SD: Standard Deviation
VIF: Variance inflation factor

Looking through the output from the SPSS procedure, the least expected result is finding out the symbol of multicollinearity, which is the situation where several independent variables in the model are correlated to each other (Pallant, 2016). Singularity is also needed to be considered because it is the case that one independent variable is the combination of other independent variables in the same model (Pallant, 2016). Both stated problems in the relationship among independent variables leads to less reliable statistical inference. Pallant (2016) suggests checking the tolerance and VIF value to control multicollinearity and singularity. Tolerance value is calculated by the formula $1 - R^2$, indicating how much an independent variable is not constructed by other independent variables in one model. VIF is inversed of Tolerance and used to detect multicollinearity. It is said that if the tolerance is below 0.10 and VIF is over 10, there is a possibility of singularity and multicollinearity. In this research, all the outcomes announce no significant problems; the VIF value is far below the cut-off of 10 while the tolerance is over 0.10. There are also no results of over 0.9 for the

correlation between independent variables, which Pallant (2016) warned is a signal of multicollinearity. It is safe to state that it is not necessary to omit any variables. In a multiple regression analysis, assumptions about normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity can be concluded by exploring The Normal P-P Plot and scatterplot. There is no major deviation and violation of assumption detected in the analysis. The Normal P-P plot is a straight line from bottom left to right, and the homoscedasticity is rectangularly distributed. The details can be found in Appendix 2.

The R Square is 0.645, informing a substantial number of 64.5% of the variance in "the brand trust in brand activism" can be explained by the predictors in the model. The model also performs a statistical significance with F=105.85 and p<0.001

5.4. Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses of the research are tested by examining the output of the Standardised Coefficient Beta. It is stated that the Standardised Coefficient is the condition in which all values of each independent variable are converted into the same scale; thereby, the evaluation process is rational (Pallant, 2016). The largest Beta coefficient is "Argument strength of brand activism messages" with β=.349 and a Sig. value is less than .05 (p<.001), indicating a unique significant contribution of the argument strength to the prediction of brand trust in brand activism scores. The predictor "Credibility of brand activism activities" is the second-largest contributor to the "Brand trust in brand activism efforts" (β=.302). It also performs a statistically signification unique contribution to the dependent variable (p<.001). These values provide strong evidence for hypothesis two and four.

The contribution of variables including "Favourability in brand activism messages" and "Continuity of brand activism activities" to the dependent variable follows respectively as mentioned in the order. The former's value beta is β=.163 with p=.010 while the latter's is β=.141 with p=.009. Therefore, hypothesis one "Favourability in brand activism messages" and hypothesis three "The continuity is supported to have a contribution to the brand trust in brand activism" are also supported. Table 04 presents an overview of the hypothesis testing procedure. All the results of hypothesis testing will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Table 04. Hypothesis testing result

Hypothesis	Standard Coeffiencient Beta (β)	Sig. (p-value)	Hypothesis testing result
H1. The favourability of customers on advertisements and messages by brands during their social activism campaigns contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.	.163	.009	Supported
H2. The argument strength of brand activism messages during their social activism campaigns contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.	.349	<.001	Supported
H3. The continuity of the brand activism activities contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.	.141	.010	Supported
H4. The credibility of brand activism activities contributes significantly to the brand trust in brand activism efforts.	.302	<.001	Supported

VI. Discussion

This section summarises the findings and contributions made to answer the research question. The average age of respondents in the survey is 22 years (Mean=22.0672), with a range of ages from 18 to 41. By examining the descriptive analysis, a positively skewed distribution in age is detected, demonstrating the scores values are bent towards the lower side. It indicates that the participants of Gen Z females, who are born from 1996 onwards, dominate this survey. While this study does not aim at profoundly investigating the demographic information, there might be a trend that the younger population have a deep concern with brand activism in general, which is also reported in both practical and academic research. The data collected also informs an understandable result that the majority of female respondents use beauty products of two brands in the survey. It is expected because the selected cases are among the most popular brands in the beauty industry, and they provide a wide range of personal care products. According to the ELM model, there are a number of factors influencing the motivation to process persuasive messages, and a high level of relevance is one of the most significant factors. In the context of this study, the selected brand activism campaigns in the examples target women and girls; therefore, it is expected that the female respondents are motivated to carefully consider the messages and give rational evaluation because the topic is closely aligned with them. Considering a status quo in which consumers have more doubts about the brand's efforts in tackling sociopolitical challenges, the goal of sample selection and questionnaire design is to explore consumers' insight when they are in a deep connection context with brand activism.

Using the quantitative method to analyse the data, the study hopes to find strong evidence for the causal relationship between a number of factors related to the implementation of brand activism and the trust in brand activism efforts which will be called brand activism trust henceforth. In general, the Pearson coefficient value recorded in the bivariate test is greater than 0.5, showing that putting in the context of an activism campaign, brand activism trust is strongly associated with the consumer's favourability in the message, how they feel being persuasive by the messages, their evaluation of the activism continuity and to what extent they see the credibility in activism activities. The score distribution for each variable in this study is negatively skewed, indicating a model bending to the higher scores. Assessing the measurement scale in this study, it can be interpreted that respondents tend to evaluate the items on more extremely positive scores, showing their clear opinion on the matter. Positive Pearson

coefficient correlation also performs that a higher level of independent variable evaluation leads to a higher level of the dependent variable. In other words, if consumers evaluate that the more they favour the messages, the more they are persuaded by the messages, the more they see the continuity and credibility in activism activities, and the higher level they put their trust in the activism campaign.

Through multiple regression analysis, all given hypotheses are supported. However, when weighing the level of contribution of each predictor variable to the outcome variable, there are some aspects to be discussed. The variable that has the greatest impact on the consumers' trust in brand activism efforts in the model is "Argument strength of brand activism messages" (β=.349, p<.001). It is expected that indicators related to activities might have better performance in constructing the model because consumers want to see how the brand can actualise its activism discourse (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Nevertheless, it should be considered that on symmetrical consideration between activism messages and activism actions, rhetoric can be received by the consumers first and foremost. The persuasive messages are also a reflection of the action performance, and this might be an explanation for the consumers' preference towards factors. If the consumers can be persuaded by the activism messages in the campaign, their trust in this campaign will increase. This variable is developed on the ELM model (Zhao et al., 2011), which describes the cognitive process of individuals. While the aspect of trust this study adopts is cognitive trust (Johnson & Grayson, 2005; Kim et al., 2019), it might impact the correlation between the two factors.

On the other hand, consumers also find a sense in the action. The second highest value is "Credibility of brand activism activities" (β=.302, p<.001), indicating how the consumers observe and evaluate the quality of the activities and their alignment with the brand's activism declaration. The value is not too far from the result of the argument strength predictor, so it can be an indicator for a counterbalance of real actions with argument strength towards brand activism trust. It also should be noted that this variable was measured with a single-item measurement. The initial scale model is developed by borrowing the concept from the study by Portal et al., (2018); however, there was a possibility of weak internal consistency among the items in the scale. The Cronbach's α value is 0.663, while the most popular recommendation number is at least 0.7; therefore, it is decided to reform the measurement into a single-item model by obtaining the item that directly indicates the concept in research.

The β value and Sig. value of the favourability of brand activism messages and the continuity of brand activism activities provide evidence to support the hypothesis that those variables also contribute to the dependent variables in the model. However, their values are outperformed by the value for the other two independent variables. As argued in Chapter II and Chapter III, the independent variables are developed based on the concept that brand activism is considered as a new brand's evolvement in contributing to social changes. It reaches a balance in both discourse and action to make an impact with a meaningful purpose for the social. Vredenburg et al. (2019) describe authentic brand activism as a brand which can perform high quality in both social practices and messages. On this symmetrical balance, "Favouribility of brand activism messages" and "Argument strength in brand activism messages" represent the messages while "Continuity of brand activism activities" and "Credibility of brand activism activities" represent practices aspects in a brand activism effort, like a campaign or a project. Due to the research limitations, there is no further investigation into the dominance among independent variables; the in-depth examination to combine the variables under correlation between messages and practices is also omitted. However, by weighing the values, there might be a more significant contribution to the brand activism trust by the two independent variables related to messages (H1and H2), compared to the variables related to activities (H3 and H4). Overall, they all significantly influence the level of trust in brand activism. It is the answer to the research question of which factor has contributed to brand trust in brand activism efforts.

The conceptual model in this study provided strongly reasonable evidence to predict the brand activism trust. It is confirmed by evaluating the R square value of the model, which stated the model can explain a variance of 64.5% for the level of trust in brand activism.

VII. Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the knowledge of brand activism as a strategy arising in the trust crisis which demands and also motivates businesses to join the "change agents" force (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). The study problematises how consumers perceived messages and acknowledge the practice efforts of brands can moderate their trust in the activism efforts of a brand. Previous literature presents a status quo that a majority of consumers today expect brands to perform as activists and utilise their ability to spread influence for the common good values. However, consumers also doubt that brands are using activism for clout without authenticity (Vradenburg et al., 2020; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). Consumers think that the activism strategy that brands are carrying out is a "trustwashing" strategy (Edelman, 2019). This study advanced our understanding of brand activism through the cognitive trust aspect (Johnson & Grayson, 2005; Kim et al., 2019), by exploring predictor factors that can affect the trust in activism, which lead to forming a hypothesis to answer the question: Which factor has contributed to brand trust in brand activism efforts?

By applying Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) as the theoretical framework and developing hypotheses based on literature closely related to trust, messages and authenticity in the marketing field, the study has provided additional information about brand activism implications. The research results found clear support for the four hypotheses that consumers' brand activism trust can be affected by four aspects in the implementation of an activism campaign: the level of favourability of messages, to what extent they are persuaded by argument strength of messages, how they observe the continuity of activism activities and how they evaluate the credibility of activism activities. The conceptual model is well structured with a result of 64.5% variance of dependent variable being explained by independent variables. Overall, these findings are in accordance with findings of brand trust reported by Grace & O'Cass (2005), Krystallis & Chrysochou (2014), Kim et al. (2019), and Portal et al. (2018). However, when comparing our results to those of older studies, it must be pointed out that no other studies investigate brand trust in the context of brand activism.

Overall, this study may be a promising aspect in evaluating brand activism by dissecting discourse and practical approaches. The research provides empirical evidence for analysing and evaluating the trust levels in brand activism from the perspective of consumers. There are

several limitations to this approach; however, the study can be a starting indicator for further exploration.

7.1. Implications

The research contributed to both academic and practical implications in the field of strategic communication. On the theoretical ground, the study reaffirmed a number of theories and conceptual models in perceived messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Zhao et al., 2011) and brand trust (Johnson & Grayson, 2005; Portal et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2019) through experimenting them in a new concept of brand communication. It leads to contribution to furthering findings for the new brand activism literature. The empirical findings in the research can also cast a new light on the concern of understanding brand activism as a long-term strategy (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). It also provides evidence to argue for the "trust washing" in the brand activism debate (Vradenburg et al., 2020; Edelman, 2019).

By investigating two specific cases of brand activism campaigns in the beauty industry, the study contributes examples of the emerging areas in that consumers expect the brands to take action. Results gained from the analysis can also improve understanding of how the beauty brands can challenge their nature of building a perfect image to be perceived as socially responsible by their own targeted consumers. It also further enhances the belief that while taking a stance is a key opponent in making brand activism distinguishable, the adoption of a progressive stance will help the company increase their brand equity (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). The evidence also shows a hint that Generation Z might be even more conscious than Millennials about globalisation problems (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).

On the practical side, the research is a further examination of the concern raised by corporates and communication organisations about the high expectation of consumers, especially young generations, in business social responsibility (Sprout Social, 2017; Cone Communication, 2017). There is a lack of trust in the purpose of activism activities as detected in previous surveys (Edelman, 2019) and there are debates on how to change state of affairs. The result of this study might evoke that the brand should take a close look at what is the priority of consumers, the emerging problems on-trend or difficulties that they found a feeling of relevant and connected. It is also said in many previous studies that the consumers demand actions; however, this study provide evidence to support that what makes brand activism a new

evolution in corporate sociopolitical involvement is their presence in voicing out against social injustice. The consumers might not know much about the brand's activism history and how activism activities are implemented, however, they want to "hear" the strong declaration from the brand. The results of this research can be used as a reference for more in-depth practical research on carrying out activism strategies and activities.

7.2. Limitations

Although the research provided and suggested some potential insights for future research in brand and communication, there are some limitations to be noticed. As mentioned in Chapter 04, the convenience sampling method might be not the ideal approach for finding a sample with a high chance of representing the population. Due to the time constraints, the study also neglected some aspects of the demographic profile, such as the educational and cultural background of respondents, their level of concern with sociopolitical issues and so on. There might be more additional factors with the possibility of controlling the examined model; there are suggestions for future research to test samples in more concrete conditions. The study also fails to narrow down the geographical location due to the method of publishing the survey. Future researchers might want to investigate the problem with a more specific and a greater range of participants in specific countries and regions.

There are still unanswered questions and uncertainties in the relationship among variables, and it is suggested that future research should look for more possibilities of factors influencing the brand trust in brand activism. The correlation between factors also needs to be examined more carefully. The study is approaching problems through the quantitative method; thereby, it cannot approach complex perception of humans. Future research should consider another approach method and philosophy to provide in-depth understanding of the problem.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Advertisement

Dove Campaign

HELPING 40 MILLION
YOUNG PEOPLE
BUILD SELF-ESTEEM

Dove

From 2004 to 2020. Download our educational
tools for free at dove.com/selfesteem

Dove

Helping girls see themselves
in a positive light

Dove is partnering with Cartoon Network to help
20 million young people build self-esteem.

Dove
self-esteem
project | CN
CARTOON NETWORK.

The Body Shop Campaign

RISE UP WITH SELF LOVE

"Self-love is being confident in your own skin, in your whole being. Loving, caring and showing respect to who you really are."

Zainab Al-Eqabi, Motivational Speaker & Para-athlete

The Body Shop posted a video to playlist **Self Love Street**.
July 26, 2021 · 🌐

Meet us on Self Love Street where we're getting to know Fran, Leila & Olivia, 3 housemates who are dealing with insecurities triggered by modern life.

💔 Not finding love online.
📱 Poor self-esteem after being trolled.
🤳 Frustration at not being able to capture a flattering selfie.

Unfortunately there are many of us who can relate to these insecurities, but instead of being held back by self-doubt, each housemate chooses self-love 🙌. Tune into Love Island on ITV2 tonight at 9pm to see the advert debut. 🌴 💚

If you are experiencing feelings of self-doubt, visit our online hub for empowering self-love tips: https://bit.ly/3BPuDPH #SelfLoveUprising

The Body Shop Malaysia ✔
March 29, 2021 · 🌐

Keep the self-love movement going strong! ❤️ Nearly a quarter of those who are on social media often compare themselves to people they know on social media, compared to just one in ten of those who are on social media less than an hour a day. This can affect our self-esteem.

One thing we highly recommend to do is to mute/unfollow accounts that aren't doing you any good. You have the power to curate your feed! 💪💕

💭 What are your thoughts? And what else can we do? Tell us in the comments. 👇

📖 Read our full Global Self Love Index report here: https://bit.ly/31tKkeI

⭐ If you haven't watched our leading lights Nandini Balakrishnan and Natalie Hussain share their thoughts on self-love yet, you can find it on our Instagram TV tab!

#SelfLoveUprising #TheBodyShopMalaysia

TRUE OR FALSE?

High social media users have higher levels of self-love.

Appendix 2. SPSS Output

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: BrandTrust_IndexNew

Scatterplot
Dependent Variable: BrandTrust_IndexNew
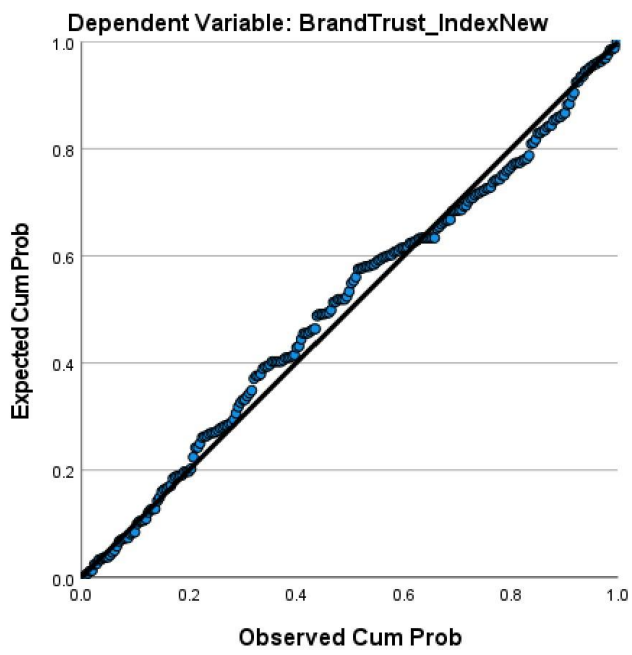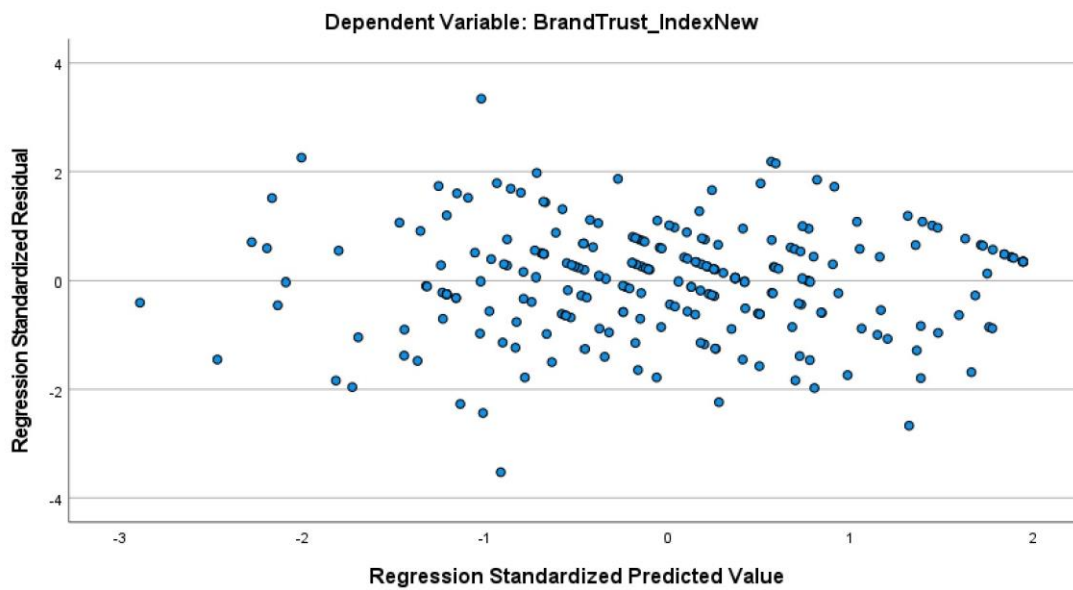
Appendix 3. Questionnaire

Brand Activism: A look at self-love campaigns by beauty brands

Hi,

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

I am doing research for a master thesis about how the brands in beauty industry take a stand and engage with social issues.

Therefore I am curious to hear your awareness and perception about this topic.

It will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete this questionnaire. All responses will be anonymized and analyzed only for the purpose of thesis research.

I truly appreciate your insight and your time. Your opinions would be greatly helpful to understand more about brand and their activism from the perspective of consumers.

If you have more in-depth comments, suggestions or any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me via this information:

Ngoc Nguyen

Email: ba3605ng-s@student.lu.se

LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/ngocbaont/

Year of birth *

Your answer

Gender *

○ Male

○ Female

○ Prefer not to say

Please choose a number randomly. *

After choosing the option, you will be navigated to different questionaire pages.

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

Next   Page 1 of 3   Clear form

Dove Questionnaire

Dove - Self-Esteem Project

Dove launched The Self-Esteem project in 2004.

Dove created a programme to develop and increase body confidence and self-esteem in young people through educational program. The project's aim is to empower 250 million young people by 2030.

Here is a collection of social media posts and adverstiments of the campaign.

(Advertisement in Appendix 1.)

Do you use the beauty and personal care products of Dove (makeup, skincare, *
bath and hair treatment,...)?

I never use = 1 | I rarely use = 2 | I sometimes use = 3 | I often use = 4 | I always use = 5

	1	2	3	4	5	
I never use	O	O	O	O	O	I always use

Q.1 How do you feel about the messages?

Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

I like the messages of the advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

I react favourably to the messages of the advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

I feel positive about the messages of the advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

The messages of the advertisements in the campaign are good *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

The messages of the advertisements in the campaign do a good job of promoting self-esteem *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

I am happy with the messages of advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

Q.2 What do you think about the messages
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The messages in the campaign are the reason for self-esteem that is believable *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign are the reason for self-esteem that is convincing *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign give a reason for self-esteem that is important to me *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	O	O	O	O	O	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign help me feel confident about self-esteem *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign help me and other peers increase self-esteem *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign put thoughts in my mind about wanting to improve self-esteem. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign put thoughts in my mind about not wanting to obey so-called standard beauty trends *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Overall, how much do you agree or disagree with the message about self-esteem that the brand promote? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages gave strong reasons to encourage self-esteem *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Q.3 What is your opinion about the brand's continuity in activism ?

Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The brand is consistent over time in promoting the self-esteem values *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand offers continuity in promoting the self-esteem values *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand has a clear concept of self-esteem that it pursues *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Q.4 What is your opinion about the brand's continuity in activism ?
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The brand will not betray its messages about self-esteem and it is proven through its real actions to tackle the challenge *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand is dishonest to promote self-esteem *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

My experience with the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises * to promote self-esteem

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Through their actions, it can be said that the brand's commitment to the self- * love is credible

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Q.5 Overall, depending on provided information and from your personal experience with Dove and their product, what is your opinion about their social activism?
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The brand approaches the topic "self-esteem" with professionalism and dedication *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Given Dove's contributions to promote "self-esteem", I see no reason to doubt their competence in fighting for social issues *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand is honest in tackling social challenges through both communications and practical actions *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

I can rely on Dove not to make their products and service going against their commitment with promoting diverse and equal values of "self-esteem" *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

It is safe to say that Dove is fighting for good values *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The Body Shop Questionnaire

(Advertisement in Appendix 1.)

Do you use the beauty and personal care products of The Body Shop (makeup, *
skincare, bath and hair treatment,...)?

I never use = 1 | I rarely use = 2 | I sometimes use = 3 | I often use = 4 | I always use = 5

	1	2	3	4	5	
I never use	○	○	○	○	○	I always use

Q.1 How do you feel about the messages?
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

I like the messages of the advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

I react favourably to the messages of the advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

I feel positive about the messages of the advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages of the advertisements in the campaign are good *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages of the advertisements in the campaign do a good job of promoting self-love *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

I am happy with the messages of advertisements in the campaign *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Q.2 What do you think about the messages?
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The messages in the campaign are the reason for self-love that is believable *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign are the reason for self-love that is convincing *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign give a reason for self-love that is important to me *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign help me feel confident about self-love *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign help me and other peers increase self-love *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign put thoughts in my mind about wanting to improve self-love. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The messages in the campaign put thoughts in my mind about not wanting to obey so-called standard beauty trends *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Overall, how much do you agree or disagree with the message about self-love that the brand promote? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

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The messages gave strong reasons to encourage self-love *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Q.3 What is your opinion about the brand's continuity in activism ?
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The brand is consistent over time in promoting the self-love values *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand offers continuity in promoting the self-love values *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand has a clear concept of self-love that it pursues *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Q.4 What do you think about the brand and their activism activities?
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The brand will not betray its messages about self-love and it is proven through its real actions to tackle the challenge *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand is dishonest to promote self-love *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

My experience with the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises to promote self-love *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Through their actions, it can be said that the brand's commitment to the self-love is credible *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Q.5 Overall, depending on provided information and from your personal experience with The Body Shop and their product, what is your opinion about their social activism?
Strongly Disagree = 1 | Disagree = 2 | Neutral = 3 | Agree = 4 | Strongly Agree = 5

The brand approaches the topic "self-love" with professionalism and dedication *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Given The Body Shop's contributions to promote "self-love", I see no reason to doubt their competence in fighting for social issues *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

The brand is honest in tackling social challenges through both communications and practical actions *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

I can rely on The Body Shop not to make their products and service going against their commitment with promoting diverse and equal values of "self-love" *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

It is safe to say that The Body Shop is fighting for good values *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree