

MDDM

Master's Degree Program in
Data-Driven Marketing

**Exploring the Impact of Brand Activism on Consumer
Engagement and Corporate Outcomes in the Pharmaceutical
Industry**

Inês Duarte Monteiro

Master Thesis

presented as partial requirement for obtaining a Master's Degree in Data-Driven Marketing

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

**Exploring the Impact of Brand Activism on Consumer Engagement and Corporate
Outcomes in the Pharmaceutical Industry**

by

Inês Duarte Monteiro

Master Thesis presented as partial requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in Data-Driven Marketing, with a specialization in Marketing Intelligence

Supervised by

Marlon Dalmoro

July, 2024

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism, any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration. I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Rules of Conduct and Code of Honor from the NOVA Information Management School.

[Lisbon, July 14th of 2024]

DEDICATION

I am really grateful to all of the participants who kindly offered their time and insights into this study. Your helpful experiences have significantly enhanced the findings and increased our grasp of the problem.

I am also thankful to my supporting parents, relatives, friends (particularly Inês), and boyfriend for their continuous encouragement and support.

Finally, I want to express gratitude to my supervisor, Marlon Dalmoro, for his unwavering support and direction during this journey.

This research would not have been feasible without your trust.

ABSTRACT

Brand Activism, in which firms communicate their perspectives on social and political issues, is gaining appeal among marketers and academics. However, this strategy is linked to politically and culturally sensitive matters, which raise the risk of reputational and financial losses if not handled effectively. One of the most essential lessons learned from brand development is that consumer engagement is critical to brand reliability and advancement since it is a leading indicator of sales volume, cost reduction, and brand recommendations. Despite the rising tendency in other businesses, the pharmaceutical industry has yet to adopt many public opinions on these concerns. This study seeks to fill this vacuum by investigating the influence of brand activism activities on customer attitudes and behavior toward the sector, as well as assessing and categorizing the many types of brand activism campaigns undertaken by pharmaceutical businesses. The study utilizes qualitative research methods, such as theme analysis of interviews and campaigns. The study's findings show the usefulness of discussing concepts such as empowerment, mental health, and empathy in developing deeper customer interactions. It also emphasized the necessity of strategic and ethical communication in building brand trust and reputation in the business.

KEYWORDS

Brand Activism; Pharmaceutical Industry; Consumer Behavior; Purchase Intention; Consumer Perception;

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Literature review	4
2.1 Evolution of Brand Activism: Navigating Through Time.....	4
2.1.1 Understanding the Nuances: CSR, ESG, and the Distinctive Essence of Brand Activism.....	7
2.2 Balancing Acts: Unraveling the Dual Outcomes of Brand Activism	9
2.2.1 The impact of Brand Activism on Consumers behavior	12
2.3 Understanding the Pharmaceutical perspective on Brand Activism actions	14
3. Methodology	17
3.1 Research design and method	17
3.2 Data collection method	17
4. Results and Discussion.....	23
4.1 Results.....	23
4.1.1 Thematic analysis.....	23
4.1.2 Interview analysis	33
5. Discussion	38
5.1 Theoretical contributions	40
5.2 Practical Implications.....	41
6. Conclusions and Future Research	43
6.1 Limitations of the study.....	44
6.2 Future Research.....	44
Bibliographical References	46
Appendix.....	51
Appendix A – Semi-Structured Script Interview Managers.....	51
Appendix B - Semi-Structured Script Interview Consumers.....	53
Appendix C – Content Analysis of Campaigns	55
Appendix D – Ethics Committee	72

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework.....	16
Figure 2 - <i>See What's Possible</i> campaign by Johnson & Johnson.....	24
Figure 3 - <i>Skin Out Loud</i> campaign by Beiersdorf.....	25
Figure 4 - <i>Rethink Soft</i> campaign by Beiersdorf.....	25
Figure 5 - <i>Strength in Numbers</i> campaign by Beiersdorf.....	26
Figure 6 - <i>Tu Decides</i> campaign by Bayer.....	27
Figure 7 – <i>Smelling Like Fish Down There</i> campaign by Bayer.....	27
Figure 8 - <i>Father's Day</i> campaign by Bayer.....	28
Figure 9 - <i>Freedom Comes from Within</i> Campaign by Bayer.....	28
Figure 10 – <i>Pfizer Talks: Mental Health</i> – Season 5 Campaign by Pfizer.....	29
Figure 11 - <i>Pfizer Talks: Sexuality</i> - Season 6 Campaign by Pfizer.....	30

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Specific objectives and respective techniques.....	18
Table 2 – Interviewees' sociodemographic characteristics	20
Table 3 – Campaigns analyzed in the study.....	21

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape, the urgency of interest in Brand Activism is evident among marketers and academics globally (Shetty, Venkataramaiah, & Anand, 2019). According to Edelman's 2022 global trust barometer, there is a fall in people's faith in democracy and the government, along with a strong conviction that businesses should be doing more to solve societal issues (Verlegh, 2024). This trend is particularly remarkable as traditional businesses, rooted in the market for an extended period, face formidable competition from emerging, purpose-driven entities that actively position themselves as advocates for societal improvement (Eyada, 2020).

Aligned with Korschun (2021), there has been a historical tendency for brand managers to avoid entanglements in political conflicts. However, nowadays, a growing number of companies aspire to reconcile financial success with societal goals by precisely navigating the elaborate ground of political dynamics. Particularly, an evident trend is emerging, with brands progressively vocalizing their perspectives on socially controversial issues, strategically aligning themselves with public opinions to actively engage with societal concerns. Eyada (2020), underscores the contemporary societal shift towards heightened consciousness regarding the imperative to operate sustainably. This change has led to the emergence of the phenomenon known as "Brand Activism", which can be characterized as adopting an activist stance and openly articulating one's perspective on a cause or issue (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). It is crucial to note, however, that activism often revolves around highly contentious, divisive, and polarizing themes. Consequently, companies not adequately prepared for this scenario face the imminent risk of enduring substantial reputational and financial losses (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Brand activism provides a practical challenge for businesses, however it has prompted significant academic interest in the field. In its 2020-2022 report, the Marketing Science Institute (MSI, 2020) identified Brand Activism as a significant topic of research in the marketing field. Two years later, in the 2022-2024 report, the Institute (MSI, 2022) addresses the necessity of studying the effects of Brand Activism on customer behavior. We can conclude with these necessities for more research, that the scene of Brand Activism has been evolving rapidly, with more companies stepping into the realm of expressing their stances on socio-political issues. This emphasizes the importance of brand activism in some industries, such as pharmaceuticals,

due to their specific qualities and the comparatively low prevalence of public activism. However, within the pharmaceutical industry, this form of public activism has been relatively limited, presenting an intriguing area for exploration.

Despite the possible advantages of supporting social causes, pharmaceutical firms often avoid linking their brands to activist movements. Kobrak (2013), claims that pharmaceutical businesses place a special emphasis on their reputation because of their complex scientific work and the possible, deliberate, or unintentional, effects that their goods may have on life and death. This risk-averse nature of the pharmaceutical industry sets the stage for an exploration of how Brand Activism, with its potential for controversy and divisiveness, intersects with the pharmaceutical sector's commitment to maintaining a sterling reputation.

Schmidt et al. (2021) emphasize that brands, through providing emotional and self-expression benefits, exert influence on consumers' overall well-being. This influence is further extended as brand consumption, intertwined with the values upheld by brands, aids customers in shaping their identities and sense of self. In this context, Brand Activism acts as a powerful communication tool, articulating the principles and values that a brand prioritizes. Customers' reactions to brand activism campaigns can be either positive or negative, depending on how much the brand upholds or deviates from the social norms that its target audience accepts and shares (Warren & McGraw, 2016 cited in Cammorata et al., 2021). Whenever the brand aligns with the audience's cultural, social, political, or environmental principles and convictions, the reaction of customers may be positive because they identify with the position taken by the brand (Shetty, et al., 2019) and the company's message.

In the modern business model, active participation in societal discourse has become increasingly vital for brands. Data from Sprout Social (2023) underscores this shift, revealing that 70% of consumers now contend that brands should articulate their opinions on social and political issues. Among consumers who endorse Brand Activism on social issues, 66% believe in the transformative power of brands to effect tangible societal change.

This research seeks to shed light on a relatively unexplored area within the pharmaceutical industry, aiming to understand the dynamics of Brand Activism and its impact on consumer perspective. By understanding consumer reactions, the findings can guide pharmaceutical companies in formulating effective activism strategies aligned with consumer expectations,

potentially paving the way for more meaningful engagements with societal issues. So, the research question established for this research is “In this particular context, how can brand activism affect consumer involvement and business outcomes given the dynamic and ever-changing pharmaceutical sector landscape?”. To answer this question, three objectives were determined: identifying the predominant types of Brand Activism campaigns initiated by pharmaceutical companies; understanding how consumers perceive and engage with pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns across various platforms, including social networks and websites; exploring how consumer engagement in pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns influence their perception and purchase intentions towards the industry.

This dissertation aims to uncover insights into consumer engagement and motivations concerning pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns. This could include understanding why certain campaigns resonate more with consumers and the factors that influence their engagement. Also, assess the impact of these initiatives on consumer perceptions of pharmaceutical companies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EVOLUTION OF BRAND ACTIVISM: NAVIGATING THROUGH TIME

In the contemporary setting of the world of businesses, activism has gained prominence. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2024), activism is defined as “the activity of working to achieve political or social change, especially as a member of an organization with particular aims”. The 21st century's heightened environmental and social concerns have compelled companies to swiftly adapt and assume a leadership role in addressing these issues (Cammarota, D'Arco, Marino & Resciniti, 2023).

Traditionally, brands have been marketed primarily based on their performance attributes and positioning strategies, as emphasized by Sarkar and Kotler (2020). However, in today's scenery, this approach alone is no longer adequate. Overall, corporations' adoption of Brand Activism activities may be seen as a response to requests to be more responsible and to take active and public stands in favor/against what is considered right/wrong (Moorman, 2020; Swaminathan et al., 2020). According to Hodgson and Brooks (2007), businesses may take on the role of true activists by connecting, critiquing, and influencing social interactions and society in the direction of a better world.

In response to heightened competition where quality and price parity exist, many businesses have turned to social-cause advertising (Eyada, 2020). This approach connects with target audiences by addressing issues close to their hearts, including confidence, women empowerment, social justice, feminism, climate change, racism, and political concerns. Eyada's (2020) affirmation is that brands express their opinions on these causes, sometimes extending their efforts beyond advertising to actively supporting charities or advocating for principles.

In the same point of view, Sarkar and Kotler (2020) point out the evolving nature of brand purpose. They argue that it is no longer sufficient for companies to merely articulate a higher purpose, instead, their actions must align with that vision. The contemporary focus has shifted towards the tangible actions a brand takes in the real world, as these actions serve as powerful messages to both consumers and society at large.

Shetty, Venkataramaiah, and Anand (2019) elaborate on the diverse manifestations of Brand Activism, encompassing public expression of opinions, advocacy for causes, financial

contributions to social issues, and communication of stances on various matters through marketing and advertising. This proactive engagement, not only generates visibility and interest for the company, but also proves instrumental in attracting its target consumer base. Accordingly, other authors agree that raising awareness and promoting behavioral and sociopolitical change are the primary goals of Brand Activism (Eilert & Cherup, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Furthermore, scholars such as Aronsson and Kato (2021) categorize Brand Activism into regressive, neutral, or progressive types. The regressive perspective rejects addressing current societal issues, while the progressive approach involves contributing to solutions that benefit society. In the same line Vredenburg et al. (2020), affirms that an activist brand may focus on progressive or conservative topics and seek to advance or obstruct social development. Sarkar and Kotler (2020) present a nuanced perspective, highlighting that activism within businesses need not always be progressive; it can also manifest as regressive, indicating a broader spectrum of possibilities within Brand Activism strategies. One prominent example highlighted by the authors (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020) is the case of the Big Tobacco industry, representing a stark instance of regressive activism – in this case, the tobacco industry historically denied the detrimental effects of its products, despite internal studies revealing otherwise, and their marketing strategies even glorified smoking, knowingly causing harm to consumers, making it the poster child for regressive activism.

Conversely, Sarkar and Kotler (2020), underscore the rise of progressive activism in various industries. They identify a growing number of businesses driven by purposes beyond profit, actively striving to address pressing societal issues.

In 2020, pivotal events, such as the #BlackLivesMatter movement, brought social justice movements to the forefront, marking a significant moment when activism gained heightened attention in society (Belle, 2020). This shift emphasized the growing importance of activism in people's lives and urged companies to reevaluate their roles in contributing to societal improvement.

According to Manfredi-Sanchez (2019) Brand Activism, as a strategy, seeks to influence customers through campaigns based on political principles. This phenomenon comprises a shift in organizational communication management and social policy duties with the goal of having

a positive influence by addressing the issues that must be addressed and societal reforms that must be undertaken. In the same line of thought as Manfredi-Sanchez, the definition proposed by Sarkar and Kotler (2020) for Brand Activism categorizes it as business efforts directed towards promoting, impeding, or steering social, political, economic, and environmental transformations.

According to Sibai et al. (2020), a brand may be considered activist if it upholds moral principles, challenges prevailing opinions, and seeks to advance social welfare. In the same point of view, for Sarkar and Kotler (2020), Brand Activism has evolved as a values-driven agenda for businesses concerned about the future of society and the health of the world. The same authors categorize the pressing difficulties confronting society into six main categories, capturing a range of societal concerns:

- Social Activism: Encompasses issues related to societal and communal problems, including education, healthcare, social security, privacy, consumer protection, and various equality aspects such as gender, LGBT, race, age, among others.
- Workplace Activism: Focuses on governance matters within companies, such as company structure, CEO compensation, worker remuneration, labor and union relations, supply chain management, and corporate governance.
- Political Activism: Engages with issues related to lobbying, privatization, voting rights, and policy matters within governmental structures.
- Environmental Activism: Addresses concerns revolving around conservation, ecocide, land use, air and water pollution, emission control, and adherence to environmental laws and regulations.
- Economic Activism: Deals with wage and tax policies impacting income inequality and wealth redistribution.
- Legal Activism: Concerned with laws and regulations affecting businesses, including tax laws, citizenship regulations, and employment legislation.

According to Christian Toit (2016), referenced in Miguel and Miranda (2022), businesses are becoming more vocal on matters of society since it aligns with their brand values, which may put them at risk of alienating some stakeholder groups. In line with Sarkar and Kotler (2020),

companies that are in positions of authority and influence should actively pursue justice, rather than passively accepting injustice.

According to Katsikeas et al. (2016), KPIs such as customer attitude, product-market performance, customer behavior, and customer-level performance can all be applied to assess how Brand Activism affects operational performance across the complete brand value chain model. Additionally, the impact of brand activism on organizational performance may also be measured in terms of financial market performance, investor returns, equity risk, or accounting metrics like sales revenue, profit, and revenue growth.

According to studies, there is a slight likelihood of beneficial brand activism, but there is a significant risk of negative brand activism on consumer opinions (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). Moreover, it is anticipated that Brand Activism would have effects beyond performance results. This potential comprises actions that consider modifications to laws and policies, the impact on injustice and social inequality, the enhancement of social welfare and the environment, and shifts in public and/or cultural opinion (Koch, 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018; Vredenburg et al., 2020).

2.1.1 UNDERSTANDING THE NUANCES: CSR, ESG, AND THE DISTINCTIVE ESSENCE OF BRAND ACTIVISM

Brand Activism is claimed to be an evolution of CSR that focuses on the socio-political spectrum, and interest in this notion has recently increased (Aronsson & Kato, 2021). Sarkar and Kotler (2020) affirm that Brand Activism is a natural progression beyond the values-driven Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) programs that are reforming businesses throughout the world much too slowly.

While CSR emphasizes corporate citizenship, Brand Activism transcends this paradigm by directly engaging with significant societal challenges, necessitating corporations to remain adapted to evolving stakeholder concerns (Paine, 2020).

As per the Corporate Governance Institute (2023), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices play a crucial role in raising external awareness of a business's ethical conduct. Companies incorporating actionable ESG criteria not only demonstrate a long-term vision but also emerge as attractive investment options. In essence, ESG serves as an evaluation of a

company's morality concerning people and the environment. The Corporate Governance Institute (2023) notes that, while the emphasis may have historically been on profitability, governance has now taken precedence. To summarize, ESG provides quantifiable goals, enhances business valuation, and increases available financial resources. Investors utilize ESG as a tool to assess the sustainability of a company.

Chernev and Blair (2015) hypothesize that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is commonly viewed as a strategy to enhance business reputation and cultivate consumer trust. However, they contend that the implications of CSR extend beyond its role in public relations and fostering goodwill among customers. The authors argue that CSR can significantly shape how customers perceive a company's products. One characteristic that sets Brand Activism apart of this definition, is its fundamental concern for the most important problems facing society (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020). At this stage, it is important to recognize the various stages currently taking place in the approach to social issues by brands and differentiate them:

1. Marketing orientation - Cause Marketing Initiatives;
2. Company orientation - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies and Governance, Environmental and Social (ESG) programs;
3. Society orientation - Brand Activism;

Marchiondo (2022), indicates that people place a lesser value on Brand Activism compared to Corporate Social Responsibility. Brand Activism is perceived by the customers as a marketing tactic employed to stay prominent in consumer discussions, whereas Corporate Social Responsibility is positively regarded.

As per Korschun (2021), Brand Activism distinguishes itself from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), lobbying, and other forms of political influence by virtue of two distinctive features. Primarily, Brand Activism entails the explicit declaration of a company's stance, a characteristic that sets it apart from alternative forms of political influence, such as lobbying. The author posits that Brand Activism constitutes a public manifestation executed through advertising, social media channels, and public relations.

Furthermore, as posited by Korschun (2021), the construct of Brand Activism encompasses advocacy as a fundamental constituent. Unlike mere adherence to societal responsibilities, Brand Activism seeks to exert influence over public sentiment and the dynamics of individual

engagement with political authorities. For instance, whereas a socially responsible corporation may take pride in its initiatives related to LGBTQ issues, an activist entity transcends this threshold by actively fostering awareness and garnering support for the cause (Korschun, 2021).

In conformity with Kotler (2021), Brand Activism is effecting a transformation in the conceptualization of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), transitioning from the pejorative practice of "greenwashing" to the more substantive commitment of "walking the talk" concerning sustainability and social responsibility.

In accordance with the insights of Wettstein and Baur (2016), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) places paramount importance on the tangible outcomes of actions, such as the enhancement of reputation and sales, often superseding the foundational principles that underlie a firm's operations. The broader societal perspective generally regards CSR endeavors favorably. Brand Activism, in contrast, directs its focus towards issues that may not be universally acknowledged as urgent concerns, exemplified by its engagement with topics like homelessness.

2.2 BALANCING ACTS: UNRAVELING THE DUAL OUTCOMES OF BRAND ACTIVISM

Drawing from the insights of Graham et al. (2009), the moral foundations theory posits that individuals' moral judgments on specific issues may vary, influenced by their emphasis on five foundational principles: care (versus harm), fairness (versus cheating), loyalty (versus betrayal), authority (versus subversion), and purity (versus immorality). Brand Activism introduces moral challenges that society is still in the process of resolving.

The position a brand takes on socio-political issues serves as a reflection of its moral values. For instance, a brand opposing gender quotas might prioritize values such as loyalty to in-groups and transparency. In the same line, a company that offers corporate daycare services may prioritize moral values related to care and justice (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2018).

The findings made by Eyada (2020) provide insight into how customer views are changing and how this is affecting marketing tactics. Due to the constant onslaught of product marketing across numerous media outlets, consumers have developed stronger beliefs. To effectively

engage their audience, marketers need to understand how consumer views are changing and modify their marketing strategy appropriately.

Cammarota et al. (2023), presents a conceptual framework illustrating the antecedents, intervening factors, and outcomes of Brand Activism. The key outcomes, examined from a business perspective, comprehend brand impact, consumer impact, employee impact, financial impact, and effects on other stakeholders. For a more granular examination, we will emphasize two specific dimensions:

- Within the realm of the **brand concept**, Brand Activism is observed to impact dimensions such as: brand image, brand reputation, visibility, positioning, repositioning, and legitimacy.
- Conversely, within the **consumer concept**, Cammarota et al (2023) assert that Brand Activism is noted to influence dimensions such as: consumer purchase intention, consumer support, customer engagement, customer loyalty, brand advocacy, brand aversion, and brand boycott.

Agreeing with the evidence presented above, the research conducted by Miguel and Miranda (2023) reveals that well-executed Brand Activism strategies yield a spectrum of positive outcomes such as brand support, enhanced reputation, increased sales volume, augmented market value, amplified online exposure, greater social media engagement, heightened purchase intention, bolstered customer loyalty, and an augmented willingness among consumers to pay higher prices.

Furthermore, when scrutinized from the standpoint of civil society, Brand Activism is associated with consequences such as the restructuring of markets, revisions in regulations and laws, influence on social norms, and the initiation and fortification of social movements (Cammarota et. Al, 2023). This dual perspective underscores the intricate nature of Brand Activism and its extensive implications spanning both business and societal realms.

Sarkar and Kotler (2020) also discuss the business benefits of Brand Activism, quoting Unilever CEO Alan Jope, who emphasizes the correlation between purpose-driven brands and growth. Jope highlights that purpose not only enhances brand relevance but also stimulates discussions, increases market penetration, and decreases price sensitivity. This conviction has led Unilever

to commit that every brand they own embodies a clear purpose. As stated by Shetty, Venkataramaiah, and Anand (2019), a combination of art and science is necessary for effective brand activism. If done well, it may help a company's values become more relatable to its customers; if done poorly, it could drive away its devoted clientele.

According to Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), a heightened level of self-brand similarity fosters stronger consumer identification, consequently yielding a positive attitude towards the brand, increased purchase intentions, and heightened brand advocacy. The authors assert that when consumers align with a brand's moral stance, there is a subsequent uptick in sales and positive brand associations. Conversely, if consumers disagree or perceive a brand's activist actions as "woke washing," the identification with the brand diminishes, leading to decreased sales and more negative attitudes towards the brand.

Also outlined by Miguel and Miranda (2023), ineffective Brand Activism can precipitate a range of adverse consequences for instance stakeholder discontent, a decline in brand reputation, challenges in attracting and retaining customers, instances of boycotts, reduced sales, diminished cash flow, and a decline in stock prices. Furthermore, ineffective Brand Activism may incite anti-brand behavior and result in a notable decrease in consumer purchase intent.

Blom (2020), argues that even if some consumers support a business's ideas, if the company's activities contradict its declared beliefs, even supporters of the company's values may condemn it for lacking credibility, which might result in negative consequences.

Also, as per Eyada (2020), there's a delicate balance between staying current and potentially sparking controversy, which can negatively impact businesses. As consumers become more discerning about authenticity and purpose in brand messaging, brands must be cautious about aligning themselves with social and political issues. For Eyada (2020), to effectively engage with consumers, nowadays, it is required not just to understand their preferences but also to be authentic and purpose-driven in addressing societal concerns, and to maintain positive brand-consumer relationships.

In the same line of thought, as the authors mentioned previously, Shetty et. al (2019) argues that Brand Activism might have adverse effects on a company's core customer base if not aligned with the business's fundamental values, ethics, and vision. It could be perceived as a

superficial marketing tactic and, in some instances, could trigger backlash or boycotts from consumers with differing social, cultural, political, and environmental perspectives.

According to Vredenburg et al. (2020), the efficacy of an activist campaign is shaped by factors such as self-brand resemblance, consumer-brand identity, and the alignment of the prosocial cause with the brand's mission. Striking an appropriate balance between brand representation and activism proves to be a challenging endeavor.

Despite this, Miguel and Miranda (2023) assert that stakeholder misinterpretation may manifest, particularly if individuals disagree with or feel offended by the company's expressed opinions (Barros, 2019 in Miguel & Miranda, 2023). This underscores the delicate balance companies must navigate when engaging in Brand Activism, recognizing that the alignment with social issues may generate both positive and adverse reactions from their stakeholders.

This nuanced perspective highlights the intricate and multifaceted nature of the impact wielded by Brand Activism across various facets of both the brand itself and consumer perceptions.

2.2.1 THE IMPACT OF BRAND ACTIVISM ON CONSUMERS BEHAVIOR

Marketing is an organization's systematic endeavor to build lucrative customer relationships. It involves the acquisition of new consumers and the nurturing of existing customer relationships, ensuring an enduring delivery of value to customers over time (Armstrong, Adam, Denize, & Kotler, 2014). Moreover, when businesses and brands connect with their target audience on deeper emotional levels beyond pricing or product quality, it fosters stronger engagement (Shetty, Venkataramaiah & Anand, 2019).

Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) identified an asymmetric relationship between consumer-brand identification, sentiments, and purchasing behavior within the context of Brand Activism. The research revealed that when customers disagreed with a brand's moral stance, it had adverse effects on their beliefs, intentions, and behavior. However, when consumers agreed with a brand's moral stance, there were no significant beneficial effects.

To gauge the influence of Brand Activism on company performance, it's essential to delve into the Consumer-Brand Identification (CBI) hypothesis. In the same line of thought as Mukherjee and Althuizen, Tuškej, Golob, and Podnar (2013), posited that customers tend to forge stronger relationships with businesses with which they identify. Building upon this, Stokburger-Sauer et

al. (2012) emphasize that a heightened degree of CBI brings notable advantages to the firm, including increased brand advocacy, purchase intention, and brand loyalty among customers.

As per Kubetzek (2023), Brand Activism serves as a tool to evaluate a consumer's moral alignment with a particular brand. It can aid in determining whether a brand resonates with and aligns with an individual's moral principles.

Aronsson and Kato (2021) assert that modern consumers, particularly the millennial generation, exhibit elevated expectations compared to earlier cohorts. They are socially conscious, educated, and driven by ideals beyond mere price and quality considerations. This demographic group, shaped by prevalent issues like environmental pollution, societal unrest, and other persistent challenges, demands that businesses extend their concerns beyond profits to encompass community welfare and global well-being. In consonance with that line of thinking, to Eyada (2020), customers are no longer just passive recipients of information from advertisements; instead, they are now more engaged and share values and opinions that all brands need to consider. In accordance with the company's goal, vision, and values, brands must demonstrate their ethical responsibility by associating with social issues, adhering to the notion of cause marketing, and engaging in activism.

With the description of today's society's necessities and wishes, we can assert that boycotting or changing their purchase intention is a form of activism from consumers also (Lightfoot, 2019). Furthermore, Lightfoot (2019) explicitly defines consumer activism as a manifestation of activism undertaken by individuals through their engagement in the market. This participatory dimension manifests through actions such as deliberately choosing to purchase fair-trade items or refraining from patronizing companies associated with contentious labor practices. In essence, consumer activism represents a dynamic intersection between individual consumer choices and socio-political advocacy, thereby underscoring its nuanced role within the broader landscape of political participation.

Sarkar and Kotler (2020) propose three distinct avenues for Brand Activism firms seeking to engage with their consumers: following them, leading them, or collaborating with them to co-create a desirable future. In their exploration of connecting with consumers and extending beyond, the authors introduce two approaches:

- The Internet of Purpose: This approach positions the product as an activist tool and catalyst. It involves leveraging the product itself to further activism. The product becomes a means to engage consumers in supporting social or environmental causes, fostering a sense of purpose and activism through its use.
- The Purpose Platform: This strategy involves the company creating a movement centered around the Common Good. It goes beyond merely selling a product; it aims to build a broader movement or community focused on societal well-being. This approach engages both society and consumers, uniting them under a shared purpose that transcends mere transactional relationships.

In accordance with Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020), when consumers find themselves in disagreement with a brand's social or political stance, it leads to a divergence in moral standards. Such consumer-brand discord results in a diminished sense of consumer-brand identity, diminishing the likelihood of consumers choosing to purchase the product. In contrast, it amplifies brand advocacy and brand loyalty. The rationale behind this phenomenon lies in individuals perceiving their moral underpinnings as inherently "right," superior, or the normative standard. In this context, consumers may fail to discern anything distinctive in a business aligning with a cause they already endorse, as they steadfastly believe that their moral principles hold singular significance. Consequently, there is a lack of discernible augmentation in customer brand recognition, potentially diminishing the positive impact on the company (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).

2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE PHARMACEUTICAL PERSPECTIVE ON BRAND ACTIVISM ACTIONS

As we could understand from the information presented before, one of the many different dimensions of a brand impacted by Brand Activism is reputation, further than that, according to Vredenburg et al. (2020), consumer response to Brand Activism is also influenced by brand reputation. That stated it is very important to understand the importance of reputation for Pharmaceutical Industry Brands and maybe understand their reluctance to apply an activist strategy on their brands.

As Smith (2008) defends, a company's success cannot be determined just by its earnings in the dynamic business environment of today. Also, in the global market, the pharmaceutical business faces formidable obstacles on both economic and political levels. One of the most

demanding groups of external stakeholders influencing the sector is the general public, followed by governments and customers.

To define reputation, we can follow the perspective of Kobrak (2013), asserting that reputation is a term that is important to commercial activity, although it may be difficult to define. However, like patents and trademarks, reputation may assist businesses in drawing in clients and achieving the size and scope efficiencies that allow them to invest in machinery, facilities, and expertise. Looking at the Pharmaceutical Industry scenario, and according to the report from RepTrak. (2022), before the pandemic, the public felt deceived by the business; as drug costs increased and public mistrust increased, people began to turn to alternative, holistic therapies rather than conventional treatment.

However, the first vaccination program in the nation was launched in Q1 of 2021, which coincided with a notable improvement in the U.S. Pharma Reputation Score from Average to Strong. It was hypothesized by researchers that this 3.4-point gain may climb further when vaccination rates rose. Despite a great start, Pharma's reputation started to erode in June 2021, which signaled the start of a significant slump. Over the course of the year, the industry's Reputation Score declined generally, falling by 2.71% from January to December.

In that report, we can understand more than just the state of the reputation score of this Industry. Through the seven drivers of reputation, that can give us insights of the stakeholder perception of a brand, from RepTrak (2022) - Product/Service; Innovation; Workplace; Conduct; Citizenship; Leadership; and Performance - we can identify that the three categories with the biggest point decreases were Leadership, Citizenship, and Conduct. The conduct driver evaluates the ethical behavior, transparency, and fairness of a company; citizenship track the efforts of a company to enhance the world to a better place; and leadership assesses if a company is effectively managed.

Profits play a significant part in the business, but pharmaceutical firms must develop strong brand recognition and, consequently, strong corporate awareness among customers to achieve better profits over the long term (Smith, 2008).

Today, in contrast to many years ago, the pharmaceutical industry reputation is not different from industries like financial or tobacco (Kessel, 2014). It is estimated that more than 40% of a

company's market capitalization is based on intangible assets – including reputation (Brigham & Linssen, 2010). Kessel (2014) identified nine strategies to restore the pharmaceutical industry's reputation, one of those strategies being “Do good and do it loudly”. The author explains that it is very important for the industry to focus on improving their reputation in order to enhance loyalty from various stakeholders and to increase sales lastly.

To sum up, the pharmaceutical industry's hesitation to engage in brand activism may be attributed to the necessity of protecting its reputation, attending to stakeholder concerns, and navigating the intricate terrain of public opinion. Pharmaceutical businesses may handle brand activism carefully to reduce reputational risks and preserve stakeholder confidence, even when it has the potential to improve brand image and benefit society.

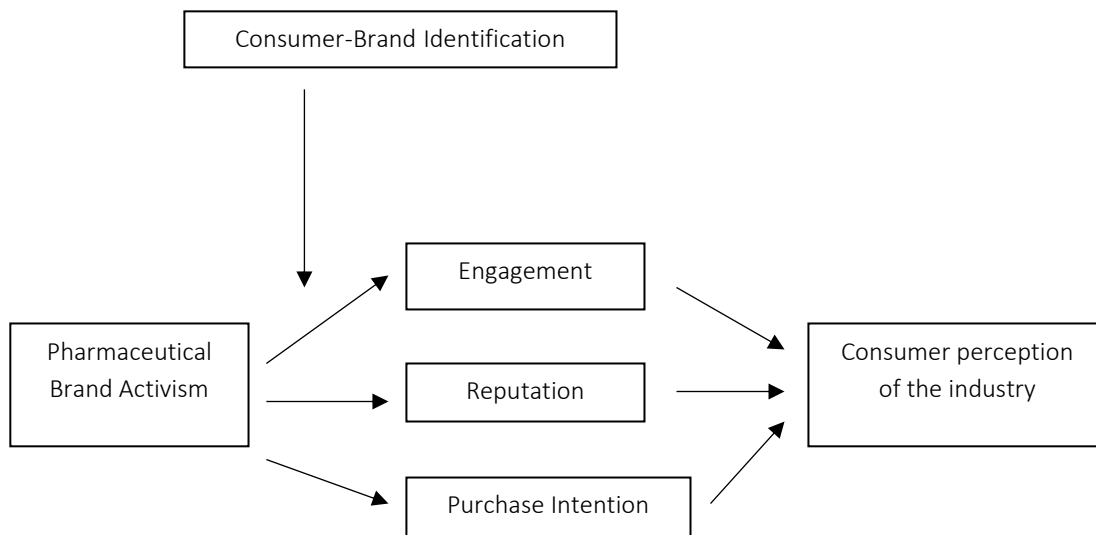


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This model explores how the activism campaigns undertaken by pharmaceutical brands translates into shifts in the consumer perception of the sector, which then influences engagement, reputation, and purchase intention, by taking consumer brand identification into account as a critical mediator.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

To address the research question and objectives, the present study adopts a qualitative, exploratory approach. The study's exploratory technique was selected considering the paucity of previous research on the subject of brand activism in the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the lack of studies looking at how consumers and business outcomes perceive this relatively new phenomenon. This approach is especially suitable when the study question is novel and hasn't been adequately studied in a particular community or sample yet (Creswell, 2009).

Understanding, explaining, exploring, discovering, and clarifying many facets of human phenomena—such as circumstances, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences—in a particular group or environment is the main objective of qualitative research (Kumar, 2018). Because of this, this technique gives the researcher a way to interpret the individuals' perceptions of the events under investigation—especially the study participants (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, deductive reasoning is frequently the foundation of qualitative study design, which aims to uncover underlying patterns, meanings, and insights (Kumar, 2018). Qualitative research designs are further characterized by their inherent adaptability and emergent character, with adaptive processes that develop in response to novel findings and nuanced contextual information.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Primary and secondary sources were the two data gathering techniques taken into consideration in this study, as mentioned by Kumar (2018). To achieve the objectives settled the study uses a range of suitable research techniques, such as semi-structured interviews as a primary source and ethnographic content analysis as a secondary source.

The specific goals of the study and the methods of research that were employed are described in Table 1.

Table 1 - Specific objectives and respective techniques

Objectives	Techniques
Identify the predominant types of Brand Activism campaigns initiated by pharmaceutical companies	Ethnographic Content Analysis of campaigns published on social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube or companies' websites, news articles, and blog articles) between 2018 and 2023 from well-established companies from the Pharmaceutical Industry. Semi-structured interviews with 3 marketeers from different companies in the pharmaceutical industry.
Understand how consumers perceive and engage with pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns on various platforms, including social networks and websites	Semi-structured interviews with 10 people from different academic backgrounds and with different types of relation to or knowledge of the Pharmaceutical Industry.
Explore how consumer engagement in pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns influences their perception and purchase intention towards the industry	Semi-structured interviews with 10 people from different academic backgrounds and with different types of relation to or knowledge of the Pharmaceutical Industry.

Source: Author's elaboration

Qualitative research employs a variety of techniques for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). One such technique that offers a thorough yet flexible way to gather data is the interview survey strategy due to its adaptability and capacity to extract comprehensive information. For the current study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as one of the methods for data collection. A loose form of an interview script is used when the interviewer prepares a list of

questions or topics to guide the discussion in semi-structured interviews – this approach allows great flexibility in terms of subject and organization, subsequently offering benefits for qualitative research (Kumar, 2018).

Moreover, semi-structured interviews are particularly recommended in circumstances where the research topic is less known as they enable a detailed investigation of emerging themes and perspectives (Creswell, 2009). In line with Creswell's (2009) logic, this study's examination of brand activism in the pharmaceutical industry is an example of a topic that meets the requirements of this qualitative technique.

Participant selection is the act of choosing a subset (referred to as a sample) from a larger population to estimate or forecast the prevalence of an unknown element, condition, or result (Kumar, 2018). The selection procedure in qualitative research is less dependent on sample size and participant selection technique because the main objective is to explore a broad range of perspectives and experiences. According to Kumar (2018), purposive, judgmental, expert, accidental, and snowball participant selection are examples of non-probability sample designs that are commonly used in qualitative research.

For the three interviews that were conducted to achieve the first objective, participants were selected from the marketing departments of reputable pharmaceutical firms using purposive sampling - key personnel from many renowned pharmaceutical companies (*Bayer, Boiron, and Servier*) were interviewed. The purpose of the selection process was to gather a variety of perspectives from professionals who are actively engaged in creating and carrying out marketing projects in the pharmaceutical industry. Additionally, ten respondents were selected to address the second and third objectives to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Of the ten participants, five of them had connections to the pharmaceutical industry, while the remaining did not. This deliberate selection process was designed to gather different perspectives on consumer participation with Brand Activism initiatives from both inside and outside the company. It was given fictitious identities in order to preserve the privacy of every interviewee.

Table 2 – Interviewees' sociodemographic characteristics

	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Profession
1	<i>Tomás</i>	42	Male	Marketing Director
2	<i>Catarina</i>	26	Female	Product Manager
3	<i>José</i>	26	Male	Digital Marketing
4	<i>Luísa</i>	25	Female	Medical Scientific Liaison
5	<i>Paula</i>	28	Female	Medical Scientific Liaison
6	<i>M^a Francisca</i>	29	Female	Marketing Team
7	<i>Joaquim</i>	26	Male	Finance Department
8	<i>Júlia</i>	27	Female	Marketing Team
9	<i>Sara</i>	23	Female	Student
10	<i>Pedro</i>	23	Male	Designer
11	<i>Claúdia</i>	24	Female	Digital Marketing
12	<i>Sofia</i>	23	Female	TV story editor
13	<i>Alberto</i>	23	Male	Student

Source: Author's elaboration

For this study purpose, content analysis of news articles, press releases, and blog posts as well as brand activism campaigns promoted by pharmaceutical companies on social media platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter were utilized as one analytical tool. Regarding the content analysis part, was done a examination of different Brand Activism campaigns, from 2015 to 2022. The ten campaigns that were examined were initiated by renowned pharmaceutical companies and were promoted in a range of media, including company websites, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and blog or news articles (Table 3).

Table 3 – Campaigns analyzed in the study

	Campaign name	Company
1	<i>See What's Possible</i>	Johnson & Johnson
2	<i>Skin Out Loud</i>	Beiersdorf
3	<i>Rethink Soft</i>	Beiersdorf
4	<i>Strength in Numbers</i>	Beiersdorf
5	<i>Tu decides</i>	Bayer
6	<i>Smelling Like Fish Down There</i>	Bayer
7	<i>Father's Day Campaign</i>	Bayer
8	<i>Freedom Comes from Within</i>	Bayer
9	<i>Get ready. Get set. Get old</i>	Pfizer
10	<i>Pfizer Talks</i>	Pfizer

Source: Author's elaboration

For this study, was used an ethnographic content analysis to gather data. In contrast to the quantitative methods of content analysis, Altheide (1996), as referenced in Bryman (2015), introduced an original approach known as ethnographic content analysis (ECA). Unlike traditional quantitative content analysis, Altheide's ECA emphasizes a qualitative viewpoint, focusing on the richness and depth of textual material. Rather than only measuring and categorizing the content, ECA investigates the contextual nuances, meanings, and underlying narratives that are implicit in the text (Bryman, 2015). Moreover, ECA is a flexible and iterative approach that lets researchers adjust their analytical plan in response to the evolving complexities of the data.

The obtained data for this study was examined using a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves carefully examining qualitative data to identify and extract significant themes that

appear in transcripts and the relationships between them (Bryman, 2015). This method requires a systematic approach to data processing, usually starting with transcript coding - which entails dissecting the data into its constituent parts and assigning a code to each one. These codes serve as unique identifiers for certain concepts, topics, or patterns that emerge in the data (Bryman, 2015).

Thematic analysis also involves determining the relationships between many codes. A more thorough understanding of the underlying phenomena under research is facilitated by an examination of the relationships and intersections between several themes or notions (Bryman, 2015).

To identify and analyze the data collected, an organized matrix (Appendix C) was created for the study's ethnographic content analysis component. The matrix consists of eleven distinct categories, each of which was carefully selected to represent important aspects of pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns: Campaign Name, Pharmaceutical Company, Campaign Objective, Target Audience, Platform(s), Key Message(s), Type of Activism, Tactics/Strategies, Tone/Emotion, Visual Elements and Call to Action. In Appendix C, we can find the information retrieved for the analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The established study aims were followed during the data collection. The topic findings from the analysis of ten distinct campaigns run by four major pharmaceutical corporations *Johnson & Johnson*, *Beiersdorf*, *Pfizer*, and *Bayer* are interpreted and examined in the part that follows. In addition, it will also decipher and evaluate thirteen distinct interviews with individuals with various ties and connections to the pharmaceutical sector.

To address these objectives, two distinct semi-structured interview scripts (see Appendix A) were created and distributed to three distinct groups: pharmaceutical company employees, consumers with no ties to the pharmaceutical industry, and consumers who had or have a professional relationship with the industry. Concerning the two interview scripts developed (Appendix A), it is worth noticing that a set of questions appears in both Interview Scripts A and B. This strategic redundancy intends to involve diverse operators in research activities to provide their perspectives on the same topic matter, as well as to facilitate comparative analysis that is consistent with the study's overall structure. In the following chapter, we will discuss the interviews with the employees of the pharmaceutical industry companies.

4.1 RESULTS

4.1.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

To provide light on the main ideas and strategies employed, this study delves deeply into the underlying themes, trends, and outcomes of the campaign materials. This study attempts to provide important insights into the key topics these organizations tackle by carefully examining the campaign's language and substance.

Following a thorough search through several campaigns from various companies, 10 campaigns were chosen depending on the topic they covered (Appendix C):

1. "See What's Possible" – Johnson & Johnson
2. "Skin Out Loud" – Beiersdorf
3. "Rethink Soft" – Beiersdorf
4. "Strength in Numbers" – Beiersdorf
5. "Tu decides" – Bayer Portugal

6. "Smelling Like Fish Down There" – Bayer
7. "Father's Day Campaign" – Bayer
8. "Freedom Comes from Within" – Bayer
9. "Get ready. Get set. Get old" – Pfizer
10. "Pfizer Talks" – Pfizer

The ***See What's Possible*** campaign from Johnson & Johnson's brand Neutrogena is centered around women's self-expression and empowerment. Given that, the campaign's imagery features individuals pursuing their passions and interests, it specifically aims to inspire viewers to believe that every person has the power to alter the world and to value their individuality. Strong and upbeat, the images are vibrant with cheerful content that encourages viewers to share photos with the #SeeWhatsPossible hashtag. With this campaign, Neutrogena aimed to promote women's empowerment by challenging consumers to recognize the potential of women in pursuing any task, job, or challenge they choose.



Figure 2 – *See What's Possible* campaign by Johnson & Johnson

The ***Skin Out Loud*** campaign by Beiersdorf's brand NIVEA, is an excellent illustration of a company advocating for diversity and inclusivity in the pharmaceutical business. Through the use of diverse skin types with different colors and textures, as well as actual individuals sharing their skin experiences, the campaign aims to promote skin inclusivity. The campaign's general tone reflects a combination of compassion and joy, and it invites viewers to join in the conversation by tagging #SkinOutLoud in all social media posts. Nivea, with this campaign, seeks

to encourage acceptance and celebration of all skin types, colors, and textures, promoting a more inclusive and diverse perception of beauty overall.



Figure 3 – *Skin Out Loud* campaign by Beiersdorf

Beiersdorf unveiled another NIVEA campaign called *Rethink Soft*, which places a strong emphasis on empathy and understanding in social interactions. Instead of reinforcing stereotypical ideas about gender and masculinity, advertising emphasizes the need for compassion and intimacy in today's society. With a strong narrative and inspiring message, the commercial introduces the company's line of skincare products labeled with the same qualities and uses the campaign hashtag, #RethinkSoft, to encourage viewers to join a wider discussion on deeds of kindness and empathy. In conclusion, with this campaign, Nivea is advocating for a more inclusive and flexible understanding of gender and masculinity, challenging the conventional gender roles present in nowadays society.



Figure 4 – *Rethink Soft* campaign by Beiersdorf

Finally, men are encouraged to join the battle for mental health by Beiersdorf's NIVEA Men's ***Strength in Numbers***. The campaign's objectives are to raise men's awareness of mental health issues and lessen the stigma around them by promoting conversations and offering tools and assistance. The advertisement, which consists of genuine images and an inspirational statement, encourages men to take care of their mental health by using their products in their self-care routine and to share their own stories with the hashtag #NIVEAMenMentalHealth. NIVEA's campaign aims to raise awareness of mental health among men, as well as promote open talks, and decrease the stigma associated with men's mental health concerns.

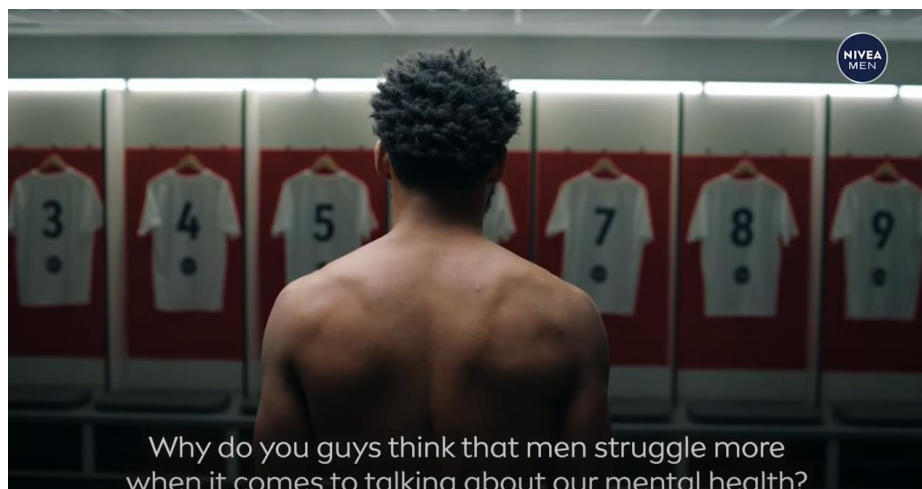


Figure 5 - *Strength in Numbers* campaign by Beiersdorf

The ***Tu Decides*** campaign exemplifies Bayer's dedication to educating women about sexual health issues and advocating for them. A digital chat show with interactive elements including live Q&A with professional guests like Tânia Graça, Margarida Santos, Jessica Athayde, and Carolina Torres is one of the campaign's primary aspects. Another is the dissemination of factual information and conversation about women's sexual health and their different options. The clever and educational, but light tone invites viewers to participate in the discussion, visit Bayer's social media pages for further resources and assistance, and use the hashtag #TuDecides. This is an example of social activism, promoting educational information regarding sexual health and contraception.



Figure 6 – *Tu Decides* campaign by Bayer

Conversely, the *Smelling Like Fish Down There* campaign purposefully disturbs the audience to draw attention to the taboo topic of talking about female vaginal health. In order to urge women to pay attention to their vaginas without feeling guilty or embarrassed about it, the advertisement placed a strong emphasis on grabbing the audience's attention through the use of provocative images and clear, precise wording. Even though the video's content is not quite evident, the vibrant colors and imagery convey a range of emotional feelings, from discomfort to hilarity.



Figure 7 – *Smelling Like Fish Down There* campaign by Bayer

The *Father's Day Campaign: Bepantol Baby* emphasizes the relationship between dads and children while reminding customers that the Bepantol Baby products may help with routine baby care duties. The campaign highlights Bepantol Baby and their support for moments of

affection and bonding via riding the wave of parenthood by evoking feelings of love and intimacy through heartwarming stories and images of fathers and their kids. The tone of the message is one of emotional appeal, nostalgia, and an invitation to celebrate Father's Day and include Bepantol Baby goods into everyday life.

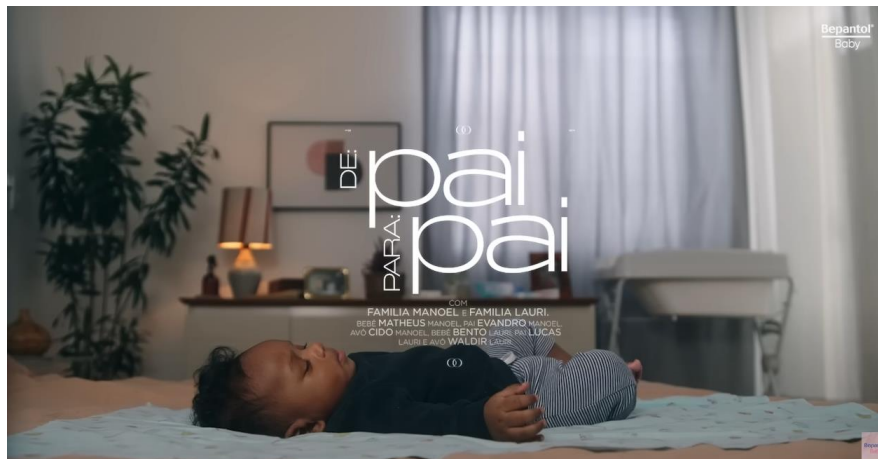


Figure 8 – Father's Day campaign by Bayer

Finally, *Freedom Comes from Within* is an extremely creative and inspirational campaign in which Brazilian singer and actor Manu Gavassi is involved. By first collaborating with a number of influencers and conducting a social experiment in front of viewers on the company's social media accounts, the brand is encouraging authenticity and pushing individuals to be themselves on social media. The voiceover adopts an authoritative, engaging, and positive tone, encouraging viewers to utilize the campaign hashtag (#FreedomComesFromWithin) and learn more about Bayer products and their roles in supporting women's strength and individuality.



Figure 9 – Freedom Comes from Within Campaign by Bayer

As there is no video or imagery available right now of the Pfizer campaign ***Get Ready. Get Set. Get Old***, the following points correctly describe the information on the press release. The campaign had the objective of boosting awareness and education, and to eliminate the negative connotations related with aging. As a matter of fact, Pfizer's marketing was built on debunking the notion that growing older is inherently bad. To achieve this goal, the organization employed gripping stories and accurate data to convince the general public that seniors from all backgrounds should be honored for the contributions they can still make to society even as they age. The movement demands an end to ageism in society, a shift in public perception of aging, and the support of legislation and policies that will provide the elderly with appropriate care.

Just the fifth and sixth seasons of the campaign were included in the case study when it came to the examination of the "Pfizer Talks". Throughout ***Pfizer Talks: Mental Health – Season 5***, Pfizer hopes to dispel the stigma associated with mental diseases and promote psychological well-being by fostering conversation and providing thorough information. In order to do this, the campaign records different conversations with various professionals and educates the public through social media campaigns and community events. It is a supportive, empowering, and educated approach. Recognizing that mental illness affects people of all ages and from all walks of life, Pfizer urges people to prioritize their mental health, seek treatment without delay, and talk about mental illness more frequently in order to dispel the stigma associated with those who experience mental health issues.



Figure 10 – Pfizer Talks: Mental Health – Season 5 Campaign by Pfizer

Similar to this, the goal of *Pfizer Talks: Sexuality - Season 6* is to dispel common misunderstandings and misconceptions while also tearing down the social taboo associated with talking about sexual health. This project seeks to remove the social and psychological obstacles that frequently prevent people from having frank and educated discussions about sexual health concerns. Pfizer promotes awareness and encouragement by equipping specialists in sexuality education with accurate information about sexual health and empathy for others. The campaign encourages people to talk about sexuality openly, seek out more information on their own, and enjoy happy and healthy sexual lives rather than be ashamed of this topic.



Figure 11 – Pfizer Talks: Sexuality - Season 6 Campaign by Pfizer

Pharmaceutical firms such as *Johnson & Johnson*, *Beiersdorf*, *Bayer*, and *Pfizer* have launched multiple projects to address a variety of health and societal challenges via the use of empathy, education, and advocacy tools. Despite the fact that social activism is heavily used in these campaigns and the only type of activism present in these activities, these initiatives illustrate the pharmaceutical industry's commitment to doing actions that promote health and social well-being. These programs, which focus on delivering hope and promoting good life improvements, target varied groups, engage in taboo issues, and promote awareness about the need for education and empathy. Through these initiatives, the corporations hope to create a more educated and empathetic public, encouraging people to make healthier and more informed choices.

The study evaluated ten campaigns to determine the type of Brand Activism utilized, and three interviews were conducted with managers from *Bayer*, *Boiron*, and *Servier* to see how these participants saw the prevalent type of Brand Activism campaigns undertaken by pharmaceutical corporations. The conversations cover a wide range of important topics and well-known pharmaceutical marketing strategies.

Health advocacy is still a prominent topic for brand activism, especially in the pharmaceutical industry. The goal of these initiatives is to increase public awareness of different health-related concerns and to encourage healthier living. A *Novo Nordisk* campaign that tackled issues related to public health, such as shifts in the acceptable range of body sizes, was found to be very pertinent, especially when considering the significance of these topics in building a more robust public health system. These objectives include educating and enabling people to take charge of their own health, as well as raising health literacy on available choices.

Campaigns addressing issues of power and inclusion are essential since the pharmaceutical industry values fair and positive attributes with equal regard. These campaigns aim to dispel myths and barriers that keep people apart and, worse, do not contribute to an improvement in general lifestyle and health. The *Descomplica* campaign by Bayer, which attempts to inform and empower women about contraception methods, is one example. Talking with their doctors and finding out more about the best course of action to take, assists women in making the greatest decision for them. These initiatives show the industry's strong commitment to social issues, such as women's empowerment, that have an impact on people's physical health.

When planning campaigns to organize pharmaceutical brand activism, environmental issues are also crucial considerations. Reducing the quantity of plastic used in packaging and enhancing other areas by lessening the company's carbon footprint are two actions that promote industrial sustainability and that were mentioned during the interviews. These initiatives demonstrate the industry's readiness to embrace eco-friendly business practices and awareness of their environmental effect. Apart from tackling ecological concerns, every one of these initiatives offers an entirely new demographic of consumers prepared to shell out more money for eco-friendly goods.

“Pharmaceutical companies have more obligations than just legal and health issues. They must be part of complex solutions for society, including environmental and social measures.”

(José, Servier)

The pharmaceutical industry's investment initiatives include community and social responsibility. These activities frequently include providing aid to locals, participating in health-care programs, or other social causes.

“Absolutely. I believe brands have a significant responsibility to address these issues, especially social and environmental issues. These efforts can drive meaningful change, given the influence and resources that large corporations possess. In the pharmaceutical industry, this responsibility is particularly heightened, given the direct influence on people's health and wellness.”

(Catarina, Boiron)

Based on the interviews, pharmaceutical brand activism has prioritized issues based on regulatory authorities' and stakeholders' expectations and needs. Pharmaceutical companies are expected to demonstrate high levels of ethical behavior and propose answers to social issues. This regulatory environment encourages health consciousness, environmental stewardship, and social reasons. Furthermore, stakeholders want transparency, ethical standards, and genuine engagement in social concerns, which influence these projects.

“Regulatory expectations, stakeholder demands, and the industry's mission. I have engaged in initiatives related to health literacy because besides aligning with my function and area of work at the time, it was driven by a personal commitment to improving patient knowledge about their medical options.”

(Catarina, Boiron)

Therefore, the interviews show that the main strategic brand activism activities of pharmaceutical businesses are health promotion, community and social contribution, environmental concerns, people's empowerment and diversity, and enhanced health awareness. These initiatives are motivated by the industry's desire to reach health and wellness standards as well as its belief that it has a duty to effect change for the benefit of individuals, the environment, and society at large.

4.1.2 INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

The findings will be presented as follows, in accordance with the aims established in the study objectives. As a result, using the setting established in the previous chapter, the findings resulting from interviews as the major data-gathering approach will be addressed further in this chapter.

4.1.2.1– CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH PHARMACEUTICAL BRAND ACTIVISM: IMPACT ON INDUSTRY PERCEPTION AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

While focusing on the issue, it is critical to investigate customers' views and relationships with pharmaceutical brand activism on various social media platforms, as well as their perceptions and purchase behavior in this industry. The first portion of this study will give data on participants' thoughts and activities toward the topic, gathered from five people who are unaffiliated with any pharmaceutical businesses. This research seeks to give an unbiased view of consumer reactions to pharmaceutical brand activism, providing significant insights into the general public perception of these programs and their potential influence on consumer behavior.

- Consumers without any professional ties to the Pharmaceutical Industry

Customers' reactions to discussions on the roles that businesses play in addressing social, political, and environmental issues brought up by the public vary. After analyzing answers from several interviews, it was observed that every response indicates that companies should act morally and understand that doing so may help them gain the respect of socially conscious customers as well as improve their reputation.

“Nevertheless, while I don't think they have to take on that responsibility, I do tend to favor brands that address these issues and align their actions accordingly over those that don't.”

(Cláudia)

The main focus of this discussion was the necessity for businesses to communicate honestly and freely, especially when handling sensitive topics.

“It depends on the truthfulness of their communication.”

(Sofia)

Respondents emphasized the need for true brand activism as well as refraining from strategies aimed solely at increasing revenues, such as "greenwashing." As a result, they underscored the importance of stating the truth in marketing messages. The mentioning of two examples—Starbucks' anti-Palestinian stance and Nike's support for 'No to Racism'—shows how divergent customers' attitudes may be to the issues that the company debates.

"I think it can go very well or very poorly! If the brand's actions align with the topic they are defending, they can't easily fall prey to negative comments. However, if they have vulnerabilities, it can go wrong. Even if their actions are aligned, things can still go awry."

(Cláudia)

Furthermore, it was commonly considered that many participants were unable to recognize pharmaceutical brand advertising activities. However, the limited number that exists may be seen most clearly in Pfizer's actions, which tied its brand to vaccination promotion during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to two participants, they became aware of the efforts through YouTube or Instagram ads. However, consumer participation in such programs varies; some people actively participate in the arguments presented in these advertisements, while others avoid them entirely.

In addition, the interviews seemed to be quite helpful in illuminating the ways in which brand activity influences customers' decisions and opinions. It was found that none of the five participants reported any change in their purchase intention about pharmaceutical services or goods. In reference to the pharmaceutical business, respondents are similarly circumspect. The industry's importance for public health was underlined once again, and suggestions for enhancement were offered, including cutting back on the number of animals used in product testing and bringing down the price of the products. More specifically, the participants stressed how important it is for the public to perceive pharmaceutical firms as powerful when they engage in Brand Activism in order to strengthen their reputation and foster better customer relations.

"I think it has played an important role in helping their image and reputation because these campaigns help create a relationship with people. By doing this, when it comes to buying

medications or products, the brand can stay top of mind and be chosen by the consumer.”

(Cláudia)

It is clear from the interviews with the consumers without any ties to this industry that values, honesty, and integrity are the driving forces for brand activism over the future of the pharmaceutical sector.

“I think it will involve a strengthened commitment to causes that align with each brand's values, creating empathy with the public.”

(Pedro)

By examining the interviews with these individuals, we can observe the recommendations they made for this industry's future marketing activism initiatives. These recommendations included working with people who align with the company's values, funding socially beneficial research, and encouraging transparency. The interviewees believe that by making these efforts, pharmaceutical companies may gain the credibility and confidence of their consumers.

“Above all, reinforce transparency, as I mentioned before, to give credibility to their efforts for change.” (Pedro Fonseca)

“Invest more in educating people on these topics and raising awareness about their campaigns. Digital platforms can be one solution and promoting partnerships with organizations and governments to meet people's needs.” (Cláudia)

“Partner with influencers who share the brand's values. Fund and communicate research in line with those values.”

(Sofia)

- Consumers with professional ties to the Pharmaceutical Industry

After analyzing five more interviews with people who are either workers in the pharmaceutical industry or have a close association with it, it was found that all five interviewees shared the same opinion: all brands ought to be concerned about social, political, and environmental issues. Participants in the interview reached a consensus on two points: first, companies do shape society's perceptions of them; and second, companies have to be cautious in their

interactions with consumers. The participants underscored the fragile character of interventions in these affairs and highlighted the intricate and perhaps hazardous connections with the political problems.

“Yes, I do think brands have a responsibility to address these topics. However, I believe there's no need for them to be activists on all fronts. When it comes to political issues, it can be challenging to find a position that doesn't exclude some groups. It should be handled with discretion and only if the brand is directly affected.”

(Luísa)

Interview responses provided a variety of opinions on corporations taking public positions on sensitive issues. While some complimented businesses for being willing to confront serious issues, others emphasized the necessity of connecting and warned them not to adopt a veneer or stance that would undermine brand value. Furthermore, while awareness campaigns are considered a sensitive form of sales promotion, respondents stated that they should be used with prudence and not only to boost sales.

“It generally depends on the topic and the purpose of the public stand. Some topics should not be used to promote brand products. Awareness campaigns should not aim to promote sales because then it stops being a public stand and becomes profiting from a situation.”

(Luísa)

Whereas in prior interviews, participants' overall awareness of brand activism activities in the pharmaceutical industry was limited, it was clear that in these they all were aware. When asked for further information on pharmaceutical brand activism, the Bayer *Descomplica* campaign, as well as the Bayer Foundation was mentioned. However, based on these observations, participants decided that the efforts were mostly insufficient or irrelevant, while also recognizing that if some activities were visible and ongoing, they may have a significant impact.

“It's a work in progress. We've come a long way; particularly as younger generations have become more vocal on these topics. Companies follow suit, whether because they feel it's necessary or because they follow their consumers. This leads to the development of relevant policies.”

(Maria Francisca)

Brand activism continues to be an issue that has elicited a wide range of reactions from participants. Some contribute indirectly by enjoying, discussing, and sharing such works. While some consumers participate in campaigns and other activities associated with their favorite brands, others merely follow what is posted on social media. This range of action, in which customers can be labeled as inactive supporters or active participants in brand activism initiatives, demonstrates how consumer engagement can take several forms.

Perceptions of the influence of brand activism varied according to the interviewees. People were agreeing that brand activism can improve industry reputation, while others believe it has little impact on customers. Several participants noted that, while brand activism can impact people's attitudes toward a company and their willingness to buy or make decisions about its products and services, this is not the case with pharmaceutical sector products or services.

“Pharma is different from consumer products. My decisions aren’t significantly influenced by these campaigns in terms of purchasing. However, it might affect where I choose to work or how I perceive companies.”

(Maria Francisca)

The respondents have suggested three ways to enhance the current brand activism activities of pharmaceutical companies. Working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to offer assistance was one of the proposals; other suggestions included investing in digital platforms to attract the attention of consumers and funding honest and open brand activism. Moreover, it was mentioned that to promote authenticity and trust, activism needs to be included in a company's basic values and strategic growth.

5. DISCUSSION

Brand activism is a new phenomenon, particularly in the pharmaceutical sector. These organizations' primary social purpose is to enhance people's health, but they must navigate the hurdles of being a socially responsible corporation and shaping the perception of responsibility. The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of Brand Activism in the pharmaceutical sector, as well as its reception in terms of consumer involvement and desire to purchase the company's products. The research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the performance of Brand Activism by analyzing multiple campaigns from prominent pharmaceutical companies and discussing them with important industry players and observers about this unique marketing tactic in this sector.

This study determined, via an analysis of ten different campaigns, that the four major subjects addressed by pharmaceutical brand activism are advocacy for health, people's empowerment, inclusion, and the environment.

Large pharmaceutical companies are clearly aligned with the objective of enhancing public health initiatives. Campaigns like "Pfizer Talks: Mental Health - Season 5" are intended to help the public improve their mental health by decreasing biases, creating awareness, and spreading useful information. Pfizer's programs aim to address and reduce the societal stigmas associated with mental health disorders, promoting a more educated and supportive environment for those seeking mental health treatment. They must also be careful not to obstruct communication, which suggests a failure to be loyal and honest, and to prevent any unethical judgments, convincing critics that the publication and information provided are bias-free and have no commercial tendencies.

Fighting against cultural prejudices and advocating for reforms in healthcare access demonstrates these companies' greater responsiveness. The "Tu Decides" campaign by Bayer, in Portugal, is an example of best practices since it teaches women about various contraceptive methods and innovatively tackles taboo subjects related to their sexual health. Such programs can increase the trustworthiness of healthcare among particular groups of patients who, first and foremost, can feel alienated from the healthcare discourse or, second, might feel ashamed to discuss their own sexual preferences and lives.

The pharmaceutical industry is increasingly recognizing the need for environmental sustainability. These organizations are devoted to ecologically friendly practices, as seen by interviews about efforts to eliminate plastic packaging. Complete openness in a company's manufacturing supply chain, from raw material procurement to pharmaceutical disposal, may also help to improve environmental stewardship messages. Nonetheless, what is known as 'greenwashing', in which corporations make what might be seen as deceptive signals of their sustainability plans, can severely affect the firms' image if consumers have a poor opinion of it.

Consequently, it was possible to verify the data on brand activism given by Eyada (2020) and identify the types and topics of brand activism that are most common in pharmaceutical sector advertising and that consumers find appealing. This is due to the fact that problems that appeal to consumers' emotions—such as feminism, racism, the environment, women's rights, and confidence—are more likely to garner public attention than other broad subjects. Pharmaceutical businesses are making an attempt to embrace client orientation and trend following, but when it comes to debating complex subjects, they tend to stick to their traditional ways.

As Sarkar and Kotler (2020), identified the different types of brand activism, we can further support the argument that the pharmaceutical industry only participates in brand activism while taking social and environmental activism into consideration. Based on the identified ways of thinking in the pharmaceutical market and the fact that most of the campaigns analyzed for this research resonate with the product as an activist tool, it is possible to conclude that the pharmaceutical industry primarily adopts Sarkar and Kotler's "Internet of Purpose" type (2020).

According to Eyada (2020), it's critical to highlight the tightrope that companies must walk in order to remain relevant, be inclusive, and avoid these tensions. She also stresses the significance of sincerity in discussions and deeds pertaining to social problems. This idea is supported by observations from customer interviews, they have continuously provided incentives for brand activities that don't contain any shady or thrashy features; instead, the brand activities are created in a morally responsible way through cooperation.

To elaborate, Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) observed that brand activism has an asymmetrical relationship with consumer sentiments, brand recognition, and purchase intention. Customers' agreement with a brand's position on a moral problem, on the other

hand, does not appear to be sufficient to increase such positive beliefs, intentions, or behaviors; rather, consumer disagreement with the brand's position on a moral issue appears to have a detrimental impact on the above-mentioned domains. The interviews reveal how individuals see brand activism in terms of brand management, particularly if they work for a pharmaceutical firm. These customers underline the need to maintain a continual watch with comparable attitudes toward potential rewards such as an enterprise's trust and reputation. Customers place a strong emphasis on connections that are genuine, honest, and ethical. This is because they believe that people shouldn't be perceived as dishonest or driven just by financial gain. Pharmaceutical corporations should promote stakeholder involvement, maintain an open-door policy, and engage in honest lobbying, which is more successful than aggressive lobbying. Insiders should use caution to avoid raising suspicions, but both consumers and suppliers value strong relationships and loyalty.

5.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The results of the consumer interviews are inconsistent with previous studies on purchasing behavior and brand activism, especially in the pharmaceutical industry. As Kotler and Sarkar (2017) note, brand activism has the potential to favorably influence consumers' perspectives and choices, however, the data retrieved indicates that pharmaceutical businesses have difficulties in implementing this idea due to the type of products and services they sell.

The purpose-driven brand activism concept put forth by Kotler and Sarkar (2020) aligns with the information gathered from the interviews regarding brand activism, as they highlight the importance of transparency in improving stakeholders' perceptions of the company while addressing the issues and concerns that the movement aims to address. According to Vredenburg et al. (2020), however, self-created, dishonest brand advocacy campaigns or "marketing sustainability" tactics may actually erode consumer faith in the brand, which might have a negative impact on the company's reputation and financial losses.

Within the pharmaceutical sector, whose products are frequently recommended by medical professionals and reimbursed by insurance, brand advocacy could not have a substantial impact on customer conduct. Cost and efficacy are still critical factors in the market for necessities, whether they be resources, services, or commodities. However, brand attractiveness could be more important for the company's non-essential products or services. According to Stokburger-

Sauer et al. (2012), customers may grow more attached to and favor some items over others if they recognize a company's dedication to social or environmental concerns through brand activism. This phenomenon is especially significant in the pharmaceutical industry for over-the-counter pain relievers and cosmetics, where brand impression and values have a greater direct impact on customer choice.

Apathy towards the pharmaceutical business, as revealed by the interview data, inhibits effective brand activism. Consumers may see brand activism with skepticism, doubting the corporations' objectives and wondering whether their purpose is to utilize it as a sort of distraction from concerns such as drug prices or other industry challenges. Such pessimism regarding the industry's reputation mirrors the findings of RepTrak (2022). When designing a brand activism plan for any pharmaceutical firm, keep the following rules in mind: the company must first restore the industry's tarnished reputation before engaging in brand activism effectively. As a result, the industry must capitalize on Kessel's (2014) "do good, do it loudly" strategy.

Lightfoot (2019) defines "consumer activism" as a subgroup of consumers who participate in brand activism discourse, as opposed to observers who could also take part in it. Accordingly, the interview findings support this notion by showing that, although some users utilize social media to discuss their brand activism activities, others only watch YouTube commercials.

5.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Pharmaceutical businesses must devise practical strategies that encourage brand activism and the related message to appeal to customers and uphold their values. When arranging these responsibilities, the sector's social concerns—protecting the environment, promoting mental health, and ensuring access to healthcare—should be given priority. These issues need to be consistent with the fundamental values of the organization in order to remain legitimate. In addition to speaking passionately during one's speech, it's important to show how successful such a proclamation is by doing change, such as initiating community health projects or altering regulations. The involvement of stakeholders such as advocacy organizations, healthcare providers, and employees in the creation and implementation of these campaigns casts doubt on their validity. Using both classic and modern communication techniques can help to

successfully tackle this issue, strengthening the company's relationships with stakeholders and consumers and highlighting the significance of the stated efforts.

Therefore, in order to promote successful and honest brand activism efforts, the pharmaceutical business must interact with stakeholders who are affected by and engaged in change. Advertisers should start by using stakeholder analysis to identify key stakeholders, such as customers, healthcare providers, regulatory bodies, and advocacy groups, all of whom have crucial requirements, expectations, and concerns regarding the advertisement. Having open channels of communication is essential for corporate communication since it allows people to exchange ideas and provide company feedback. This encourages consumer and business trust.

As a result, throughout the campaign's numerous phases, stakeholder participation and engagement increase, suggesting that the activities are truly concentrated on solving urgent issues. Additionally, it's critical to give stakeholders educational resources—such as pamphlets or other materials—to improve their understanding of the situation. You can be sure that they will continue to be open and responsible for doing their jobs because these actions are included in the report. Furthermore, consistent assessment of these benchmarks' effects will increase stakeholder trust.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study aimed to investigate the effect of brand activism on consumer engagement and business results in the pharmaceutical sector. More specifically, the study's research objectives focused on identifying the most common types of Brand Activism campaigns launched by pharmaceutical companies; understanding how consumers perceive and engage with pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns across various platforms, including social networks and websites; and investigating how consumer engagement in pharmaceutical Brand Activism campaigns influences their perception and purchase intentions toward the industry.

The campaigns compiled over the years have focused on several key societal concerns: empowerment, mental health, empathy, and sexual health education. This study demonstrates that as society changes, modern pharmaceutical corporations use care, choice, and health as attractive elements. These are relevant to the target consumer, providing a chance to develop a deep brand relationship. Community-building activities, or rather activities focused on consumer involvement, including in social media sites, such as the possibility of a live question and answer sessions or the usage of hashtags, have also been shown to be very beneficial.

Furthermore, there has been a movement in social marketing tactics for pharmaceutical goods, with the problem-focused approach losing emphasis in favor of the correct conversation of controversial themes. To summarize, when companies tackle these essential concerns, they not only advertise their products but also share knowledge and create a better relationship with the customers.

This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge on the subject of marketing and consumer behavior in the pharmaceutical sector by providing the following insights. Firstly, it provides a thematic overview of current marketing efforts, as well as an assessment of effective customer-acquisition toolkits. Secondly, it analyzes the integration of social concerns into the marketing/advertising communication process, with a focus on social responsiveness. Finally, the study contributes to the literature on consumer behavior by demonstrating how themes like empowerment, empathy, and education may influence customers' perceptions and behaviors toward the industry.

This study found that consumers are responding positively but with some reluctance to brand activism, particularly in the pharmaceutical industry. As a result, it is advised that behavior that adheres to personal norms that are consistent with satisfying the fundamental self-concept would likely elicit a favorable response and result in the restoration of trust in the sector. As a result, lead generation organizations should focus more strategic efforts and communications investments on developing and implementing efficient brand activism campaigns. It also aids in rebuilding client trust and avoiding the perception of being profit-driven.

Managers must emphasize commitment and communication with stakeholders and interested parties in order for brand activism tactics and actions to be effective and improve stakeholder attitudes. It is critical to devote effort to ensuring that pharmaceutical marketing initiatives are very successful and that the business maintains a positive reputation.

6.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is also important to emphasize that this study includes limitations. To begin, it is important to note that the conclusions may be generalized and are unlikely to reflect the overall current situation of the sector or public sentiment since the data analyzed were retrieved from a small number of interviews and campaigns. The analysis results from the study's over-reliance on interviews, the absence of a quantitative component, and its exclusive focus on the qualitative aspect, which raises subjectivity because it depends on participants' subjective perceptions. Furthermore, because the study is based on self-reported data assessed according to conventional standards, it may be impacted by the social desirability effect and respondents' desire to show themselves in the best possible light.

Furthermore, the study lacks nuanced insights that might help comprehend the reception and impact of Brand Activism across different cultures and generations, raising issues about the research's external validity, which may restrict its generalizability.

6.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can be undertaken in the areas listed below based on the findings of the study. Future studies should include a broader and more varied sample of respondents to better reflect the industry and customer attitude. Increasing the number of participants and assuring a wide demographic mix (including age, gender, and patient groups) can help offer a more

complete picture. Including multiple patient groups rather than just customers will allow for a more thorough evaluation of the impact on different sectors.

One method to avoid making premature generalizations is to undertake broader research that includes a wider range of campaigns. It would also be useful to incorporate prior campaigns done in different locations and with diverse cultural backgrounds to see how Brand Activism is perceived.

Longitudinal research is required to better understand the long-term consequences of Brand Activism on consumer behavior, such as changes in purchasing patterns, brand loyalty, and overall customer attitude. These studies might follow participants over time to see how their attitudes and actions change in response to ongoing marketing campaigns.

Thus, if the observed absences are addressed in future studies, Brand Activism in the context of pharmaceutical marketing may be defined in greater detail, allowing for the development of solid marketing strategies while minimizing negative ethical consequences.

In conclusion, these elements are critical as the pharmaceutical sector expands. Leaders in this business are well aware of the opposing goals of profit generation and ethical behavior. Companies in the pharmaceutical industry are not only determined to create positive brand images for their products, but they are also concerned with improving people's quality of life by implementing today's modern marketing techniques based on empathy, support, and education. Marketeers play an important role in striking this balance, by ensuring that promotional messages are funded ethically and efficiently to entice target customers.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

#BrandsGetReal: Brands Creating Change in the Conscious Consumer Era | Sprout Social. (2023, February 6). Sprout Social. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/data/brands-creating-change/>

activism noun - Definition, pictures, pronunciation and usage notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com. (n.d.). <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/activism>

Armstrong, G., Adam, S., Denize, S., & Kotler, P. (2014). *Principles of marketing*. Pearson Australia.

Aronsson & Kato (2021). *Brand Activism: Does it work?* [Master's thesis, Malardalen University Sweden].

Belle, E. (2020). Refinery29. Retrieved from [www.refinery29.com: https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/12/10207922/social-justice-movements-2020covid-black-lives-matter](https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/12/10207922/social-justice-movements-2020covid-black-lives-matter)

Blom, F. (2020). " *Empresas que se posicionam arriscam críticas de dois lados*" - Dagens opinion. (2020, June 16). Dagens Opinion. <https://dagensopinion.se/artikel/foretag-som-tar-stallning-riskerar-kritik-fran-tva-hall/>

Brigham, A.F. & Linssen, S. *Your brand reputational value is irreplaceable. Protect it!* Forbes <http://www.forbes.com/2010/02/01/brand-reputation-value-leadership-managing-ethisphere.html> (February 1, 2010).

Bryman, A. (2015). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cammarota, A., D'Arco, M., Marino, V., & Resciniti, R. (2023). *Brand Activism: A literature review and future research agenda*. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 47(5), 1669-1691.

Cammarota, A., Marino, V., & Resciniti, R. (2021). *Consumer response to brand activism: A multiple Case Study Analysis*. In *Trasformazione digitale dei mercati: il Marketing nella creazione di valore per le imprese e la società* (p. 1).

- Chernev, A., & Blair, S. (2015). *Doing well by doing good: The benevolent halo of corporate social responsibility*. Journal of Consumer Research, 41(6), 1412-1425.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.
- Eilert, M., & Nappier Cherup, A. (2020). *The activist company: Examining a company's pursuit of societal change through corporate activism using an institutional theoretical lens*. Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 39(4), 461-476.
- Eyada, B. (2020). *Brand Activism, the relation and impact on consumer perception: A case study on Nike advertising*. International Journal of Marketing Studies, 12(4), 30-42.
- Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). *Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations*. Journal of personality and social psychology, 96(5), 1029.
- Hodgson, D. L., & Brooks, E. (2007). *Introduction: Activisms*. Women's Studies Quarterly, 35(3/4), 14–25.
- Hollebeek, L. D., Glynn, M. S., & Brodie, R. J. (2014). *Consumer Brand Engagement in Social Media: Conceptualization, Scale Development and Validation*. Journal of Interactive Marketing, 28(2), 149-165.
- Katsikeas, C. S., Morgan, N. A., Leonidou, L. C., & Hult, G. T. M. (2016). *Assessing performance outcomes in marketing*. Journal of Marketing, 80(2), 1–20.
- Kessel, M. (2014). *Restoring the pharmaceutical industry's reputation*. Nature Biotechnology, 32(10), 983-990.
- Kobrak, C. (2013). *The Concept of Reputation in Business History*. Business History Review, 87(4), 763–786. doi:10.1017/S000768051300113X
- Koch, C. H. (2020). *Brands as activists: The Oatly case*. Journal of Brand Management, 27(5), 593-606.
- Korschun, D. (2021). *Brand Activism Is Here to Stay: Here's Why*. NIM Marketing Intelligence Review, 13(2), 10-17.

Kotler, P., & Sarkar, C. (2017). *Finally Brand Activism!* The Marketing Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.marketingjournal.org/finally-brand-activism-philip-kotler-and-christian-sarkar/> (accessed on October 11, 2023).

Sarkar, C., & Kotler, P. (2020). *Brand Activism*. Idea Bite Press.

Kotler, P., Pfoertsch, W., & Sponholz, U. (2021). *H2h marketing: Putting trust and brand in strategic management focus*. Academy of Strategic Management Journal, 20, 1-27.

Kubetzek, P. (2023). *The impact of brand activism on brand equity among Generation Z consumers* (Doctoral dissertation).

Kumar, R. (2018). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. Research methodology, 1-528.

Lightfoot, E. B. (2019). *Consumer activism for social change*. Social work, 64(4), 301-309.

Manfredi-Sánchez, J. L. (2019). *Brand activism*. Communication & Society, 32(4), 343-359.

Marchiondo, E. (2022). *Differences Between Brand Activism and Corporate Social Responsibility in Consumer Perception*. CUNY Academic Works.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Miguel, A., & Miranda, S. (2023). *Brand Activism Effectiveness: The Predictors and Potential Effects of Brand Activist Actions*. Media & Jornalismo, 23(42), 147-164.

Moorman, C. (2020). *Commentary: Brand activism in a political world*. Journal of public policy & marketing, 39(4), 388-392.

MSI Announces 2020-22 Research Priorities - MSI - Marketing Science Institute. (2020, May 7). MSI - Marketing Science Institute. <https://www.msi.org/articles/2020-22-msi-research-priorities-outline-marketers-top-concerns/>

MSI Announces 2022-24 Research Priorities – MSI – Marketing Science Institute. (2022, October 27). MSI - Marketing Science Institute. <https://www.msi.org/article/msi-announces-2022-24-research-priorities/>

Mukherjee, S. & Althuizen, N. (2020). *Brand Activism: Does courting controversy help or hurt a brand?* International Journal of Research in Marketing, 37(4), 772–788.

Paine, L. S. (2020). *Covid-19 Is Rewriting the Rules of Corporate Governance*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2020/10/covid-19-is-rewriting-the-rules-of-corporate-governance>

Pharma, BioTech, and Life Science Industries | RepTrak. (2022). <https://www.reptrak.com/industry/pharmaceutical/>

Schmidt, H. J., Ind, N., Guzman, F., & Kennedy, E. (2021). *Sociopolitical activist brands*. Journal of Product & Brand Management, 31(1), 40-55.

Shetty, A. S., Venkataramaiah, N. B., & Anand, K. (2019). *Brand Activism and millennials: an empirical investigation into the perception of millennials towards Brand Activism*. Problems and perspectives in management, 17(4), 163.

Sibai, O., Mimoun, L., & Boukis, A. (2021). *Authenticating brand activism: Negotiating the boundaries of free speech to make a change*. Psychology & Marketing, 38(10), 1651-1669.

Smith, A. D. (2008). *Corporate social responsibility practices in the pharmaceutical industry*. Business Strategy Series, 9(6), 306-315.

Stokburger-Sauer, N., Ratneshwar, S. & Sen, S. (2012). *Drivers of consumer–brand identification*. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 29(4), 406–418.

Swaminathan, V., Sorescu, A., Steenkamp, J. B. E., O’Guinn, T. C. G., & Schmitt, B. (2020). *Branding in a hyperconnected world: Refocusing theories and rethinking boundaries*. Journal of Marketing, 84(2), 24-46.

Tuškej, U., Golob, U., & Podnar, K. (2013). *The role of consumer–brand identification in building brand relationships*. Journal of business research, 66(1), 53-59.

Verlegh, P. W. (2024). *Perspectives: a research-based guide for brand activism*. International Journal of Advertising, 43(2), 388-402.

Vredenburg, J., Kapitan, S., Spry, A., & Kemper, J.A., 2020. *Brands taking a stand: Authentic Brand Activism or woke washing?* Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, 39, (4), 444-460.

Wettstein, F., & Baur, D. (2016). *“Why should we care about marriage equality?”: Political advocacy as a part of corporate responsibility*. Journal of business ethics, 138, 199-213.

What is the difference between CSR and ESG? (2023, September 25). The Corporate Governance Institute.

<https://www.thecorporategovernanceinstitute.com/insights/lexicon/what-is-the-difference-between-csr-and-esg/>

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – SEMI-STRUCTURED SCRIPT INTERVIEW MANAGERS

Grand Tour Questions:

1. Do you think brands have the responsibility to address social, political or environmental issues?
2. What do you think of brands that take public stands and promote controversial topics?
3. Can you tell me whether your firm has undertaken any Brand Activism campaigns? If so, could you explain the tactics and approaches used by the company to carry out these initiatives?
4. Could you share any incidences or experiences you've had with corporations that engage in activism or social responsibility? How has your firm specifically responded to such industry actions?
5. When deciding whether to support a firm or its products, have you seen any values or causes that resonate strongly with customers? How have customers reacted to these ideals or causes, particularly in terms of your company's offerings?

Engagement with Brand Activism Campaigns:

1. Have you seen any pharmaceutical brand activism campaigns? If so, could you please mention one or two examples?
2. How did you become aware of these initiatives?
3. These initiatives addressed what types of social, political, or environmental issues? Can you identify any recurring theme?
4. How do you perceive the prevalence of themes such as empowerment, health advocacy, and inclusion in brand activism campaigns on the pharmaceutical industry?
5. Why do you believe pharmaceutical companies prioritize social activism themes such as empowerment, health advocacy, and inclusion over other types of activism, such as workplace, political, environmental, economic, or legal activism?
6. What factors or considerations influence this prioritization within the industry? Did you ever engage in any of these initiatives? If so, what drove you to participate in them?

7. Can you describe how you interacted with pharmaceutical Brand Activism content on social media or other platforms?

Perceptions about the Industry:

1. What is your understanding of pharmaceutical corporations' various obligations, which include not just medical and healthcare issues, but also social, political, environmental, legal, and sustainability concerns?
2. What role do you feel pharmaceutical companies should have in addressing social concerns and lobbying for change?
3. Do you feel pharmaceutical corporations have effectively met their responsibility to address a wide range of social, political, environmental, legal, and sustainability concerns?

Impact on Engagement and Reputation:

1. Have pharmaceutical brand activism activities influenced customer involvement with the industry? If so, how have they affected this participation?
2. How do you think these advertising have affected consumers' perceptions of pharmaceutical corporations?
3. Have you observed any changes in your dealings with pharmaceutical products or services since the Brand Activism campaigns?

Influence on Purchase Intention:

1. Do you feel that after seeing Brand Activism advertisements, customers were more likely to purchase pharmaceutical products or services? Could you explain the reasons for their motivation, or lack thereof?
2. In your perspective, do customers rely their purchase decisions on a company's promotion of Brand Activism programs? Why, or why not?
3. Do you think customers evaluate pharmaceutical companies' ethical practices before making a purchasing decision?

Future Expectations and Recommendations:

1. How do you see the future of pharmaceutical brand activism?

2. Do you have any advice for pharmaceutical corporations to enhance their Brand Activism efforts?
3. How can customers be influencing the path of Brand Activism efforts in the pharmaceutical industry?

APPENDIX B - SEMI-STRUCTURED SCRIPT INTERVIEW CONSUMERS

Grand Tour Questions:

1. Do you think brands have the responsibility to address social, political or environmental issues?
2. What do you think of brands that take public stands and promote controversial topics?
3. Do you know any brand that have done this?
4. Could you describe any incidents or experiences you have with corporations engaging in activism or social responsibility?
5. When deciding to support a company or its products, are there any particular values or causes that you are passionate about?

Engagement with Brand Activism Campaigns:

1. Have you seen any pharmaceutical brand activism campaigns? If so, could you please mention one or two examples?
2. How did you become aware of these initiatives?
3. These initiatives addressed what types of social, political, or environmental issues? Can you identify any recurring theme?
4. Did you engage in any of these initiatives? If so, what drove you to participate in them?
5. Can you describe how you interacted with pharmaceutical Brand Activism content on social media or other platforms?

Perceptions about the Industry:

1. What is your understanding of pharmaceutical corporations' various obligations, which include not just medical and healthcare issues, but also social, political, environmental, legal, and sustainability concerns?

2. What role do you feel pharmaceutical companies should have in addressing social concerns and lobbying for change?
3. Do you feel pharmaceutical corporations have effectively met their responsibility to address a wide range of social, political, environmental, legal, and sustainability concerns?

Impact on Engagement and Reputation:

1. Have you seen any changes in your attitudes about the pharmaceutical sector as a result of recent brand advocacy efforts? If so, could you explain how these initiatives affected your involvement or perceptions?
 - a. If you see any changes in your involvement with the pharmaceutical sector as a result of recent brand activism activities, how do you believe these efforts will affect your participation or perceptions?
2. In your perspective, how much have pharmaceutical corporations' brand activism activities influenced the industry's overall image and reputation among consumers?
 - a. In your opinion, how much impact would brand activism initiatives by pharmaceutical corporations have on the industry's overall image and reputation among consumers?
3. Have you seen any changes in your behavior or views regarding pharmaceutical products or services after being exposed to brand activism campaigns? If yes, could you tell me how these advertisements affected your interactions or decision-making processes?
 - a. If you see any changes in your behaviors or views regarding pharmaceutical products or services as a result of exposure to brand activism efforts, how do you believe these campaigns will affect your interactions or decision-making processes?

Influence on Purchase Intention:

1. Have you been motivated to purchase pharmaceutical products or services after seeing any Brand Activism campaigns? Why, or why not?
2. Have you made a purchasing choice based on a company's promotion of a Brand Activism initiative?

3. How do you evaluate pharmaceutical businesses' ethical policies before making a purchase?

Future Expectations and Recommendations:

1. How do you see the future of pharmaceutical brand activism?
2. Do you have any advice for pharmaceutical corporations to enhance their Brand Activism efforts?
3. How do you see customers influencing the path of Brand Activism efforts in the pharmaceutical industry?

APPENDIX C – CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CAMPAIGNS

Campaign Name	See What's Possible	Skin Out Loud	Rethink Soft	Strength in Numbers
Pharmaceutical Company	Johnson & Johnson	Beiersdorf	Beiersdorf	Beiersdorf
Campaign Objective	To promote self-confidence and empower individuals to pursue their goals and dreams.	To celebrate skin diversity and promote inclusivity in beauty standards.	To promote kindness and empathy by challenging traditional perceptions of softness and strength.	To raise awareness about men's mental health issues and encourage open conversations to reduce stigma.
Target Audience	Young adults and individuals interested in skincare and personal grooming.	People of all ages, genders, and skin types who are interested in skincare and beauty.	Consumers of all ages who resonate with messages of kindness, empathy, and social responsibility.	Men of all ages who may be experiencing mental health challenges or who want to support others in their mental health journey.
Platform(s)	Social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), Neutrogena website	YouTube, Social Media (Instagram, Facebook), NIVEA website	Social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), NIVEA website	Digital platforms (website, social media), possibly supplemented by traditional media channels.

Key Message(s)	- Embrace your uniqueness and believe in your potential. - Neutrogena products can help individuals look and feel their best, enabling them to pursue their aspirations with confidence.	- Every skin tells a unique story and should be celebrated. - Embrace your natural beauty and feel confident in your own skin. - NIVEA products cater to diverse skincare needs and are suitable for all skin types.	- Softness is not a sign of weakness but rather a symbol of empathy, kindness, and strength. - Small acts of kindness can have a significant impact on individuals and communities. - NIVEA products embody the values of softness and care, promoting skin health and well-being.	- Mental health is an important issue that affects everyone, including men. - It's okay for men to talk about their mental health and seek support when needed. - NIVEA Men products support men's well-being, both inside and out.
----------------	---	--	--	---

Type of Activism	Empowerment and Self-Expression	Inclusivity and Diversity Advocacy in Beauty	Social Activism (Kindness and Empathy Advocacy)	Mental Health Advocacy
Tactics/Strategies	- Showcasing diverse individuals pursuing their passions and dreams. - Featuring real people sharing their stories of self-expression and achievement. - Highlighting the role of Neutrogena products in enhancing individuals' confidence and self-image. - Leveraging social media platforms to amplify the message and engage with the audience.	- Creating a series of episodes featuring real people sharing their personal skin stories. - Showcasing the beauty of diversity through a range of skin tones, textures, and conditions. - Partnering with influencers and experts to amplify the message of inclusivity. - Leveraging digital platforms to engage with a	- Launching a social media campaign centered around the theme of "Rethink Soft." - Encouraging consumers to share stories and experiences of kindness and empathy using the campaign hashtag (#RethinkSoft). - Partnering with influencers and organizations aligned with	- Launching a digital campaign focused on men's mental health, possibly incorporating video content, articles, and social media posts. - Collaborating with mental health experts and influencers to provide resources and encouragement for men to open up about their mental health. - Utilizing storytelling to highlight personal experiences and the importance of

		broad audience and encourage dialogue.	the campaign's values to amplify its message. - Leveraging user-generated content to foster community engagement and dialogue.	seeking help. - Implementing a call-to-action element encouraging men to share their own mental health stories and support others in their journey. -
Tone/Emotion	Inspirational, aspirational, and uplifting.	Empathetic, celebratory, and uplifting.	Inspirational, thought-provoking, and heartwarming.	Empathetic, supportive, and encouraging.
Visual Elements	- Vibrant and dynamic visuals showcasing individuals pursuing their passions. - High-quality images and videos featuring diverse faces and backgrounds.	- Authentic and heartfelt testimonials from individuals sharing their skin journeys. - Beautifully shot visuals capturing the diversity of skin tones and textures.	- Emotional storytelling through videos, images, and testimonials highlighting acts of kindness and empathy.	- Authentic imagery depicting men of diverse backgrounds and ages engaging in self-care and supportive behaviors. - Video content featuring real stories and

	- Positive and energetic atmosphere to convey a sense of optimism and possibility. - Product shots and demonstrations highlighting the benefits of Neutrogena skincare products.	- Warm and inviting atmosphere to create a sense of connection and acceptance. - Product integration to demonstrate the suitability of NIVEA products for various skin types.	- Warm and inviting visuals evoking feelings of comfort, compassion, and connection. - Product integration to demonstrate the brand's commitment to softness and care. - Vibrant and uplifting imagery to convey the positive impact of kindness on individuals and communities.	experiences related to men's mental health struggles and triumphs. - Positive and uplifting visuals conveying hope and solidarity. - Product integration to showcase how NIVEA Men products can contribute to men's overall well-being.
Call to Action	Encouraging viewers to share their own stories	Encouraging viewers to join the conversation	Encouraging viewers to join the movement	Encouraging men to start conversations

	of empowerment and self-expression using the campaign hashtag (#SeeWhatsPossible) and to explore Neutrogena products for enhancing their confidence and beauty routines.	on social media using the campaign hashtag (#SkinOutLoud), share their own skin stories, and explore NIVEA's range of skincare products designed for diverse needs.	by sharing their own stories of kindness and empathy on social media using the campaign hashtag (#RethinkSoft) and to explore NIVEA's range of skincare products embodying the values of softness and care.	about mental health, share their own experiences using the campaign hashtag (#NIVEAMenMentalHealth), and explore NIVEA Men products as part of their self-care routine.
--	--	---	---	---

Campaign Name	Tu Decides	Smelling Like Fish Down There	Father's Day Campaign: Bepantol Baby	Freedom Comes from Within
Pharmaceutical Company	Bayer	Bayer	Bayer	Bayer
Campaign Objective	To dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding female health issues and promote informed discussions on the topic.	To raise awareness about feminine hygiene and challenge stigma surrounding discussions about vaginal health.	To celebrate the bond between fathers and their children and highlight the role of Bepantol Baby in nurturing that relationship.	To promote self-expression, individuality, and freedom through a co-creation campaign with Manu Gavassi.
Target Audience	Women of all ages who are interested in learning more about their health and well-being, as well as healthcare	Women of reproductive age, particularly those who may feel uncomfortable discussing	Parents, particularly fathers, and families with young children who may use	Young adults and individuals who resonate with messages of self-expression and empowerment.

	professionals and influencers in the field.	vaginal health topics.	Bepantol Baby products.	
Platform(s)	Digital platforms, including streaming platforms (e.g., YouTube, Facebook Live), Bayer's website, and social media channels.	Digital platforms, including social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), news websites, and potentially print media.	Bayer's website, social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), possibly supplemented by traditional media channels.	Social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook), Bayer's website, possibly supplemented by influencer marketing and traditional media channels.
Key Message(s)	- Empower women with accurate information about their health and bodies. - Encourage open and informed conversations about female health issues. - Showcase Bayer's commitment to women's health through education and advocacy.	- Normalize conversations about vaginal health and hygiene. - Emphasize the importance of proper feminine hygiene practices. - Encourage women to prioritize their vaginal health without shame or embarrassment.	- Celebrate the journey of fatherhood and the special bond between fathers and their children. - Showcase Bepantol Baby as a trusted partner in caring for babies' sensitive skin. - Highlight the role of	- Encourage individuals to embrace their uniqueness and express themselves authentically. - Highlight Bayer's commitment to empowering individuals to live life on their own terms. - Showcase Manu Gavassi as a brand ambassador embodying the values of

			Bepant ol Baby in facilitat ing momen ts of connec tion and closene ss betwee n fathers and their childre n.	freedom and self- expression .
Type of Activism	Health Education and Advocacy	Health Advocacy and Awareness	Family Bonding and Product Promotion	Self-Expression and Empowerment
Tactics/Strategie s	- Hosting a digital talk show featuring expert guests discussing various aspects of female health, including debunking myths and addressing common concerns. - Leveraging interactive elements such as live Q&A sessions and	- Using provocative language and imagery to grab attention and spark conversation about feminine hygiene. - Leveraging digital platforms and news outlets to generate buzz and	- Launching a digital campaign centered around Father's Day, featuring heartwarming stories and visuals of fathers and their children.	- Collaborating with Manu Gavassi to co-create content and messaging that resonates with the target audience. - Launching a social media campaign featuring behind-the-scenes footage, interviews, and interactive

	audience polls to engage viewers and encourage participation. - Promoting the talk show through targeted advertising and social media campaigns to reach a wide audience of women and healthcare professionals. - Providing additional resources and information on Bayer's website for viewers to learn more about female health topics.	drive engagement with the campaign. - Incorporating humor to help break down barriers and make the topic more approachable. - Providing educational content and resources on proper feminine hygiene practices and common vaginal health concerns.	- Leveraging social media platforms to engage with the audience and encourage them to share their own fatherhood experiences. - Incorporating product messaging and demonstrations to showcase the benefits of Bepantol Baby in baby care routines. - Collaborating with influencers or real families	elements to engage with fans and followers. - Leveraging influencer marketing to amplify the campaign's reach and credibility among the target demographic. - Incorporating user-generated content and community engagement to foster a sense of belonging and connection.
--	---	--	---	--

			to amplify the campaign's reach and authenticity.	
Tone/Emotion	Informative, supportive, and empowering.	Controversial, humorous (to some), and informative.	Emotional, heartwarming, and nostalgic.	Empowering, inclusive, and uplifting.
Visual Elements	- Professional and engaging set design for the talk show, creating a comfortable and inviting atmosphere. - High-quality video production to ensure clear communication of information and expert insights. - Visual aids such as infographics and diagrams to illustrate key points	- Eye-catching visuals featuring humorous or provocative imagery related to feminine hygiene. - Bold and attention-grabbing typography to convey the campaign's message. - Use of color and imagery to evoke feelings of discomfort or humor,	- Photos and videos capturing tender moments between fathers and their children, evoking emotions of love and connection. - Warm and inviting color palette to create a cozy and familial	- Vibrant and dynamic imagery reflecting themes of freedom, self-expression, and individuality. - Photos and videos featuring Manu Gavassi and other influencers expressing themselves authentically and confidently. - Use of bold colors and typography to grab attention

	and enhance understanding. - Branding elements to reinforce Bayer's association with women's health and expertise in the field.	depending on the viewer's perspective. - Branding elements to reinforce the campaign's association with feminine hygiene and health awareness.	atmosphere. - Branding elements integrated subtly into the content to reinforce the association with Bepantol Baby. - Product shots showcasing Bepantol Baby products in everyday use, emphasizing their role in nurturing babies' skin.	and convey a sense of energy and vitality. - Branding elements subtly integrated into the content to reinforce Bayer's association with empowerment and self-expression.
Call to Action	Encouraging viewers to continue the conversation about female health, share their own experiences and questions, and explore	Encouraging women to engage in conversations about vaginal health, seek information and resources about proper hygiene	Encouraging viewers to celebrate Father's Day by sharing their own stories of fatherhood and moments of connection	Encouraging viewers to embrace their uniqueness and express themselves authentically using the campaign hashtag

	Bayer's resources for further information and support.	practices, and prioritize their overall health and well-being.	with their children, and to consider incorporating Bepantol Baby products into their baby care routines.	(#FreedomComesFromWithin), and to explore Bayer's products and initiatives that support individuality and empowerment.
--	--	--	--	--

Campaign Name	Pfizer Talks: Mental Health – season 5	Pfizer Talks: Sexuality – season 6	Get ready. Get set. Get old.
Pharmaceutical Company	Pfizer Portugal	Pfizer Portugal	Pfizer
Campaign Objective	7 episodes with the aim to promote awareness and discussion surrounding mental health, with a focus on breaking stigma and providing comprehensive information.	6 episodes with the aim to destigmatize discussions about sexuality and address common misconceptions and challenges related to sexual health, with the help of experts.	To challenge conventional views of aging and promote a more positive and realistic perspective on aging, highlighting the opportunities and contributions of older adults.
Target Audience	General public, including individuals of all ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and health statuses, emphasizing the importance of mental health for everyone.	General public, including individuals interested in sexuality education, as well as those seeking information about sexual health, particularly focusing on topics relevant to people with disabilities, sexual	General public, particularly individuals of all ages who hold negative stereotypes or misconceptions about aging, as well as older adults themselves.

		orientation, and sexual experiences across different life stages.	
Platform(s)	Youtube, LinkedIn and Facebook	Youtube, LinkedIn and Facebook	Multi-channel campaign including digital platforms, social media, traditional media channels, and possibly events or community outreach programs.
Key Message(s)	- Mental health encompasses more than just disorders or conditions ; it also includes emotional and psychological well-being. - Many factors, such as environment, communication, and lifestyle choices, can influence mental health.	- Sexuality is no longer a taboo subject, and it's essential to have open discussions about it. - The campaign aims to demystify sexuality and its challenges, providing clarification on common doubts and misconceptions	- Aging is a natural and valuable part of life, and older adults have much to offer to society. - The campaign aims to challenge negative stereotypes and misconceptions about

	- Mental health is a universal concern that affects individuals across all demographics and life stages. - The goal of the campaign is to discuss mental health openly and sensitively, aiming to inform and educate people from various aspects of society. - Collaboration with diverse experts will provide a multifaceted approach to addressing mental health issues.	- Specific topics such as sexuality in people with disabilities, first-time experiences, sexual orientation, and sexual health across different life stages will be addressed to lay the groundwork for a healthy sexual life.	- aging, promoting a more positive and inclusive view of older adults. - Through storytelling and community engagement, the campaign highlights the diverse experiences, achievements, and contributions of older adults.
--	--	--	--

Type of Activism	Mental Health Advocacy and Education	Sexual Health Education and Advocacy	Aging Awareness and Advocacy
Tactics/Strategies	- Hosting discussions, on various aspects of mental health, involving experts from different fields.	- Hosting discussions featuring experts in sexuality education and sexual health to provide accurate information and answer questions from the audience.	- Creating compelling narratives and content featuring older adults from diverse backgrounds and walks of life, showcasing their stories, accomplishments, and vitality. - Engaging with the public through social media campaigns, community events, and educational resources to challenge

			ge ageism and promot e underst anding and accepta nce of aging. - Partner ing with organiz ations and influen cers in the aging and healthc are sectors to amplify the campai gn's reach and impact.
Tone/Emotion	Empathetic, supportive, and informative.	Informative, inclusive, and welcoming.	Positive, empowering, and inclusive.
Visual Elements	- Logo and Branding: The "Pfizer Talks" podcast has a recognizab le logo featuring the	- Logo and Branding : The "Pfizer Talks" podcast has a recogniz able logo featuring	- The video may use metaph orical imager y to represe nt the

	podcast's name in a clean and modern font, accompanied by the Pfizer logo or branding elements. The color scheme incorporates Pfizer's corporate colors to maintain brand consistency.	the podcast's name in a clean and modern font, accompanied by the Pfizer logo or branding elements. The color scheme incorporates Pfizer's corporate colors to maintain brand consistency.	concept of embracing new phases of life. This could include visuals of sunrise or dawn to signify the start of a new day or the opening of a new chapter. - The video's visual elements may evoke emotions associated with transition and renewal, such as hope, optimism, anticipation
--	---	---	--

			tion, and joy.
Call to Action	Encouraging individuals to prioritize their mental health, seek support if needed, and engage in conversations to help break the stigma surrounding mental illness.	Encouraging individuals to engage in open conversations about sexuality, seek accurate information from reliable sources, and embrace a healthy and fulfilling sexual life.	Encouraging individuals to rethink their attitudes toward aging, challenge ageism in their communities, and advocate for policies and initiatives that promote the well-being and inclusion of older adults.

APPENDIX D – ETHICS COMMITTEE

This is to certify that

Project No.: **DDMKT2024-3-154952**

Project Title: **Exploring the Impact of Brand Activism on Consumer Engagement and Corporate Outcomes in the Pharmaceutical Industry**

Principal Researcher: **Inês Duarte Monteiro**

according to the regulations of the Ethics Committee of NOVA IMS and MagIC Research Center this project was considered to meet the requirements of the NOVA IMS Internal Review Board, being considered **APPROVED** on 3/15/2024.

It is the Principal Researcher's responsibility to ensure that all researchers and stakeholders associated with this project are aware of the conditions of approval and which documents have been approved.

