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Brand Activism in the Digital Era:

A Case Study on Ben & Jerry's brand

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Master Thesis

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

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação

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by

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

Supervised by

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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, 12/07/2024]

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ABSTRACT

Consumers, especially the youngest ones, expect brands to be more involved in activist causes. This has led to brand activism, where brands felt the need to take a stand on any cause, whether social, political, or environmental. With this, brands have gotten great power that, if used correctly, can change society. For that reason, they need to be authentic regarding the causes and practices defended. This study aims to understand authentic brand activism's impact on several marketing dimensions, such as brand image, brand loyalty, and consumer-brand identification. To answer the research question, an online survey was conducted, in which Ben & Jerry's was the brand chosen due to its long history of activism. In the survey, different activism campaigns from the brand were shown to be assessed by the respondents. With 237 participants, the results showed that authentic brand activism positively affects brand image and consumer-brand identification. Regarding brand loyalty, authentic brand activism has an indirect effect through consumer-brand identification. This study adds important insights to brands concerning the consequences of authentic brand activism.

KEYWORDS

Brand Activism; Authenticity of Activism; Brand Image; Brand Loyalty; Consumer-brand Identification

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABA	Authenticity of Brand Activism
AVE	Average Variance Constructed
BI	Brand Image
BL	Brand Loyalty
CBI	Consumer-Brand Identification
CR	Composite Reliability
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
HTMT	Heterotrait – Monotrait
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT

Society has serious problems that cannot be ignored, such as social exclusion, economic inequality, and pollution. It is mainly the millennials that are changing this reality, as they do not accept to remain in silence and, therefore, expect brands to do the same (Amati, 2022; Curry, 2020). Millennials are called "conscious consumers" (Stern, 2021) because they pressure brands to raise awareness and change mentalities. It does not matter how many people are impacted; making a positive change matters. The brands that manage to stand out and make a difference receive the full attention of millennials (Gilliland, 2021). One of the brands that stands out for its activism is Ben & Jerry's, which uses ice cream to change the world. Everything is consciously calculated, from the ingredients to the environmentally friendly freezers (Richards, 2022). Ben & Jerry's entered the world of activism a long time ago. It is a company that has always been very transparent about its politics and the values it defends, with a long history of supporting social and political causes (Malik, 2021). Ben & Jerry's founders attribute their success to the quality of their ingredients, different flavors, and social activism. Other companies could also make ice cream like Ben & Jerry's, but they would never be able to copy the brand's social and activist mission (Karpen, 2023).

While some companies aim to generate profit, the consumer identifies itself with the brand and the causes it supports. For this reason, many brands are starting to associate themselves with causes to get closer to the consumers (Eyada, 2020). Impactful changes are what consumers demand the most; they want to see results (Wallach & Popovich, 2023). At Ben & Jerry's their fans recognize the brand's social mission, which makes them embrace and support the business. Subsequently, they buy more ice cream from the brand (Beard, 2021). Consumers want real and honest brands that take a stand, but only if it makes sense with the values the brands defend and the story behind them. If brands defend a cause without realizing how to apply it to their products or company, they will be seen as inauthentic and opportunistic (Stillman, 2019) and can damage their relationship with consumers (Korschun, 2021). However, authenticity is evident when a brand is true to its values (Kapitan et al., 2022). The question here is how can the authenticity of brand activism affect brand image, loyalty, and consumer-brand identification? That will be the main question of this study. According to Martin (2023), brand activism creates a deeper connection between brands and consumers when the values are aligned and it generates a sense of authenticity, developing strong consumer-brand relationships. Besides that, brands that engage in activism can also gain a good reputation for their ability to tackle society's problems. This attracts consumers who share the same values and generates customer loyalty. However, there is so much more than that. Although brand activism is a very appealing topic, the concept is not yet completely defined because there are still some debates about its real definition. This challenges brands that want to adopt activism as a strategy. Therefore, we must go deeper into this subject

(Eyada, 2020). By overcoming these adversities, activist brands can develop new strategies to improve their business and impact consumers.

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to be a guideline for brands that wish to adopt brand activism as a marketing strategy. The objective is to explore the impact of authentic activism on the brand's image, loyalty, and consumer-brand identification, based on a real example from an activist brand, Ben & Jerry's.

To summarize what was previously mentioned, the following question can be posed:

- How can the authenticity of brand activism affect brand image, loyalty, and consumer-brand identification?

Given the importance of brand activism, it is essential to understand the benefits and potential risks for brands if they adopt activism as a strategy. What will happen to the image of the brand? Will the authenticity of brand activism affect brand loyalty? How will the consumer-brand identification be affected? (Miguel & Miranda, 2023).

All these questions allow researchers to go further, enable new studies, and clarify brands on the right path.

1.3. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is composed of an introduction to the main topic. The second chapter is about the literature review, regarding the authenticity of brand activism and the associated concepts, which are discussed based on the literature of different authors.

Then, in the third chapter, a presentation of the chosen method, followed by a description of the used approaches. In the fourth chapter, the results derived from the applied method are presented and can be observed alongside a careful and well-structured analysis.

Finally, based on the obtained results, conclusions are drawn. The implications of the study, as well as its limitations, are also discussed in this chapter. Based on those limitations, some suggestions are made that may help future researchers to go deeper on this subject.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. BRAND ACTIVISM

Over the past few years, brand activism has increased notability, becoming one of the most important marketing trends (Stern, 2021). With all the attention brand activism has received, more and more brands are joining this movement (Wannow et al., 2023). What is brand activism, after all? Brand activism goes much further than advertising; it involves a profound transformation, which has to adapt to considering society's problems and leading consumers to change their buying choices (Verlegh, 2023). Brand activism is a communication strategy whose ultimate objective is to influence consumers with social, political, or even environmental causes through campaigns or messages (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). By influencing consumers, brands can achieve great results and improve society (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018). Brand activism allows brands to make themselves heard, transmit the values and causes they defend, and still have an impact, not only in their business but also in the world. Brands can give their opinion anywhere, such as campaigns and social media posts (Verlegh, 2023). Above all, brands want consumers to feel identified and to know that brands listen to them (Cammarota et al., 2021).

Brand activism goes far beyond the concept of brands "doing their part for social causes". Brands take the initiative to change consumers' mindsets and help society. When a brand takes some risks with activism, it is seen as being brave (Korschun, 2021). Brands that take the first step end up having more visibility than brands that stay behind, afraid to act, waiting to understand the consequences they may have (Korschun, 2021). If brands are seen as vulgar or inauthentic, they can suffer negative consequences, more than if they had not been involved in activism (Garg & Saluja, 2022). However, it all depends on how the brand defends the cause, but if it is honest and authentic, it is halfway there.

If brands adopt brand activism, they can benefit from it, pointing out the brand from their competition, increasing public exposure, increasing consumer loyalty, and creating opportunities for consumers to have a voice (Eyada, 2020). Brand activism is divided into six categories: legal activism, social activism, economic activism, political activism, business activism, and environmental activism (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017; Yoo et al., 2021). By bringing together these six categories of brand activism, it is possible to measure the commitment of each company/brand to the causes they defend (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). Additionally, the authors mention that brand activism comes as an evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Kotler & Sarkar, 2018). CSR is a commitment from companies to improve the well-being of communities and society through environmental and social measures (Reckmann, 2023).

Brands currently find themselves in a situation where they can implement changes that will have a real impact (Verlegh, 2023). As such, running campaigns, posting on social media, or making donations is not enough; they must go beyond. For example, the case of Ben & Jerry's, a brand with a long history of addressing controversial issues, such as racism, refugees, and

climate change. Although two white men founded this company, the board was very inclusive. They even were arrested for practicing social activism, although the company may not have the best track record, if it defends its causes honestly and truthfully, it can teach and inspire many people about how there is always time to change. The past does not define them since their struggles, values and the causes they defend are the most important things for society (Curry, 2020).

Considering the growth that brand activism has been experiencing, it is expected that consumers will be able to create a solid bond with the brand, which can lead to a change in the mentality and behavior of most consumers (Lewis & Vredenburg, 2023).

2.2. AUTHENTICITY OF BRAND ACTIVISM

2.2.1. THE PATH TO AUTHENTIC BRAND ACTIVISM

When brands adopt activism, authenticity can become a problem (Sibai et al., 2021). Consumers are not applauding the brands that lack authenticity and hide their intentions, they are applauding those that take a stand to solve society's problems (Yoo et al., 2021). When brands decide to impose themselves, they face great pressure from consumers. This way, brands must be ready for the "backlash" (taking a side, means opposing another side) and for the doubt generated regarding the authenticity of their position (Baird, 2019). According to Christian (2019), customers do not invent purposes for brands. They search everything about the brand until they understand the founder's intention. Brands that go beyond their limits and impose themselves are doing it in a meaningful and lasting way. On the other hand, brands that ignore their consumers and see no connection between what they do and what they say, expose themselves to ridiculous and negative reactions (Curry, 2020). When that happens, brands make promises they cannot keep or fail to implement, the phenomenon of "woke washing". According to Ahmad et al. (2024, p. 2), woke washing can be defined as "the act of expressing support for a sociopolitical issue, but subsequently failing to implement that action plan or to address the same issue happening within the organization." When the activist message is not aligned with the values and practices of the brands, they are accepting inauthentic brand activism. This way, brands may fail consumers and difficult potential social change (Vredenburg et al., 2020). With this in mind, brands must be conscientious about the activist messages they pass to their target audience (Ahmad et al., 2022), the messages must be aligned with the brand's purpose and values, as well as the causes that consumers defend, always guaranteeing the brand's authenticity (Verlegh, 2023). Factors, such as purpose, values, messaging, and practice influence and determine each other to create truth (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

2.2.2. BEN & JERRY'S AS A CASE STUDY

Ben & Jerry's is one of the most memorable names in the food industry, it has been operating for over 40 years and continues with the same mission and goals: peace, love, and ice cream. Over the years, the brand gained numerous delicious flavors and socially conscious editions. Their flavors have increased consumer awareness of serious global issues (Richards, 2022). The brand has never been afraid to make a political statement, unlike other brands that are afraid to associate themselves with a political cause because they might lose customers, be accused of being inauthentic, or simply because they do not want to be associated with controversial issues (Fallo, 2020). Ben & Jerry's can be considered a justice brand, taking a stand when many avoid that (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017).

Ben & Jerry's is constantly searching for ways to be better, to improve human rights, support social or economic justice, and defend the ecosystems. They want to make a difference and change the world through ice cream (Ben & Jerry's, 2023). The company has released numerous campaigns as a socially progressive company: in 2021 Colin Kaepernick, a football player, and activist helped to create a new vegan flavor called "Change the Whirled" and in 2023, in partnership with Tony's Chocolonely, a new flavor called "Chocolatey Love-A-fair" was created to promote the end of modern slavery in cocoa farming (Todd, 2022).

Many people disagree with the brand's position. However, Ben & Jerry's has enough confidence to continue, and the heat they receive strengthens their belief that what they do is meaningful and has a real impact (Beard, 2021). There was a time when Ben & Jerry's tried to inspire the youth to engage in activist movements, but now the company is learning how to improve their actions (Mainwaring, 2020).

2.3. OUTCOMES OF BRAND'S ACTIVISM AUTHENTICITY

2.3.1. BRAND IMAGE

Brand image is one of the most important bases for helping brands to make better marketing decisions about targeting specific market segments and positioning a product, says Lee et al. (2014). According to Dobni & Zinkhan (1990), the interpretations that consumers associate with brands, whether rational or emotional, can define brand image. Keller (1993) also described brand image as the perceptions of a brand by the associations consumers made in their memory. In other words, consumers store a set of connections with a particular brand in their memories, which can also be described as brand associations. These associations can favor brands with unique and solid beliefs and establish a positive brand image (Biehal & Sheinin, 2007). Although it is hard to identify a consistent expression to measure this variable, it is usually related to consumers' perceptions about a brand, reflected in the associations made in consumers' memory. According to Keller (1993), these associations may be based on the brand's attributes and consumers' benefits and attitudes.

Regarding authentic brand activism, when consumers sense authenticity in a brand, a positive effect is reflected in the brand image (Vredenburg et al., 2020). According to Shetty et al. (2019), brands that take a stand in some cause, be it social, political, or other, are more positively perceived compared to brands that stay impartial, especially by millennials and Gen Z. With this in mind, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Authenticity of brand activism has a positive effect on brand image.

2.3.2. CONSUMER-BRAND IDENTIFICATION

Brands make their voice present everywhere. It focuses on creating empathy between the consumer and the brand identity through communication (Madhavaram et al., 2005). Moving onto the topic of consumer-brand identification, according to Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), consumer-brand identification is described as the customer's perception of being linked with a brand; the customer wishes to fulfill its entire identity in the marketplace of brands in a valid and meaningful way. What happens then is that consumers rely on brands to create their own identities (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Consumers see the brand as a part of themselves and experience strong feelings and connections to it. Mainly, if it supports a cause that consumers defend, they can use it to express that they support the same cause and identify with others (Escalas & Bettman 2003; Bernritter et al., 2017). When brand managers become aware of this type of situation and the impact that this phenomenon has on their brands, they realize that it is important to investigate it (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012).

Several authors have done some research about the relationship of consumer-brand identification to branding (e.g. He et al., 2012; Lam et al., 2010; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). He & Lai (2014) defended that brand image was one of the factors influencing consumers to develop brand identification. When customers choose a product, their purchase behavior is influenced by the coherence between their perception of the product and their image (Sirgy & Su, 2000). A favorable brand image generates real worth for consumers and increases their trust in the brand (Tu et al., 2012). Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) also identified some brand identification drivers, such as brand-self similarity, brand social benefits, memorable brand experiences, and others. According to the author, focusing on brand-self similarity, which explains the overlap level between a consumer's attitude toward personal characteristics and the brand, could explain why people want to keep being who they are. If consumers connect with authentic brand activism, brand-self similarity, and, consequently, consumer-brand identification, they will be able to evaluate, if brand values are aligned with theirs (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).

In general, a positive correlation between the aforementioned concepts is expected (Jung & Kim, 2015). Brand identification can also create a "love" relationship between the consumer and the brand and a "bubble" of positivity (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Based on the previous paragraphs, the hypotheses are predicted:

H2: Brand image has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.

H3: Authenticity of brand activism has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.

2.3.3. BRAND LOYALTY

According to John (2011), customer loyalty is the attitude or mentality that motivates a customer to either make another purchase at a business, store, or outlet, or to make a new purchase of a specific good, service, or brand. This inclination can be represented by a continuance commitment of the customer to the brand due to high switching costs or the unavailability of other options (Marshall, 2010). The commitment is created by the communication between brands and customers and by a lot of work from brands through the years to fulfill their promises to consumers (Gilaninia et al., 2012). Consumers' perception of a brand that consistently delivers the quality and price that is most favorable to people increases the consumer's loyalty to that brand (Ishak & Abd Ghani, 2013). Nevertheless, customer loyalty is not only focused on the purchasing attitude. When consumers establish a real and strong connection with a brand, they tend to create proximity to the brand, finding joy and security. Therefore, it is believed that a customer with a solid emotional connection to the brand is ready to engage with the brand for a long relationship (Theng So et al., 2013). This predicts that emotional connection has the potential to increase brand loyalty. However, this is not enough to retain customers; brands that have already been on the market for several years are beginning to face more fearless competitors. With this, older brands urgently need to change their strategy and stand out. Showing responsibility and acting on today's most relevant causes is a way to increase brand loyalty and trust (Eyada, 2020). Brands can gain loyal followers if they build authentic relationships (Amati, 2022). Even Carrol et al. (2022) affirm that brand authenticity and loyalty have a positive relationship. On the other side, Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020), affirm that the effect of authenticity of brand activism and brand loyalty is unbalanced.

As mentioned, consumers want brands to act proactively and defend relevant causes; this will give a better image to that brand that will lead to customer satisfaction, and satisfied customers tend to be loyal, which is a necessary condition for a brand to survive (Chen & Quester, 2006; Davies et al., 2003). With this in mind, brands should focus on improving their brand image. Besides that, according to some authors, consumer-brand identification also has a positive effect on brand loyalty. To Dick and Basu (1994), brand loyalty had many antecedents that could be divided into three classifications: cognitive, emotional, and conative antecedents. Consumer-brand identification was classified as an emotional antecedent (Lam et al., 2010), and it was proven to have a positive correlation with customer loyalty (Akbari, 2021; Popp & Woratschek, 2017). However, there is still little literature about the relationship between the two variables. Due to these findings, the following hypotheses are predicted:

H4: Brand image has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

H5: Authenticity of brand activism has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

H6: Consumer-brand identification has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The literature review chapter contributes to understanding the state of the art on the research topic in discussion. It also helps to identify the gaps that need further investigation. Based on this, it is necessary to proceed with a conceptual model that supports the investigation by structuring and carrying out the research questions (Rudasill et al., 2018).

The conceptual model represents specific hypotheses to help understand the relationships between the variables identified through the literature review. In this study, the variables are the authenticity of brand activism, brand image, consumer-brand identification, and brand loyalty.

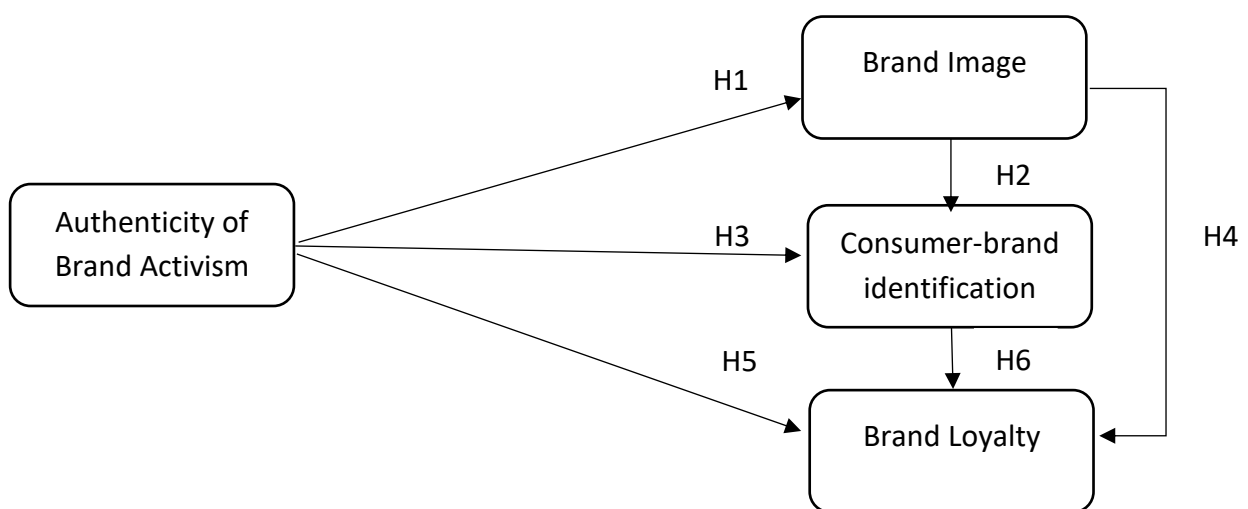


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

To recap, the hypotheses that have been formulated previously are:

H1: Authenticity of brand activism has a positive effect on brand image.

H2: Brand image has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.

H3: Authenticity of brand activism has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.

H4: Brand image has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

H5: Authenticity of brand activism has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

H6: Consumer-brand identification has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

By testing these hypotheses, the study aims to achieve empirical evidence on the impact of authentic brand activism on brand image, consumer-brand identification, and brand loyalty.

3. METHOD

3.1. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The current chapter presents the method used in this study to answer the hypotheses proposed in the previous chapter. The chosen method was a quantitative approach through a survey to help validate the hypotheses. The survey was developed through the platform Qualtrics and presented to a target population of 18 years old or above.

The primary research question this study aims to answer is "How can the authenticity of brand activism affect brand image, loyalty, and consumer-brand identification?". With this in mind and considering that this study is focused on a specific brand (Ben & Jerry's), this survey is focused on four activist campaigns from the brand, so the respondents could visualize and respond to the questions according to the campaigns. This study aims to gain meaningful feedback and viewpoints from current and potential customers of Ben & Jerry's. The survey was distributed through email and social media platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn) to the author's contacts.

3.2. CONSTRUCTS MEASURES

Authenticity of brand activism: There was no authenticity scale related to brand activism in the marketing literature. However, perceived authenticity concerning corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices has been applied in the past (Alhouti et al., 2016).

Consumer-brand identification: In this construct, the original scale was used (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012).

Brand image: This case is the same as consumer-brand identification, the original scale was also applied (Villarejo-Ramos & Sánchez-Franco, 2005).

Brand loyalty: This is the construct with more items, however, one was eliminated ("8. Even in the case of not using it, I would like to buy X brand"), for not making sense in an ice cream brand (Villarejo-Ramos & Sánchez-Franco, 2005).

The scale for the four constructs under analysis is a 7-point Likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree).

It is also important to highlight that the original and adapted items from the constructs listed above are in appendix B.

3.3. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was tested with a small sample, sixteen respondents of the target population. Comments and suggestions were shared, which made it possible to adjust the questionnaire before the official launch. The aspects that were more addressed were related to layout and clarity. Furthermore, since the survey was translated into Portuguese, two people were required to analyse the translation to ensure it matched the original scale. They also ended up analysing whether the questionnaire made sense from a consumer perspective.

The survey was divided into eight blocks:

Block 1: In the first block a small introduction explaining the goal of the study was made, and the participants had to voluntarily consent to take part in the survey.

Block 2: The next one had some general questions concerning consumers' familiarity with the brand such as: "Do you know the Ben & Jerry's brand?" or "Do you usually buy Ben & Jerry's products?".

Block 3: The third block contained four activist campaigns to remind participants of some of the brand's campaigns, as well as a quote with the brand's values that were important to have in mind for the rest of the questions.

Blocks 4 to 7: The following blocks were related to the constructs; each one had been separated by page to make it more visually apparent. To avoid identifying the variables different titles were given, such as brand perception and brand relationship. The first was related to the authenticity of brand activism and brand image, and the second was to consumer-brand identification and brand loyalty. Each one of the blocks had the goal of understanding how consumers felt according to each of the variables, always based on the perception they had of the brand and its campaigns.

Block 8: At the end of the survey, questions about demographics were asked, such as their age, gender, education, occupation, and citizenship.

After the survey was launched, it was shared through email and social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

3.4. SAMPLE

The data from Qualtrics was collected between the 23rd of March and the 12th of May 2024. It revealed important information about age, gender, education, occupation, and citizenship. From the answers obtained from the online survey, most of the respondents are Portuguese (93%), regarding gender 59% women, and 40% men (1 person preferred not to say). As for age, 84% of the sample are under 34 years old, 46% are between 18-24 years old, and 38% are between 25-34 years old. As for the rest, 7% are between 35-44 years old, 4% are between 45-54 years old, 4% are between 55-65 years old, and only 1% are older than 65 years old. Most of the sample is employed (67%), compared to a low percentage of unemployed (2%), 30% are students, and the remaining 1% are already retired. Concerning education, the sample has a high level of education since 40% have a bachelor's, 13% have a postgraduate, 36% have a master's and 1% have a doctorate. The rest either completed high school (9%) or 9th grade (1%).

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The author Kyriazos (2018) recommends a ratio of 5 to 10 respondents per item ratio with a minimum of 100 participants, taking into consideration that this study has 32 items, the range of the sample should be from 160 to 320 participants.

Out of the 342 responses initially obtained, only 237 were valid to include in the data analysis (inside the range), and the rest of the responses were not considered as they were unfinished or had only neutral responses. The collected data was then analysed using Microsoft Excel and SmartPLS 4.0 software to obtain the results. Firstly, the data was collected from Qualtrics and exported to Excel format with only numerical values since the responses were registered with the help of a 7-point Likert scale. After that, a copy of the Excel file was created so the generic and demographic answers could be deleted and leave only the responses related to the constructs. The missing and invalid answers were also deleted from the file. Finally, the file was ready to be imported to SmartPLS 4.0 (the latest version).

In SmartPLS, the first thing to do was create a space and import the updated Excel file. After that, it was necessary to develop the PLS-SEM model based on the conceptual model and then run it to import the data to Excel. After running the first PLS-SEM model, it was time to run the Bootstrapping model and import the data to Excel. From here onwards, all data analysis was carried out using Excel.

4. RESULTS

It is important to also talk about general data: 94% of people know the Ben & Jerry's brand, but only 5% know the brand's history well, 17% know a little and 78% do not know anything. When asked if they usually buy the brand's products, 25% never buy them and 41% rarely buy them, 31% of participants buy occasionally, with a very low percentage buying often (4%). Concerning product consumption, the results are practically the same as the previous question.

4.1. MODEL ESTIMATION

In this chapter, the results of the analysis of the measurement and structural model using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) are introduced. The hypotheses formulated in this study are also being evaluated if they are supported accordingly.

The chosen method was PLS-SEM because it is one of the most popular tools for exploring the relationships between the different constructs. Regarding the two sub-models: the measurement model and structural model, the first defines the relations between the indicators and the variables, and the second defines the relations between the unobserved variables (Hair et al., 2017).

4.1.1. MEASUREMENT MODEL EVALUATION

4.1.1.1. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY TESTING

Before testing the model's reliability and validity, the first thing to analyze is the loadings and their respective significance. Loadings represent the degree of connection between the indicators and the construct and must be above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). If loading is below 0.70 it must be removed from the measurement model to be considered valid. By checking table 10 in appendix C, which shows the outer loadings, it is possible to see that some indicators were eliminated, this happened because the loadings of the respective constructs were below 0.70. Although the constructs were statistically significant (p -value = 0,000) their contribution was insufficient. The indicators removed were BI_1; BI_4; BI_7; BL_4; BL_5; BL_6 and BL_7. The first three indicators corresponded to the first, fourth, and seventh indicators of the construct of brand image. The others corresponded to the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh indicators of the construct of brand loyalty (appendix B).

After removing the loadings mentioned, internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were analyzed to evaluate the measurement model.

Internal reliability indicates whether the variables are reliable to measure the constructs. In this case, reliability was calculated using the Composite Reliability (CR) measurement, which should be between 0.70 and 0.90 to indicate a high level of reliability. As seen in table 1, all values are above 0.70, but some are also above 0.90. Since the values above 0.90 are not above 0.95 it is still possible to consider that the variables have a high level of reliability (Hair et al., 2017).

Furthermore, convergent validity indicates if a positive correlation exists between a measure and alternative measures of the same construct (Hair et al., 2017). Convergent validity was tested using the Average Variance Constructed (AVE) measurement (table 1), which is recommended to be above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017). Since all values are above 0.50, the study has a strong validity. It is also possible to confirm convergent validity by checking table 10 in appendix C. As mentioned before, the table only shows the loadings above 0.70 since the ones that were below 0.70 were removed, so this means the values presented in table 10 are considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 1: Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ABA	0,923	0,924	0,937	0,651
BI	0,791	0,797	0,864	0,613

BL	0,878	0,892	0,907	0,621
CBI	0,924	0,926	0,940	0,691

The discriminant validity indicates which construct differs from other constructs (Hair et al., 2017). In this case, discriminant validity was measured using the Heterotrait – Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (table 2) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (table 3). The HTMT values should be below 0.90 if discriminant validity is not lacking. As shown in table 2, all values are under 0.90, which indicates all correlations are positive.

Table 2: Discriminant validity - Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	ABA	BI	BL
BI	0,754		
BL	0,465	0,595	
CBI	0,662	0,761	0,750

Regarding the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the value of the square root of AVE for each construct must be higher than the relationship between that construct and another. Looking at table 3 it is possible to see that there is discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant validity - Fornell-Larcker criterion

	ABA	BI	BL	CBI
ABA	0,807			
BI	0,648	0,783		
BL	0,424	0,507	0,788	
CBI	0,609	0,661	0,691	0,831

Table 11 (appendix D) also shows the cross-loading criterion, in which all constructs' loadings were higher than cross-loadings with other constructs through the columns. Therefore, the discriminant validity was also confirmed by this criterion. It is possible to conclude that this analysis indicates strong validity of the measurement model.

4.1.2. STRUCTURAL MODEL EVALUATION

4.1.2.1. ENDOGENOUS VARIABLES

The model comprises four variables: authenticity of brand activism (exogenous variable), brand image, brand loyalty, and consumer-brand identification (endogenous variables). Observing table 4, it is possible to analyze the R-square adjusted for the endogenous variables. The R-square adjusted for BI is 0.417, this means that ABA moderately explains 41,7% of the variance in BI. Regarding the R-square adjusted for CBI, this is 0.489, which means that ABA and BI moderately explain 48,9% of the variance in CBI. Finally, the R-square adjusted for BL is 0.476, which means that ABA, BI, and CBI moderately explain BL by 47,6%.

Table 4: R-square adjusted overview

	R-square adjusted
BI	0,417
BL	0,476
CBI	0,489

4.1.2.2. PATH COEFFICIENTS SIGNIFICANCE

Taking into account the previous results, the structural model was evaluated using the bootstrapping technique to understand the impact of the variables on one another. In figure 2, it is possible to see the model obtained.

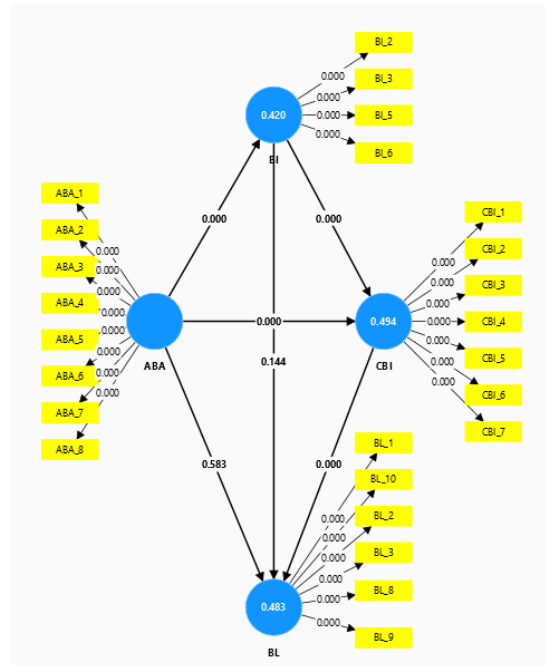


Figure 2: Structural model from PLS-SEM

From the structural model (figure 2), it is possible to generate a table with path coefficients, including their standard error, T-statistics, and p-values (table 5). The path coefficients express the correlations between the variables, and they should be between -1 and 1, considering that numbers closer to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship and numbers closer to -1 indicate the opposite (Hair et al., 2017). Besides that, the t-values need to be larger than the critical value to be considered statistically significant. If the t-value is effectively larger, the p-value must be smaller than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2017).

Looking at the results in table 5, it is possible to observe that almost all relationships are significant. The authenticity of brand activism significantly impacts the brand image ($O= 0,648$, $t=16,535$, $p=0,000$) and consumer-brand identification ($O= 0,311$, $t=4,839$, $p=0,000$). Also, the brand image strongly impacts consumer-brand identification ($O= 0,460$, $t=7,889$, $p=0,000$).

Finally, consumer-brand identification significantly impacts brand loyalty ($O= 0,644$, $t=11,178$, $p=0,000$). However, the impact that authentic brand activism has on brand loyalty ($O= -0,036$, $t=0,549$, $p=0,583$) is not significant, such as the impact that brand image has on brand loyalty ($O= 0,104$, $t=1,462$, $p=0,144$), so H4 and H5 are rejected, while the other hypotheses are supported.

Table 5: Path coefficients

		Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
H1	ABA -> BI	0,648	0,650	0,039	16,535	0,000
H5	ABA -> BL	-0,036	-0,034	0,066	0,549	0,583
H3	ABA -> CBI	0,311	0,308	0,064	4,839	0,000
H4	BI -> BL	0,104	0,103	0,071	1,462	0,144
H2	BI -> CBI	0,460	0,463	0,058	7,889	0,000
H6	CBI -> BL	0,644	0,646	0,058	11,178	0,000

4.1.3. MEDIATION ANALYSIS

The mediation analysis happens when a third mediation variable is between two constructs (Hair et al., 2017). This analysis is based on the results presented in table 6, where it is possible to see the specific indirect effects, and in table 7, the total effects that support the results obtained in table 6, since it shows the direct and the indirect effects together.

Looking at the p-values and the t-statistics in table 6, not all indirect effects are significant (ABA -> BI -> BL: p-value=0,155). However, it is possible to argue that an indirect mediation exists between the rest of the variables. These results support the hypothesis tested. However, H4 and H5 had been previously rejected, but with the introduction of other variables (CBI for H4 and BI and CBI for H5), the relationship becomes statistically significant, so H4 and H5 can be considered partially accepted, and table 7 shows that direct and indirect effects when put together show significant results.

Table 6: Specific Indirect effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
ABA -> BI -> BL	0,068	0,068	0,048	1,421	0,155
ABA -> BI -> CBI	0,298	0,301	0,043	6,946	0,000
ABA -> CBI -> BL	0,200	0,199	0,046	4,351	0,000
ABA -> BI -> CBI -> BL	0,192	0,195	0,033	5,843	0,000
BI -> CBI -> BL	0,296	0,299	0,047	6,369	0,000

Table 7: Total effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
ABA -> BI	0,648	0,650	0,039	16,535	0,000

ABA -> BL	0,424	0,427	0,052	8,232	0,000
ABA -> CBI	0,609	0,609	0,042	14,528	0,000
BI -> BL	0,401	0,403	0,073	5,482	0,000
BI -> CBI	0,460	0,463	0,058	7,889	0,000
CBI -> BL	0,644	0,646	0,058	11,178	0,000

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

After analyzing the results presented in chapter 4, a summary is presented in table 8.

This study's goal was to explore how the authenticity of brand activism affected brand image, loyalty, and consumer-brand identification by analyzing the relationships between the different constructs that played an important role in this study. The study followed a quantitative approach to test the hypotheses, and the data was collected through an online questionnaire. The sample comprised 237 participants, and the results were analyzed using SmartPLS.

In the correlation analysis, statistically significant associations were seen in all the relationships, except for two of them H4 and H5. However, the rest of the variables were moderately correlated to each other.

Table 8: Hypothesis summary and results

Hypothesis	Description	Results
H1	Authenticity of brand activism has a positive effect on brand image.	Supported
H2	Brand image has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.	Supported
H3	Authenticity of brand activism has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.	Supported
H4	Brand image has a positive effect on brand loyalty.	Partially Supported (via consumer-brand identification)
H5	Authenticity of brand activism has a positive impact on brand loyalty.	Partially Supported (via consumer-brand identification)
H6	Consumer-brand identification has a positive impact on brand loyalty.	Supported

The first hypothesis tested through the structural model was that the authenticity of brand activism directly impacted brand image. The literature review findings stated when consumers

feel authenticity in brand activism it has a positive effect on the brand image (Vredenburg et al., 2020) also, brands taking a stand in socio-political causes are more positively perceived (Shetty et al., 2019). Based on this study, it can be concluded that the authenticity of brand activism positively affects brand image, confirming previous studies.

This study also showed that brand image directly impacted consumer-brand identification. The literature review defended that brand image influenced consumers to develop brand identification (Sirgy & Su, 2000; He & Lai, 2014). A positive brand image generates worth for consumers (Tu et al., 2012). Based on this, it is concluded that brand image has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.

Besides brand Image, the authenticity of brand activism also impacted consumer-brand identification. In the literature review, it was mentioned that it was expected a positive correlation between the two variables (Jung & Kim, 2015). Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) also mentioned that if consumers connected with authentic brand activism, brand-self similarity, and, consequently, consumer-brand identification, consumers would have a clearer vision to judge and truly understand if the values of a determined brand and theirs would be aligned. This way it can be concluded that the authenticity of brand activism has a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.

Another relationship shown in the structural model is between brand Image and brand loyalty. The relationship was not statistically significant. However, through mediation analysis, all hypotheses were tested, and hypothesis 4 was partially supported. Some authors mention that brands that defend relevant causes provide a better image than others, leading to customer loyalty (Chen & Quester, 2006; Davies et al., 2003).

Some authors, like Blut et al. (2007) defended that factors, like price change or social advantage, could influence customer loyalty. Having this in mind, maybe the results depended on the context. Even though customers have a good image of the brand, it does not mean they are loyal to the brand. For example, if it is a premium brand, customers will not be able to pay and will opt for a cheaper brand, which can explain why the hypothesis is only partially supported. For the next studies, variables like income or price change could be analyzed to understand their impact on brand loyalty.

The relationship between the authenticity of brand activism and brand loyalty, as previously referred was also not statistically significant. Through mediation analysis, hypothesis 5, was partially accepted. In the literature review, it was mentioned that authentic relationships between brands and consumers could create customer loyalty (Gilaninia et al., 2012; Amati, 2022). Other authors, like Carrol et al. (2022) mentioned a positive relationship between brand authenticity and brand loyalty. However, there is still a lack of literature regarding the relationship between brand activism and brand loyalty. According to Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020), the effect between the two variables is unbalanced, which can explain why the hypothesis is only partially supported in this study.

Finally, the model showed that consumer-brand identification directly impacted brand loyalty. In the literature review, consumer-brand identification was classified as an emotional antecedent of brand loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994; Lam et al., 2010) and argued to have a positive correlation with customer loyalty (Akbari, 2021; Popp & Woratschek, 2017). Based on this study, it is possible to conclude that effective consumer-brand identification has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

5.2. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

First, this study introduces a current and controversial topic in today's world. Many generations, especially the youngest ones, fight daily for a better world, expecting brands to do the same. Although some brands fear activism, when brands have authentic causes and defend real values aligned with consumers it can have a positive impact, especially on their image, loyalty, and consumer-brand identification.

The findings from this study provide important information and practical context to brands that want to enter the activist world or that already belong there. The results show that brands that take a stand and are transparent about the values and causes they defend can accomplish positive outcomes, especially in their image and identification with the consumer.

Brand activism has become one of the most popular and important marketing trends (Stern, 2021). It creates a deep connection between brands and consumers when they share the same values and causes. Consumers start to believe in the brand when it takes a stand, creating a bond between the consumer and the brand. A good image of the brand also creates worth for consumers, causing a positive impact on consumer-brand identification.

However, taking a stand has its risks and might affect the relationship between consumers and brands. Brands must be ready for the doubts and dangers generated by consumers regarding a brand's authenticity. Consumers need to feel they can trust the brand and that its intentions are genuine. With this in mind, brands have to be conscious of what they share and communicate to customers, ensuring the brand is authentic, since the results may not be expected.

Brand managers could use the results from this study to test how the younger generations would respond and embrace the causes defended. Based on the results, consumers have a better image of authentic activist brands and feel identified and closer to brands, however, they do not seem to stay loyal to a brand just because of its image or authenticity. Therefore, brand managers should find different strategies to engage customer loyalty. For example, consumer-brand identification creates a positive impact on customer loyalty, it could be one of the strategies used by brands.

Although authentic brand activism can be powerful and truly impact brands, it can also have consequences, and it is recommended that brands investigate the values of their consumers and adapt to the brand, always keeping it genuine.

5.3. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has some limitations, which impact the results obtained. As the survey was conducted in a short period, the sample size was relatively small (237 responses), Furthermore, the sample is non-probabilistic for convenience, which also does not allow for generalizing the results.

Furthermore, although 94% know the brand analysed in the survey, only 5% know its history and only 4% often buy their products. For future research, the survey must include a more famous brand in the world of activism or conduct focus groups with participants who have real knowledge about the brand; that way, it is possible to better understand the decisions that customers make.

Even though many activist brands support social, political, or environmental causes, they usually do not show how that changes their operations. In the future, it would be an option to consider a brand that changed through time due to activism and better understand the impact.

Another option, considering the results obtained would be to include different variables in the model that could have a stronger impact on loyalty, for example, brand trust, to support the results obtained.

It would also be interesting in a future study to analyse the income of the respondents and understand if that influences the results since consumers may have their values aligned with an activist brand and feel more connected to it but do not buy their products because they are more expensive,

In addition, a future research suggestion is to analyse the data by age group to better understand how the results change depending on age or generation.

Lastly, the survey was conducted in Portuguese, so most of the population was Portuguese, it would be interesting to investigate other countries and explore the cultural differences that can lead to different results.

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APPENDIX A – ONLINE SURVEY

Ativismo de Marca na Era Digital: Um Caso de Estudo sobre a marca Ben & Jerry's.

Caro(a) participante,

Como parte da minha tese de mestrado em Data-Driven Marketing pela Nova IMS, estou a realizar um estudo por inquérito para compreender melhor **como a autenticidade do ativismo de marca pode afetar a imagem e a lealdade à marca.**

O questionário demora aproximadamente 4 minutos a ser concluído e todas as respostas são confidenciais.

Ao concordar em participar, confirma que:

- Tem 18 anos ou mais.
- A sua participação é voluntária e apenas para propósitos académicos.
- É livre de interromper a sua participação a qualquer altura sem penalização.
- Todos os dados são confidenciais.

Concordo em participar

Não concordo em participar

Questões Gerais

Conhece a marca Ben & Jerry's?

Sim

Não

Está familiarizado(a) com a história da marca Ben & Jerry's?

Sim, conheço bem a história da marca

Sim, conheço um pouco da história da marca

Não conheço a história da marca

Costuma comprar produtos da Ben & Jerry's?

Nunca

Raramente

Ocasionalmente

Frequentemente

Muito Frequentemente

Consome os produtos da Ben & Jerry's?

Nunca

Raramente

Ocasionalmente

Frequentemente

Muito Frequentemente

Recorda-se de alguma campanha da Ben & Jerry's?

Sim

Não

Lembrando a marca e as suas campanhas

Os Valores da marca

"Adoramos fazer gelados - mas usar o nosso negócio para tornar o mundo um lugar melhor dá ao nosso trabalho o seu propósito. Guiados pelos nossos Valores Fundamentais, procuramos em tudo o que fazemos, a todos os níveis do nosso negócio, promover os direitos humanos e a dignidade, apoiar a justiça social e económica para as comunidades historicamente marginalizadas e proteger e restaurar os sistemas naturais da Terra. Por outras palavras: usamos o gelado para mudar o mundo."

As Campanhas

Para recordar as campanhas da marca, pode ver alguns exemplos abaixo:





Lembra-se de ter visto alguma destas campanhas?

Sim

Não

Percepção da Marca

Com base na percepção que tem sobre a marca e as suas campanhas, selecione o grau de concordância com as seguintes afirmações (de 1=Discordo Totalmente a 7=Concordo Totalmente):

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Discordo Parcialmente	4 - Não Discordo nem Concordo	5 - Concordo Parcialmente	6 - Concordo	7 - Concor Totalme
As mensagens de ativismo da Ben & Jerry's são genuínas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As mensagens de ativismo preservam o que a Ben & Jerry's significa para mim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As mensagens de ativismo captam o que torna a Ben & Jerry's única para mim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

As mensagens de ativismo da Ben & Jerry's estão de acordo com os valores e crenças da Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's está a ser fiel a si mesma com as mensagens de ativismo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's está a defender aquilo em que acredita	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's é uma empresa socialmente responsável	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's está preocupada em melhorar o bem-estar da sociedade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

◀ ▶

Relação com a Marca

Com base na percepção que tem sobre a marca e as suas campanhas, selecione o grau de concordância com as seguintes afirmações (de 1=Discordo Totalmente a 7=Concordo Totalmente):

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Discordo Parcialmente	4 - Não Discordo nem Concordo	5 - Concordo Parcialmente	6 - Concordo	7 - Concord Totalmen
Esta marca diz muito sobre o tipo de pessoa que sou e quero ser	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A imagem desta marca e a minha autoimagem são semelhantes em muitos aspetos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta marca desempenha um papel importante na minha vida	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sou muito apegado(a) a esta marca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tenho um forte sentimento de pertença à Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's tem um grande significado pessoal para mim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's encarna aquilo em que acredito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Percepção da Marca

Com base na percepção que tem sobre a marca e as suas campanhas, selecione o grau de concordância com as seguintes afirmações (de 1=Discordo Totalmente a 7=Concordo Totalmente):

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Discordo Parcialmente	4 - Não Discordo nem Concordo	5 - Concordo Parcialmente	6 - Concordo	7 - Concordo Totalmente
Algumas características da Ben & Jerry's vêm-me rapidamente à cabeça	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consigo ver-me a defender a Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's tem uma personalidade forte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tenho uma impressão clara do tipo de pessoas que usam a marca Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's tem uma imagem forte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Os atributos intangíveis da Ben & Jerry's são razão suficiente para a comprar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's oferece um valor elevado em relação ao preço que temos de pagar por ela	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

◀ ▶

Relação com a Marca

Com base na percepção que tem sobre a marca e as suas campanhas, selecione o grau de concordância com as seguintes afirmações (de 1=Discordo Totalmente a 7=Concordo Totalmente):

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Discordo Parcialmente	4 - Não Discordo nem Concordo	5 - Concordo Parcialmente	6 - Concordo	7 - Concordo Totalmente
Considero-me leal à Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Ben & Jerry's seria a minha primeira escolha quando penso em gelado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Não comprarei outras marcas se a Ben & Jerry's estiver disponível na loja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A marca Ben & Jerry's correspondeu às minhas expectativas da última vez que comprei os seus produtos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Voltarei a comprar Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Irei recomendar a Ben & Jerry's a outros consumidores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O preço de outra marca teria de ser consideravelmente inferior para não escolher a Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mesmo que outra marca tenha as mesmas características que a Ben & Jerry's, preferiria comprar a Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Se houver outra marca tão boa como a Ben & Jerry's, preferiria comprar a Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Se outra marca não for diferente da Ben & Jerry's em nenhum aspeto, parece mais inteligente comprar a Ben & Jerry's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

◀ ▶

Dados Demográficos

Por favor, indique a sua faixa etária.

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 anos ou mais

Por favor, indique o seu gênero.

Masculino

Feminino

Não binário / terceiro gênero

Outro

Prefiro não dizer

Por favor, indique o seu nível de escolaridade.

- Ensino básico
- Ensino secundário ou equivalente
- Licenciatura
- Pós-Graduação
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento

Por favor, indique a sua situação profissional atual.

- Estudante
- Trabalhador(a) por conta própria
- Trabalhador(a) por contra de outrem
- Desempregado(a)
- Reformado(a)

Por favor, indique a sua nacionalidade.

- Portuguesa
- Outra

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

APPENDIX B – CONSTRUCTS OPERATIONALISATION

Table 9: Constructs Operationalisation

CONSTRUCTS	ORIGINAL ITEMS	REFERENCES	ADAPTED ITEMS
Authenticity of Brand Activism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The company's CSR actions are genuine. 2. The CSR action preserves what the company means to me. 3. The CSR action captures what makes the company unique to me. 4. The company's CSR action is in accordance with the company's values and beliefs. 5. The company is being true to itself with its CSR actions. 6. The company is standing up for what it believes in. 7. The company is a socially responsible company. 8. The company is concerned about improving the well-being of society. 	Alhouti et al., 2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ben & Jerry's activism messages are genuine. 2. The activism messages preserve what Ben & Jerry's means to me. 3. The activism messages capture what makes Ben & Jerry's unique to me. 4. Ben & Jerry's activism messages are in accordance with Ben & Jerry's values and beliefs. 5. Ben & Jerry's is being true to itself with the activism messages. 6. Ben & Jerry's is standing up for what it believes in. 7. Ben & Jerry's is a socially responsible company. 8. Ben & Jerry's is concerned about improving the well-being of society.
Consumer-brand identification	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This brand says a lot about the kind of person I am, and I want to be. 2. This brand's image and my self-image are similar in many respects. 3. This brand plays an important role in my life. 4. I am very attached to this brand. 5. I feel a strong sense of belonging to brand X. 	Algesheimer et al., 2005; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This brand says a lot about the kind of person I am, and I want to be. 2. This brand's image and my self-image are similar in many respects. 3. This brand plays an important role in my life. 4. I am very attached to this brand. 5. I feel a strong sense of belonging to Ben & Jerry's.

	<p>6. Brand X has a great deal of personal meaning for me.</p> <p>7. Brand X embodies what I believe in.</p>		<p>6. Ben & Jerry's has a great deal of personal meaning for me.</p> <p>7. Ben & Jerry's embodies what I believe in.</p>
Brand Image	<p>1. Some characteristics of X come to my mind quickly.</p> <p>2. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of X.</p> <p>3. X has a strong personality.</p> <p>4. I have a clear impression of the type of people who use X brand.</p> <p>5. X has a strong image.</p> <p>6. The intangible attributes of X brand are reason enough to buy it.</p> <p>7. X provides a high value in relation to the price we must pay for it.</p>	Villarejo-Ramos & Sánchez-Franco, 2005	<p>1. Some characteristics of Ben & Jerry's come to my mind quickly.</p> <p>2. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Ben & Jerry's.</p> <p>3. Ben & Jerry's has a strong personality.</p> <p>4. I have a clear impression of the type of people who use Ben & Jerry's brand.</p> <p>5. Ben & Jerry's has a strong image.</p> <p>6. The intangible attributes of Ben & Jerry's are reason enough to buy it.</p> <p>7. Ben & Jerry's provides a high value in relation to the price we must pay for it.</p>
Brand Loyalty	<p>1. I consider myself to be loyal to X brand.</p> <p>2. X would be my first choice.</p> <p>3. I will not buy other brands if X is available at the store.</p> <p>4. X brand fulfilled my expectations the last time I bought it.</p> <p>5. I will buy X again.</p> <p>6. I will suggest X to other consumers.</p> <p>7. The price of another brand would have to be</p>	Villarejo-Ramos & Sánchez-Franco, 2005	<p>1. I consider myself to be loyal to Ben & Jerry's.</p> <p>2. Ben & Jerry's would be my first choice when I think about ice cream.</p> <p>3. I will not buy other brands if Ben & Jerry's is available at the store.</p> <p>4. Ben & Jerry's brand fulfilled my expectations the last time I bought it.</p> <p>5. I will buy Ben & Jerry's again.</p> <p>6. I will suggest Ben & Jerry's to other consumers.</p>

	<p>considerably inferior to not choose X.</p> <p>8. Even in the case of not using it, I would like to buy X brand.</p> <p>9. Even if another brand has the same features as X, I would prefer to buy X.</p> <p>10. If there is another brand as good as X, I would prefer to buy X.</p> <p>11. If another brand is not different from X in any way, it seems smarter to purchase X.</p>		<p>7. The price of another brand would have to be considerably inferior to not choose Ben & Jerry's.</p> <p>9. Even if another brand has the same features as Ben & Jerry's, I would prefer to buy Ben & Jerry's.</p> <p>10. If there is another brand as good as Ben & Jerry's, I would prefer to buy Ben & Jerry's.</p> <p>11. If another brand is not different from Ben & Jerry's in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Ben & Jerry's.</p>
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APPENDIX C – OUTER LOADINGS

Table 10: Outer Loadings

Variables	Constructs	Outer Loadings	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
ABA (authenticity of brand activism) (Alhouti et al., 2016)	ABA_1	0,777	24,737	0,000
	ABA_2	0,769	22,573	0,000
	ABA_3	0,733	20,018	0,000
	ABA_4	0,829	32,559	0,000
	ABA_5	0,884	51,990	0,000
	ABA_6	0,863	47,915	0,000
	ABA_7	0,757	20,081	0,000
	ABA_8	0,831	36,442	0,000
BI (Brand image) (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Stokburger- Sauer et al., 2012)	BI_1	Removed	-	-
	BI_2	0,791	27,110	0,000
	BI_3	0,807	25,685	0,000
	BI_4	Removed	-	-
	BI_5	0,756	18,924	0,000
	BI_6	0,777	27,556	0,000
	BI_7	Removed	-	-
BL (Brand loyalty) (Villarejo- Ramos & Sánchez- Franco, 2005)	BL_1	0,841	49,180	0,000
	BL_10	0,723	16,115	0,000
	BL_2	0,787	24,463	0,000
	BL_3	0,797	27,413	0,000
	BL_4	Removed	-	-
	BL_5	Removed	-	-
	BL_6	Removed	-	-
	BL_7	Removed	-	-
	BL_8	0,763	20,891	0,000
BL_9	0,811	29,378	0,000	
CBI (Consumer- brand identification) (Villarejo- Ramos & Sánchez- Franco, 2005)	CBI_1	0,771	27,993	0,000
	CBI_2	0,735	23,058	0,000
	CBI_3	0,887	62,597	0,000
	CBI_4	0,884	59,295	0,000
	CBI_5	0,889	61,302	0,000
	CBI_6	0,880	60,968	0,000
	CBI_7	0,753	25,869	0,000

APPENDIX D – CROSS LOADINGS

Table 11: Discriminant validity - Cross Loadings

	ABA	BI	BL	CBI
ABA_1	0,777	0,515	0,256	0,361
ABA_2	0,769	0,451	0,380	0,560
ABA_3	0,733	0,462	0,330	0,570
ABA_4	0,829	0,540	0,310	0,462
ABA_5	0,884	0,578	0,338	0,495
ABA_6	0,863	0,577	0,329	0,473
ABA_7	0,757	0,493	0,385	0,472
ABA_8	0,831	0,559	0,392	0,515
BI_2	0,528	0,791	0,486	0,585
BI_3	0,574	0,807	0,341	0,481
BI_5	0,446	0,756	0,311	0,369
BI_6	0,472	0,777	0,423	0,596
BL_1	0,420	0,481	0,841	0,704
BL_10	0,365	0,433	0,723	0,445
BL_2	0,308	0,377	0,787	0,508
BL_3	0,261	0,326	0,797	0,565
BL_8	0,300	0,380	0,763	0,459
BL_9	0,335	0,392	0,811	0,525
CBI_1	0,628	0,600	0,456	0,771
CBI_2	0,616	0,591	0,417	0,735
CBI_3	0,495	0,521	0,624	0,887
CBI_4	0,408	0,499	0,672	0,884

CBI_5	0,422	0,534	0,665	0,889
CBI_6	0,420	0,517	0,676	0,880
CBI_7	0,576	0,593	0,483	0,753

APPENDIX E – ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



This is to certify that

Project No.: **DDMKT2024-3-181529**

Project Title: **Ativismo de Marca na Era Digital**

Principal Researcher: **Sofia Abreu**

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 3/18/2024.

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.

The Principal Researcher is required to notify the Ethics Committee, via amendment or progress report, of

- Any significant change to the project and the reason for that change;
- Any unforeseen events or unexpected developments that merit notification;
- The inability of the Principal Researcher to continue in that role or any other change in research personnel involved in the project.

Lisbon, 3/18/2024

NOVA IMS Ethics Committee
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NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação

Universidade Nova de Lisboa