



**A literature review of brand bravery, brand activism,
and sustainable branding as contemporary branding
strategies: The Social Marketing new era**

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**A literature review of brand bravery, brand activism,
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Abstract

Brand management literature is continuously developing in response to the fast-moving business environment. The notions of brand bravery, sustainable branding, and brand activism have recently emerged as promising social marketing and branding strategies. However, our understanding of these specific concepts is limited due to the scarcity of relevant academic literature. This paper aims to provide a review of the existing literature on brand bravery that contributes to developing a robust understanding of the concept in relation to the other overlapping concepts of brand activism and sustainable branding and propose them as brand management strategies for today's brands. The findings of this study indicate that on the one hand, brand bravery is a distinctive brand personality attribute that is likely to trigger positive outcomes, i.e., consolidating brand identity, credibility, authenticity, and brand equity. On the other hand, brand bravery could also backfire. The study also confirms that while the concepts of brand bravery, brand activism, and sustainable branding are related and can overlap, they each have their unique focuses. This study serves the interests of marketing scholars and professionals alike and provides valuable implications for researchers and practitioners.

Keywords: Social Marketing, Brand Bravery; Brand activism; Sustainable branding; Brand Management; Brand Strategies; Literature Review

JEL Classification: M310, M370, M14

Introduction

Brands play important roles for modern organisations that result in favourable financial and non-financial outcomes. For example, brands increase public awareness of the product/service, differentiate the product/service from its rivals, develop and strengthen customer loyalty, support coherent and consistent image of the organisation across segments and markets, facilitate growth and expansion,

and build brand equity (Murphy, 1992; Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003; Kapferer, 2004; De Chernatony, 2006; M'zungu et al., 2010; Kotler & Keller, 2014; Davis, 2017; 2018; Swaminathan et al., 2020).

The domain of brand management continuously evolves to cater for changing internal and external developments in the business environment. One of the latest additions to brand managers toolbox is brand bravery (Jain et al., 2021; Azizi 2022; Lee et al., 2023). Numerous success stories show that brand bravery can enhance a brand's performance. However, most of these stories are documented in press articles and practitioners' publications, see for example: Smith & Milligan, (2011); Saunders, (2016); Palmer, (2018); Adams, (2018); Kemp-Robertson & Barth, (2018); Shelly, (2018); McCarthy, (2019); Maestri, (2020); Marketing, (2020). Academic literature is very scant regarding brand bravery and brave brands (Jain et al., 2021). Additionally, one can observe an overlap between brand bravery and other emerging branding concepts such as brand activism and sustainable branding. It is therefore the aim of this study to clarify this confusion and put forward brand bravery as a profound brand strategy that contemporary brands can adopt. No comprehensive literature review has been conducted on brand bravery and there is an obvious need for conducting this kind of research, as it will serve as a roadmap for marketing academics and practitioners. The subsequent sections of this study discuss the methodology used in conducting the literature review, followed by the results of literature analysis, the discussion of findings, and finally the conclusions, implications, new theoretical constructs, and future research directions.

Methodology

A literature review supports theoretical advancements by pointing to prospective research directions (Webster & Watson, 2002). Different types of reviews are suggested, such as narrative, see for example: Baumeister & Leary, (1997); Wong et al., (2013), systematic and meta-analysis, see: Davis et al., (2014), and integrative reviews (Torraco, (2005). Moreover, Snyder, (2019) differentiates between three broad approaches to literature reviews, namely Systematic, Semi-systematic, and Integrative. The systematic approach is adequate when there is sufficient number of publications, and when the topics of investigation are well developed. The semi-systematic or narrative review approach is intended for issues that have been conceptualised and explored in different ways by different

groups of researchers from other fields, making a full systematic review procedure impossible (Wong et al., 2013). That is, it is simply not practical to review every single article that might be related to the topic, so an alternative technique must be devised. The integrative review approach is closely related to the semi-structured review approach. An integrative review differs from a semi-structured review in that it aims to examine, critique, and synthesize the literature on a research issue in a way that allows new theoretical frameworks and viewpoints to emerge (Torraco, (2005). There are many examples of this style of review in business literature (e.g., Gross, 1998; Covington, 2000; Mazumdar et al., 2005). The majority of integrative literature reviews are designed to address new, emergent subjects, with the goal of developing first or preliminary conceptualizations and theoretical models rather than reviewing existing models. Accordingly, the integrative approach is adequate for the current study since the brand bravery topic is newly emergent and underdeveloped in terms of its conceptualisations and theoretical grounding.

Publication search

A thorough search for multiple keywords that included "Brand Bravery," "Brave Branding," "Brand activism," and "Sustainable Branding" is used to identify any publication on the research topics. Searches were conducted in seven academic databases, in which the authors had institutional access:

1. Clarivate Web of Science (WoS www.webofscience.com)
2. Academic Search Complete (EBSCO www.ebsco.com)
3. ABI/INFORM (ProQuest www.proquest.com)
4. Emerald Insight (www.emerald.com)
5. JSTOR (www.jstor.org)
6. Elsevier Scopus (www.scopus.com)
7. Google Scholar (www.scholar.google.com)

The initial search rendered numerous results as publications on brand management are vast. Moreover, since bravery is a profound personality trait, hundreds of the search results pertained to psychology, social psychology, and behavioural science literature.

Selection criteria

As the aim of this study is to review relevant literature on brand bravery and conceptually differentiate the concept from other overlapping brand archetypes, inclusion and exclusion criteria were implemented in the literature search with a tendency to broaden the search criteria to ensure inclusion of all relevant articles. In the first search phase, the following criteria had to be met: (1) the article had to be peer-reviewed in a scholarly journal, (2) the publication language is English, (3) and the full text is available and accessible, yielding 1311 articles. Conference papers, masters and doctoral dissertations, textbooks, and unpublished working papers were not considered in this search as academics and practitioners alike often use journals to acquire and disseminate knowledge and new findings. Journals therefore represent the highest level of research (Nord & Nord, 1995; Ngai, 2003; Hook et al., 2018). As Figure (1) depicts, in the second phase of literature search the articles were scanned so abstracts and keywords could be analysed and, when necessary, the complete text is read. Publications in other domains than marketing and brand management were excluded involving those published in psychology and social psychology journals. This is because such analysis is beyond the capacity of this study. This phase brought down the number of articles to 562.

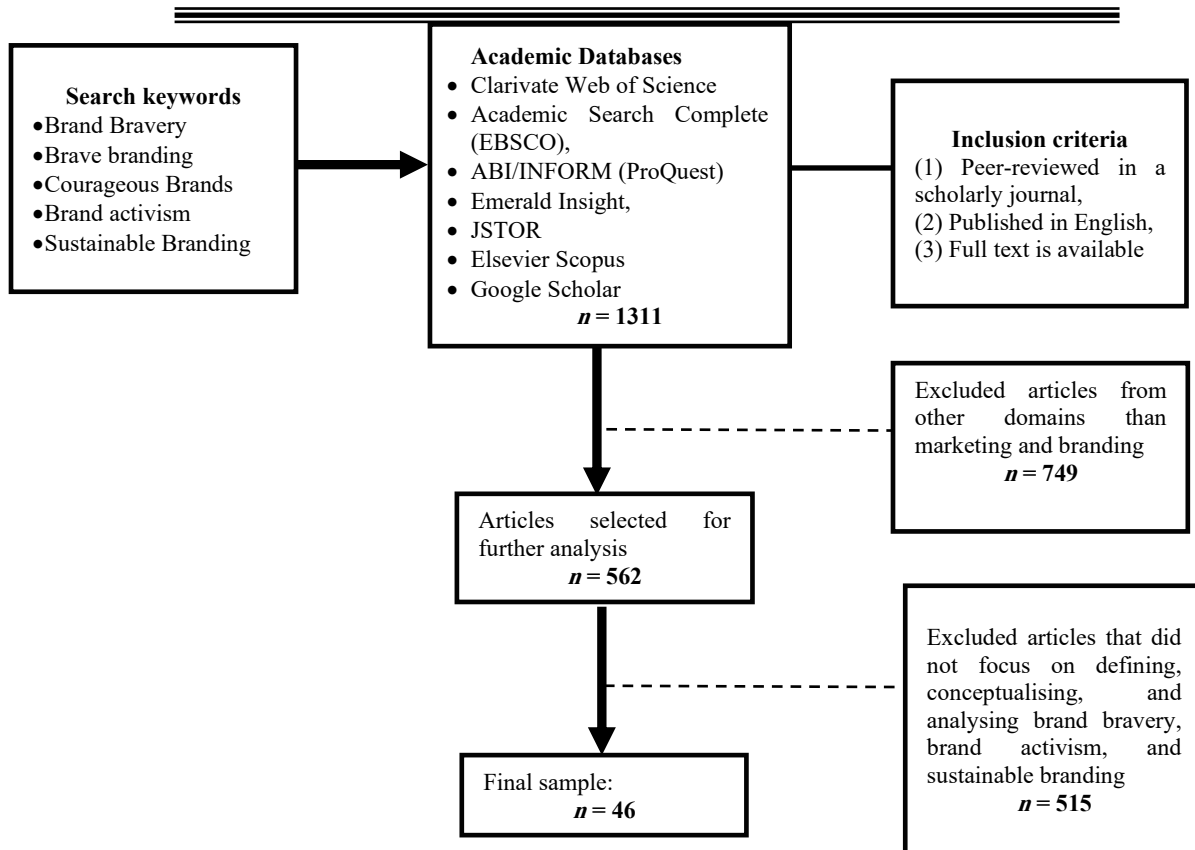


Figure (1) Literature search and article selection process (prepared by the author)

In the third and final phase, only articles that focused on defining, conceptualising, and analysing brand bravery, brand activism, and sustainable branding were retained. Of the 562 papers, the final sample consisted of 46 articles ($n = 46$) that met the search and refinement criteria (Fig.1).

Analysis and results

The final articles included in this review were analysed by topic, year of publication, research methods and design, findings, and future research recommendations (see appendix I for details). Literature analysis was primarily concerned with conceptualising brand bravery and the other two related and overlapping branding concepts, i.e., brand activism, and sustainable branding.

Table (1) depicts the literature sample characteristics in relation to the three distinctive – yet related – concepts. Out of 46 papers analysed, 25 have focused on brand activism, 4 on brand bravery, 12 on sustainable branding, and 5 papers discussed related branding concepts, i.e., brand personality, brand authenticity, storytelling, conscious and purposeful branding, and innovative branding. Notably, 21 papers were conceptual and 25 were empirical. Similarly, table (2) captures the thematic and methodological clustering of literatures related to the research topics. For example, the 25 papers related to brand activism (9 conceptual and 16 empirical) have discussed several variables such as: social activism, strategic activism, backlash, mainstream malcontent, Social Counter Marketing (SCM), brand hatred, brand-cause congruence, and digital brand activism. The 4 papers which discussed brand bravery (1 conceptual, and 3 empirical) have discussed the underpinnings of brand bravery (Jain et al., 2021; Azizi, 2022), brave brand communications (Abdulkarim, 2018), and backlash of brand bravery (Lee et al., 2023).

Each of the three branding themes has had some distinctive attributes that only belonged to the theme. One can also observe that there were common attributes between two, and in some cases among the three branding themes. The analysis concluded that the earliest account of brands being courageous, tough, and rugged was in 1997 in Jenifer Aaker study of brand personality dimensions. Over the course of the following two decades, brand personality research has evolved, and the three themes of this study have gained significant attentions from marketing scholars and practitioners as the business environment witnessed significant technological, socio-cultural, and political changes, which led marketing and branding decision makers to get their brands engaged in controversial, provocative, challenging, and confrontational situations.

Table (1) Literature sample characteristics

Research domain	Number and type of studies	Studies	
Brand bravery	4 studies (3 empirical and 1 conceptual)	1. Abdulkarim, (2018) 2. Jain et al, (2021)	3. Azizi, (2022) 4. Lee et al, (2023) *
Brand activism	25 studies (16 empirical and 9 conceptual)	1. Kozinets & Handelman, (2004) 2. Baron & Diermeier, (2007) 3. Palazzo & Basu, (2007) 4. Baghi & Gabrielli, (2013) 5. Hopkinson & Cronin, (2015) 6. Bellew et al, (2017) 7. Sobande, (2019) 8. Vredenburg et al, (2020) 9. Hydock et al, (2020) 10. Swaminathan et al, (2020) 11. Moorman, (2020) 12. Korschun, (2021) 13. Sibai et al, (2021)	14. Pimentel & Didonet, (2021) 15. Smith et al, (2021) 16. Milfeld et al, (2021) 17. Ghosh, (2022) 18. Alharbi et al, (2022) 19. Cristobal et al, (2022) 20. Herzberg & Rudeloff, (2022) 21. Bhargave & Bedi, (2022) 22. Batista et al, (2022) 23. Wannow & Haupt, (2022) 24. Rast et al, (2022) 25. Confetto et al, (2023)
Sustainable branding	12 studies (4 empirical and 8 conceptual)	1. Brady, (2003) 2. McDonagh & Prothero, (2014) 3. Grubor & Milovanov, (2016) 4. Grubor & Milovanov, (2017) 5. Chaifetz & Smith, (2019) 6. Bandyopadhyay & Ray, (2020)	7. Chandy et al, (2021) 8. Hong & Li, (2021) 9. van Heerde et al, (2021) ** 10. Milfeld et al, (2022) 11. Rai & Chawla, (2023) *** 12. Rathee & Milfeld, (2023)
Other related branding topics	5 studies (2 empirical and 3 conceptual)	1. Aaker, (1997) 2. Jo Hatch & Schultz, (2003) 3. Herskovitz & Crystal, (2010)	4. Baumgarth, (2020) 5. Lindgreen et al, (2021)
Total number of studies		46	

* Article discusses both concepts of brand bravery and brand activism.

** Article discusses sociocultural and ecological brand identity which relates to both concepts of brand activism and sustainable branding.

*** Article discusses brand hatred which is claimed to result from negative perceptions of brand activism, or unsustainable brands.

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Table (2) Thematic and methodological clustering of literatures

Research domain and themes	Methodology	Studies associated with the research topic	Number of studies
Brand bravery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brave communications • Brand bravery underpinnings • Backlash 	Conceptual	Abdulkarim, (2018).	1
	Empirical	Jain et al, (2021); Azizi, (2022); Lee et al, (2023) *.	3
Brand activism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social activism • Public opinion • Strategic activism • Backlash • Co-branding • Mainstream malcontent • Social Counter Marketing (SCM) • Brand hatred • Brand-cause congruence • Corporate Political Advocacy (CPA) • Digital brand activism 	Conceptual	Baron & Diermeier, (2007); Palazzo & Basu, (2007); Bellew et al, (2017); Vredenburg et al, (2020); Swaminathan et al, (2020); Moorman, (2020); Korschun, (2021); Pimentel & Didonet, (2021); Bhargave & Bedi, (2022).	9
	Empirical	Kozinets & Handelman, (2004); Baghi & Gabrielli, (2013); Hopkinson & Cronin, (2015); Sobande, (2019); Hydock et al, (2020); Sibai et al, (2021); Smith et al, (2021); Milfeld et al, (2021); Ghosh, (2022); Alharbi et al, (2022); Cristobal et al, (2022); Herzberg & Rudeloff, (2022); Batista et al, (2022); Wannow & Haupt, (2022); Rast et al, (2022); Confetto et al, (2023).	16
Sustainable branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical, social, and environmental responsibility • Innovation and differentiation • Brand identity, reputation, equity, and market share • Backlash • Responsible marketing • Boycott and boycott • Brand hatred • Sustainable advertising 	Conceptual	Brady, (2003); McDonagh & Prothero, (2014); Grubor & Milovanov, (2016); Grubor & Milovanov, (2017); Chandy et al, (2021); van Heerde et al, (2021) **; Rai & Chawla, (2023) ***; Rathee & Milfeld, (2023).	8
	Empirical	Chaifetz & Smith, (2019); Bandyopadhyay & Ray, (2020); Hong & Li, (2021); Milfeld et al, (2022).	4
Other related branding topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand personality • Brand authenticity • Storytelling • Conscious & purposeful brands • Innovative branding 	Conceptual	Herskovitz & Crystal, (2010); Baumgarth, (2020); Lindgreen et al, (2021).	3
	Empirical	Aaker, (1997); Jo Hatch & Schultz, (2003).	2
Total			46

* Article discusses both concepts of brand bravery and brand activism.

** Article discusses sociocultural and ecological brand identity which related to both concepts of brand activism and sustainable branding.

*** Article discusses brand hatred which is claimed to result from negative perceptions of brand activism, or unsustainable brands.

Discussion of findings

Literature analysis has made us more competent in establishing the differences between brand bravery and the other two overlapping branding architects. This section conceptualises the three research topics and establishes the differences and similarities among them.

Brand Bravery

The earliest notion of a brand personality trait related to bravery was suggested by Jennifer Aaker (1997) as she referred to ruggedness and excitement among other brand personality dimensions. Ruggedness in that context meant the brand being tough and excitement being daring. A rather recent account of brand bravery was the original work of Jain et al., (2021) who attempted to explicitly conceptualise brand bravery using psychological and behavioural theories that tackled bravery as a human trait in their study of mobile phone brands. As synthesized in table (3), bravery is described as the willingness to make sacrifices, feeling concerned for others, showing redemptive behaviours, and heroism. Dictionaries refer to bravery as the quality of being courageous.

Table 3 Findings regarding brand bravery definition and terminology (prepared by the author)

Brand Bravery conceptualisation		Related publications
Description of research domain	Brand Bravery involves a brand taking risks in its marketing and branding strategies, often addressing controversial or divisive issues. The brand makes a stand, usually for a social, political, or ecological cause, which may not always align with the views of all its consumers.	Abdulkarim, (2018) Jain et al., (2021); Azizi, (2022); Lee et al., (2023)
Brand bravery underpinnings	Altruism, Bold, Courageous, Determined, Enduring, Fearless, Gritty	
Brand bravery outcomes	Self-brand congruity, brand advocacy, brand attitude, and brand identification.	

Jain et al., (2021) suggested a positive influence of perceived brand bravery on favourable marketing outcomes. Lee et al., (2023) asserted in their study of non-profit brand activism that brand bravery plays an important role to mediate the relationship between brand social activism, and brand equity. Azizi (2022) supported Jain et al.,(2021) in his case study analysis of sportswear brands. Both studies agreed that brand bravery is underpinned by seven underpinnings/drivers, namely: altruism, boldness, courage, determination, endurance, fearlessness, and grittiness.

Altruism is one of the themes of brand bravery and greatly aids in exhibiting responsible conduct on a social foundation. This trait can be explained using the Lego brand as an illustration, which promised to restrict the use of plastic in the production of its products. With this goal in mind, it successfully switched out its plastic toys for sugarcane plastic, which is less hazardous to the environment (Lauwaert, 2008). Being *Bold* refers to deviating from established labels or industry norms (Jain et al., 2021). The launch of the Netflix entertainment platform, which attracted the public and became a great centre of entertainment, serves as an example of this trait. Netflix's attempt to do something unconventional opened the door for a new meaning of watching movies or web series justifies this audacious trait (Brennan, 2018). The quality of being *Courageous* is when a brand isn't afraid to own its mistakes, limits, and faults (Jain et al., 2021). The fried chicken company KFC, which openly admitted that it had fallen short of its core component, chicken, is a good example of this brand attribute. It is a highly esteemed brand that is renowned for its openness and transparency, which allows it to win consumers' confidence, meet their demands, and outperform rivals.

The next brand bravery trait is being *Determined*, which, as the name implies, demonstrates faith and commitment in its company activities. It embodies the notion of having confidence in oneself, standing up for the truths one passionately believes in, and being prepared to speak up on controversial issues. According to Abad-Santos, (2018), Nike was determined to launch a campaign with former National Football League player Collin Kaepernick, who was suspended from the game for taking a knee during the playing of a nation's national anthem in protest of racial injustice. Nike continued to work with Collin on an advertising and was unwilling to abandon it, regardless of what the brand's consumers thought of it. By releasing the commercial with the sports star and the tagline "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything", Nike demonstrated the strength of its brand values and went on to win the Creative Arts Emmy for best commercial. Similarly, Starbucks reinforced its brand identity by hiring thousands of refugees in response to President Trump's travel restriction on immigrants (Abitbol et al., 2018; Jain et al., 201; Azizi, 2022). *Enduring* can be described as a quality that assesses a brand's genuine potential and determines whether it can survive turbulent times and return to the market with renewed business plans. *Fearless* is the quality that allows a brand to explore many fields, employ certain innovative, unusual, and unorthodox tactics, and

confront numerous risks in order to develop new ideas to compete in the market (Jordan, 2013). Lastly, the characteristic *Gritty* is founded on the revolutionary notion of defying the pre-existing standards that are present inside the brand by applying its new tactics, going against the accepted wisdom in the industry, and emphasizing being stubborn and intractable (Jain et al., 201; Azizi, 2022).

Consequently, brand bravery can be seen as both a novel concept and a by-product of organisational actions associated with eager objectives. On the one hand, brand bravery is a relatively recent concept that has gained prominence in the marketing and branding literature, reflecting the growing strategic importance of taking bold and unconventional actions in a rapidly changing and highly competitive business environment (Bellew et al., 2017, Abdulkarim, 2018). On the other hand, brand bravery can also be seen as a by-product of organizational actions associated with higher pursuits such as innovation, differentiation, and growth, as companies strive to stand out in the marketplace and meet the changing needs and expectations of their customers. Ultimately, the concept of brand bravery can be viewed as a reflection of the ongoing evolution of branding and marketing practices in response to the changing needs of the business landscape. Similarly, Brand bravery can be seen as both a strategy and a tactic. As a strategy, brand bravery refers to a company's overarching approach to branding and marketing, in which they are willing to take bold, creative, and unconventional risks to differentiate themselves from their competitors and build a strong, memorable brand (Jain et al., 201; Azizi, 2022; Lee et al., 2023). This approach is driven by the company's values, goals, and target audience, and is implemented through a series of tactics and initiatives that support the brand's mission and vision. As a tactic, brand bravery refers to specific actions or initiatives that a company takes to achieve its branding goals. This can include running controversial advertising campaigns, launching innovative products, taking a stance on social or political issues, or using unexpected marketing techniques. These tactics are designed to capture attention, create buzz, and drive brand awareness and engagement. In both cases, brand bravery requires careful planning, execution, and assessment to be effective. By taking a strategic approach to brand bravery and measuring the results of its tactics, a company can continually refine and improve its branding efforts and achieve its goals.

The study in hand agrees with Baumgarth, (2020); Jain et al., (2021); and Azizi (2022) that brand bravery represents a new frontier in branding. It involves taking risks and standing for what matters, even in the face of potential backlash. Brand bravery can be a powerful tool for building brand loyalty and differentiating from competitors, but it must be approached with authenticity and backed by tangible actions. As societal challenges continue to mount, and consumers demand more responsibility from businesses, brand bravery will likely become increasingly important. Brands that are willing to take a stand, to be brave, will not only contribute to societal progress but also forge deeper connections with their customers. The era of brand bravery is upon us, and it is those brands that are brave enough to embrace it that will thrive.

From the literature analysis, several recommendations are available for future research on brand bravery that include exploring the antecedents and consequences of brand bravery by investigating the factors that drive brands to take bold and risky actions, studying the impact of brand bravery on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and brand loyalty. Also, scholars are encouraged to examine the role of brand authenticity and trust in brand bravery initiatives; and to examine the cultural and contextual factors that influence brand bravery across different markets.

Brand activism

Table (4) summarizes the findings of literature analysis regarding brand activism. The table describes the research domain, its underpinnings, and acclaimed outcomes. Brand activism has emerged as a significant part of corporate social responsibility. It pertains to the strategic decision by enterprises to take a stand on pertinent social, political, economic, or environmental issues (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020; Sobande, 2020; Pimentel & Didonet, 2021).

Table 4 Findings regarding brand activism definition and terminology (prepared by the authors)

Brand Activism conceptualisation		Related publications
Description of research domain	Brand Activism involves brands taking action to promote or bring about social, political, or environmental change. This is more than simply making a statement; it involves active participation in the cause, beyond mere philanthropy and social responsibility.	Kozinets & Handelman (2004); McDonagh & Prothero, (2014); Grubor & Milovanov, (2016); Grubor & Milovanov, (2017); Chandy et al, (2021); van Heerde et al, (2021); Rai & Chawla, (2023); Rathee & Milfeld, (2023); Chaifetz & Smith, (2019); Bandyopadhyay & Ray, (2020); Hong & Li, (2021); Milfeld et al, (2022);
Brand activism underpinnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integration of social and political issues into brand identity and marketing strategies. • The responsibility to address societal challenges and advocate for positive change. • Increasing consumer demand for purpose-driven brands, • A desire to align with values and causes. • The recognition that taking a stand can enhance brand reputation and customer loyalty. 	
Brand activism outcomes	Increased brand visibility, enhanced brand reputation, customer loyalty and engagement, customer-brand congruence, brand equity, and brand authenticity.	

One of the earliest accounts of brand activism was Kozinets & Handelman (2004) empirical study of the types of consumer movements in response to perceived social, environmental, or ethical injustices. They claim consumer movements and public opinion could exert significant pressure on businesses to alter their practices, or even transform entire industries. In this context, brand activism is about utilizing the corporation's brand and resources to drive systemic changes in society. It represents a shift from a profit-only focus to a model where businesses engage with their stakeholders on issues of shared concern (Baron & Diermeier, 2007; Wannow & Haupt, 2022).

Many factors have influenced the rise of brand activism. The evolving consumer landscape, characterized by an increasingly socially conscious consumer base, is a key driver. Consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, demand more from businesses than just products or services. They seek alignment with brands that share their values and demonstrate commitment to causes they care about. Moreover, digital technology and social media have provided brands with a

platform to voice their stance on various issues as they can directly engage with their consumers and inspire dialogues on matters of social significance. This increased transparency has also resulted in an unprecedented level of accountability for corporations (Bellew et al., 2017; Moorman, 2020; Sibai et al., 2021). However, brand activism is not free of challenges. It involves a delicate balance as brands need to remain authentic in their engagement and avoid accusations of ‘woke-washing’ or brand hypocrisy, where activism efforts are perceived as insincere or simply a marketing ploy (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). Consumers are becoming adept at distinguishing between genuine corporate activism and superficial attempts at engagement (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Chaifetz & Smith, 2020; Baumgarth et al., 2020; Sibai et al., 2021; Alharbi et al., 2022; Rast et al., 2022). Furthermore, the political and polarizing nature of many issues can pose risks to the brand. Taking a stance might alienate a segment of the customer base who hold opposing views. Therefore, brands must tread carefully, ensuring their activism aligns seamlessly with their brand values and mission (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020; Smith et al., 2021). A good example of brand activism is Ben & Jerry's, which has been vocal about issues ranging from climate change to racial justice. Their activism is not just external but permeates their internal operations, such as sourcing Fairtrade ingredients and ensuring pay equity within the company.

While brand activism carries inherent risks, its benefits can be substantial if executed well (Palazzo & Basu, 2007; Chaifetz & Smith, 2020; Baumgarth et al., 2020). It has the potential to strengthen brand equity, enhance customer loyalty, and attract and retain talent. Moreover, brand activism is claimed to differentiate a brand from its competitors, giving it a unique selling proposition that appeals to consumers' values rather than just their wallets (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Korschun, 2021). Therefore, it is believed that brand activism represents a new paradigm in corporate responsibility, marketing and a brand management since both conceptual and empirical research have asserted that brand activism allows corporations to inspire societal change while building stronger connections with customers. However, its success depends on its authenticity and alignment with the brand's core values. As society continues to evolve, the role of businesses in addressing critical societal issues is likely to become even more significant, making brand activism an essential strategy for corporations in the future.

Several recommendations for future researchers have been identified. The most significant is the call for investigating the motivations and drivers behind brand activism and exploring how different types of activism align with different brand strategies. Also, studying the effectiveness of various brand activism approaches in terms of consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase behaviour is a promising research agenda. Additionally, researching the long-term impact of brand activism on brand equity and market performance, as well as examining the ethical implications and potential risks associated with brand activism as a marketing strategy have all been suggested.

Sustainable branding

Table (5) summarizes the findings of literature analysis regarding sustainable branding. The table describes the research domain, its underpinnings, and acclaimed outcomes.

Table 5 Findings regarding sustainable branding definition and terminology (prepared by the author)

Sustainable branding conceptualisation		Related publications
Description of research domain	Sustainable Branding refers to a brand's efforts to be environmentally responsible. This could involve using sustainable materials, reducing waste, minimizing energy use, or other environmentally friendly practices.	Brady, (2003); McDonagh & Prothero, (2014); Grubor & Milovanov, (2016); Grubor & Milovanov, (2017); Chandy et al, (2021); van Heerde et al, (2021) **; Rai & Chawla, (2023) ***; Rathee & Milfeld, (2023); Chaifetz & Smith, (2019); Bandyopadhyay & Ray, (2020); Hong & Li, (2021); Milfeld et al, (2022).
Sustainable branding underpinnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental responsibility • Social responsibility: • Ethical business practices • Stakeholder engagement and collaboration • Long-term thinking and resilience • Communication and transparency 	
Sustainable branding outcomes	Enhanced brand reputation, increased customer loyalty and market share, cost savings and efficiency, innovation and differentiation, and positive societal impact.	

There are numerous examples of successful sustainable branding, such as Patagonia, the outdoor clothing company, has long been an advocate for environmental conservation. Their environmental activism, backed by tangible actions such as donating a portion of their profits to environmental causes, has reinforced their brand image, and resonated well with their target audience.

Another example is Unilever's "Sustainable Living" plan, which aims to decouple the company's growth from its environmental footprint. The plan sets out clear, measurable targets and has been integrated into various Unilever brands, demonstrating a comprehensive and authentic approach to sustainable branding (Polman & Winston, 2021). In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, sustainable branding has emerged as a critical strategy for organizations seeking to navigate the challenges of the 21st century. As early as 2002, Arlo Brady was among the first to put forward the notion of sustainable branding which positions sustainability at the core of a brand's identity, shaping its values, operations, and communications (Brady, 2003). In his seminal work, he calls for sustainability marketing and sustainable branding to reflect a shift away from short-term, profit-driven strategies towards a more holistic, future-oriented perspective that balances economic success with social and environmental responsibility (Grubor & Milovanov, 2016; Chandy et al., 2021). Moreover, other scholars confirm that sustainable branding involves more than just adhering to regulatory requirements or implementing isolated green initiatives. It requires embedding sustainability into the very DNA of a brand (Grubor & Milovanov, 2016; Chaifetz & Smith, 2020). This means integrating sustainable practices into all aspects of the business, from sourcing and manufacturing to packaging and distribution. It also means communicating these efforts effectively to stakeholders, fostering transparency, and building trust (Brady, 2003; Baghi & Gabrielli, 2013).

The rise of sustainable branding can be attributed to several interconnected trends. Firstly, consumers are becoming more environmentally and socially conscious. They are not only seeking high-quality, competitively priced products but also prioritizing brands that align with their values (Hong & Li, 2021; Rathee & Milfeld, 2023). Secondly, technology and social media have brought about increased transparency, putting brands under greater scrutiny. Today's consumers have access to a wealth of information about brands and their practices. They can quickly expose brands that fail to live up to their sustainability claims, leading to potential reputational damage (Hong & Li, 2021; Rai et al., 2023). Moreover, governments and regulators around the world are introducing stricter sustainability standards, making it essential for brands to incorporate sustainable practices into their operations. In addition, investors are increasingly considering environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria in their investment decisions, leading to a greater focus on sustainability in the corporate world. However, sustainable branding also comes with challenges. The most prominent

of these is the issue of "greenwashing", where brands overstate or falsely advertise their sustainability credentials. Greenwashing not only misleads consumers but also undermines trust in brands that are genuinely sustainable (Chaifetz & Smith, 2020; Baumgarth et al., 2020; Chandy et al., 2021). To create a successful sustainable brand, companies must ensure authenticity and consistency. This means aligning all aspects of the brand with sustainability, from internal operations to external communications. The brand's sustainability message must be clear, honest, and backed up by tangible actions. Accordingly, sustainable branding represents a new frontier in the business world. It requires brands to think beyond short-term profits and consider their broader impact on society and the environment. While this involves significant challenges, the potential benefits are substantial. A strong sustainable brand can drive customer loyalty, differentiate from competitors, and future-proof the business against regulatory changes and resource shortages. As sustainability continues to rise up the global agenda, sustainable branding will likely become not just an optional strategy, but a business imperative (Milfeld et al., 2022; Rai et al., 2023).

Conclusions and new theoretical constructs

In the quest to conceptualise brand bravery and distinguish it from other similar branding concepts such as brand activism and sustainable branding, this literature review identified 1311 academic, peer-reviewed, scholarly publications, of which 562 articles were included as they belonged to the marketing and branding context. A final sample of 46 articles were thoroughly analysed and had a clear link with this study's aim. Based on the literature review and analysis, the study concludes this study with the similarities and differences among the research variable from which the study confirms that brand bravery, brand activism, and sustainable branding share many similarities, but, indeed, they are not the same.

Brand Bravery involves a brand taking risks in its marketing and branding strategies, often addressing controversial or divisive issues. The brand makes a stand, usually for a social, political, or ecological cause, which may not always align with the views of all its consumers.

Similarities: Like Brand Activism, it involves taking a stand on social or political issues. In Sustainable Branding, this bravery might be demonstrated by being upfront about the ecological impacts of the company's operations.

Differences: Brand bravery is more about the risk-taking aspect of branding and doesn't necessarily have to be related to sustainability or activism. A brand may show bravery by taking a controversial stand on any issue, not just those related to social justice or the environment.

Brand Activism involves brands taking action to promote or bring about social, political, or environmental change. This is more than simply making a statement; it involves active participation in the cause.

Similarities: Like Brand Bravery, Brand Activism involves taking a stand on controversial issues. With Sustainable Branding, the activism might be in relation to environmental sustainability.

Differences: Brand Activism specifically relates to promoting or effecting change and is inherently action oriented. While sustainable branding may involve elements of activism (if the brand is actively campaigning for environmental causes, for example), not all brand activism is necessarily related to sustainability.

Sustainable Branding refers to a brand's efforts to be environmentally responsible. This could involve using sustainable materials, reducing waste, minimizing energy use, or other environmentally friendly practices.

Similarities: Like Brand Activism, Sustainable Branding can involve taking action to bring about change, in this case, environmental change. In the case of Brand Bravery, a brand may take a brave stance by openly acknowledging its environmental impact and committing to change.

Differences: Sustainable Branding is specifically focused on environmental issues, whereas Brand Bravery and Brand Activism can relate to any social, political, or controversial issue.

New theoretical constructs

Building upon existing literature and incorporating recent advancements in branding, this study proposes the following new theoretical constructs relating to the three research variables:

Brand bravery Authenticity: This assesses the genuineness of a brand's bravery, gauging whether the stand taken aligns with the brand's identity and values, and if it's reflected in its actions and practices.

Brand bravery Impact: This measures the repercussions of a brand's brave actions on its reputation, customer loyalty, and sales, helping to understand the real-world implications of brand bravery.

Brave brand resilience: This evaluates a brand's ability to withstand backlash or controversy arising from its brave stance, reflecting its commitment and adaptability in challenging situations.

Brand activism scope: This construct gauges the breadth of issues a brand is willing to engage in, providing insights into the brand's societal and political commitments.

Brand activism consistency: This assesses the degree to which a brand's activism aligns with its core values and is reflected in its business operations, measuring the authenticity of its activist stance.

Brand activism influence: This evaluates the tangible effects of a brand's activism on societal or political change, providing a measure of the brand's impact beyond the business sphere.

Sustainability integration: This construct measures the extent to which sustainability practices are incorporated into a brand's operations, products, and services, reflecting the brand's commitment to sustainability.

Sustainability communication: This assesses the clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of a brand's communication of its sustainability efforts, indicating its transparency and engagement with stakeholders.

Sustainability impact: This evaluates the tangible environmental and social impacts of a brand's sustainability efforts, providing insights into the real-world effects of its sustainable branding.

These new constructs offer a comprehensive framework for understanding and researching the increasingly significant phenomena of brand bravery, brand activism, and sustainable branding. They highlight the need for brands to not only

talk the talk but also walk the walk, demonstrating authenticity, resilience, and impact in their actions.

In summary, brand bravery is a necessity for brand activism and sustainable branding, but not all brave brands are sustainable or activist. They could simply take a courageous stance or express an unconventional point of view. In essence, brand bravery, brand activism, and sustainable branding represent different ways in which brands can demonstrate social responsibility and engage with stakeholders beyond the traditional business-consumer relationship. While they can overlap and intersect in practice, they are distinct concepts with unique implications and challenges.

Future research

This study suggests several promising avenues for future research arising from the overlap that could be observed among the three branding concepts, and the need to propose new theoretical constructs that contribute to branding academics and practitioners' knowledge development. The following future research questions are proposed:

Q.1 What are the boundary conditions of brand bravery and/or brand activism and/or sustainable branding?

Future research could explore the factors that moderate the relationship between brand bravery and/or brand activism and/or sustainable branding and consumer responses, such as the type of product or service, the cultural context, or the target audience.

Q.2 What role could brand bravery play in crisis management?

Brand bravery could be an important factor in how brands handle crises and respond to negative events. Future research could explore how brands can demonstrate bravery in the face of crises, and how consumers respond to such actions.

Q.3 What roles do social media play in the antecedents and outcomes of brand bravery and/or brand activism and/or sustainable branding?

Social media has become an important platform for brands to demonstrate their bravery and engage with consumers. Future research could explore how brands

can effectively use social media to showcase their bravery and how social media influences the perception of brand bravery.

Q.4 What are the ethical implications of brand bravery?

While brand bravery can have positive effects on brand outcomes, it could also raise ethical concerns, such as the potential for brands to exploit social or environmental causes for their own benefit.

Q.5 What role could brand bravery play in developing a robust brand resilience culture?

Brand resilience could be defined as a brand's ability to recover from setbacks or negative publicity. A brand that is resilient can withstand criticism and negative feedback and continue to thrive in the market. Brand resilience could be an important construct for understanding how brands can be brave in the face of adversity.

Q.6 What are the outcomes of positive/negative Brand's Bravery Resonance?

Brand resonance would assess how well a brand's brave stance resonates with its target audience.

Q.7 What are the relationships among brand bravery, activism, sustainable branding, and brand agility?

Brand agility could be defined as a brand's ability to adapt to changing market conditions and consumer preferences. A brand that is agile can quickly pivot to new opportunities and challenges and stay relevant in the market. Brand agility could be an important construct for understanding how brands can be brave while remaining flexible and adaptable.

Q.8 What are the characteristics of brave consumer behaviour?

Study how consumers respond to brand bravery, considering factors such as brand loyalty, trust, and the desire for new and innovative products.

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Appendix (i) Synthesis of main findings and future research recommendations of literature ordered by the year of publication

Reference: Journal, Topic of research, Research type and methods	Main findings	Future research recommendations
<p>Aaker, (1997) <i>Journal of marketing research,</i> Brand personality Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Brand personality has 5 main dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the relationship between brand personality and consumer behaviour, such as brand preference and loyalty. • Examining the influence of different marketing strategies on brand personality perceptions. • Exploring the impact of cultural differences on brand personality dimensions and understanding how brand personality evolves over time. • Investigating the potential link between brand personality and financial performance.
<p>Jo Hatch & Schultz, (2003) <i>European journal of marketing</i> Corporate branding Empirical, case study</p>	<p>Aligning organizational identity, culture, and image contributes to a consistent, authentic brand. A strong corporate brand, built on a foundation of shared values and clear communication, not only differentiates a company in the market but also fosters trust, loyalty, and long-term relationships with customers, employees, and other stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the dynamics of alignment and misalignment between organizational identity, culture, and image. • Identifying best practices for creating and maintaining consistent brand messaging. • Researching the role of new media channels and evolving communication strategies in shaping corporate branding outcomes.
<p>Brady, (2003) <i>Brand Management</i> Sustainable branding Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>Companies that demonstrate genuine commitment to ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities can create sustainable brand value by fostering trust and loyalty among stakeholders. This involves transparent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the relationship between corporate responsibility and sustainable brand value. • Identifying best practices for integrating responsibility into core business strategies by understanding the role of stakeholder engagement and transparent communication.

	communication, authentic actions, and stakeholder engagement. By integrating responsibility into their core business strategies, companies can not only enhance their reputation and brand value but also contribute positively to society and the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining the long-term effects of responsible actions on brand value and business performance. • Investigating how cultural context and industry-specific factors influence the effectiveness of responsibility-driven branding efforts, providing insights for companies to optimize their strategies.
<p>Kozinets & Handelman, (2004) <i>Journal of consumer research</i> Brand activism Empirical, mixed methods (interviews + observations)</p>	Consumer movements often emerge in response to perceived social, environmental, or ethical injustices associated with certain consumption patterns. By mobilizing public opinion and utilizing social networks, these movements can exert significant pressure on businesses to alter their practices or even transform entire industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining the unintended consequences of activism on consumer culture and investigate how businesses can effectively respond to and engage with these movements. • Researching the role of digital platforms and social media in shaping consumer activism and the potential for collaboration between businesses and activists to drive sustainable consumption practices.
<p>Baron & Diermeier, (2007) <i>Journal of Economics & Management Strategy</i> NGO activism Conceptual, theory development</p>	Strategic activism has a substantial impact on the way firms approach non-market challenges. Activists often target firms based on their perceived vulnerability to public opinion, leading to increased scrutiny and pressure to engage with stakeholders. In response, firms may choose to adopt dialogue-based approaches or adapt their strategies to align with stakeholder demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the interactions between activists and firms. • Studying the effectiveness of various nonmarket strategies in different contexts. • Researching the long-term impact of activism on corporate behaviour.
<p>Palazzo & Basu, (2007) <i>Journal of business ethics</i> Corporate branding & ethical backlash</p>	Key variables contributing to ethical backlash include increased focus on branding, media, and technology's role in amplifying concerns, rising social activism, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the effectiveness of various ethical practices and communication strategies on backlash. • Investigating the role of collaboration between corporations and stakeholders.

Conceptual, theory development	growing consumer awareness of social and environmental issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examining the impact of emerging technologies on corporate branding and ethical scrutiny.
Herskovitz & Crystal, (2010) <i>Journal of business strategy</i> Brand persona & storytelling Conceptual, theory development	Stories effectively convey a brand's values, emotions, and experiences, which foster emotional connections between consumers and the brand. A strong brand persona, built through storytelling, allows companies to differentiate themselves in the market, build customer loyalty, and promote long-term relationships with consumers by evoking shared values and emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring the most effective storytelling techniques for different industries. Examining the impact of cultural context on brand storytelling. Researching the role of emerging media and technology in shaping storytelling strategies. Investigating the long-term effects of storytelling on brand loyalty, consumer behaviour, and overall business performance, providing insights for companies to optimize their branding strategies.
Baghi & Gabrielli, (2013) <i>International review of public and non-profit marketing</i> Cause-related marketing & brand activism Empirical, quantitative	Consumers' perceptions and willingness to act on a cause-related product are influenced by co-branding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating the impact of brand-fit and congruence between partnering brands on consumer perceptions and responses. Studying consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviours in response to co-branded cause-related marketing campaigns. Exploring the role of message framing and communication strategies in influencing consumer responses.
McDonagh & Prothero, (2014) <i>Journal of marketing management</i> Sustainability marketing Conceptual, theory development	The article discusses the current state of sustainability marketing research and identifies three major themes: sustainability as a source of innovation, sustainability as a source of differentiation, and sustainability as a driver of consumer behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying interdisciplinary collaboration between marketing researchers and scholars from other fields such as environmental studies, sociology, psychology, and economics. Investigating sustainable business models and their implications for marketing. Addressing social justice and inequality issues in sustainability marketing research. Studying the intersection of digital technologies and sustainability marketing.
Hopkinson & Cronin, (2015) <i>Journal of marketing management</i>	Celebrity campaign as institutional entrepreneur provoke mainstream malcontent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating the influence of celebrity institutional entrepreneurs in driving social change and challenging the status quo.

<p>Brand activism Empirical, case study</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the impact of social media and digital platforms in amplifying the voices of celebrity institutional entrepreneurs. • Examining the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of social movements led by celebrity activists.
<p>Grubor & Milovanov, (2016) <i>ENTRENOVA</i> Sustainable branding Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>Article proposes a sustainability-profitability relationship mediated by positive reputation, brand equity, and increasing market share.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the impact of sustainable branding on consumer behaviour and the role of brand communication in fostering sustainable attitudes and behaviours. • Investigating the effectiveness of different strategies, such as greenwashing detection, in building trust and credibility in sustainable brands. • Researching the measurement and assessment of sustainable brand equity and its relationship with financial performance.
<p>Bellew et al, (2017) <i>Journal of social marketing</i> Digital brand activism Conceptual, literature review</p>	<p>Conceptualisation of Social Counter Marketing and proposition of 8 dimensions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the effectiveness of countermarketing strategies in reducing harmful behaviours such as tobacco use, unhealthy eating, and sedentary lifestyles. • Exploring the role of digital and social media platforms in designing and disseminating countermarketing campaigns.
<p>Grubor & Milovanov, (2017) <i>Interdisciplinary description of complex system</i> Sustainable branding Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>Findings propose a positive impact of sustainable branding strategies on brand equity and profitability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the influence of sustainability on brand positioning, brand equity, and brand image. • Investigating the role of sustainable brand strategies in shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. • Studying the impact of different communication strategies, such as cause-related marketing, green advertising, and digital media on consumer responses to sustainable brands. • Examining the challenges and opportunities for brands in transitioning towards sustainable practices

<p>Abdulkarim, (2018) <i>Journal of communication management</i> Brave marketing communications Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>The article highlights the importance of creativity and bravery to in marketing communications, and adaption to technology in successful brand communications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the role of creativity in the digital era and how agencies can adapt to technological advancements. • Investigating the challenges and opportunities posed by emerging technologies such as AI, virtual reality, and data analytics. • Researching the ethical implications of technology in advertising and the importance of maintaining human-centric approaches amidst technological advancements.
<p>Chaifetz & Smith, (2019) <i>Journal of global scholars of marketing science</i> Sustainable brandings Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Consistent and cohesive branding, guided by a strong centralized vision, can help create a sustainable brand identity that fosters public recognition, support, and trust. However, they also note that allowing flexibility for local adaptations of branding can enhance community engagement and relevance. Striking a balance between centralization and customization is crucial for achieving a sustainable branding strategy in these programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining the impact of various branding strategies on public program outcomes, • Exploring the balance between centralized branding and local customization. • Investigating the role of digital media and technology in shaping branding efforts. • Considering stakeholder perspectives, including participants, communities, and program administrators, to better understand the effectiveness and challenges associated with different branding approaches in these public programs.
<p>Sobande, (2019) <i>European journal of marketing</i> Brand activism and brand bravery Empirical, qualitative</p>	<p>Findings illuminate how marketing enables the visibility or erasure of intersectional and social activist issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the motives and intentions behind woke branding and the potential contradictions and challenges faced by brands engaging in such practices. • Researching the impact of woke-washing on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase behaviour.
<p>Baumgarth, (2020) <i>Journal of marketing Management</i> Fresh perspectives on brand management Conceptual, editorial</p>	<p>Conscious brands, purposeful brands taking a stand are among the new and fresh branding topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring new theoretical perspectives and frameworks to understand the dynamics of brand management in a changing market environment. • Investigating the role of brand experience, brand co-creation, and digital transformation in shaping consumer-brand relationships. • Researching the impact of cultural and social factors on brand management strategies.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying the effectiveness of innovative brand management practices and their impact on brand equity and business performance.
<p>Vredenburg et al, (2020) <i>Journal of public policy & marketing</i> Brand activism Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>Article develops a theory-driven framework that identifies moderate, optimal incongruence between a brand and a cause as a boundary condition to strengthen outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating the authenticity of brand activism efforts by exploring the motives and intentions behind brands taking a stand on social issues. Studying the impact of brand activism on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as examining the potential risks and consequences of "woke washing" or inauthentic brand activism. Research the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of brand activism efforts
<p>Hydock et al, (2020) <i>Journal of marketing research</i> CSR and Corporate Political Advocacy Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Findings indicate that CPA influences individual and market outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating how market share influences the effectiveness and consequences of corporate political advocacy efforts. Studying consumer responses and attitudes towards political advocacy based on brand size and market dominance.
<p>Swaminathan et al, (2020) <i>Journal of marketing</i> Use of digital and social media brand activism Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>The article uses firms, consumers, and society theoretical perspectives to propose boundary-breaking branding research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring new theoretical perspectives and models that capture the complexities of modern branding, including the influence of digital technologies, social media, and consumer engagement. Studying the dynamics of brand communities and online brand advocacy, as well as investigating the role of brand storytelling and authenticity in a hyperconnected environment. Researching the ethical implications and privacy concerns associated with hyperconnectivity.

<p>Moorman, (2020) <i>Journal of public policy & marketing</i> Brand political activism Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>7 views (lenses) are found to influence political marketing activism, including, brand authenticity, corporate citizen, cultural authority, calculative, brands as educators, political mission, and employee engagement views.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the factors that drive brand activism, such as corporate values, societal pressures, and stakeholder expectations. • Studying the effectiveness of different types of brand activism strategies and their impact on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase behaviours. • Researching the consequences and risks associated with brand activism in politically charged environments. • Exploring the role of brand activism in shaping public opinion and influencing policy outcomes.
<p>Bandyopadhyay & Ray, (2020) <i>Journal of global marketing</i> Sustainable branding Empirical, qualitative</p>	<p>Findings indicate that positioning a sustainable fashion brand should consider the following 3 aspects: authenticity of the product and business processes, traditional aspects of product design, and an appealing backstory with market relevance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the intersection of ethics and aesthetics in sustainable fashion by exploring how brands can effectively communicate their ethical values while maintaining aesthetic appeal. • Studying consumer perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable fashion brands, considering factors such as authenticity, trust, and the influence of social entrepreneurship.
<p>Jain et al, (2021) <i>Journal of Product & Brand Management</i> Brand activism Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Positive relationships between perceived brand bravery and favourable outcomes (self-brand congruity, brand advocacy behaviour, brand attitude, and brand identification).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the antecedents and consequences of brand bravery by investigating the factors that drive brands to take bold and risky actions. • Studying the impact of brand bravery on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and brand loyalty. • Researching the role of brand authenticity and trust in brand bravery initiatives. • Examining the cultural and contextual factors that influence brand bravery across different markets.
<p>Pimentel & Didonet, (2021) <i>Journal of the Brazilian Academy of Management</i></p>	<p>Conceptual links are proposed between brand activism concerns, environment, scope, agents, implementation, relationships, process, context, and effect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the motivations and drivers behind brand activism by exploring how different types of activism align with different brand strategies.

<p>Brand activism Conceptual, theory development</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying the effectiveness of various brand activism approaches in terms of consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase behaviour. • Researching the long-term impact of brand activism on brand equity and market performance. • Examining the ethical implications and potential risks associated with brand activism as a marketing strategy.
<p>Korschun, (2021) <i>Marketing Intelligence Review</i> Brand activism Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>Brand activism will remain part of marketers' playbook as long as people use it to decide with whom they will entertain a business relationship. Additionally, showing authentic concern is important and stakeholders expect more than just a glimpse into a company's display window to be convinced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the motivations and effectiveness of brand activism by examining how it influences consumer attitudes, behaviours, and brand loyalty. • Studying the factors that drive consumer responses to brand activism, including the role of authenticity, credibility, and stakeholder engagement. • Researching the long-term effects of brand activism on brand equity and financial performance.
<p>Lindgreen et al, (2021) <i>Industrial marketing management</i> Innovative branding: Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>The article emphasizes the importance of innovative and bold ideas to advance the field of business marketing research. The authors suggest fostering creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and diverse perspectives to generate ground-breaking ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring unconventional topics, methodologies, and perspectives, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and investigating the role of new technologies and media in marketing research. • Understanding the process of fostering creativity and innovation within academic and industry contexts.
<p>Sibai et al, (2021) <i>Psychology and marketing</i> Brand activism and social justice Empirical, multi case study</p>	<p>Branding strategies influence brands' ability to authenticate morale competency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the factors that contribute to authentic brand activism, including organizational values, stakeholder engagement, and transparency. • Studying the effectiveness of different strategies and tactics used by brands to engage in activism and the impact on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. • Researching the legal and ethical boundaries of brand activism, exploring the role of free speech and potential risks involved.

<p>Smith et al, (2021) <i>Psychology and marketing</i> Brand activism, social media, and brand attitude Empirical, qualitative</p>	<p>Social justice branding elicits multiple emotions that empower action. Positive outcomes result from those not resistant to the message and leading to multiple positive results such as brand advocacy and defence. Risk of social justice branding should be anticipated and scrutinized in advance to mitigate possible backlash.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the factors that contribute to backlash, such as authenticity, perceived motives, and cultural appropriation. • Studying the impact of backlash on brand perceptions, consumer attitudes, and purchase behaviour. • Researching the strategies brands can employ to effectively navigate backlash and maintain credibility. • Exploring the role of social media and online activism in shaping and amplifying backlash.
<p>Chandy et al, (2021) <i>Journal of marketing</i> Sustainable marketing and ecological value: Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>The article addresses the role of marketing in creating a positive impact on society and the environment. It argues that businesses have the potential to contribute to a better world by adopting responsible marketing practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the impact of marketing activities on individual and collective well-being by exploring strategies to enhance marketing ethics and social responsibility. • Studying the role of marketing in addressing social and environmental challenges, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. • Researching the effectiveness of marketing interventions in promoting sustainable behaviours and facilitating social change. • Examining the role of technology and digital marketing in advancing positive societal outcomes.
<p>Hong & Li, (2021) <i>Journal of nonprofit & public sector marketing</i> Ethical Marketing and Sustainability Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Study finds that consumers tend to boycott (or buycott) a brand when the personal stances on a sociopolitical issue are consistent (or inconsistent) with the brands, and such effect is mediated by brand attitude and moderated by magnitude of public support, and perceived credibility of public support information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the factors that influence consumers' willingness to boycott or buycott brands based on their sociopolitical stances. • Studying the role of the spiral of silence theory in shaping consumer behaviour by exploring how perceived public opinion and social pressures affect consumer silence or vocal support. • Researching the moderating factors that influence the effectiveness of brand activism, such as consumer identification with the issue, brand credibility, and message framing.

<p>van Heerde et al, (2021) <i>Journal of marketing</i> Sociocultural identity and social media advertising Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>The article discusses the need to integrate ecological value into academic marketing research and emphasizes the importance of considering ecological factors in marketing studies. The article also calls for a more holistic approach to marketing research that recognizes and integrates ecological value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the impact of marketing activities on ecological sustainability and exploring strategies to incorporate environmental considerations into marketing decision-making processes. • Studying consumer behaviour and attitudes towards sustainable products, as well as the effectiveness of green marketing strategies. • Researching the measurement and evaluation of environmental outcomes related to marketing practices.
<p>Milfeld et al, (2021) <i>Journal of Advertising</i> Cultural identity and brand advertising Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>The findings demonstrate that framing brand advertising messages to activate a cultural identity mindset positively influences the attitudes, intentions, and purchase behaviour of stigmatized group members. The study suggests that adopting a cultural identity mindset framing strategy in advertising can offer a fresh start for stigmatized groups, empowering them and challenging stereotypes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the underlying mechanisms and cognitive processes through which cultural identity mindset framing influences attitudes, intentions, and behaviours of stigmatized group members. • Exploring the long-term effects of cultural identity mindset framing on brand perception and consumer-brand relationships. • Researching the role of cultural values, individual differences, and the cultural context in shaping responses to cultural identity mindset framing.
<p>Ghosh, (2022) <i>Journal of multidisciplinary research and development</i> Brand activism and social media advertising Empirical, mixed (interviews + survey)</p>	<p>Findings support the correlation between brand activism and strengthening the consumer-brand relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the motivations and drivers behind online brand activism and exploring how it influences consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours towards the brand. • Studying the role of social media and online platforms in amplifying brand activism and the subsequent effects on consumer engagement and brand loyalty. • Researching the potential risks and ethical considerations associated with online brand activism.

<p>Azizi, (2022) <i>Research in Sport Management and Marketing</i> Brand bravery Empirical, case study</p>	<p>Brand bravery is derived by the extent to which a brand is perceived as altruistic, bold, courageous, determined, enduring, fearless, and gritty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the components that contribute to brand bravery perception among customers, such as brand reputation, innovation, and customer loyalty. • Studying the impact of brand bravery on customer satisfaction, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty in the sports product industry. • Researching the role of marketing strategies, such as brand storytelling and experiential marketing, in fostering brand bravery.
<p>Alharbi et al, (2022) <i>Sustainability</i> Corporate social advocacy and brand activism: Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Findings indicate a mediation effect of consumer-celebrity congruence and attitudes toward the brand on the relationship between consumer-brand congruence and purchase intentions, brand preference, and boycott recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the impact of consumer-brand congruence and consumer-celebrity congruence on consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions. • Studying the moderating effects of different factors, such as celebrity controversy and consumer identification with social causes. • Researching the role of perceived authenticity, credibility, and trust in shaping consumer responses to such alignments.
<p>Cristobal et al, (2022) <i>Journal of Business and Management Studies</i> Brand activism and woke advertising Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Findings indicate that woke advertising enhance the overall consumer attitude and brand perceptions, but no evidence of influence on purchase intentions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the effectiveness of different strategies and tactics used in woke advertising and their impact on consumer attitudes, brand perceptions, and purchase intentions. • Studying the role of consumer values, social identity, and the alignment between brand activism and corporate behaviour. • Researching the long-term effects of woke advertising on brand loyalty and market performance.
<p>Milfeld et al, (2022) <i>Journal of advertising</i> Social issues and consumers response</p>	<p>The study finds that the advertising context (public issue salience) influences marketing outcomes (i.e., brand attitudes).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the mechanisms through which public issue salience influences consumer perceptions, attitudes, and responses to CSR advertising. • Studying the moderating factors, such as brand-consumer fit and message framing, that influence the effectiveness of CSR advertising in response to public issues.

Empirical, quantitative		
<p>Herzberg & Rudeloff, (2022)</p> <p><i>Journal of brand strategy</i></p> <p>Brand activism and CSR</p> <p>Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Brand activism had a positive on brand equity attributes, but the impact was not greater than that achieved by CSR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the differential effects of brand activism and CSR on various dimensions of brand equity, including brand image, brand loyalty, and brand reputation. • Researching the long-term impact of brand activism and CSR on financial performance and market outcomes.
<p>Bhargave & Bedi, (2022)</p> <p><i>Journal of business ethics</i></p> <p>Brand activism and marketing ethics</p> <p>Conceptual, theory development</p>	<p>Reframing brands as a series of normatively binding expectations that are ethically akin to promises. This framing overcomes the criticism of traditional branding as a constellation of shared associations surrounding a company and its offering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the role of brand promises in building trust and loyalty among consumers. • Studying the factors that influence the credibility and perceived authenticity of brand promises. • Researching the impact of brand promises on consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase behaviour. • Exploring the role of communication strategies, brand-consumer fit, and the long-term effects of brand promises on brand equity.
<p>Batista et al, (2022)</p> <p><i>Journal of interactive marketing</i></p> <p>Brand activism and social media communication</p> <p>Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Consumers evaluate brands reply using an assertive tone more favourably than those using a sarcastic tone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the effectiveness of different response strategies, such as assertive and sarcastic replies, and their impact on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and brand outcomes. • Studying the role of brand-consumer fit, the perceived appropriateness of responses, and the influence of social media platforms on response effectiveness. • Researching the long-term implications of brand responses to uncivil comments on brand reputation and customer relationships.

<p>Wannow & Haupt, (2022) <i>Marketing review St. Gallen</i> Brand activism Empirical, qualitative</p>	<p>Moral emotions linked to brand activism include pride, guilt, elevation, gratitude, anger, and compassion. brand activism could be an emotional minefield.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the range of emotions that consumers experience in response to brand activism and how these emotions influence consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours. • Studying the factors that moderate emotional reactions, such as individual differences, brand-consumer fit, and message framing. • Researching the long-term effects of emotional reactions to brand activism on brand relationships and consumer loyalty.
<p>Rast et al, (2022) <i>Atlantic Marketing Journal</i> Brand activism Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Brand authenticity, brand activism, religiosity, and social identity: Individuals who identify as more religious consistently display higher attitudes, intentions, and perceptions of authenticity for brands supporting social justice issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the role of religiosity in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours towards such advertisements. • Studying the moderating factors, such as religious identity and moral beliefs, that influence the effectiveness and acceptance of controversial social justice advertising among religious consumers.
<p>Lee et al, (2023) <i>Journal of Brand Management</i> Brand activism and brand bravery Empirical, quantitative</p>	<p>Partial serial mediation, where the direct negative effect of non-profit brand activism on brand equity is eliminated in the presence of brand bravery and brand hypocrisy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the relationship between non-profit brand activism and brand bravery and examining how such activism influences consumer perceptions of brand hypocrisy and brand equity. • Studying the moderating factors that influence these relationships, such as consumer values and brand-consumer fit.
<p>Confetto et al, (2023) <i>Sustainability</i> Brand activism authenticity Empirical, multi case study</p>	<p>Findings indicate that authentic brand activism is attributed to trigger positive marketing outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the effectiveness of brand activism initiatives in driving consumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviours towards SDGs in the beauty and personal care industry. • Studying the role of brand-consumer fit, message framing, and perceived authenticity in shaping consumer responses to brand activism for SDGs.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching the long-term impact of brand activism on brand reputation, customer loyalty, and market performance.
<p>Rai & Chawla, (2023) <i>International journal of professional business review</i> Brand hatred Conceptual, literature review</p>	<p>The article identifies the causes and consequences of brand hatred. It examines various factors that can contribute to brand hatred, such as negative experiences, unethical business practices, failed expectations, and brand-related controversies. The findings discuss how brand hatred can impact consumers' attitudes, behaviours, and brand-related decision-making processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the antecedents and consequences of brand hatred by exploring the factors that contribute to its development and persistence. • Studying the impact of brand hatred on consumer behaviour, such as negative word-of-mouth and boycott intentions. • Researching the role of emotions, cultural differences, and brand strategies in mitigating or managing brand hatred. • Examining the ethical considerations and implications of brand hatred for brand management.
<p>Rathee & Milfeld, (2023) <i>International journal of advertising</i> Sustainable advertising Conceptual, literature review</p>	<p>The authors found that sustainability advertising can positively influence consumer attitudes and intentions towards sustainability, but the effectiveness varies depending on factors like message framing, appeals, and visual elements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the effectiveness of different advertising strategies in promoting sustainable behaviour and attitudes. • Studying the impact of message framing, emotional appeals, and the use of visual elements on consumer responses to sustainability advertising. • Researching the role of individual factors, such as environmental concern and values, in shaping consumer responses. • Exploring the long-term effects of sustainability advertising on consumer behaviour and its contribution to achieving sustainability goals.