



**BRAND ACTIVISM IN SOCIAL MEDIA:
THE IMPACT OF BRAND ACTIVISM CONTENT ON
INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT**

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Abstract

Title: The impact of Brand Activism content on Instagram engagement

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Social media platforms have become central in a significant part of the population. This is especially the case for young people representing the core users of Instagram. They generate an interesting and strategic target for companies to communicate with on such a platform. Brands' presence online has become paramount for the companies. This is why establishing a well thought communication on Instagram can be critical. On another hand, sociopolitical matters importance has been very high over the past years and attracted a lot of attention. Various companies took action and became brand activists. This phenomenon is on the rise while the consumers give more importance to the corporate behaviors. In this dissertation, the aim is to observe companies that proceed in activism, discovering consumers' opinion about it and the impact on Instagram engagement. Two research questions and four research hypotheses were proposed regarding whether people's opinion and behavior towards a brand would be influenced by its activism or not, and if Instagram users' engagement would be impacted by brand activist posts. Opinion and behavior were collected in a survey focusing on the under 35 years old segment. The Instagram engagement was analyzed based on users' likes and comments on a selection of both activist and non-activist posts of 6 different brands in a period of two consecutive months. Results showed that overall, people perceive activist brands in a better way and that they are more likely to engage with them. Additionally, pictorial activist posts tend to receive a higher engagement.

Keywords: *Brand Activism, Content Marketing, Instagram engagement*

Sumario

Título: O impacto do conteúdo do Ativismo de marca no envolvimento no Instagram

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A comunicação através das redes sociais tornou-se central para uma parte significativa da população. Isto é especialmente o caso dos jovens, principais utilizadores do Instagram. Estes geram um alvo interessante e estratégico para as empresas. A presença online das marcas torna-se primordial. É por isso que estabelecer uma comunicação bem pensada no Instagram é crítico. Por outro lado, a importância social-política tem sido muito elevada nos últimos anos e tem atraído muita atenção. Várias empresas tornaram-se ativistas de marca. Este fenómeno está a aumentar enquanto os consumidores dão mais importância aos comportamentos das empresas. Nesta dissertação, o objetivo é observar as empresas que prosseguem no ativismo, descobrindo a opinião dos consumidores sobre o mesmo e o impacto no envolvimento Instagram.

Foram propostas duas questões de investigação e quatro hipóteses de investigação, sobre se a opinião e o comportamento das pessoas, em relação a uma marca, seriam ou não, influenciados pelo seu ativismo; e se o envolvimento dos seguidores seria afetado pelos posts de ativistas da marca. A opinião e o comportamento foram recolhidos num inquérito centrado nos menores de 35 anos. O compromisso foi analisado com base nos likes e comentários, sobre uma seleção tanto de posts de ativistas como não ativistas, de 6 marcas diferentes, num período de dois meses consecutivos. Os resultados mostraram que, em geral, as pessoas percebem melhor as marcas ativistas e que, é mais provável que se envolvam com elas. Além disso, os posts de fotos de ativistas tendem a receber um maior envolvimento.

Palavras-chave: Ativismo de marca, Marketing de Conteúdo, Envolvimento no Instagram

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List of Abbreviations

- RQ: Research Question
- H: Hypothesis
- BA: Brand Activism
- NA: Non-Activist
- CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
- Av: Average
- Nb: Number
- BLM: Black Lives Matter
- LGBTQ : Lesbians Gays Bisexuals Transexuals Queers

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background & Problem statement

The beginning of the 21st century saw the ascension of the virtual world. Social medias became increasingly utilized in the daily life of the people as they shift their likeliness to interact with others with virtual platforms, such as Facebook or Instagram, more and more (Alalwan, 2017).

Social Medias have become a pillar for companies to communicate with the consumers and to advertise on. The use of Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or any other social media is now a common habit for the majority of the people. This implies that companies have to manage the content they share through their posts on those platforms. Marketers must design what to communicate to social media users accordingly to the goals of the brand. Various types of content are possibly usable. They can be visual (image, video, text etc) while also being meaningful (message transmitted). Therefore, it is strategical to get more knowledge about which of those types of contents are the more effective ones. In this dissertation, the discuss will concern the use of brand activism as content of social media posts.

Brand activism (or corporate activism) occurs when a corporation take a stand on a social or political matter and act in favor of it. Meike Eilert refers it as the « company's willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic, and environmental issues to create societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviors of actors in its institutional environment » (Eilert, 2020). Thus, we can imagine that the use of this concept by a company generates its social and/or political identity while anchoring itself as part of the society. It evolves from different notions such as Customer Social Relationship, Cause Marketing, Corporate Philanthropy and more. Brand activism is different than any other corporate strategies as it is society-driven, meaning that it aims to impact the social environment in a positive way. Successful companies have pursued in marketing campaigns focusing on social causes such as Nike with its 2018 campaign starring the US Football player Kaepernick. The concept is on the rise as it is more and more used by companies in today digital environment (Çetinkaya, 2021).

This research aims to discuss the impact of Brand activism on social media being relevant for the future of marketing as well as being already usable nowadays by the companies. There is a lack of studies around this topic meaning that doing research is appropriate in this area to know more about it. Even though a multitude of possibilities is available, the goal of this study will be to look at the impact generated by social media content that relates to a social and/or political matter. To narrow down, the focus will be on the posts' engagement on Instagram.

1.2 Aim & Scope

In this research, the dissertation will be based on two different important concepts that are Corporate activism and social media and the link between those two will be studied. Thus, the general goal is to find out if and how brand activism is valuable when used as part of a company's social media content. Therefore, the will is to discover at first the consumers' perception when asked about this concept and its usage by companies, but also how would they behave towards Brand activism through their engagement.

Therefore, the dissertation will be divided into two main goals. First, trying to understand what the overall perception of activist brands is and then, pointing out the change in social media engagement when an organization is sharing brand activism related posts on their page. The research questions of this dissertation are following.

RQ1. Are Brand Activism contents more engaging than non-activist ones?

RQ2. How is Brand Activism perceived by social media users?

This research will focus on the impact that brand activism contents have on Instagram compared to non-activist posts by a same brand. This is to realize if an overall difference exists between the two types of content in the generated engagement. In other words, the objective is to know if brand activism contents on social media increase individuals' engagement towards the brand.

1.3 Research Methods

In order to discover social media users' opinion concerning brand activism, as well as the engagement effect of brand activist posts on Instagram, the research will be divided into two distinct inquiries.

The first analyze will require secondary data to discover people's behavior on social media posts of activist brands. Here, the aim is to verify the previously discovered findings. To do so, a number of seven Instagram accounts will be selected. Then, related posts using, and not using, brand activism content will be analyzed to get quantitative data. With the results, it will be possible to discuss posts performance using people's interactions (comments, likes, shares, etc) as the main metric, and more specifically the difference in engagement about posts using brand activism content and non-activist posts.

The second analyze will require primary data to discover people's opinion and behavior about brand activism. To collect that, a survey will be conducted. As the research concerns social media, the survey will be focusing more on its adult daily users, often being people between 18 and 35, for a matter of relevance in the information collected. With the resulting data, an overall idea will be possible to establish concerning the impact of brand activism content on the perception of the related from the platform users.

With those two distinct analyzes performed in this dissertation, the Instagram engagement impact of Brand activism will be more precised. The shift that it could create in people's engagement and opinion will be clearer concerning the segment of active social media users.

1.4 Relevance

Brand activism is society-driven, relating of social causes, meaning that this concept is broader than just marketing, which makes it even relevant for several entities. Moreover, the use of social media has become a habit in everyone's life so the study of the concept within this digital area makes it more relevant for the next years.

More than the interest generated by the sociopolitical impact, Brand activism is increasingly used by the companies (Eilert, 2020). In this way, the concept will logically attract the interest of marketers and managers when thinking about their strategy on social media content

This next trend factor can also make this concept appealing for researchers as many unknown and unprecise effects are still present concerning it. More studies could be made on the topic to go deeper into the concept and to discover its different impacts. This research will discuss the social media engagement using brand activism content, this makes room for further research).

Finally, as this concept is present tackles social and political causes, its study could also be valuable for different public policy entities

1.5 Dissertation Outline

The next steps of the dissertation will be divided into four main sections. The second chapter will concern the current knowledge about the subject. It will relate of some research about Brand Activism to understand more the concept as well as digital and social marketing.

The third chapter will draw an overview of what the research will be about and the steps to get the collect the information desired. The fourth chapter will use those data and analyze them in order to make a discussion out of it. Finally, the fifth chapter will draw conclusions about the research while also pointing out the limitations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Social Media

2.1.1 Concept & History

Social media can be defined as “*a group of Internet-based applications that builds on ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and it allows the creation and exchange of user generated content*” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). In other words, it corresponds to a “computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities” (Dollarhide, 2019). It allows its users to share content such as personal information, documents, pictures and videos through the use of Internet. This implies the possibility of using social medias via a smartphone, a tablet or computer via either a web application or web-based software. *They are often used for a messaging purpose* (Dollarhide, 2019). However, the concept of social media can be distinguished from the social networking.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the first online communication services appeared introducing people to a new way to communicate with each other. Platforms such as America Online, Compuserve and Prodigy gave its users the ability to discover emails, bulletin board messaging and real-time online chatting (Saqib, 2016). Those ones were also accompanied by the first blogging services, such as Epinions and Bloggers in the same period (Edosomwan, 2011). However, the first truly considered social media was created in 1997, SixDegrees. It was the first opportunity to upload profile pictures and connect with other users on the same website platform (McFadden, 2020).

It's in the 2000s that social media received a big boost with the creation of many new social networks (Edosomwan, 2011). To sum up the main social media launches in the 2000s: Friendster in 2002, Myspace & LinkedIn in 2003, Flickr and Facebook in 2004, Reddit and Youtube in 2005, Twitter in 2006, Tumblr in 2007 (Edosomwan, 2011).

As the already implemented social media were growing up, the 2010s also saw appearing new platforms: Instagram in 2010, Snapchat and Pinterest in 2011, Vine in 2013, Periscope in 2015, TikTok in 2016 (Edosomwan, 2011).

It has been studied that humans are social creatures and the social interactions with others have an influence on individuals' life (McFadden, 2020). Those social interactions also have a significant impact on the molding of someone (McDougall, 2015) alongside the principle that identities are shaped by group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). With the emergence of the social media, people tend increasingly to identify as an online community member, and this tendency is even more highlighted for younger generations (Kaakinen, 2018). The social media success is, partly, due to those factors.

Social medias actually "*pervaded the daily lives of those with access*" and this can be realized with how natural it became to use related words such as "tweeting", "liking" or "friending" (Branham, 2017). Seeing how central the different social medias became in everyone's life, it is obvious to ask ourselves how companies could use them and how valuable it can be as a marketing tool.

2.1.2 Marketing tool

Nowadays, social media platforms are well known but a few of them emerge as the most popular ones. Obviously, and according to Statista, Facebook is on top of that list with more than 2,7 billion active users in October 2020, it has become unmissable in the digital world. On another hand, the promising Tik Tok keeps increasing its active users with approximately 689 million active users currently, while Douyin has around 600 active users in China. As the two are the same, just branded differently depending on its country of use, its real number of active users reach 1,29 billion. Concerning Instagram, it ranks at the sixth position, or third if we don't take chat applications into consideration, with 1,158 billion users in the same month (Statista, 2020). With this incredibly large audience, social media platforms appear to be the place where companies could reach a large amount of people for their advertisements. They constitute opportunities that take place among the best for brands to connect with prospective consumers (Neti, 2011). In the current era, those platforms actually became more valuable for companies' revenues than the traditional ways of communication. As a key proof, in 2018, the online expenses in the U.S. were \$107,5 billion (21,8% more than 2017) against \$70,9 billion for the Tv ones (1,4% more than 2017) or \$17,7 billion for the radio (1% more than 2017), creating a big gap between the online and traditional (Maryville, 2019).

The social media platforms offer various possibilities for the companies to use. However, according to Hubspot, those platforms benefit the business organizations in four main ways (Hubspot, 2020): Increase brand awareness, generate leads and boost conversions, foster relationships with customers, learn from competitors.

Moreover, companies aim to connect with their targeted audience based on shared content information through social media (with a majority of them using Facebook). The most often, they use those platforms as an extension to traditional medias while only a few used them to create mechanisms with their audience (Shawky, 2019). However, an aspect well developed through social media is brand loyalty. This is paramount for the organizations in order to perform well over time and keep the customer base (Erdogmus and Cicek, 2012). The most significant drivers of brand loyalty are advantageous campaigns on social media followed by relevancy of the content, popularity of the content among friends, and appearing on different social media platforms (Erdogmus and Cicek, 2012). Moreover, it is important to create a

coherent and relevant social media marketing strategy and to do so the brand should, according to Hubspot, follow five steps: research the buyers' persona and audience, determine which social platform to market on, make and share unique and engaging content, schedule the posts, analyze the impact and results to adjust the strategy (Hubspot, 2020).

Besides the brand loyalty, it is strategic to know the success of a post, or a profile, and how it impacted its audience. To do so, companies can use the different social media metrics, the main ones being engagement (clicks, comments, likes and replies), reach, followers, impressions, video views, profile visits, mentions, tags, reposts and shares (Hubspot, 2020).

2.1.3 Content

Even though the different social medias platforms are already being very valuable for companies, they are used to share content. It would be inefficient to share content thus the need to define a proper content marketing strategy. The content marketing can be defined as “the process of planning, creating, distributing, sharing, and publishing content to reach your target audience. It can boost factors like brand awareness, sales, reach, interactions, and loyalty.” (Hubspot, 2020). Nowadays, it is not the presence on social media that creates an advantage for brands anymore, but the influence on targeted audience made by shared creative content (Gumus, 2017). The main objective of brands through social media content marketing is to attract new consumers and create an engagement with them (Nur Syakirah, 2015). On another hand, social media content marketing affects the other part of a business. It possesses a positive and significant relationship with the consumer purchase decision (Ansari, 2019).

The content marketing is paramount in the social media strategy of a company. It allows the leads and prospects to get to know the products and services offered and show how it solve their challenges, boosts conversions, increases brand loyalty by building a relationship with the customers while creating a sense of community (Hubspot, 2020). It is known that a high-quality social media content marketing increases the brand awareness while giving a strong boost to the return on investment of a company (Nur Syakirah, 2017). Therefore, when thinking about establishing the social media marketing strategy, the main focus should be on what content to share.

2.1.4 Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform that can be designated as a photo and video sharing network. It was bought by Facebook in 2012 for \$1 Billion (Mattern, 2016), which later on turned the platform more focused on companies' perspective. Through the application, the social media allows the users to connect with each other easily and to gather followers using visual contents. This is an opportunity for brands as social interactions are facilitated among the consumers (Blight et al., 2017).

Across the different social media platforms, Instagram is considered the most popular one among young people with more than 70% of the 12-24 years old being active users in 2018 (Huang, 2018). Additionally, a proportion of 69,8% of Instagram users' is younger than 35 years old (Statista, 2020), meaning that the main users' segment for Instagram is that under 35 years old one.

Instagram can be used for different purposes by companies such as to increase brand awareness and to reach new customers. However, the platform as well represents a great tool in order to build brand image (Khan, 2018). Additionally to this main brand image purpose, Instagram introduced a new in app marketplace that can be used by the companies to sell their products directly on the platform. This social media is mainly based around visual aesthetic content (through images and videos) creating an environment even more favorable for certain types of corporate content such as luxurious ones or cosmetics (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). Stated by HubSpot, around 90% of Instagram users nowadays follow at least one brand account and 83% stating that the platform allowed them to discover new products or services.

When going into the app, the core content is composed of picture the users, but it can also be videos (IGTV, Reels or classic post depending on its length). The posts can be liked, commented, saved, or shared with other users. Those four interactions are the main metrics to analyze a post-performance (alongside the number of views for videos). Users can also interact with direct messages or stories (content with a limited lifetime 24 hours).

However, in this dissertation, the goal is to focus on how the engagement is impact by the use of BA content meaning that the analyze will be based on related metrics (likes and comments).

2.2 Brand activism

2.2.1 The concept

The concept of Brand Activism is applied for decades by some companies but is really spreading in today's environment. In the recent years, we saw an increasing number of companies pursuing in such behaviors while social and political matters kept being paramount in the society. Nowadays, consumers want organizations to take a stand on sociopolitical issues (Vredenburg J, 2020). Brand activism concept can be defined as follows. The concept of brand activism concerns different society matters. They can be of a social, political, economic and/or environmental nature. The final objective is to make improvements in the society by acting on reforms and stasis. This implicates efforts regarding the promotion, the impediment or the direction of one, or several of those by an organization. Activism can take many forms ranging from written letters to newspapers, or to political campaigns and economic actions (such as boycotts), or preferentially patronizing businesses, strikes, rallies, sit-ins, street marches and hunger strikes (Kotler and Sarkar, 2017).

To properly be considered as an activist brand, the organization must be respecting the four key factors. First of all, it must act having the society and the people interests in mind. Being an activist brand means pursuing in communication behavior that is purpose-driven as well as values-driven.

The second one concerns the tackled issues which must be considered as contested, controversial or polarizing sociopolitical ones.

Third key is about nature of the issue. Determined by several factors such as the religion, political identity or other ideologies, it can be considered as conservative or progressive.

The fourth and last key of Brand activism the way of the company to act for it. The contribution must be made with a main aim to reach people and transmit the philosophy. It must be done through messaging besides brand practice (Vredenburg, 2020).

Overall, the corporate activism is about the company values. Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, stated "People should have values. Companies are nothing more than a collection of people. So by extension, all companies should have values. As a CEO, I think one of your responsibilities is to decide what the values of your company are and lead accordingly. » (Kessler, 2017).

Brand Activism is evolving from two different types of concepts. First of all, the Marketing-driven one such as the Cause Promotion, the Cause-related Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility. These are used with a Marketing purpose in order to shape the image of the brand using it. Then the Corporate-driven one relating to Corporate Philanthropy, Workforce Volunteering and Socially responsible business practices towards employees (Kotler and Sarkar 2017).

However, it can be used to make a situation become better about a topic, or to get back to it was before. This is the distinction between progressive and regressive activism. A perfect example of the second type is the tobacco companies advertising on the “virtues” of smoking as well as lobbying politicians for regressive policies. On the other hand, the companies that act on big sociopolitical problems without any money-related first thought are performing progressive activism (Kotler and Sarkar 2017).

In 2015, Lars Rebien Sørensen (CEO of Novo Nordisk) stated that “Corporate social responsibility is nothing but maximizing the value of your company over a long period. In the long term, social and environmental issues become financial issues”. This statement relates to the Corporate social responsibility, which can be considered as a component of Brand Activism, thus we can easily assume that it also related to it. Still talking about CSR, and so implying Corporate activism as well, the way it is implemented and understood is linked to social expectations of corporate behavior (Latapí, 2019), pointing out the fact that people actually expect from organizations.

The Brand Activism concept can be divided into six different categories (Kotler P. and Sarkar C, 2020):

- Social activism concerns the demographics and is mainly about equality (gender, LGBT, age, race, etc.). However, it concerns as well as societal and community-related issues (school funding, education, etc.).
- Legal activism deals with the legal environment in which the company exist. In other terms, it concerns all the policies and laws that can impact the companies’ activities such as tax, workplace, and employment laws.
- Business activism is about governance – corporate organization, CEO pay, worker compensation, labor and union relations, governance, etc.

- Economic activism involves monetary matters like minimum wage and tax policies impacting income inequality and redistribution of wealth.
- Political activism covers the political-related interests. It can appear as lobbying, voting, voting rights, and policy (gerrymandering, campaign finance, etc).
- Environmental activism is based on the idea of environmental respect and protection. Thus, it deals with conservation, environmental, land-use, air and water pollution laws and policies.

2.2.2 Famous examples

Even though the number of companies that become activist brands is increasing, some are considered as pioneers as they are actually being one for decades.

Patagonia is one of those companies. The brand decided to turn to an environmental activist organization a long time ago and is really well known for all it is doing. They act in various ways such as self-imposed tax in order to support environmental NGOs or communicate massively on the environmental issues.

On another hand, Ben & Jerry's is also an activist brand but tackling issues sociopolitical related. As an example, the company started "I dough I dough" product marketing to promote the idea of equality in marriage, meaning that any could marry the loved person regardless of their sexual orientation. Additionally, they launched the "Empower Mint" flavored product to take a stand on people's voting rights (Deborah K, 2020).

Nike also pursued in Brand Activism but focusing on social matters. They side by their signed athletes taking a stand for the equality of people. The huge campaign starring the U.S. Football player Colin Kaepernick is one example of that. He kneeled during the U.S. national anthem to protest against racism and inequality, thus has been backed up by the international Brand.

Even though some of these examples are very famous around the world, they brands associated began their activism quite recently while this concept was already in place, but rare, in the 1980s. The company Benetton started campaigns around social and environmental matters often considered controversial. In the late 1980s, the company replaced its traditional sportswear ads with visual content around sociopolitical issues (aids, racism and terrorism) and environmental disasters to raise awareness. The embodiment of Benetton's brand shifted towards social issues and this is still the case today with the United colors of Benetton (Serra 2006).

2.2.3 Impact

Becoming an activist brand can be very impactful for the companies. It can result in a boycotting attitude from consumers or a boycotting one if the company's stand is opposite from its core customers. When having a consistent attitude with a brand, regarding sociopolitical issues, the consumers get a more positive attitude towards it, the likelihood of boycotting increases while the boycotting one lowers (Hong C, 2018).

The outcome of brands pursuing in activism can be various. Depending on the campaign, the ideas, the relevancy and more, this type of brand behavior can result in a big win for a company. The example of Nike, with the campaign previously mentioned, shows the benefits perfectly. By taking a stand with Collin Kaepernick about racial justice, the brand appeared as a very influential activist. This 'Dream crazy' campaign put the attention of a lot of people towards it as the brand's slogan mentions incredibly increased by 3640% in the few days following the launch. In the end, Nike's spots have resulted in a "record engagement with the brand" (Mark Parker, CEO of Nike).

However, there are also negative effects coming from taking a stand on society matters. If not in adequacy with the one of the consumers, backlash can occur. In the Nike case, some consumers, not agreeing with the stand of the brand, created a movement hostile to the organization (Butson, 2018). After the announcement of the campaign, a dramatical turn in people's emotional perception of the brand occurred. In the period preceding the campaign launch, the overall sentiment ratio of the people, when mentioning the brand on social media, was always superior to 90% positively. The shift happened at the launch of the advertisement when, on the most negative day, Nike only had a positive sentiment ratio of 28,5% (Kellan T, 2018). Moreover, to answer this campaign and the choose of Colin Kaepernick as the face of it, the detractors began to destroy the brand's products or to cut out the brand's logo. They also spread a call to boycott the brand and burn their products on the social media with the hashtags #bannike #dumpnike #justburnit #boycottenike etc (Butson T, 2018).

As sociopolitical, environmental, economic and legal matters are paramount in the society, and as people always have an opinion concerning them as well as emotional responses depending on the topic, we can imagine that people can feel very concerned when a company takes a stand on such issues. The part of young people referred as "millennials" always welcome brands that take a stand on social, political, environmental and cultural causes rather than the ones that

remain neutral on the same matters (Shivakanth, 2019). Moreover, because of the emotional bonding that some individuals have with such brands, they are willing to pay a price premium for activist brands (Shivakanth, 2019).

As just mentioned, for a brand to pursue as an activist, it is very important to assess the risks because it can result in a big backlash and a social movement against it. However, it appeared in past uses, that Brand activism can also be a very positive impactful concept when it is use properly and in adequacy with the brand consumers.

2.2.4 Implications for the research

Concluding the Literature review, Brand Activism can generate a significant impact on a brand concerning different aspects and its Instagram engagement could easily be one of them.

Based on theoretical background about social media and brand activism, the following hypotheses were formulated to answer the research questions:

H1. Users engage more on posts with brand activism content

H2. The impact of brand activism content differs on the type of the post

H3. People perceive activist brands in a better way than non-activist

H4. People perceive better an activist brand that shares the same stand and worse an activist brand taking the opposite one

Those hypotheses were chosen due to several reasons:

Throughout the history, people tended to act for sociopolitical causes and thus, we can imagine that they would appreciate even more a company that step out of its business role to have an impact on the society. However, it also depends on the individual's perception of the cause and its stand or opinion towards it. It is imaginable that a company that transmit a democrat political stand could get a negative opinion from republican people meaning that it can be risky for a company to become activist.

Moreover, an incentive for a higher chance of engagement is more than probable for the same reason along the tendency of people to act for sociopolitical and environmental matters. Most often, those matters attract the attention of a lot of people which could result in a higher engagement when communicated through social medias. As a side effect, there is a possibility that this potential higher attraction of engagement from a brand with a specific activism post, or set of posts, could also result in an increase of engagement for the following posts as a higher interest could be pointed towards the activist brand.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

In this research proposal, the different research hypotheses need different data sets and thus different analyzes. This inquires two different approach to address each of them specifically. The first step will be to search for secondary data in a social media platform, in this case Instagram, to analyze the difference between content addressing some sociopolitical or environmental idea and more classic marketing content. Then, the following approach will be to conduct a survey to get primary data giving insights on people's perception of Brand Activism.

3.2 Secondary data

After getting information about how people perceive Brand Activism and how they think they would behave, the next step is to actually search if the results are accurate in real life situation. This is why the second part of the research will concern Brand Activism campaigns on social media. In this study, the social media platform chosen is Instagram. This choice is due to the fact that majority of people under 30 years old, who are the principal survey respondents, consider it as their main social media but also because companies marketing is focusing more and more on that platform.

The research pursue as follows. The first step will be to select a sufficient number of companies that used Brand Activism content on Instagram. Those companies will be chosen depending on their international status to draw an overall tendency of people behaviors as final results. However, several conditions have to be met in order for the companies' Instagram profiles to be selected: the company has to be weekly active on Instagram, the profile needs to have a well-developed audience (minimum of 500k followers), the chosen profiles must be the worldwide one of the companies (not one addressing a specific country), in order to keep the companies quite similar to each other they have to be part of the consumer goods sector, and of course there is a paramount need for them to act as brand activists on Instagram (sharing activist posts).

Once companies selected, the approach will be to compare a set of posts with activism content to one without for each one of the organizations. The research will be focusing on the engagement. Thus, the comparison will concern the number of likes and number of comments

for the different posts as mentioned previously. The posts selection method will be the following.

A range of two consecutive months from the year 2020 will be selected for each brands' Instagram profile in which all the posts will be gathered to form the sets. For each of them, the selected range of two months will be chosen due to a high presence of BA content within the posts so that an analysis appears relevant. If the presence of BA posts would be too low, it would entail a bias in the results as the samples would be immensely unbalanced. On another hand, it wouldn't strong enough to base an analysis on one or two activist posts only. Another aspect to consider is the activity of the brand on Instagram. Within the selected time frame of two consecutive months, a minimal number of 20 posts is required in order to be considered active and be selected.

All the publications that are part of that range will be picked meaning that the sample will be composed of all the posts from each selected company that have been published during the selected two consecutive months.

The different posts will be separated into two main categories. The first one being the "activism set" and the second being the "non-activism set". The amount of likes and comments will be gathered for each post in order to create the dataset. Thus, the posts will get five variables: the brand of belonging, the presence of activism, the number of likes, the number of comments and the type of the post (picture or video).

On another hand, the activist posts chosen among the companies will have to tackle different sociopolitical matters in order to not narrow down as only one cause effect. The goal is not to focus on one specific cause (e.g. Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ, Environmental respect etc) but rather the brand activism as a whole.

Once data collected, it will be analyzed to see if there is any significant engagement variation when using Brand Activism content. The number of likes and comments will be looked at in separate ways as the impact can be different on these variables. The analysis will be based on consecutive T tests. The first step is to analyze the BA effect on the whole sample. The second one is to reproduce the analysis but with a focus on each brand. And lastly, it is to analyze the difference in the effect of BA on engagement depending on the posts type.

3.3 Primary data

Within this study, the first part of the research will approach the collection of primary data through a survey. The choice of conducting a survey rather than focus groups or individual interviews is based on the idea to produce reliable quantitative data in a large number.

3.3.1 Population and sample

The research concerns Brand Activism, and more precisely its use in the social media campaigns of the companies. Therefore, when sharing the survey, the main target will be the heavy users of Instagram. In other terms, the majority of the respondents will be composed of people under 35 years old as they represent the main user base of social media, and more specifically Instagram (Statista 2020). Another specific aspect of the sample will actually be the individuals' origin.

In order to minimize cross culture differences in the answers collected, the respondents will be, for the majority, European (83% of them). The sample size corresponds to a number of 101 useable answers.

3.3.2 Survey idea and goal

Throughout this survey, the aim is to discover the opinion of people around the concept of Brand Activism and how they think they would behave towards an activist brand. Obviously, a part of the survey will be composed of basic demographics questions in order to ensure that the majority of the respondents are part of the core target. Also, it could help in understanding some specificities in the responses created by the demographic's differences (origin, age, studies and so on).

Beginning the survey, the topic related questions will appear after a brief description of the Brand Activism concept and what it is about. This part is important in order to reduce the respondent's confusion with the questions and that their answers are properly accurate with the topic. The survey questions will be then divided in two different units.

First one will concern the general opinion. In this part, the desire is to get to know what people think of companies that engage in Brand Activism campaigns and how do they perceive them

using 1 to 7 rating scale. In other words, this part aims to draw an overall perception of the target concerning this concept and to get to understand the reasons behind this.

Furthermore, the survey will pursue with questions tackling the behavioral aspect. The second main objective is to understand how people would react to companies communicating about social and political matters.

Evidently, questions will have an overall perspective at first. Nevertheless, they will get increasingly more specific about the social media aspect of brand activism and their personal idea of how they would engage towards BA.

In the end, the results with this survey, through several t tests, will allow to draw an overall idea about how people perceive Brand activism, how would they react to it as well as how different would they engage towards BA on social media. Concerning the behaviors, it will be interesting to compare the results of the survey to the results of the Instagram analyses.

Chapter 4: Research Results

4.1 Post engagement analysis

4.1.1 Brands

To conduct the analysis of brand activism's impact on posts engagement, the following brands were selected in order to create the dataset.

Brands	Sector	Nb. of Followers	Nb. of Posts	BA Cause	Time period (2020)
Ben & Jerry's	Food	1,5 Millions	2.740	Presidential election, Environment, Social equality & rights (Transsexuals rights, Racism)	November & December
Converse	Clothing	10.2 Millions	525	Social Equality (LGBTQ, BLM)	Mid May to Mid July
Lush	Cosmetics	4,1 Millions	3.790	Environment, Plastic use, Presidential Election, Social Equality	July & August
Oreo	Food	3,1 Millions	1.010	LGBTQ	September & October
Patagonia	Clothing	4,6 Millions	2.770	Environment, Workers conditions, Presidential election	October & November
Starbucks	Drinks	18 Millions	2.170	Social equality & rights (LGBTQ, BLM, Other minorities)	Mid May to Mid July

Table 1. Selected brands for the analysis

All of these brands satisfied the conditions of selection. Each of them is well known worldwide with a solid followers' base (several millions), they are active and allocate a part of their posts to activism (at least, within the selected time period). These six brands are part of the consumer good industry providing its customers with different proposition such as food for Ben&Jerry's and Oreo, clothing for Converse and Patagonia, cosmetics for Lush, drinks for Starbucks. Among the six brands, and within the time frames selected of two months, a number of 247 posts have been reported for this research. Those 247 posts were published during the year 2020, between May and December.

Moreover, a variety of matters have been tackled through the different posts. There was a big emphasize on social equality matters and movements, such as BLM or LGBTQ, that have been central in the activism of Converse Oreo and Starbucks. On another hand, presidential elections were also part of the activism of Ben and Jerry's, Lush and Patagonia. However, they were not addressed in the same way as Lush tried to create incentives to vote while Patagonia and Ben and Jerry's clearly took a stand on a political side. Lastly environmental matters have been tackled by different brands such as Lush and Patagonia to raise awareness towards respect of animals and the nature as a whole. Patagonia communicated stands around environmental respect and political views well lush tried to raise awareness around topics such as plastic use or the sharks' conditions.

4.1.2 Analysis of engagement

As previously decided, the analysis will focus on the two public engagement metrics of posts that are likes and comments. To compare the means of both metrics from both groups, an Independent samples T-Test was conducted.

	Activism	Likes	Comments	Number of posts
Posts	Activist	61.182,56	851,56	108
	Non Activist	43.525,04	474,54	139

Table 2. Reporting of Likes and Comments Means for Activist and Non-Activist posts

In the reporting of engagement, we can observe that activist posts (n=108) have higher means for both likes and comments compared to posts without activist content (n=139).

Nevertheless, let's take a look at the overall results of the statistical analysis.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	6,584	0,11	1,816	245	0,071	17,657,5124	9,723,61121	-1,495,0255	36,810,0503
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,755	193,643	0,081	17,657,5124	10,062,7825	-2,189,2166	37,504,2414
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	7,806	0,006	1,921	245	0,056	377,00879	196,28441	-9,61142	763,62901
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,753	133,758	0,082	377,00879	215,07602	-48,38113	802,39871

Table 3. Independent samples T-Test for overall engagement

First, concerning the analysis of the number of likes, we can see that activist posts got a higher mean (m=61 182,56) then non-activist one (m=43 525,04). However, the T tests resulted in a non-statistically significant, but close, output (p=0,081 > 0,05).

Secondly, concerning the analysis of the number of comments, the results were quite similar to the likes' one. The mean of comments that activist posts got (m=851,56) is higher than the mean of comments from the non-activist posts (m=474,54). Even though, the T-test resulted once again in a non-statistically significant, but close, output (p=0,082 > 0,05).

Overall, it is visible that activist posts results in a higher engagement (both for likes and comments) but the statistical significance closely reached in this test.

4.1.2.1 Analysis among Brands

As the statistical significance was not reached in the overall comparison, we are going to run independent samples T test for each of the brand to get specific results.

Brands	Activism	Likes	Comments	Number of posts
Ben & Jerry's	Activist	37.888,65	558,50	20
	Non Activist	9.562,89	103,92	38
Converse	Activist	198.835,61	1.094,22	18
	Non Activist	102.671,00	226,44	9
Lush	Activist	10.743,41	135,59	29
	Non Activist	14.525,31	197,12	34
Oreo	Activist	53.733,67	3.052,17	6
	Non Activist	25.580,17	431,12	24
Patagonia	Activist	30.288,33	256,37	27
	Non Activist	25.388,00	67,42	12
Starbucks	Activist	102.394,50	3.991,87	8
	Non Activist	152.277,77	1.914,41	22

Table 4. Reporting of Likes and Comments Means per Brand

4.1.2.1.1 Ben and Jerry's

First brand to analyze in Ben and Jerry's with a total of 58 posts published in the months of November and December 2020.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	63,718	0,000	5,248	56	0,000	28.325,7553	5.397,49332	17.513,2769	39.138,2337
	Equal Variances not assumed			3,925	20,168	0,001	28.325,7553	7.217,29254	132.278,83	43.372,775
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	22,786	0,000	4,097	56	0,000	454,5785	11,94793	232,32355	676,83435
	Equal Variances not assumed			3,005	19,554	0,007	454,5785	151,27599	138,56117	770,59673

Table 5. Independent samples T-Test for Ben and Jerry's

Looking at the T test, we can see that the activist posts (n=20) of the ice cream brand resulted in higher mean of likes (m=37 888,65) compared to non-activist posts (n=38 & m=9 562,89) and the output is statistically significant (t=3,9925 & p=0,001).

Concerning the comparison of comments' means, the indication points out a statistically significant (t=3,005 & p=0,007) higher mean for activist posts (m=558,5) than non-activist ones (m=103,92).

4.1.2.1.2 Converse

Second brand to analyze in Converse which posted a total of 58 publications from mid-May to mid-July.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	0,007	0,934	1,841	2	0,077	96,164,6111	52,229,0213	-11,403,072	203,732,294
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,808	15,361	0,09	96,164,6111	53,185,5909	-16,966,186	209,295,48
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	2,57	0,126	1,393	25	0,176	867,77778	623,04413	-415,40562	2,150,96117
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,971	17,834	0,064	867,77778	440,32919	-57,9373	1,793,49286

Table 6. Independent samples T-Test for Converse

The analysis of the Converse case shows out a higher mean of likes for activist posts (n=18 & m=198 835,61) compared to non-activist ones (n=9 & m=102 671). However, this result of a higher mean is not statistically significant (p=0,077 > 0,05) and the situation is the same for comments as the activist mean (m=1 094) is higher than NA posts (226) but the statistical significance was not reached (p=0,17).

4.1.2.1.3 Lush

The third analyzed brand is Lush which have been very active during July and August with a total of 63 publications.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	0,144	0,706	-1,523	61	0,133	-3,781,9097	-3,781,9097	-8,748,5728	1,184,75336
	Equal Variances not assumed			-1,482	49,339	0,145	-3,781,9097	-3,781,9097	-8,908,744	1,344,92455
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	0,069	0,794	-0,782	91	0,437	-65,53144	-61,53144	-218,85905	95,79617
	Equal Variances not assumed			-0,814	54,358	0,419	-65,53144	75,61223	-213,10194	90,03906

Table 7. Independent samples T-Test for Lush

This time, the situation is opposite from the previous cases for both likes and comments. We can distinguish a higher mean in attracted likes for NA posts (n=34 & m=14 525,32) compared to activist ones (n=29 & m=10 743,41) but the difference doesn't appear to be statistically significant (p=0,133).

This is the same concerning comments' result as the mean for NA posts (m=197,85) is once again higher than BA posts (m=135,59) but statistical significance is not reached (p=0,437).

4.1.2.1.4 Oreo

The fourth brand is Oreo, the famous biscuits company, which posted 30 publications within the months of September and October, including a small campaign regarding the LGBTQ community.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	28,055	0,000	3,137	28	0,004	28.153,5	8.974,54203	9.769,9841	46.537,016
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,71	5,255	0,134	28.153,5	1.582,912	-12.111,455	68.418,4547
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	16,692	0,000	4,296	28	0,000	2621,04167	610,12231	1.371,26276	3.870,82057
	Equal Variances not assumed			2,091	5,035	0,090	2621,04167	1.253,45502	-594,24991	5.836,33325

Table 8. Independent samples T-Test for Oreo

Here, the situation is similar to the Converse's one. It is observable that the mean of likes generated by activist posts (n=6) from Oreo (m=53 733,67) compared to its NA posts (m=25 580,17) but the statistical significance is not reached (p=0,134). Same for comments, the mean is higher for BA posts (m=3 052,17) than NA ones (m=431,12), but the statistical significance is not reached (p=0,09).

4.1.2.1.5 Patagonia

The fifth brand, Patagonia, have been posting 49 posts in total during the months of October and November.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	1,586	0,216	0,464	37	0,645	4.900,3333	1.564,3859	-16.505,146	26.305,8124
	Equal Variances not assumed			0,634	36,058	0,530	4.900,3333	7.726,5472	-10.768,986	20.569,6527
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	3,538	0,068	1,533	37	0,134	188,9537	123,27544	-60,82607	438,73348
	Equal Variances not assumed			2,303	26,746	0,029	188,9537	82,05067	82,52469	357,38272

Table 9. Independent samples T-Test for Patagonia

Once again, we can observe higher means for activist post in both likes (m=30 288,33) and comments (m=256,37) compared to NA posts' mean in likes (m=25 388) and comments (m=67,42) but the results are not usable as the statistical significance is not reached in both cases (for likes p=0,645 & for comments p=0,134).

4.1.2.1.6 Starbucks

Lastly, let's analyze the case of Starbucks. The coffee brand posted a number of 30 from mid-May to mid-July.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	0,546	0,466	-2,191	28	0,037	-49,883,273	22,763,4205	-96,512,026	-3,254,5196
	Equal Variances not assumed			-2,535	17,062	0,021	-49,883,273	19,681,5363	-91,396,209	-8,370,3369
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	28,533	0,000	1,669	28	0,106	2077,46591	1,245,0273	-472,85691	4,627,78873
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,037	7,263	0,333	2077,46591	2,003,5445	-2,625,6517	6,780,58348

Table 10. Independent samples T-Test for Starbucks

In this case, the situation is different from what we saw previously. Concerning the comparison of likes, the results show statically significant ($t=-2,191$ & $p=0,037$) higher number of like for NA posts ($m=152\ 277,01$) compared to activist ones ($m=102\ 394,5$). The specificity of this analysis is that the situation for the comments is opposite. The mean for BA posts ($m=3\ 991,87$) is higher than NA ones ($m=1914,4$) but the outputs are not statistically significant ($p=0,33$).

Overall, when going through brand per brand and analyzing the differences between the means of activists' posts compared the means of non-activist ones, in the majority of the T tests we could observe a higher engagement performed by the activists but the results were not statistically significant. We still can't properly conclude that BA content has a significant impact on the engagement performances of Instagram posts.

4.1.2.2 Analysis among Types

As we saw previously, in the vast majority of times, a difference occurs for both likes and comments when using activist content. However, the statistical significance was not reached. Other factor can I have an impact on the post engagement such as the type of the posts. For this reason, we are going to take a closer look at the differences in engagements (of activism compared to NA) when separating pictural posts from video ones.

	Activism	Likes	Comments	Number of posts
Photos	Activist	78.571,12	1.083,96	78
	Non Activist	50.257,21	529,36	107
Videos	Activist	15.925,90	243,77	31
	Non Activist	21.196,26	296,26	31

Table 11. Reporting of Likes and Comments Means per Type of post

4.1.2.2.1 Pictural posts

Beginning with the analysis among pictures (n=185), we can once again compare activist posts (n=78) to NA ones (n=107).

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	6,509	0,012	2,285	183	0,023	28.313,9739	12.391,6475	3.865,10565	52.762,8421
	Equal Variances not assumed			2,187	136,566	0,03	28.313,9739	12.948,7027	2.708,0793	53.919,8685
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	10,241	0,002	2,159	183	0,032	554.60640	256,88148	47,77618	1.061,43662
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,916	92,804	0,058	554.60640	289,50913	-2.031,737	1.129,53017

Table 12. Independent samples T-Test for Pictures

Analyzing the results of the T test, we can observe a statistically significant ($t=2,285$ & $p=0,03$) higher mean for activist pictural posts in likes ($m=78\ 571,18$) compared to NA pictural posts ($m=50\ 257,74$).

Concerning the comments, we can also see a higher mean for activist posts ($m=1\ 083,96$) than NA posts ($m=529,35$). We can consider the output as the statistical significance is closely reached ($t=1,916$ & $p=0,058$).

4.1.2.2.2 Video posts

Now let's take a look at the video posts (n=31) analysis of engagement. When looking at the numbers, we can see a big difference in the amount of likes and comments generated from videos compared to pictures.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal Variances assumed	2,654	0,109	-0,865	60	0,39	-5,243,3548	6,061,66287	-17,368,486	6,881,7762
	Equal Variances not assumed			-0,865	54,062	0,391	-5,243,3548	6,061,66287	-17,395,939	6,909,22971
Comments	Equal Variances assumed	0,733	0,395	-0,455	60	0,650	-52,45161	115,164	-282,81391	177,91069
	Equal Variances not assumed			-0,455	49,197	0,651	-52,45161	115,164	-283,85888	178,95565

Table 13. Independent samples T-Test for Videos

When observing this T test, we can't take out statistically significant differences between activist posts engagement and NA posts one. Even if there is a difference in the means with higher results for NA posts, the outputs are not conclusive (p=0,39 & p=0,65).

Therefore, separating the photos and the videos into two different sets to analyze the difference in the impact of Brand Activism content on engagement depending on the type of the post, it is observable that only pictorial posts with BA content result in a significant increase in likes and comments generated.

4.2 Survey data analysis

Conducting the survey, a total amount of 121 answers were collected. However, some answers were incomplete which narrow the number of useful answers to 101 in total.

4.2.1 Demographics

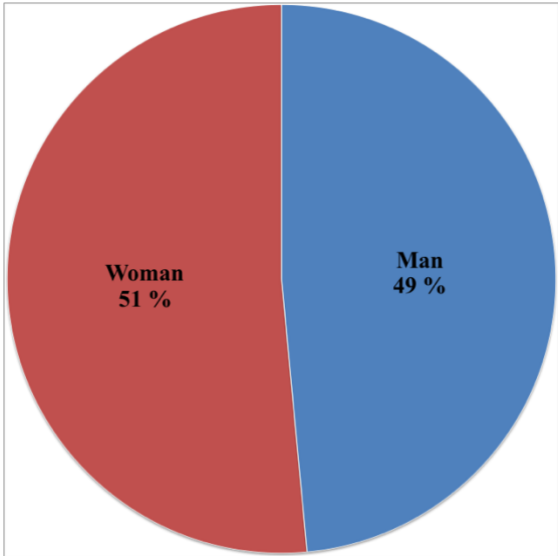


Figure 1. Gender of the respondents

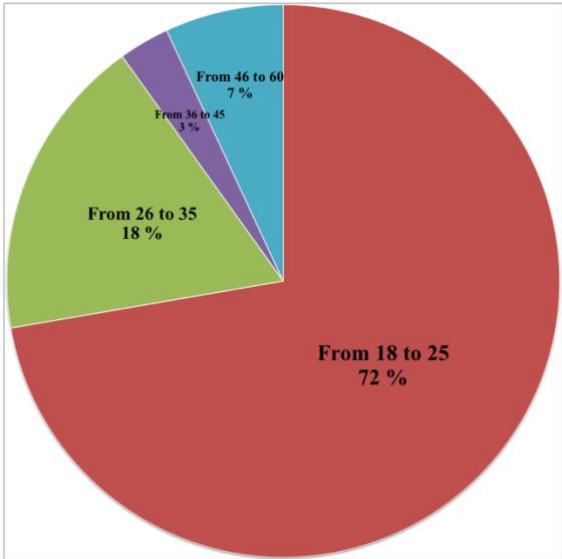


Figure 2. Age of the respondents

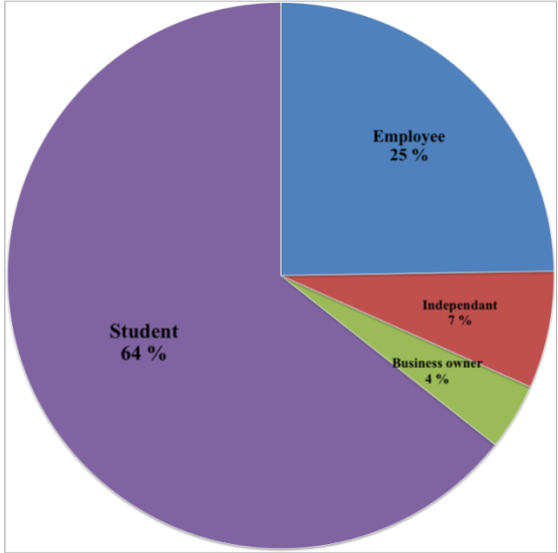


Figure 3. Professional position of the respondents

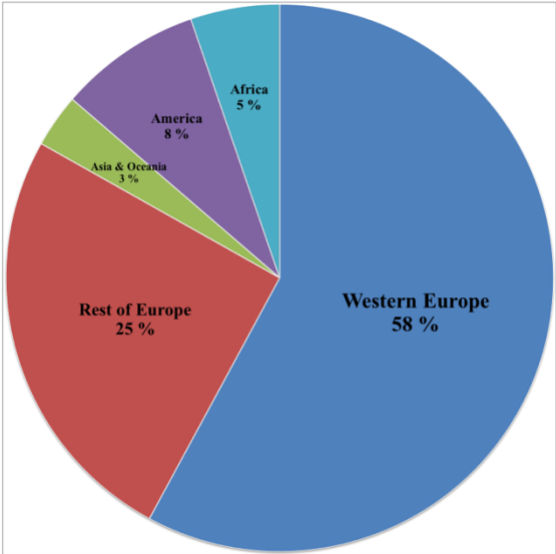


Figure 4. Origin of the respondents

Now that we have an overall picture of the demographics, let's analyze the relationship of the respondents with brands and their familiarity with the brand activism concept.

Analyzing the answers, it is visible that respondents give quite significant importance to the brands with an importance mean rate of 7,11 (out of 10).

Additionally, more than half of the answerers (60,2%) were familiar with the concept of Brand Activism while only a small portion didn't know it at all (11,7%).

When asked how activist they considered themselves, the overall activist rate mean is 5,78 out of 10 among the participants which is very close to the middle point. Thus, it can be assumable that the results won't be biased by a very activist sample that would give an extreme and unrepresentative importance to activism performed by brands.

4.2.2 Social Media usage

Besides the demographics, let's take a look at the answerers' usage of social media, and more precisely Instagram, and their engagement habits on the platform before jumping in the analysis of the opinion and behaviors towards activist posts.

4.2.2.1 Usage rate & frequency

The goal to reach active social media users, and more specifically Instagram ones, was reached. A total of 98,1% of all the answerers were social media users with 99% active every week (9,9% weekly and 89,1% daily). Among them, 91,8% were also active on Instagram and use the platform at least weekly (9% of them weekly and 91% daily). It is interesting to see that all of the 18 to 24 years old answerers are Instagram users. This shows how impactful and interesting Instagram can be for this segment of the population.

4.2.2.2 Habits of engagement

After the usage, let's have a look at the results for the habits of the respondents and more precisely the engagement ones. First, it appears that Instagram users engage less often with brands than with individual users. Additionally, they engage more often through likes than comments. Different t-test were conducted to get those conclusions. The results showed an overall tendency of 4,29 (out of 5) of liking other users posts against 3,16 for brands, and 2,9 to comment other users posts against 1,82 for brands.

However, this is not concerning activist brands but only the overall tendency.

4.2.3 Opinion

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate (out of 7) the opinion they have of the following types of brand:

Non activist brand	Activist brand taking a Similar stand on a Random matter	Activist brand taking a Similar stand on an Important matter
Random Activist brand	Activist brand taking an Opposite stand on a Random matter	Activist brand taking an Opposite stand on an Important matter

No brands were specified to not influence on the taste of the person, nor specific matter because the given importance varies depending on the person and the matter.

It was assumed two hypotheses concerning that: activist brands are better perceived than non-activist brands; the opinion towards an activist brand varies in accordance with the stand taken by the company and by the person. A t-test was conducted resulting in a statistical significance ($p=0,00$).

Therefore, it was expected to find a higher mean in the related perception for activist brands than non-activist brands.

This is the case when not specifying the matter and the stand as the opinion rate mean of the non-activist brands was 3,98 while the one of random activist brand was 4,63 (16,33% higher). When specifying the matter and stand, the overall opinion rate does not really change with a mean of 4,56.

However, the change occurs within the stand taken and matter concerned. As assumed, the opinion of the person towards the company becomes better when the stand is similar to the individual and gets worse in the opposite case. For a matter randomly chosen, the overall opinion means of an activist brand with a similar stand appeared to be 5,39 against 3,78 for an opposite stand. Also as assumed, when the matter is important for the respondent, the fluctuation becomes even wider with a resulted mean of 6,13 for a same stand and 2,93 for an opposite one.

4.2.4 Behaviors

Following the hypotheses, it was expected to have a higher engagement likeliness rate for activist brands than non-activist ones and this was the output.

On the 1 to 7 scale used, the mean of engagement likeliness towards non-activist brands was 3,20 against 3,79 for a random activist one. However, an interesting finding occurred when calculated the mean of the four other options (activist brand with a similar or opposite stand on a random or important matter). When doing so, the logic would have implied that the result would be approximately the same then random activist brand mean, but it was actually higher with 4,37.

The likeliness to engage with the brands increases for the four options available in the question (activist brand taking a similar stand on a random matter, activist brand taking an opposite stand on a random matter, activist brand taking a similar stand on an important matter and an activist brand taking an opposite stand on an important matter). The increase in the mean is higher for a same stand option ($m=4,67$) than for an opposite stand one ($m=4,07$). However, it is intriguing to observe that the results in the means of both opposite stand options are higher ($m=3,76$ for a random matter & $m=4,38$ for an important matter) than non-activist brands. Additionally to that point, and following a finding mentioned in the previous paragraph, we can also observe that when specifying a positioned stand on a matter, respondents shows more likeliness to engage with the brand compared to asking directly about a random activist brand.

As resulted in the opinion part, the change is higher when the matter is important for the person ($m=4,72$).

Even though the results show a higher likeliness to engage towards any activist brand, this does not necessarily mean a positive impact as this engagement can be of a negative nature in the comments. This aspect got the same results pattern than the opinion. The nature of the engagement is better when the stand taken by the company is the same than the person and vice versa. Again, the difference is more pronounced when the matter is important for the person.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Instagram engagement

Concerning Instagram posts' engagement, the selection of the posts to analyze allowed to draw overall findings concerning different causes (so brand activism in general and not on a specific matter) and the selection of those brands with big communities allowed to base the analysis on important enough numbers in order to be reliable.

Even though the statistical significance was not always reached (often closely reached), the results of this part of the research are still valuable and we can assume pointing out two main findings:

- Overall, posts with brand activism content may get a superior engagement than non-activist ones but this research is not enough to state it.
- Pictural posts are positively and significantly impacted by the use of brand activism content while it doesn't seem to be the case for video posts.

4.3.2 Opinion and behavior

Concerning the opinion towards activist brands and the likeliness to engage with them, the survey allowed to draw a general idea of the reality with variable factors (importance of the cause to the person and the stand taken).

The results of this part of the research pointed out four main findings:

- Overall, people perceive better activist brands than non-activist ones
- People's opinion of an activist brand depends on the stand taken (shared or not)
- Users are more likely to engage with any activist brand even if the stand is opposite from theirs
- The opinion shift and engagement likeliness one is bigger when the brand addresses a matter of importance to the person

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Limitations

5.1 Conclusions

In this dissertation, various aspects were pointed out and potential impacts of brand activism were shown. Conducting the research project analyses, these were the outputs concerning the different hypotheses originally made:

H1. Users engage more on posts with brand activism content

From the analysis, Instagram users seem to engage more on activist posts as the means (of both likes and comments generated) were higher for this group of posts when analyzing the overall results. However, there is a necessity to qualify this hypothesis as we can't reject a difference of mean for both categories of posts, due to their closely but not properly reached statistical significance ($p=0,08$).

Thus, the hypothesis that users engage more on posts with brand activism content was close to be statistically verified but this research did not conclude in an approval of it. Additionally, this aligns with the results of the survey showing that respondents were more likely to engage with an activist brand than a non-activist one.

H2. The engagement impact of brand activism content differs on the type of the post

The analysis showed clearly that the impact on engagement was different if the posts were pictures compared to when posts were videos. The t tests resulted in statistically significant higher means, for both likes and comments, when pictures have activist content compared to when they don't. On another hand, the analysis wasn't conclusive concerning the video posts. This means that it is concludable that activism content has a positive impact on pictorial posts' engagement, but not on video ones.

Therefore, the hypothesis stating that the engagement impact of brand activism content differs depending on the type of posts is validated.

H3. People perceive activist brands in a better way than non-activist

From the survey analysis, the results showed that an overall improvement in the perception of the individuals regarding a brand is made when it acts as activist.

H4. People perceive better an activist brand that shares the same stand and worse an activist brand taking the opposite one

Based on the respondents' answers and its analysis, we could observe a correlation between the perception of an activist brand and the taken stand (is it also shared by the individuals?). As expected, the respondents perceive an activist brand taking a similar stand to theirs, and worse an activist brand taking a stand opposite to theirs. This hypothesis was verified.

The results regarding the different hypotheses allow to answer the two research questions of the dissertation:

RQ1. Are Brand Activism contents more engaging than non-activist ones?

Overall, when only observing Instagram engagement means, it seems that activist posts generate a higher engagement than non-activist ones. However, it was not verified by the statistical tests. Thus, this research does not conclude that Brand Activism content increases the number of likes or comments in a general way.

Sidely, there was a clear difference in the change of generated engagement between the pictural posts and the video ones. Pictural posts appeared to be really impacted, in both likes and comments, while the analysis concerning video was not conclusive.

Finally, it was found that the potential increase in engagement from activist brands happens regardless of the taken stand but doesn't have the same magnitude if is similar to the individuals that if it is opposite.

RQ2. How is Brand Activism perceived by social media users?

The overall findings of the research showed that brand activism is generally well perceived by the people. People have a better opinion of activist brands than non-activist ones. Nonetheless, this perception also depends on the stand taken by the company and the one of the concerned individuals.

5.2 Limitations

Throughout the research, and as it serves as an opening on the topic meaning that the analyses only scratch the surface of the different implications, some limitations occurred for both primary and secondary data.

5.2.1 Limitations for the secondary data

Concerning the secondary data, several limitations can be pointed out.

The first one being that, even if the overall results in the analysis of engagement showed a tendency for a higher one when posts contain activism messages, the statistical significance was often not reached for the brands' analyses and for the video posts one. Assumptions of results could be made overall but once again, the outputs were close to statistical significance without attaining it. This could be the outcome of the unbalanced samples between brands and the differences in their respective follower base.

On another hand, even though some tests have been run for different specific examples (per brand and per type), the method of regrouping all the posts could be considered not the most relevant. As all the posts were gathered without selecting only the resembling ones, brand activism has not been the unique differentiation among the posts. This means that other factors could have impacted the engagement of the posts such as the starring of a celebrity, the visual appeal of a post, the seasonality topics or any other aspect that could generate an impact on the post's engagement. This was a factor really standing out for Starbucks, it appeared quite easily that the most successful posts were pictorial ones with a very beautiful and colorful visual around its beverage's products. They were more appealing for the eyes of Instagram users than the visuals of the brand's activist publications. This specific phenomenon also occurred for Lush cosmetics.

Moreover, the brands selected were part of the consumer goods industry which are often close to their customers, perhaps entailing a difference with companies of other industries.

With this method and the established conditions for brands selection, only 6 brands and 247 posts have been analyzed in this research. This allows to get a first idea, but this didn't appear being enough to properly affirm that brand activism indeed increases the engagement when used as part of the post's content systematically.

5.2.2 Limitations for the primary data

In the survey, a limitation occurs directly when taking a look at the demographics. The answerers were mainly coming from Western Europe. Knowing the cross-cultural effects across populations (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011), this could entail some limitations as the results could be significantly different if the sample was mainly composed of individuals from Africa, America, Asia, Oceania or with an equal proportion of every region.

Moreover, still around the demographics of the answerers, a major part of them were students under 25 meaning that their thinking process can be different from more than 25 years old workers. Thus, the results actually focus more on this specific segment and not on the under 35 years old originally planned. On the other hand, this makes the results more accurate for this segment of the population which is very active on social media and represent a strategic and interesting target for companies.

Another limitation is the number of useful survey respondents that was of 103. This number could be considered too low to have proper and representative results. It could be higher in order to satisfy a more significant reliability of the collected data.

Ending with the survey in itself, it could be deepened to gather more information towards the attitude or any other relevant aspect. When conducted the survey, the will was to keep it simple to answer and to analyze because of its role as a side interest of the research to conduct. But while facilitating the process it also created a limitation in the information collected. The survey could be more sophisticated and relies on strong method in order to avoid the different psychological biases in the responses which mainly comes from their subjective opinions about the questions rather than literally testing them.

5.3 Future research

This specific dissertation has an opening goal on the brand activism effect on engagement when used in Instagram posts content research topic. Various related opportunities are opened possible for other researchers that want to discover more about it.

First of all, there is a possibility to go further in this research by analyzing the nature of the interactions of the people within the activist posts comments to know if the change in engagement is actually positive or not. On another hand, the performance of stories could also be an interesting focus for another research.

Moreover, it would be interesting to conduct such a research on different social media platforms such as Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, or TikTok when companies will be enough implemented, as they may not be impacted in the same way by the use of brand activism.

Also, this dissertation is based around brand activism, meaning that other types of Instagram contents could be used as the changing variable to analyze in the selected posts for a similar research. Many related research opportunities remain with this topic by changing the selected variables (content, social media etc.) or going deeper with this analyze.

Concerning the opinion of the people, this dissertation simply looked at their first thoughts concerning brand activism and how they think they would behave on Instagram when facing an activist post. This can be analyzed much deeper through more developed surveys or other types of data collection methods in order to understand better the human psychology related to use of activism by brands.

Also, it would be really relevant for researchers to develop this aspect for the different social media user's categories based on demographics (age, origin, etc).

In other words, many interesting possibilities around brand activism and social media can appear for future research. This dissertation only stands as an opening door on the topic which surely possess many specific implications to discover.

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Appendices

Figure 1: Value-Driven concept



Figure 2 : Types of Brand Activism



Figure 3: Brand activism and CSR Marketing Activities

Table 1. Brand Activism and CSR Marketing Activities.

CSR Activity	Cause Promotion and Cause-Related Marketing	Corporate Social Marketing	Advocacy Advertising	Brand Activism
Form	Monetary (also involves advertising)	Advertising	Advertising	Advertising and practice
Aim	Seek to influence consumer perception through company-cause associations	Seek reputational and economic benefit via consumer appreciation of association with cause/issue	Incite institutional change through shifting public opinion and behavior	Support a cause, raise awareness, change behavior, and encourage sociopolitical change; also seeks reputational and economic benefit via consumer appreciation of association with cause
Initiative (Kotler, Hessekiel, and Lee 2012)	Marketing driven	Marketing driven	Marketing driven	Purpose and values driven
Degree of controversy	Noncontroversial charity, cause, or event	Noncontroversial issue	Noncontroversial issue	Controversial sociopolitical cause, issue, charity, or event
Nature of issue	Progressive	Progressive	Benefit industry	Progressive or conservative
Issues addressed	Social, environmental	Social, environmental	Political	Social, political, environmental, legal, business, or economic
Nature of engagement	No/minimal internal practice	Messaging only, no internal practice	Messaging only, no internal practice	Alignment between messaging and practice
Illustrative topics	Breast cancer research, Red Cross, UNICEF	Issues affecting the corporation's immediate industry	Issues involved with firms' operations, defending themselves from criticism; mainly occurs in harmful industries such as oil and tobacco	Immigration, gender rights, LGBTQIA+, U.S. gun reform, and climate change
Example	Pampers donates a portion of its profit to UNICEF for vaccine against neonatal tetanus	Heineken began a "drink responsibly" campaign	R.J. Reynolds disputed the harmfulness of smoking	Gillette viral ad explores toxic masculinity
Indicative Literature	Crimmins and Horn 1996; Kotler, Hessekiel, and Lee 2012; Varadarajan and Menon 1988	Haley 1996; Inoue and Kent 2014; Kotler and Lee 2005	Cutler and Muehling 1989; Fox 1986; Haley 1996; Menon and Kahn 2003	Dodd and Supa 2014; Korschun et al. 2019; Moorman, 2020; Nalick et al. 2016; Sarkar and Kotler 2018; Smith and Korschun 2018; Wettstein and Baur 2016

Figure 4: Defining characteristics of Brand Activism

Table 1. Defining Characteristics of Brand Activism

Characteristic	Definition	Links to Brand Activism	Example
Purpose and values driven	Brand purpose is embedded as well as derived from its core values. Thus, a brand is not driven solely by profit but focuses on a brand's contribution to wider public interest and societal goals (The British Academy 2019), prioritizing delivery of social and environmental benefits (Bocken et al. 2014).	Brand activism, driven by brand purpose and values, seeks to impact sociopolitical issues beyond immediate economic interests (Sarker and Kotler 2018; Weismann and Baur 2014).	Unilever: 28 "sustainable living" brands (i.e., brands focused on reducing environmental footprint and increasing social impact) (Unilever 2019b). Tony's Chocolonely created a reference price (living income) for cocoa and seeks to cooperate with other chocolate companies to create change in the industry (Tony's Chocolonely 2020). Patagonia created "Action Works" to connect committed individuals to organizations working on environmental issues and donates 1% of sales to such organizations (which has encouraged other companies to do the same starting "1% for the Planet") (Patagonia 2018).
Contested, controversial, and polarizing Sociopolitical issues	Controversial issues have competing values and interests, engender disagreements about assertions or actions, are politically sensitive, and arouse strong emotions (Flinders University 2019; Malik et al. 2014). While what represents a contested issue may change over time and differ across cultures, current issues in the media include climate change, sexual harassment, gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, racism, immigration, gun control, reproductive rights, and public health.	Brands are choosing to, and are comfortable with, alienating certain consumers by engaging with divisive sociopolitical causes (Smith and Korschun 2018).	Gillette: advertisement and donations to charities addressed toxic masculinity (Al-Mulim 2019). Nike: advertisement featuring Black Lives Matter professor and former NFL football player Colin Kaepernick addressed racial inequality (Boren 2018).
Progressive and conservative stances	Adoption of progressive or conservative stances. Both may be considered prosocial as they believe their actions benefit society (Chenery and Tuffel 2018; Eisenberg 1982).	Brand activism can address any sociopolitical issue along the political divide (subjective based on political ideology or religion) (Hoorman 2020).	Dick's Sporting Goods: The firm was historically a supporter of the U.S. National Rifle Association and a purveyor of firearms and, thus, had a conservative following. Dick's outlawed the sale of assault-style rifles in their stores following the Parkland, Florida, school shooting in 2018, prompting backlash from a largely conservative customer base. In contrast, gun control consumers supported this action, as it aligned more with their values (Edgell-Johnson 2018). Nordstrom: The firm discontinued the fashion line of Ivanka Trump, the daughter of President Donald Trump. Supporters of Trump started a "Boycott Nordstrom" social media campaign. Yet, Nordstrom was previously boycotted by people who did not support Trump (Crawwell and Abrams 2017).
Messaging and practice	Brand activism involves both intangible (messaging) and tangible (practice) commitments to a sociopolitical cause (Defina and Burbano 2011).	Brand activism goes beyond merely advocacy/messaging (i.e., Dodd and Saps 2014; Malik et al. 2018; Weismann and Baur 2014) and involves alignment with corporate practices that uphold brand purpose and values.	Messaging: Several CEOs spoke out against U.S. President Donald Trump's immigration ban (Coke 2017). (CEO statements) The 2017 Super Bowl commercials were acknowledged for drawing attention to immigration, gender, and environmental rights (WGSN Insider 2017). (Advertising) Practices: Target's introduction of gender-inclusive bathrooms advocated for transgender rights (WGSN Insider 2017). (Organizational practice) Procter & Gamble's commitment to donate \$3 million to relevant causes following the Gillette toxic masculinity campaign (Gillette 2018). (Donor support) Ranco's "Coffee vs. Gangs" project, which trains young men in Honduras to be coffee farmers, not gang members (Holder 2017). (Continued support)

Figure 5: Activist marketing messaging framework

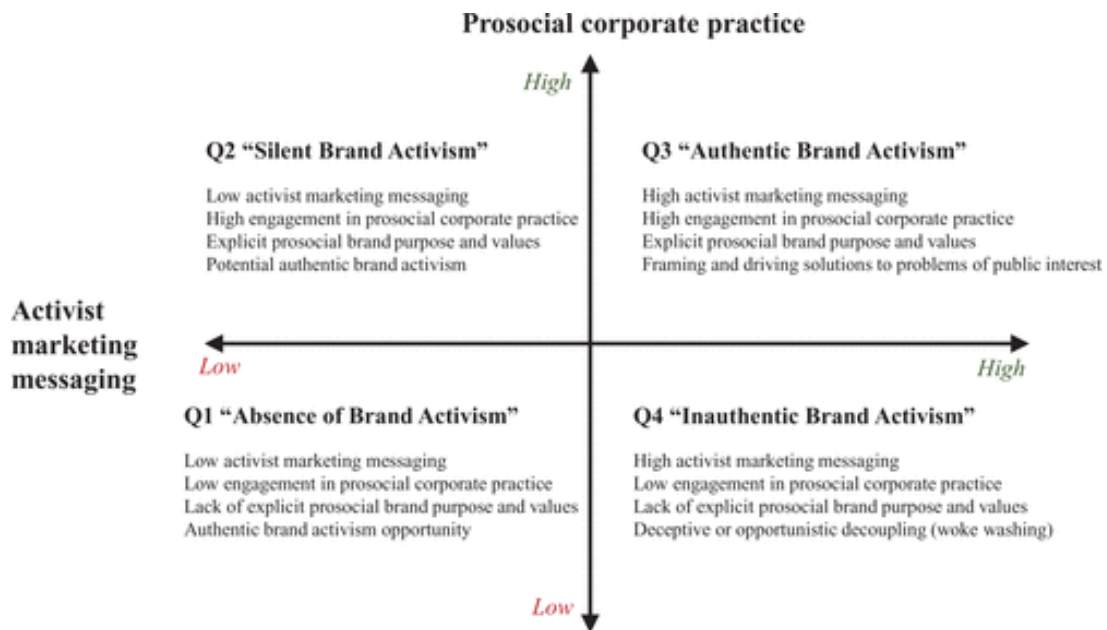


Figure 6: Framework of optimal incongruence

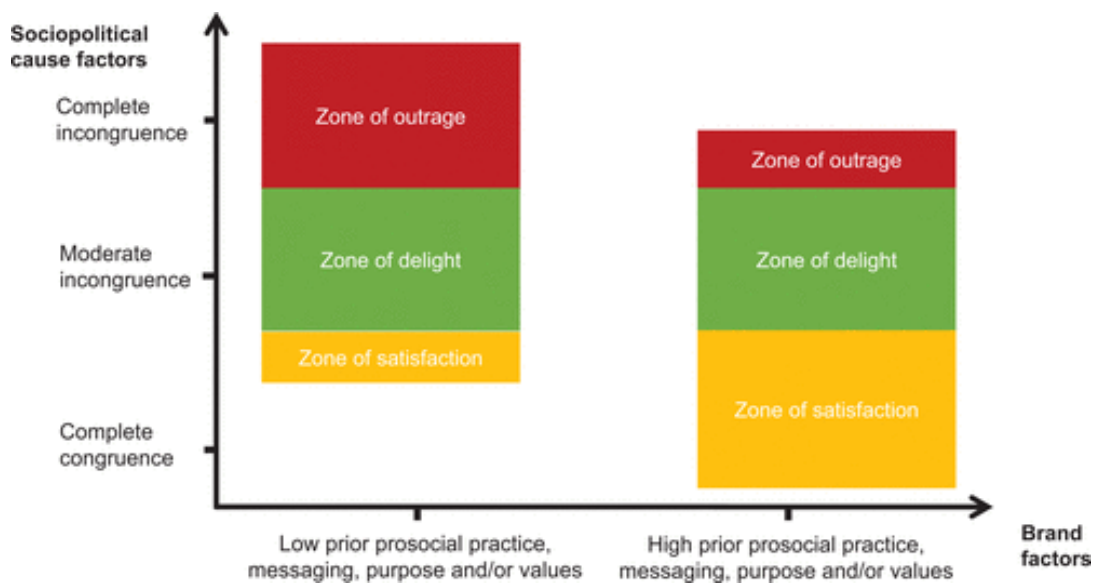


Figure 7: Social media timeline

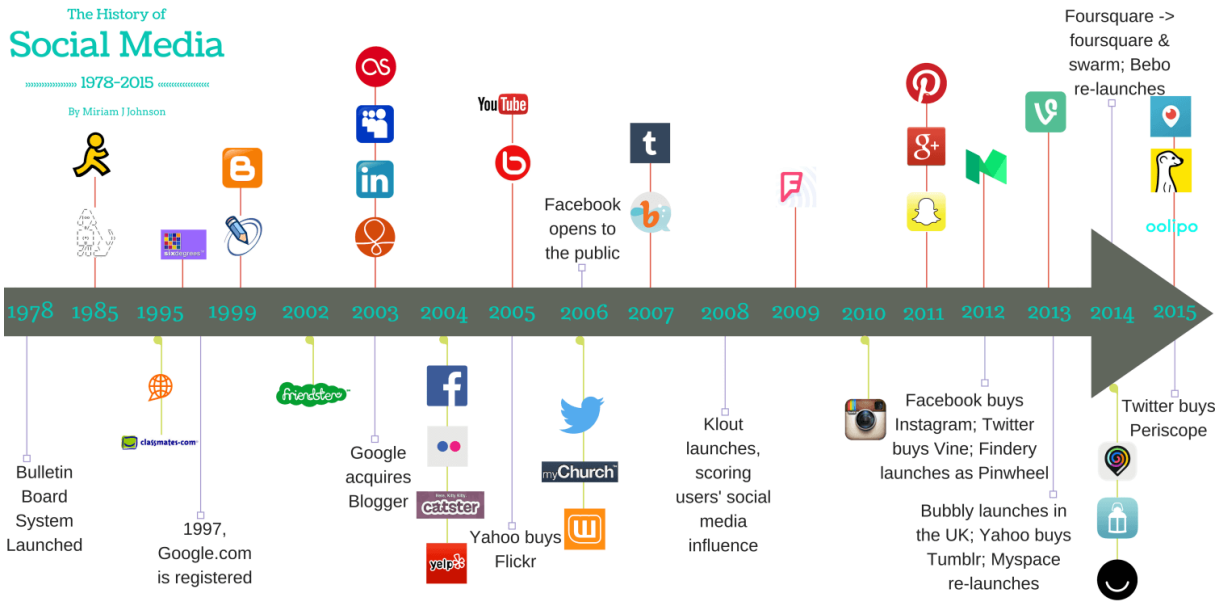


Figure 8: Social Media with the most users

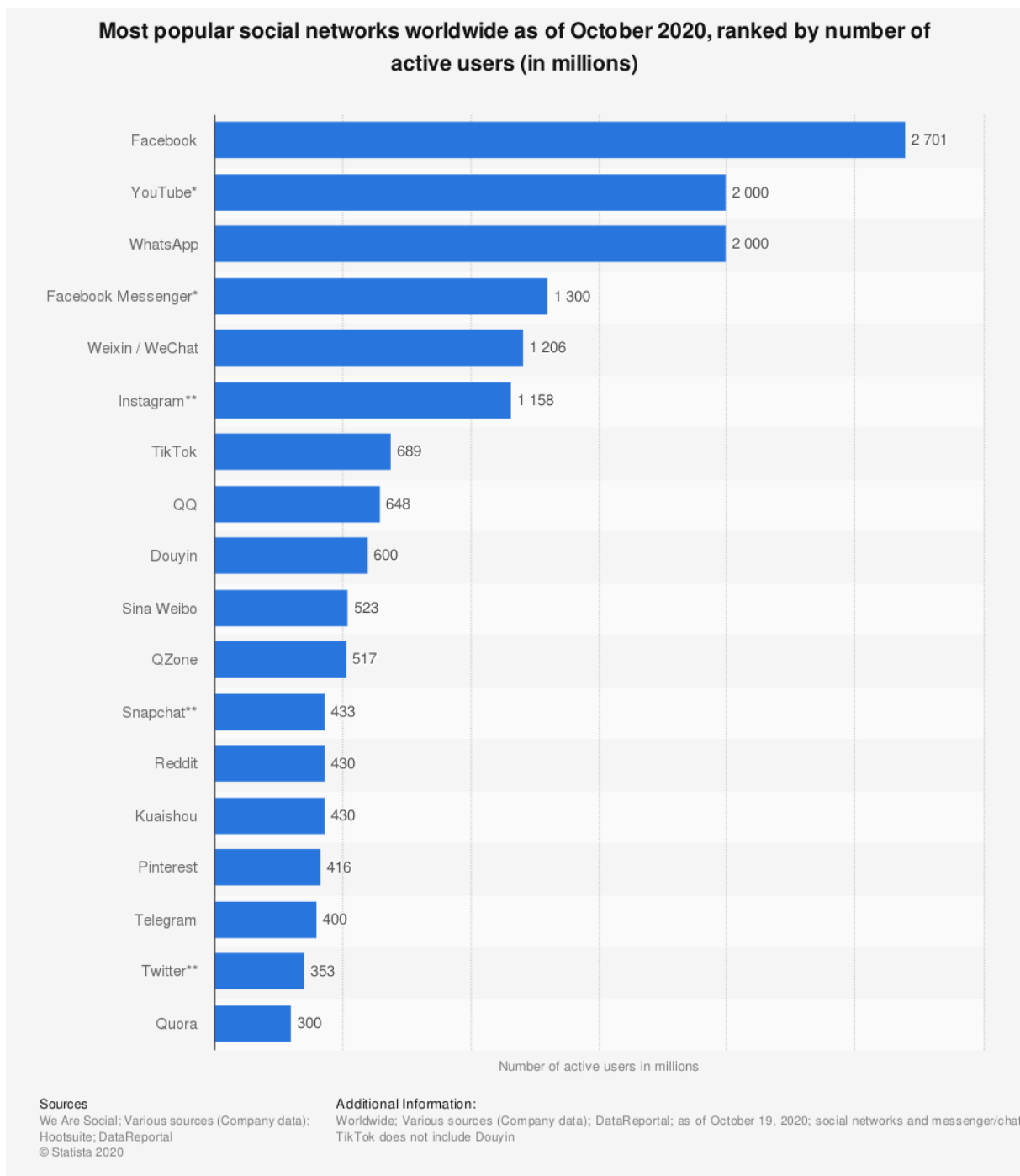
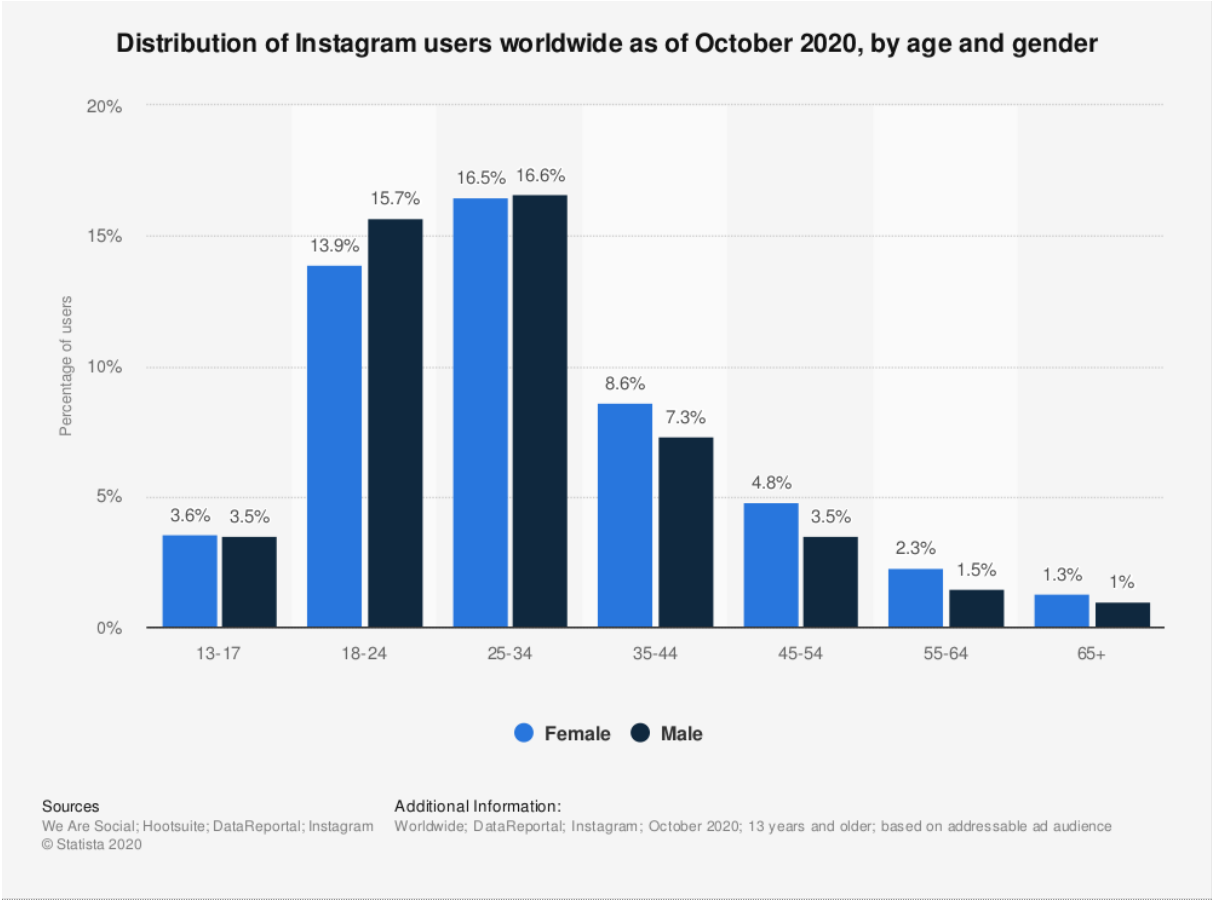




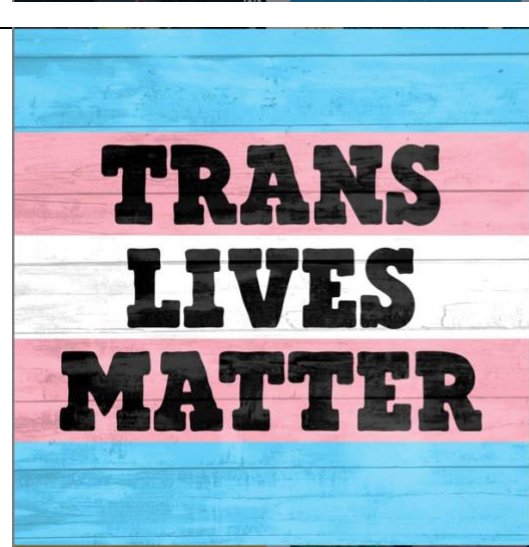
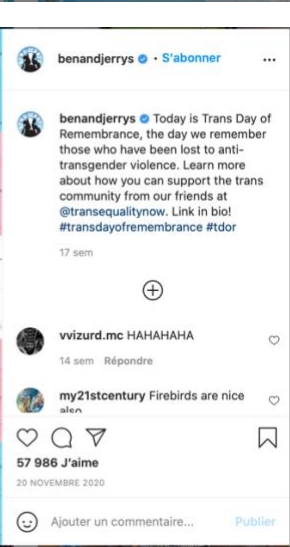

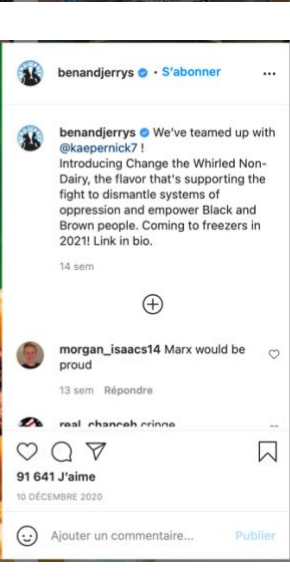
Figure 9. Instagram users



Instagram Posts

Here are some examples of the activist posts that have been analyzed.

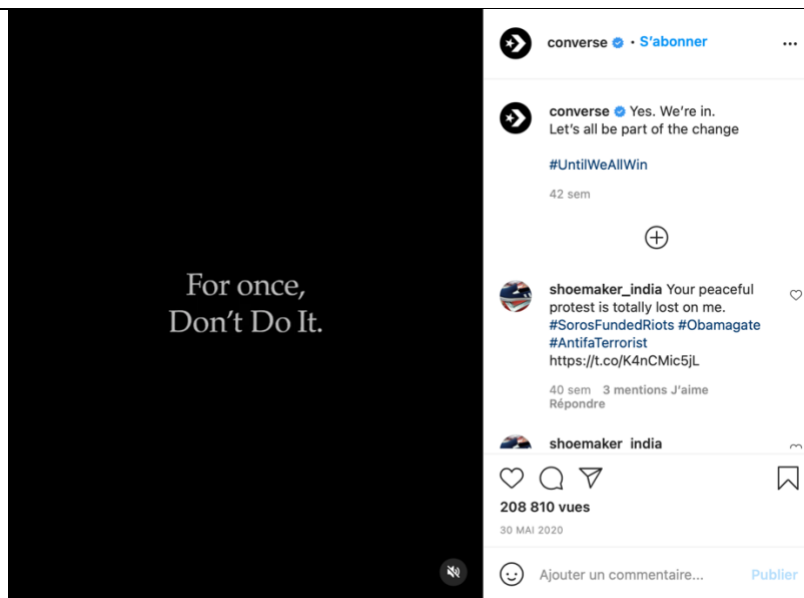
Ben&Jerry's

		<p>Pictural post with a written message to raise incentives around voting for presidential elections in the US</p>
		<p>Pictural post with a written message in honor of the transexuals community</p>
		<p>Pictural post of a Ben&Jerry's ice cream product in collaboration with Collin Kaepernick</p>

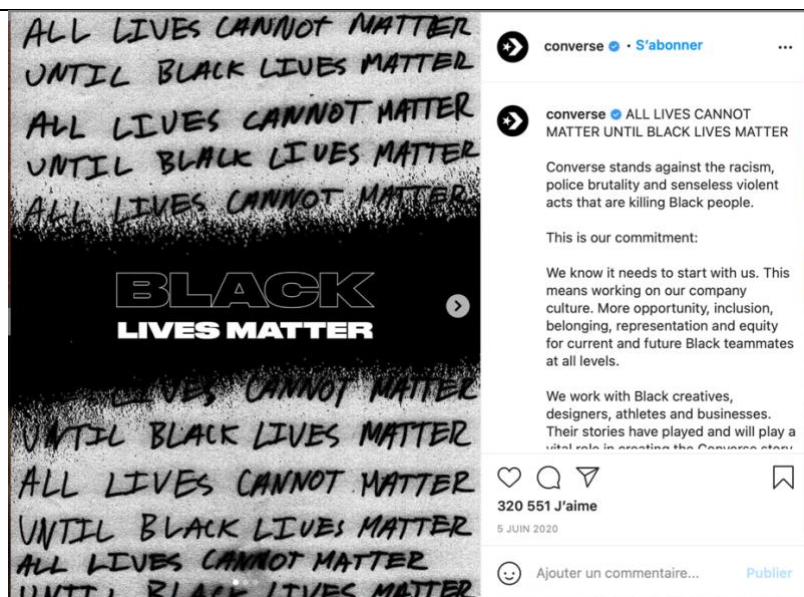
Converse



Video post featuring an Instagram model in honor of the LGBTQ community



Video post to raise incentives for change regarding racism

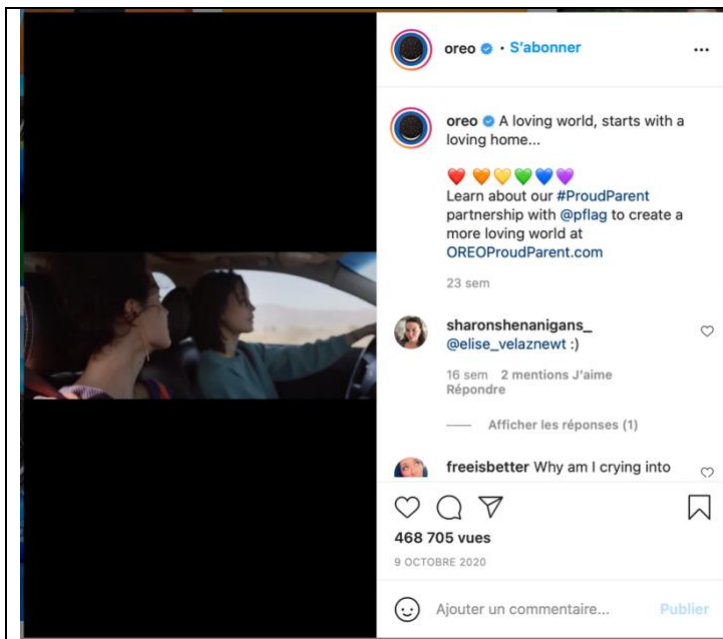


Pictorial post in honor of BLM movement

Lush

<p>It's Plastic Free July.</p> <p>We're talking all things plastic-free this month and how small changes have big impacts.</p> <p>Icons: a swirl, a smile, a bar of soap, a citrus slice, and a drop.</p>	<p>lushcosmetics • S'abonner</p> <p>lushcosmetics 120 billion units of packaging are created by the cosmetics industry every year.</p> <p>Think that's far too much? Us too. That's why we're setting our Lushies a challenge: we're encouraging people to go plastic-free this July and make the switch to naked products. We'll be sharing tips and easy swaps with our Lushies to show you how you can make a difference.</p> <p>One small switch is all it takes to leave a lasting impact. Are you ready to make a change?</p> <p>Head to our link in bio to learn more.</p> <p>37 sem</p> <p>24 791 J'aime</p> <p>1 JUILLET 2020</p> <p>Ajouter un commentaire... Publier</p>	<p>Pictorial post sharing an incentive to only use plastic free products</p>
<p>Everyday Lush routine:</p> <p>STEP 1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.</p> <p>STEP 2. Arrest the cops that killed Breonna Taylor.</p> <p>STEP 3. Support the BREATHE Act to end police brutality.</p> <p>STEP 4. Take every action you can; the fight is far from over.</p>	<p>lushcosmetics • S'abonner</p> <p>lushcosmetics "Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor" is an unstoppable demand to arrest all the Louisville Metro Police involved in the killing of Breonna.</p> <p>Continue to say her name, sign every petition, make calls to the Kentucky Attorney General to demand action and support those on the frontlines fighting to ensure accountability.</p> <p>Follow @mvmnt4bklives and learn how to support the BREATHE Act—a bill that divests taxpayer dollars from brutal and discriminatory policing and invests in a new vision for public safety.</p> <p>Click the link in our bio to take action for Breonna. #BREATHEAct</p> <p>58 826 J'aime</p> <p>19 JUILLET 2020</p> <p>Ajouter un commentaire... Publier</p>	<p>Pictorial post with different written message around the police brutality matter</p>
<p>#DROPTHEGUN #KEEPTHEPEACE</p> <p>STORYSTITCHERS ORG</p>	<p>lushcosmetics • S'abonner</p> <p>lushcosmetics Over the last six weeks, we've been fortunate enough to feature the work of our amazing Charity Pot partners fighting for racial justice and equality. This week last, but definitely not least, we want you to meet the Saint Louis Story Stitches Artists Collective. A collective of professional artists and minority youth (ages 16-24) working together to create social change with a focus on gun violence prevention.</p> <p>Stitchers collect stories, reframe and retell them through art, writing and performance to promote understanding, civic pride, intergenerational relationships and literacy.</p> <p>4 654 J'aime</p> <p>27 AOÛT 2020</p> <p>Ajouter un commentaire... Publier</p>	<p>Pictorial post with written messages in the form of hashtags against the use of guns</p>

Oreo



Video post storytelling a part of a lesbian couple life






Pictural post showing Oreo's products with the colors of the pride flag



Pictural post showing Oreo's products with the colors of the pride flag featuring an Instagram influencer

Patagonia

	<p>patagonia · S'abonner</p> <p>patagonia It is fitting that, when all other forms of protection fail, climbing a tree remains our last means of saving it from being cut down. Robert Moor explores the history of the tree-sit as a form of protest by joining a global sleepover.</p> <p>Read the story through the link in bio. Photo: Paul Dix</p> <p>22 sem</p> <p>twinmapleoutdoors Thank you for your support of the @nativefishcoalition 🙌❤️</p> <p>73 895 J'aime</p> <p>11 OCTOBRE 2020</p> <p>Ajouter un commentaire... Publier</p>	<p>Pictorial post showing a man camping on top of a tree to prevent it of being cut off</p>
	<p>patagonia · S'abonner</p> <p>patagonia Heads-up: We're out tomorrow—every Patagonia employee gets a paid day off on Election Day so we can all be sure to vote. And we're super grateful to all of our partners in #TimeToVote who are making it easier for their employees to get to the polls and to the election workers making this all possible. Whatever happens, our commitment to democracy and saving our home planet remains. See you Wednesday. #ThankYouElectionHeroes</p> <p>Photo: @_timdavis_</p> <p>19 sem</p> <p>179 449 J'aime</p> <p>3 NOVEMBRE 2020</p> <p>Ajouter un commentaire... Publier</p>	<p>Pictorial post showing a door and writings to represent election polls and raise the incentive to vote</p>
	<p>patagonia · S'abonner</p> <p>patagonia The clothing industry contributes up to 10% of the pollution driving the climate crisis. And apparel workers are among the lowest paid in the world. You have the power to change the way clothes are made. Click the link in bio for more. #buyless #demandmore</p> <p>15 sem</p> <p>thegreatoutdoors Brilliant campaign!!!!</p> <p>14 sem Répondre</p> <p>ciencourday This is some</p> <p>514 009 vues</p> <p>29 NOVEMBRE 2020</p> <p>Ajouter un commentaire... Publier</p>	<p>Video post with images of nature being destroyed by human actions and sharing a message that, actually, it is still possible to save our planet</p>

Starbucks

		<p>Pictorial post with a written message in honor of Black Lives Matter movement and take a stand against racism</p>
		<p>Pictorial post supporting BLM movement</p>
		<p>Pictorial post in honor of the LGBTQ community</p>

SPSS Tables for the Instagram analyses

Instagram engagement

T-Test

Group Statistics					
	Activism	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Activist	108	61182,5556	87002,8484	8371,85299
	Non activist	139	43525,0432	65824,4786	5583,15940
Comments	Activist	108	851,5556	2107,49729	202,79402
	Non activist	139	474,5468	844,62229	71,63993

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
									Lower	Upper	
Likes	Equal variances assumed	6,584	,011	1,816	245	,071	17657,5124	9723,61121	-1495,0255	36810,0503	
	Equal variances not assumed			1,755	193,643	,081	17657,5124	10062,7825	-2189,2166	37504,2414	
Comments	Equal variances assumed	7,806	,006	1,921	245	,056	377,00879	196,28441	-9,61142	763,62901	
	Equal variances not assumed			1,753	133,758	,082	377,00879	215,07602	-48,38113	802,39871	

T-Test

Group Statistics					
	ActivismPerBrand	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Ben&Jerry's (Activist)	20	37888,6500	31794,9160	7109,55935
	Ben&Jerry's (Non Activist)	38	9562,8947	7658,46854	1242,36765
Comments	Ben&Jerry's (Activist)	20	558,5000	671,66137	150,18805
	Ben&Jerry's (Non Activist)	38	103,9211	111,63802	18,11008

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
									Lower	Upper	
Likes	Equal variances assumed	63,718	,000	5,248	56	,000	28325,7553	5397,49332	17513,2769	39138,2337	
	Equal variances not assumed			3,925	20,168	,001	28325,7553	7217,29254	13278,8030	43372,7075	
Comments	Equal variances assumed	22,786	,000	4,097	56	,000	454,57895	110,94793	232,32355	676,83435	
	Equal variances not assumed			3,005	19,554	,007	454,57895	151,27599	138,56117	770,59673	

T-Test

Group Statistics

	ActivismPerBrand	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Converse (Activist)	18	198835,611	125732,833	29635,5130
	Converse (Non Activist)	9	102671,000	132491,475	44163,8251
Comments	Converse (Activist)	18	1094,2222	1845,31698	434,94538
	Converse (Non Activist)	9	226,4444	205,93877	68,64626

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal variances assumed	,007	,934	1,841	25	,077	96164,6111	52229,0213	-11403,072	203732,294
	Equal variances not assumed			1,808	15,361	,090	96164,6111	53185,5909	-16966,186	209295,408
Comments	Equal variances assumed	2,507	,126	1,393	25	,176	867,77778	623,04413	-415,40562	2150,96117
	Equal variances not assumed			1,971	17,834	,064	867,77778	440,32919	-57,93730	1793,49286

T-Test

Group Statistics

	ActivismPerBrand	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Lush (Activist)	29	10743,4138	11507,0711	2136,80947
	Lush (Non Activist)	34	14525,3235	8131,91468	1394,61186
Comments	Lush (Activist)	29	135,5862	217,31240	40,35390
	Lush (Non Activist)	34	197,1176	372,85148	63,94350

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal variances assumed	,144	,706	-1,523	61	,133	-3781,9097	2483,79902	-8748,5728	1184,75336
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,482	49,339	,145	-3781,9097	2551,64593	-8908,7440	1344,92455
Comments	Equal variances assumed	,069	,794	-,782	61	,437	-61,53144	78,67861	-218,85905	95,79617
	Equal variances not assumed			-,814	54,358	,419	-61,53144	75,61223	-213,10194	90,03906

T-Test

Group Statistics

	ActivismPerBrand	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Oreo (Activist)	6	53733,6667	38447,1316	15695,9758
	Oreo (Non Activist)	24	25580,1667	12218,9972	2494,19236
Comments	Oreo (Activist)	6	3052,1667	3064,89996	1251,24017
	Oreo (Non Activist)	24	431,1250	364,88465	74,48177

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal variances assumed	28,055	,000	3,137	28	,004	28153,5000	8974,54203	9769,98401	46537,0160
	Equal variances not assumed			1,771	5,255	,134	28153,5000	15892,9120	-12111,455	68418,4547
Comments	Equal variances assumed	106,692	,000	4,296	28	,000	2621,04167	610,12231	1371,26276	3870,82057
	Equal variances not assumed			2,091	5,035	,090	2621,04167	1253,45502	-594,24991	5836,33325

T-Test

Group Statistics

	ActivismPerBrand	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Patagonia (Activist)	27	30288,3333	35379,9698	6808,87836
	Patagonia (Non Activist)	12	25388,0000	12651,7878	3652,25655
Comments	Patagonia (Activist)	27	256,3704	423,29206	81,46259
	Patagonia (Non Activist)	12	67,4167	33,96913	9,80604

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal variances assumed	1,586	,216	,464	37	,645	4900,33333	10564,3859	-16505,146	26305,8124
	Equal variances not assumed			,634	36,058	,530	4900,33333	7726,56472	-10768,986	20569,6527
Comments	Equal variances assumed	3,538	,068	1,533	37	,134	188,95370	123,27544	-60,82607	438,73348
	Equal variances not assumed			2,303	26,746	,029	188,95370	82,05067	20,52469	357,38272

T-Test

Group Statistics

	ActivismPerBrand	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Starbucks (Activist)	8	102394,500	43001,4421	15203,3057
	Starbucks (Non Activist)	22	152277,773	58625,0128	12498,8947
Comments	Starbucks (Activist)	8	3991,8750	5614,77191	1985,12164
	Starbucks (Non Activist)	22	1914,4091	1271,46266	271,07675

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal variances assumed	,546	,466	-2,191	28	,037	-49883,273	22763,4205	-96512,026	-3254,5196
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,535	17,062	,021	-49883,273	19681,5363	-91396,209	-8370,3369
Comments	Equal variances assumed	28,533	,000	1,669	28	,106	2077,46591	1245,02730	-472,85691	4627,78873
	Equal variances not assumed			1,037	7,263	,333	2077,46591	2003,54450	-2625,6517	6780,58348

T-Test

Group Statistics

	ActivismPerType	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Activist Picture	78	78571,1795	96268,6530	10900,2785
	Non Activist Picture	107	50257,2056	72299,7426	6989,47993
Comments	Activist Picture	78	1083,9615	2435,70006	275,78872
	Non Activist Picture	107	529,3551	910,99080	88,06880

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal variances assumed	6,509	,012	2,285	183	,023	28313,9739	12391,6475	3865,10565	52762,8421
	Equal variances not assumed			2,187	136,566	,030	28313,9739	12948,7027	2708,07930	53919,8685
Comments	Equal variances assumed	10,241	,002	2,159	183	,032	554,60640	256,88148	47,77618	1061,43662
	Equal variances not assumed			1,916	92,804	,058	554,60640	289,50913	-20,31737	1129,53017

T-Test

Group Statistics

	ActivismPerType	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Likes	Activist Video	31	15952,9032	19513,3913	3504,70853
	Non Activist Video	31	21196,2581	27536,9574	4945,78355
Comments	Activist Video	31	243,7742	330,51775	59,36274
	Non Activist Video	31	296,2258	549,45717	98,68542

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Likes	Equal variances assumed	2,654	,109	-,865	60	,390	-5243,3548	6061,66287	-17368,486	6881,77620
	Equal variances not assumed			-,865	54,062	,391	-5243,3548	6061,66287	-17395,939	6909,22971
Comments	Equal variances assumed	,733	,395	-,455	60	,650	-52,45161	115,16400	-282,81391	177,91069
	Equal variances not assumed			-,455	49,197	,651	-52,45161	115,16400	-283,85888	178,95565

SPSS Tables for the Survey analyses

Demographics tables:

T-Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Do you give importance to brands ?	103	7,11	1,514	,149

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Do you give importance to brands ?	47,637	102	,000	7,107	6,81	7,40

Frequencies

Statistics

Are you familiar with the concept of brand (or corporate) activism ?

N	Valid	103
	Missing	18

Are you familiar with the concept of brand (or corporate) activism ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	62	51,2	60,2	60,2
	I am not sure	29	24,0	28,2	88,3
	No	12	9,9	11,7	100,0
	Total	103	85,1	100,0	
Missing	System	18	14,9		
Total		121	100,0		

Are you a social media user ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	101	83,5	98,1	98,1
	No	2	1,7	1,9	100,0
	Total	103	85,1	100,0	
Missing	System	18	14,9		
Total		121	100,0		

How often do you use social media ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Weekly	10	8,3	9,9	9,9
	Daily	90	74,4	89,1	99,0
	Yearly	1	,8	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	83,5	100,0	
Missing	System	20	16,5		
Total		121	100,0		

Do you use Instagram ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	89	73,6	91,8	91,8
	No	8	6,6	8,2	100,0
	Total	97	80,2	100,0	
Missing	System	24	19,8		
Total		121	100,0		

How often do you use Instagram ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Weekly	8	6,6	9,0	9,0
	Daily	81	66,9	91,0	100,0
	Total	89	73,6	100,0	
Missing	System	32	26,4		
Total		121	100,0		

Opinion:**One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Non-activist brand	98	3,98	,746	,075
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Random activist brand	103	4,63	,970	,096
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a random matter	103	5,39	1,031	,102
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a random matter	103	3,78	1,188	,117
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a matter important to you	103	6,13	1,054	,104
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a matter important to you	103	2,93	1,457	,144

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Non-activist brand	52,821	97	,000	3,980	3,83	4,13
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Random activist brand	48,452	102	,000	4,631	4,44	4,82
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a random matter	53,031	102	,000	5,388	5,19	5,59
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a random matter	32,274	102	,000	3,777	3,54	4,01
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a matter important to you	58,977	102	,000	6,126	5,92	6,33
Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a matter important to you	20,424	102	,000	2,932	2,65	3,22

Behavior:

T-Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How often do you usually like other users' posts ?	91	4,29	,898	,094
How often do you like brands' posts on Instagram ?	91	3,16	1,067	,112

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
How often do you usually like other users' posts ?	45,528	90	,000	4,286	4,10	4,47
How often do you like brands' posts on Instagram ?	28,286	90	,000	3,165	2,94	3,39

T-Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How often do you usually comment other users' posts ?	87	2,90	1,012	,108
How often do you comment brands' posts ?	87	1,82	,934	,100

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
How often do you usually comment other users' posts ?	26,698	86	,000	2,897	2,68	3,11
How often do you comment brands' posts ?	18,132	86	,000	1,816	1,62	2,02

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Non-activist brand	87	3,20	1,363	,146
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Random activist brand	91	3,79	1,480	,155
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a random matter	91	4,27	1,599	,168
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a random matter	91	3,76	1,566	,164
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a matter important to you	91	5,07	1,645	,172
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a matter important to you	91	4,38	2,026	,212

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Non-activist brand	21,873	86	,000	3,195	2,90	3,49
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Random activist brand	24,443	90	,000	3,791	3,48	4,10
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a random matter	25,501	90	,000	4,275	3,94	4,61
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a random matter	22,895	90	,000	3,758	3,43	4,08
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a matter important to you	29,374	90	,000	5,066	4,72	5,41
Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. – Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a matter important to you	20,642	90	,000	4,385	3,96	4,81



Precision for the rest of the survey:

- When mentioned "non-activist", there is no form of brand activism performed but other socially impacting behaviours could occur (e.g. Corporate Social Responsibilities).
- When mentioned "random brand", it concerns a brand randomly selected.
- When mentioned "random matter", it concerns a matter randomly selected which is not of huge importance for you.
- When mentioned "important matter", it concerns a matter that is paramount for you and that can affect you emotionally.
- When mentioned "taking a stand", it concerns the fact of positioning itself about the type of matter mentioned (e.g. CO2 emission matter: being in favour of electric cars use vs. being in favour of traditional cars use).

Q4. Please indicate your opinion of the following types of brands.



	Strongly negative	Negative	Somewhat negative	Neither positive or negative	Somewhat positive	Positive	Strongly positive
Non-activist brand							
Random activist brand							
Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a random matter							
Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a random matter							
Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a matter important to you							
Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a matter important to you							

Q5. Are you a social media user ?

- Yes
- No


Q6. How often do you use social media ?

- Yearly
- Monthly

- Weekly
- Daily

Q7. Do you use Instagram ? 

- Yes
- No

Q8. How often do you use Instagram ? 

- Yearly
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

Q9. How often do you usually like other users' posts ? 

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Q10. How often do you usually comment other users' posts ? 

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Q11. Do you follow brands ? 

- Yes
- No


Q12. How often do you like brands' posts on Instagram ? 

- Never


- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Q13. How often do you comment brands' posts ? 

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Q14. Please indicate how likely you would engage (like and/or comment) on Instagram with the following types of brands. 

	Strongly unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely or unlikely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Strongly likely
Non-activist brand							
Random activist brand							
Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a random matter							
Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a random matter							
Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a matter important to you							
Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a matter important to you							

Q15. Please indicate the nature of your potential engagement for the following types of brands. 

	Strongly negative	Negative	Somewhat negative	Neither positive or negative	Somewhat positive	Positive	Strongly positive
Non-activist brand							
Random activist brand							
Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a random matter							
Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a random matter							
Activist brand taking a stand similar to yours on a matter important to you							
Activist brand taking a stand opposite to yours on a matter important to you							

Q16. What gender are you ?

- Male

- Female
- Other

Q17. How old are you ?

- Less than 18
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-60
- More than 60

Q18. Where do you come from ?

- Africa
- North America
- Latin America
- Asia
- Middle East
- Central Europe
- Eastern Europe
- Nordic Europe
- Western Europe
- Oceania

Q19. What is your education level ?

- Highschool
- Bachelor
- Master
- PhD
- Other

Q20. What is your main activity ?

- Employee
- Independent
- Business owner
- Student

- Unemployed
- Retired
- Other

Q21. What is your income per month ?

- Less than 500€
- From 500€ to 999€
- From 1000€ to 1999€
- From 2000€ to 2999€
- From 3000€ to 5000€
- More than 5000€

End of Survey