

STUDY THE IMPACT OF BRAND ACTIVISM AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM ON MARKETING TRENDS

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Abstract: Brands and advertising companies have successfully utilized the cultural momentum of social and political aspects to entangle with new consumers and advertise their products. So many researches have been conducted about the intersection of marketing and social and political movements but overlooked by advertising agencies. This research gives an insight of brand activism which can eventually help advertisers comprehend about the social and political movements and brands. It is helpful to determine the pathway of grand industrial success and an amalgamation with social and political movements. After diving deep into the prospect of social movements' framing in advertising messages, this research explores the nuances of this aspect of those frames with a conceptual model. In-depth interviews with advertising professionals create a best practices guideline for activist ads. Advertisers nowadays can be benefited by implicating right strategies to social movements by modifying and revamping critical conversations about brand activism beyond large-scale strategy. On the other hand, political activism is also playing a powerful tool for any brand's long-term success. Big brands are considering the political movements seriously and making a constructive effort to refabricate their brand activism strategy. So, in the age of globalization, political activism is a core essence of any brand's long-term success story. This paper investigates the progressive representations of brand activism in the context of social and political movements in advertising and marketing trends.

Keywords: Brand Activism, political activism, Political Stance, Marketing Trends

I. Introduction

Brand activism is really a popularly growing corporate practice [1] in which organizations or brands take a discretionary initiative on what they think is beneficial for society and then consequently make public statements and eventually adapt their operations in ways that support their chosen social causes. Corporate social responsibility is different from brand activism [2]. This must understand the difference between social responsibility and brand activism. Corporate social responsibility is primarily targeted to make organizational operations more sustainable.



Fig: 1Relation of Marketing – Driven & Social- Driven

Source:Created by Researcher

On the other hand, brand activism handles social, environmental and human concerns and these concerns are not related to the organizational core operations. organizations are making an effort to entangle themselves with an activist message sometimes may miss the mark and can estrange customers. Figure above represent the three factors (Marketing – Driven, Corporate- Driven and Social- Driven) as driven for Brand activism.

1.1 Categorization of Brand Activism

The reason for concern is the gap between business and customer values and sometimes the gap between employees and executive values. Organizations no longer have a second option. If the gap is evident and significantly large then companies will suffer. The organization must create a strategy to amalgamate their values with the values of customer, employee and society. Brand Activism constitutes business efforts to sport, or trigger socio economic, political and environmental amelioration. Brand activism is a natural advancement beyond the values-propelled Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) programs. In Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Best for Your Company and Your Cause (2005), Nancy Lee and Philip Kotler pointed to six major areas for corporate social-responsibility activities which were purely marketing driven.

Brand activism is quite contrasting as it is propelled by a fundamental concern for the most crucial issue faced by society. It creates a platform for an organization to represent themselves as a value-driven organization. One value driven company can't overlook the social values. Organizational value must be aligned with employees, society and the communities. Organizational action should be evident rather than their words what they say. Brand activism can simultaneously progressive and regressive [3].



Fig: 2 Brand Activism
Source: Created by Researcher

The biggest example for regressive activism is the tobacco companies. They repudiated the fact that their products actually cause harm to their consumers despite their own research that revealed that their products are really harmful. They marketed the “virtues” of smoking in a way that actually harmed their customers. Companies that lobby politicians for regressive policies are regressive brand activists. On the other hand of progressive activism side, we see companies are taking initiatives and efforts to have a positive impact on the biggest social issues. They have a greater purpose than finding only lucrative options and are leading the industries.

1.2 Essence of Brand Activism

The big brands have realized the core essence of Brand Activism. They decoded the mindset of people. Some interesting facts are presented below to have an idea about the consumer’s perspective of brands [4]. Brands must associate their values with the society for better sustainability of their brands. This is only possible when brands realize the demand and expectation of consumers in the context of social issues.

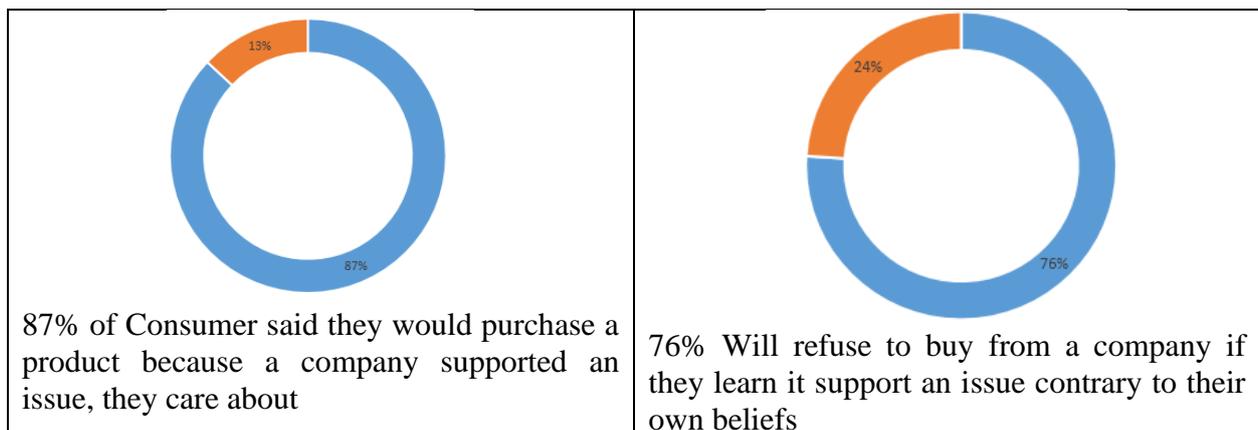


Fig: 3: Brand Activism [4]

It clearly exhibits how consumers relate the social context to their product purchase. So, to align with the consumer sentiment brand should stand by the real issues of the consumer.

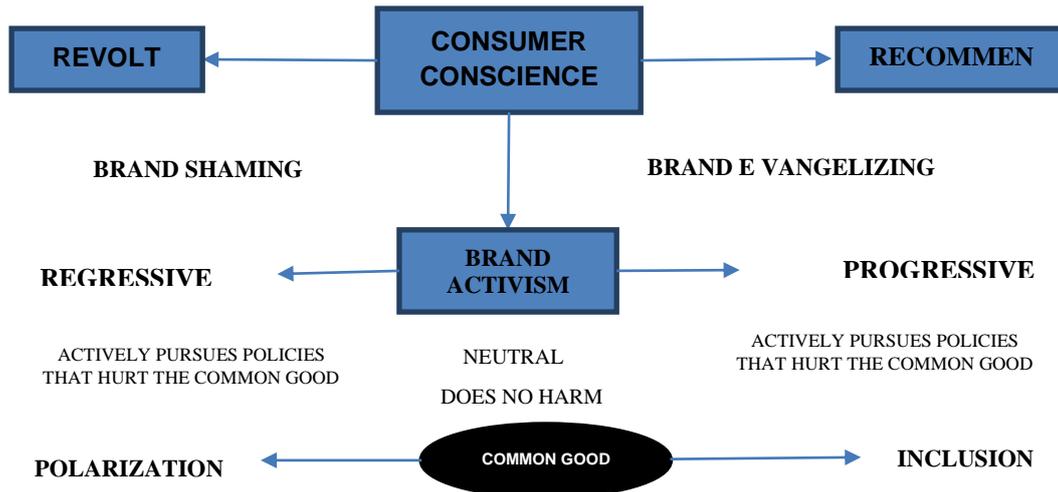


Fig 4: Components of brand activism
Source: Created by Researcher

1.3 Brand Social and Political Activism

Brand activism represents a circumstance in which an entity shares its principles and opinions on social, economic, environmental or political problems, a perspective that represents the importance of the company [5]. Although certain groups may actually go on record to reveal their opinion on topics that are socially or economically divisive, others can take steps to mobilize individuals around the topic in question. The advocacy of the brand is clearly not a show off. It could be possible because, since it is explicitly aligned with their fundamental beliefs, certain institutions are active in brand advocacy. Yet at the same moment, it is obvious that out of this advertising lobbying, brands get lucrative profits. Nike 's plan to highlight Colin Kaepernick in recent times for the company's iconic "do it" campaign's 30th anniversary [6]. The campaign was responsible for some intense customer and marketer debates, especially on social media, but ultimately, it paid off for the business.

1.4 Politics and branding: how values-based decisions affect brands

Advertising activism may actually contribute to the bullying or preaching of an advertising by customers. More precisely, consumers support or disagree with the political viewpoint of the brand. More technically, it will contribute to boycott or a buycott whether buyers oppose or consent with the political position of a company. In the boycott, buyers decline to use such brands' goods as a means of resistance. Buycott clients, on the other side, display a tremendous support for their labels and actively buy their goods. Customers also have at their discretion instruments. Buycott.com is an internet website and software that reads barcodes of the Common Commodity Code (UPC) of goods and shows when a buyer can purchase or deny a commodity or service on the basis of how firm the offering is intertwined with the standards and beliefs of the user. Data shows that 83 percent of customer advocates believe that expressing respect for firms by purchasing from them instead of engaging in boycotts (59 percent) is more relevant than ever. Brand lobbying and values-based tactics have a consolidated influence on brand values, as mentioned previously. As an example, e can remember how during the 2017 taxi strike opposing the Muslim ban of Donald Trump, social media switched on Uber. Here is the outlined example. Consumers were shocked after Trump's immigration policy that Travis Kalanick, who was the then CEO of Uber, did not offer a single comment on this presidential order. As the value proposition of this business is about pointing out some form of inequality or unfairness or oppression, the whole community was awaiting a response from Uber. Consumers launched a #DeleteUber hashtag as a consequence of Uber's decision to keep running their services at New York's JFK airport during the strike. This culminated in the Uber software being removed by more than 200,000 users. In the other side, Lyft ultimately opposed Trump 's policy in this moment of resistance and made a one-million-dollar pledge to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Consumers respected Brand's political

role and, after uninstalling UBER, downloaded Brand's software. In the documents, in terms of App Store Downloads, Lyft crossed UBER.

1.5 Benefits of Political Stance

Showing your audience, you're clued-in and informed

Having a strong political position leads businesses to display integrity and faith. And also, to remind clients that the business is affiliated with the cause. As an example, when the news of Brexit first came out, customers began to demand brands who did fantastic business in Europe to stand out and convey their stance. Large brands who wanted to stay quiet were harshly attacked and lost consumer confidence.

Building rapport and loyalty

If a company takes a political stand, it genuinely expresses corporate meaning and essentially helps create partnerships and confidence in the eyes of customers. In comparison, interest in brand political advocacy has a favourable influence on customer buying behavior. Since the customer will identify their beliefs with the brands, it is likely [7]. How strong this association is, it should not be underestimated, provides customers with an emotional component to help the company. This relational entanglement goes well beyond the consistency or price of goods.

The Patagonia line of apparel can be listed as a notable example. Apart from promotions aimed at the hiking, skiing and surfing communities, the firm offers natural outdoor apparel but does not do a lot of conventional ads. Alex Weller, European Marketing Director of Patagonia, clarified that Patagonia's campaign is mainly triggered by creating a community focused on the ideals it shares with its communities and an enduring bond that can be accomplished with conventional ads.

Social Activism Essence:

It should be mentioned that, as long as the company cares deeply regarding social problems, brand social advocacy can be seen as a PR and marketing tactic [8]. Today's customers are widely perceived that if the company supports a justification clearly to get PR, they can quickly find that the brand is attempting to take advantage of the circumstance. Starbucks ran a "Run Together" advertisement in 2015, risking public consequences. Since the killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, two unarmed black males, the purpose of the movement was to instil dialogue on race.

Starbucks announced that their baristas would write # race together on their cups in order to attract media recognition and engage customers in a race relations debate. After this announcement, several social media clients argued that Starbucks' advertisement was insincere and opportunistic. How does Starbucks expect their baristas to hold a substantive race discussion when they were occupied servicing a line of waiting clients?

In October 2018, Ben and Jerry's ice cream company released a new flavor named "Pecan Resist" and announced that they will also pledge \$100,000 lump sum for numerous social causes to encourage nonviolent resistance against regressive Trump policies.

II. Author's Review

Hollenbeck et al. [9], The goal of this analysis is to analyse the present anti-brand social movement by analyzing on the Internet the culture of consumer activists. For in-depth study, they described three anti-brand websites: anti-Wal-Mart, anti-McDonald's and anti-Starbucks. We offered perspectives on the explanations for the creation of online anti-brand communities based on 36 interviews and a two-year analysis of anti-brand communities. They examined the conduct of those sports and presented the technological effects.

Mancha et al. [10], share their views on Brand activism. In this work. They believe that brand activism is defined as a strategy designed to influence consumer citizenship through campaigns initiated and supported by political values. It includes changes to the company’s communication management and social responsibility practices. These changes stem from social movements and contribute to the social production of citizen consumer status.

Raphael et al. [11], studied on Becoming Brands: Celebrity, Activism and Politics. They believe that just understanding the brand from this economic point of view cannot fully capture the influence of the brand. It is easy to forget, at least in history, how brands substantially changed animals and people to declare ownership: the phenomenon of using cattle as a brand to declare livestock as property continues, and people generally view people as a brand as property AND slaves.

Gray et al. [12], Brands Take a Stand for Good: The Effect of Brand Activism on Social Media Engagement. This study explored the impact of brand activism campaign quality on social media participation (especially on Twitter). Tweets from 8 different brands (Nike, Reebok, Under Armour, Puma, Always, Yoplait, Procter & Gamble, and Airbnb) were collected using RStudio and Twitter API, and analyzed based on their association with brand radical movements. A survey was also distributed to collect data on several characteristics of each battle.

Shetty et al. [13], Brand Activism and Millennials. The findings and conclusions of this study also prove that millennials will not hesitate to pay high prices for such active brands because their emotional connection with such brands goes beyond the price logic. Therefore, brand managers must begin to think strategically about activism and carefully navigate their brands in turbulent activities, showing their core brand values and sincerity to the cause they represent.

2.1 Trend Analysis of Brand Activism

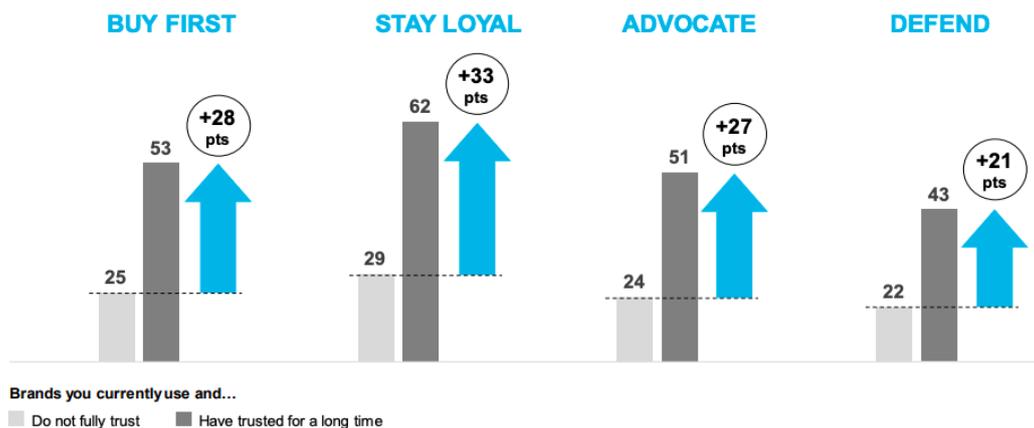


Fig 5: shows that impact of Brand Build Trust, Consumer Reward Them
Source: <https://www.clickz.com/earn-consumer-trust-with-technology/>

The above figure 5 illustrated graphical trend clearly exhibits how consumers value the brand on the basis of trust. Trust is the most crucial aspect of creating a pool of loyal customers and hence better brand loyalty. So, the easy approach to earn the consumer trust is valuing their social and political sentiment. Better the stance on social and political issues better the possibility of winning trust and creating the brand loyalty. The trend gives an insight into the primitive aspects of social and political issues on which brands should take a stance on a regular basis and value the consumer sentiment. They are two kind of consumers; one is of liberal and open-minded kind and they demand brand activism in a greater scale where conservative kind of consumers are rational but not skeptical about brand activism. This mentioned trend analysis reference

vouched to sprout social media platform. This shows liberal consumers have a greater need of brand activism and brands should consider this seriously.

2.2 Global Case Study

Research suggests people recognize products that reflect corporate accountability. Amazingly, 73% of individuals agree that brands ought to do more than simply sell a good or service. Many brands work better to establish socially good tactics for raising money or standing for a valuable cause after discovering this reality. This sort of operation is performed quite behind-the-scenes much of the time, though. As part of a consumer-facing approach [14], this is certainly not integrated. We also seen a number more cases of brands in recent years who advocate behind and utilize current social or political concerns to warn ads. It is certainly a dangerous tactic and it is possible to quote Pepsi as an example. It seems like without mining the impacts, Pepsi definitely delved into a social cause and they really felt the sun. 57% of customers say they are prepared to boycott products that do not hold the same precious ethical values. But this was only an exception. Some companies were socially or morally conscious and it performed very good with those companies.

Yoplait

Yoghurt-brand Yoplait intended to embark on a traditional public discussion in order to reach a fresh or forgotten-about audience. It refers to the degrading awareness provided to mothers of how to be a successful mom, and subsequently criticizing certain mothers who do not comply. The brand agreed to launch the 'Mom On' initiative. It's more about mothers confronting frequent critiques they encounter, such as breastfeeding stigma, returning to college, and even alcohol consumption. Their ads were distinguished from the conventional ones. The advertising did not concentrate on current affairs or any commercial deals, but rather on the issue. These commercials is solid and prospective enough to heart the sentiments of others who are not in favour of the social cause. The competing brands were dominated by this initiative and this initiative became extraordinary. The plan to take a role in the parenting discussion proved worthy for Yoplait, and it helped the company accomplish its objective of engaging with a core audience of all kinds of mothers. The advertising culminated in a 1,461 percent rise in brand awareness, according to Google's report.

Airbnb

A good representation of Airbnb is also there. During the prestigious Super Bowl spot, nine days after American President Donald Trump signed an order to temporarily close America's boundaries for refugees, Airbnb promoted an ad to demonstrate the immediate reaction to the announcement. "The ad called" We Agree "presented a segment of individuals of varying nationalities together with the words:" We affirm that we all belong, no matter who you are, where you come from, who you respect or who you worship. The more amazing the environment is, the more you embrace it.'

This commercial was a phenomenal hit for the company and during the super bowl, it became one of the most successful advertisements. It really helped to strengthen and facilitate the larger positioning of Airbnb on race and diversity concerns. The brand took the hit itself earlier because of the perceived ethnic profiling on its website. That way, the ad helped to demonstrate reassurance about the non-compromising stance of the company on this kind of political issue.

P&G

Examples of brands who really advocate with certain real social and political issues are full of examples. A P&G case study illustrates how constructive it can be to work with actual social and political problems. This brand was obsessed with the dilemma of identity and sexuality. They have come under the spotlight for an understandable cause. The gender roles were tossed out by several brands to reflect their sceptically progressive image. One of them was P&G as well. They initiated a campaign named 'Campaign Like a

Child.' This was used to foster the true nature of respecting women. Through 'We See Fair' a movement fabricated to tackle gender inequality and move for equity for everyone, they brought this movement one step further.

Boys and girls defying gender roles were seen in the multi-channel advertisement, which was supported on social networking platforms as well as TV. The timing was directly important. Particularly after the U.S. general election, it was encouraged as arguments over gender and gender equity became unacceptable for many. The study says that 45 percent of managers and a third of its board are women, in addition to supporting the problem. The prompt role of P&G on gender equity inside the workforce has continued to increase the overall appeal of the company.

2.3 Indian Case Study

Chipotle started collaborating with several producers in an attempt to enhance their meat efficiency, free of antibiotics. The aim was to guarantee the maximum quality food. They advertised a 'Back to the Start' ad. The social cause of over-industrialization was sponsored. When Chipotle revealed, though, that it might ease up its non-antibiotic ban, it generated a lot of social media noise. Being a company activist, Chipotle withdrew the proposal rapidly. To preserve integrity.

One would have seen Dove's true drawings of perfection. To highlight the true attractiveness of women, the commercial was meaningfully marketed. Every woman on the world was made to feel sexy and it was rightly battling against the standards of cliché appearance that contributed to the destruction of young women's self-esteem. The brand has been influential in inspiring every woman to enter its fight against these ideals of attractiveness. Dove has effectively communicated its brand message that says Dove brings out the natural beauty inside you without even advertising its commodity.

Lifebuoy urged the battle against infant mortality due to diarrhoea through its "Support an Infant to Hit 5" initiative by encouraging safe hand washing habits in Indian villages. They also actively partnered with UNICEF, PSI, to target school children and new mothers to increase consciousness of wellbeing and well-being. The movement has contributed to a shift in the practise of more than 130 million people washing their hands worldwide. Among these, 47 million are Indian.

Mahindra & Mahindra have also gained by marketing advocacy from their brand value. They initiated a massive crowd-funded initiative that was powered exclusively online. The goal of this campaign was to improve the standard of life of farmers in India. They teamed up with a digital agency named Flying Cursor and began encouraging a donation of up to 1 CR to #SeedTheRise and the organization itself agreed to add additional crores. In terms of the brand's reputation, this initiative was impressive.

Via its 'Jaago Re' "version 2.0 set, Tata Tea mocks armchair activism. This movement started to captivate Indians to rise up against horrible events such as rapes and suicide by farmers. It also gave the brand remarkable popularity.

III. Research Methodology

This paper also explores the general perception of customers on this technique of promotion of brand and enhancing the marketing trends. This analysis is limited in the scope of perpetual knowledge of the marketing trends on the behalf of the few suggestive factors. This paper performs short analysis for enhancing the general perception of the Brand Activism, political activism.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection is really essential for any kind of research. So, to construct any research, concrete and aptly inferential right data collection strategy is needful. The research was primarily conducted to gain the insight about brand activism concepts and the impact of brand activism in consumer buying behavior. This was an initiation towards the analytical framework of brand activism. Taking the global giants into consideration the research focus was basically targeted for Indian brands. So, to understand the impact of brand activism on consumer buying Indian people were aimed. Random stratified sampling was taken into consideration as it reduces the bias and increases the variance, which is really essential to infer in a more precise manner. We constructed a geographical based start to cover maximum variance in perception. In the primary research email surveys were being sent to 100 different people across the nation. Out of 100, we received 91 surveys filled. Apart from the primary research, secondary research was also being conducted. Some existing credential research papers and some online data archives were being accessed to make the research firm and inferential.

3.2 Hypothesis Design

After the humongous task of primary data collection focus shifted to hypothesis design and implication of right methodology. Null and alternative hypothesis was being framed on the basis of the objective of the research. Then the selection of appropriate technique or testing took place. As per the current research factor analysis was the most appropriate test to be implemented. Some descriptive statistical tests were also being included in our research to know some valuable insights of data to observe the bias and variance within the data. Normality tests were conducted to understand whether data was skewed or not. IBM A-MoS software was being used to conduct all those statistical tests. Further the hypothesis being accepted or rejected on the basis of the derived p value.

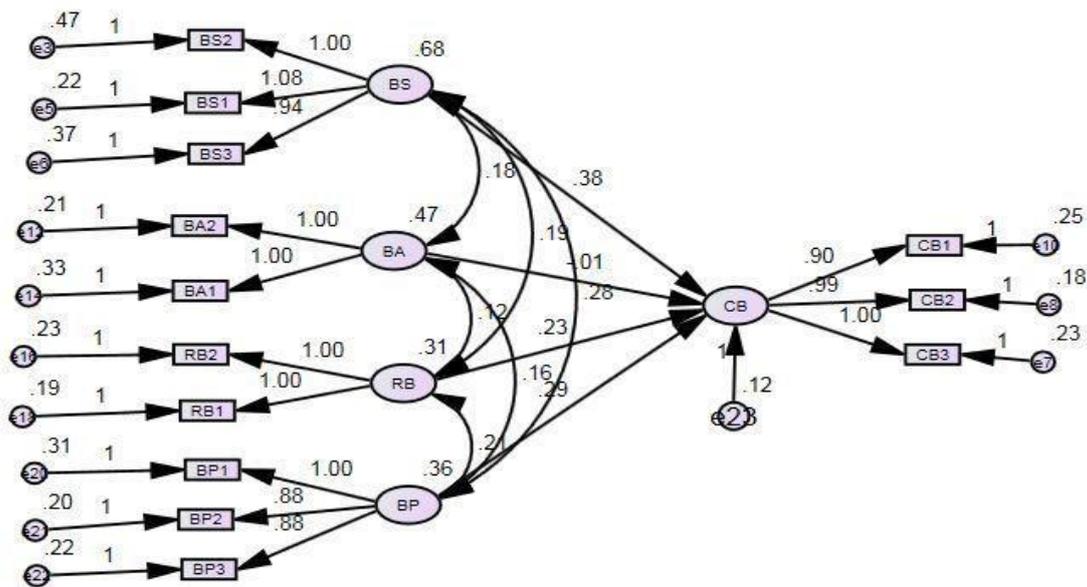
3.3 Analysis

Consumer Behavior of Brand Buying: (Y) – CB, Brand Social Activism: (X1) – BS, Brand Affordability (X2)- BA

Referral Brand Marketing: (X3) – RB, Brand Political Activism (X4)- BP

Number of distinct sample moments:	91
Number of distinct parameters to be estimated:	34
Degrees of freedom (91 - 34):	57

Minimum was achieved
Chi-square = 127.707
Degrees of freedom = 57
Probability level = .000



As the above relation presented the impact on Consumer behavior with affecting factors as discussed above through SEM in A-MoS.

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
CB	<---	BS	0.382	0.041	9.265	***
CB	<---	BA	-0.007	0.039	-0.173	0.863
CB	<---	RB	0.225	0.066	3.409	***
CB	<---	BP	0.289	0.071	4.093	***

3.4 Interpretation

Chi-square is generally defined as badness of fit instead of goodness of fit index. The smaller value of chi square depicts a good fit. Apart from chi square CFI, MNFI are known as goodness of fit. The higher values of these factors signify a better fit. Along with this Wald test offers insight about the variation in chi square value and signifies the extent of deterioration in model fit when free values are fixed. On the other hand, Lagrange Multiplier defines how variation in chi square improves the model fit if fixed parameters are transformed into free parameters. The modification of the model is illustrated as a form of adjustments. These adjustments are done by transforming free parameters into fixed or fixing the free parameters. Model consideration in SEM is similar to the planned comparisons in ANOVA and modification of model can be compared to the post hoc comparisons of ANOVA. There is a slightest possibility of occurrence of Type I error and trigger to a condition where specific characteristics are generalized to a population. After determining the goodness of fit of the model next concern is to dive into the nuances of the specific characteristics of the fit. The ratio of every concerned parameter signifying to its standard error which is distributed as a z statistic and is significant at the 0.05 level if its value exceeds 1.96. The parameters which are not standardized can only be determined with the help of reference variables. The evaluation of the significance tests signify the absolute magnitude of path coefficients and it also illustrates aspects of sample size and multicollinearity aspects among the variables. The path coefficients which are standardized and having a value less than .10 depicts a lesser effect, whereas values revolving around .30 shows a medium effect and values having a value greater than .50 depicts a large impact or effect. One of the primary aspects of the model evaluation is critical ratio. For a specific path coefficient, the conducted t test crafted Critical Ratio must be ≥ 1.96 to prove its significance. We should also observe keenly on Standard Errors. This is a really crucial and significant indicator. Whole focus should be concentrated on improving the goodness of

fit of the model. From the significant p value analysis of the model it can be stated that Brand Social Activism and Brand Political Activism along with Brand Referral Marketing has significant impact on consumer buying behavior. Even the result exhibits that consumers really value these aspects over affordability when all the aspects are taken into consideration. Results of the research model itself goes parallel with the various previous researches where the results concluded that in the recent trend of globalization brands must consider the brand and social activism through a reliable approach to make their products sustainable and consumer friendly. Researches also illustrated that consumer buying behavior is largely influenced by a brand's stance on social and political causes. Empirical findings of this specific research also find the same. Along with corporate social responsibility funds, brands must evaluate and comprehend the consumer mindset and psychology and value their sentiments. As in the age of active social media the consumers are prominently supporting social and political causes and hence, they want their brand also make their stance very clear which must be supporting the consumer value.

IV. Conclusion

In the age of social media people are connected globally. They value each other's sentiment and stand for their own ethics. They express their stand for every social and political cause and determine to make their stance prominent. So, one word the consumers are caring for their own value and ethics. They also want their preferred brand to take the same stance as they do and at the same time the brand should actively participate in social and political causes. As consumers become more engrossed in campaigning for socio-political change, they want to see the giant brands take a stand and support something greater than corporate profits. As a matter of fact, consumers are vouching more loyalty to brands that go beyond providing them with just a product or service and support for the same values and beliefs they hold. In this research paper numerous examples are being cited for reference. The empirical analysis of the paper also exhibits the same. Brands are realizing these very essences of Brand Activism concept and participating evidently in the social and political causes to value their customer sentiments.

4.1 Future Scope of Research

For this research purpose sample size was small but adequate in nature. But in future there is a wide scope of research on the same subject with a larger sample size. For the convenience of this research this study is constrained to Indian brands but empirical research can be done by researchers on a global scale. For the ease of research, the variables or factors selected for the research model analysis where as in future research models more ingrained factors could be included. The aspect of social media sentiments could be merged into future research and analysis of marketing trends.

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