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How Brand Activism Influences Consumer Perception of The Celebrities, Companies, and Advertisements That Contain Controversial Content

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ABSTRACT

Brand activism occurs when a brand shows their political views in their commercials and advertisements. My thesis aims to determine how consumers respond to companies practicing brand activism, and advertisements that contain the companies' stance on controversial social, and political topics, and celebrities endorsing the advertisements. Through a review of existing literature on brand activism and empirical tests of my hypotheses, I demonstrate that consumers' brand preference influences their responses to brand activism practices. More specifically, consumers brand preferences towards a company will favorably influence consumers' responses to the company supporting social issues. Furthermore, consumers who have a positive opinion towards a company or a higher brand preference will respond more favorably to controversial advertisements that the company produces. This same concept can be applied to influencers used in the advertisements. For instance, consumers who have a brand preference for the celebrity or influencer are likely to respond more favorably to the influencer or celebrity supporting the brand's stance on controversial or social issues. However, there was no significant evidence of consumers' political ideology affecting their brand preference. When looking at purchase intention, consumers who have a stronger brand preference are likely to purchase the products shown in the controversial advertisements.

Keywords:

Brand Preference, Purchase Intention, Controversial Advertisements, Brand Activism, Political Ideology

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 2017, Pepsi produced an advertisement featuring Kendall Jenner (Victor, 2017). The advertisement begins showing protestors on the streets while Kendall is modeling in a campaign (Bernard, 2017). Kendall then sees and joins the protestors, after removing the makeup she had on for the photoshoot (Bernard, 2017). Law enforcement officers are shown stopping the protest and Kendall hands an officer a Pepsi (Bernard, 2017). This leads to the officer getting along with the protestors (Bernard, 2017). This advertisement was released amidst a vast amount of police brutality claims primarily among members of the African American community (Victor, 2017). Therefore, people were offended because the advertisement showed a white woman ending police brutality with a soft drink and interpreted this as making light of a serious social issue (Victor, 2017).

The Pepsi advertisement came to my attention after watching a reality show starring Kendall Jenner and hearing her perspective on the issue and accounts of the public backlash of the event. It peaked my interest after hearing the various accounts of issues with the advertisement and Kendall herself. I am personally still a fan of Kendall after watching the advertisement, but I was curious if other people felt the same way. I wondered if people who had political views in line with supporting Black Lives Matter or Defunding the Police would view the advertisement. On one hand, Pepsi was supporting these causes, so I wondered if people who agree with them would support them and if these beliefs would translate to their opinion of Kendall. Would avid Pepsi fans who disagree with the views of Pepsi put that aside and still

purchase Pepsi products? I wondered if these people would switch their beverage preference to Coca-Cola, or if Kendall Jenner fans would move on to supporting other influencers.

Another similar case of a mainstream brand promoting a social issue is Disney promoting the LGBTQ+ community on their Disney+ show, *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*. This study focuses on one promotional trailer for the show that came out in 2019. The trailer begins with the two boys having a conversation about dancing (Kerns, 2019). This leads to one boy, Carlos, asking the other, Seb, to attend the homecoming dance as his date (Kerns, 2019). This leads to Seb saying yes to attend the dance with Carlos (Kerns, 2019). Some parents were not happy with Disney showing this content to their children (Spence, 2022). Some reports showed Disney pushing this content in many different television shows and movies (Spence, 2022).

I was a fan of the original *High School Musical* movies, so I began watching the new show *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*. When watching this show and following the corresponding Disney social media account for the show, I came across the advertisement and was stunned that Disney showed LGBTQ+ couples on their television show. This was like nothing I had ever seen on a Disney show and it intrigued me to see how parents of children were reacting to this content. I was curious if they thought the content was too advanced or non-appropriate. When thinking of these views, I also considered if the political ideology of the parents had anything to do with their opinion of this advertisement.

Once I came upon these examples and created these studies and hypotheses based on the concept of brand activism and the effects of brand preference, I noticed that many cases among companies and influencers supporting advertisements perceived as controversial were political in

some way. This led to the question of whether or not the political ideology of the consumer

impacts the brand preference and opinion of the controversial advertisements.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

Brand Activism

Brand activism is when a brand promotes sociopolitical issues and values, while incorporating these acts into their promotional content (Mirzaei, Wilkie, & Siuki, 2022; Vredenburg, Kapitan, Kemper, & Spry, 2020). Brand activism must appear to be authentic and genuine in the court of public opinion or the public may feel that the brand is using their brand activism only for profits, whether it is a for profit or non-profit organization (Mirzaei, Wilkie, & Siuki, 2022; Vredenburg, Kapitan, Kemper, & Spry, 2020). Brand equity can determine how much and in what way brands take part in brand activism (Ahmad, Guzman, & Kidwell, 2022). Brands that are more well known can use funds and brands less well known should put in more personal work to the cause (Ahmad, Guzman, & Kidwell, 2022). Brands should align their activism efforts with their brand image so that they do not deter their current customers away from the brand (Ahmad, Guzman, & Kidwell, 2022; Hong & Li, 2021).

Some examples of brand activism topics include racism, sexism, sexual harassment, the effects of social media, climate change, gun control, LGBTQ+ rights, and the Black Lives Matter movement. Nike had a campaign titled "For Once, Don't Do It" to support the Black Lives Matter Movement and attempted to give the public suggestions on how to speak up if they see racism occurring (Mirzaei, Wilki, & Siuki, 2022; Cohen, 2020). This campaign was well received by the majority of viewers; however, some viewers questioned the authenticity of the campaign (Nike's "For Once, Don't Do It" Rallies Strong Support, But Not Without Controversy, 2020). Another campaign that illustrates the concept of brand activism is Always' #LikeAGirl

campaign (Lee & Yoon, 2020). The main idea of the campaign is to improve female self-esteem (Lee & Yoon, 2020). This campaign had diminishing effects that showed the campaign doing better in certain years during the time period it was in use, but the user-generated aspects of the campaign were successful in increasing engagement (Lee & Yoon, 2020).

In terms of consumer reaction to brand activism, brands must be authentic in their aid of causes and the values they support because lack of authenticity can result in strong consumer backlash (Mirzaei, Wilkie, & Siuki, 2022; Vredenburg, Kapitan, Kemper, & Spry, 2020). Many people who disagree with a brand may stop purchasing products from the brand and choose competing brands instead (Pöyry & Laaksonen, 2022; Jungblut & Johnen, 2021; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).

This thesis will focus more on the brand loyalty aspect of brand activism. This is important to the Public Perception of Pepsi and Kendall Jenner In Response To The 2017 Campaign Depicting BLM Movement study because I want to determine if brand loyalty affects consumers perception of who is at fault for controversial advertisements. For the Public Perception of Disney Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community on Their Streaming Platform study, I want to determine if people's brand loyalty to Disney affects who they blame for the controversial advertisement.

Brand Preference

Brand Preference is consumers' feelings or attitude about a brand that influence the consumers' willingness to choose this brand over another (Padberg, Walker, & Kepner, 1967). People typically feel more comfortable when they are using brands with similar values to their own values (Ross, 1971; Fiedler, Blaisdell, & Warrington, 1952). Consumers are more likely to

choose brands that they feel align with their ideal view of themselves and their actual view of themselves (Ross, 1971; Levy, 1959). Some studies show that brand preference links the initial information the consumer gains with the decision the consumer makes (Bagozzi, 1983; Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani, & Fan, 2016).

 It is also important for brands to pay attention to the consumer's preference of their brand because it can influence customer loyalty (Padberg, Walker, & Kepner, 1967). It has been proven that brand preference has a positive relationship with consumers being loyal to a product (Cuong D. T., 2020). Brand research is proven to be a prediction on the level of loyalty a consumer feels towards a brand (Cuong D. T., 2020; Mousavi, Naami, & Iranpour, 2018; Chinomona, Mahlangu, & Pooe, 2012; Tolba, 2011). Brand Loyalty is known in the marketing field to appear when consumers choose a brand for bias reasons and repeat their purchases despite marketing efforts from competing brands (Fournier & Yao, 1997; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Wang, Wu, Lin & Wang, 2011). Brand loyalty can be illustrated by the number of times a consumer returns to a store or purchases products (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996). Customers who experience brand loyalty would not stop purchasing your products as quickly as those who are not loyal (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996). If there was a drastic change in price or product, the consumer who is loyal would need that change to be higher than someone who is not loyal to the brand (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996). Service failure can actually build loyal customer bases and strengthen an already loyal relationship if the consumer feels the brand handles the situation in a suitable manner; the opposite to this idea also applies (Wang, Wu, Lin, & Wang, 2011).

Brand loyalty can be strengthened when companies take accountability when they mess up in the court of public opinion; some definitions of brand loyalty mention that it is a bias look

at a brand (Fournier & Yao, 1997; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Wang, Wu, Lin & Wang, 2011). If

a consumer already likes a brand and the brand does a good job of handling the situation in the

mind of the consumer, the consumer may become even more loyal to the brand and not see

anything wrong with the brand's actions (Wang, Wu, Lin, & Wang, 2011). Furthermore, if the

consumer is loyal to the brand, they may not be looking at the brand in the same critical light that

they would other brands because they have a bias preference for the brand (Jacoby & Chestnut,

1978).

I predict that brand loyalty will have an influence on the consumer perception of brands

who support different political causes or movements. Brand loyalty may cause the consumer to

feel that the brand or influencer they are loyal to is not at fault for the advertisement. People that

like a particular influencer or model may want to buy the same products as her, but people who

dislike her may not want to buy them because they may feel she is unrelatable. In contrast,

people who are loyal consumers may identify and feel loyal to a brand and feel that the brand is

not at fault for the advertisement.

Accordingly, I hypothesize:

> H1a: Consumers who exhibit a greater preference for a brand, as opposed to
>
> those with lesser affinity, are likely to respond more favorably to the brand
>
> engaging with controversial social issues in advertisements.

Prior work suggests that advertisements can be proven effective or ineffective based on

the attitude the consumer has towards the brand loyalty or advertisement itself (Alalwan, 2018;

Ayanwale, Alimi, & Ayanbimipe, 2005; Zhao, Butt, Murad, Mirza, & Al-Faryan, 2022). People

find advertisements that are more relatable to their lifestyles to be more appealing and attractive

(Fennis & Stroebe, 2020; Zhao, Butt, Murad, Mirza, & Al-Faryan, 2022). When people see celebrities that they like endorsing a product, they are more prone to paying attention to an advertisement and potentially purchasing the product (Zhao, Butt, Murad, Mirza, & Al-Faryan, 2022; Osei- Frimpong, Donkor, & Owusu – Frimpong, 2019; Yang, 2018; Zhang, Jeong, Olson, & Evans, 2020).

Accordingly, I hypothesize:

> H1b: Consumers who exhibit a greater preference for a brand, as opposed to those with lesser affinity, are likely to respond more favorably to the brand's advertisements addressing controversial social issues.
>
> H1c: Consumers who demonstrate a stronger preference for a brand, compared to those with lesser affinity, are likely to respond more favorably to the celebrity endorsing the brand's stance on controversial social issues in the advertisement.

Next, I look at the effects of brand preference and purchase intention. Some prior work suggests that the value consumers place on a product is determined by brand preference and purchase intention (Cuong D. T., 2020; Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003; Muzakir & Damrus, 2018; Calvo-Porral & Mangin, 2017; Hu, 2011). Other work shows that brand preference and the opinions consumers have about the brand can determine whether or not the consumer is going to go through with a purchase of the product (Cuong D. T., 2020; Pool, Arisian, Abareshi, & Mahyari, 2018; Emor & Pangemann, 2015).

Accordingly, I hypothesize:

H1d: Consumers with a stronger brand preference, compared to those with lower

affinity, are more inclined to buy products from brands engaged in brand

activism.

I will address one more factor in this thesis. I will also examine the political ideology of the consumer or individual customer. Brand activism includes many different political stances that brands are taking (Mwencha & Njuguna, 2023). One example of brand activism for a political movement was brands supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement (Mwencha & Njuguna, 2023). Many brands supported this movement by releasing statements on social media platforms, like Facebook (Lerman, 2020; Mwencha & Njuguna, 2023). Google even changed their Google Maps feature to support new additions to maps encouraged by BLM movement leaders (Lerman, 2020; Mwencha & Njuguna, 2023). The LGBTQ+ community is another political topic that many brands support, however the LGBTQ+ community does not always agree with the image companies promote and the public does not always agree with LBTGQ+ couples being shown (Shepard, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2021; Aaker, 1997). This being said, the Pepsi commercial I am showing participants references the Black Lives Matter Movement (Victor, 2017). Since there are political references in the advertisement, it leads to a study on consumer's political ideology.

Consumers' Political Ideology and Consumption Decisions

Political ideology in the field of consumer behavior refers to the values a consumer has and who they would have political affiliations with (Crockett & Wallendorf, 2004; Dawson, 2001).

Political Ideology has been actively studied in the field of marketing. When looking at the African American population and how their class can affect their political ideology and purchase habits, people consume goods that support their political ideology whether that be their race, class, or gender (Crockett & Wallendorf, 2004). Consumers who are more conservative are likely to complain less than liberal consumers when it comes to having to report issues with government organizations (Jung, Garbarino, Briley, & Wyhausen, 2017). The reasoning that Jung, Garbarino, Briley, and Wyhausen (2017) found for conservatives being less likely to complain is that they have a larger tendency to support the idea of system justification. However, researchers should note that people may not always view political issues in alignment with their party (Wyer, et al., 1991; Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe, 2015). In terms of purchasing habits, liberal individuals typically purchase more musical performance and a variety of hobby products, but less patriotic products (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Rogers and Jost, 2022).

Some common characteristics can be shown in people depending on their political ideology (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022). It has been proven that people who are more conservative respond to people they see as a threat in a negative way; This means that they are less accepting of people and situations they are not familiar with (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Brown, Fincher, & Walasek, 2016). Conservative individuals tend to respect authority and are more loyal to groups that they feel are relatable (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Haidt & Graham, 2007). People who identify themselves as more liberal value being inclusive and fair to all groups of people even if they do not necessarily belong to the group (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Haidt & Graham, 2007). Conservatives are more likely to pay attention to phrasing if it is written in a negative tone and use stereotypes when describing things, in comparison to more liberal consumers (Adval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Carraro, Castelli, & Macchiella, 2011; Deppe, et. al., 2015).

Due to the purchase habits of consumers when it comes to political ideology, I propose that political ideology will jointly influence consumers' reaction to brand activism, along with brand preference. As predicted in the first set of hypotheses, I suggest that there will be a strong main effect of brand preference on consumer perceptions towards a brand, its advertisement, and celebrities endorsing the brand's stance on sensitive social issues. I further predict that there will be a moderating role of consumers' political ideology on the relationship between brand preference and consumer responses toward the brand, its advertisement, and the celebrities involved in the advertisements. Earlier I addressed that more conservative individuals tend to value things that they are familiar with and dislike change (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Brown, Fincher, & Walasek, 2016). More liberal individuals are open to trying new things and supporting groups of people that are different (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Rogers and Jost, 2022). Therefore, one can infer that conservative individuals may have a harder time accepting controversial advertisements that show situations they are not familiar with in comparison to the liberal individuals that are more comfortable with seeing new things (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Brown, Fincher, & Walasek, 2016; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Rogers and Jost, 2022).

For instance, conservative individuals may not be familiar with LGBTQ+ families because conservatives tend to be more traditional and would therefore be more uncomfortable with the non-familiar family unit being shown (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Brown, Fincher, & Walasek, 2016; Shepard, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2021; Aaker, 1997). When looking at an advertisement based on a political standpoint, liberal individuals may be more open to hearing the advertisement and seeing the viewpoint because liberal individuals tend to be more accepting of new ideas (Adaval & Wyer Jr., 2022; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Rogers and Jost, 2022).

Accordingly, I hypothesize:

> H2a: The positive effect of brand preference on consumer responses to brand activism is expected to be more pronounced among liberal consumers in comparison to conservative consumers.

> H2b: The positive effect of brand preference on consumer responses to the brand's preference on consumer responses to the brand's advertisement is expected to be more pronounced among liberal consumers in comparison to conservative consumers.

> H2c: The positive effect of brand preference on consumer responses to the brand's preference on consumer responses to the celebrity is expected to be more pronounced among liberal consumers in comparison to conservative consumers.

Next, I will examine the effects of purchase intention and political ideology. There was not a lot of literature that explored the effects of purchase intention and political ideology. It is important to note that consumers make their product purchases based on their political views in some cases (Duman & Ozgen, 2017; Sandiki & Ekici, 2008). Some consumers will boycott or stop using certain products because they disagree with the stance the company who produces the product takes (Duman & Ozgen, 2017; Sandiki & Ekici, 2008;Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005; Stolle & Hooghe, 2003).

Accordingly I hypothesize:

> H2d: The positive effect of brand preference on purchase intention for the brand's products is expected to be more pronounced among liberal consumers in comparison to conservative consumers.

In the following studies, I will examine the purchase intention of the consumer in reference to the products being sold in the controversial advertisements, as well as other products that the celebrities used in the advertisements endorse. Purchase intention will be the main dependent variable in the study and be used to determine the reason consumers either will or will not purchase the products shown in the advertisements.

Chapter 3

**Study 1: Public Perception of Pepsi and Kendall Jenner In Response To The 2017
Campaign Depicting BLM Movement**

The goal of Study 1 is to provide evidence supporting all eight hypotheses. I predict that

consumers who are currently fans of a brand are more apt to respond positively to the brand that

practices brand activism because they already like the brand (H1a). I further predict that

consumers who already like a brand are going to be more positive about advertisements that the

brand creates supporting political or social causes (H1b). When looking at the celebrities and

influencers that could take part in these advertisements, I also predict that people who are already

fans of the celebrity will respond more positively to the celebrity endorsing a brand and

participating in brand activism (H1c). Considering the brand preference regarding the company

and the influencer, I took it one step further to study the purchase intention of the consumers who

have a high brand preference. Therefore, I also predict that consumers who demonstrate a

stronger preference for a brand are likely to purchase the product brands promote in

advertisements that could be seen as controversial (H1d).

When looking at how political ideology affects purchase intention, I predict that liberal

consumers will be more supportive of brand activism than conservative consumers considering

the differing belief systems of these consumers (H2a). Since I am testing if liberal consumers

react more positively to brand activism than conservative consumers, I also predict that they will

react more favorably towards advertisements showing brand activism (H2b). Since I am

considering the brand of the company and the reactions of the consumer based on political

ideology, I also consider the brand of the influencer. Therefore, I predict that liberal consumers

will be more supportive of influencers who are present in advertisements promoting brand

activism (H2c). When looking at how political ideology affects purchase intention, I predict that liberal consumers will be more likely to purchase products from brands who practice brand activism (H2d).

Methods and Procedure

Participants and Design

Two hundred and forty-nine individuals recruited from Cloud Research participated in this study (46.6% female, 53% male, .4% non-binary, 0% prefer not to say; M_{age}= 39.33); individuals living in the United States were eligible to participate. As a contextual framework for this study, the recent Pepsi commercial featuring Kendall Jenner was adopted, which gained controversy due to its advertisement on Black Lives Matter.

Methods and Procedure

In the beginning of the survey, participants rated their liking for the brand, Pepsi, using 4 items (a=.95; e.g., "I like Pepsi."; see Appendix A for the collection of measurement items used in the two studies). This measure served as one of the independent variables in the main analysis.

Subsequently, participants were presented with a brief scenario wherein a 25-year-old woman named Jane viewed Kendall Jenner's Pepsi advertisement (see Appendix B for the scenarios adopted in the two studies), along with the actual advertisement video linked below the scenario. In this study, a projective technique was adopted wherein participants read about someone else's experience in a scenario and provided responses regarding what the person within the scenario would feel and think about the content of the scenario, such indirect questioning methods are recognized for their ability elicit

participants' genuine thoughts about the content while minimizing social desirability bias

in self-report measures (Fisher, 1993). This bias often stems from respondents'

inclination to avoid embarrassment and present themselves in a favorable light to others

(Fisher, 1993; Bergen & Labonte, 2020; Krumpal, 2011). People are more likely to

respond using social desirability bias when they find the topic they see as controversial

(Bergen & Labonte, 2020; Grimm, 2010).

After watching the video, participants reported their perceptions of how Jane

would perceive the brand (four items, α=.79; e.g., "Jane might have thought that Pepsi is

supportive of the Black Lives Matter Movement and a great way to raise awareness for

this sensitive topic."), its advertisement (four items, α=.73; e.g., "Jane might have thought

that this advertisement is a great way to raise awareness for the Black Lives Matter

through brand campaigns."), and the celebrity, Kendall Jenner, who starred in the

advertisement (seven items, α=.89; "Jane might have thought that Kendall Jenner is tone-

deaf to the struggles of real Black Lives Matter Protestors."). All responses were

collected on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "Strongly Disagree" and 7

representing "Strongly Agree."

I included measures that aim to capture the respondents' opinions about the brand

and the activism that the brand practices. With this question, I am directly asking the

participants their opinion on the brand instead of using indirect questioning. Participants

were asked to express their thoughts regarding a Pepsi advertisement conveying its stance

on the controversial social issues, Black Lives Matter, using 4 items (α=.90; e.g., "Pepsi

had good intentions and should not be looked down on because they couldn't have known

the advertisement was offensive."). Again, responses were collected on a 7-point Likert

scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree." Participants then indicated their purchase intention for Pepsi products. To this end, a brief shopping scenario was presented wherein participants were about to purchase soft drinks at a supermarket and encountered Pepsi products. Participants rated their likelihood of purchasing Pepsi on this shopping trip using these three items (α=.98; e.g., "How likely are you to purchase Pepsi products?").

Next, participants reported their political ideology using seven items adapted from Jung et al. (2017). Participants were presented with seven controversial social, political, and racial issues (e.g., opinion on immigration) and asked to select one option that best reflected their opinion among three choices (e.g., "Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents," "Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing, and health care," "Don't know/ refuse to answer.") (Jung, Garbarino, Briley, & Wyhausen, 2017). One option reflected a politically liberal view, another response had a conservative view, and the third a neutral view. For the main analysis, all responses reflecting a liberal view on each item were coded as +1, neutral as 0, and conservative as -1. A composite measure of the political ideology was then created for each participant by summing all seven scores. Thus, a higher score on this measure indicated a more liberal political orientation for each participant. Finally, participants provided background information including age and gender.

Results and Discussion

Consumer attitudes toward brand activism (Indirect questioning).

First, I analyzed participants' perceptions of how Jane would have viewed Pepsi after watching the advertisement on Black Lives Matter, which aimed to test H1a and H2a. To investigate H1a, which posits the main effect of brand preference on consumer responses to brand activism, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the independent variable, while participants' attitudes towards Pepsi's brand activism were the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on participants' attitudes towards Pepsi's brand activism (β=-.18, t(247) = 3.31, p=.001). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand tend to perceive its activism more favorably.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference and individuals' political orientation on consumer responses to brand activism (H2a), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes towards brand activism were regressed onto brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However, contrary to my H2a, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between brand preference and political ideology on consumer responses to brand activism (β=.00, t(245)=.00, p=.99). Thus, H2a was not supported in this study. Additionally, there was a significant main effect of political ideology (β=.05, t(245) = 2.17, p<.05), signifying that politically liberal consumers were more likely to exhibit a favorable response to the brand, Pepsi, compared to conservative consumers.

Consumer attitudes towards advertisements involving sensitive, controversial social issues (indirect questioning).

First, I analyzed participants' perceptions of how Jane would have viewed Pepsi after watching the advertisement on Black Lives Matter, which aimed to test H1b and H2b. To

investigate H1b, which posits the main effect consumers who exhibit a greater preference for a brand, as opposed to those with lesser affinity, are likely to respond more favorably to advertisements addressing controversial social issues. Brand likeability served as the independent variable, while participant's attitude, or their interpretation of Jane's attitude, towards the advertisement is the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect on the consumer's attitude towards the advertisement (β= -.22, t(247)= -4.39, p< .001). This finding suggests that consumers who are fans of the Pepsi brand tend to respond more favorably towards Pepsi after seeing the advertisement.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference on consumer responses to brand activism and look to see if it is expected to be more pronounced among liberal consumers in comparison to conservative consumers (H2b), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes towards brand activism were regressed onto brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However, contrary to my H2b, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between ad likeability and political ideology on consumer responses to ad likeability (β= .001, t(249)= .06, p=.95). Thus, H2s was not supported in this study.

Consumer attitudes towards celebrities endorsing controversial advertisements (Indirect questioning).

First, I analyzed participants' perceptions of how Jane would have viewed Kendall Jenner after watching the advertisement on Black Lives Matter, which aimed to test H1c and H2c. To investigate H1c, which posits the main effect of celebrity brand preference on consumer responses to the influencer's activism, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand or influencer preference served as the independent variable, while participants' attitudes towards Kendall's

brand activism was the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on participants' attitudes towards Kendall's brand activism (β= -.172, t(247)= -3.37, p<.001). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater affinity for Kendall's brand tend to perceive its activism more favorably.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference and individuals' political orientation on consumer responses to brand activism (H2c), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes toward brand activism were regressed onto brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However, contrary to my H2c, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between brand preference and political ideology on consumer responses to brand activism (β= .008, t(245)=.57, p= 0.58). Thus H2a, was not supported in this study.

Consumer's opinions on brand activism (Direct questioning).

First, I analyzed participants' perceptions of who was at fault for the advertisement after watching the advertisement on Black Lives Matter, which aimed to test H1a and H2a using direct questioning. To investigate H1a, which posits the main effect consumers who exhibit a greater preference for a brand, as opposed to those with lesser affinity, are likely to respond more favorably to the brand practicing activism, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the independent variable, while participants' opinion about the brand practicing activism was the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on participants' attitudes towards the advertisement (β=.29, t(247)= 5.41, p<.001). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater brand preference will have a more positive opinion about the advertisement.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference and individuals' political orientation on consumer responses to brand activism (H2a), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes towards brand activism were regressed onto brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However, contrary to my H2b, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between brand activism and political ideology on consumer responses to ad likeability (β= -.0047, t(245)= -.34, p=.73). Thus, H2b was not supported in this study.

Consumers' purchase intention towards the product of the brand that directly engaged in activism (Direct Questioning).

First, I analyzed participants' perceptions of who was at fault for the advertisement after watching the advertisement on Black Lives Matter, which aimed to test H1d and H2d. To investigate H2d, which posits the main effect consumers who exhibit a stronger preference for a brand, compared to those with lesser affinity, are likely to purchase the product of the brand involved in the activism practice advertisement, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the independent variable, while purchase intention was the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on participants' attitudes towards purchase intention (β=.82, t(247)= 16.59, p<.001). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater brand preference will have a more positive opinion about the advertisement.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference and individuals' political orientation on consumer responses to brand activism (H2d), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes towards brand activism were regressed onto brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However,

contrary to my H2d, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between brand activism and political ideology on consumer responses to ad likeability (β= -.006, t(245)= -.50, p=.62). Thus, H2d was not supported in this study.

Discussion

Overall, I found that that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand tend to perceive its activism more favorably (H1a). It was also proven that consumers who are fans of the Pepsi brand tend to respond more favorably towards Pepsi after seeing the advertisement (H1b). The study showed that consumers with a greater affinity for Kendall's brand tend to perceive its activism more favorably (H1c). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater brand preference will have a more positive opinion about the advertisement (H1d).

However, some of the hypotheses we tested were proven to be untrue or not supported by the study. Overall, the reason that the hypotheses were proven ineffective was that the p-value was too large for there to be a significant relationship. H2a, H2b, H2c, and H2d have an independent variable dependent on the respondent's political ideology. One reason why there was not a significant interaction between political ideology and both brand preference and purchase intention is the advertisement was not explicitly giving a political stance. For instance, the advertisement might show Kendall walking into a protest, but not show any liberal or conservative signage supporting presidential candidates (Bernard, 2017). The advertisement also did not explicitly tell respondents how to vote politically, it merely reflected social issues without speaking ill about cops or the Black Lives Matter Movement (Bernard, 2017). Perhaps if Pepsi would have implemented these techniques, the respondents would have had stronger

feelings based on their political ideology. In the next study. I am studying Disney and looking at

the brand position and how it is expressed more overtly in the advertising.

Chapter 4
Study 2: Public Perception of Disney Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community on Their Streaming Platform:

This study examines H1a by looking at purchase intention and brand preference in relation to Disney products across the Disney umbrella. Study 2 tests six hypotheses, except H1c and H2c. For exploratory purposes, I am also testing the purchase intention for the products from the brand that are not directly related to the activism practice.

I predict that consumers who exhibit a greater preference for a brand are more likely to see the brand supporting brand activism as a positive action (H1a). Considering the consumers who already like the brand could respond positively to content the brand produces, I predict that consumers who already like the brand are going to react positively to the brand's advertisements addressing controversial social issues (H1b). When looking at purchase intention and brand preference, I predict that consumers who demonstrate a stronger preference for a brand, are more likely to purchase the product of the brand involved in the advertisement including brand activism. For exploratory purposes, I am going to also examine the relationship that purchase intention has with Disney products that are different from Disney+ in an effort to see if the purchase intent for other Disney brands is altered by the actions of Disney+.

When examining political ideology and its effects on brand preference, I predict that liberal consumers will respond more favorably to brands supporting brand activism than conservative consumers due to the difference in their belief systems (H2a). I also think that consumers who are liberal will have a more positive outlook on the advertisements that the brands produce supporting brand activism for the same reasons (H2b). When looking at the

purchase intention and how that is affected by political ideology, I predict that liberal consumers will be more likely to purchase after seeing the brand activism because most of the brand activism I see makes me think the companies may have a liberal political view (H2d). I am also testing the effects of political ideology on Disney brands differing from Disney+ for exploratory purposes.

Methods and Procedure

Participants and Design

Two hundred and fifty four individuals recruited from Cloud Research participated in this study (44.1% female, 54.7% male, 1.2% non-binary, 0% prefer not to say; M_{age}= 38.89); individuals living in the United States were eligible to participate. As a contextual framework for this study, the recent Disney Plus commercial featuring two LGBTQ+ teens were adopted, which gained controversy due to the Disney target audience being younger kids.

Methods and Procedure

In the beginning of the survey, participants rated their liking for the brand, Disney, using 4 items (α=.95; e.g., "I like Disney."; see Appendix A for the collection of measurement items used in the two studies). This measure served as one of the independent variables in the main analysis.

Subsequently, participants were presented with a brief scenario wherein a 35-year-old woman named Kylie viewed Disney's advertisement (see Appendix B for the scenarios adopted in the two studies), along with the actual advertisement video linked

below the scenario. In this study, a projective technique was adopted wherein participants

read about someone else's experience in a scenario and provided responses regarding

what the person within the scenario would feel and think about the content of the

scenario, such indirect questioning methods are recognized for their ability elicit

participants' genuine thoughts about the content while minimizing social desirability bias

in self-report measures (Fisher, 1993). This bias often stems from respondents'

inclination to avoid embarrassment and present themselves in a favorable light to others

(Fisher, 1993; Bergen & Labonte, 2020; Krumpal, 2011). People are more likely to

respond using social desirability bias when they find the topic they see as controversial

(Bergen & Labonte, 2020; Grimm, 2010).

After watching the video, participants reported their perceptions of how Kylie

would perceive the brand (seven items, α=.58; e.g., "Kylie might have thought that

Disney is promoting LGBTQ+ couples to brainwash the younger generation"), its

advertisement (six items, α=.82; e.g., "Kylie might have thought that the depiction of the

LGBTQ+ people is offensive to the LGBTQ+ community All responses were collected

on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "Strongly Disagree" and 7 representing

"Strongly Agree."

Looking at the relate_2 measure, participants were asked to express their thoughts

regarding a Disney advertisement conveying its stance on the controversial social issues,

showing the LGBTQ+ community to kids, using 5 items (α=.97; e.g., "I will continue to

watch Disney movies with LGBTQ+ content in them"). Again, responses were collected

on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree."

Participants then indicated their purchase intention for Disney + products. To this end, a brief shopping scenario was presented wherein participants were about to purchase streaming services and encountered Disney products. Participants rated their likelihood of purchasing Disney using these three items (α=.98; e.g., "How likely are you to purchase Disney Plus?"). Again, responses were collected on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree."

Next, participants indicated their purchase intention for Disney Channel products. To this end, a television channel browsing scenario was presented wherein participants were about to choose a show to watch and encountered Disney Channel. Participants rated their likelihood of choosing Disney using these three items (α=.98; e.g., "How likely are you to select Disney Channel?"). Again, responses were collected on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree."

Then, participants indicated their purchase intention for Disney merchandise products. To this end, a shopping scenario was presented wherein participants were about to choose a stuffed animal and encountered Disney products. Participants rated their likelihood of choosing a Disney plush using these three items (α=.98; e.g., "How likely are you to purchase Disney products?"). Again, responses were collected on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree."

Next, participants reported their political ideology using seven items adapted from Jung et al. (2017). Participants were presented with seven controversial social, political, and racial issues (e.g., opinion on immigration) and asked to select one option that best reflected their opinion among three choices (e.g., "Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents," "Immigrants today are a burden on our

country because they take our jobs, housing, and health care," "Don't know/ refuse to

answer.") (Jung, Garbarino, Briley, & Wyhausen, 2017). One option reflected a

politically liberal view, another response had a conservative view, and the third a neutral

view. For the main analysis, all responses reflecting a liberal view on each item were

coded as +1, neutral as 0, and conservative as -1. A composite measure of the political

ideology was then created for each participant by summing all seven scores. Thus, a

higher score on this measure indicated a more liberal political orientation for each

participant. Finally, participants provided background information including age and

gender.

Results and Discussion

Consumer attitudes towards brand activism (Indirect questioning)

First I analyzed participants' perceptions of how Kylie would have viewed Disney after

watching the advertisement showing the two boys in a relationship, which aimed to test H1a and

H2a. To investigate H1a, which posits the main effect of brand preference on consumer

responses to brand activism, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the

independent variable, while participants' attitudes towards Disney's brand activism was the

dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect on the

consumer's attitude towards the advertisement (β= -0.09, t(252)= -2.42, p< 0.05). This indicates

that consumers attitudes towards Disney is affected by Disney's brand activism efforts.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference and individuals' political orientation on consumer responses to brand activism (H2a), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes toward brand activism were regressed onto brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However, contrary to my H2a, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between brand preference and political ideology on consumer responses to brand activism (β= .01, t(250)=1.22, P=0.23). Thus H2a, was not supported in this study.

Consumer attitudes towards advertisements involving sensitive, controversial social issues (Indirect questioning).

First, I analyzed participant's perceptions of how Kylie would have viewed Disney after watching the advertisement showing the two boys in a relationship, which aimed to test H1b and H2b. To investigate H1b, which posits the main effect consumers who exhibit a greater preference for a brand, as opposed to those with lesser affinity, are likely to respond more favorably to advertisements addressing controversial social issues. Brand likeability served as the independent variable, while participant's attitude, or their interpretation of Kylie's attitude, towards the advertisement is the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect on the consumer's attitude towards the advertisement (β= -.12, t(252)= -2.54, p< .05). This finding suggests that consumers who are fans of the Disney brand tend to respond more favorably towards Disney after seeing the advertisement.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference and individuals' political orientation on consumer responses to brand activism (H2b), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes toward brand activism were regressed onto brand preference

(mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However, contrary to my H2b, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between ad likeability and political ideology on consumer responses to ad likeability (β= .01, t(250)= 1.18, p=.24). Thus, H2b was not supported in this study.

Consumer opinions on brand activism (Direct questioning).

First, I analyzed participants' perceptions of who was at fault for the advertisement after watching the advertisement showing the teen LGBTQ+ couple, which aimed to test H1a and H2a. To investigate H1a, which posits the main effect consumers who exhibit a greater preference for a brand, as opposed to those with lesser affinity, are likely to respond more favorably to brands addressing controversial social issues, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the independent variable, consumer opinion of the advertisement was the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on participants' attitudes towards the brand participating in brand activism (β=.45, t(252)= 5.94, p<.0001). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater brand preference will have a more positive opinion about the brand participating in brand activism.

To examine the interactive effects of brand preference and individuals' political orientation on consumer responses to brand activism (H2a), another regression analysis was conducted. Consumer attitudes towards brand activism were regressed onto brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. However, contrary to my H2a, the analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between brand activism and political ideology on consumer responses to the brand practicing brand activism (β= .02, t(250)= 1.67, p=.096). Thus, H2b was not supported in this study.

Consumers' purchase intention towards the brand practicing brand activism: Disney+ (Direct questioning).

To find evidence for H1d, which posits the main effect of brand preference on purchase intention for the product of the brand involved in the activism practice, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the independent variable, while participants' purchase intention for Disney+ was the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on purchase intention ($\beta=.81$, $t(252)=13.09$, $p<.001$). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand are more likely to purchase the product of the brand that directly engaged in the activism practice even after exposure to the advertisement.

To examine consumers' purchase intention for the product of the brand involved in the activism practice, I conducted a regression analysis on purchase intention for Disney+ as a function of brand preference (mean-centered), individuals' political ideology (mean-centered), and their interaction. Interestingly, a significant interaction between the two independent variables on purchase intention for Disney+ was found ($\beta=.06$, $t(250)=4.47$, $p=.000$). More specifically, among politically liberal individuals, the positive effect of brand preference was significant ($\beta=1.04$, $t(250)=11.43$, $p=.000$). Similarly, this effect was significant among those who were politically conservative ($\beta=0.57$, $t(250)=8.55$, $p=.000$), albeit larger among politically liberal individuals. Thus H2d has been supported in this study. A main effect of brand preference remained significant ($\beta=0.80$, $t(250)=13.39$, $p=.000$), as well as a main effect of political ideology ($\beta=.19$, $t(250)=7.49$, $p=.000$).

Consumers' purchase intention towards the brand's other lines of products: Disney Channel and

Disney merchandise (Direct Questioning)

For exploratory purposes, we investigated whether participants' purchase intention for the brand, as influenced by it's activism practice, extends to the brand's other product lines. To find evidence of consumer's purchase intention towards the Disney Channel products, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the independent variable, while participants' purchase intention for Disney Channel served as the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on purchase intention ($\beta=.63$, $t(252)=9.30$, $p<.0001$). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand are more likely to purchase the product of the brand that directly engaged in the activism practice even after exposure to the advertisement when looking at various types of products. The Disney Channel interaction was ($\beta=.023$, $t(250)=1.64$, and $p=.10$). This means that there was a significant interaction between political ideology and purchase intention of Disney Channel products.

To find evidence of consumer's purchase intention towards the Disney merchandise products, I conducted a regression analysis. Brand preference served as the independent variable, while participants' purchase intention for Disney merchandise was the dependent variable. As hypothesized, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of brand preference on purchase intention ($\beta=.71$, $t(252)=11.46$, $p<.0001$). This finding suggests that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand are more likely to purchase the product of the brand that directly engaged in the activism practice even after exposure to the advertisement. The Disney merchandise interaction was ($\beta=.02$, $t(250)=1.57$, $p=.12$). This means that there was a significant interaction between political ideology and purchase intention of Disney products.

Discussion

There was not a significant interaction between brand preference and political ideology on consumer responses to brand activism. I found that consumers who are fans of the Disney brand tend to respond more favorably towards Disney or not blame Disney for the controversy. Also, consumers who are fans of the Disney brand tend to respond more favorably towards Disney after seeing the advertisement (H1b). Consumers with a greater brand preference will have a more positive opinion about the advertisement. Findings suggests that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand are more likely to purchase the product of the brand that directly engaged in the activism practice even after exposure to the advertisement (H1d). Findings also suggests that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand are more likely to purchase the product of the brand that directly engaged in the activism practice even after exposure to the advertisement when looking at various types of products, as well.

Among politically liberal individuals, the positive effect of brand preference was significant, Similarly, this effect was significant among those who were politically conservative (H2d). When exploring not just the Disney + product, but also Disney Channel and Disney merchandise, there is a significant interaction between purchase intention and political ideology.

There was not a significant relationship between political ideology and brand preference. The analysis did not reveal a significant interaction between brand preference and political ideology on consumer responses to brand activism (H2a). The data also showed there was no significant interaction between ad likeability and political ideology on consumer responses to ad likeability (H2b).

One reason why there was not a significant interaction between political ideology and brand preference is the advertisement was not explicitly giving a political stance. For instance,

the advertisement might show the two teens as a couple, but not show any liberal or conservative signage supporting presidential candidates (Kerns, 2019). The advertisement also did not explicitly tell respondents how to vote politically, it merely reflected social issues like the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement (Kerns, 2019). Perhaps if Disney would have implemented these techniques, the respondents would have had stronger feelings based on their political ideology.

Chapter 5

General Discussion

When looking at the Pepsi data, findings suggest that consumers with a greater affinity for the brand tend to perceive its activism more favorably (H1a). Results also show that consumers who are fans of the Pepsi brand tend to respond more favorably towards Pepsi after seeing the advertisement (H1b). I also found that consumers with a greater affinity for Kendall's brand tend to perceive her activism more favorably (H1c). When looking at purchase intention, consumers with a greater brand preference will have a more positive opinion about the advertisement (H1d).

When looking at the Disney+ data, the data proved H1a, H1b, H1d, and H2d to have significant interactions. H1a was significant and showed that brand preference for Disney has a significant interaction will respond more favorably towards Disney or not blame Disney for the controversy. H1b showed that brand preference for Disney can still impact consumer perception of the brand in a positive manner after watching the advertisement. H1d measured the interaction between purchase intention and brand preference. This proved that the consumer will be more likely to purchase the product of the brand that directly engaged in the activism practice even after exposure to the advertisement. H2d measured the relationship between purchase intention and political ideology and also proved to be significant in this study. This means that liberal consumers were more likely to purchase Disney + after viewing the advertisement in comparison to conservative consumers.

Although there were some interesting significant findings, there were also a few hypotheses that proved to be insignificant in both sets of data. In both data sets H2a and H2b were proven to be insignificant. This means that the relationship between brand preference and customer interaction with the brand is insignificant when looking at the brand and the advertisement. It also shows that there was no effect of significance between brand preference to the advertisement among Liberal and Conservative consumers. The Pepsi data also showed insignificant results when comparing purchase intention to political ideology, differing from the Disney data. This means that in the case of Pepsi and Kendall Jenner there was no relationship between purchase intention and the political ideology of the consumer.

Overall, there were a few limitations to the study. Funding was good, but if I had more funding I could have tested more respondents and broadened the data set. However, the biggest limitation was the time factor. There was only a year to get the studies approved by the IRB, studies created, and data analyzed. This led to an original plan to conduct four studies being shortened to two studies.

I think that a few future topics that researchers could study alongside this data are the Kolin Kaepernick and Nike campaign and the Bud Light and Dylan Mulvaney advertisement. In terms of Kaepernick, this would allow us to see into the sports industry and determine if similar interactions are present among sports consumers, versus consumers in the beverage and entertainment industry. Looking at the Bud Light controversy would shine a light on the beverage industry, more specifically alcohol.

Appendix A: Measurement Items

Table 2: Collection of Measurement Items

Measures	Items	Scale
Consumer Opinion of Pepsi Brand Preference (Study 1)	After viewing the ad, what do you think would be Jane's opinion about Pepsi? "Jane might have thought that Pepsi…" 1) "…is making the Black Lives Matter protests seem trivial." 2) "…is tone-deaf to the struggles of real Black Lives Matter Protestors." 3) "…is supportive of the Black Lives Matter movement and a great way to raise awareness for this sensitive topic." 4) "…is tone deaf to the struggles of law enforcement during mass protests."	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Consumer Opinion of Advertisement Brand Preference (Study 1)	After viewing the ad, what do you think would be Jane's opinion about the advertisement? "Jane might have thought that _____." 1) The advertisement is offensive to the black community. 2) It is inappropriate to portray a white supermodel resolving the issue of police brutality simply by handing a police officer a Pepsi 3) It is offensive to say that law enforcement is not concerned with greater issues and is only concerned with getting a Pepsi 4) This advertisement is a great way to raise awareness for the Black Lives Matter movement through brand campaigns 5) Choose strongly disagree on this item	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Consumer Opinion of Influencer Brand Preference (Study 1)	After viewing the video, what do you think would be Jane's opinion about Kendall Jenner? "Jane might have thought that Kendall Jenner _____." 1) "…is not wise to participate in the shooting of the advertisement." 2) "…is tone-deaf to the struggles of real Black Lives Matter Protestors." 3) "…is making the Black Lives Matter protests seem trivial." 4) "…is tone deaf to the struggles of law enforcement during mass protests." 5) "…is at fault for the political misstatement in the Kendall Jenner Pepsi advertisement." 6) "…is not at fault for the political misrepresentation in the Kendall Jenner advertisement." 7) "…is not fit to represent the Pepsi brand." 8) "…choose three on this item."	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree

Consumer Perception of the Brand Activism (Study 1)	On a scale of 1-7, how much do you relate to the following statements? Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements. 1) The Kendall Jenner Pepsi advertisement sent a great message 2) The Kendall Jenner Pepsi advertisement was intended to end conflict between protestors and police 3) Pepsi had good intentions and should not be looked down on because they couldn't have known the advertisement was offensive 4) The backlash both Pepsi and Kendall received was bad luck and of no fault of their own	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Purchase Intention of Pepsi (Study 1)	Imagine you find yourself in the supermarket's beverage aisle, intending to buy a pack of soda. How likely are you to choose Pepsi beverages? 1) How likely are you to purchase Pepsi products? 2) How willing are you to purchase Pepsi products? 3) How inclined are you to purchase Pepsi products?	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Consumer perception of the brand Brand Preference (Study 2)	After viewing the ad, what do you think would be Kylie's opinion about the advertisement? "Kylie might have thought that _____" 1) "…the depiction of LGBTQ+ people is offensive to the LGBTQ+ community." 2) "…the depiction of the LGBTQ+ kids is offensive to parents who believe in 'traditional' families" 3) "…the depiction of LGBTQ+ kids is inappropriate to show on a kids television show." 4) "…It is great that Disney shows couples that are LGBTQ+" 5) ".,Disney is showing relatable couples by showing the LGBTQ+ couple." 6) "Disney is being inclusive by showing an LGBTQ+ couple." 7) "Choose strongly disagree on this item."	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Consumer Perception of the advertisement Brand Preference (Study 2)	After viewing the clip, what do you think would be **Kylie's opinion about Disney**? "Kylie might have thought that Disney_____" 1) "…is promoting LGBTQ+ couples to brainwash the younger generation." 2) "…is inaccurately portraying the LGBTQ+ community." 3) "…is including the LGBTQ+ couple to be inclusive to all people no matter what their sexual orientation." 4) "…is including the LGBTQ+ couple to gain views and not to support LGBTQ+ Community." 5) "…is no longer a family channel." 6) "…is woke and accurately portraying the LGBTQ+ community."	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Consumer Perception	On a scale of 1-7, how much do you relate to the following statements? Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements.	1: Strongly disagree;

of the Brand Activism **(Study 2)**	1) I will continue to watch Disney movies with LGBTQ content in them. 2) I would let my kids or other people's kids watch Disney movies with LGBTQ content. 3) I will continue to watch Disney Channel and Disney Plus with LGBTQ content in them 4) I would let my kids or other people's kids watch Disney Channel or Disney Plus with LGBTQ content in them. 5) I will continue to purchase Disney merchandise.	7: Strongly agree
Purchase Intention of **Disney+** **(Study 2)**	Imagine you are scrolling through streaming service offerings, intending to purchase a new streaming service to watch with your family. How likely are you to choose Disney Plus? 1) How likely are you to purchase Disney Plus? 2) How willing are you to purchase Disney Plus? 3) How inclined are you to purchase Disney Plus?	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Purchase Intention of **Disney Channel** **(Study 2)**	Imagine you are scrolling through television channels attempting to find a show for your younger children to watch. How likely are you to select Disney Channel? 1) How likely are you to select Disney Channel? 2) How willing are you to select Disney Channel? 3) How inclined are you to select Disney Channel?	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree
Purchase Intention of **Disney Merchandise** **(Study 2)**	Imagine you find yourself in a store's toy aisle, intending to buy a stuffed animal for your child. How likely are you to choose a Disney plush? 1) How likely are you to purchase Disney products? 2) How willing are you to purchase Disney products? 3) How inclined are you to purchase Disney products?	1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly agree

| Political Ideology (Studies 1 and 2) (Jung et. al., 2017) | Please express your opinion on government regulation.   1)Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.

2) Government regulation of business is necessary to protect public interest.

3) Don't Know or Refuse to Answer

Please express your opinion on low-income people.

   1) Poor people have had hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently.
   2) Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything
   3) Don't Know or Refuse to Answer
Please express your opinion on the government's help to US citizens.

   1) The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy.
   2) The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt.
   3) Don't Know or Refuse to Answer
Please express your opinion on racial discrimination.

   1) Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days
   2) Blacks who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition
   3) Don't Know or Refuse to Answer
Please express your opinion on immigration.

   1) Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.
   2) Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing, and health care.
   3) Don't Know or Refuse to Answer
Please express your opinion on environmental laws.

   1) Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy.
   2) Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost.
   3) Don't Know or Refuse to Answer
Please express your opinion on homosexuality.

   1) Homosexuality should be accepted by society.
   2) Homosexuality should be discouraged by society.
   3) Don't Know or Refuse to Answer | |

Appendix B: Scenarios

Study 1: Public Perception of Pepsi and Kendall Jenner in Response to the 2017

Campaign Depicting Black Lives Matter

Jane is a 25-year-old woman who works at a Marketing firm. She recently saw Kendall Jenner's new Pepsi advertisement when she was watching television. The advertisement included model Kendall Jenner posing for a photograph as the protestors walked by. She then joined the protestors and handed the police officer a Pepsi to promote the image that a Pepsi could bring people together and end police brutality.

Study 2: Public Perception of Disney Supporting The LGBTQ+ Community on Their

Streaming Platform

Kylie is a 35-year-old mother to three healthy children ages 8,10, and 12. Kylie and her husband do their best to parent their children. She's been allowing her children to watch Disney over the last few years, but recently she's seen a drastic change in their content. She noticed that Disney began supporting more controversial topics. One of these topics was the company's support of the LGBTQ community. Disney was also showing two high school children kissing on their Disney Plus show and promoting "Gay Days" in their theme parks.

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