

# Lay beliefs about the impact of brand activist campaigns on consumer moral self

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Cite as:

Itani Souha, Borau Sylvie (2022), Lay beliefs about the impact of brand activist campaigns on consumer moral self. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 51st, (107287)

Paper from the 51st Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 24-27, 2022



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## **Abstract**

Companies are increasingly engaging in brand activism, advocating for social, political, or environmental causes. Previous research on brand activism focuses on its efficacy, without considering its social and psychological impact. Our experiment (N=774) draws on the moral foundations theory to investigate lay beliefs about the potential impact of brand activism on consumers' moral self. Results show that respondents believe that activist ads can change consumers' attitudes towards certain causes and alter their moral self. Results also indicate that activist ads mostly convey the moral values of care and fairness, with fairness mediating the impact of activist ads on consumers' moral self. Respondents' political ideology moderates some of these effects, with conservatives being more skeptical. Our findings advance the literature on brand activism and moral psychology by examining the potential effect of brand activism on our morality, and possibly on our ideologies and values.

**Keywords:** *Brand activism; Moral self; Political ideology*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour