

**IMPACT OF BRAND ACTIVISM ON FACEBOOK TO  
BRAND IMAGE AND PURCHASE INTENT:  
THE CASES OF UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORPORATION'S *C2 GREEN TEA* AND  
MONDE NISSIN CORPORATION'S *LUCKY ME! INSTANT PANCIT CANTON***

John Alexander L. Fellizar

**Abstract**

This paper determines the statistical relationship of brand activism on Facebook to the respective brand image and purchase intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. A total of 135 respondents were purposively tapped from different age groups, SECs, and areas through an online survey. In general, results showed that respondents deemed brand activism on Facebook generally important. Meanwhile, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis revealed that brand image and degree of interest are the independent variables that strongly correlate with the degree of importance of brand activism on Facebook (dependent variable). No significant differences between the responses for C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton was observed. This paper contributes to understanding brand activism in the Philippine setting and is beneficial among marketers and advertisers. The researcher recommends a more in-depth review of the relevant literature and studies and considering other variables to explain the brand activism phenomenon better.

**Keywords:** brand activism, correlation, brand image, purchase intent, dependent variable, independent variable

## **I. Introduction**

### **a. Review of Related Literature**

Aside from meeting primary consumer demand and providing certain benefits, consumers are now expecting brands to have their respective brand purposes. Wagner (2021) defined brand purpose as the inner core of a brand or organization that drives value for stakeholders by addressing a societal issue. From positioning as brands that meet specific human needs and fill gaps in the market, brands' involvement in social issues affecting their respective target markets has become more apparent. On top of brand identity and purpose, which brands are expected to radiate in the long run, being agile in taking stands on social issues and supporting social movements and advocacies puts brands on a different stage. Higher engagement with such social campaigns that fall under the general meaning of brand activism suggests more consumer support for the brand, leading to higher sales performance potential (Gray, 2019).

#### **i. General Context of Brand Activism**

Brand activism is a strategy that seeks to persuade consumers using campaigns created and sustained by political and social values (Manfredi-Sanchez, 2019). Mukherjee and Althuizen (2018) added that it is the act of taking a stand on divisive socio-political issues.

As people become more attentive to important issues, most consumers want brands to take a stand on socio-political matters in today's marketplace (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Consumers try to educate themselves on socio-political issues and expect the same from the companies (Milfeld and Flint, 2020). Due to these, brands have recently begun to take a brand activism strategy by aligning with a socio-political cause to increase their relevance and strengthen customer relationships (Key et al., 2021). Brands are now penetrating an era where brand activism strategies are holding a sign on consumers' decision-making rather than traditional brand marketing (Gray, 2019). Companies transcend their status as capitalist institutions and resemble full-pledged humans when they take positions on critical issues (Manfredi-Sanchez, 2019). Consumers are more engrossed in campaigning for socio-political change, so they want to see brands take a stand and support something more significant. Consumers are vouching for more loyalty to brands that go beyond providing them with just a product or service and support the same values and beliefs they hold (Kumar, 2020). Consumers prefer to buy a brand if it supports a cause or purpose, and they stop buying if the brand behaves unethically (Shetty et al., 2019).

However, not all brands successfully do these due to disconnections between social issues, brand identity, and lack of consistency. Sourjo and Althuizen (2020) concluded that in studies involving unknown and well-known brands, attitudes towards the brand decreased substantially among consumers who disagreed with a brand's stand. In contrast, there was no significant effect among consumers who supported the stand. When brands match activist messaging, purpose, and values with pro-social corporate practice, they engage in authentic brand activism (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Activist brands commonly engage in controversies to redefine which opinions and ideas are acceptable to express publicly (Sibai et al., 2021).



## **ii. Brand Activism in the Philippines**

In the Philippines, brand activism is not new. Many companies, predominantly multinationals, have used brand activism in their advertising strategies. This advertising strategy presents an opportunity for brands to connect with consumers on a more personal level by raising awareness of the issues that are important to them (Champlin et al., 2019). Hence, the presence of multinational companies in the Philippines that employ this kind of advertising strategy gave birth to the existence of woke advertising in the country (Goh, 2016).

Ligo Sardines, one of the top canned sardines brands in the Philippines, went viral during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic due to its several Facebook criticizing the lack of government efforts in preventing the ill effects of the pandemic. All of Ligo Sardines' graphic advertisements on Facebook related to socio-political issues went viral, but the brand obtained varying reactions. Many pointed out the progressive nature of the posts and commended the brand for taking a stand on socio-political matters (Get Real Philippines, 2020).

In 2018, Bench Philippines launched an online campaign for one of its fragrance lines that tackled the unconditional love of a father to his gay son. This campaign is one of the brand's contributions to the long list of campaigns for the LGBTQ+ community. In the video, a student who appears to be hiding his sexuality from his father gives himself a generous spritz of cologne as soon as he arrives at school. The fragrance gives him an instant mood lift and the confidence to interact with the guy he's crushing on. Meanwhile, at home, he puts up a front as his father mistakes the scent for a girl's (Arcano, 2018).

In 2013, Pantene showed a video of men and women having similar behaviors but were labeled differently, exposing a double standard. For the first time in its brand history, Pantene did not highlight its products but instead underscored a critical issue that helped women to shine (Tulshyan, 2013).

Furthermore, during the 2022 Presidential Elections campaign, several brands quickly voiced their stands on Isko Moreno's call for Leni Robredo's withdrawal from the Presidential race. Durex PH, Victoria Court, BPI, Standard Insurance, Cha Tuk Chak, and TEAcher's Brew were the first brands to voice their disagreement with Isko Moreno's call (Licci, 2022).

## **iii. C2 Green Tea**

Universal Robina Corporation introduced C2 Green Tea to the Philippine market in 2004 as the first ready-to-drink (RTD) tea (URC, 2019). Since then, Filipinos have developed an affinity with tea drinks and have grown to love C2's refreshing flavors. And more than just refreshment for the hot days, C2 is packed with all the benefits that green tea leaves or camellia sinensis offers, C2 promises a real and authentic tea experience (Business Mirror, 2018).

The selection of C2 Green Tea as a subject for this study goes beyond its market position. Being the first in the RTD Tea category and successfully challenging soda brands in crucial consumption moments is a feat only a few brands can pull through.

#### **iv. Lucky Me!**

Launched in 1989, Lucky Me! has grown into a household brand enjoyed by almost every Filipino family. Filipinos' love for the brand developed through the years as Lucky Me! has always been understanding and responsive to its valued consumers through continuous product innovations (Monde Nissin, 2018).

In 2020, Kantar Worldpanel reported in its 2020 Asia Brand Footprint study that Lucky Me! Has, for the fifth consecutive year, dominated the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brand category in the Philippines, as it was bought by nearly all Philippine households (97%) in 2019, or more than 35 times in 2020 (Inquirer.net, 2020).

Lucky Me! has become a subject of public and government scrutiny after several countries banned some of its variants due to chemical contamination. Monde Nissin Corporation has issued a statement claiming its iconic Lucky Me! is safe for consumption. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) later issued a similar report that effectively closed the Lucky Me lid! Controversy. However, the argument contributed to the 15% decline in Monde Nissin's net income in the first half of 2022, alongside rising costs of raw materials (ABS-CBN News, 2022).

#### **b. Significance of the Study**

It is timely and imperative to have a deeper and evidence-based understanding of the impact of being involved in social issues, social movements, and advocacies on Facebook to brand success in terms of image, preference, and purchase propensity. Understanding this relationship on a deeper level will provide crucial insights into the type and depth of relationships consumers have with the brands they love, hate, and look up to. These insights will help marketing professionals navigate and craft their respective marketing strategies for their brands while staying relevant and purposeful. Aside from marketers, this study will also help psychologists, and market researchers further understand the human mind, particularly consumer behavior and decision-making.

Likewise, this study aims to serve as a foundation that brands can use in devising their online marketing strategies, especially those that are thought-provoking and are subject to social media scrutiny and division.

#### **c. Scope and Limitations**

This study covers the impact of brand activation on Facebook to brand image and purchase intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. This covers 135 respondents who answered an online survey using a structured questionnaire.

Due to the limit on resources and time, this study does not extend to other social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram. Moreover, this study does not include a discussion of other brands aside from the ones stated in the literature review. These untapped parameters can be discussed in future studies related to brand activism.



Moreover, the discussion of results and conclusions are brand-level and does not include generalizations for the categories where C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton is.

#### **d. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions**

In general, this study aims to gauge the impact of brand activism on Facebook on consumers' image and purchase intent toward C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. Furthermore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of brand activism on the brand image of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton?
2. What is the effect of brand activism on the purchase intent towards C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton?
3. What is the effect of brand activism on the likelihood of shifting to And from C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton?
4. What is the effect of brand activism on the degree of recommendation for C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton?
5. What is the effect of brand activism on the future purchase of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton?
6. What is the effect of brand activism on the degree of interest in C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton?

## **II. Methodology**

For the researcher to know if brand activism affects the brand image and purchase intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton, an online survey, was mounted using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is composed of questions that directly asked respondents their perception of brand activism and whether brand activism affects their perception of the brands included in the survey in terms of brand image, purchase intent, the likelihood of shifting, degree of recommendation, future purchase, and degree of interest.

#### **a. Sampling Method**

The researchers used purposive (non-probability) sampling in obtaining respondents to answer the online survey. Tongco (2007) defined purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling most effective when one needs to study a particular domain with knowledgeable respondents. Purposive sampling may also be used with both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The inherent bias of the method contributes to its efficiency, and the technique stays robust even when tested against random probability sampling. Given that this research is mainly devoted to qualified respondents willing to answer the online survey, the researcher utilized the purposive way of getting respondents.

## b. Respondent Profile

A total of 135 qualified respondents were tapped who answered the 10-minute online survey through Google Forms. The online survey lasted one week, from May 7, 2022, to May 14, 2022.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

|                  |                            |     |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----|
| AGE GROUP        | 18 to 25 years old         | 13% |
|                  | 26 to 35 years old         | 62% |
|                  | 36 to 45 years old         | 24% |
| AREA             | Metro Manila               | 27% |
|                  | North Luzon                | 21% |
|                  | South Luzon                | 36% |
|                  | Visayas                    | 8%  |
|                  | Mindanao                   | 7%  |
| HOUSEHOLD INCOME | Php 10,001 to Php 25,000   | 17% |
|                  | Php 25,001 to Php 45,000   | 45% |
|                  | Php 45,001 to Php 75,000   | 12% |
|                  | Php 75,001 to Php 150,000  | 1%  |
|                  | Php 151,001 to Php 250,000 | 24% |

Table 1 shows the demographic breakdown of respondents who were tapped for this study. Regarding the age group, the majority (62%) are aged 26-35, 24% are aged 36-50, and the remaining 13% are aged 18-25. In terms of area, most were coming from Luzon (Metro Manila, North Luzon, South Luzon) with 27%, 21%, and 36% contributing to the total number of respondents, respectively. Regarding household income, most respondents (81%) have household incomes of Php 25,001 to Php 75,000. The remaining household income ranges constitute the remaining 19% of the respondents.

## c. Variables

The following variables were used in the study to know the statistical relationship between brand activism on Facebook and brand performance regarding brand image and purchase intent.

### ***Dependent variable***

- Degree of Importance of Brand Activism on Facebook

### ***Independent variables***

- Degree of Effect on Brand Image
- Degree of Effect on Purchase Intent
- Likelihood to Shift to Other Brands
- Degree of Recommendation
- Degree of Purchase Intent in the Next 6 Months (*intent to buy the brand in the next six months considering other brands in the market basket, more long term and can be affected by other factors*)
- Degree of Interest (*interest to the brand without the price consideration, mainly focused on intrinsic product features*)

#### d. Statistical Treatment

- Pearson Product-Moment Correlation - a measure of the correlation (linear dependence) between two variables X and Y, given the formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=0}^n (X_i - \bar{X}) (Y_i - \bar{Y})}{(n - 1) S_X S_Y}$$

Where:

$r$  = sample covariance of two variables

$x_i$  = single value of x

$\bar{x}$  = mean of all X's

$\bar{Y}$  = mean of Y's

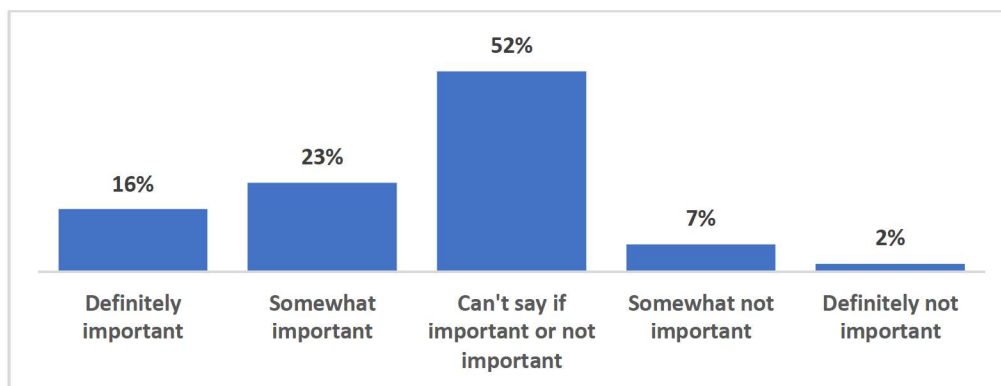
$n$  = number of all variables

$s_x$  = standard deviation of all X's

Decision Rule:

The coefficient of correlation can be positive or negative. Its value lies between the limits +1 and -1. It may vary from a positive one (indicating a perfect positive relationship), through zero (showing the absence of a relationship), to a negative one (indicating a perfect negative relationship). If the correlation coefficient is between 0.00 and  $\pm 0.29$ , then there is a very little or weak correlation;  $\pm 0.50$  and  $\pm 0.69$ , then there is a moderate correlation; when it lies between  $\pm 0.70$  and  $\pm 0.89$ , then there is a high correlation;  $\pm 0.90$  to  $\pm 1.00$  represents a very high correlation. (Gujarati, 2003)

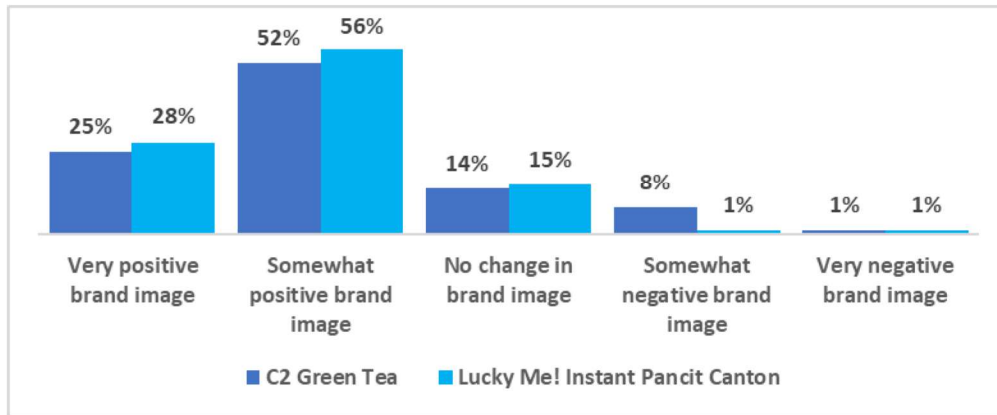
### III. Presentation of Data and Results



**Figure 1. Degree of Importance of Brand Activism on Facebook**

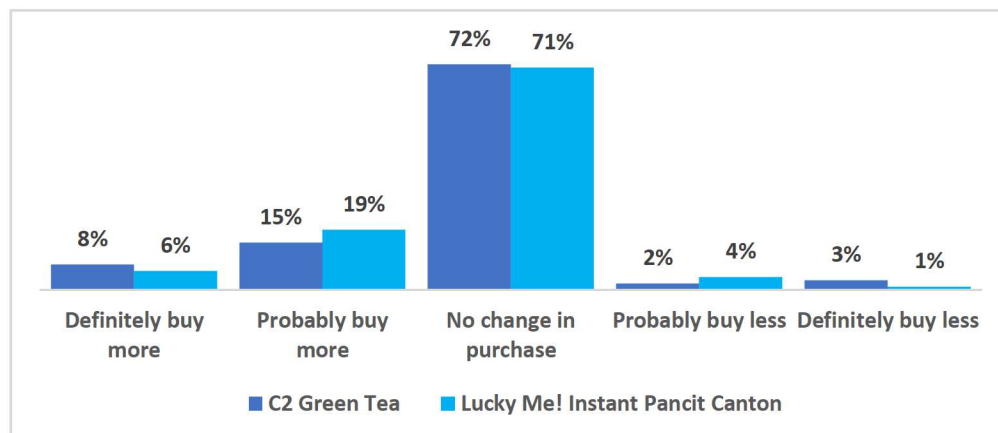
Figure 1 shows the degree of importance of brand activism on Facebook among respondents. 4 out of 10 (39%) of the respondents agree that being involved in social causes and advocacies is essential. 5 out of 10 (52%) are indifferent about considering brand activism as important or not. Meanwhile, only 1 out of 10 (9%) consider being involved in social causes and advocacies unimportant.





**Figure 2. Effect of Brand Activism on Facebook on the Brand Image of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton**

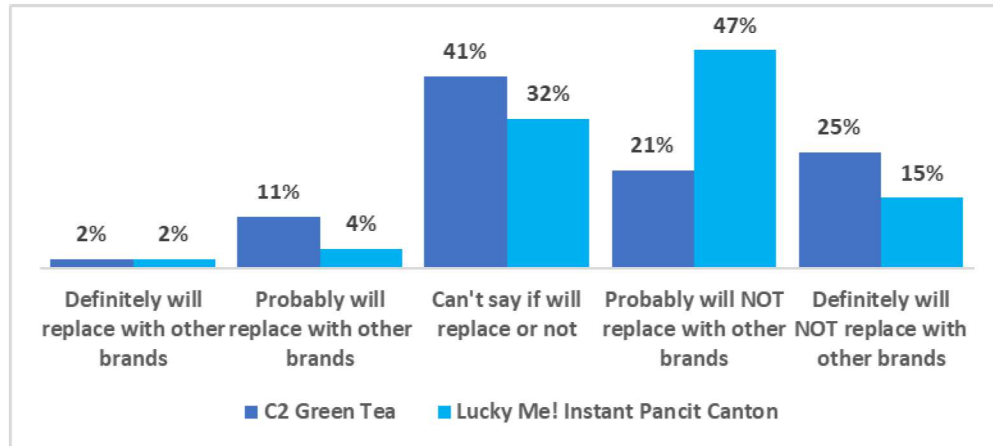
Figure 2 displays the effects of brand activism on Facebook on the brand image of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. Regardless of brand, a significant majority or 8 out of 10 respondents (77% C2, 84% LM) adjudged that being involved in social causes and advocacies positively impacts the brand image of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me!



**Figure 3. Effect of Brand Activism on Facebook to Purchase Intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton**

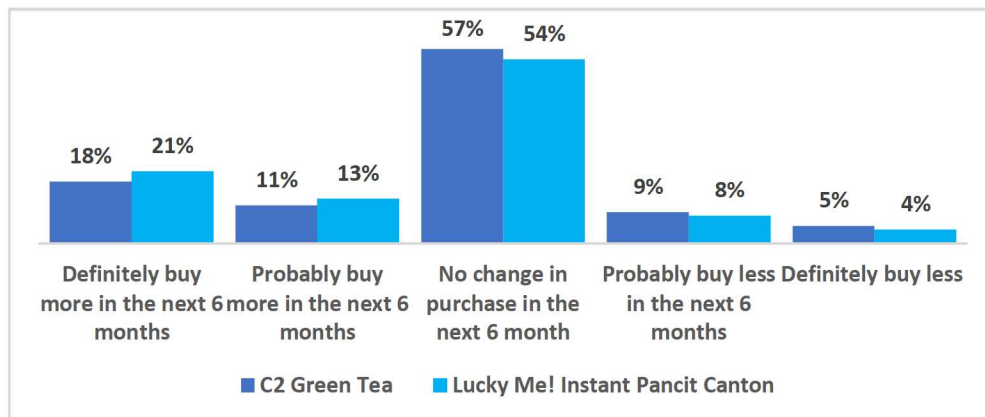
Figure 3 shows the effects of brand activism on Facebook on the purchase intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. Regardless of brand, 7 out of 10 respondents (72% C2, 71% LM) stated that being involved in social causes and advocacies has no impact on their purchase intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Only 2 out of 10 respondents (23% C2, 25% LM) claimed they would buy more of these brands.





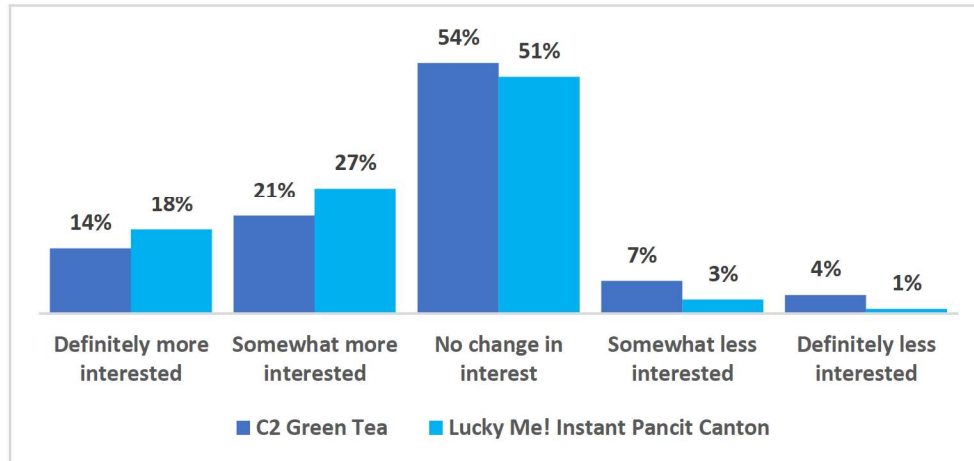
**Figure 4. Effect of Brand Activism on Facebook to Likelihood to Shift from C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton to other brands**

Figure 4 shows the effects of brand activism on Facebook on the likelihood of shifting from C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton to other brands. More respondents are not keen on replacing C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton (46% C2, 62% LM). Meanwhile, 3 to 4 out of 10 respondents (41% C2, 32% LM) are unsure if they will replace C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton with other brands. Only 1 out of 10 respondents (13% C2, 6% LM) are keen on replacing C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton.



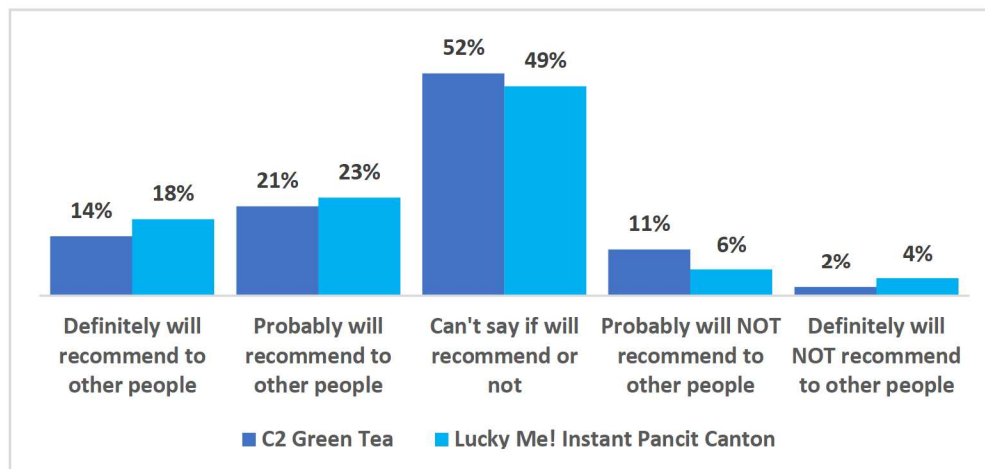
**Figure 5. Effect of Brand Activism on Facebook to Purchase Intent in the Next 6 Months of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton**

Figure 5 illustrates the effects of brand activism on Facebook on respondents' purchase intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton in the next six months. Regardless of brand, 5 to 6 out of 10 respondents (57% C2, 54% LM) claimed their purchase propensity towards the brands would not change in the next six months, even if the brands are involved in social causes and advocacies. Only 3 out of 10 respondents (29% C2, 34% LM) claimed they would buy more of these brands in the next six months.



**Figure 6. Effect of Brand Activism on Facebook to Degree of Interest Towards C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton**

Figure 6 displays the effects of brand activism on Facebook on respondents' degree of interest in C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. Regardless of brand, 5 out of 10 respondents (54% C2, 51% LM) claimed that being involved in social causes and advocacies has no impact on their degree of interest in C2 Green Tea and Luck Me! Meanwhile, more respondents (45%) said they would become more interested in Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton became involved in brand activism. On the other hand, around 3 out of 10 respondents (34) claimed that they would become more interested in C2 Green Tea if they became involved in brand activism.



**Figure 7. Effect of Brand Activism on Facebook to Degree of Recommendation Towards C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton**

Figure 7 shows the effects of brand activism on Facebook to the degree of recommendation for C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. Regardless of brand, 5 out of 10 respondents (52% C2, 49% LM) adjudged that being involved in social causes and advocacies has no impact on their degree of recommendation on C2 Green Tea and Luck Me! Meanwhile, 4 out of 10 (35% C2, 41% LM) stated they would recommend C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton with other people if these brands became involved in brand activism on Facebook.



| Variables                                | Pearson correlation coefficient (r) | Degree of Correlation to Importance of Brand Activism |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Brand Image                              | 0.79                                | Strong positive                                       |
| Purchase Intent                          | 0.13                                | Weak positive   |
| Likelihood to Shift                      | - 0.19                              | Weak negative   |
| Degree of Recommendation                 | 0.46                                | Moderate positive                                     |
| Purchase Propensity in the Next 6 Months | 0.08                                | Weak positive   |
| Degree of Interest                       | 0.66                                | Strong positive                                       |

**Table 2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Between Variables and Importance of Brand Activism on Facebook to C2 Green Tea**

Table 2 shows the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (Pearson r) between the variables and the importance of brand activism for C2 Green Tea. Based on the Pearson r values, only Brand Image and Degree of Interest have a strong positive correlation with the importance of brand activism for C2 Green Tea. This means that the degree of importance of brand activism on Facebook follows a positive relationship with the brand image of C2 Green Tea.

| Variables                                | Pearson correlation coefficient (r) | Degree of Correlation to Importance of Brand Activism |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Brand Image                              | 0.82                                | Strong positive                                       |
| Purchase Intent                          | 0.17                                | Weak positive   |
| Likelihood to Shift                      | -0.14                               | Weak negative   |
| Degree of Recommendation                 | 0.42                                | Moderate positive                                     |
| Purchase Propensity in the Next 6 Months | 0.14                                | Weak positive   |
| Degree of Interest                       | 0.72                                | Strong positive                                       |

**Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Between Variables and Importance of Brand Activism for Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton**

Table 3 shows the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (Pearson r) between the variables and the importance of brand activism for Lucky Me! Pancit Canton. Based on the Pearson r values, only Brand Image and Degree of Interest have a strong positive correlation with the importance of brand activism for Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. This means that the degree of importance of brand activism on Facebook follows a positive relationship with the brand image of Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton.

#### IV. Discussion of Results

Based on the data table generated on the degree of importance of brand activism on Facebook, it is clear that a massive chunk of the population deems brand activism as necessary. However, more Filipinos are indifferent as to whether they find brand activism on Facebook as important or

not. This lukewarm view of brand activism can be attributed to the market stance of the brands included in the study, which are all market leaders in their respective categories in the Philippines. Consumers usually favor market leaders due to their long-standing reputation and brand equities which activates the default positive image of market leaders.

From the data tables generated for each of the variables (e.g., brand image, purchase intent, likelihood to shift, purchase intent in the next six months, degree of interest, degree of recommendation), responses for C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Pancit Canton does not significantly differ, which radiates their respective market positions as market leaders in the RTD Tea and Instant Noodles categories, respectively.

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis concluded that only brand image and degree of interest strongly correlate with brand activism. The positive correlation between brand image and degree of interest in brand activism on Facebook can be attributed to Filipinos' emotional attachment to brands. However, this emotional attachment does not automatically translate to purchase or consumption. Unlike the insignificant variables, brand image and degree of interest do not entail an actual change in purchase and consumption patterns (i.e., buying more or less, replacing brands).

## **V. Conclusion**

This paper analyzes the correlation of brand activism on Facebook to the respective brand image and purchase intent of C2 Green Tea and Lucky Me! Instant Pancit Canton. The impact of brand activism was measured to the dimensions of brand image and purchase intent, particularly brand image, purchase intent, likelihood to shift, recommendation, and purchase intent in the next six months.

Based on Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis, brand image and degree of interest are the independent variables that strongly correlate with the degree of importance of brand activism on Facebook (dependent variable). Other independent variables have weak to moderate correlations to the dependent variable.

Further research and review of the literature comparing the impact of brand activism between market leaders and non-market leaders, and between essential and non-essential products are recommended to add another layer of depth to the discussion of brand activism in the local context. Identifying and considering other factors that might affect brand activism are also encouraged.

The researcher also recommends that future researchers consider applying other statistical techniques to come up with more holistic and actionable conclusions.



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