In the thoroughly researched article "Online Outrage Can Benefit Brands That Take Stances on Social Issues," Saeid Kermani, Peter Darke, and Theo Noseworthy deconstruct a popular myth in contemporary marketing—that brands should stay out of socially contentious issues to maintain a neutral market position. However, the authors don't simply challenge that notion; by extensive dissection of the aftermath left by Nike's controversial ad campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick, they assert an argument in which brand resiliency in the face of public aversion can lead to enhanced consumer loyalty and financial success (Darke et al., para. 3).

This essay seeks to further the argument presented in the article, by pointing out its ethos, logos, and pathos and hence further consolidating its credibility, and building up its power of persuasion to the skeptics.

The article is relevant for a broad readership—from marketing professionals through to change advocates in society—advocating that brands become mirrors of societal evolving values. In an era where consumer power is rising to direct purchasing in tune with one's ethics and politics, the authors argue that brands can command this (Darke et al., para. 5). This is the context in which the article's thesis is set—one of those that are not mere speculation, but rather are soundly based upon a series of systematic studies.

The authors label this 'positive outrage' and capture the positive effects that public backlash against a brand's social stance can have at its very heart. The authors show, in a sample of five methodologically sound studies, that consumers self-expressing that they adhere to a brand's values experience a higher sense of affiliation toward the brand and buy more from it in reaction to social media outrage (Darke et al., para. 7). This argument is a testament to the logos in the article – a logical structure buttressed by empirical evidence.

The case with details about Nike's Kaepernick campaign, when the brand value rose $6 billion despite initial backlash, is one of the quantitatively powerful examples proving the statement given by this article (Darke et al., para. 3). This is not only the story of an underdog but the story of logos, appealing to the logical side of the skeptic with hard evidence and reason.

The article's ethos, or its ethical appeal, is indisputably strong. The authors' scholarly and professional background naturally give their analysis a certain weight and command respect. The deep dissection of consumer behavioral data and the balanced presentation of the risks related to brand activism hardly give room for a different opinion (Darke et al., para. 12). In acknowledgment of how complex it is and how much a stand on the social issue might be a mishap, the authors refine the argumentation which takes into consideration the benefits and difficulties of brand activism. Pathos is also taken care of in the authors' rhetorical strategy. People may have deep connections to the brands they use as a reflection of values that are important to them, so it is all that much more striking to read about it when that brand is under some kind of perceived attack. Such emotional investments may turn consumers into brand advocates who in return mobilize to support and defend a brand from the outrage.

More important than the individual consumer behavior, the authors take their considerations regarding the implications of the findings into society. They have argued that currently, brands are in a strategic position towards driving social change as wielders of adequate social influence. It will unify people for collective action and will unite people in favor of common cause (Darke et al., para. 14). This then gives another dimension to the article, calling on the readers to reflect the wider implications that brand activism has for social coherence and development. The authors state that in the age of the internet, which now has its loud echo mirroring public opinion, brands will necessarily incite outrage with the purpose of building a stronger and more dedicated client list (Darke et al., para. 16).

Finally, the paper by Kermani, Darke, and Noseworthy is a highly persuasive, balanced article which appeals to its audience's logic, ethics, and emotions. Nuanced and insightful, the article reveals brand strategies on controversial issues—leveraging potential adversity as a source of strength. The article convinces that through its logic, credible authorship and emotional resonance, brands have much to gain from standing firm in their social beliefs even against the online outrage (Darke et al., para. 18). This article does not just argue for a novel marketing strategy, but it rather puts fourth a new paradigm wherein brands are active participants in the discourse of social values—fully prepared to weather the tempest of public opinion whilst being on the right side.

**Word Count: 748 excluding in-text citations.**

Naysayer Description:

The naysayer to this article may come from traditionalists in business who believe companies should remain neutral in social discourse to avoid public opinion volatility. They argue that taking social stances could divide the customer base, dilute the brand's focus on product quality and service, and lead to long-term loss of trust and customer loyalty. They also question the sustainability of such marketing strategies, doubting whether short-term gains translate into long-term profitability and brand health.

**Works Cited:**

Saeid Kermani, Peter Darke, and Theo Noseworthy “Online Outrage Can Benefit Brands That Take Stances on Social Issues.” *The Conversation*, 15 Aug. 2023, theconversation.com/online-outrage-can-benefit-brands-that-take-stances-on-social-issues-208091.