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**BRAND ACTIVISM, CONSUMER CONGRUENCE TO A CAUSE AND BRAND
AUTHENTICITY: IMPACTS ON WORD-OF-MOUTH**

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**BRAND ACTIVISM, CONSUMER CONGRUENCE TO A CAUSE AND BRAND
AUTHENTICITY: IMPACTS ON WORD-OF-MOUTH**

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Advisor: Prof. Dr. Paulo de Paula Baptista

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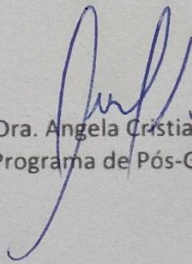
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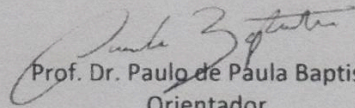
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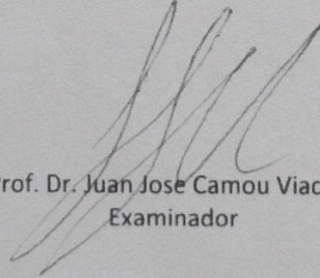
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To my Mom and Daddy,
wherever they are, who always support me
and allow me to pursue my dreams.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand what the impact of an activist brand message in WOM is, considering the moderator roles of brand authenticity and consumer congruence to the activist cause in these relations. Two experiments were used to answer the research question. The first one – 290 respondents in a 2X2 setting – tested and corroborated the hypothesis that an activist message from a brand, when congruent (incongruent) with consumer point-of-view about a specific cause or activism, increases (decrease) the intention of positive WOM and decrease (increase) the intention of negative WOM. The second one – 299 respondents in a 2x2 setting – retested (and also corroborated) the first hypothesis and tested the hypothesis that for an authentic (non-authentic) brand the moderation effect of congruence between consumer point-of-view about a cause and the brand positioning about that same cause will result on an increase (decrease) in positive WOM and a decrease (increase) in negative WOM. Both experiments were conducted in Amazon Mechanical Turk. The analysis using conditional process analysis (Hayes, 2018) using the SPSS 23.0 macro PROCESS Version 3.4 revealed that consumer congruence to the cause moderated the main relationship but only Brand Credibility – as an element from Perceived Brand Authenticity – moderate it.

Keywords: Brand Activism. Brand Authenticity. Cause Congruence. Experiment.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In October 2017 Avon™ launched, in Brazil, a project under the hashtag #REPENSEOEOLOGIO (in a free translation something like "rethink compliment") consisting of a site and a series of videos that tried to show the power of words in people's development, especially in creating and reinforcing roles and gender stereotypes. Both the trailer and the documentary ("Rewind the Compliment / Complete Documentary") have reverberated in traditional and online media. On YouTube®, it had 58,411 views, 2,000 likes, and 11,000 dislikes, generating 1,748 comments. The same content on Avon ®'s Facebook® fan page (over 19 million followers), reached more than 1,900,000 views with 37,000 reactions (17,000 likes and 13,000 adverse reactions) and was shared more of 10,000 times.

In September 2018, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its “Just Do It” brand signature, Nike® used Colin Kaepernick¹ as the face of their campaign with the message “Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything”. According to the business news site Bloomberg (“Kaepernick Campaign Created \$43 Million in Buzz for Nike - Bloomberg,” n.d.) this initiative generated a result of around 43 million dollars in media exposure and many reactions – positive and negative – in the various social network.

Today in our society, there are several social and political debates being held – online and offline – about different subjects, such as gender, ethnic and racial minorities, immigration, and other topics that are even more taboo.

In this context, business organizations also seek to assume positions on these subjects, as shown in the examples cited in the introductory paragraphs, disseminating their opinion extensively, through their brands, with campaigns, sponsorships, and products.

Consumers, for several psychological and sociological reasons, react to this kind of action or communication, talking to others online – through likes, dislikes, comments, and shares – and also offline through one of the oldest mechanisms to spread good and bad news: word-of-mouth (WOM). Different measurements may be used to demonstrate the magnitude of consumer’s reactions to activist posts, as shown in those examples mentioned before. Metrics like the number of views, likes, dislikes, comments, and shares are standard metrics used by marketing managers to indicate the impact of an action on social networks and the immediate engagement of consumers. Moreover, they are the current WOM.

¹ Colin Kaepernick was virtually banned from NFL by kneeling during the execution of the American National Anthem in a game in 2016 in protest against racial injustice.

Consumers can react positively or negatively or even do not react at all, depending upon their view of the content or cause of that specific campaign. If it is a cause that they are defending, they will spread positive WOM about it and, probably, about the brand or corporation who issued the message. (Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Torelli, Monga, & Kaikati, 2012)

Brands have long ceased to be logos used in products and advertisements. Now, they can be seen as cultural elements that are constructed through the market-consumers relationship (Holt, 2006). This idea may be reinforced through those examples mentioned in the opening paragraphs.

Sarah Banet-Weiser (2012, p. 4) explains this phenomenon: “Branding in our era has extended beyond a business model; branding is now both reliant on and reflective of, our most basic social and cultural relations.” In addition to this macro-level aspect, brands also act at the micro-level, helping consumers to define and show who they are. (J. Aaker, 1999; Belk, 1988; Escalas & Bettman, 2005)

Brands play an important role and contribute to the mainstream culture of society (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2009), so they participate – intentionally or not – in social debates and social movements. Brands can reinforce entrenched stereotypes, patterns, and concepts, or they can help to break them by participating in the construction of others. Furthermore, people expect brands to position themselves on these issues. According to a survey conducted by Sprout Social² with over 1000 consumers in the United States, 2/3 of consumers want brands to express their positions about political and social issues. (“Championing Change in the Age of Social Media - How Brands Are Using to Connect with People on the Issues that Matter”, 2017). Edelman Communication Agency³ (“Edelman Earned Brand”, 2018, p. 2) also reports a recent survey that is conducted annually with 8,000 respondents around the world: “Nearly two-thirds of consumers now choose, switch to or boycott a brand based on its stand on societal issues, up from 51 percent in 2017.”

When brands are considered as a cultural element that makes up contemporary society, authenticity questions – beyond product authenticity – begin to appear as an issue. Holt, arguing about the evolution of consumer culture and brand management paradigms, asserted that post-modernity consumers, who are much more aware of the commercial intention of brands, stated:

² Sprout Social is a social media management agency based in Chicago

³ Edelman is a digital marketing agency based in Chicago

“When all brands are understood as commercial entities, through and through, consumers will be less inclined to judge a brand's authenticity by its distance from the profit motive. Instead of a standard of disinterestedness, the question of authenticity will shift to focus on the brand's contribution as a cultural resource.” (Holt, 2002, p.87).

Consumers are looking for brands that are “relevant, original and genuine: they are increasingly searching for brand authenticity.” This search for authenticity happens due to an “overflow of the fake, and omnipresence of meaningless market offers” and also because brands play an essential role in the construction of consumer identity and in the way he or she wants to express himself or herself. (Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin, & Grohmann, 2015, p. 1)

Given the context briefly reported here, it may be worth to understand from academic and managerial perspectives, how the perception of brand authenticity interferes in consumer reaction, through WOM, when a brand assumes an activist position.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question that defines the objectives of this research project is: “what is the impact of an activist brand message in WOM considering the moderator roles of brand authenticity and consumer congruence to the activist cause in these relations?”.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 General Objective

The main objective of this research is to evaluate the impact of an activist message in WOM and the moderator role of brand authenticity and consumer congruence to the activist cause in these relations.

1.2.2 Intermediary Objectives

In order to achieve the main objective of this research, some intermediary objectives were set:

- a) to evaluate the direct effect of an activist message in WOM moderated by consumer congruence to a cause;
- b) to evaluate the moderator role of brand authenticity in these relations.

1.3 THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL JUSTIFICATION

Brand activism has been more used by marketing practitioners than by academia, except for its presence in a more critical view of the appropriation of political and social activist messages by companies in their advertising pieces and positioning strategies, in what Sarah Banet-Weiser and Roopali Mukherjee named as *commodity activism*, a kind of activism that consumers perform by buying something for any particular reason. (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012).

Taking a stand as a political and social activist company or brand is being seen as the step forward of social responsibility actions, as this seems to be the expectation of consumers (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). Douglas Holt was already expressing (Holt, 2002), long before brand activism started to appear as a new trend, about how consumers would be looking for brands to help to build their identity, providing cultural elements that would complement their interpretation of the world.

Political, social, and environmental concerns of society – issues that go beyond buying and selling transactions – are also addressed in corporate social responsibility (CSR) studies. However, CSR studies focus on how to reconcile financial results with the need to be a company that preserves natural resources and does good in social aspects. (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018).

Current CSR theories now include a social approach (Elkington, 1998), broadening their focus beyond environmental questions. Besides, these studies have also demonstrated that social responsibility, corporate ethics, and sponsorship of social causes are directly related to better financial results to better consumers' responses (affective, cognitive, and behavioral) and can affect price perception, quality, and purchase intention (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006). However, as Sarkar and Kotler (2018) consider, CSR's approach is studied and considered more about the results for the company, while activism would be about a much broad impact, even considering it for the whole society.

As a recent phenomenon, there is a theoretical gap considering the impact of these activists initiatives, as posed by Sarkar and Kotler (2018), in the consumer-brand relationship, from the brand management perspective and also from consumer perception. Several studies bring consumer activism as an instance of activism, but those that deal with the activism of any

kind by corporations and brands usually try to demonstrate that there is an appropriation of issues from society and communities for the mere purpose of building more profits.

Lee, Hosanagar and Nair (2018), in a study using FacebookTM, highlighted the importance of social networks (SN) for brand communication strategy since consumers are spending more time connected to SN consuming, creating, and sharing content. They aimed to understand what kind of content engages consumers in an open and real (non-lab) context such as FacebookTM. They concluded that brand personality-related content and information about social initiatives generate more engagement than information about products and prices. However, content that can be considered activist was just one of the codes used by researchers, along with humanitarian issues.

Considering activist content as an instance of what is known as firm-generated content (FGC), there is still very little written about how such content engages the consumer. (Osei-Frimpong & McLean, 2018).

The impact or interference of other constructs from the consumer-brand relationship field is also missing in this context. Can the perception of authenticity cause some change in the way he/she reacts to an activist positioning? Although there is no direct mention to the actions of activist nature, Morhart et al. (2015) and Guèveremont and Grohmann (2016) suggest that there are other elements to be investigated regarding the concept of brand authenticity such as the consumer's cultural context and other styles of brand communication.

For practitioners, such as brand managers, it is also essential to know how to use activism strategically. Should a brand be perceived as authentic by consumers to be able to use this approach efficiently? Answering such essential questions can help brand managers to make better decisions in their roles.

Brand activism is already a reality, as can be seen from the numerous films and commercials that bring activist positions, some of them mentioned in the introductory paragraphs. However, some of those actions seem to be intuitively generated and managed. This managerial practice shows that also from the practical point of view, there is room for a better understanding of the phenomenon.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 BRAND ACTIVISM AND CONSUMER REACTION

Activism related to consumption has been more studied from the consumer standpoint. This activism is about the consumer who challenges the actions of marketers and companies and brands they represent. Furthermore, the activism that deals with the impact of consumption in the whole society as a part of a cultural construct is widely studied (Handelman & Fischer, 2018; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Kozinets et al., 2002).

However, the idea of activism driven by brands is still a relatively new concept. It has been used more by marketing professionals than academics. Jean-Noel Kapferer talking about brand management was, perhaps, one of the first to mention the term when he stated that:

“[] some brands are more than actors; they are activists: they act as stimulants of the whole category and beyond. They raise debates and stimulate issues. As such, they are more than suppliers; they demonstrate energy and concern for the future of the category and the well-being of the end-users. This kind of brand is able to raise a community and have followers. Today, fostered by the internet revolution, which made salient the forgotten ” (KAPFERER, 2012, p. 132)

Douglas B. Holt (2002, p. 87) analyzing the growth of the anti-brand movement in the early 2000s, wrote about the future of brands:

“Consumers will look for brands to contribute directly to their identity projects by providing original and relevant cultural materials with which to work. So, brands will become another form of expressive culture [...] Brands that create worlds that strike consumers' imaginations, that inspire and provoke and stimulate, that help them interpret the world that surrounds them, will earn kudos and profit”.

Since Brand Activism is not a well-established field of study, some other fields can be used as a source of the theoretical background to support activism as an element of brand strategy.

In General Business Strategy, one field that could encompass elements of activism and contribute to defining Brand Activism better is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Today's concept of CSR started to be developed in the 1960s, bringing the idea that companies have societal obligations beyond to comply with laws and formal regulations merely. The social context on those days was facing many changes through social movements such as civil rights

and women's rights, naming a few. (BRØNN; VRIONI, 2001; CARROLL; SHABANA, 2010). Despite several different definitions, Carrol and Shabana (2010, p. 90) summarize the concept stating that "the essence of CSR and what it refers to are the ethical and philanthropic obligations of the corporation towards society."

More recently, some authors are using the expression Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA) or Corporate Political Advocacy (CPA) (WILCOX, 2018; DODD; SUPA, 2014) to refer to those organizations that make public statements or that take a public stance on social or political issues. Wilcox (2018, p. 3) differentiates CSA from CSR, although recognizing that CSA has its origin on CSR, because

"[] CSR emphasizes action and policies that can help the corporation's reputation and profits. CPA, in contrast, moves beyond dialogic theory's emphasis on achieving consensus, but to focus on an organization's values and how those values are reflected in CEO statements about often controversial social and political issues".

From a Marketing perspective, there is a construct that overlaps with CSR concepts, which is Cause-Related Marketing (CRM). Some authors consider CRM as a dimension of CSR since a brand is a fundamental part of a company's strategy. In a broad sense, CRM can be understood as support activities, mainly financial, to link a cause to a company or brand. (Lafferty, Goldsmith, & Hult, 2004). These activities can be a short-term initiative – a sales-promotion, when a portion of the revenues of a particular product goes to a cause – or a long-term partnership – a Cause-Brand Alliance (CBA) – linking the brand to a cause permanently. (Vahdati & Voss, 2019).

Varadarajan and Menon (1988, p. 59) state that CRM is an evolution of corporate philanthropy, "a manifestation of the alignment of corporate philanthropy and enlightened business interest."

The most cited definitions of CRM, according to Bergkvist and Zhou (2019, p. 5) is:

"[] the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customer engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives."

Furthermore, they classify CRM as a type of leveraged marketing communications (LMC). LMC is that kind of communication used to benefit the brand using a positive association that consumer has to another subject, as a cause.

Sarkar e Kotler (2018, n.p.), proposed an initial definition to brand activism (BAct):

“Brand Activism consists of business efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, and/or environmental reform or stasis with the desire to promote or impede improvements in society.”

According to the authors, BAct is an evolution of CRM and CSR. For them, Brand Activism is a concept oriented by the more significant and more pressing needs of society, and not by the needs of marketing as CRM neither by the needs of the corporation as CSR.

Manfredi-Sánchez (2019, p. 348) defined brand activism “as a communication strategy whose aim is to influence the citizen-consumer employing messages and campaigns created and sustained by political values.” He approaches brand activism from corporate citizenship or corporate political activity, mentioning that it is a shift in the way companies address political issues.

More recently, Champlin et al. (2019, p. 1247) used Brand Advocacy (BAd) to refer to “for-profit brands attempt to align themselves with a social issue, so they appear more socially responsible, rather than overtly commercial.” However, Brand Advocacy is also used to refer to the attitude of someone – consumers, clients, or employees – defending and supporting a brand (Schepers & Nijssen, 2018), and much more recognized in this sense.

For this dissertation, the construct BAct will be adopted as an adaptation of Sarkar and Kotler’s definition, agreeing that it is an evolution and encompass several others and also because it is the only that brought the idea that activism can be pro or against any cause. Then BAct can be seen as any brand effort or activity to promote or impede a social, political, economic, or environmental change.

Regardless of the field or the specific construct, there is an agreement that CSR, CSA, CRM, CBA, or BAct can impact corporate reputation, consumer-brand relationship, and financial results, for the good and the bad, depending on the approach corporations take it on their strategy.

Brønn and Vrioni (2001), talking about CRM, state that, when aligned to the company’s mission, adequately developed and correctly executed, CRM may bring positive results related to reputation and brand-related constructs such as brand loyalty and brand image. Becker-Olsen et al. (2006), studying the impact of CSR actions on consumer behavior, concluded that consumers could reward companies that engage in social initiatives with some purchase-related behavior.

Torelli, Monga e Kaikati (2012) in their theoretical review of the study about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and brand concepts state that communication of CSR foster purchase intention and other purchase-related behavior, as well as, positive intentions and behaviors related to a company or brand and to the cause that are supported by such company or brand.

One point that is pervasive in researches is that CSR and CRM actions should be congruent with the consumer standpoint about the cause that they are supporting. Marin and Ruiz (2007, p. 248) building from identity consumption theory emphasizes “the importance of identity similarity and attractiveness in shaping consumer attitudes, preferences, and choices.” Youn and Kim (2008) stated that prior prosocial behaviors had positive effects on consumer attitudes toward cause-related actions. Some others assure that customer-cause involvement and affinity have a positive impact on consumer reaction. (Arora & Henderson, 2007; Koschate-Fischer, Stefan, & Hoyer, 2012; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). Following this line of thought, Sen, Du, and Bhattacharya (2016, p. 72) stated that “consumer affinity or support for the CSR issue is, naturally, a positive moderator of consumer responses.” Another concept used to reinforce the importance of congruence between a cause and the consumer point-of-view about it is the moral foundation since CSR, CRM, and activists’ actions are considered moral actions, hence should be aligned with individual moral values. This congruence between moral values and the cause drives pro-company attitudes and behaviors. (Baskentli, Sen, Du, & Bhattacharya, 2019; Chernev & Blair, 2015)

Xie, Bagozzi, and Grønhaug (2019) stated that most of the research in the CSR field studied consumer reactions to corporate irresponsibility, such as negative emotions, feelings, and reactions. In their study about the impact of CSR actions on consumer brand advocacy behaviors (represented by positive word-of-mouth, among other constructs), they found that empathy moderated the extent of moral emotions and attitudes that are evoked in response to a CSR action regarding ethics of community.

Literature mentions several possible consumer reactions to CRM, CSR, and other cause-related actions, and one that appears frequently is Word-of-Mouth (WOM) (Abbas, Gao, & Shah, 2018; Thomas, Mullen, & Fraedrich, 2011; Youn & Kim, 2008).

WOM has received much attention over the years as a more genuine and relied upon by consumers (Thomas et al., 2011) and capable of surpassing the criticism of regular advertisement. Traditional word-of-mouth communication (WOM), which occurs offline, has been treated as a valuable tool to help consumers make decisions, and it is recognized by marketers as well as by social scientists who believe that as a natural phenomenon, interferes

with virtually all consumer decisions. Furthermore, as said by Silverman (Kimmel, 2005), WOM is “the oldest, newest Marketing Medium.” WOM communication, whether offline or online, is one of the most common ways of assessing consumer engagement and as stated by Youn and Kim (2008, p. 132) in their study about consumer attitudes toward cause-related marketing “[WOM] would be the most efficient channel to communicate corporate support of social issues with the public.”

Since the WOM, in its offline or online format, is considered a common way to evaluate consumer engagement, it can be useful to understand some of the engagement mechanisms. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) researched the academic production on traditional offline WOM to understand consumer motivations to engage in WOM in an offline context, to convey those motivations to the world of the internet. Internet communication has extended these possibilities of information exchange between consumers and brands. Communication in this digital environment differs from offline communication by being able to target multiple individuals instead of one-to-one, to be available indefinitely, and to be anonymous, among other characteristics. (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010).

They brought the concept of social interaction utility in virtual communities: utility related to the interaction focus (concern with other consumers, help the company, social benefits, and exercise of power), utility for consumption (consumption of communication itself), and approval utility (self-improvement, material rewards). In addition to these three groups, a re-reading of previous studies, the authors added two others: utility related to moderation (specific to the context where they were doing research, which was a platform for opinions and reviews of products and services) and homeostasis utility (search to return to the affective balance expressing positive feelings or extravasating negative feelings).

Gavilanes, Flatten, and Brettel (2018) use advertising engagement literature to redraw the phases of the engagement. They proposed four phases of engagement: (1) neutral observation or consumption, (2) positive filter, (3) cognitive and affective processing, and (4) brand advocacy. According to the authors, each of these phases requires a different level of cognitive, emotional, or behavioral effort. According to this approach, the weakest level of engagement would be only consuming content published by the brand, and the highest one would be sharing branded content on his/her personal page. In this sense, consumer engagement in a digital context happens:

“When consumers interact with a brand in a digital environment or through media (e.g., social networks), strengthening their investment with the brand at different

levels and phases (e.g., consume, filter, process, co-create, and advocate) to produce traceable reactions (e.g., impressions, clicks, likes, comments, shares) that represent an interactive observable response to firm-initiated (e.g., advertising) or user-initiated (e.g., viral Facebook post) contact.” (Gavilanes et al., 2018, p. 6)

Regarding the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of the engagement, Gavilanes, Flatten, and Brettel (2018) builds upon the theoretical models used to demonstrate how mental processing of advertisements occurs and reactions generated by this mental processing. They state, based on several pieces of literature, that there is a part of this mental processing of an advertisement that is like a black box of “cognitive and affective reactions” that they call intermediate mind-set responses (IMR) (Gavilanes et al., 2018, p. 7). Consumer behavior resulted from these reactions can be to buy or to advocate in favor of the product or the brand. Gavilanes et al. (Gavilanes et al., 2018) approach is a distinct perspective from engagement theories, where the cognitive and affective reactions and consumer effort are analyzed. The authors believe that the digital engagement and IMR processes in the digital context are similar and that the interactivity of the digital world makes the reactions visible. Thus, the authors state that, just as an ad generates feedback from viewers, a Facebook® post, or any other social media content, will also generate feedback in the form of digital engagement.

Gavilanes, Flatten, and Brettel (2018) also claim that the content category of posts also affects the engagement at different levels. They worked with seven different categories of content: new product announcements, current product displays, contests and sweepstakes, sales, consumer feedback, infotainment, and company information. So, they concluded that Facebook® posts from the infotainment category significantly affect consumer engagement. Infotainment, according to the previous literature used by these authors, is a social network advertising category that “delivers information and/or entertains users with new, factual, useful, educational, and/or interesting information, funny videos or pictures, boulevard news, seasonal postings, and wishes, etc.” (Gavilanes et al., 2018, p. 4). This engagement is a cognitive one, making him or her commenting, as well as making him or her a brand advocate who shares branded content in his/her social network.

Corroborating with the idea that the content of the message affects consumer engagement, Lee, Hosanagar and Nair (2018) in their study on Facebook™, about advertisement content and how it does influence consumers’ engagement concluded that:

“Our main finding is that brand personality content is associated with higher levels of consumer engagement with a message, while directly informative content is

associated with lower levels of engagement when included in messages in isolation but higher engagement levels when provided in combination with brand personality-related attributes.” (Lee et al., 2018, p. 3)

The authors consider brand personality-related content those with emotional elements, humor or joke, and philanthropy-related or activist content.

All theoretical background exposed here supports what postulates hypotheses #1 (H1):

H1: An activist message from a brand, when congruent (incongruent) with consumer point-of-view about a specific cause or activism, increases (decrease) the intention of positive WOM and decrease (increase) the intention of negative WOM.

2.2 BRAND AUTHENTICITY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO BRAND-CAUSE FIT

Literature about CRM, CSR, and other cause-related actions report several elements as interfering in the relationship between the brand or corporation action and the consumer reaction. One recurrent subject as an essential antecedent of consumer reaction is the perceived fit between the brand and the cause (Barone, Norman, & Miyazaki, 2007; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Bigné, Currás-Pérez, & Aldás-Manzano, 2012; Lafferty, 2007; Lafferty et al., 2004; Xiaoli, Kwangjun, Nan, & Heo, 2007).

Champlin et al. (2019) stated that a brand could match with a cause in three different ways: functional match, image match, or target audience match. Nevertheless, they reported that these previous studies, even reassuring the importance of brand-cause fit, presented mixed results. One mixed result reported is the example of female-related brand and female-related social issues: for one side sounds natural that a brand that sells female-related products and knows its target, goes well with a female-focused social cause and get a good reaction from its consumer; but for the other side the brand can be perceived as profiting from women. Bigné et al. (2012) also reported a set of mixed results depending on cause-brand fit – positive and negative – from previous studies.

Furthermore, the cause-brand fit was reported as ineffective when consumers, being aware of corporation CSR actions, see those actions as insincere. (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006)

Another concept largely found in researches about consumer reactions to activist actions from a brand or a corporation is based on the attribution of motives or intentions of them by the consumer. (Bigné-Alcañiz, Currás-Pérez, & Sánchez-García, 2009; Bigné et al., 2012; Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Sen et al., 2016). Most of these authors consider two lines of theory to subsidize

their researches: attribution theory and persuasion knowledge model. The first “explains how individuals attribute causes to events” (Childs, Woo, & Kim, 2019, p. 490) and the later states “that consumers learn to interpret and evaluate the persuasion agents' goals and tactics and use this knowledge to cope with persuasion attempts” (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013, p. 1832).

If the consumer, presented to an activist action – a persuasion attempt –, attributes the motive behind this action as an altruist or public-serving motive and also, while assessing their evaluation of the brand or corporation represented by reputation, brand credibility and authenticity as positive, they will tend to react more positively (Alhouti, Johnson, & Holloway, 2016; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Brønn & Vrioni, 2001).

Pérez states that even though CSR messages “proved to be a double-edged sword” (Pérez, 2019, p. 3) due to their potential to increase customer loyalty at the same time, they face high levels of skepticism. Moreover, she mentions that one way to decrease skepticism is the message be perceived as authentic by a consumer. Joo, Miller, and Fink (2019, p. 243) also discussing authenticity of CSR initiatives and consumer reactions, pointed that all dimensions of authenticity are positively related to “WOM toward the organization and its CSR program, intentions to support the organization (i.e., media consumption intentions) and its CSR program.”

Bron and Vrioni (2001, p. 208) assert that to defeat skepticism, almost natural reaction for CSR and CRM, and by similarity, for Brand Activism, “it is not only important for companies pursuing CRM to be genuine in their behavior, but they must also have a full understanding of consumers' knowledge of CRM and their level of skepticism before attempting this marketing technique.”

Then, authenticity is a construct that repeatedly appears in previous researches about consumer’s reactions to marketing actions (Alhouti et al., 2016). However, in the context of CSR, CRM, or cause-related actions, the researches are limited, and most of them talk about the authenticity of the action itself, not about the brand or corporation's perceived authenticity. (Alhouti et al., 2016; Amawate & Deb, 2019b; Jeon & An, 2019)

Champlin et al. (2019, p.1241) alert that engaging in an activist advertising strategy can be a risky decision, and should “consider how they might communicate the brand’s authentic and thorough understanding of the social issue, before ‘claiming’ the issue as part of the brand’s positioning strategy.” Pérez (2019), in her conceptual research about message authenticity in CSR, pointed out that authenticity and credibility should be treated as distinct constructs, at least for CSR communication models. She also pointed out that authenticity could be a

predecessor for message credibility, and then message credibility would help to develop source credibility.

Brand authenticity construct is relatively new in the Marketing academic field. Several different meanings are found, built from a variety of aspects, such as the history of a brand, its origin, brand's products manufacturing methods, brand credibility, moral issues, among others. (Morhart et al., 2015). However, even though it is a recent phenomenon in Marketing literature, brand authenticity – beyond product authenticity questions and issues – is a construct that is being studied more and more, since brands can be considered as one of the cultural elements that make up contemporary society. Holt (2002), in his discussion about the evolution of consumer culture and brand management paradigms, asserted that post-modernity consumers, who are more aware that brands are commercial entities, would consider brands participation in the culture construction a better sign of authenticity than its distance from the search for profit.

In a post-post-modernity context, consumers are facing an “overflow of the fake and an omnipresence of meaningless market offers.” In the same context, brands play an important role in consumer identity construction and consumer expression of himself or herself (or how he/she wants to be seen by others). Then, it is reasonable that consumers look for brands that are “relevant, original and genuine: they are increasingly searching for authenticity in brands.” (Morhart et al., 2015, p. 1)

It seems there is a collective understanding that brand authenticity is a relevant subject in the consumer-brand relationship field from an academic perspective and a practical standpoint. However, there is no consensus about the definition and about how to measure brand authenticity from the consumer perspective.

Bruhn et al. (2012) do not precisely define brand authenticity construct, but conclude that “authenticity is a rationally-created characteristic informing an individual’s subjective perceptions and is thus not a characteristic interpreted as being immanent in objective reality.” (Bruhn et al., 2012, p. 568). In their empirical study with consumers, they conclude that brand authenticity has four dimensions: continuity, originality, reliability, and naturalness.

Morhart et al. (2015) propose a perceived brand authenticity (PBA) model that integrates three perspectives from previous concepts of authenticity: an objectivist perspective (something that can be measured or evaluated by experts), a constructivist perspective (when one's beliefs, values, and expectations are projected on what is being assessed as authentic or not) and an existentialist perspective (the idea of being true to oneself, related to the notion of self). They add to this interpretation a consumer perspective that has resulted in four dimensions

to brand authenticity: continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism. Then they suggest the following definition for PBA, composed of four components:

“as the extent to which consumers perceive a brand to be faithful toward itself (continuity), true to its consumers (credibility), motivated by caring and responsibility (integrity), and able to support consumers in being true to themselves (symbolism).” (Morhart et al., 2015, p. 203).

Napoli et al. (2014) also propose a definition and a scale that incorporates consumer voice to brand authenticity (CBBA) defining it as: “as a subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by consumers” (Napoli et al., 2014, p. 1091) composed by three dimensions: quality commitment, heritage, and sincerity.

Akbar and Wymer (2017) have found in brand-related literature, eight brand authenticity conceptualizations with a total of 40 different dimensions. After analysis, they proposed that brand authenticity is a construct with two dimensions – originality and genuineness – and is defined “as the extent to which a brand is considered unique, legitimate, truthful to its claims, and lacking falsity” (Akbar & Wymer, 2017).

Building upon what is stated by Charlton and Cornwell (2019) in their work about horizontal marketing partnerships and brand compatibility, authenticity can be an alternative to brand-cause fit, since brand-cause fit has not shown a conclusive answer from previous studies. The theoretical basis adopted by Charlton and Cornwell (2019) for brand authenticity that also fits with the approach of this current study is the one proposed by Morhart et al. (2015). The four dimensions defined by Morhart et al. (2015) – continuity, credibility, integrity, symbolism – encompass most of the constructs previously studied on an individual basis as intervenient in the relationship between the brand or corporation action and the consumer reaction.

Continuity explained as “brand's timelessness, historicity and its ability to transcend trends” (Morhart et al., 2015, p. 202) brings the long-lasting relationship idea that the consumer needs to create means to attribute values to the brand and then cope with the moments he or she interacts with the brand, as stated by attribution theory and persuasion knowledge model. (Alhouthi et al., 2016)

Credibility is all about delivering on previous commitments, and for Morhart et al. (2015, p. 202). is defined as “the brand's transparency and honesty toward the consumer, as well as its willingness and ability to fulfill its claims.” Credibility can be considered similar to reputation, a construct reported as an essential characteristic in companies to generate positive consumer reactions.

The third element in PBA construct is **integrity**, which is conceptualized as “the moral purity and responsibility of the brand” (Morhart et al., 2015, p. 203) and according to what was stated by several researchers, and supported by attribution theory. In this theory, when a consumer attributes the motive behind the activist action as an altruist or a public-serving motive – a representation of moral purity – they react more positively to the action (Alhouti et al., 2016; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Brønn & Vrioni, 2001).

And the last PBA element, **symbolism**, is about a brand’s “potential to serve as a resource for identity construction by providing self-referential cues representing values, roles, and relationships” (Morhart et al., 2015, p. 203). It goes together with the alignment between the activism or the cause and the consumer point of view (Arora & Henderson, 2007; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Lichtenstein et al., 2004) as a resource to reinforce or create identity, and then reinforcing the potential to generate a reaction from consumers.

Even considering that an activist action from a brand does not have the same impact – from the brand or the consumer perspective – as a brand scandal, the former, if it is not congruent to the consumer point of view, it can cause, at least, some level of discomfort. Then, brand authenticity can alleviate this discomfort as “it alleviates negative consequences of a brand scandal” (Guèvremont & Grohmann, 2018, p. 9).

Considering the exposed, hypotheses 2 (H2) can be formulated as follows:

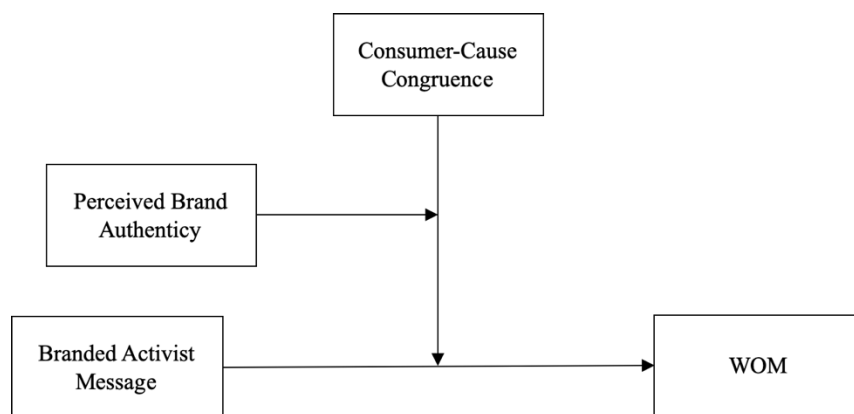
H2: For an authentic (non-authentic) brand, there will be an increase (decrease) in the moderation effect of consumer congruence to a cause on the relationship between the activist message and WOM

3 METHOD

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Based on the theoretical background, we propose the following conceptual framework to answer the research question – “what is the impact of an activist message in WOM considering the moderator roles of brand authenticity and consumer congruence to the activist cause in these relations?” – and also, based on the theoretical background, the conceptual framework, presented in Figure 1, was developed.

Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework



Source: the author, 2020

We developed two experiments to test H1 and H2.

3.2 EXPERIMENT #1

3.2.1 Brand selection

The first experiment would compare a well-known brand and not informed one (showed as a blurred logo), then we selected, firstly, some brands from the Interbrand⁴ Global Brands

⁴ Interbrand is a global brand consultancy with 24 offices in 17 countries. It is specialized in brand strategy, brand analytics, brand valuation, corporate design, digital brand management, packaging design, and naming. Interbrand publishes the Best Global Brands report on an annual basis that identifies the world’s 100 most valuable brands based on three key aspects: (a) the financial performance of the branded products or service, (b) the role the brand plays in influencing consumer choice and (c) the strength the brand has to command a premium price, or secure earnings for the company. <https://www.interbrand.com/best-brands/best-global-brands/2018/>

2018 ranking. Selecting from this diverse set of brands that includes brands from mature industries and the so-called new economy, Toyota brand presented an acceptable performance in PBA scale, a brand considered authentic enough by the consumers, and also have not presented an extreme attachment level, which could cause an interference capable to reduce the impact of the activism.

Other criteria used to select were qualitative: this well-known brand, should not be involved in any recent activist action or any scandal, should be neutral in its political positioning but with some social initiatives and should be active in social networks.

Three researchers were consulted to make the final decision, and Toyota was chosen to be the brand for the first experiment.

3.2.2 Manipulation instruments development

Firstly, we decided to use Twitter™ as the social media to convey the messages because it is, most of the time, only text without pictures or any other kind of interference.

The cause used to manipulate the activism in this experiment was immigration-related issues in the USA. Immigration was chosen among other subjects to represent activism since it is a current and broad global issue that affects all sorts of people and all sorts of countries. It can be replicated, if desired, in other contexts, and is also a subject that is controversial and broad enough to find enough favorable and unfavorable consumers.

For the activist tweet, we selected a specific subject related to Immigration that was fresh in the media, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)⁵, an American immigration policy. We also applied the word Dreamer, used to identify those who are protected by DACA.

For the non-activist tweet, we put together some sentences talking about products, quality, and consumers, that could be used by Toyota or any other brand as an institutional communication. We took care of not use any real advertisement slogan or signature because the same content would be used for the blurred brand version of the manipulation instrument.

Then we presented the tweets for seven researchers for content interpretation, and after the adjustments, the final tweets (Appendix 1) were used in the experiment.

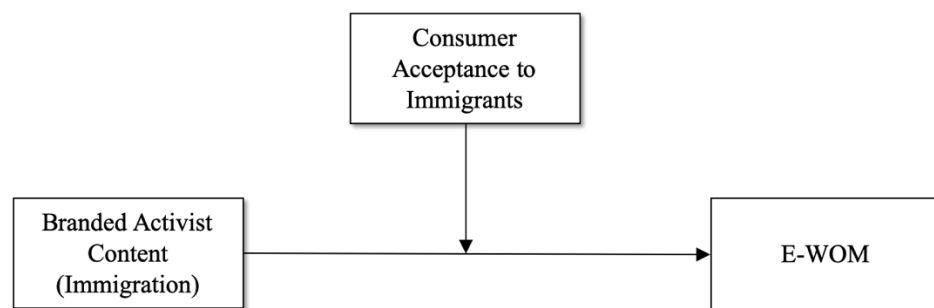
⁵ “Daca is a federal government program created in 2012 under Barack Obama to allow people brought to the US illegally as children the temporary right to live, study and work in America”. (“What is Daca and who are the Dreamers? | US news | The Guardian,” n.d.)

3.2.3 Experiment Description

The objective of this first experiment was to test the hypothesis (H1) that an activist message from a brand, when congruent (incongruent) with consumer point-of-view about a specific cause or activism, increases (decrease) the intention of positive WOM and decrease (increase) the intention of negative WOM as it is represented in Figure 2.

We expect that this effect is valid for a known brand as well as for a not identifiable brand.

Figure 2 – Conceptual Framework for H1



Source: the author, 2020

It was a 2 (activist tweet versus non-activist tweet) x 2 (visible brand versus blurred logo brand) between-subjects factorial design. Consumers and non-consumers of Toyota brand composed experiment sample. Sampling was non-probabilistic and for convenience, and two hundred and ninety participants, recruited directly from Amazon Mechanical Turk in exchange for a small financial compensation, completed this study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions

After a very brief introduction about the research and its aim, respondents firstly answered about their acceptance of immigrants, and then the manipulation was presented. After that, they responded questions about their prone to make WOM and concluded, answering some demographic questions.

Since the cause communicated by the tweet relates to Immigration Issues, a compatible scale must be used to measure that. The first part of the questionnaire, used the Immigrant Acceptance Scale showed in Table 1, and it was a combination of a scale initially used to measure core political values and developed by Schwartz, Capra, and Vecchione (Schwartz, Caprara, & Vecchione, 2010) combined with a public opinion poll from US News Channel. Responses were made on a 7-point Likert Scale that ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 =

strongly agree. Low scores in questions IMM1, IMM3, and IMM5 and high scores in questions IMM2, IMM4 E IMM6 indicate low acceptance of immigrants.

Table 1 – Immigrant Acceptance Scale

IMM1	People who come to live here from other countries generally make the USA a better place to live
IMM2	People who come to live here from other countries generally take jobs away from American workers
IMM3	People who come to live and work here from other countries are the leading cause of unemployment in the USA today
IMM4	People who come to live here from other countries make the USA’s cultural life richer
IMM5	Undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, known as DREAMers, should be allowed to stay in the country.
IMM6	All illegal immigrants should be deported

Source: Adapted from Schwartz, Caprara, & Vecchione, 2010

Then, the manipulation instruments showed in Appendix 1, were presented, comprised of four possibilities:

- a. Manipulation Toyota Activist Tweet (TAct) – A sequence of two tweets defending immigration and immigrants related issues in the USA at Toyota Twitter Page;
- b. Manipulation Toyota Non-Activist Tweet (TNAct) – A sequence of two tweets communicating generic messages at Toyota Twitter Page;
- c. Manipulation Blurred Logo Activist Tweet (BAct) – A sequence of two tweets communicating generic messages at a branded Twitter Page, but the brand is blurred;
- d. Manipulation Blurred Logo Non-Activist Tweet (BNAct) – A sequence of two tweets defending immigration and immigrants related issues in the USA at a branded Fan Page, but the brand is blurred.

After they read the sequence of the two posts, they were asked about their possible reactions using Positive and Negative WOM scales (Table 2), adapted from Harrison-Walker (2001), Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002), Brown et al. (2005), Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux (2009), Goyette et al. (2010), Alexandrov, Lilly, and Babakus (2013), Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2013), Casidy and Shin (2015) and Antonetti and Maklan (2018).

Table 2 – Word-of-mouth Scale

Positive Word-of-Mouth	
PWOM1	I would say positive things about this brand
PWOM2	I would be proud to tell others that I am this brand's customer
PWOM3	I would recommend this brand to others
PWOM4	I would speak of this brand's good sides
Negative Word-of-Mouth	
NWOM1	I would say negative things about this brand
NWOM2	I would bad-mouth against this brand to other people
NWOM3	I would warn other people not to use or buy this brand
NWOM4	I would complain about this brand's behavior to other people

Source: adapted from Harrison-Walker (2001), Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002), Brown et al. (2005), Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux (2009), Goyette et al. (2010), Alexandrov, Lilly, and Babakus (2013), Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2013), Casidy and Shin (2015) and Antonetti and Maklan (2018).

As for manipulation check for the activism content, they were asked to answer two questions, as showed in Table 3, adapted from Moskalenko and McCauley (2009) and Corning and Myers (2002).

Table 3 – Activism Manipulation Check Scale

ACTIV_CH1	The tweets you have just seen are promoting a social cause, such as immigrants' rights
ACTIV_CH2	Since activism is “the use of direct and noticeable action to achieve a result, usually a political or social one,” those posts showed an activist content

Source: adapted from Moskalenko and McCauley (2009) and Corning and Myers (2002).

At last, they answered a set of demographic questions (age, gender, school level, political view, and ethnicity).

3.2.4 Participants

Two hundred and ninety participants recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk completed this study in exchange for a small financial compensation from August 16th to 17th, 2019. In order to participate, individuals had to pass three filters: to be in the USA, with an

approval rate for all requesters' HITs higher than 98%, and the number of HITs approved greater than 500.

First of all, the total time taken to answer the study was considered, and all of them that took less than⁶ 130 seconds were discarded (7 cases). Then, the time to read the tweets presented was analyzed, and all data representing unacceptable low times of reading were selected to exclusion (reading times⁷ inferior to 2 seconds), resulting in 1 exclusion.

Then all cases with the wrong answers for the trap questions and the wrong answer to the brand presented were excluded (8 cases).

Then, post content interpretation was verified by two different researchers, and another 32 cases were discarded.

After this first analysis based on time and content, responses considered atypical (for Immigration Acceptance questions and WOM questions) were detected using Mahalanobis D² measurement, proper for multivariate situations (Hair Jr, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). Another 11 cases were discarded, resulting in 231 valid cases (48 for Manipulation TAct, 55 for Manipulation TNAct, 61 for Manipulation BAct, and 57 for Manipulation BNAct). The summary of the steps taken to clean up the data is in Table 4.

Table 4 - Summary of Data Cleaning

	Toyota		Blurred Brand		Total
	Activist Tweets	Non-Activist Tweets	Activist Tweets	Non-Activist Tweets	
Total (Initial Respondents)	73	72	75	70	290
Time to complete study (less than 130 sec)	3	0	2	2	7
Time to Read the Tweets (less than 2 sec)	0	0	1	0	1
Wrong Answers	3	3	1	1	8
Tweets Interpretation	6	14	8	4	32
Mahalanobis Distance	3	0	2	6	11
Total (Final Respondents)	58	55	61	57	231

Source: the author, 2020

The final sample demography, shown in Table 5, is in line with MTurk demographics identified in recent research, considering the MTurk workers' level of experience, for school

⁶ The total time to take the survey suggested by Qualtrics was 14 minutes, then anyone that took around 15% of total suggested time or less was considered unacceptable.

⁷ An average speed reader can read 300 words per minute or 5.5 words per second (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speed_reading).

level and political view. Ethnicity showed some difference, with more non-white representation in the experiment sample (Robinson, Rosenzweig, Moss, & Litman, 2019). MTurk workers are becoming increasingly diverse and are around 500,000 in total, and they are still different from the US population (Chandler, Rosenzweig, Moss, Robinson, & Litman, 2019). MTurk workers are younger, better educated, and more liberal than the US population, and the sample of this experiment does not differ from this reality.

Table 5 - Demographics

Demographics	Experiment
Age	
Less than 30	31.6%
31 to 40	29.0%
41 to 50	21.2%
More than 50	18.2%
Gender	
Male	39.8%
Female	60.2%
School Level	
High School	11.2%
Some College	22.5%
Ass. Degree	7.8%
Bach. Degree	40.7%
Master	15.2%
PhD	0.9%
Professional	1.7%
Political View	
Very Conservative	6.5%
Conservative	22.1%
Moderate	23.8%
Liberal	30.7%
Very Liberal	16.9%
Ethnicity	
White	67.5%
Non-White	32.5%

Source: the author, 2020

3.2.5 Measurement model evaluation

In order to examine the quality of the psychometric properties of the scales used in this study, the measurement model was tested for Cronbach's Alpha reliability and also assessed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using SPSS and Amos software.

Internal Reliability of Immigrant Acceptance, Positive WOM, and Negative WOM scales may be considered acceptable due to Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0,7 for all three scales.

The first analyses of the Immigrant Acceptance Scale presented a high covariance between the estimated errors of two items ($e_4 \leftrightarrow e_1 = 55.698$) and, therefore, it was adjusted. After adjusting covariance, all loadings were higher than 0.5, as indicated by Hair et al. (2014) and also presented adequate reliability, since variance extracted and construct reliability are all very close or higher than 0,7. The model had an acceptable fit presenting $\chi^2 = 14.128$, $df = 5$, $NFI = 0.981$, $CFI = 0.988$, $RMSEA = 0.089$ and satisfactory psychometric properties.

Table 6 – Reliability and CFA

Scale	Item	Standardized Regression Weights	Variance Extracted	Construct Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Immigrant Acceptance	People who come to live here from other countries generally take jobs away from American workers	0.847	0.672	0.949	0.905
	People who come to live here from other countries make the USA's cultural life richer	0.841			
	People who come to live and work here from other countries are the leading cause of unemployment in the USA today	0.794			
	Undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, known as DREAMers, should be allowed to stay in the country.	0.811			
	All illegal immigrants should be deported	0.803			
Positive WOM	I would recommend this brand	0.950	0.705	0.983	0.964
	I would speak of this brand's good sides	0.911			
	I would be proud to say to others that I am this brand's customer	0.946			
	I would strongly recommend people buy products from this brand	0.946			
Negative WOM	I would say negative things about this brand	0.935	0.698	0.981	0.958
	I would bad-mouth against this brand to other people	0.959			
	I would warn other people not to use or buy this brand	0.933			
	I would complain about this brand's behavior to other people	0.908			

Source: the author, 2020

The whole model considering Immigrant Acceptance, PWOM and NWOM had an acceptable fit presenting $\chi^2 = 112.504$, $df = 62$, $NFI = 0.967$, $CFI = 0.985$, $RMSEA = 0.060$ and since the square root of average variance extracted is higher than the corresponding

interconstruct correlation estimates (Table 7), there are no problems with discriminant validity for the whole model.

Table 7 – Standardized Correlations and Square-Root of AVE⁸

	Immigrant Acceptance	Positive WOM	Negative WOM
Immigrant Acceptance	0.819		
Positive WOM	0.436	0.839	
Negative WOM	-0.515	-0.730	0.835

Source: the author, 2020

3.2.6 Manipulation Check

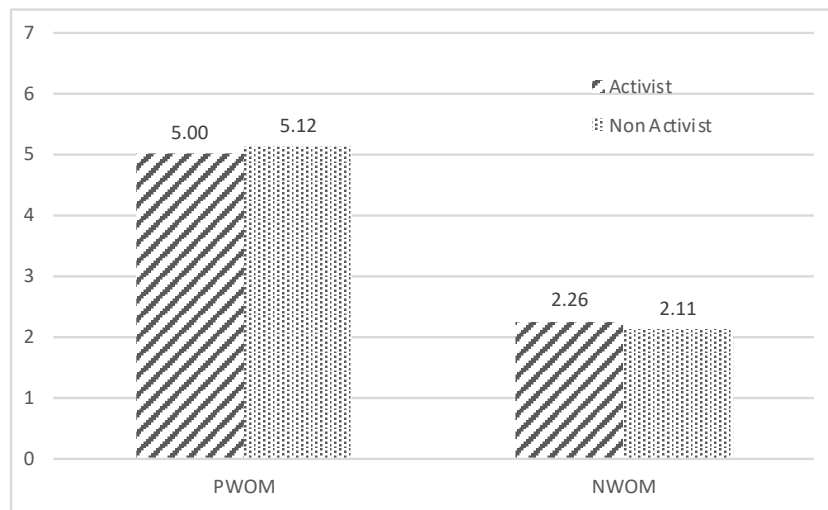
An ANOVA confirmed that the manipulation of activism was successful ($F(3,119.7)=123.00, p < .001$). Participants in the activist tweet condition – with brand logo visible or blurred – rated the content significantly higher on each of the activism manipulation check questions, showed in Table 4, than participants that received the non-activist tweet – with brand logo visible or blurred ($M_{TAct} = 6.07, SD_{TAct} = 0.80$ vs. $M_{TNAct}=3.14, SD_{TNAct}=1.50$ and $M_{BAct} = 6.17, SD_{BAct} = 0.72$ vs $M_{BNAct}=3.31, SD_{BNAct}=1.37$)

3.2.7 Results

Just looking at the difference between the Positive WOM and Negative WOM means when respondents saw an activist content or a non-activist content (Figure 3), it seems there is no significant difference.

⁸ All correlations are significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed). The figures corresponding to the square root of AVE for each column construct are typed in bold along the diagonal.

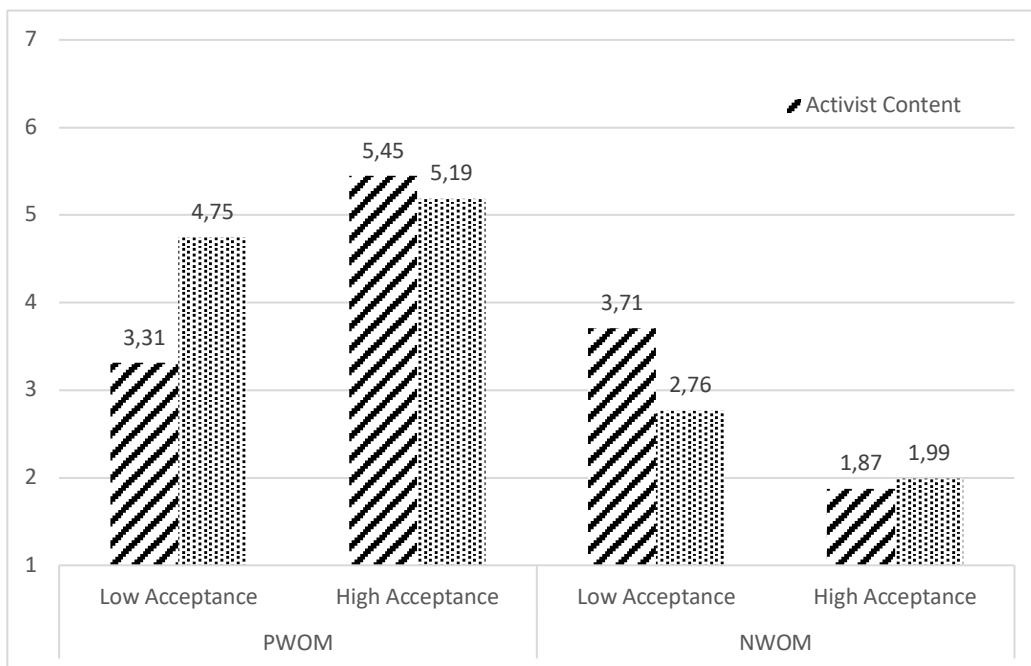
Figure 3 – Positive and Negative WOM Means Comparison



Source: the author, 2020

However, if the variable Acceptance to Immigrants is taking into consideration, its effect appears to be relevant, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Positive WOM and Negative Means Comparison versus Immigrant Acceptance⁹



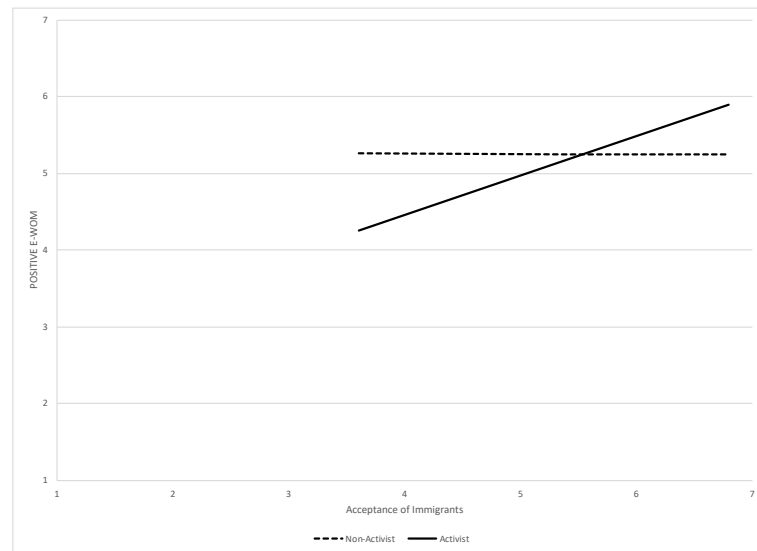
Source: the author, 2020

⁹ For comparison purposes only, High Immigrant Acceptance are those in the upper portion of the scale considering the average point (3.5) a Low Immigrant Acceptance are those in the lower portion of the scale.

To better examine this moderated hypothesis, we ran a conditional process analysis (Hayes, 2018) using the SPSS macro PROCESS Version 3.4 (model 1, 5000 bootstrap samples). First, considering only the cases where Toyota Brand was visible, we used Branded Content served as the predictor coded with 0 when showing an activist content and 1 when showing non-activist content, Consumer Acceptance to Immigrants as the moderator, and positive or negative WOM as the outcome (Full results are in Appendix 4).

These variables and the interaction between them accounted for a significant amount of variance in positive WOM ($R^2=0.1845$, $F(3,109)=8.2212$, $p<.001$), and it is showed in Figure 5. There is evidence of an interaction between the tweet content and immigrant acceptance ($b=-0.5231$, $t(109)=3.3918$, $p=0.0010$), and this interaction explains 8,6% of the variance in Positive WOM.

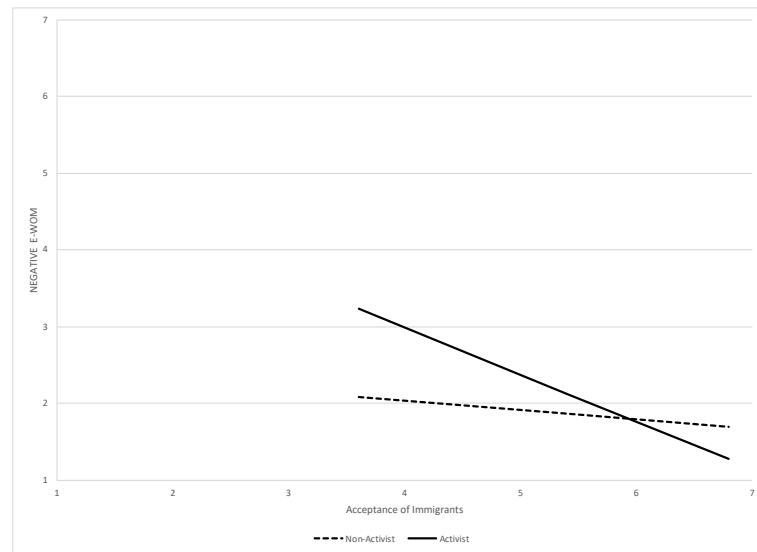
Figure 5 – Impact of Content on Positive WOM when Toyota logo is visible



Source: the author, 2020

The same result occurred with negative WOM. Tweet Content, Immigrant Acceptance, and the interaction between them accounted for a significant amount of variance in negative WOM ($R^2=0.3459$, $F(3,109)=19.2167$, $p<.001$) and it is shown in Figure 6. There is evidence of an interaction between a tweet content and immigrant acceptance ($b=0.4905$, $t(109)=3.9478$, $p=0.0001$), and this interaction explains 9.4% of the variance in negative WOM.

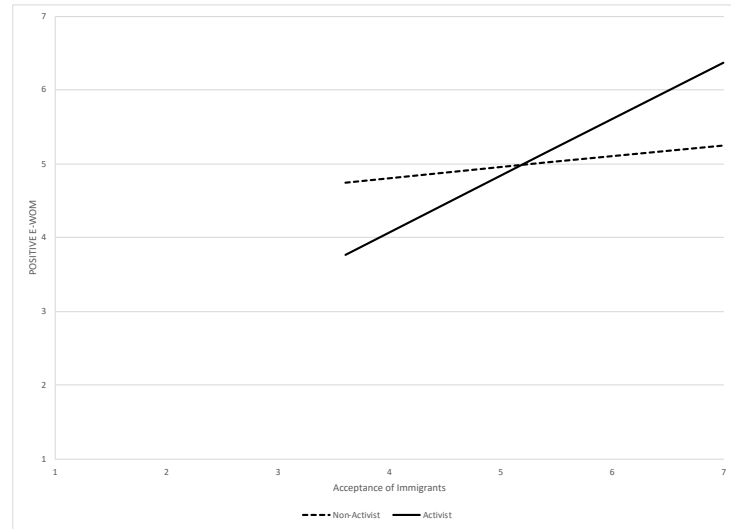
Figure 6 – Impact of Content on Negative WOM when Toyota logo is visible



Source: the author, 2020

Keeping Branded Content as the predictor but considering only the cases where brand logo is blurred, Consumer Acceptance to Immigrants as the moderator, and positive WOM as the outcome, the results showed that the interaction between the variables account for a significant amount of variance in positive WOM ($R^2=0.3774$, $F(3,114)=23.034$, $p<.001$) and it is showed in Figure 7. Also, in this situation, there is evidence of an interaction between a tweet content and immigrant acceptance ($b=-0.6132$, $t(114)=-4.4776$, $p<0.001$), and this interaction explains 11.0% of the variance in positive WOM. (Full results are in Appendix 5).

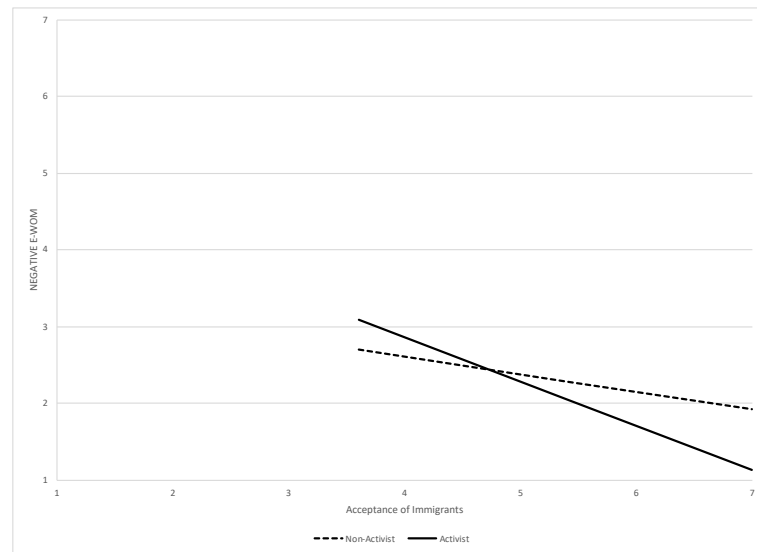
Figure 7 – Impact of Content on Positive WOM when the brand logo is blurred



Source: the author, 2020

The same result occurred with negative WOM. Tweet Content, Immigrant Acceptance, and the interaction between them accounted for a significant amount of variance in negative WOM ($R^2=0.2956$, $F(3,114)=15.9430$, $p<0.001$), and it is showed in Figure 8. There is evidence of an interaction between a tweet content and immigrant acceptance ($b=0.3440$, $t(114)=2.6364$, $p=0.0095$), and this interaction explains 4.3% of the variance in negative WOM.

Figure 8 – Impact of Content on Negative WOM when the brand logo is blurred



Source: the author, 2020

In this experiment, we measured participants' acceptance of immigrants using a standard measure and experimentally manipulated the content of two tweets from a brand that, in one set of tweets, they could see the brand logo – Toyota – while in the other set they could not see it.

As pointed out before, this experiment reassures that customer-cause congruence have an impact on consumer reaction (Arora & Henderson, 2007; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Lichtenstein et al., 2004) and also, reassures what Sen, Du, and Bhattacharya (2016) identified in their study, that it is a moderator of consumer reaction.

Then, consistent with what we have hypothesized (H1), we found that the consumers that demonstrate more acceptance to immigrants tend to generate more positive WOM and less negative WOM when see an activist tweet comparing to a non-activist one, being the brand logo visible or blurred.

When a brand wants to communicate a particular message to its target audience, the results of this first experiment suggest that it is important to understand the perspective of this audience concerning the cause the brand is supporting and communicating, at least to foresee the reaction better and be prepared for it.

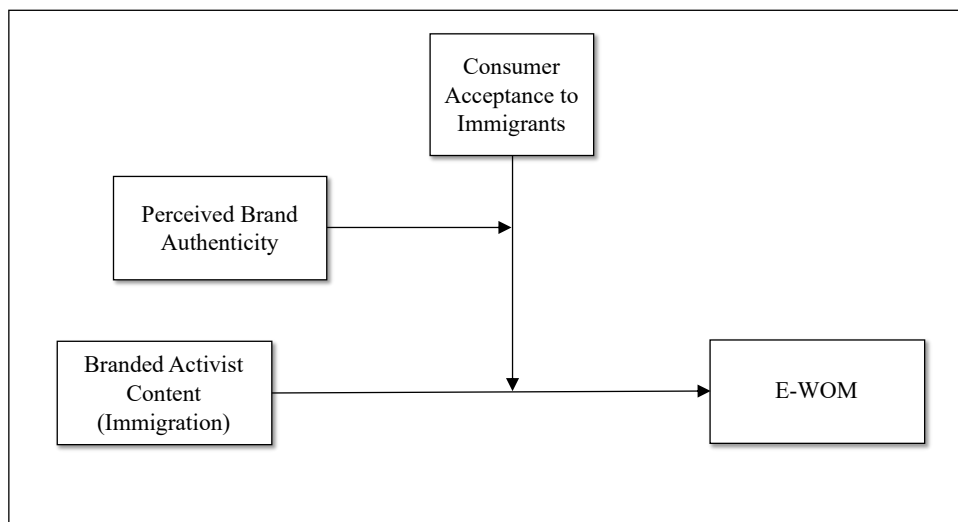
3.3 EXPERIMENT #2

3.3.1 Experiment Description

Once the moderation effect of Immigrant Acceptance in the relationship between activism and WOM exists for both an identified (Toyota) and an unidentified (Blurred) brand, the purpose of Experiment #2 was to assess whether this effect remains consistent for both authentic and non-authentic brands. The conceptual framework for this experiment is in Figure 9, showing what is stated in hypothesis H2: for an authentic (non-authentic) brand the moderation effect of congruence between consumer point-of-view about a cause and the brand positioning about that same cause will result on an increase (decrease) in positive WOM and a decrease (increase) in negative WOM.

Once more, the cause used to manipulate the activism in this experiment was immigration-related issues in the USA using the same tweets used in the first experiment.

Figure 9 – Conceptual Framework for H2



Source: the author, 2020

It was a 2 (activist tweet versus non-activist tweet) x 2 (authentic brand versus non-authentic brand) between-subjects factorial design. Sampling was non-probabilistic and for convenience, and three hundred participants, recruited directly from Amazon Mechanical Turk in exchange for a small financial compensation, completed this study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions

After a brief introduction about the research, the authenticity manipulation scenario was presented to the respondents. Then, they answered about their perceptions about the brands

(general brand evaluation and perceived brand authenticity), and just after that, the activism manipulation scenario (a sequence of two tweets from the previously presented brand) was shown. After that, they responded to questions about their prone to make WOM, followed by their immigrant acceptance. To conclude, they answered some demographic questions.

The two manipulation scenarios showed in Appendix 2 and adapted from Morhart et al. (2015) were presented. The content of the manipulation varies along the four PBA dimensions: continuity dimension was presented based on the founding date (1854 for highly authentic condition and 2012 for less authentic condition); integrity dimension was presented by the origin of the founders (Monks vs. businessmen); credibility dimension was presented by the source of the product (a proprietary formula vs. an acquired one), and symbolism was demonstrated in brand slogan (“Feel nature—Feel like yourself” (highly authentic brand) or “Feel nature—Feel like a different person” (less authentic brand)).

After they read the randomly assigned scenario, they were asked to answer three questions adapted from Park, Milberg, and Lawson (1991) and Martin, Stewart, and Matta (2005) about their evaluation of the brand that was presented to them.

Then, for manipulation check purposes, they were asked to answer a questionnaire to measure their perception about the authenticity of the brands described in the manipulation scenario. The PBA scale from Morhart et al. (2015) showed in Table 8, was used to assess their perception about brand authenticity.

Then, the activism manipulation instruments where the brand logo was blurred used in experiment #1 and showed in Appendix 1, were presented, together with the authenticity manipulation comprising four groups:

- a. Authentic Brand and Activist Tweet (AuAct) – Authentic Brand with tweets defending immigration and immigrants related issues in the USA at a branded Twitter Page;
- b. Authentic Brand and Non-activist Tweet (AuNAct) – Authentic Brand with tweets communicating generic messages at a branded Twitter Page;
- c. Non-authentic Brand and Activist Tweet (NAuAct) – Non-authentic Brand with tweets defending immigration and immigrants related issues in the USA at a branded Twitter Page;
- d. Non-authentic Brand and Non-activist Tweet (NAuNAct) – Non-authentic Brand with tweets communicating generic messages at a branded Twitter Page.

After reading the sequence tweets, they were asked about their possible reactions using Positive and Negative WOM scales, presented in Table 2.

As for manipulation check for the activism content, the same questions used in Experiment #1 and showed in Table 4 were used. Similarly, the same questionnaire about their acceptance of immigrants used in Experiment #1 and showed in Table 1 was replicated.

At last, they answered a set of demographic questions (age, gender, school level, political view, and ethnicity).

Table 8 – Scales used in Experiment #2

General Brand Evaluation		
	BR_EV1	I have a positive evaluation of it
	BR_EV2	I like it
	BR_EV3	I react favorably to it
Perceived Brand Authenticity (PBA)		
Continuity	BR_AU1	[BRAND NAME] is a brand with a history
	BR_AU2	[BRAND NAME] is a timeless brand
	BR_AU3	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that survives times
	BR_AU4	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that survives trends
Credibility	BR_AU5	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that will not betray you
	BR_AU6	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that accomplishes its value promise
	BR_AU7	[BRAND NAME] is an honest brand
Integrity	BR_AU8	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that gives back to its consumers
	BR_AU9	[BRAND NAME] is a brand with moral principles
	BR_AU10	[BRAND NAME] is a brand true to a set of moral values
	BR_AU11	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that cares about its consumers
Symbolism	BR_AU12	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that adds meaning to people's lives
	BR_AU13	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that reflects important values people care about
	BR_AU14	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that connects people with their real selves
	BR_AU15	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that connects people with what is really important

Source: XXXX, 2020

3.3.2 Participants

Two hundred ninety-nine participants recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk completed this study in exchange for a small financial compensation from December 16th to 27th 2019. In order to participate, individuals had to pass three filters: to be in the USA, with an

approval rate for all requesters' HITs higher than 98%, and the number of HITs approved greater than 5000.

First of all, the total time taken to answer the study was considered, 5 cases that took less than¹⁰ 130 seconds were discarded. Then, tweet content understanding was verified by three different researchers, and another 42 cases were discarded.

After this first analysis based on time and content, responses considered atypical (for all scales) were detected using Mahalanobis D^2 measurement, proper for multivariate situations (Hair Jr et al., 2014). Another 11 cases were discarded. Then, also using Mahalanobis D^2 measurement, for each one of the scales used in the experiment, another 37 cases were discarded, resulting in 204 valid cases. The summary of the steps taken to clean up the data is in Table 9.

Table 9 – Summary of Data Cleaning

	Authentic Brand & Activist Tweet	Authentic Brand & Non-Activist Tweet	Non- Authentic Brand & Activist Tweet	Non- Authentic Brand & Activist Tweet	Total
Total (Initial Respondents)	75	66	78	80	299
Time to complete study (less than 130 sec)	2	2	0	1	5
Tweets Understanding	11	10	9	12	42
Mahalanobis Distance	10	10	14	14	48
Total (Final Respondents)	52	44	55	53	204

Source: the author, 2020

The final sample demography is shown in Table 10, and comparing to the experiment #1 sample, the results are remarkably similar, except for Ethnicity. This sample has more respondents reported as whites than the previous one, making it closer to the US population in Ethnicity.

¹⁰ The total time to take the survey suggested by Qualtrics was 14 minutes, then anyone that took around 15% of total suggested time or less was considered unacceptable.

Table 10 - Demographics

Demographics	%
Age	
Less than 30	22.6%
31 to 40	31.9%
41 to 50	18.1%
More than 50	27.5%
Gender	
Male	39.7%
Female	60.3%
School Level	
High School	8.8%
Some College	17.2%
Ass. Degree	16.2%
Bach. Degree	42.6%
Master	13.2%
PhD	0.5%
Professional	1.5%
Political View	
Very Conservative	6.4%
Conservative	19.6%
Moderate	27.9%
Liberal	32.4%
Very Liberal	13.7%
Ethnicity	
White	75.0%
Non-White	25.0%

Source: the author, 2020

3.3.3 Measurement model evaluation

In order to examine the quality of the psychometric properties of the scales used in this second experiment, the measurement model was tested for reliability and also assessed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using SPSS and Amos software.

PBA scale presented loadings higher than 0.5, as indicated by Hair et al. (2014), variance extracted and construct reliability are all higher than 0,7, as shown in Table 11. The scale also presented adequate reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0.7. The model had an acceptable fit presenting $\chi^2 = 215.710$, $df = 86$, $NFI = 0.92$, $CFI = 0.95$, $RMSEA = 0.086$ and satisfactory psychometric properties.

Table 11 – CFA PBA

Dimension	Item	Standardized Regression Weights	Variance Extracted	Construct Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Continuity	[BRAND NAME] is a brand with a history	0.766	0.703	0.945	0.729
	[BRAND NAME] is a timeless brand	0.862			
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that survives times	0.921			
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that survives trends	0.797			
Credibility	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that will not betray you	0.832	0.705	0.929	0.959
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that accomplishes its value promise	0.796			
	[BRAND NAME] is an honest brand	0.889			
Integrity	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that gives back to its consumers	0.741	0.698	0.943	0.981
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand with moral principles	0.877			
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand true to a set of moral values	0.905			
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that cares about its consumers	0.809			
Symbolism	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that adds meaning to people's lives	0.816	0.717	0.949	0.918
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that reflects important values people care about	0.856			
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that connects people with their real selves	0.826			
	[BRAND NAME] is a brand that connects people with what is important	0.888			
			0.814	0.969	0.955

Source: the author, 2020

The whole model considering PBA, Immigrant Acceptance, PWOM and NWOM had an acceptable fit presenting $\chi^2 = 612.710$, $df = 340$, $NFI = 0.900$, $CFI = 0.953$, $RMSEA = 0.063$ and since the square root of average variance extracted is higher than the corresponding interconstruct correlation estimates (Table 12), there are no problems with discriminant validity for the whole model.

Table 12 – Standardized Correlations and Square-Root of AVE¹¹

	Immigrant Acceptance	Perceived Brand Authenticity	Positive WOM	Negative WOM
Immigrant Acceptance	0.819			
Perceived Brand Authenticity	0.023	0.904		
Positive WOM	0.369	0.681	0.944	
Negative WOM	-0.515	-0.475	-0.745	0.926

Source: the author, 2020

3.3.4 Manipulation check

To assure the adequacy of the instruments in the context of this experiment an ANOVA confirmed that the manipulation of activism was successful ($F(3,200)= 80.98, p < 0.001$). Participants in the activist tweet condition rated the content significantly higher on each of the activism manipulation check questions than participants that received the non-activist tweet – ($M_{AutAct} = 5.85, SD_{AutAct}= 1.13$ vs. $M_{AutNAct}=3.01, SD_{AutNAct}=1.45$ and $M_{NAutAct}= 5.77, SD_{NAutAct} = 1.22$; vs $M_{NAutNAct}=3.03, SD_{NAutNAc}=1.32$)

An ANOVA also confirmed that the brand authenticity manipulation was successful ($F(3,200)= 14.48, p < 0.001$), since the participants in the authentic brand condition rated the brand significantly higher on PBA scale than participants in the less authentic brand condition. ($M_{AutAct} = 5.72, SD_{AutAct}= 0.78$ vs. $M_{NAutAct}=4.82, SD_{NAutAct}=0.92$ and $M_{AutNAct}= 5.58, SD_{AutNAc} = 0.81$ vs. $M_{NAutNAct}=4.86, SD_{NAutNAc}=1.03$)

3.3.5 Results

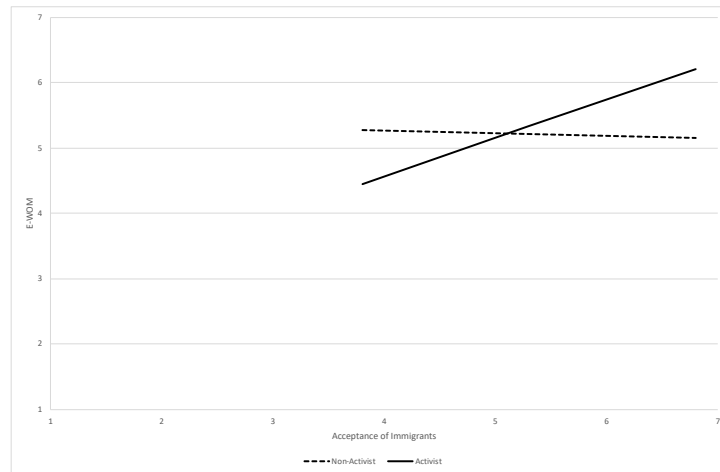
3.3.5.1 Retesting H1

To further examine hypotheses H1, first, we ran conditional process analysis (Hayes, 2018) using the SPSS macro PROCESS Version 3.4 (model 1, 5000 bootstrap samples) used Branded Content served as the predictor coded with 0 when showing an activist content and 1 when showing no activist content, Consumer Acceptance to Immigrants as the moderator, and positive or negative WOM as the outcome.

¹¹ All correlations are significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed). The figures corresponding to the square root of AVE for each column construct are typed in bold along the diagonal.

These variables and the interaction between them accounted for a significant amount of variance in positive WOM ($R^2=0.2352$, $F(3,200)=20.5006$, $p<.001$), and it is shown in Figure 10. There is evidence of an interaction between the tweet content and immigrant acceptance ($b=0.6250$, $t(200)=5.5837$, $p<.001$), and this interaction explains 11,9% of the variance in Positive WOM.

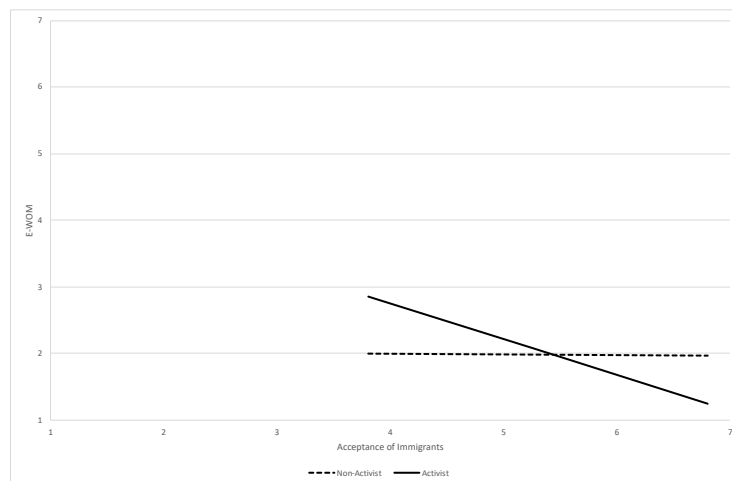
Figure 10 – Impact of content in positive WOM



Source: the author, 2020

The same result occurred with negative WOM. Tweet Content, Immigrant Acceptance, and the interaction between them accounted for a significant amount of variance in negative WOM ($R^2=0.2522$, $F(3,200)=22.4838$, $p<.001$) and it is shown in Figure 11. There is evidence of an interaction between a tweet content and immigrant acceptance ($b=-0.5251$, $t(200)=-5.3115$, $p<.001$), and this interaction explains 10,6% of the variance in negative WOM.

Figure 11 – Impact of content in negative WOM



Source: the author, 2020

This result reassures what was concluded by Experiment #1: an activist tweet generates more positive WOM and less negative WOM, as the consumer demonstrates more acceptance of immigrants. Moreover, if the content is non-activist, the propensity to make WOM is not affected by the consumer's acceptance of immigrants.

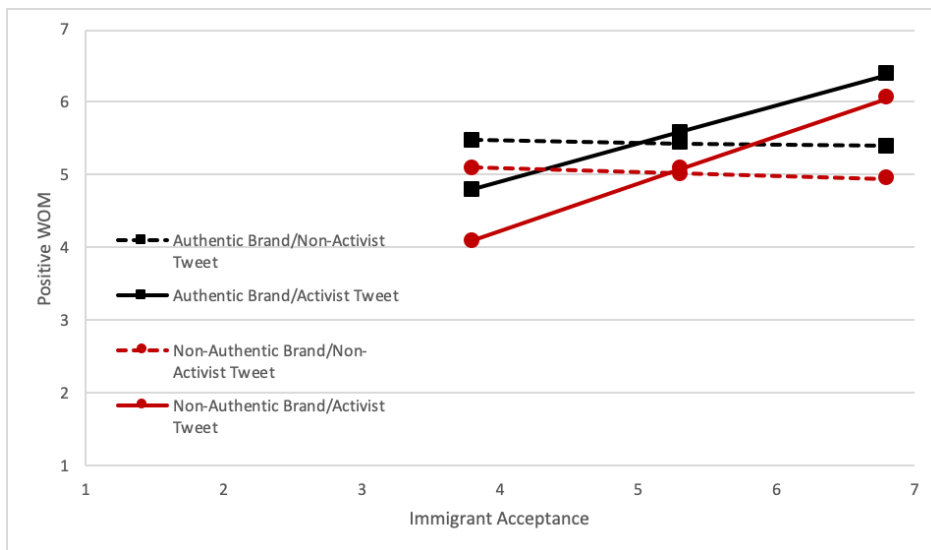
3.3.5.2 Testing H2

To test hypotheses H2, we ran conditional process analysis (Hayes, 2018) using the SPSS macro PROCESS Version 3.4 (model 3, 5000 bootstrap samples) used Branded Tweet served as the predictor coded with 0 when showing an activist content and 1 when showing no activist content, Consumer Acceptance to Immigrants as one of the moderators, Brand Authenticity – coded with 0 when showing an authentic brand and 1 when showing a non-authentic brand – as another moderator and positive or negative WOM as the outcome.

These variables and the interaction among them accounted for a significant amount of variance in positive WOM ($R^2=0.2723$, $F(7,196)=10.4756$, $p<.001$), and it is showed in Figure 12. However, there is no evidence of an interaction between the tweet content, immigrant acceptance, and brand authenticity ($b=-0.1570$, $t(196)= -0.7107$, $p=0.4781$).

Notwithstanding the difference in WOM results from the authentic and non-authentic brand, authenticity is not capable of potentializing the brand activism and cause-congruence interaction effect.

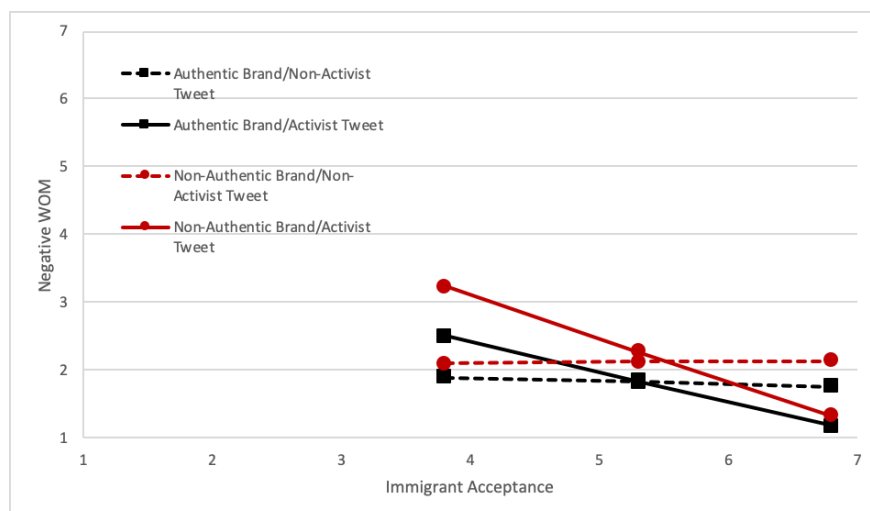
Figure 12 – Impact of Content in Positive WOM



Source: the author, 2020

The same result occurred with negative WOM. Tweet Content, Immigrant Acceptance, Brand Authenticity, and the interaction among them accounted for a significant amount of variance in negative WOM ($R^2=0.2909$, $F(7,196)=11.4877$, $p<.001$) and it is shown in Figure 13. Again, there is no evidence of an interaction among a tweet content, immigrant acceptance, and brand authenticity ($b=0.2586$, $t(196)=1.3275$, $p=0.1859$).

Figure 13 – Impact of Content in Negative WOM



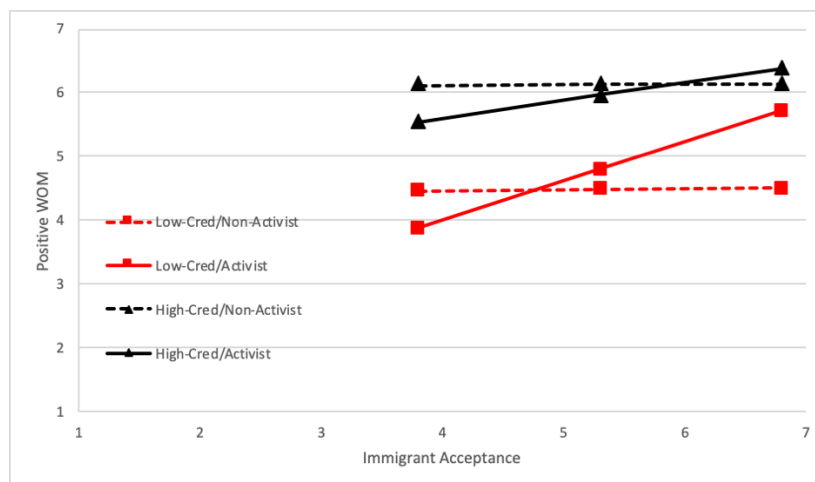
Source: the author, 2020

These results would refute H2 since the moderation effect of congruence between consumer point-of-view about a cause and the brand positioning about that same cause on WOM is not influenced by PBA.

In order to better understand if any of the PBA dimensions could moderate this relationship, we run other four conditional process analysis (Hayes, 2018) using the SPSS macro PROCESS (Version 3.4 (model 3, 5000 bootstrap samples) used Branded Tweet served as the predictor coded with 0 when showing an activist content and 1 when showing no activist content, Consumer Acceptance to Immigrants as one of the moderators, and each one of the PBA dimensions (Continuity, Credibility, Integrity, and Symbolism) captured using the PBA scale we used as a manipulation check as another moderator and positive or negative WOM as the outcome.

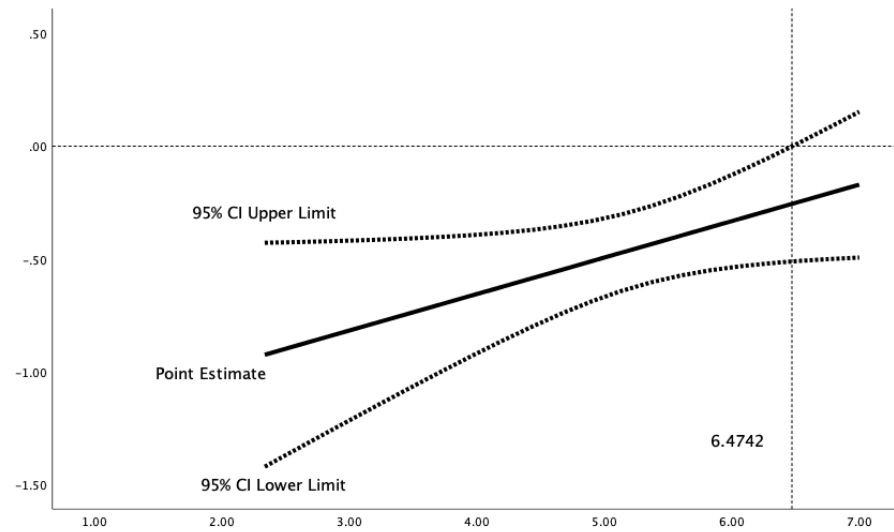
Continuity, Integrity, and Symbolism did present the same behavior as the whole construct – no moderation – but credibility showed different behavior. As for the whole model, we concluded that Tweet Content, Immigrant Acceptance, Brand Credibility, and the interaction among them accounted for a significant amount of variance in PWOM ($R^2=0.5883$, $F(7,196)=40.0101$, $p<.001$). In this case, there is evidence of interaction between the tweet content, immigrant acceptance, and the dimension credibility ($b=-0.162$, $t(196)= -2.002$, $p=0.0467$) (See Figure 14). The results of the Johnson-Neyman technique, visualized in Figure 15, was used to identify the range of brand credibility to which the effect of the immigrant acceptance was significant, we concluded that when brand credibility is below 6.47 (90% of the sample), this moderation is significant.

Figure 14 – Brand Credibility and Immigrant Acceptance impact in PWOM



Source: the author, 2020

Figure 15 – Johnson-Neyman analysis result



Source: the author, 2020

H2 is, then, partially corroborated. Brand credibility, as one dimension of PBA, presented a moderation role in the relationship, at least for Positive WOM.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 GENERAL DISCUSSION

Building on the literature of CSR, CRM, and other cause-related fields, Brand Authenticity and WOM, this research proposed to understand how consumer congruence to a cause and brand authenticity influence WOM generation when a brand issues an activist communication.

Consumer congruence to the cause is pointed out by the literature as a requirement to engage him or her in any positive (or negative) behavior or attitude regarding to the action, to the corporation or the brand (Arora & Henderson, 2007; Baskentli et al., 2019; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Chernev & Blair, 2015; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Marin & Ruiz, 2007; Sen et al., 2016; Torelli et al., 2012; Youn & Kim, 2018). This was confirmed by the present study, using positive and negative WOM to represent consumer attitude toward the activist content.

Previous researches indicated that authenticity was an important element to create more consumer engagement, or reaction to a CSR, CRM, or activist action, mainly to its power to overcome consumer skepticism about marketing communication in general. (Alhouthi et al., 2016; Amawate & Deb, 2019a; Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Champlin, Sterbenk, Windels, & Poteet, 2019b; Jeon & An, 2019). Several different constructs were used in these previous researches to refer to authenticity such as credibility, reputation, and message authenticity. PBA, as described by Morhart et al. (2015), was a construct that, in encompassing several of the elements demonstrated as important by previous CSR and CRM authors, could be used as a moderator in the relationship, as an alternative for Cause-Brand fit. The second experiment has not totally corroborated the hypotheses that PBA would be a moderator of the relationship among activist content, consumer congruence to a cause, and WOM. Consumers react slightly more positively and less negatively when submitted to a manipulation scenario showing an authentic brand. However, there was no meaningful change in the direction or in the size of effect already captured by the moderation of consumer congruence to the cause. Examining PBA dimensions one by one, only brand credibility demonstrated a moderation role, in line with what Pérez (2019) conceptual research about message authenticity in CSR, that authenticity and credibility maybe should be treated as separated constructs, at least for CSR communication models. She also pointed out that authenticity could be a predecessor for message credibility, and then message credibility would help to develop source credibility.

4.2 CONTRIBUTIONS

This research contributes to the literature, bringing Brand Authenticity to the context of activism, CSR, or CRM, examining how it interferes with WOM generation and, also, bringing activism as a relevant and updated subject to be studied in the Consumer-Brand Relationship field.

Previous studies from CSR and CRM fields call attention to authenticity, but mainly related to message or actions authenticity (Alhouti et al., 2016; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Pérez, 2019), and few touched corporations – and brand – authenticity. Furthermore, being Brand Authenticity still an underdeveloped construct; the current research adds to the framework developed by Morhart et al. (Morhart et al., 2015), showing that brand credibility may assume an independent role in the context created by this study.

Activism from a brand perspective is a new subject that is growing in interest since most of the academic production that relates activism and brands treats anti-brand and anti-consumption activism or the risks in adopting an activist position. Then adopting an initial definition to brand activism is a starting point for a new field of study that needs attention.

Furthermore, by reassuring that consumer congruence to a cause directly interferes with how he or she will react to a message, sharing a positive or negative WOM, we contribute to the consumer behavior literature and also to WOM literature.

As stated by Pérez (2019, p. 3), talking about CSR messages, they are “proved to be a double-edged sword.” Then, from a managerial perspective, it is important to understand that activism is not a strategy for every brand, because it can be very risky for a brand that has a consumer base that is not aligned with the cause that is being defended. Moreover, considering only the credibility impact, the least credible brand may conquer a vote of confidence when the supported cause is aligned with a cause that is important to the consumer.

4.3 LIMITATIONS

Despite the care in creating the activist message manipulation instrument, in trying to maintain equivalence to avoid distractions about the message conveyed, and without information that would interfere with the respondent's assessment, such as the number of shares or likes (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012); the chosen theme was at the center of the socio-political debates in the USA at that time, which was extremely present in the respondents' lives.

According to Druckman e Leeper (2012, p. 877), in their study on experiments in political communication, “strong attitudes often lead to motivated reasoning where individuals avoid, ignore, or reject information that is inconsistent with their prior opinions.” Therefore, these strong attitudes towards immigration due to extensive previous exposure could have interfered with their reactions. We suggest other activist themes to be used in future studies and an additional measurement of attitude toward the content to capture emotional reactions about them.

Since the second experiment used a scenario with no real brand, Brand-Cause fit, or compatibility, could not be assessed. Although Brand-Cause fit literature (Barone et al., 2007; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Bigné et al., 2012; Lafferty, 2007; Lafferty et al., 2004; Xiaoli et al., 2007) presented mixed results about its effect, being positive or negative, in consumer reaction, there is agreement that it is important variable in this CRM/CSR/Activism context and interferes in consumer reaction. The usage of real brands in future studies can address this limitation

4.4 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Brand Activism is a pretty new concept, and its use is being driven by practitioners, which demonstrates that there is an opportunity for more in-depth development of the subject to differentiate it from previous constructs, extensively presented in this research, such as CSR, CRM, Brand Advocacy, among others. Activism is a very well-developed field in Political Psychology and Political Science referring to human-being individual and collective activism. Building upon the concepts and frameworks of these fields and considering that others used human nature characteristics or traits to develop brand concepts, such as Fournier (1998) in her seminal work about Brand Relationship or Aaker (1997) in her, also seminal, research about Brand Personality, a better conceptualization and a measurement scale for Brand Activism can be developed.

Even though consumer congruence to the cause proved to be a moderator in the model for this context, it would be beneficial to go more in-depth examining other consumer behavior or consumer motivations related constructs, such as moral emotions, as intervenient variables in this model. This way was already pointed out as promising by some authors in CSR and CRM fields (Agarwal & Malhotra, 2019; Sen et al., 2016; Xie et al., 2019). Another construct, also related to consumer behavior that can be considered, and that it is present in Morhart et al.

(2015) as part of the study for their PBA scale development, is skepticism about marketing communication in general.

If the broad concept of Brand Authenticity does not interfere in the way consumers react to a brand activist message, could the perception of Brand Hypocrisy interfere? Brand Hypocrisy – defined as a brand perceived as intentionally projecting false or unrealistic appearances, thereby implying the dissimulation or manipulation of attributes, motivations, or beliefs. , as defined by Guèvremont (2019), is even a newer concept compared to Brand Authenticity, but to some extent, they are on the opposite side of the brand relationship constructs: authenticity as positive and hypocrisy as negative. Knowing that negative experiences with brands make people discuss and share more negative reviews (Joshi & Yadav, 2020), explore it through Brand Hypocrisy, can be a promising path.

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APPENDIX 1 – EXPERIMENT 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

(INTRODUCTION)

Dear Participant:

My name is Célia Beatriz Patto Martins, and I am a Master's student at PUC-PR, from Brazil. For my dissertation, I am investigating aspects of consumer relationship with some selected brands in a cross-cultural context. The following questionnaire will require approximately 5 minutes to complete, and there are no right or wrong answers; it is all about your candid opinion.

The results will only be used and presented on a consolidated basis so that no response will be disclosed individually.

I emphasize that we are an academic institution with no links with the brands that will be presented to you.

If you have any questions, please e-mail me at celia.martins@pucpr.edu.br.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

(IMMIGRANT ACCEPTANCE QUESTIONS) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

Answer the following questions with your candid and honest point of view. Again, there are no right or wrong answer.

IMM1 People who come to live here from other countries generally make the USA a better place to live.

IMM2 People who come to live here from other countries generally take jobs away from American workers

IMM3 People who come to live and work here from other countries are the leading cause of unemployment in the USA today

IMM4 People who come to live here from other countries make the USA's cultural life richer

IMM5 Undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, known as DREAMers, should be allowed to stay in the country.

IMM6 All illegal immigrants should be deported

(ACTIVISM MANIPULATION) (Activist or Non-Activist Tweet from Toyota or blurred logo – randomized)

Imagine that, on a regular day, you are surfing on Twitter®, and you see a tweet like the following one, from a brand

And after some days, while you are surfing on Twitter® again, you see another tweet like the following one, from the same source of the first one.

(BRAND FIT) (If Tweet was from Toyota)

Do you think the message of the previous tweets do fit to Toyota brand?

Definitely not / Probably not / Might or might not / Probably yes / Definitely yes (5)

(BRAND FAMILIARITY) (If Tweet was from Toyota) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

Type in the box below the brand name you have just seen in the tweets and think about it to answer the following questions

This brand is very familiar to me

I'm very knowledgeable about this brand

I have seen advertisements about this brand in the media (TV / Internet / Magazines / Radio)

(UNDERSTANDING CHECK)

In your opinion, what is the central message of the tweets you have just read?

(ATTENTION CHECK)

Please, choose the answer 'Probably True'.

Definitely true / Probably true / Neither true nor false / Probably false / Definitely false

(WOM) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

Considering the tweets that you have just read, and knowing that they are from a brand, answer the following questions.

PWOM1 I **would say positive things** about this brand

PWOM2 I **would be proud to tell** others that **I am this brand's customer**

PWOM3 I **would recommend** this brand to others

PWOM4 I **would speak** of this **brand's good sides**

NWOM1 I **would say negative things** about this brand

NWOM2 I **would bad-mouth against this brand** to other people

NWOM3 I **would warn** other people not to use or buy this brand

NWOM4 I **would complain about this brand's behavior** to other people

(MANIPULATION CHECK) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

The posts you have just seen are promoting a social cause, such as immigrants' rights.

Since activism is “the use of direct and noticeable action to achieve a result, usually a political or social one,” those posts showed an activist content.

(DEMOGRAPHICS)

Let me know a little bit more about you.

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than high school degree / High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) / Some college but no degree / Associate degree in college (2-year) / Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) / Master's degree / Doctoral degree / Professional degree (JD, MD)

How old are you?

What is your gender?

Male / Female / Other

In politics, people sometimes talk about liberal and conservative. In general, how would you describe your political views?

Very Conservative / Conservative / Moderate / Liberal / Very Liberal

Which category describes you: (select all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska Native / Asian / Black or African American / White / Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin / Middle Eastern or North African / Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander / Some other race, ethnicity, or origin / I prefer not to answer

APPENDIX 2 – EXPERIMENT 2 QUESTIONNAIRE

(INTRODUCTION)

Dear Participant:

My name is Célia Beatriz Patto Martins, and I am a Master's student at PUC-PR, from Brazil. For my dissertation, I am investigating aspects of consumer relationship with some selected brands in a cross-cultural context. The following questionnaire will require approximately 5 minutes to complete, and there are no right or wrong answers; it is all about your candid opinion.

The results will only be used and presented on a consolidated basis so that no response will be disclosed individually.

I emphasize that we are an academic institution with no links with the brands that will be presented to you.

If you have any questions, please e-mail me at celia.martins@pucpr.edu.br.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

(AUTHENTICITY MANIPULATION) (Authentic and Non-Authentic Brand Scenario – randomized)

After reading the following content, please provide your opinion about it, answering some questions. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

(GENERAL BRAND EVALUATION) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree)

What is your evaluation of the brand you have just read about?

I have a positive evaluation of it

I like it

I react favorably to it

(AUTHENTICITY MANIPULATION CHECK) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

CON1 [BRAND NAME] is a brand with a history

CON2 [BRAND NAME] is a timeless brand

CON3 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that survives times

CON4 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that survives trends

CRE1 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that will not betray you

CRE2 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that accomplishes its value promise

CRE3 [BRAND NAME] is an honest brand

INT1 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that gives back to its consumers

INT2 [BRAND NAME] is a brand with moral principles

INT3 [BRAND NAME] is a brand true to a set of moral values

INT4 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that cares about its consumers

SYM1 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that adds meaning to people's lives

SYM2 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that reflects important values people care about

SYM3 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that connects people with their real selves

SYM4 [BRAND NAME] is a brand that connects people with what is really important

(ACTIVISM MANIPULATION) (Activist or Non-Activist Tweet from a blurred logo – randomized)

Imagine that, on a regular day, you are surfing on Twitter®, and you see a tweet like the following one, from a brand

And after some days, while you are surfing on Twitter® again, you see another tweet like the following one, from the same source of the first one.

(UNDERSTANDING CHECK)

In your opinion, what is the central message of the tweets you have just read?

(WOM) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

Considering the tweets that you have just read, and knowing that they are from a brand, answer the following questions.

PWOM1 I **would say positive things** about this brand

PWOM2 I **would be proud to tell** others that **I am this brand's customer**

PWOM3 I **would recommend** this brand to others

PWOM4 I **would speak** of this **brand's good sides**

NWOM1 I **would say negative things** about this brand

NWOM2 I **would bad-mouth against this brand** to other people

NWOM3 I **would warn** other people not to use or buy this brand

NWOM4 I **would complain about this brand's behavior** to other people

(ACTIVISM MANIPULATION CHECK) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

The posts you have just seen are promoting a social cause, such as immigrants' rights.

Since activism is “the use of direct and noticeable action to achieve a result, usually a political or social one,” those posts showed an activist content.

(IMMIGRANT ACCEPTANCE QUESTIONS) (Likert 7 points – strongly disagree to strongly agree) (Randomized)

Answer the following questions with your candid and honest point of view. Again, there are no right or wrong answer.

IMM1 People who come to live here from other countries generally make the USA a better place to live.

IMM2 People who come to live here from other countries generally take jobs away from American workers

IMM3 People who come to live and work here from other countries are the leading cause of unemployment in the USA today

IMM4 People who come to live here from other countries make the USA's cultural life richer

IMM5 Undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, known as DREAMers, should be allowed to stay in the country.

IMM6 All illegal immigrants should be deported

(DEMOGRAPHICS)

Let me know a little bit more about you.

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than high school degree / High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) / Some college but no degree / Associate degree in college (2-year) / Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) / Master's degree / Doctoral degree / Professional degree

(JD, MD)

How old are you?

What is your gender?

Male / Female / Other

In politics, people sometimes talk about liberal and conservative. In general, how would you describe your political views?

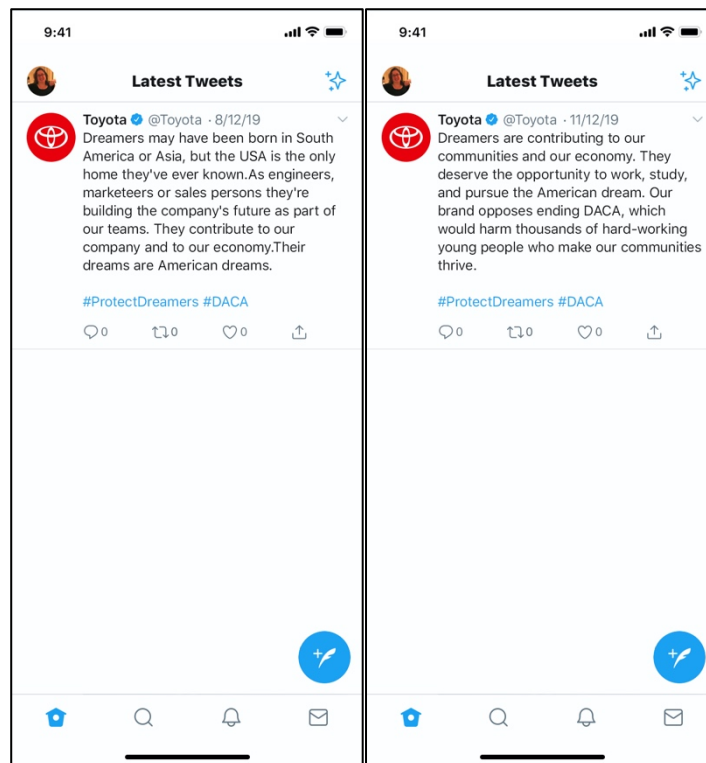
Very Conservative / Conservative / Moderate / Liberal / Very Liberal

Which category describes you: (select all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska Native / Asian / Black or African American / White / Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin / Middle Eastern or North African / Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander / Some other race, ethnicity, or origin / I prefer not to answer

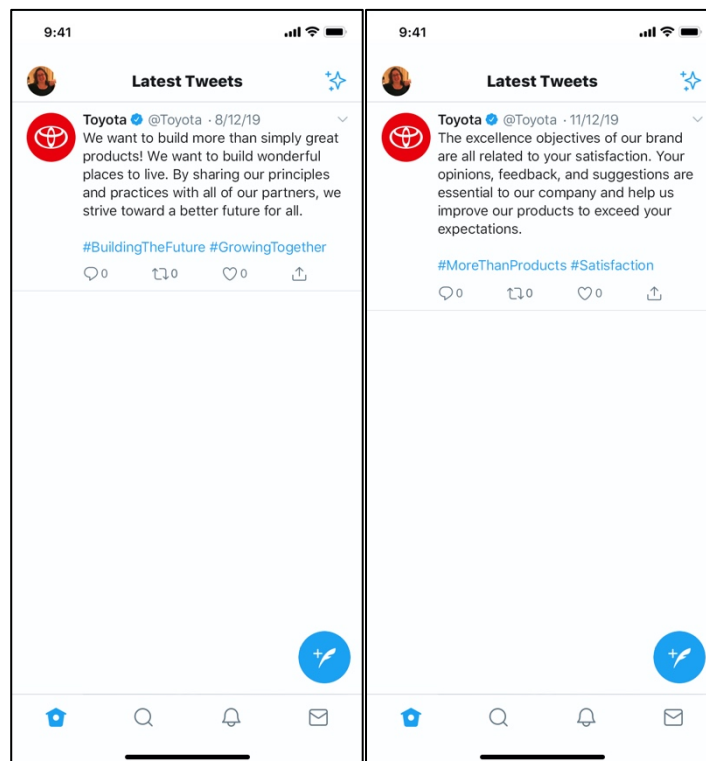
APPENDIX 3 – MANIPULATION INSTRUMENTS

Figure 16 – Activist Tweets from Toyota



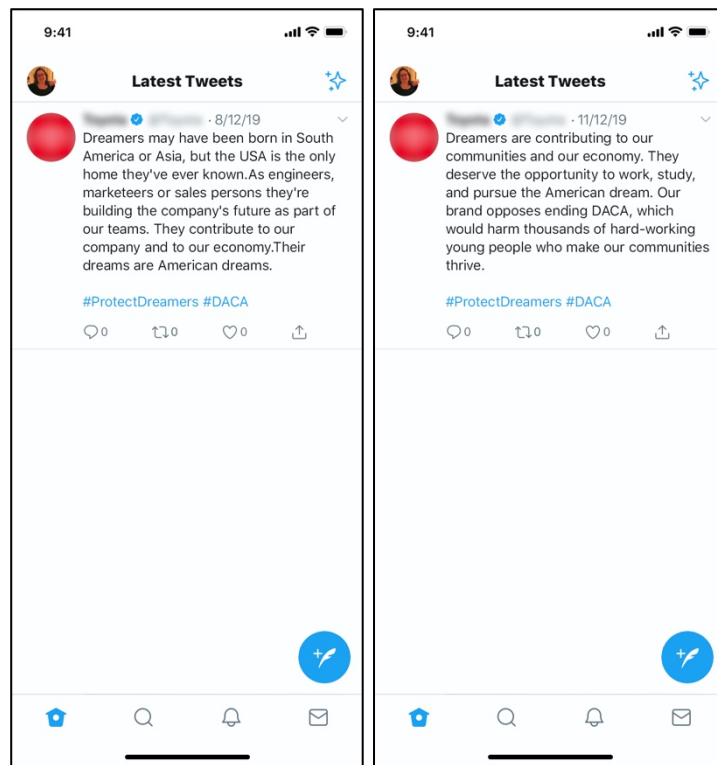
Source: the author, 2020

Figure 17 – Non-Activist Tweets from Toyota



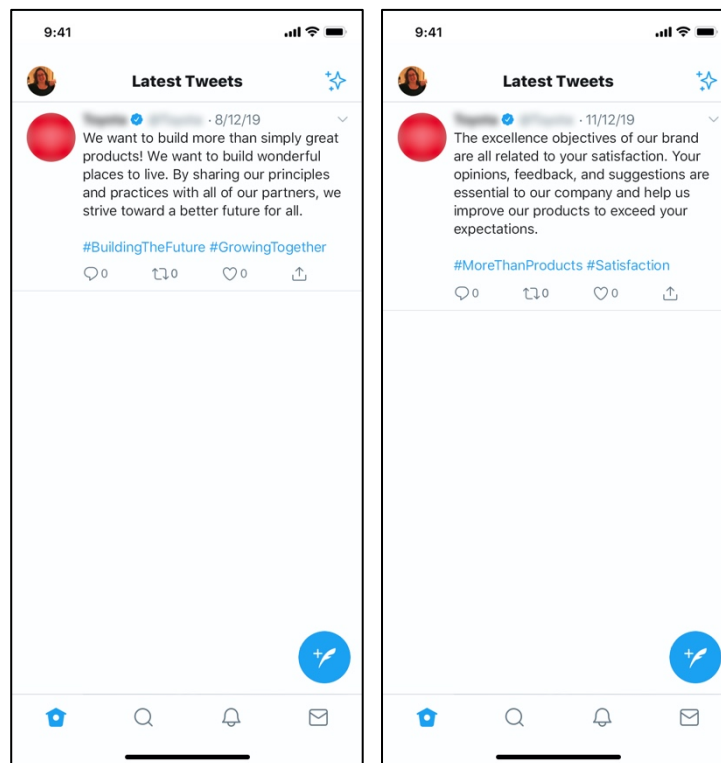
Source: the author, 2020

Figure 18 – Activist Tweets from a blurred logo



Source: the author, 2020

Figure 19 – Non-Activist Tweets from a blurred logo



Source: the author, 2020

Figure 20 – Authentic Brand Scenario

Brand [REDACTED] is a European skincare label founded in 1854. It was created by two European Monks who had developed and patented a proprietary herbal formula to cure skin irritations. To make their knowledge about medical plants accessible to the broader public, they started to produce and distribute the product under the auspices of their small abbey. Today, Brand [REDACTED] is an international business, run from its birthplace. Since the beginning, the original formula has not been changed at all. The original herbal formula is still at the base of each of the products in the brand portfolio. The brand offers its customers a life philosophy: "Feel nature – feel like yourself." It denotes the brand's commitment to 100% herbal ingredients for their products to help users cultivate a healthy life. At brand [REDACTED], values people care about are central. Therefore, the brand strategically invests in consumer care and stakeholder relations. In terms of product quality, "Good Housekeeping Institute" has rated this hand cream as one of the Top Five in the Market, among more than 30 tested.

Source: the author, 2020

Figure 21 – Non-Authentic Brand Scenario

Brand [REDACTED] is a European skincare label founded in 2012. It was created by two businessmen who had acquired the patent of a proprietary herbal formula to cure skin irritations. To market their products of medicinal plants to the broader public, they started to produce and distribute the product under the auspices of a big holding company. Today, Brand [REDACTED] is an international business, run from the holding's headquarters. Since the beginning, the original formula has been changed several times in line with recent trends. The current herbal formula is now at the base of each of the products in the brand portfolio, and the brand offers its customers the claim: "Feel nature – feel like a different person." It denotes the brand's use of 15% herbal ingredients for their products to help users cultivate a moisturized skin. At Brand [REDACTED], shareholder value is central. Therefore, the brand strategically invests in marketing and investor relations. In terms of product quality, "Good Housekeeping Institute" has rated this hand cream as one of the Top Five in the Market, among more than 30 tested.

Source: the author, 2020

APPENDIX 4 – EXPERIMENT #1 COMPLETE HAYES REPORT (TOYOTA LOGO VISIBLE)

Analysis 1 – PWOM

Model : 1
 Y : PWOM_M
 X : ACTIV
 W : IMM_M1

Sample
 Size: 113

 OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 PWOM_M

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4296	.1845	1.5403	8.2212	3.0000	109.0000	.0001

F(3,109)=8.2212, p<.001, R²=.1845 (all predictors to PWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.3840	.5632	4.2330	.0000	1.2678	3.5002
ACTIV	2.8993	.8219	3.5277	.0006	1.2704	4.5282
IMM_M1	.5175	.1070	4.8365	.0000	.3055	.7296
Int_1	-.5231	.1542	-3.3918	.0010	-.8288	-.2174

b=-.5231, t(109)=-3.3918, p=.0010 => There is evidence of an interaction between activist tweet AND immigrant acceptance and explains 8,6% of the variance in Positive e-wom

Product terms key:

Int_1 : ACTIV x IMM_M1

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0861	11.5046	1.0000	109.0000	.0010

Focal predict: ACTIV (X)
 Mod var: IMM_M1 (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
3.6000	1.0161	.3299	3.0803	.0026	.3623	1.6699
5.4000	.0745	.2381	.3130	.7549	-.3974	.5464
6.8000	-.6578	.3503	-1.8779	.0631	-1.3521	.0365

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
4.6098	41.5929	58.4071
6.9249	87.6106	12.3894

Conditional effect of focal predictor at values of the moderator:

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1.0000	2.3762	.6754	3.5180	.0006	1.0375	3.7149
1.3000	2.2193	.6322	3.5102	.0007	.9662	3.4723
1.6000	2.0623	.5895	3.4985	.0007	.8940	3.2307

1.9000	1.9054	.5473	3.4812	.0007	.8206	2.9902
2.2000	1.7485	.5059	3.4562	.0008	.7458	2.7511
2.5000	1.5915	.4653	3.4201	.0009	.6692	2.5138
2.8000	1.4346	.4260	3.3677	.0010	.5903	2.2789
3.1000	1.2777	.3881	3.2918	.0013	.5084	2.0469
3.4000	1.1207	.3523	3.1811	.0019	.4225	1.8190
3.7000	.9638	.3192	3.0196	.0032	.3312	1.5964
4.0000	.8069	.2897	2.7854	.0063	.2327	1.3810
4.3000	.6499	.2650	2.4525	.0158	.1247	1.1752
4.6000	.4930	.2466	1.9989	.0481	.0042	.9818
4.6098	.4879	.2462	1.9820	.0500	.0000	.9758
4.9000	.3361	.2360	1.4239	.1573	-.1317	.8039
5.2000	.1791	.2342	.7648	.4461	-.2851	.6434
5.5000	.0222	.2415	.0920	.9269	-.4564	.5008
5.8000	-.1347	.2570	-.5242	.6012	-.6440	.3746
6.1000	-.2916	.2794	-1.0440	.2988	-.8453	.2620
6.4000	-.4486	.3071	-1.4605	.1470	-1.0573	.1601
6.7000	-.6055	.3390	-1.7863	.0768	-1.2773	.0663
6.9249	-.7231	.3649	-1.9820	.0500	-1.4463	.0000
7.0000	-.7624	.3738	-2.0395	.0438	-1.5034	-.0215

Analysis 2 – NWOM

Model : 1
 Y : NWOM_M
 X : ACTIV
 W : IMM_M1

Sample
 Size: 113

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 NWOM_M

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5882	.3459	.9999	19.2167	3.0000	109.0000	.0000

F(3,109)=19.2167, p<.001, R²=.3459 (all predictors to NWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.4237	.4538	11.9525	.0000	4.5243	6.3230
ACTIV	-2.9131	.6622	-4.3992	.0000	-4.2255	-1.6007
IMM_M1	-.6094	.0862	-7.0684	.0000	-.7803	-.4385
Int_1	.4905	.1243	3.9478	.0001	.2443	.7368

b=.4905, t(109)= 3.9478, p=.0001 => There is evidence of an interaction between activist tweet AND immigrant acceptance and explains 9,4% of the variance in nEGATIVE e-wom

Product terms key:

Int_1 : ACTIV x IMM_M1

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0935	15.5847	1.0000	109.0000	.0001

Focal predict: ACTIV (X)
 Mod var: IMM_M1 (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
3.6000	-1.1471	.2658	-4.3160	.0000	-1.6739	-.6203
5.4000	-.2641	.1918	-1.3769	.1714	-.6444	.1161
6.8000	.4226	.2822	1.4974	.1372	-.1368	.9820

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
5.1765	47.7876	52.2124

Conditional effect of focal predictor at values of the moderator:

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1.0000	-2.4225	.5442	-4.4515	.0000	-3.5011	-1.3439
1.3000	-2.2754	.5094	-4.4668	.0000	-3.2850	-1.2658
1.6000	-2.1282	.4750	-4.4808	.0000	-3.0696	-1.1869
1.9000	-1.9810	.4410	-4.4923	.0000	-2.8551	-1.1070
2.2000	-1.8339	.4076	-4.4993	.0000	-2.6417	-1.0260
2.5000	-1.6867	.3749	-4.4987	.0000	-2.4298	-.9436
2.8000	-1.5396	.3432	-4.4857	.0000	-2.2198	-.8593
3.1000	-1.3924	.3127	-4.4525	.0000	-2.0122	-.7726
3.4000	-1.2452	.2839	-4.3868	.0000	-1.8078	-.6826
3.7000	-1.0981	.2572	-4.2698	.0000	-1.6078	-.5884
4.0000	-.9509	.2334	-4.0742	.0001	-1.4135	-.4883
4.3000	-.8037	.2135	-3.7642	.0003	-1.2269	-.3805
4.6000	-.6566	.1987	-3.3041	.0013	-1.0504	-.2627
4.9000	-.5094	.1902	-2.6787	.0085	-.8863	-.1325
5.1765	-.3738	.1886	-1.9820	.0500	-.7475	.0000
5.2000	-.3623	.1887	-1.9194	.0576	-.7363	.0118
5.5000	-.2151	.1946	-1.1055	.2714	-.6007	.1705
5.8000	-.0679	.2070	-.3281	.7435	-.4783	.3424
6.1000	.0792	.2251	.3520	.7255	-.3669	.5253
6.4000	.2264	.2475	.9149	.3623	-.2641	.7169
6.7000	.3736	.2731	1.3678	.1742	-.1677	.9149
7.0000	.5207	.3012	1.7289	.0867	-.0762	1.1177

APPENDIX 5 – EXPERIMENT #1 COMPLETE HAYES REPORT (BLURRED LOGO)

Analysis 1 – PWOM

Model : 1
 Y : PWOM_M
 X : ACTIV
 W : IMM_M1

Sample
 Size: 118

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 PWOM_M

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6143	.3774	1.2554	23.0342	3.0000	114.0000	.0000

F(3,114)=23.0342, , R²=.3774 (all predictors to PWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.0261	.5072	2.0230	.0454	.0213	2.0309
ACTIV	3.1733	.7459	4.2542	.0000	1.6956	4.6509
IMM_M1	.7631	.0933	8.1767	.0000	.5782	.9479
Int_1	-.6132	.1369	-4.4776	.0000	-.8844	-.3419

b=-.6132, t(114)=-4.4776, p<.001 => There is evidence of an interaction between activist tweet AND immigrant acceptance and explains 11.0% of the variance in Positive e-wom

Product terms key:

Int_1 : ACTIV x IMM_M1

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.1095	20.0488	1.0000	114.0000	.0000

Focal predict: ACTIV (X)
 Mod var: IMM_M1 (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
3.6000	.9659	.3045	3.1725	.0019	.3628	1.5691
5.4000	-.1378	.2077	-.6634	.5084	-.5492	.2736
7.0000	-1.1188	.3179	-3.5191	.0006	-1.7486	-.4890

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
4.4166	30.5085	69.4915
5.9053	57.6271	42.3729

Conditional effect of focal predictor at values of the moderator:

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1.2000	2.4375	.5898	4.1330	.0001	1.2692	3.6058
1.4900	2.2597	.5527	4.0882	.0001	1.1647	3.3547
1.7800	2.0819	.5161	4.0338	.0001	1.0595	3.1043

2.0700	1.9041	.4800	3.9670	.0001	.9532	2.8549
2.3600	1.7262	.4445	3.8840	.0002	.8458	2.6067
2.6500	1.5484	.4097	3.7794	.0003	.7368	2.3600
2.9400	1.3706	.3759	3.6459	.0004	.6259	2.1153
3.2300	1.1928	.3434	3.4732	.0007	.5125	1.8731
3.5200	1.0150	.3126	3.2468	.0015	.3957	1.6342
3.8100	.8372	.2840	2.9478	.0039	.2746	1.3998
4.1000	.6593	.2583	2.5522	.0120	.1476	1.1711
4.3900	.4815	.2366	2.0352	.0442	.0128	.9502
4.4166	.4652	.2348	1.9810	.0500	.0000	.9305
4.6800	.3037	.2199	1.3808	.1700	-.1320	.7394
4.9700	.1259	.2096	.6007	.5492	-.2893	.5411
5.2600	-.0519	.2065	-.2515	.8019	-.4609	.3571
5.5500	-.2297	.2109	-1.0893	.2783	-.6476	.1881
5.8400	-.4076	.2225	-1.8320	.0696	-.8483	.0332
5.9053	-.4476	.2260	-1.9810	.0500	-.8953	.0000
6.1300	-.5854	.2401	-2.4378	.0163	-1.0611	-.1097
6.4200	-.7632	.2626	-2.9059	.0044	-1.2835	-.2429
6.7100	-.9410	.2889	-3.2574	.0015	-1.5133	-.3687
7.0000	-1.1188	.3179	-3.5191	.0006	-1.7486	-.4890

ANÁLISE 2 – NWOM

Model : 1
 Y : NWOM_M
 X : ACTIV
 W : IMM_M1

Sample
 Size: 118

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

NWOM_M

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5436	.2956	1.1397	15.9430	3.0000	114.0000	.0000

F(3,114)=15.9430, p<.001 , R²=.2956 (all predictors to PWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.1529	.4833	10.6626	.0000	4.1955	6.1102
ACTIV	-1.6276	.7107	-2.2902	.0239	-3.0355	-.2197
IMM_M1	-.5726	.0889	-6.4393	.0000	-.7487	-.3964
Int_1	.3440	.1305	2.6364	.0095	.0855	.6024

b=.3440, t(114)= 2.6364, p=.0095 => There is evidence of an interaction between activist tweet AND immigrant acceptance and explains 4.3% of the variance in Positive e-wom

Product terms key:

Int_1 : ACTIV x IMM_M1

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0429	6.9504	1.0000	114.0000	.0095

Focal predict: ACTIV (X)

Mod var: IMM_M1 (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
3.6000	-.3893	.2901	-1.3420	.1823	-.9640	.1854
5.4000	.2298	.1979	1.1616	.2478	-.1621	.6218
7.0000	.7802	.3029	2.5756	.0113	.1801	1.3803

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
2.1568	3.3898	96.6102
6.0034	61.0169	38.9831

Conditional effect of focal predictor at values of the moderator:

IMM_M1	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1.2000	-1.2149	.5619	-2.1620	.0327	-2.3280	-.1017
1.4900	-1.1151	.5266	-2.1174	.0364	-2.1584	-.0718
1.7800	-1.0153	.4917	-2.0648	.0412	-1.9895	-.0412
2.0700	-.9156	.4573	-2.0021	.0476	-1.8215	-.0097
2.1568	-.8857	.4471	-1.9810	.0500	-1.7714	.0000
2.3600	-.8158	.4235	-1.9266	.0565	-1.6547	.0230
2.6500	-.7161	.3904	-1.8345	.0692	-1.4894	.0572
2.9400	-.6163	.3582	-1.7208	.0880	-1.3259	.0932
3.2300	-.5166	.3272	-1.5787	.1172	-1.1648	.1316
3.5200	-.4168	.2978	-1.3995	.1644	-1.0069	.1732
3.8100	-.3171	.2706	-1.1718	.2437	-.8531	.2190
4.1000	-.2173	.2461	-.8829	.3791	-.7049	.2703
4.3900	-.1176	.2254	-.5215	.6030	-.5641	.3290
4.6800	-.0178	.2096	-.0850	.9324	-.4329	.3973
4.9700	.0819	.1997	.4103	.6823	-.3136	.4775
5.2600	.1817	.1967	.9236	.3576	-.2080	.5714
5.5500	.2814	.2010	1.4006	.1641	-.1166	.6795
5.8400	.3812	.2120	1.7984	.0748	-.0387	.8011
6.0034	.4374	.2208	1.9810	.0500	.0000	.8748
6.1300	.4809	.2288	2.1022	.0377	.0277	.9342
6.4200	.5807	.2502	2.3206	.0221	.0850	1.0764
6.7100	.6805	.2752	2.4722	.0149	.1352	1.2257
7.0000	.7802	.3029	2.5756	.0113	.1801	1.3803

APPENDIX 6 – EXPERIMENT #2 COMPLETE HAYES REPORT (RETEST EXPERIMENT #1)

Analysis 1 – PWOM

Model : 1
 Y : PWOM
 X : ACTIV2
 W : IMM_M2

Sample
 Size: 204

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

PWOM

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4850	.2352	1.3289	20.5006	3.0000	200.0000	.0000

F(3,200)=20.5006, p<.001, R²=.2352 (all predictors to PWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.2356	.3955	5.6526	.0000	1.4557	3.0155
ACTIV2	3.1915	.6021	5.3002	.0000	2.0042	4.3789
IMM_M2	.5840	.0746	7.8268	.0000	.4368	.7311
Int_1	-.6250	.1119	-5.5837	.0000	-.8457	-.4043

b=-.6250, t(200)=-5.5837, p<.001 => There is evidence of an interaction between activist tweet AND immigrant acceptance and explains 11,9% of the variance in Positive e-wom

Product terms key:

Int_1 : ACTIV2 x IMM_M2

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.1192	31.1776	1.0000	200.0000	.0000

Focal predict: ACTIV2 (X)
 Mod var: IMM_M2 (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

IMM_M2	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
3.8000	.8165	.2239	3.6472	.0003	.3751	1.2580
5.3000	-.1210	.1624	-.7448	.4573	-.4413	.1993
6.8000	-1.0585	.2430	-4.3564	.0000	-1.5376	-.5794

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
4.5489	28.9216	71.0784
5.6426	59.8039	40.1961

Conditional effect of focal predictor at values of the moderator:

IMM_M2	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1.0000	2.5665	.4953	5.1823	.0000	1.5899	3.5431
1.3000	2.3790	.4636	5.1311	.0000	1.4648	3.2933
1.6000	2.1915	.4323	5.0690	.0000	1.3390	3.0440
1.9000	2.0040	.4014	4.9926	.0000	1.2125	2.7955
2.2000	1.8165	.3709	4.8974	.0000	1.0851	2.5479
2.5000	1.6290	.3410	4.7769	.0000	.9566	2.3015
2.8000	1.4415	.3119	4.6221	.0000	.8265	2.0565
3.1000	1.2540	.2837	4.4201	.0000	.6946	1.8135
3.4000	1.0665	.2569	4.1523	.0000	.5600	1.5730
3.7000	.8790	.2318	3.7930	.0002	.4220	1.3360
4.0000	.6915	.2090	3.3080	.0011	.2793	1.1037
4.3000	.5040	.1896	2.6584	.0085	.1302	.8779
4.5489	.3484	.1767	1.9719	.0500	.0000	.6969
4.6000	.3165	.1745	1.8140	.0712	-.0276	.6606
4.9000	.1290	.1649	.7822	.4350	-.1962	.4543
5.2000	-.0585	.1619	-.3612	.7183	-.3778	.2608
5.5000	-.2460	.1658	-1.4838	.1394	-.5729	.0809
5.6426	-.3351	.1699	-1.9719	.0500	-.6702	.0000
5.8000	-.4335	.1761	-2.4618	.0147	-.7807	-.0863
6.1000	-.6210	.1918	-3.2378	.0014	-.9992	-.2428
6.4000	-.8085	.2117	-3.8190	.0002	-1.2259	-.3910
6.7000	-.9960	.2347	-4.2428	.0000	-1.4589	-.5331
7.0000	-1.1835	.2601	-4.5502	.0000	-1.6964	-.6706

Analysis 2 – NWOM

Model : 1
 Y : NWOM
 X : ACTIV2
 W : IMM_M2

Sample
 Size: 204

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

NWOM

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5022	.2522	1.0367	22.4838	3.0000	200.0000	.0000

F(3,200)=22.4838, p<.001, R²=.2522 (all predictors to PWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4.8856	.3493	13.9862	.0000	4.1967	5.5744
ACTIV2	-2.8554	.5318	-5.3690	.0000	-3.9041	-1.8067
IMM_M2	-.5343	.0659	-8.1076	.0000	-.6642	-.4043
Int_1	.5251	.0989	5.3115	.0000	.3302	.7201

b=.5251, t(200)=5.3115, p<.001 => There is evidence of an interaction between activist tweet AND immigrant acceptance and explains 10,6% of the variance in negative e-wom

Product terms key:

Int_1 : ACTIV2 x IMM_M2

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.1055	28.2125	1.0000	200.0000	.0000

 Focal predict: ACTIV2 (X)
 Mod var: IMM_M2 (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

IMM_M2	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
3.8000	-.8600	.1977	-4.3491	.0000	-1.2499	-.4701
5.3000	-.0723	.1435	-.5040	.6148	-.3552	.2106
6.8000	.7154	.2146	3.3335	.0010	.2922	1.1385

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
4.8899	36.2745	63.7255
6.0674	69.6078	30.3922

Conditional effect of focal predictor at values of the moderator:

IMM_M2	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1.0000	-2.3303	.4374	-5.3274	.0000	-3.1929	-1.4678
1.3000	-2.1728	.4095	-5.3058	.0000	-2.9803	-1.3653
1.6000	-2.0152	.3819	-5.2775	.0000	-2.7682	-1.2623
1.9000	-1.8577	.3545	-5.2399	.0000	-2.5568	-1.1586
2.2000	-1.7002	.3276	-5.1896	.0000	-2.3462	-1.0542
2.5000	-1.5426	.3012	-5.1216	.0000	-2.1366	-.9487
2.8000	-1.3851	.2755	-5.0283	.0000	-1.9283	-.8419
3.1000	-1.2276	.2506	-4.8988	.0000	-1.7217	-.7334
3.4000	-1.0700	.2269	-4.7167	.0000	-1.5174	-.6227
3.7000	-.9125	.2047	-4.4579	.0000	-1.3161	-.5089
4.0000	-.7550	.1846	-4.0889	.0001	-1.1190	-.3909
4.3000	-.5974	.1675	-3.5677	.0005	-.9276	-.2672
4.6000	-.4399	.1541	-2.8543	.0048	-.7438	-.1360
4.8899	-.2876	.1459	-1.9719	.0500	-.5753	.0000
4.9000	-.2824	.1457	-1.9382	.0540	-.5696	.0049
5.2000	-.1248	.1430	-.8728	.3838	-.4068	.1572
5.5000	.0327	.1464	.2234	.8234	-.2560	.3214
5.8000	.1903	.1555	1.2233	.2227	-.1164	.4969
6.0674	.3307	.1677	1.9719	.0500	.0000	.6613
6.1000	.3478	.1694	2.0531	.0414	.0138	.6818
6.4000	.5053	.1870	2.7025	.0075	.1366	.8740
6.7000	.6629	.2073	3.1970	.0016	.2540	1.0717
7.0000	.8204	.2297	3.5712	.0004	.3674	1.2734

APPENDIX 7 – EXPERIMENT #2 COMPLETE HAYES REPORT

Analysis 2 – PWOM

Model : 3
 Y : PWOM
 X : ACTIV
 W : IMM_MEAN
 Z : AUT_BR

Sample
 Size: 204

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

PWOM

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5218	.2723	1.2903	10.4756	7.0000	196.0000	.0000

F(7,196)=10.4756, p<.001, R²=.2723 (all predictors to PWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.2914	.6267	8.4438	.0000	4.0555	6.5273
ACTIV	-3.6973	.8343	-4.4317	.0000	-5.3427	-2.0520
IMM_MEAN	-.0506	.1147	-.4413	.6595	-.2769	.1756
Int_1	.7080	.1537	4.6071	.0000	.4049	1.0110
AUT_BR	.2671	.8950	.2985	.7657	-1.4980	2.0322
Int_2	.9321	1.1876	.7849	.4335	-1.4100	3.2741
Int_3	.0274	.1646	.1667	.8678	-.2971	.3520
Int_4	-.1570	.2209	-.7107	.4781	-.5927	.2787

Product terms key:

Int_1	:	ACTIV	x	IMM_MEAN	
Int_2	:	ACTIV	x	AUT_BR	
Int_3	:	IMM_MEAN	x	AUT_BR	
Int_4	:	ACTIV	x	IMM_MEAN	x
					AUT_BR

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W*Z	.0019	.5052	1.0000	196.0000	.4781

Focal predict: ACTIV (X)
 Mod var: IMM_MEAN (W)
 Mod var: AUT_BR (Z)

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
 Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/

ACTIV	IMM_MEAN	AUT_BR	PWOM	.
BEGIN DATA.				
.0000	3.8000	.0000	5.0990	
1.0000	3.8000	.0000	4.0919	
.0000	3.8000	1.0000	5.4704	
1.0000	3.8000	1.0000	4.7987	
.0000	5.3000	.0000	5.0231	
1.0000	5.3000	.0000	5.0779	
.0000	5.3000	1.0000	5.4356	

1.0000	5.3000	1.0000	5.5903
.0000	6.8000	.0000	4.9472
1.0000	6.8000	.0000	6.0639
.0000	6.8000	1.0000	5.4008
1.0000	6.8000	1.0000	6.3819

END DATA.

GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=

ACTIV WITH PWOM BY IMM_MEAN /PANEL ROWVAR= AUT_BR .

ANÁLISE 2 – NWOM without covariates

Model : 3
 Y : NWOM
 X : ACTIV
 W : IMM_MEAN
 Z : AUT_BR

Sample
 Size: 204

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

NWOM

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5394	.2909	1.0031	11.4877	7.0000	196.0000	.0000

F(7,196)=11.4877, p<.001, R²=.2909 (all predictors to NWOM)

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.0211	.5525	3.6579	.0003	.9315	3.1108
ACTIV	3.6430	.7356	4.9524	.0000	2.1923	5.0937
IMM_MEAN	.0174	.1011	.1721	.8635	-.1821	.2169
Int_1	-.6570	.1355	-4.8491	.0000	-.9242	-.3898
AUT_BR	.0256	.7891	.0324	.9742	-1.5307	1.5819
Int_2	-1.5164	1.0471	-1.4482	.1491	-3.5814	.5486
Int_3	-.0601	.1451	-.4143	.6791	-.3463	.2260
Int_4	.2586	.1948	1.3275	.1859	-.1256	.6428

Product terms key:

Int_1	:	ACTIV	x	IMM_MEAN	
Int_2	:	ACTIV	x	AUT_BR	
Int_3	:	IMM_MEAN	x	AUT_BR	
Int_4	:	ACTIV	x	IMM_MEAN	x
					AUT_BR

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W*Z	.0064	1.7623	1.0000	196.0000	.1859

Focal predict: ACTIV (X)
 Mod var: IMM_MEAN (W)
 Mod var: AUT_BR (Z)

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
 Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/

ACTIV IMM_MEAN AUT_BR NWOM .

```
BEGIN DATA.  
  .0000    3.8000    .0000    2.0873  
  1.0000    3.8000    .0000    3.2337  
  .0000    3.8000    1.0000    1.8844  
  1.0000    3.8000    1.0000    2.4971  
  .0000    5.3000    .0000    2.1134  
  1.0000    5.3000    .0000    2.2743  
  .0000    5.3000    1.0000    1.8204  
  1.0000    5.3000    1.0000    1.8354  
  .0000    6.8000    .0000    2.1395  
  1.0000    6.8000    .0000    1.3149  
  .0000    6.8000    1.0000    1.7563  
  1.0000    6.8000    1.0000    1.1738  
END DATA.  
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=  
  ACTIV    WITH    NWOM    BY    IMM_MEAN /PANEL    ROWVAR=    AUT_BR    .
```