

**UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL  
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO  
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM ADMINISTRAÇÃO  
MESTRADO ACADÊMICO EM ADMINISTRAÇÃO**

**NATHALIA SOARES BRUM DE MELLO**

**THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SOCIOPOLITICAL ADVOCACY ON  
CONSUMER CAUSE-RELATED ENGAGEMENT**

**PORTO ALEGRE**

**2022**

**NATHALIA SOARES BRUM DE MELLO**

**THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SOCIOPOLITICAL ADVOCACY ON  
CONSUMER CAUSE-RELATED ENGAGEMENT**

Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Mestre em Administração.

Área de concentração: Marketing

Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Cristiane Pizzutti dos Santos

**PORTO ALEGRE**

**2022**

THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SOCIOPOLITICAL ADVOCACY ON CONSUMER  
CAUSE-RELATED ENGAGEMENT

Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Mestre em Administração.

Área de concentração: Marketing

Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Cristiane Pizzutti dos Santos

Aprovado em \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_.

**BANCA EXAMINADORA**

---

Profa. Dra. Cristiane Pizzutti dos Santos

---

Prof. Dr. Leonardo Nicolao

---

Profa. Dra. Danielle Mantovani Lucena da Silva

---

Prof. Dr. Paulo de Paula Baptista

**2022**

## AGRADECIMENTOS

Sabendo que sozinhos não chegamos a lugar nenhum, gostaria de reservar este espaço para agradecer especialmente todos aqueles que de alguma maneira contribuíram com o sucesso deste trabalho e, também, com a minha trajetória acadêmica.

À minha família por estar sempre ao meu lado principalmente nas dificuldades. Com certeza o afago e suporte de vocês nos momentos de aflição foram extremamente importantes para que eu continuasse com a cabeça erguida atrás dos meus sonhos.

Ao meu noivo, Diego de Vasconcelos Souza, por nunca sair do meu lado, lutar minhas lutas junto comigo e me dar todo o apoio possível ao longo desses dois anos. Só nós sabemos o que foram os anos de 2020 a 2022 e com certeza se eu não tivesse você comigo, tudo seria ainda mais difícil.

À minha prima, Marcela Toledo, por passar horas comigo a fio conversando e aconselhando nas minhas reflexões sobre a vida. Nossa troca me salva todos os dias.

À Deus, por ter me dado calma e discernimento até nos momentos mais desesperadores.

À minha orientadora, profa. Cristiane Pizzutti dos Santos, por ter feito da sua orientação não somente acadêmica, mas também de vida. Muito obrigada também pelo trabalho e esforço incansáveis que a senhora colocou no nosso projeto.

Aos colegas de grupo em particular do GEMS por contribuírem com o meu trabalho nas suas sugestões, esclarecimentos e dicas. Um agradecimento em especial para Renata Santos por ter me auxiliado em tantos momentos de dúvidas.

*“A menos que modifiquemos a nossa maneira de pensar, não seremos capazes de resolver os problemas causados pela forma como nos acostumamos a ver o mundo” (Albert Einstein)*

## RESUMO

Em um mundo cada dia mais polarizado politicamente, permanecer neutro não parece mais ser uma opção. É notório o número crescente de empresas advogando sobre causas que fogem da sua esfera normal de negócio, se posicionando a favor ou contra determinada questão muitas vezes social. A esse fenômeno damos o nome de “Advocacia Sociopolítica Corporativa” (ASC) que consiste no ato das empresas de comunicarem aos seus stakeholders os valores as quais defendem e querem se coligar. Se posicionar de forma sociopolítica certamente tem efeitos controversos nos resultados da mesma maneira. Enquanto consumidores de diferentes classes, idades e orientações políticas podem agir de forma distinta em relação à empresa que advoga determinada causa, pouco ainda se sabe sobre se esse posicionamento corporativo de fato influencia nos pensamentos e comportamentos das pessoas frente à causa. A presente dissertação tem por objetivo, então, compreender se há efeito da ASC no engajamento dos consumidores com a causa a nível afetivo (elevação e empatia), cognitivo (acomodação e atenção) e comportamental (engajamento online e endosso). Por meio de dois estudos experimentais envolvendo estudantes e um painel online (Amazon Mechanical Turk), foi possível identificar que o mecanismo explicativo por trás do engajamento do consumidor com a causa é a autoridade moral. Entidades percebidas como tendo autoridade moral são aquelas que possuem uma forte personalidade moral e poder para influenciar outras pessoas. Porque Hoppner e Vaddakenpart (2019) afirmam que empresas com autoridade moral são aquelas que são percebidas como morais, autênticas/credíveis, e que possuem poder e plataforma para influenciar os pensamentos e comportamentos das pessoas, esta dissertação explora a autenticidade e a influência como antecedentes da moral autoridade. Além do mecanismo explicativo da autoridade moral, também foi possível notar que a confiança dos consumidores na empresa desempenha um papel importante nessa relação especificamente para empatia, acomodação e atenção.

**Palavras-chave:** advocacia social corporativa, engajamento, causa social

## ABSTRACT

In an increasingly politically polarized world, remaining neutral no longer seems to be an option. The growing number of companies advocating on causes that are outside their normal sphere of business is notorious. We call this phenomenon “Corporate Sociopolitical Advocacy” (CSA) which consists of a communication strategy where companies affiliate themselves with a particular (often controversial) issue. Sociopolitical positioning certainly has controversial effects on outcomes as well. While consumers of different classes, ages and political orientations may act differently in relation to the company that advocates a particular cause, little is still known about whether this corporate positioning actually influences people's thoughts and behaviors towards the cause. This dissertation aims to understand if there is an effect of CSA on consumer engagement with the cause on affective (elevation and empathy), cognitive (accommodation and attention) and behavioral (online engagement and endorsement) dimensions. Two experimental studies involving students and MTurk workers identify that the explanatory mechanism behind consumer engagement with the cause is moral authority. Entities perceived as having moral authority are those that are perceived as having a strong moral personality and power to influence others. Because Hoppner and Vaddakenpart (2019) state that companies that have moral authority are those that are perceived as moral, authentic/credible, and that has power and a platform to influence people's thoughts and behaviors, this dissertation explores authenticity and influence as antecedents of moral authority. In addition to the explanatory mechanism of moral authority, it was also possible to infer that trust also plays an important role in this relationship specifically for empathy, accommodation, and attention.

**Keywords:** corporate social advocacy, engagement, social issue

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1. Elements of Moral Authority .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Figure 2. Theoretical Model .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Figure 3. High vs. Low Conditions of Authenticity .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Figure 4. Petitioning Simulation (VD) .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Figure 5. Mediation Test on Affective Engagement (Study 1) .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Figure 6. Mediation Test on Cognitive Engagement (Study 1) .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Figure 7. Mediation Test on Behavioral Engagement (Study 1) .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Figure 8. Moral Authority x Trust on Cognitive Engagement (Study 1) .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Figure 9. Moral Authority x Trust on Affective Engagement (Study 1) .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Figure 10. Moral Authority x Trust on Behavioral Engagement (Study 1) .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Figure 11. Mediation Test on Affective Engagement (Study 2) .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Figure 12. Mediation Test on Cognitive Engagement (Study 2) .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Figure 13. Mediation Test on Behavioral Engagement (Study 2) .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Figure 14. Moral Authority x Trust on Cognitive Engagement (Study 2) .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Figure 15. Moral Authority x Trust on Affective Engagement (Study 2) .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Figure 16. Moral Authority x Trust on Behavioral Engagement (Study 2) .....</b>	<b>54</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1. Constructs related to CSA .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Table 2. Distinctive Features .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Table 3. Variables Description .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 4. Parcial Conditions .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Table 5. Means of Authenticity and Influence on Moral Authority .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Table 6. Conditions on Consumer Cause-Related Engagement .....</b>	<b>50</b>

## SUMMARY

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>2. Conceptual Background</b> .....	<b>15</b>
2.1 Corporate Sociopolitical Advocacy .....	15
2.1.1 CSA x Related Terms.....	19
2.1.2 Consumer Responses to Corporate Advocacy .....	21
2.1.3 Consumer Cause-Related Engagement .....	23
2.1.4 The Role of Moral Authority .....	27
2.1.4.1 Moral Authority and Authenticity .....	29
2.1.4.2 Moral Authority and Influence .....	31
<b>3. Empirical Studies</b> .....	<b>32</b>
3.1 Study 1 .....	33
3.1.1 Design and Participants .....	33
3.1.2 Manipulation Stimuli .....	34
3.1.3 Measures.....	36
3.1.4 Data Analysis .....	38
3.1.5 Results .....	38
3.1.5.1 Manipulation Check .....	38
3.1.5.2 Hypothesis Testing .....	39
3.1.5.3 Alternative Explanations .....	41
3.1.6 Discussion .....	43
3.2 Study 2 .....	44
3.2.1 Design and Participants .....	44
3.2.2 Manipulation Stimuli .....	45
3.2.3 Measures.....	46
3.2.4 Data Analysis .....	48
3.2.5 Results .....	48
3.2.5.1 Manipulation Check .....	48
3.2.5.2 Hypothesis Testing .....	49
3.2.5.3 Alternative Explanations .....	52
3.2.5.4 Discussion.....	54
<b>4. General Discussion</b> .....	<b>54</b>
4.1 Theoretical Contributions .....	56
4.2 Managerial Implications .....	56
4.3 Limitations and Future Research .....	57

<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Appendix A. Measurement model results .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Appendix B. Manipulation Stimuli (Study 2) .....</b>	<b>73</b>

## 1. Introduction

Over time, the marketing discipline has evolved to include among its concerns the understanding of its role in serving society (Elliot et al., 2016; Garg and Saluja, 2022). A recent special issue from *Journal of Marketing* (April, 2021) called “better marketing for a better world” reflects this concern. Hence, although profits will continue to be essential and basic to corporate survival, the major challenge to business today may be to meet the societal needs of a changing environment (Chandy et al., 2021). Through the shift from building an institution that generates profit and great products to understanding that businesses have a role beyond making money, “traditional businesses stepped into the social good space by creatively using their products to support and advocate for social issues” (Feldmann, p. 81, 2016).

Recently, in tune with consumers expectations about companies’ stance on social and political issues (Hydock et al. 2019; Austin et al. 2019; Hootkin and Chaitin 2019), controversial issues such as Black Lives Matter<sup>1</sup> and the #MeToo<sup>2</sup> movement incited mainstream brands to refocus on doing social good (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Differently from corporate social responsibility (CSR) that align the affiliating causes with their corporate goals and mission (Carroll, 2008), corporate advocacy regarding social issues (called hereafter “Corporate Sociopolitical Advocacy” - CSA)<sup>3</sup> involves a normally controverse support or opposition to policies, political perspectives or issues (e.g., on gay marriage, health care reform and emergency contraception) outside the company normal sphere (Austin et al., 2019; Dodd and Supa, 2014; Clemensen, 2017).

Such efforts may be understood not as an obligation, but as a voluntary activity where the intended outcome is to effect changes in society (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt 2019; Dodd and Supa, 2014). For example, Starbucks and Ben&Jerry’s has consistently advocate for social causes, such as standing up for LGBTQIA+ rights and against racial oppression. Although this approach is partly risky for business because it addresses issues that are often polarized, it is also capable of generating a competitive advantage in a youthful market that not only seeks the

---

<sup>1</sup> Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an activist movement originating in the African-American community against violence directed at black people.

<sup>2</sup> #MeToo movement is an activist movement against sexual abuse and harassment.

<sup>3</sup> Also called “brand activism” (Garg and Saluja, 2022) and “corporate political advocacy” (Wettstein and Baur, 2016)

utility of the products that a brand can provide, but also takes a stand on relevant issues (Feldmann, 2016).

Contrasting with a profuse literature on the consequences for firms (e.g., negative e-WOM, purchase intent, sales growth) and with the fact that CSA is grounded on the idea that companies have a responsibility to society at large (Korschun et al., 2020) by influencing public opinions (Chatterji and Toffel, 2016) and changing attitudes and behaviors of their stakeholders (Eilert and Cherup, 2020), the marketing literature has largely neglected the effects of CSA on society. One exception is Holiday et al. (2020) who examines the impact of an anti-bullying campaign on consumer engagement (i.e., volume of activity and length of participation time) with the cause on Twitter over a seven-year period. Although their effort to understand the effects of marketing campaigns on society's debate toward an issue is valid, their study did not explore controversial issues, as often are the case of CSA.

Then, the following relevant questions remain unanswered: What is the impact of corporate sociopolitical advocacy on consumer engagement toward the defended cause? And what is the underlying mechanism behind this effect? In this dissertation I try to respond these questions by exploring the effects of CSA on engaging individuals toward the advocated cause. Regardless of the company's motivation to engage in social advocacy, positioning itself can result in positive and/or negative changes for the entity and society (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019). As this work aims to understand how companies can lead individuals to reflect and act on certain social causes, I decided to consider engagement (as a multidimensional concept arising from the marketing literature) as the main consequence of social advocacy. .

A general assumption among practitioners and academics is that successful engagement starts with an emotional response (in this case, empathy and elevation) that has a primary role in attracting the attention of your audience (Heath, 2007) to think about an issue. When individuals pay more attention to others, they are better able to recognize their needs, thus generating more empathy and, consequently, having a greater intention to help (Zheng et al., 2021). Thus, based on the engagement literature, it is proposed that engagement as a dependent variable is a multidimensional concept that encompasses affective (i.e., empathy and elevation), cognitive (i.e., attention and accommodation) and behavioral (i.e., endorsing, online engagement and contribution to the cause) dimensions (Brodie et al., 2011).

Because individuals often have more positive reactions to companies that are seen as moral on the subject that they are advocating for, I suggest that it through companies' moral authority that individuals will engage with the cause and become agents of social change.

Moral authority, often cited in the fields of ethics (e.g., White et al., 2000), sociology (e.g., Whitehead and Baker, 2012) and international relations (e.g., Wohlforth et al., 2018) refers to an entity's potential to influence others' morality (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019). Because companies' moral authority can only be exercised if it's perceived as moral, authentic (or believable), and with power to influence others, I argue that perceptions of authenticity (i.e., CSA consistency over time) and influence (i.e., high number of followers) after a CSA communication act as antecedents of moral authority which leads to greater effects toward consumers' engagement with the advocated cause.

For the state of art in marketing, as far as I know, this is the first research to empirically analyze the moral authority of a company as an important factor for the effectiveness of its CSA toward the cause being advocated. Following the suggestions of Hoppner and Vadakkepatt (2019) regarding the relevance of this construct to understanding the social role of companies, this work proposes to be the first one to relate moral authority to the understanding of a marketing problem empirically. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, no study has sought to explore the effects of corporate advocacy on engagement toward a cause in a multidimensional way (i.e., cognitive, affective and behavioral).

The results indicate that CSA alone, even if perceived as authentic and of great influence, does not impact the levels of affective, cognitive or behavioral cause-related engagement. However, this dissertation demonstrates through two experimental studies that this relationship becomes significant through the mechanism of moral authority. This work is structured as follows: the next section consists of corporate sociopolitical advocacy (CSA) theoretical basis as well as its related concepts and due differences. Next, I develop hypothesis arguing how moral authority can be an explicative mechanism for consumer cause-related engagement. Then I describe how the empirical studies were conducted and their results. Finally, main findings, managerial and theoretical implications, research limitations, and future research are discussed on the last section.

## 2. Conceptual Background

This chapter includes a literature review on the upward movement on social issues addressed by companies, consumer engagement, and the role of moral authority in this context.

### 2.1 Corporate Sociopolitical Advocacy

Traditionally, companies have largely avoided entering into conversations on divisive social or political issues out of fear of alienating part of their consumers (Hydock et al., 2019). However, as diverse stakeholders believe that companies should encompass goodwill and ethical behavior into their daily practices (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001), traditional businesses have started to use their products to support and advocate for social issues (Feldmann, 2016). Doing so, companies use their interaction with consumers as a way to communicate company values and beliefs as a way to be perceived positively by community members and the public, generating favorable corporate reputation (Feldmann, 2016; Du, Bhattacharya and Sen, 2010).

In order to cover these areas of concern, terms such as corporate social responsibility – CSR (Holiday et al., 2020; Abitbol et al., 2018), cause-related marketing – CRM (Perrini, 2006; Gautier and Pache, 2015; Weinzimmer and Esken, 2016), corporate sociopolitical activism/advocacy – CSA (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Dodd and Supa, 2014, 2015; Parcha and Westerman, 2020; Hydock et al., 2019), corporate political activity/activism – CPA (Grazzini et al., 2020; Clemensen, 2017), brand activism (Garg and Saluja, 2022), firm political advocacy – FPA (Weber et al., 2018) and CEO activism (Chatterji and Toffel, 2019) have been at the forefront of discussion about good business that are not limited to profit, but also helps communities, people and causes by addressing issues such as the environment, poverty and social injustice (Feldmann, 2016). Table 1 provides an overview of these areas of concern related to corporate sociopolitical advocacy literature with particular attention given to the controversial nature of the cause.

**Table 1. Constructs related to CSA**

Related constructs	Controversial topic/cause	Author(s) (e.g.)
<i>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</i>	No	Bhagwat et al. (2020); Park & Jiang (2020); Austin et al. (2019); Hydock et al. (2019); Abitbol et al. (2018)
<i>Corporate Sociopolitical Activism</i>	Yes	Bhagwat et al. (2020)
<i>Corporate Political Activity</i>	Yes	Bhagwat et al. (2020); Grazzini et al. (2020)

<i>Corporate Political Activism</i>	Yes	Clemensen (2017); Wettstein & Baur (2016)
<i>Corporate Sociopolitical Advocacy (CSA)</i>	Yes	Parcha & Westerman (2020); Austin et al. (2019); Hydock et al. (2019); Kim et al. (2020); Dodd & Supa (2014; 2015)
<i>Firm Political Advocacy (FPA)</i>	Yes	Weber et al. (2018)
<i>CEO Activism</i>	Yes	Chatterji & Toffel (2019)
<i>Brand activism</i>	Yes	Garg & Saluja (2022)

Source: own elaboration

More recently, corporate sociopolitical advocacy has been discussed in academic literature as a subset of CSR (Austin et al., 2019; Dodd and Supa, 2014). In fact, authors such as Abitbol et al. (2018), sustain that CSR can take many forms including philanthropy (i.e., donations), cause-related marketing known as a corporate philanthropy with a company's business interest (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988), corporate social marketing (CSM) which seeks to engage people in socially beneficial behaviors for some form of company support (Bloom, Hussein and Szykman, 1997) and corporate sociopolitical advocacy, the main construct of this paper, that refers to a corporate's public statement on social-political issues (Dodd and Supa, 2014).

"Advocacy" itself can be understood as the act of promoting and supporting an individual, organization, or idea (Edgett, 2022). In addition to individuals, companies also began to develop a social profile by engaging in advocacy. In this regard, two ways of engaging in advocacy have been identified in the literature: social advocacy (i.e., corporate social advocacy) and political advocacy (i.e., corporate political advocacy).

Although the idea of a company participating in political dialogue is not new (Matten and Crane, 2005), the recent political climate of the United States has made it more common for corporations to publicly stance on important issues (Clemensen, 2017; Dodd, 2018). For example, Starbucks involvement with CSA initiatives can be illustrated by their standing up for LGBTQ+ rights and weighing in on the gun control debate (Dodd and Supa, 2014; Abitbol et al., 2018). Using campaign communication as a powerful communication channel to engage in significant social issues, companies usually align their campaign messaging with their stance (Gaither et al., 2018).

In addition to the increasingly popularity of social media that allows activists and corporations to express their opinions and views to their publics (Schulz, 2017), an off-the-cuff



remark during an interview or a “private correspondence” may find its way to the public sphere via a traditional journalist or a whistle-blower as well (Dodd and Supa, 2014). In this regard, according to Dodd and Supa (p. 5, 2014):

CSA materializes as an area worthy of specific analysis within the existing issues management and corporate responsibility scholarship in three primary ways: (a) the social-political issues addressed by organizations are divorced from issues of particular relevance to the organization; (b) engagement in the social-political issues is controversial and serves to potentially isolate organizational stakeholders while simultaneously attracting activist groups; and, (c) as a result, there is a particularly necessary emphasis on financial outcomes for the organization.

According to Wettstein and Baur (2016), Corporate Political Advocacy is the act of showing explicit and public support for certain individuals, groups, ideals, or values to persuade others to do the same. Concerning the etymology of the word “advocacy” as “summoning assistance”, the authors argue that companies engaged in political advocacy promote such issues, causes, or groups of people that are not primarily or exclusively in their interest, but rather, beyond the immediate economic interests. Similarly, the concept of Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA) refers to the communication strategies by which a company (predominantly members of its leadership circles) takes a stand on a cause outside its normal business sphere, often in response to an event “that is not self-initiated and that affects it only indirectly if at all” (Frohlich, 2021, p. 2).

Because both portray voicing up about a social issue that is not related to corporates’ core business, I adopt the term “corporate sociopolitical advocacy” (CSA) as an attempt to group two interchangeable terms. Thus, corporations that engage in advocacy, whether political or social, ally themselves with issues disconnected from their core business operations (Wettstein and Baur, 2016). While corporate advocacy itself has the main objective of generating a favorable public perception of the company, authors such as Rim et al. (2020) argue that CSA is characterized by a company’s explicit positioning in support of a controversial issue that may even harm the company at some point.

While CSR initiatives may be more beneficial once the interests are clearly generalizable, CSA initiatives usually involve polarizing issues and may work to address the social good for marginalized groups (Austin, Gaither and Gaither, 2019). With the increase in popularity of social media, it is easier than ever for current issues to spread around the world

while also allowing activists and corporations to release public statements (Schulz, 2017) and be open to criticisms about motivations and legitimacy (Etter, 2013).

When consumers do not only consider a product's price and quality, but also political or ethical criteria when making purchase decisions, their consumption becomes political, prosocial, or ethical (Hoffman et al., 2018). Encompassing personal, ethical, and/or political motivations, these consumers take decisions deliberately to avoid (boycott) or seek (buycott) specific products (Copeland, 2014; Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti, 2005). Although it is true that some consumers are likely to react negatively toward business stances on political issues, prior research also suggests that consumers respect and patronize companies that take stances on issues that align with their stated corporate values (e.g., Dodd and Supa, 2014; Gaither, Austin, and Collins, 2018; Korschun et al., 2016).

Addressing controversial and often polarized issues (that is, CSA), may be seen as insincere because of consumers' skepticism toward the firm's motivation to engage with social causes (Spry et al., 2018). However, consumers' reactions to a stance are more positive when CSA and customer political ideology are congruent (Bhagawat et al., 2020; Chatterji and Toffel 2019; Dodd and Suppa 2014; Leak et al. 2015) or have at least a low deviation (Bhagawat et al., 2020).

Prior work also shows that consumer reactions to CSA depend on companies' intended image and motives for engaging in CSA. Hence, when a company describes itself (or consumers see the company) as market-driven, strategic-driven, or ego-driven, consumers react negatively (e.g., less favorable to CSA, less favorable attitudes toward the company, and stronger negative word-of-mouth). However, when a company describes itself (or consumers see the company) as value-driven or altruist, consumers are more accepting of political stances, and attitudes toward the company and positive word-of-mouth intention increase (Korschum et al. 2019; Kim et al. 2020).

Moreover, a market-driven company is seemed as more hypocritical when engaging in CSA, whereas a company that labels itself as values-driven is seemed as more hypocritical when abstaining from a political stance (Korschum et al. 2019). Also, when consumers infer that the motives to engage in CSA are driven by stakeholder pressures, they display negative reactions (i.e., negative word-of-mouth) (Kim et al. 2020).

### 2.1.1 CSA x Related Terms

The main distinctions between the terms are given by how the positioning takes place, in addition to its primary objectives. It is possible to notice that companies that position themselves or act on non-controversial causes (as is the case of CSR and corporate governance) are directly linked to economic objectives. Although reputational considerations can never be entirely ruled out from advocacy on controversial issues, as in CSA, “it is safe to assume that the ‘business case’ is not their primary or even the sole driving factor” (Wettstein and Baur 2016, p. 204). Although controversial positioning is characterized by not having profit or market motivations, this type of statement can have direct and indirect impacts on the bottom-line outcomes of organizations, such as potentially isolating organizational stakeholders (Dodd and Supa, 2014; Nalick et al., 2016).

**Table 2. Distinctive Features**

<b>Dimension of Comparison</b>	<b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b>	<b>Corporate Governance</b>	<b>Corporate Political Activity</b>	<b>Corporate Sociopolitical Advocacy</b>	<b>CEO Activism</b>	<b>Brand Activism</b>
<b>Definition</b>	Refers to the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 8).	Refers to the structure of rights and responsibilities between the parties with participation in the company (Aoki, 2001).	Defined as a company’s effort to influence government policy in ways favorable to the company itself (Hillman et al. 2004).	CSA occurs when a company comments publicly on divisive political topics (Dodd & Supa, 2014).	CEO activism entails corporate leaders speaking out on issues that are largely unrelated to their company’s core business (Chatterji and Toffel, 2019)	Brands active involvement in controversial sociopolitical discourses (Garg and Saluja, 2022)
<b>Controversy</b>	No-controversial	No-controversial	Controversial and no-controversial	Controversial	Controversial	Controversial
<b>Degree of Publicity</b>	Public	Private	Private	Public	Public	Public
<b>Form</b>	Action	Action	Action and/or communication	Action and/or communication	Communication	Action and/or communication
<b>Connection with core business</b>	Connected	Connected	Mostly Connected	Not necessarily connected	Not necessarily connected	Not necessarily connected

<b>Primary objectives</b>	Economic and/or Social	Economic	Economic	Economic and/or Social	Economic and/or Social	Economic and/or Social
<b>Target</b>	Diverse Stakeholders	Political Stakeholders	Political Stakeholders	Diverse Stakeholders	Diverse Stakeholders	Diverse Stakeholders

Source: own elaboration

Related to CSA and CEO activism is also brand activism, which is understood as the act of a brand taking sides on controversial sociopolitical issues that are not necessarily related to its normal sphere of business (Garg and Saluja, 2022). Different from CSR, corporate governance and corporate political activity (CPA), this other three forms of communicating a controversial issue usually have an essential aspect of innate divisiveness with the potential to alienate stakeholders (Bhagwat et al. 2020; Vredenburg et al. 2020). Also, CSA, CEO and brand activism particularly distinguish themselves from the others in the way they express their political and social concerns. Unlike CSR and CPA, for example, these other types of activism are purely communication measures that may or may not be accompanied by an action (Frolich and Knobloch, 2021).

In addition, these three advocacy practices are also rarely directly linked to the company's core business. This is because all of them are characterized by controversy, so the initial concern of the communication is to demonstrate support for a relevant issue albeit the perceived fit between the advocated issue and the brand may not exist (Wettstein and Baur, 2016). Thus, considering CSA under the umbrella of CSR initiatives, Clemensen (2017) argues that CSA extends beyond what has traditionally been considered CSR once involves corporate support of or opposition to policies, political perspectives or issues and not just support for an issue that most people agree (e.g., fighting pollution).

Another distinguishing feature between the terms is the degree to which support (or not) for an issue is visible in the public eye. Unlike the others, terms more oriented to policy change, such as CPA and corporate governance, are carried out behind closed doors (Wettstein and Baur, 2016). Thus, while CSR, CSA, CEO and brand activism publicly position themselves on an issue (either through speech or actions), lobbying practices, for example, are not seen by the public (Wettstein and Baur, 2016). In this case, "the driver for this kind of political engagement is the economic self-interest of corporations, which implies that the subject matter of lobbying is always closely related to a company's core business" (Wettstein and Baur, 2016).

Thus, due to the growing increase in online communications and the public interest in demanding socially responsible positioning, scholars sought to understand the corporate

positioning strategies and how consumers respond to them. More specifically, the next topic will discuss the main findings about the consequences of taking a stand from the consumer's point of view.

### **2.1.2 Consumer Responses to Corporate Advocacy**

Companies that strategic affiliate with causes that align with their goals and mission can successfully distinguish a brand from its competitors, cultivate favorable attitudes of the brand and the cause, enhance brand image and increase purchase intention (Lafferty, Lueth, and McCafferty 2016; Parcha and Westerman, 2020; Shree, Gupta, and Sagar 2017; Dodd and Supa, 2014). Although CSR practices may contribute to business outcomes, their efforts to engage in pro-social behaviors are more likely to be perceived as sincere when the motivations are intrinsic – that is, when a company shows support for a cause because it sincerely cares about it – rather than extrinsic – profit perspective of social cause support (Forehand and Grier, 2003; Rim and Kim, 2016). Addressing controversial and often polarized issues (that is, CSA), may be seen as insincere because of consumers' skepticism toward the firm's motivation to engage with social causes (Spry et al., 2018). However, consumers reactions to a stance are more positive when CSA and customer political ideology are congruent (Bhagawat et al., 2020; Chatterji and Toffel 2019; Dodd & Suppa 2014; Leak et al. 2015) or have at least low deviation (Bhagawat et al., 2020).

Prior work also shows that consumer reactions to CSA depend on companies intended image and motives for engaging in CSA. Hence, when a company describes itself (or consumers see the company) as market-driven, strategic-driven or ego-driven, consumers react negatively (e.g., less favorable to CSA, less favorable attitudes toward the company and stronger negative word-of-mouth). However, when a company describes itself (or consumers see the company) as value-driven or altruist, consumers are more accepting of political stances, and attitudes toward the company and positive word-of-mouth intention increase (Korschum et al. 2019; Kim et al. 2020). Moreover, a market-driven company is seemed as more hypocritical when engage in CSA, whereas a company which labels itself as values-driven is seemed as more hypocritical when abstaining from a political stance (Korschum et al. 2019). Also, when consumers infer that the motives to engage in CSA are driven by stakeholder pressures, they also display negative reactions (i.e., negative word-of-mouth) (Kim et al. 2020).

When consumers do not only consider a product's price and quality, but also political or ethical criteria when making purchase decisions, their consumption becomes political,

prosocial or ethical (Hoffman et al., 2018). Encompassing personal, ethical and/or political motivations, these consumers take decisions deliberately to avoid (boycott) or seek (buycott) specific products (Copeland, 2014; Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti, 2005). Although it is true that some consumers are likely to react negatively toward business stances on political issues, prior research also suggests that consumers respect and patronize companies that take stances on issues that align with their stated corporate values (e.g., Dodd and Supa, 2014; Gaither, Austin, and Collins, 2018; Korschun et al., 2016).

Furthermore, prior studies about attitudes and perceptions toward the cause and the organization indicates that CSR advertising generally has a positive influence on consumer's attitudes (Kim, 2017; Basil and Herr, 2003; Boenigk and Schuchardt, 2015; Lafferty and Edmondson, 2009) and online engagement (Holiday et al., 2020). According to Castro-González et al. (p. 846, 2019) "these studies focused on cognitive aspects and demonstrated that consumers who perceive a company's high level of CSR practice are likely to identify themselves with that company, based on their cognitive evaluation", especially when the cause is congruent with consumer's personal values.

Because CSA often involves polarized issues that may not be congruent with the consumer's values, it is expected that this mechanism acts differently. In fact, Parcha and Westerman (2020) efforts reveals that a corporate statement on a controversial social issue is effective in changing attitude but under some circumstances. Their findings suggests that attitude change depends mostly on the level of consumer's issue involvement (i.e., how much the issue is relevant to the individual's goals), the number of corporations that agreed with the corporate statement and consumer's perception of advocacy fit (i.e., congruence between a corporation's business and the controversial social issue it is advocating for).<sup>4</sup>

For the best of my knowledge, Holiday et al. (2020) is the only study related to engagement with the cause. However, their study encompasses only online engagement (analysis of activity on social networks) and a non-controversial issue (anti-bullying). As we aim to understand the extent to which companies actually enable consumers to reflect and act on certain causes in a current polarized context, it seems relevant to consider consumer engagement (a multidimensional concept, as we presented in the next section) as the main

---

<sup>4</sup> For instance, a coffee shop that supports coffee farmers can be considered as high-fit while a coffee shop that supports breast cancer awareness is considered low-fit (Parcha and Westerman, 2020).

consequence of a CSA. Next, I develop the concept of “cause-related engagement” (i.e., consumer engagement with the cause) based on the engagement literature.

### **2.1.3 Consumer Cause-Related Engagement**

In the 1990s, with the rise of marketing philosophies that looked at trust and/or commitment as bases for establishing positive long-term customer relationships (that is, relationship marketing) (Moorman et al., 1993; Morgan and Hunt, 1994), marketing discipline shifted attention toward share-of-wallet, purchase frequency and subsequent customer lifetime value (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). With the rise of digital platforms and social media as way to express opinions and interact with companies, in the early 2000s, the relationship marketing literature began studying customer engagement (Santini, 2020; Kumar, 2013).

Although engagement definition is predominantly represented as a multidimensional concept (Brodie et al., 2011) that features “psychological and behavioral attributes of connection, interaction, participation, and involvement, designed to achieve or elicit an outcome at individual, organization, or social levels” (Johnston and Taylor, 2018, p. 19), marketing scholars usually have adopted perspectives of customer (or consumer) engagement with only one or two dimensions of engagement.

For instance, van Doorn et al. (2010) adopt a behavioral perspective and define customer engagement (CE) as behavioral consequence resulting from motivational drivers toward a brand or a firm that goes beyond purchasing, including a vast array of brand interactions such as electronic word-of-mouth activity. On the other hand, Kumar et al. (p. 297, 2010) adopts a value-based perspective which CE is defined as “active interactions of a customer with a firm, with prospects and with other customers, whether they are transactional or non-transactional in nature”. Finally, Brodie et al. (2011, p. 260) provide a general definition of CE as “a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships.

Pansari and Kumar (p. 300, 2017) argue that “in an engaged partnership (e.g., marital relationship) where the partners take active interest in the well-being of the other, partners interact more often with each other and also speak highly of their partner to indicate the level of emotional connectedness”. This research specifically adopts van Doorn et al. (2010) and Pansari and Kumar (2017) perspectives to understand customer engagement toward the cause advocated by a company.

Including engagement as a construct for understanding social change through CSA is relevant because engagement itself may be a politicizing force once allows individuals to make connections between local concerns and global movements (Simon and Klandermans, 2001). Similarly, engaged customers are often responsible for monitoring firm performance and disseminating information to multiple stakeholders which may change and improve legal and regulatory environment within which industries operate (van Doorn et al., 2010). Thus, this paper introduces the concept of “cause-related engagement” to refer to consumer engagement towards a sociopolitical cause advocated by a company (CSA). Based on engagement literature, we propose that cause-related engagement is also a multidimensional concept that encompasses affective (the realm of emotions) cognitive (the realm of thought) and behavioral (the realm of action) dimensions (Brodie et al., 2011; Heath, 2007). Then, we expect those consumers to engage with a cause (i.e., cause-related engagement) through emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses (see Table 3 for an overview).

### ***Cognitive dimension***

The cognitive dimension of engagement can be understood as a set of enduring and active mental states experienced by the consumer (Hollebeek, 2011). An individual’s comprehension of the world happens through mental representations of experience or schema (that is, mental schemas) that may therefore be changed through new information and experiences (Piaget, 1970). Therefore, according to Piaget’s theory of intellectual development, one of the principles of individual’s functioning is adaptation to the environment that consists in two complementary processes: (a) assimilation, that involves the person’s dealing with the environment in terms of his structures and (b) accommodation, that is, the individual’s tendency to change in response to environmental demands (Ginsburg and Opper, 1988).

Prior findings indicate that accommodation drives personality development (Block, 1982) in ways that promote greater psychological maturity (Lilgendahl et al.) which is indeed associated with enhanced interdependence concerns and prosocial motives (Perlin and Li, 2020). As suggested by Perlin and Li (p. 295, 2020), “accommodation is essential for psychological growth in the direction of a quiet ego, which emphasizes self-other interdependence”. This phenomenon has been robustly linked to the self and personality at the layer of narrative identity (Adler et al., 2016) by understanding accommodation as the process as we reflect on disrupted goals and gain self-understanding (Perlin and Li, 2020). According to Perlin and Li (p. 300, 2020):



In line with these self-reflections on what the individual feels is valuable and important, individuals create a revised life story, changing their goals and constructing “a new best possible self” in ways that are individually contoured. For one person (who values religion), this revised life story may mean becoming a missionary for their church, whereas for another (who values environmental causes), it may mean becoming engaged in conservation efforts.

Due to its cognitive ability to make individuals think and review their previous mental schemas, the use of accommodation as a cognitive variable of engagement is vital to understand the extent to which consumers are able to reflect, in this case, on the cause addressed in the CSA.

### *Affective dimension*

Finally, the emotional dimension of engagement, which prior research defines as “zealous reactions” and feelings toward the company (Vivek et al., 2012), captures the summative and enduring level of emotions experienced by a consumer with respect to his or her engagement focus (Calder et al., 2013). For instance, positive emotions such as agreeableness, enthusiasm and freedom of expression may create positive outcome expectations (Pansari and Kumar, 2017) and directly affect consumer engagement (Santini, 2020) and behavioral responses (Dessart et al., 2016; Overton et al., 2021).

Previous research report that emotions are capable to predict individuals’ attitudes and behaviors in social issues such as determining support for climate change (Nabi et al., 2018) and influencing public opinion about immigration (Lecheler et al., 2015). Also, O’Connor et al. (2008) found that individuals expressed stronger connections with companies that support an issue with which they have an emotional link.

Since managers and public policymakers can benefit from research that tests how emotions can affect behaviors through their emotional appeals (Santini, 2020), we will include an affective dimension in cause-related engagement through two positive emotions: elevation and empathy. According to Romani et al., (p. 256, 2016), “elevation consists of felt elation and intense global feelings of inspiration and well-being”. Several studies in the field of psychology show that witnessing altruistic behavior elicits elevation which, in turn, promotes a pro-social orientation and increases the witness's altruism levels. In the field of CSR, Romani and Grappi (2014) suggest that elevation can be elicited by CSR initiatives which motivate consumers to react morally or pro-socially.

Empathic feelings are also important determinants of prosocial behavior (Chapman et al., 2020; Dinsmore et al., 2021). Authors such as Small and Verrochi (2009) and Fisher et al. (2008) report findings that are consistent with the relation between empathy and concern about others. For example, Small and Verrochi (2009) found that greater feelings of empathy motivate people to offer more help to others. For this reason, I consider levels of empathy an important affective variable toward the engagement with a social cause.

### ***Behavioral dimension***

For the behavioral dimension of consumer engagement, that can be understood as “a consumer’s level of energy, effort and time spent on a brand in a particular consumer/brand interaction” (Hollebeek et al., 2014, p. 154), endorsing and online engagement will be addressed. Endorsing refers to the act of sanctioning, showing support, referring resources shared by the engagement partner (Dessart et al., 2016) which means that goes beyond spread positive word-of-mouth about their products/services but, also, advocates in favor of the firm (a valuable characteristic for sociopolitical environments). Because endorsing about a social cause can spread knowledge between consumers and create awareness, interest, changing or confirming opinions (Keiningham et al., 2018), this is an important variable to measure to understand the effects of CSA on consumer behavior toward the cause. If consumers are willing to endorse the cause after seeing a CSA communication, then it is possible that the company is acting toward social change.

On the other hand, online engagement toward a social cause, sometimes referred to as online activism or clicktivism (Halupka, 2018) or slacktivism (Kristofferson et al., 2013) or micro-political action (Vromen, 2017), is an emergent form of political participation due to its ease of replication and non-specialized boundaries for use provided mainly by the proliferation of social media environments (Halupka, 2018). It can be understood as an act of support for a cause usually done in virtual spaces (Noland, 2020) in order to “raise awareness, produce change, or grant satisfaction to the person engaged in the activity” (Rotman et al., 2011, p. 821).

Although some argue that this kind of activism is lazy, small, or unproductive (Morozov, 2009; Gladwell, 2010; White, 2010), more recently scholars move away from this marginalized position arguing that “regardless of traditional views of political and participatory legitimacy, clicktivism, and certainly connective action more broadly, has emerged as a viable alternative to traditional avenues. To this end, clicktivism is legitimate political participation in that it is pursued as such” (Halupka, p. 193, 2018). Because CSA communication frequently occurs in

online spaces, I consider the likelihood to engage online with the cause an important variable since the platform algorithm itself can spread about the cause to others in an organic way.

**Table 3.** Variables Description

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
Elevation	Affective	“[...] consists of felt elation and intense global feelings of inspiration and well-being” (Romani et al., p. 256, 2016)
Empathy	Affective	The ability to enter into the life of another person, to accurately perceive his current feelings and their meanings (Kalisch, 1973).
Accommodation	Cognitive	Individual’s mental schemas transformation in response to the environment (Piaget, 1970)
Attention	Cognitive	“Cognitive availability and amount of time spent thinking about, and being attentive to, the engagement partner” (Dessart et al., 2016, p. 410).
Online Activism	Behavioral	Refers to give support for a cause through virtual spaces (liking, sharing, etc.) (Noland, 2020)
Endorsing	Behavioral	“The act of sanctioning, showing support, referring resources shared by the engagement partner” (Dessart et al., 2016, p. 410).

Source: own elaboration

In sum, bearing in mind that an individual’s attention can be active (i.e., intentional according to the individual’s goals) or passive (i.e., controlled by external stimuli), an CSA (independent variable) is expected to act as an external stimulus that holds the attention of the individual in order to stimulate your thoughts about the cause (accommodation) and produce feelings of empathy and elevation for the situation, increasing their level of adoption (online engagement and contribution to the cause) and endorsement of the company and the cause to be solved (behavioral dimension). The next section will better describe how I expect this phenomenon to occur.

#### **2.1.4 The Role of Moral Authority**

Formally defined by Hoppner and Vadakkepatt (2019, p. 2), moral authority “refers to the potential to influence the morality of others through the use of power and platform granted

to an entity based on the perception of its stakeholders that the entity is moral”. Thus, moral authority exists to provide clarity and guidance to others about what is right in terms of values and actions, not using its power to coerce or force individuals to follow its example, but rather influencing them through their character, wisdom and example for society (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019).

While traditional sources of moral authority (e.g., police, religious leaders, family, educators) still play a key role in the moral influence of individuals, consumers, employees, and other stakeholders are increasingly motivated to demand that companies exercise their moral authority by positioning themselves on relevant issues in order to promote social change (White et al., 2000; Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019). An example of this situation was during the Covid-19 pandemic, where companies came to be recognized as “guardians of information quality”, exercising a citizen and informative role in the face of polarized instructions between science and governments (Edelman, 2021).

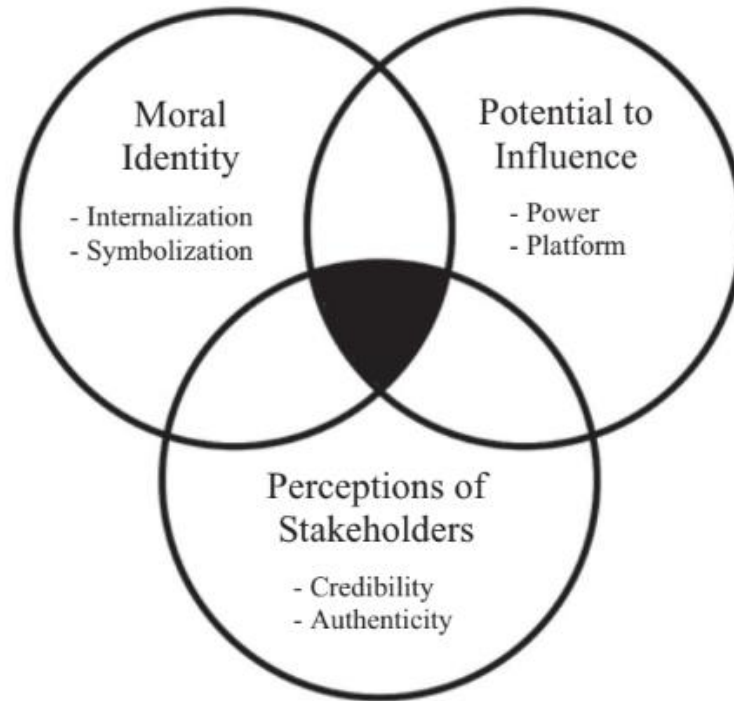
Thus, stakeholders define their position on a range of issues that are relevant to them and expect companies to position themselves and adapt their operations to meet their expectations (Frederick, 1991). In addition to using their moral authority in favor of consumers’ current ideas about morality, it is potentially expected that companies will also attempt to influence consumers’ current and future perspectives on morality (i.e., the distinction between what is right and what is wrong). (Hill and Watkins, 2007; Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019).

In this sense, actions taken by the entity, market events and changes in the normative/legal environment of society can create new entities with moral authority or erode the moral authority of existing entities (Hoppner e Vadakkepatt, 2019). As highlighted earlier, during the pandemic, government and non-profit organizations lost ground to companies in terms of performance competence and as credible sources of information (Edelman, 2021). Thus, it is possible that nowadays there is a change in who individuals look for moral references, betting on companies to discuss relevant issues for social development.

According to Hoppner and Vadakkepatt (2019), it is necessary for an entity to meet three requirements in order to have moral authority: (a) to have a moral identity, that is, to reflect its values through its internalization (how its morality becomes central to an entity’s identity) and symbolization (use of means to expose its morality, such as interviews, advertising campaigns, etc.); (b) have the potential to influence through power and a platform to communicate with

stakeholders in a way that platforms engage stakeholders with their message to utilize their power; and (c) be perceived as moral (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Elements of Moral Authority



Source: Hoppner and Vadakkepatt (2019)

In the latter case, it is through the correspondence between the dimensions of internalization and symbolization, that is, through the connection between the entity’s internal moral values and the actions they perform, that stakeholders judge their credibility (perceived experience, reliability and/or attractiveness of the connection) and/or authenticity (perceived genuineness, reality or truth of the connection) to determine whether it is indeed an example of morality (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019; Newell and Goldsmith, 2001; Napoli et al., 2014). Finally, moral authority is solidified through the use of power and a platform to influence stakeholders who, upon perceiving the entity as a credible and/or authentic example of morality, consider it worthy of their attention (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019).

#### **2.1.4.1 Moral Authority and Authenticity**

Although on the surface it seems to exist a general consensus amongst scholars in the social and behavioral sciences that authentic entities refer to that which is “real” or “genuine” or “true” (Dutton, 2003), there is much less agreement below the surface (Lehman et al. 2018). While some scholars use the term “authenticity” to infer the extent to which something (or

someone) are what they are purported to be (for instance, consider items such as an authentic Picasso painting, or an authentic Rolex) (Newman and Smith, 2016), others associate authenticity with a company that are genuineness and consistent on their commitment with their values (Lim and Young, 2021).

In an effort to fill the lack of definitional clarity about authenticity, Lehman et al. (2018) review on the issue outlined three distinct perspectives found in the literature: “Authenticity as (1) consistency between an entity’s internal values and its external expressions, (2) conformity of an entity to the norms of its social category, and (3) connection between an entity and a person, place, or time as claimed” (Lehman et al., 2018, p. 2).

Because Hoppner and Vadakkepatt (2019) argue that companies perceived as having moral authority are those that are perceived as genuine and true in their connection with a CSA (Napoli et al. 2014), this dissertation relies on the first perspective of authenticity as consistency between companies’ internal values and its external expressions (Lehman et al. 2018). Aligned with Lim and Young (2021) perceptions that CSA authenticity refers to genuineness and the company’s consistency on the advocated issue, I argue that authenticity is understood as an alignment between the company’s own corporate values and their communication, being true to itself (Yim, 2021).

Because organizations referred as “moral” (Frake, 2017) are those who “walk the talk and live up their claims” (Skilton and Purdy, 2017, p. 104), I understand authenticity to be, not just an element of moral authority (as stated by Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019) but, actually, an antecedent for the company to be perceived as possessing moral authority. For example, when Audi faced backlash over its gender equality commercial (Hong and Li, 2020), it was an indicative of lack of consistency between the companies’ words and actions, that is, lack of authenticity. Thus, I argue that low authentic companies will not be able to exert moral authority and, consequently, will not engage consumers with the cause.

Then, I first propose that:

**H1:** After a CSA communication, companies perceived as authentic (vs. inauthentic) will have a greater positive effect on (a) affective, (b) cognitive, and (c) behavioral engagement with the cause.

Also, given that moral authority is used only when entities recognize that something is not as it should be (i.e., morally wrong) and are motivated to change the situation through their

sociopolitical positioning (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019), it is expected that, given the current polarized scenario, it is through moral authority that companies hope to influence the opinions and behavior of individuals in causes still considered controversial and often financially harmful.

Thus, I expect that:

**H2:** After a CSA communication, the perceived level of moral authority will mediate the effects of authenticity on (a) affective (b) cognitive and (c) behavioral engagement with the cause.

#### **2.1.4.2 Moral Authority and Influence**

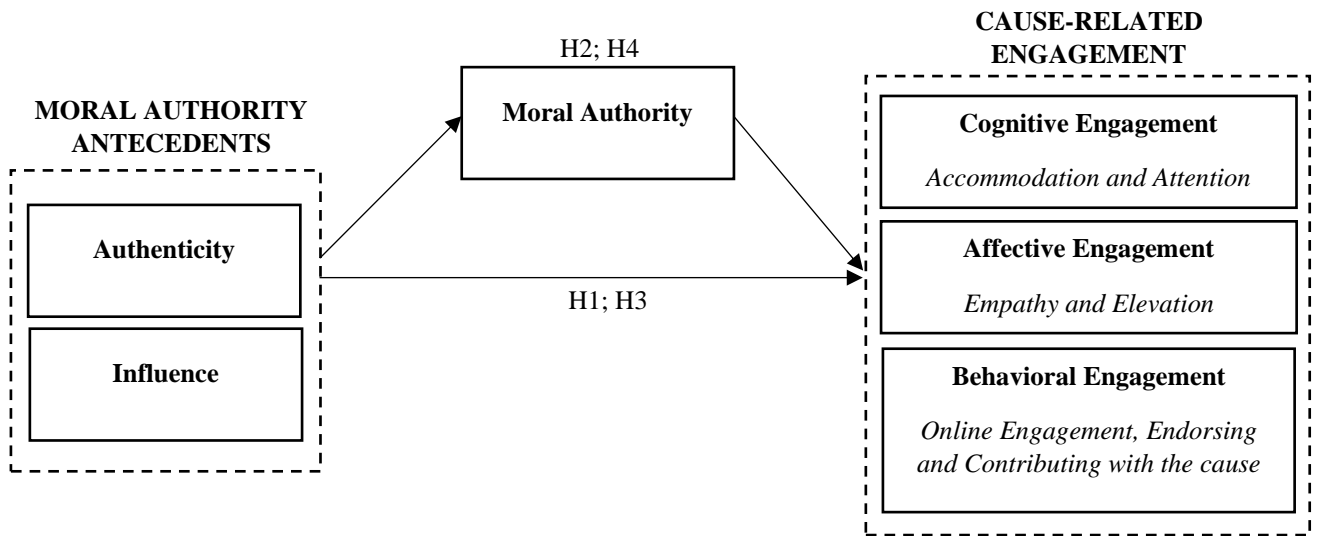
As previously mentioned, for companies to be perceived as possessing moral authority, in addition to being seen as authentic and moral, they must be seen as having power and a platform to communicate to their stakeholders their position in order to engage them with the message (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019). In other words, companies also have to be seen as powerful enough to influence others, that is, to evoke changes in a person's thoughts, attitudes, or behaviors (French and Raven, 1959).

Because “the potential to influence is predicated on possessing power and a platform to communicate to stakeholders” (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019, p. 3), I expect that, in a social media context, company's number of followers is a cue to indicate how much social influence the entity has (Charry, 2020). Indeed, scholars previously used the number of followers on social media to predict brand awareness, positive word of mouth, and even the spreading of healthier eating habits (Kim, 2020; Charry, 2020).

Thus, when individuals perceive that a large number of other users are influenced by a particular media content, they subsequently modify their own attitudes and behavior as a reaction to that perception (Gunther and Storey, 2003). In other words, “the number of followers serves as a cue to infer the social value of the owner of an account and the social acceptability of his/her opinions” (Charry, 2020, p. 8), thus, a high number of followers potentially stimulate perceptions of influence.

For this reason, I believe that, together with authenticity, it is necessary to understand moral authority's dimension of power to influence. Thus, I expect that the greater the perception that the company is influential, the greater the impact on consumer engagement with the cause. Also, it is expected that is through moral authority that the perceptions of influence impact on consumer engagement with the cause. Figure 2 illustrates our theoretical model.

**Figure 2.** Theoretical Model



Formally:

**H3:** After a CSA communication, companies perceived as influential (vs. non-influential) will have a greater positive effect on (a) affective, (b) cognitive, and (c) behavioral engagement with the cause.

**H4:** After a CSA communication, the perceived level of moral authority will mediate the effects of influence on (a) affective (b) cognitive and (c) behavioral engagement with the cause.

### 3. Empirical Studies

This work aims to investigate the effects of corporate sociopolitical advocacy on consumers' engagement toward the cause. Because causal research is better suited to describe the cause-and-effect relationship between variables (Malhotra, 2017), I used the experimental method to manipulate the effects of independent variables on dependent ones. For this, I performed two experimental studies. The first study was a single-factor between subjects with a sample of Brazilian undergraduate students and was preregistered. The second study had a design of 2 (authenticity: high vs. low) x 2 (influence: high vs. low) but with a North-American sample of MTurkers.

In sum, the results indicate a path of total mediation of moral authority in the engagement of consumers with the cause at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels. This path takes place both through perceptions of authenticity and through their level of influence.



However, when put together, the level of influence (in this case, its number of followers, posts, etc.) shows greater strength in relation to moral authority.

The details of each experiment and its results will be better described in the following sections.

### **3.1 Study 1**

The purpose of the first study was to test the first set of hypotheses (H1 e H2). Thus, I conducted an experiment to investigate the moral authority mediation of the effect of company's authenticity on consumers' affective (i.e., empathy), cognitive (accommodation), and behavioral (online engagement) engagement toward the cause.

For this first experiment, I used the LGBTQIA+ issue as the central cause of corporate sociopolitical advocacy. The CSA communication was exposed to the participants through an Instagram simulation. Authenticity was manipulated between conditions through the information provided by the company in its bio and posts. This study was preregistered (<https://aspredicted.org/ar2yd.pdf>).

#### **3.1.1 Design and Participants**

The first study was a single-factor experiment where authenticity was manipulated. Over the course of two weeks, undergraduate students were asked to respond to a survey about their behavior on social media. The sample size was defined using G\*Power 3.1.9.7 software (Faul et al., 2007). I set analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with fixed effects, main effects and interactions as the statistical test of choice. Then, I set degrees of freedom to 1, expected effect size to medium 26 (0.25), confidence level at 95% (HAIR et al., 2009;  $\alpha = 0.05$ ), 2 groups (single-factor) and 1 covariate (political orientation). Within these parameters, the software determined a total sample size of a minimum of 210 subjects.

Total sample size consisted in 194 Brazilian undergraduate students. Data collection took place in classrooms (n = 133) and online (n = 61). The low and high authenticity scenarios were manipulated according to the authenticity literature that indicates authentic companies as those perceived as genuine, real, and with a true connection to the cause they defend (Napoli et al. 2014).

Initially, all participants were exposed to a post by a fictitious company advocating in favor of the LGBTQIA+ cause (Appendix A). Then the respondents were randomly allocated

to one of the manipulated scenarios: high or low authenticity. In the condition of high authenticity (Appendix B), through its biography and feed, the company demonstrates genuine support for the LGBTQIA+ cause, with organizational values oriented to the cause, awards in the LGBTQIA+ cause, and indicating conversion of profit to institutions supporting the cause. For the participants who were submitted to the low authenticity condition (Appendix C), the organizational values exposed in their biography were more neutral and generic. Likewise, its feed no longer had any other apparent posts about the cause and its awards weren't related to the cause itself either.

Thus, a total sample of 194 participants was used for this first study<sup>5</sup>. Because the sample size conditions (of almost 100 per condition) met the number of at least 30 subjects per condition, we considered the sample size as satisfactory to achieve a statistical power of 80%, that is, the minimum suggested for experimental studies (VanVoorhis and Morgan, 2007; Cohen, 1998).

The mean age of participants was 25 years old ( $SD = 6.57$ ) with income between US\$392.26 and US\$784.51. Because the manipulation involved an LGBTQIA+ issue, collecting information about participants' political orientation and sexual orientation seems relevant. So, most participants were heterosexual (69.1%), followed by bisexuals (20.6%), homosexuals (6.7%), and asexuals (1.5%).<sup>6</sup> In addition, most of the sample consisted of liberal-oriented participants (74.2%), followed by neutrals (17%) and conservatives (8.8%).

### **3.1.2 Manipulation Stimuli**

The questionnaire was operationalized on Qualtrics platform and data collection took place over two weeks. Initially, the questionnaire had a page with clarifications and a request for consent from the respondent. After the respondent consented to participate in the survey, all were exposed to an Instagram post from a fictitious clothing company advocating for the LGBTQIA+ cause. Because using existing companies can cause confounding and because using a fictitious name can also detract from the realism of the manipulation, I chose to indicate to participants that the company name would be omitted for privacy purposes. The company's CSA communication (that is, the Instagram post) advocated for the right to include homophobia

---

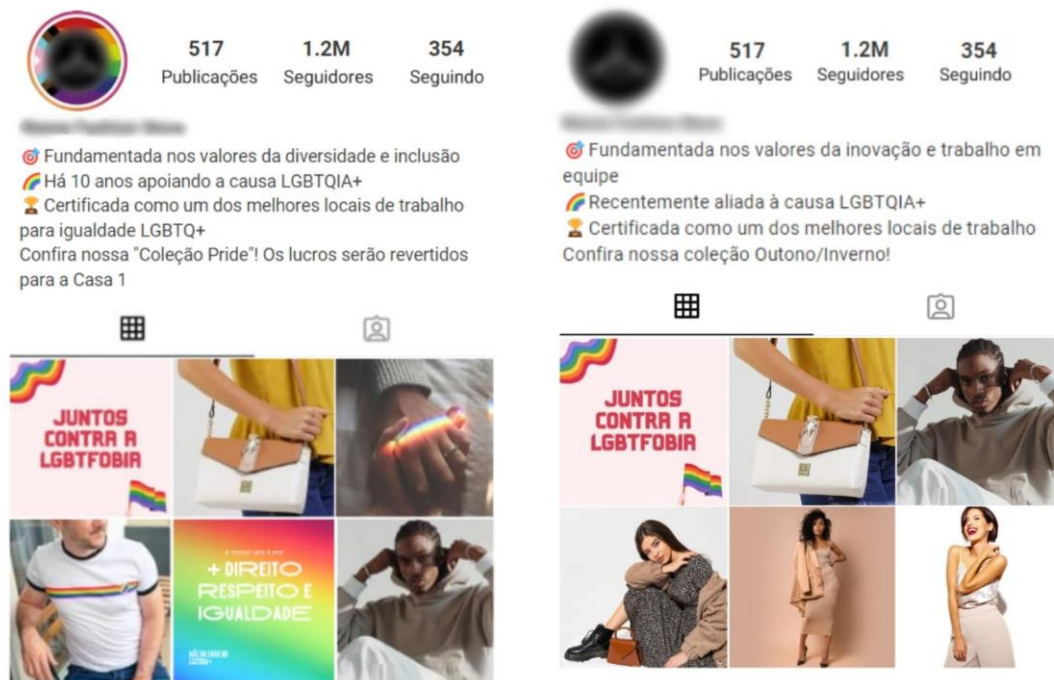
<sup>5</sup> Participants who answered "No" to the multiple-choice question that indicated whether or not they were an undergraduate student were excluded ( $n = 3$ ). Also, 1 participant was excluded for inattention to the open-ended question of age (i.e., reported his/her city instead of age).

<sup>6</sup> 2.1% of the sample (i.e., 4 participants) chose not to respond

as a motive for crime in Brazilian police reports. Then, participants were allocated to one of two authenticity conditions (low vs. high).

The manipulation of authenticity was mainly due to the information provided by the company in its Instagram bio. That is, in the condition of high authenticity, participants saw a company that describes itself as 10 years allied to the LGBTQIA+ cause, certified as one of the best workplaces for LGBTQIA+ equality, and based on the values of diversity and inclusion. In addition, the company also positions itself as acting for the cause through a specific collection, contributing to a charity dedicated to the LGBTQIA+ cause. Feed publications were also manipulated to demonstrate, albeit subtly, that the company makes other posts about the cause, so consistency in advocacy for the cause over time is reinforced by the feed images.

**Figure 3.** High vs. Low Conditions of Authenticity



On the other hand, in the low authenticity condition, participants saw a company that describes itself as recently allied to the LGBTQIA+ cause, certified as a great place to work (GPTW), and based on the values of innovation and team spirit. Unlike the high-authenticity scenario, which suggests reversing the profits of a specific collection to an institution dedicated to the cause (“Check out our Pride Collection! Profits will revert to ‘Casa 1’”), in the low-authenticity scenario, the company only discloses the new collection (“Check out our Fall/Winter collection!”). Because accusing the company of not acting according to its values on its own Instagram page seems very far from reality, the manipulation of authenticity was

due to the "sudden" position in the LGBTQIA+ cause. That is, I believe that companies seen as unrelated to LGBTQIA+ issues but that suddenly advocate for the cause, can be seen as insincere and not genuine, defending a cause only for the current scenario or context.

### 3.1.3 Measures

#### *Dependent variable: cause-related engagement*

As a multidimensional construct, affective, cognitive, and behavioral variables composed the construction of the dependent variable "cause-related engagement". For affective engagement, 5 items adapted from the empathy scale by Baggiozzi and Moore (1994) were measured: ("I can imagine the feelings of the LGBTQIA+ community people", "I can feel the pain of the LGBTQIA+ community people", "I have tender and concerned feelings for people in the LGBTQIA+ community", "I would like to make people in the LGBTQIA+ community feel better", and "I feel deep sympathy for people in the LGBTQIA+ community") ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

As for cognitive engagement, 3 items adapted from the accommodation scale by Guo et al. (2018) were measured: ("The company's positioning changes my attitude toward the LGBTQIA+ cause in some way", "The company's positioning changes my previous way of thinking about the LGBTQIA+ cause", and "The company's positioning attitude broadens my knowledge about the cause") ( $\alpha = .86$ ). Finally, behavioral engagement with the cause was measured by the intention to publicize and interact with the cause on social networks. Participants were asked to answer the level of possibility of engaging in the following actions: ("Share this post on my social network", "Leave a positive comment", "Like the post", and "Follow the page") ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

In addition, because only online engagement can also boost the company and not only the cause, a petition simulation was also created to understand the extent to which consumers behaviorally engage exclusively with the cause. Thus, after the participants responded to their intention to behave, the following question addressed the agenda raised in the post regarding Brazilian police reports and allowed the participant to "sign" the petition to fight for the inclusion of a field to record the motivation of a crime was LGBTphobia. The petitioning simulation as a dependent variable was created using a like/dislike "hot spot" question on Qualtrics, where the participants were instructed to hit the sign button until turns green and proceed to the next question if they wanted to sign the petition. On the contrary, the participant could just move to the next question without answering the question if s/he was not interested

to sign the petition. On SPSS, the petition variable was coded as “Sign” (when the participant hit the button and leave a “like”) and “Didn’t Sign” (when the participant didn’t hit the button).

**Figure 4.** Petitioning Simulation (VD)



Source: own elaboration

### ***Trust***

Participants’ trust levels in the company were also measured. For this, a three-item scale from Newell and Goldsmith (2001) was used: “I think this company is trustworthy”, “I think this company is competent”, and “I think this company is honest” ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

### ***Moral Authority***

To measure perceptions of moral authority, the question first explains what moral authority is (“Companies that display high moral authority are those that are perceived by the public as being so moral as to influence individuals’ thoughts and behaviors”). Then the participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with 2 statements: “I believe this company has a high moral authority to influence thoughts and behaviors”, and “I believe that

this company has greater moral authority to influence thoughts and behavior compared to other companies in the same segment”.

### ***Manipulation Check***

To check the manipulation, 4 items were adapted from the perceived authenticity scale of Alhouti et al. (2016). Participants were asked, after seeing the company’s posts and social media, to indicate their degree of agreement with five statements: “The company is being true to itself with its LGBTQIA+ advocacy”; “The company advocates the LGBTQIA+ rights in a way that matches its core values”; “The company is standing up for what it believes in”; and “The company’s actions and communication are consistent over time”. A composite index using these five items turned out to be a highly reliable measure for CSA authenticity ( $\alpha = .92$ ) and was used in the analysis.

### ***Control Variables***

*Political Orientation.* Participants were asked to answer a semantic differential scale in which the more to the left, the more liberal the participant; while the further to the right, the more conservative the participant is.

### **3.1.4 Data Analysis**

For the analysis of Study 1, I first performed a factor analysis of the scales as well as their reliability (the factor analysis and reliability of the scales can be found in Appendix D of this work). For hypothesis testing, I used an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and SPSS macro-PROCESS to test moral authority as a mediator.

### **3.1.5 Results**

In the following sections, I will address the manipulation check and hypothesis testing results. Then, these results will be discussed.

#### **3.1.5.1 Manipulation Check**

The manipulation check intended to ensure that individuals perceived authenticity manipulation as high (vs. low) within the context of CSA communication. For this check, I used an ANOVA between groups and the authenticity scale proposed by Alhouti et al. (2016). The results confirm the manipulation’s success, as the effects were statistically significant and distinct in the perceptions of authenticity for those allocated in the high ( $M = 5.44$ ) and low authenticity ( $M = 4.49$ ) condition; ( $F(1,192) = 21.31, p < .00$ ).

### 3.1.5.2 Hypothesis Testing

First, to test the effects of authenticity on moral authority, I conducted a one-way ANOVA between perceptions of authenticity as an independent factor and moral authority as a dependent variable. The results show a significant difference between the conditions of low ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ) and high authenticity ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ,  $F(1(192)) = 4.58$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Also, to test the effects of authenticity on consumer engagement with the cause, I performed a one-way ANOVA, establishing the conditions of perceived authenticity (high vs. low authenticity) as an independent factor and the affective (empathy), cognitive (accommodation), and behavioral (online engagement intention and petition signing) as dependent variables. This test indicated a not-statistically significant direct effect between authenticity and affective ( $p = 0.50$ ), cognitive ( $p = 0.45$ ), and behavioral engagement ( $p = 0.42$ ).

For controlling political orientation, I also ran an ANCOVA analysis. The results revealed that political orientation had a statistically significant effect on affective [ $F(1,191) = 31.43$ ;  $p < .01$ ], and behavioral [ $F(1,191) = 5.89$ ;  $p < .05$ ] engagements, but not for cognitive engagement [ $F(1,191) = 0.33$ ;  $p = .56$ ]. However, overall, there was no effect of authenticity conditions on engagements ( $p_{\text{affective}} = .37$ ;  $p_{\text{cognitive}} = .46$ ;  $p_{\text{behavior}} = .47$ ), after controlling for political orientation. Moral authority also remained statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) using political orientation as a covariate.

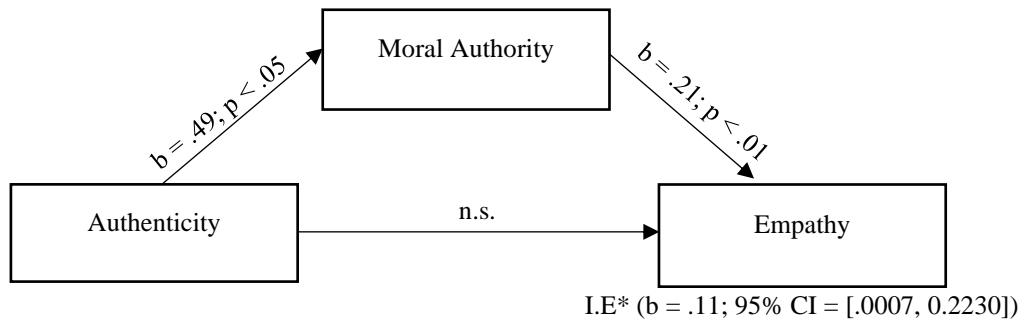
Because Hayes (2009) argues that even when there is no relationship between X and Y, that is, when the total effect (c) is null, there may be an indirect effect of X on Y, through the mediator M, we kept our test of the mediation of moral authority between levels of authenticity and engagement dimensions. To perform this test, I used the SPSS macro-PROCESS model 4 (Hayes, 2013). The mediation path was tested, using authenticity as an independent factor (a variable was created where 0 represents the low authenticity condition and 1 the high authenticity condition), moral authority as a mediator (M), and the engagements with the cause (affective, cognitive, and behavioral) as independent variables (Y).

For affective engagement (i.e., empathy), the results indicate that the impact of the authenticity condition (x) was significant on moral authority ( $b = .49$ ,  $SE = .23$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.03, .95],  $p < .05$ ). So, authenticity was a positive and statistically significant predictor of moral authority. As expected, the direct effect of the model (i.e., authenticity on

engagement) was not statistically significant ( $b = -0.21$ , 95% CI [-0.52, 0.09],  $p = 0.17$ ) as was the total effect of the model (i.e., variable X in Y without mediator control),  $b = -0.10$ , 95% CI [-0.42, 0.21],  $p = 0.50$ .

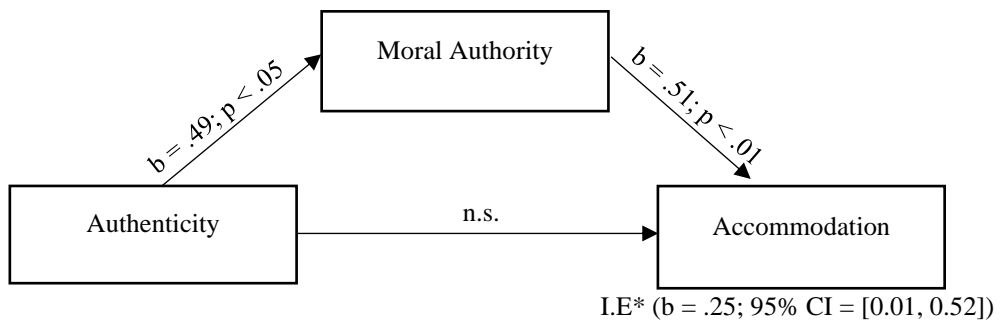
The effect of moral authority (m) had a statistically significant effect on affective engagement,  $b = .21$ , SE = .04, 95% CI [0.11, 0.30],  $p < .01$ . The mediation effect (indirect effect) was significant,  $b = 0.11$  (95% CI = 0.007, 0.2230).

**Figure 5.** Mediation Test on Affective Engagement (Study 1)



For effects on cognitive engagement (i.e., accommodation), the effects were similar. Neither the direct effect of the model was statistically significant ( $b = -0.06$ , 95% CI [-0.51, 0.37],  $p = 0.76$ ) nor its total effect,  $b = 0.18$ , 95% CI [-0.30, 0.67],  $p = 0.45$ . However, the effect of moral authority (m) had a statistically significant effect on cognitive engagement,  $b = .51$ , 95% CI [0.37, 0.64],  $p < .01$ . The mediation effect was also significant,  $b = 0.25$  (95% CI = 0.01, 0.52).

**Figure 6.** Mediation Test on Cognitive Engagement (Study 1)

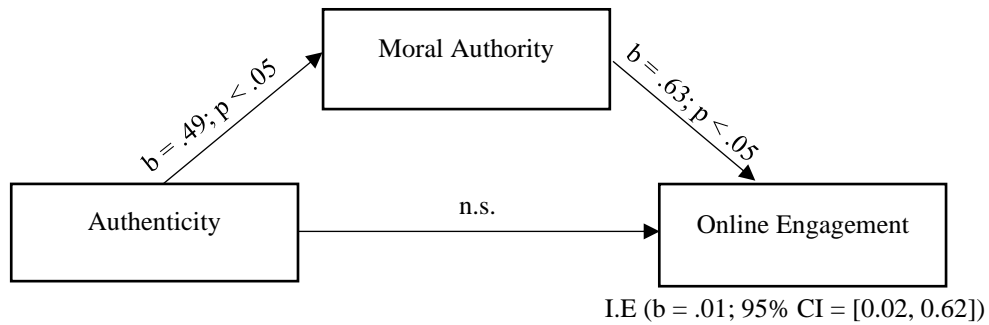


Finally, the impact of authenticity by moral authority on levels of online engagement (that is, behavioral engagement) occurred in the same way as in the previous cases. The direct effect of the model was not statistically significant ( $b = -0.10$ , 95% CI [-0.54, 0.33],  $p = 0.63$ ) as well as the total effect of the model,  $b = 0.20$ , 95% CI [-0.31, 0.72],  $p = 0.65$ . However, the



effect of moral authority (m) had a statistically significant effect on behavioral engagement,  $b = .63$ , 95% CI [0.49, 0.76],  $p < .05$ . The mediation effect (indirect effect) was significant,  $b = 0.1$  (95% CI = 0.02, 0.62).

**Figure 7.** Mediation Test on Behavioral Engagement (Study 1)



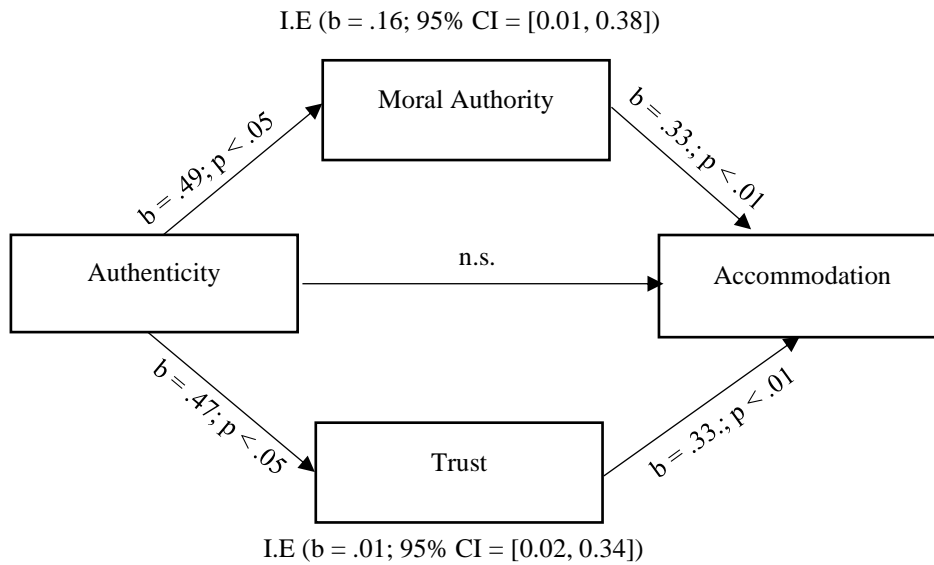
Thus, even if there is no direct relationship between authenticity and affective, cognitive, and behavioral engagements, we can conclude that there is a total mediation of authenticity conditions through moral authority on consumer cause-related engagement.

Regarding the petitioning variable, the mediation hypothesis is not confirmed. ANOVA results indicate that there are no statistically significant effects between the conditions of authenticity on signing the petition ( $F(1,192) = 0.025$ ,  $p = .87$ ). Moreover, the indirect effect of authenticity via moral authority (IE = -0.02) is negative and not statistically significant (CI [-0.13, 0.07]).

### 3.1.5.3 Alternative Explanations

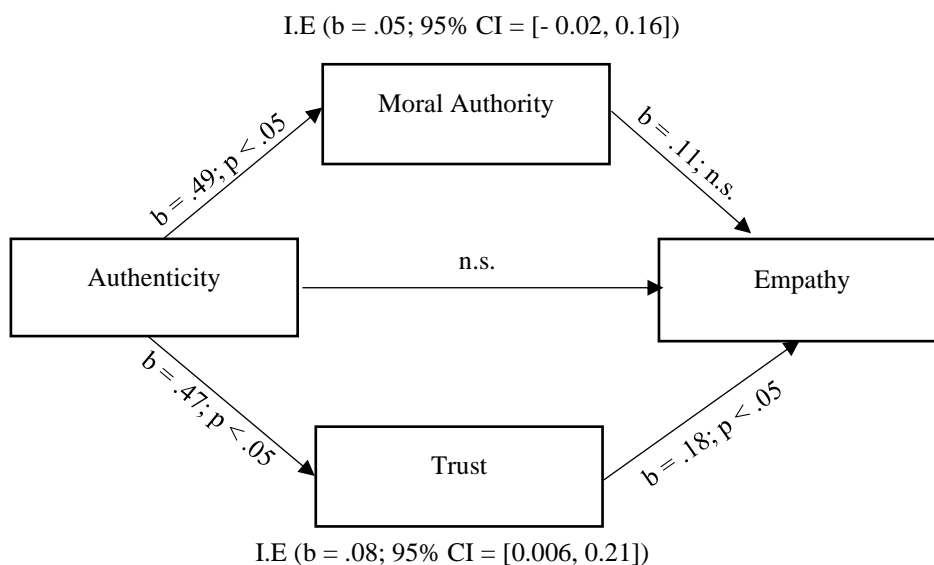
Because the explanatory route of the authenticity condition on consumer engagement can also be given in other ways, I sought to rival moral authority with another variable to understand when such effects are maintained or not. Hence, I tested the role of trust, that is, how much the individual's belief that the company is being true to its positioning influences their engagement with the cause (Newell and Goldsmith, 2001). For cognitive engagement (that is, accommodation), both moral authority ( $b = .16$ ,  $SE = .09$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [0.01, 0.38]) and trust ( $b = .15$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [0.02, 0.34]) had a statistically significant effect.

**Figure 8.** Moral Authority x Trust on Cognitive Engagement (Study 1)



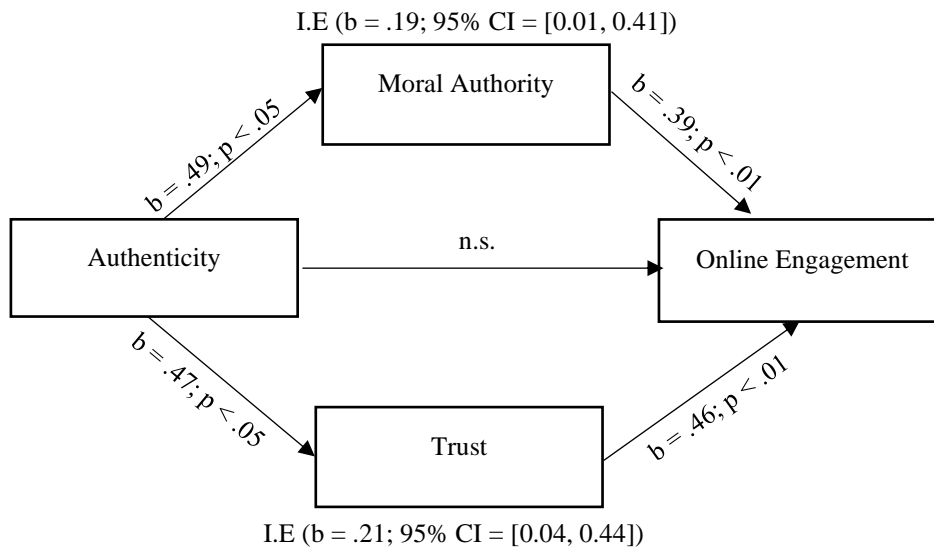
As for affective engagement, moral authority is no longer statistically significant ( $b = .05$ ,  $SE = .04$ , 95% confidence interval  $[CI] = [-0.02, 0.16]$ ) and only trust has an effect ( $b = .08$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95% confidence interval  $[CI] = [0.006, 0.21]$ ).

**Figure 9.** Moral Authority x Trust on Affective Engagement (Study 1)



Finally, for behavioral engagement, both moral authority ( $b = .19$ ,  $SE = .10$ , 95% confidence interval  $[CI] = [0.01, 0.41]$ ) and trust ( $b = .21$ ,  $SE = .10$ , 95% confidence interval  $[CI] = [0.04, 0.44]$ ) had statistically significant effects.

**Figure 10.** Moral Authority x Trust on Behavioral Engagement (Study 1)



### 3.1.6 Discussion

Study 1 aimed to investigate the effects of moral authority on individuals' engagement with the cause. For this, we investigated authenticity as a predictor of moral authority, manipulating experimental scenarios with a sample of Brazilian undergraduate students. Although the conditions of authenticity did not present a direct relationship with the affective, cognitive and behavioral engagements of individuals with the cause, this effect came to be explained by moral authority.

Furthermore, we found through mediator rivalry that trust best explains levels of empathy between individuals. This finding corroborates the study by Bastian et al. (2014) where it was found that people are more likely to help according to their levels of trust and bond between the parties. Therefore, the more the individual trusts the company and its statements, the more he will develop feelings of empathy for the cause advocated in his CSA.

Because moral authority also uses credibility to influence people's thinking and behavior (Hoppner and Vadakkapart, 2019), I believe these findings also complement each other. Because credibility, together with the perceptions that the company is authentic, develop the moral authority of companies, we believe that trust acts more in their moral authority when we talk about affective engagement. On the other hand, both trust in the firm and perceptions that it is genuine in its advocacy (i.e., authentic) explain the mechanism behind cognitive and behavioral engagements.

## 3.2 Study 2

In order to further investigate the effects of moral authority on consumer engagement with the cause, Study 2 was an experiment conducted on a sample of MTurk workers. The questionnaire was created and distributed in late July 2022. Four hundred participants were recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk service and were compensated for their participation with an amount of money (\$0.80). Similar to Study 1, participants were randomly allocated to one of the conditions and asked to answer a series of questions regarding their perceptions of the company and its CSA. This study was also preregistered (<https://aspredicted.org/vi3s7.pdf>).

### 3.2.1 Design and Participants

Because moral authority concerns the power to influence the thoughts and behaviors of individuals through their perception that the company is moral and authentic (Hoppner and Vadakkepatt, 2019), Study 2 also sought to explore the company's power of influence during a CSA. Thus, the second study was a 2 (authenticity: low vs. high) x 2 (influence: low vs. high). Thus, I also choose an ANCOVA with fixed effects, main effects and interactions as the statistical test with degrees of freedom as 1 ( $[2-1] * [2-1]$ ), medium expected effect size (0.20), confidence level at 95%, 4 groups (2x2 factorial design study) and 1 covariate (political orientation). Hence, I obtained, within these parameters, a total sample size of at least 327 subjects.

Data collection consisted of two main phases. In the first, 400 participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk for a sum of money (\$0.80). To test the quality of responses, I used an open-ended question: "Please tell us what were your thoughts and feelings after reading the description of the company and its post on social media." This question aims to detect imprecise answers regarding what was asked and to analyze the existence or not of robots in my database. After 55 rejections of robotic answers<sup>7</sup>, because the quality of the responses was still considerably lower than expected, I chose to carry out a second collection on the same platform, this time with 200 participants. On this second wave of answers, other 45 participants were rejected.

Although an effort was made to reject robotic participants and recruit new ones, our final sample still consisted of too many participants with equal responses and with no direct

---

<sup>7</sup> The answers followed a pattern and appeared to associate the keyword used in the recruitment (i.e., social media) to insert a generic text on the subject (e.g., "However, multiple studies have found a strong link between heavy social media and an increased risk of depression...").

relation with the open-ended question goal. Thus, in order to have a more qualified sample, participants who were detected as using robotic answers and/or answered the open-ended question without associating a thought or opinion about the exposed manipulation (e.g., “yes”, “n/a”), were excluded. Participants who gave simple answers, (e.g., “ok”, “none”, “good”), were kept because their answers, even if brief, were directly related to the open-ended question. Thus, a total of 121 participants were excluded from the analysis.

Therefore, our final sample consisted of 479 participants, the majority being men (63.3%) with bachelor’s degrees, mean age of 37 years, and a combined annual income between \$50,001 and \$75,000. As in Study 1, the participants were also asked about their sexual orientation and, in the same way, in Study 2 the majority were also heterosexual (57.8%), followed by bisexuals (31.1%), homosexuals (7.9 %), and asexuals (1.5%).

### 3.2.2 Manipulation Stimuli

Similar to Study 1, all participants were, initially, exposed to a post by a fictitious company advocating in favor of the LGBTQIA+ cause (Appendix B). Then the respondents were randomly allocated to one of the four manipulated scenarios (Appendix B). Authenticity manipulation followed the same procedure of the first study. For the “influence” variable I manipulated the number of followers, posts, and following as well, where high influential companies had over 20 million followers and low influential companies only 37.

**Table 4.** Partial Conditions

	High Authenticity	Low Authenticity
<b>High Influence</b>	<p><i>The post you just saw is from an Instagram page of an all-gender clothing store with <b>27.9 million</b> followers.</i></p> <p><i>Certified as a <b>Best Place to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality</b> and based on the values of <b>diversity and inclusion</b>, this company has consistently demonstrated support for the LGBTQIA+ movement for <b>over 10 years</b>.</i></p>	<p><i>The post you just saw is from an Instagram page of an all-gender clothing store with <b>27.9 million</b> followers.</i></p> <p><i>Certified as a <b>Great Place to Work (GPTW)</b> and based on the values of <b>innovation and team spirit</b>, this company has only <b>recently</b> demonstrated support for the LGBTQIA+ movement in sporadic posts on its social media.</i></p>

### Low Influence

*The post you just saw is from an Instagram page of an all-gender clothing store with 37 followers. Certified as a **Best Place to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality** and based on the values of **diversity and inclusion**, this company has consistently demonstrated support for the LGBTQIA+ movement for **over 10 years**.*

*The post you just saw is from an Instagram page of an all-gender clothing store with 37 followers. Certified as a **Great Place to Work (GPTW)** and based on the values of **innovation and team spirit**, this company has only **recently** demonstrated support for the LGBTQIA+ movement in sporadic posts on its social media.*

---

In this study, participants also read a small text of reinforcement before the manipulation. Thus, to manipulate authenticity, three stimuli were made: (1) values; (2) internalization of values (awards); and (3) consistency over time. While for influence, the main stimulus was the number of followers and this information was highlighted in the aforementioned text of reinforcement. As the text of reinforcement indicates (Table 4), participants in low authenticity and low influence conditions were exposed to an Instagram page with few followers and little information oriented to the LGBTQIA+ cause portrayed in the initial CSA.

On the other hand, the low authenticity but high influence condition, indicated a low orientation to the cause but a large number of followers, and so on. Participants were instructed to answer a series of questions about the dependent variables in the sequence. For Study 2, at least one new variable was inserted for each of the engagements for greater robustness of the analysis. In this case, attention was measured as affective engagement together with accommodation. Elevation feelings were added to empathy in affective engagement and, finally, endorsement toward the cause was measured along with online engagement.

### 3.2.3 Measures

#### *Dependent Variables*

*Accommodation.* The first cognitive dimension was evaluated by accommodation processing (e.g., “This statement changes my previous way of thinking about things”) that will be measured with three items adapted from Guo et al. (2018) ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Attention.* For attention to the cause, was used a scale derived from Zheng et al. (2021) which consisted of the following 2 adapted items: “Compared with my own life, I am now paying

more attention to the life of the people in LGBTQ+ community”, and “Now I am more concerned about the LGBTQ+ rights” ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

*Elevation.* The first affective variable will be measured using 2-item adapted from Romani et. al (2016). Items consist of “I felt inspired” and “I felt touched” ( $\alpha = .84$ )

*Empathy.* Like the first study, empathy was measured with 5 items adapted from the empathy scale by Bagozzi and Moore (1994): (“I can imagine the feelings of the LGBTQIA+ community people”, “I can feel the pain of the LGBTQIA+ community people”, “I have tender and concerned feelings for people in the LGBTQIA+ community”, “I would like to make people in the LGBTQIA+ community feel better”, and “I feel deep sympathy for people in the LGBTQIA+ community”) ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

*Online Engagement.* The first behavioral variable was measured by asking participants to indicate the level of probability of engaging in the following actions: “I would share this post on my social network”, “I would leave a positive comment on this post”, “I would like this post”; where 1 was “Very Unlikely” and 7 “Very Likely” ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

*Endorsing.* Endorsement toward the LGTQIA+ cause was measured with four adapted items from Dessart et. (2016). Similar to online engagement, participants were asked how likely they would engage in the following actions: “I would promote the LGBTQIA+ cause”, “I would try to get others interested in the LGBTQIA+ cause”, “I would actively defend the LGBTQIA+ cause from its critics”, and “I would say positive things about the LGBTQIA+ cause to other people” ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

*Moral Authority.* Because the measures of moral authority in the first study showed weaknesses in the AVE (mainly in relation to the second item), in the second study moral authority was measured with 4 items consisted of the following items according to the definition of moral authority presented by Hoppner and Vadakkepatt (2019): “Because it has high moral authority, I believe this company can influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause”, “I think this company is moral enough to influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause”, “I think this company is powerful enough to influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause”, and “Compared to other clothing companies I know, this company seems to be more likely to influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause” ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Attention Check.** In a multiple-choice question (“Recently”, “5 years”, and “Over than 10 years”), participants were asked to answer how long the company has been advocating for the LGBTQIA+ cause according to the information provided about the company ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Manipulation Check.** To check authenticity manipulation, the same 4 items from Study 1 were used (Alhouti et al., 2016). That is, I also used the perceived authenticity scale with adapted items such as: “The company is being true to itself with its LGBTQIA+ advocacy” ( $M = 5.12$ ;  $SD = 1.62$ ); “The company advocates the LGBTQIA+ rights in a way that matches its core values”; and “The company’s actions and communication are consistent over time”. Also, to test the company’s influence, I used two different questions: a scale of agreement for “I think this company is influential”; “I think this company is popular.” To test the company’s influence, I used two different questions: a scale of agreement for “I think this company is influential”; “I think this company is popular.” Additionally, participants were asked on a semantic differential scale how many followers the company apparently had according to the information given (Few followers --- Many followers). ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

### **Control Variables**

**Political Orientation.** Participants were asked to answer a semantic differential scale in which the more to the left, the more liberal the participant; while the further to the right, the more conservative the participant is.

### **3.2.4 Data Analysis**

Similar to Study 1, I first performed a factor analysis of the scales as well as their reliability and used an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and PROCESS for hypothesis testing.

### **3.2.5 Results**

Following the first study’s same path, the following sections will address the second study’s results regarding the manipulation check and hypothesis testing.

#### **3.2.5.1 Manipulation Check**

To test the effects of the authenticity condition on respondents’ perception of whether the company is authentic or not and their perception of the number of followers, using the scales previously mentioned. The results confirm the operation of manipulation both for the authenticity condition ( $F(1,477) = 3,891, p < .05$ ) and for influence ( $F(1,477) = 38,459, p < .01$ ). Table 5 shows the means of low vs. high conditions for both variables.



**Table 5.** Means of Authenticity and Influence on Moral Authority

Influence Condition		Influence	Authenticity	Authenticity Condition		Influence	Authenticity
Low Influence	Mean	4,91	5,40	Low	Mean	5,31	5,39
	N	234	234	Authenticity	N	222	222
	SD	1,59	1,15		SD	1,39	1,23
High Influence	Mean	5,69	5,59	High	Mean	5,31	5,59
	N	245	245	Authenticity	N	257	257
	SD	1,08	1,13		SD	1,43	1,06

Source: own elaboration

As expected, the effects of the interaction between the two conditions were not statistically significant neither for authenticity ( $F(1,477) = 0.573$ ,  $p = .44$ ) nor for influence ( $F(1,477) = 0.284$ ,  $p = .59$ ). Likewise, the manipulation of authenticity did not affect significantly the influence perceptions ( $F(1,477) = 2,862$ ,  $p = .09$ ) nor the influence manipulation had a statistically significant for the authenticity perceptions ( $F(1,477) = 0.001$ ,  $p = .97$ ). Thus, we can conclude that the manipulations obtained satisfactory results for the conduction of further analyses.

### 3.2.5.2 Hypothesis Testing

First, I ran a two-way ANOVA to test the effects of manipulated conditions of authenticity and influence on moral authority. The results indicate a statistically significant relationship only for the influence condition ( $F(1,475) = 3,960$ ;  $p < .05$ ;  $M_{low\_inf} = 5,15$ ;  $M_{high\_inf} = 5,41$ ) and not for the authenticity condition ( $F(1,475) = 1,027$ ;  $p = .31$ ;  $M_{low\_auth} = 5,22$ ;  $M_{high\_auth} = 5,34$ ) nor the interaction of both ( $F(1,475) = 2,436$ ;  $p = .11$ ).

Like the first study, I also ran an ANCOVA analysis for a controlling variable. The results revealed that political orientation had statistical significant effect on accommodation [ $F(1,474) = 33,47$ ;  $p < .01$ ], attention [ $F(1,474) = 21,01$ ;  $p < .01$ ], elevation [ $F(1,474) = 5,80$ ;  $p < .05$ ], and online engagement [ $F(1,474) = 8,92$ ;  $p < .01$ ]. For empathy [ $F(1,474) = 2,45$ ;  $p = .11$ ] and endorsing [ $F(1,474) = 3,07$ ;  $p = .08$ ], political orientation didn't showed an statistically significant effect. Overall there was no effect either for authenticity or influence or the interaction of both conditions on accommodation ( $p_{auth} = .82$ ;  $p_{inf} = .40$ ;  $p_{interaction} = .37$ ), attention ( $p_{auth} = .85$ ;  $p_{inf} = .37$ ;  $p_{interaction} = .13$ ), elevation ( $p_{auth} = .47$ ;  $p_{inf} = .09$ ;  $p_{interaction} = .37$ ), empathy ( $p_{auth} = .98$ ;  $p_{inf} = .32$ ;  $p_{interaction} = .12$ ), endorsing ( $p_{auth} = .38$ ;  $p_{inf} = .12$ ;  $p_{interaction} = .20$ ), and online engagement ( $p_{auth} = .42$ ;  $p_{inf} = .14$ ;  $p_{interaction} = .25$ ) after controlling for political

orientation. After controlling, moral authority still was statistically significant only for influence ( $p < .05$ ). For this reason, mediation analysis of moral authority was performed only via influence.

Similarly to Study 1, I also tested the effects of authenticity and influence on consumer engagement with the cause with a two-way ANOVA, establishing affective (elevation and empathy), cognitive (accommodation and attention), and behavioral (online engagement intention and endorsing) as dependent variables. Thus, the results indicate that none of the conditions including the interaction between them was able to significantly predict consumer engagement in each of the dimensions in a direct way (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Conditions on Consumer Cause-Related Engagement

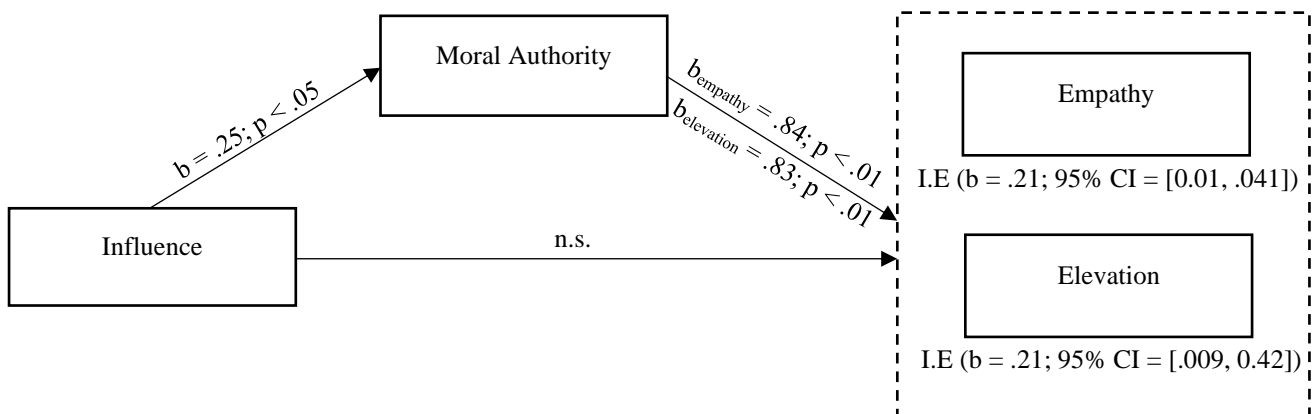
Source	Dependent Variable	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Authenticity	Accommodation	,036	,013	,909
	Attention	,016	,006	,939
	Elevation	1,681	,734	,392
	Empathy	,008	,004	,948
	Online Engagement	2,480	,920	,338
	Endorsing	2,094	,938	,333
Influence	Accommodation	1,459	,530	,467
	Attention	1,819	,653	,419
	Elevation	5,926	2,589	,108
	Empathy	1,796	,907	,342
	Online Engagement	5,331	1,977	,160
	Endorsing	4,950	2,217	,137
Authenticity * Influence	Accommodation	2,262	,822	,365
	Attention	6,428	2,309	,129
	Elevation	1,859	,812	,368
	Empathy	4,924	2,485	,116
	Online Engagement	3,582	1,329	,250
	Endorsing	3,665	1,641	,201

Because in Study 1 the direct effect of the authenticity manipulation on engagement dimensions was also not statistically significant, but there was a mediation of moral authority, the same was done for Study 2. Then, I conducted a mediation analysis (Hayes 2012, Model 4) of influence in each of the engagement's variables (that is, accommodation, attention, elevation, empathy, online engagement, and endorsing).

As previously stated, the impact of influence condition (x) was significant on moral authority ( $b = .25$ ,  $SE = .12$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .48]). Thus, contrasting with the first study, influence was the only statistical predictor of moral authority.

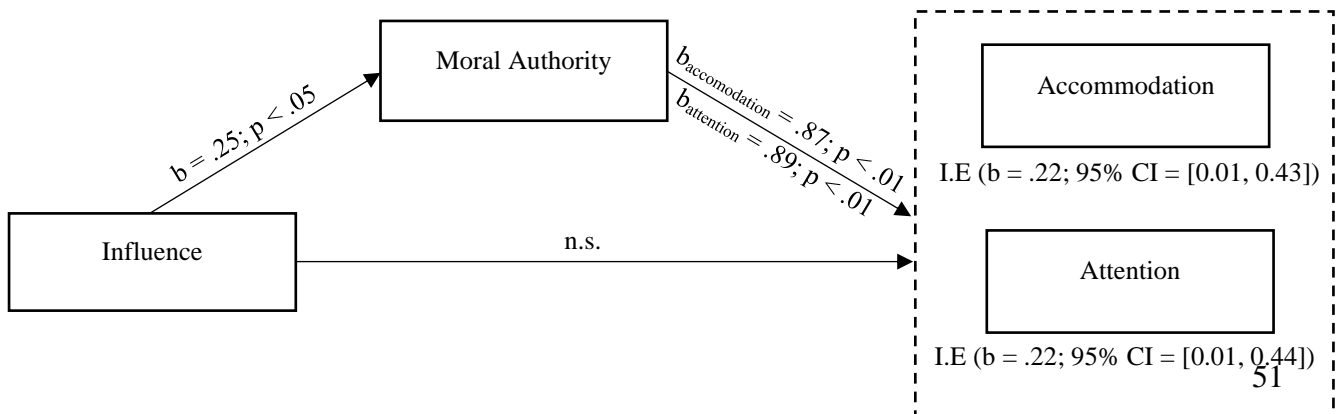
For affective engagement variables, the mediation of moral authority was statistically significant both for elevation ( $b = .21$ ,  $SE = .10$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.007, .419]) and for empathy ( $b = .24$ ,  $SE = .11$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .47]).

**Figure 11.** Mediation Test on Affective Engagement (Study 2)



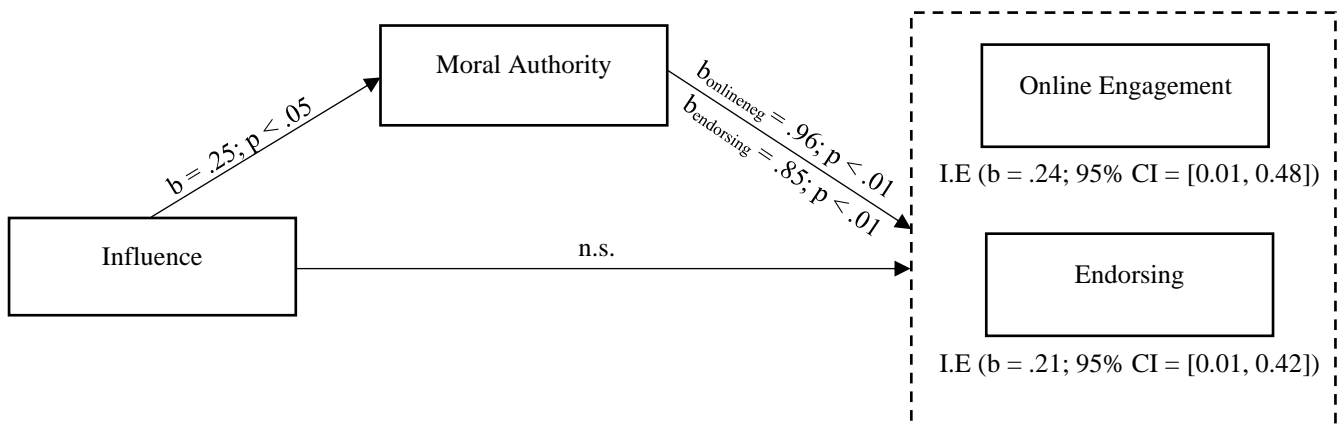
Likewise, for cognitive engagement, the mediation of moral authority was statistically significant for accommodation ( $b = .22$ ,  $SE = .10$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .44]) and attention to the cause ( $b = .22$ ,  $SE = .11$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.007, .442]).

**Figure 12.** Mediation Test on Cognitive Engagement (Study 2)



Finally, statistically significant mediation was also identified for online engagement ( $b = .24$ ,  $SE = .11$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .47]) and endorsing ( $b = .21$ ,  $SE = .10$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .43]).

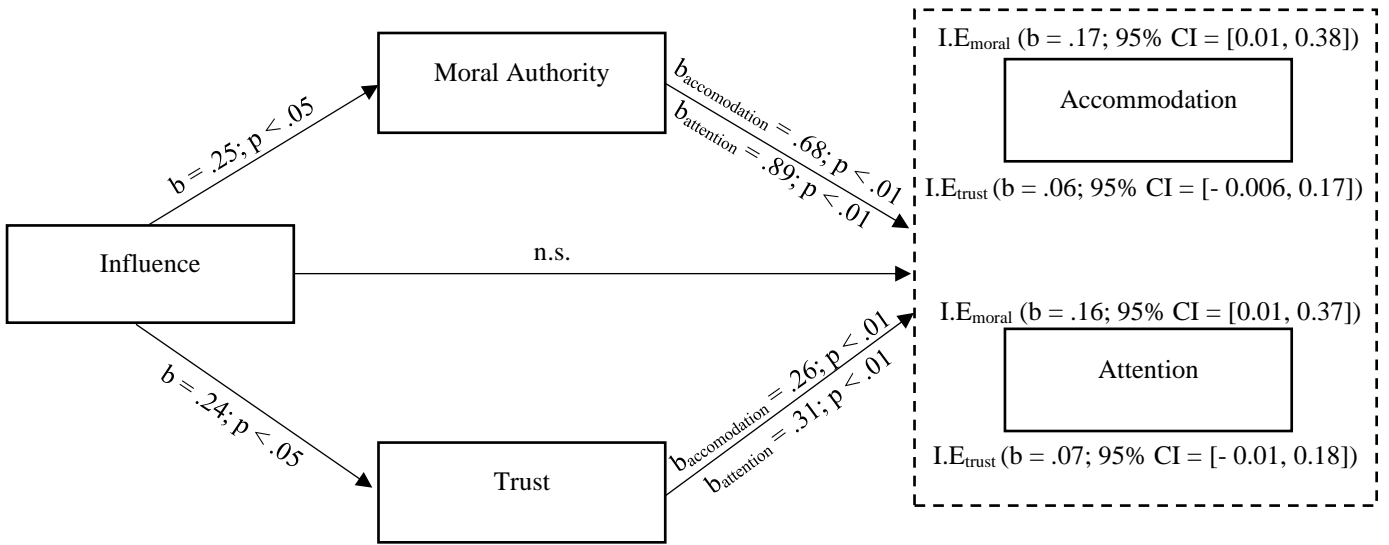
**Figure 11.** Mediation Test on Behavioral Engagement (Study 2)



### 3.2.5.3 Alternative Explanations

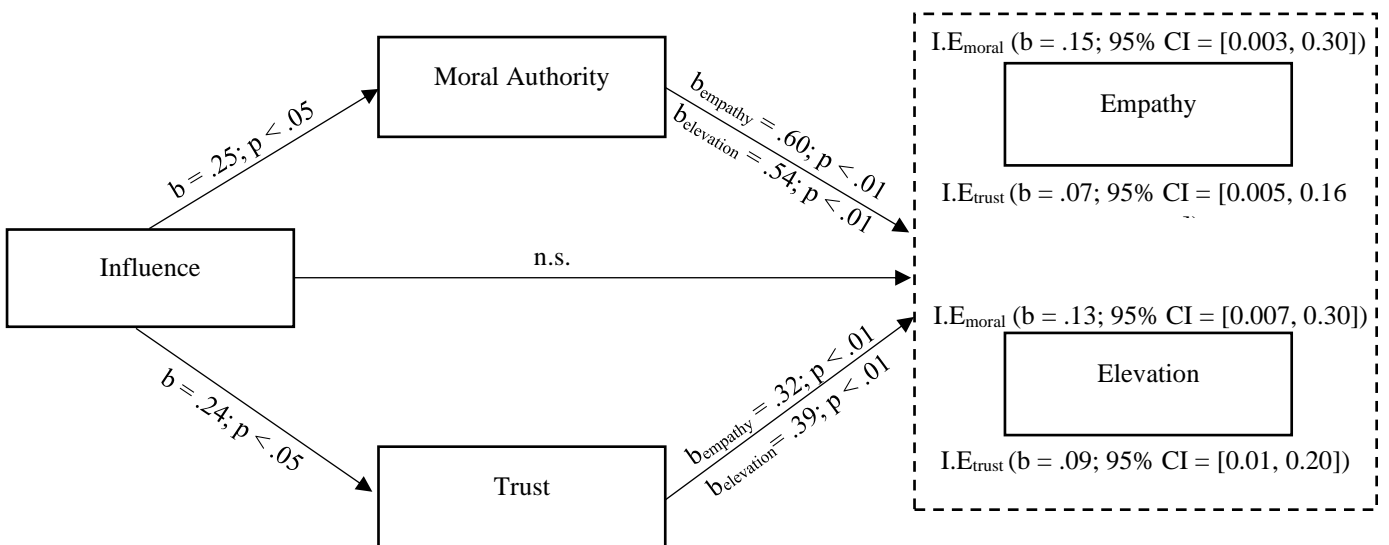
The results indicate that trust also do not mediate the effect of influence on cognitive engagement, that is, there was no statistically significant effect for individual accommodation ( $b = -.06$ ,  $SE = .04$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [-.008, .16]) nor for attention to the cause ( $b = .07$ ,  $SE = .04$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [-.002, .18]). In this case, mediation only worked for moral authority both for accommodation ( $b = .06$ ,  $SE = .04$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.003, .384]) and for attention ( $b = .16$ ,  $SE = .09$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.005, .37]).

**Figure 12.** Moral Authority x Trust on Cognitive Engagement (Study 2)



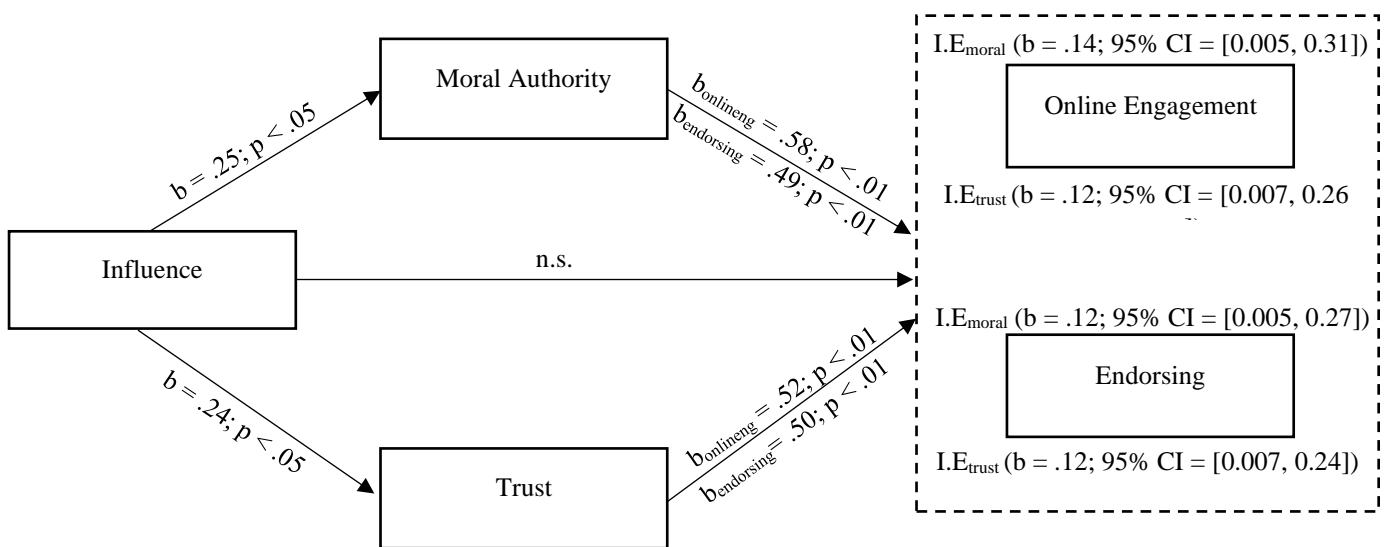
For affective engagement, moral authority ( $b = .17$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .34]) mediate the effects for empathy along with trust ( $b = .05$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.002, .11]). For elevation, trust was also statistically significant ( $b = .04$ ,  $SE = .04$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.008, .20]) as well as moral authority ( $b = .13$ ,  $SE = .07$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.009, .30]).

**Figure 13.** Moral Authority x Trust on Affective Engagement (Study 2)



For online engagement, both moral authority ( $b = .14$ ,  $SE = .07$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .31]) and trust ( $b = .12$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95 % confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .26]) function as an explanatory mechanism for the influence on engagement. Also, for endorsing, moral authority ( $b = .12$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95 % confidence interval [CI] = [.009, .27]) and trust ( $b = .12$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95 % confidence interval [CI] = [.01, .25]) works as an explanatory mechanism. For all variables, moral authority has stronger effects, except for endorsing, which has similar effect levels.

**Figure 14.** Moral Authority x Trust on Behavioral Engagement (Study 2)



### 3.2.5.4 Discussion

Study 2 investigated authenticity and influence as predictors of moral authority, manipulating experimental scenarios with a sample of workers from MTurk.

The results corroborate the mediation of moral authority under another bias. When manipulated simultaneously as predictors of moral authority, authenticity was no longer statistically significant while influence appeared to be more closely related to the construct of moral authority. However, this result is not only counterintuitive, but also contributes to the moral authority literature in listing the most relevant predictors for its measurement.

## 4. General Discussion

Because most articles on CSA aim to study how the controversial position impacts the results of companies, this work first seeks to understand the true root of the question: does CSA

actually encourage individuals to engage with the advocated cause? I believe that, given the wave of boycotts against brands that are positioning themselves in favor of sociopolitical causes (e.g., the case of Nike and Colin Kaepernick), and also the controversial results identified in the literature on the subject, companies continue to positioning for a greater cause. Despite the risk of getting involved in sensitive issues in an increasingly polarized world, companies position themselves because they believe they have the moral authority to influence other people. This means that it is through their power and internalization/dissemination of their values that companies can lead individuals to think about a particular cause and even act in favor of it. This assumption is confirmed in the two studies presented here.

The results indicate that the CSA alone does not cause individuals to engage with the LGBTQIA+ cause. However, we noticed a total mediation of moral authority in both studies, which indicates that it is through this mechanism that individuals will decide whether or not to engage with the cause. Also counterintuitively, we found that as a predictor of moral authority, perceptions that the company is influential is more relevant than the company being authentic. That is, for the sample of the second study, there was a statistically significant relationship between the condition of influence on moral authority, but not the opposite. This indicates that, although authenticity is still a relevant issue to consider in the CSA (Study 1), the perception that the company has enough power to take the case forward are more important in the decision to engage or not with the cause (Study 2).

When rivaled with trust as an alternative mediator, under conditions of authenticity moral authority ceased to function as a mediator (Study 1). In the influence conditions (Study 2), moral authority stands out over trust for cognitive engagement. This is an interesting finding, given the greater relevance of the influence on engagement intentions and that cognitive engagement is mainly about paying attention to others and changing/expanding opinions about the cause, we believe that the prevalence of moral authority in this scenario explains how individuals can reflect more on the cause to which they are exposed.

In addition, trust is also an important element of moral authority, since it is through trust that credibility is built, an element that is also present in moral authority (Hoppner and Vadakepatt, 2019). Thus, the rivalry findings, although more positive for trust at a given moment, complement the findings regarding moral authority.

## **4.1 Theoretical Contributions**

The theoretical contributions of this work are given by the expansion of theory in CSA and especially in moral authority. To date, few studies have linked CSA to the cause as an object of study and not the company. This work aims to address, in the first place, whether the company's positioning in controversial causes actually influences reflection and action on the cause. Besides the work of Parcha and Westerman (2020) that address attitude change, no study has yet sought to understand how CSA impacts the engagement of individuals in a multidimensional way (i.e., affective, cognitive and behavioral).

Also, this study proposes to expand the theory of moral authority in the field of business, more specifically in the area of marketing. Moral authority is commonly used in the fields of ethics, sociology, and international relations (e.g., White et al., 2000; Whitehead and Baker, 2012; Wohlforth et al., 2018), but there is still no deepening of this concept in the marketing area. As far as I know, only the study by Hoppner and Vadakepatt (2019) begins to introduce the term in the business area. Thus, the present study also contributes to this theory in an empirical way, addressing the different predictors of moral authority in the CSA context.

## **4.2 Managerial Implications**

Although the dependent variables of this study measure consumer engagement with the cause itself, in the context of social networks, engagement with the cause potentially favors engagement with the company as well. Because the scenarios were created in a real social network simulation, the results of this research can address different managerial implications.

First, in the context of CSA on social media, perceptions of influence are the most relevant issue. For this reason, companies that want to start addressing controversial causes in their communication strategies need to pay attention in advance if they demonstrate sufficient power on social networks. That is, the larger and more influential your company is perceived by the consumer, the more likely they are to engage with the cause. More specifically for the online engagement variable that measures users' behavior towards the company as well, both moral authority (hence, power of influence) and trust mediate this relationship. Thus, two routes are interesting to enhance the company's online engagement: (1) investment in digital and content marketing strategies to attract more followers; and/or (2) invest in the relationship with the client in order to build a relationship of trust and bonding.



Second, even though influence showed to be more relevant than authenticity when measured together, authenticity also has a significant value in the perceptions of moral authority, according to Study 1. Therefore, it is also important for the company to know how to position itself in the face of a controversial cause with wisdom and consistency. For example, if the company has been advocating for the LGBTQIA+ cause for a short time and does not show consistency in its posts on the subject or in its actions in favor of the company, they may be seen as inauthentic and potentially interested in taking advantage of consumers. Therefore, investing in a cause that the company really believes in and that it will carry forward through new manifestos, donations, etc., is also relevant to consumers' perception of moral authority.

### **4.3 Limitations and Future Research**

This dissertation has several limitations to be considered when analyzing its results. First, more experiments are needed using different samples. In the case of this research, the experiments used either students or panel data from MTurk. It is also important to consider the quality of data on online platforms. Specifically for MTurk, many respondents are robotizing their answers, making it very difficult to truly analyze the desired variables. Future studies, if using online panel, should prioritize Prolific before MTurk. If this is not possible, we suggest asking open-ended questions to identify participants with automatic responses and carry out their proper rejection and new data collection.

Because our laboratory experiment sought to get closer to reality, it was not possible to extreme as much as we would like in the conditions and, therefore, even if there is a statistically significant difference between the groups, the means for low authenticity, for example, still remain considerably above the midpoint of the scale. For purposes of greater internal validity, we recommend more traditional experiments (such as using a news article) to manipulate scenarios.

On the other hand, although the experiments were created with the aim of getting as close as possible to reality, it was still a laboratory experiment. Future studies should use field studies with real companies and real behaviors to deepen the results discussed here. As an alternative dependent variable, it would be interesting to consider the actual behavior of signing a petition or other contribution to the cause.

For moral authority, as it is still a very incipient term mainly in the business literature, there is still no scale that measures it in this context. Although our items showed a good factor

loading and Cronbach's alpha, future studies can use this gap to develop a moral authority scale for the business context in order to contribute to research in the field. In addition, even for the moral authority, other antecedent variables can be manipulated (such as reputation, company image) for a more in-depth investigation of the phenomenon in the CSA context.

For engagement, other variables can be included, such as enthusiasm (Dessart et al., 2016), clicktivism (Noland, 2017), willingness to search (Martínez-López et al., 2020), word of mouth (An et al., 2020). al., 2018), and others. Future studies may also reflect on the extent to which CSA actually has positive effects on engagement. In other words, are companies that advocates for controversial issues improving society through debate or causing greater division and intolerance?

Another limitation that deserves further investigation is the chosen cause. This dissertation only tested the effects of a CSA on the LGTQIA+ cause on consumer engagement. Other causes need to be taken into account, such as racism, immigration, gun control, abortion and other issues. Replicating the findings for other causes will reinforce the findings of this study in a way that contributes to the CSA literature and the mechanisms behind this phenomenon.

Finally, this study can expand to consumer engagement with the company itself, in order to compare the effects of moral authority on engagement with the cause vs. with the company. It is possible that for the company, because there is a business relationship between the parties, individuals react differently to the CSA. Variables such as ulterior motives and individuals' perception of the role of companies towards society can influence consumer engagement and are interesting variables for future research.

## REFERENCES

- ABITBOL, Alan et al. # RaceTogether: Starbucks' attempt to discuss race in America and its impact on company reputation and employees. **Public Relations Journal**, 2018.
- ADLER, Jonathan M. et al. The incremental validity of narrative identity in predicting well-being: A review of the field and recommendations for the future. **Personality and Social Psychology Review**, v. 20, n. 2, p. 142-175, 2016.
- ALGOE, Sara B.; HAIDT, Jonathan. Witnessing excellence in action: The 'other-praising' emotions of elevation, gratitude, and admiration. **The journal of positive psychology**, v. 4, n. 2, p. 105-127, 2009.
- ALHOUTI, Sarah; JOHNSON, Catherine M.; HOLLOWAY, Betsy Bugg. Corporate social responsibility authenticity: Investigating its antecedents and outcomes. **Journal of business research**, v. 69, n. 3, p. 1242-1249, 2016.
- American Express Company. American Express Public Responsibility: A Report of Recent Activities., New York: American Express Company, 1987.
- AN, Jake et al. Customer advocates with a generous heart. **Journal of Services Marketing**, 2019.
- ARIELY, D.; LEVAV, J. Sequential Choice in Group Settings: Taking the Road Less Traveled and Less Enjoyed. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 27, 2000
- ARNDT, Johan. Role of product-related conversations in the diffusion of a new product. **Journal of marketing Research**, v. 4, n. 3, p. 291-295, 1967.
- AUSTIN, Lucinda; GAITHER, Barbara; GAITHER, T. Kenn. Corporate social advocacy as public interest communications: Exploring perceptions of corporate involvement in controversial social-political issues. **The Journal of Public Interest Communications**, v. 3, n. 2, p. 3-3, 2019.
- BAGOZZI, Richard P.; MOORE, David J. Public service advertisements: Emotions and empathy guide prosocial behavior. **Journal of marketing**, v. 58, n. 1, p. 56-70, 1994.
- BANDURA, Albert. Social cognitive theory of mass communication. **Media psychology**, v. 3, n. 3, p. 265-299, 2001.
- BANDURA, Albert. Social-learning theory of identificatory processes. **Handbook of socialization theory and research**, v. 213, p. 262, 1969.
- BANDURA, Albert. Toward a psychology of human agency. **Perspectives on psychological science**, v. 1, n. 2, p. 164-180, 2006.
- BASIL, Debra Z.; HERR, Paul M. Dangerous donations? The effects of cause-related marketing on charity attitude. **Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing**, v. 11, n. 1, p. 59-76, 2003.
- BENNETT, Roger. Factors underlying the inclination to donate to particular types of charity. **International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing**, v. 8, n. 1, p. 12-29, 2003.
- BHAGWAT, Yashoda et al. Corporate sociopolitical activism and firm value. **Journal of marketing**, v. 84, n. 5, p. 1-21, 2020.

BLOCK, Jack. Assimilation, accommodation, and the dynamics of personality development. **Child development**, p. 281-295, 1982.

Bloom, P. N., Hussein, P. Y., & Szykman, L. R. (1997). The benefits of corporate social marketing initiatives. In M. E. Goldberg, M. Fishbein, & S. E. Middlestadt (Eds.), *Social marketing: Theoretical and practical perspectives* (pp. 313–331). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

BOENIGK, Silke; SCHUCHARDT, Viktoria. Nonprofit collaboration with luxury brands: Positive and negative effects for cause-related marketing. **Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly**, v. 44, n. 4, p. 708-733, 2015.

BRODIE, Roderick J. et al. Customer engagement: Conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. **Journal of service research**, v. 14, n. 3, p. 252-271, 2011.

CALDER, Bobby J.; ISAAC, Mathew S.; MALTHOUSE, Edward C. Taking the customer's point-of-view: engagement or satisfaction?. **Marketing Science Institute Working Paper Series**, p. 13-102, 2013.

CARROLL, Archie B. A history of corporate social responsibility: Concepts and practices. **The Oxford handbook of corporate social responsibility**, v. 1, 2008.

CASTRO-GONZÁLEZ, Sandra et al. Corporate social responsibility and consumer advocacy behaviors: The importance of emotions and moral virtues. **Journal of cleaner production**, v. 231, p. 846-855, 2019.

CHANDY, Rajesh K. et al. Better Marketing for a Better World. **Journal of Marketing**, v. 85, n. 3, p. 1-9, 2021.

CHARRY, Karine; TESSITORE, Tina. I tweet, they follow, you eat: Number of followers as nudge on social media to eat more healthily. **Social Science & Medicine**, v. 269, p. 113595, 2021.

CHATTERJI, Aaron K. et al. Field experiments in strategy research. **Strategic Management Journal**, v. 37, n. 1, p. 116-132, 2016.

CHATTERJI, Aaron K.; TOFFEL, Michael W. Assessing the impact of CEO activism. **Organization & Environment**, v. 32, n. 2, p. 159-185, 2019.

CHAUDHURI, Arjun; HOLBROOK, Morris B. The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. **Journal of marketing**, v. 65, n. 2, p. 81-93, 2001.

CLEMENSEN, Maggie. Corporate Political Activism: When and how should companies take a political stand?. 2017.

Commission of the European Communities 2001. Green Paper. Promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility, presented by the Commission (COM (2001) 366 final of 18.7.2001): <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/csr/policy.htm>, January 2009.

COPELAND, Lauren. Conceptualizing political consumerism: How citizenship norms differentiate boycotting from buycotting. **Political studies**, v. 62, p. 172-186, 2014.

CORNWELL, T. Bettina; COOTE, Leonard V. Corporate sponsorship of a cause: The role of identification in purchase intent. **Journal of business research**, v. 58, n. 3, p. 268-276, 2005.

- CUDDY, Amy JC; FISKE, Susan T.; GLICK, Peter. The BIAS map: behaviors from intergroup affect and stereotypes. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, v. 92, n. 4, p. 631, 2007.
- DARWIN, Charles. **The expression of the emotions in man and animals**. University of Chicago press, 2015.
- DE OLIVEIRA SANTINI, Fernando et al. Customer engagement in social media: a framework and meta-analysis. **Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science**, v. 48, p. 1211-1228, 2020.
- DESSART, Laurence; VELOUTSOU, Cleopatra; MORGAN-THOMAS, Anna. Capturing consumer engagement: duality, dimensionality and measurement. **Journal of Marketing Management**, v. 32, n. 5-6, p. 399-426, 2016.
- DISTASO, Marcia W.; MESSNER, Marcus. Forced transparency: Corporate image on Wikipedia and what it means for public relations. **Public Relations Journal**, v. 4, n. 2, p. 1-23, 2010.
- DODD, Melissa D.; SUPA, Dustin W. Conceptualizing and measuring “corporate social advocacy” communication: Examining the impact on corporate financial performance. **Public Relations Journal**, v. 8, n. 3, p. 2-23, 2014.
- DODD, Melissa D.; SUPA, Dustin. Testing the viability of corporate social advocacy as a predictor of purchase intention. **Communication Research Reports**, v. 32, n. 4, p. 287-293, 2015.
- DODD, Melissa. Globalization, pluralization, and erosion: The impact of shifting societal expectations for advocacy and public good. **The Journal of Public Interest Communications**, v. 2, n. 2, p. 221-221, 2018.
- DU, Shuili; BHATTACHARYA, Chitrabhan B.; SEN, Sankar. Maximizing business returns to corporate social responsibility (CSR): The role of CSR communication. **International journal of management reviews**, v. 12, n. 1, p. 8-19, 2010.
- Edelman Public Relations. 2021 Annual Edelman Trust Barometer. Disponível em: <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2021-trust-barometer&gt;>. Acesso em: 28 de outubro de 2021.
- EILERT, Meike; NAPPIER CHERUP, Abigail. The activist company: examining a company’s Pursuit of societal change through corporate activism using an institutional theoretical lens. **Journal of public policy & marketing**, v. 39, n. 4, p. 461-476, 2020.
- ELLIOT, G.; RUNDLE-THIELE, S.; WALLER, D.; SMITH, S.; EADES, L.; BENTROTT, I. Marketing. **John Wiley and Sons**.2016
- ETTER, Michael. Reasons for low levels of interactivity:(Non-) interactive CSR communication in Twitter. **Public relations review**, v. 39, n. 5, p. 606-608, 2013.
- FATMA, Mobin; RAHMAN, Zillur. Consumer perspective on CSR literature review and future research agenda. **Management Research Review**, 2015.
- FAUL, Franz et al. Statistical power analyses using G\* Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. **Behavior research methods**, v. 41, n. 4, p. 1149-1160, 2009.
- FELDMANN, Derrick. **Social movements for good: How companies and causes create viral change**. John Wiley & Sons, 2016.

- FOREHAND, Mark R.; GRIER, Sonya. When is honesty the best policy? The effect of stated company intent on consumer skepticism. **Journal of consumer psychology**, v. 13, n. 3, p. 349-356, 2003.
- FREDERICK, William C. The moral authority of transnational corporate codes. **Journal of Business Ethics**, v. 10, n. 3, p. 165-177, 1991.
- FRÖHLICH, Romy; KNOBLOCH, Aline Susanne. “Are they allowed to do that?” Content and typology of corporate socio-political positioning on TWITTER. A study of DAX-30 companies in Germany. **Public Relations Review**, v. 47, n. 5, p. 102113, 2021.
- GAITHER, Barbara Miller; AUSTIN, Lucinda; COLLINS, Morgan. Examining the case of DICK’s sporting goods: Realignment of stakeholders through corporate social advocacy. **The Journal of Public Interest Communications**, v. 2, n. 2, p. 176-176, 2018.
- GARG, Nitika; SALUJA, Geetanjali. A Tale of Two “Ideologies”: Differences in Consumer Response to Brand Activism. **Journal of the Association for Consumer Research**, v. 7, n. 3, p. 000-000, 2022.
- GAUTIER, Arthur; PACHE, Anne-Claire. Research on corporate philanthropy: A review and assessment. **Journal of Business Ethics**, v. 126, n. 3, p. 343-369, 2015.
- GINSBURG, Herbert P.; OPPER, Sylvia. **Piaget's theory of intellectual development**. Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1988.
- GLADWELL, Malcolm. Small change. **The New Yorker**, v. 4, n. 2010, p. 42-49, 2010.
- GRAHAM, Jesse; HAIDT, Jonathan; NOSEK, Brian A. Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. **Journal of personality and social psychology**, v. 96, n. 5, p. 1029, 2009.
- GRAZZINI, Laura et al. Standing for politics: What consequences for brands?. **Italian Journal of Marketing**, p. 1-17, 2020.
- GREMLER, Dwayne D.; GWINNER, Kevin P.; BROWN, Stephen W. Generating positive word-of-mouth communication through customer-employee relationships. **International Journal of Service Industry Management**, 2001.
- GUO, Siyuan et al. Inspiring awe in consumers: Relevance, triggers, and consequences. **Asian Journal of Social Psychology**, v. 21, n. 3, p. 129-142, 2018.
- HAIDT, Jonathan. Elevation and the positive psychology of morality. 2003.
- HAJLI, Nick et al. A social commerce investigation of the role of trust in a social networking site on purchase intentions. **Journal of Business Research**, v. 71, p. 133-141, 2017.
- HALL, Rodney Bruce. Moral authority as a power resource. **International Organization**, v. 51, n. 4, p. 591-622, 1997.
- HALUPKA, Max. The legitimisation of clicktivism. **Australian Journal of Political Science**, v. 53, n. 1, p. 130-141, 2018.
- HEATH, Robert. How do we predict advertising attention and engagement. **School of Management University of Bath Working Paper**, v. 9, 2007.
- HERMAN, C. Peter; ROTH, Deborah A.; POLIVY, Janet. Effects of the presence of others on food intake: a normative interpretation. **Psychological bulletin**, v. 129, n. 6, p. 873, 2003.

- HILL, Ronald Paul; WATKINS, Alison. A simulation of moral behavior within marketing exchange relationships. **Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science**, v. 35, n. 3, p. 417-429, 2007.
- HOFFMANN, Stefan et al. Under which conditions are consumers ready to boycott or buycott? The roles of hedonism and simplicity. **Ecological Economics**, v. 147, p. 167-178, 2018.
- HOLIDAY, Steven et al. The cause effect: The impact of corporate social responsibility advertising on cause consumer engagement behavior after Brand affiliation ceases. **International Journal of Advertising**, v. 40, n. 2, p. 199-224, 2021.
- HOLLEBEEK, Linda D.; GLYNN, Mark S.; BRODIE, Roderick J. Consumer Brand Engagement in Social Media: Conceptualization, Scale Development and Validation. **Journal of Interactive Marketing**, [s. l.], v. 28, ed. 2, p. 149-165, 2014.
- HOLLEBEEK, Linda. Exploring customer brand engagement: definition and themes. **Journal of strategic Marketing**, v. 19, n. 7, p. 555-573, 2011.
- HONG, Cheng; LI, Cong. To support or to boycott: a public segmentation model in corporate social advocacy. **Journal of Public Relations Research**, p. 1-18, 2020.
- HOOTKIN, J.; Chaitin, J. Doing Business in an Activist World <https://www.globalstrategygroup.com/thought-leadership/doing-business-in-an-activist-world/>. 2019.
- HOPNER, Jessica J.; VADAKKEPATT, Gautham G. Examining moral authority in the marketplace: A conceptualization and framework. **Journal of Business Research**, v. 95, p. 417-427, 2019.
- HOWE, Lauren C.; KROSNICK, Jon A. Attitude strength. **Annual review of psychology**, v. 68, p. 327-351, 2017.
- HYDOCK, Chris; PAHARIA, Neeru; WEBER, T. J. The consumer response to corporate political advocacy: a review and future directions. *Customer Needs and Solutions*, v. 6, n. 3, p. 76-83, 2019.
- IVENS, Bjoern S. et al. On the role of brand stereotypes in shaping consumer response toward brands: An empirical examination of direct and mediating effects of warmth and competence. **Psychology & Marketing**, v. 32, n. 8, p. 808-820, 2015.
- JOHNSTON, Kim A.; TAYLOR, Maureen. Engagement as communication: Pathways, possibilities, and future directions. **The handbook of communication engagement**, p. 1-15, 2018.
- KARPINSKA-KRAKOWIAK, Malgorzata. Gotcha! Realism of comedic violence and its impact on brand responses: What's so funny about that bloody ad? The moderating role of disposition to laughter. **Journal of Advertising Research**, v. 60, n. 1, p. 38-53, 2020.
- KEININGHAM, Timothy Lee et al. A roadmap for driving customer word-of-mouth. **Journal of Service Management**, 2018.
- KIM, Joon Kyoung et al. Nike, Colin Kaepernick, and the politicization of sports: Examining perceived organizational motives and public responses. **Public Relations Review**, v. 46, n. 2, p. 101856, 2020.

- KIM, Jooyoung; BANG, Hyejin; CAMPBELL, W. Keith. Brand awe: A key concept for understanding consumer response to luxury and premium brands. **The Journal of Social Psychology**, v. 161, n. 2, p. 245-260, 2021.
- KORSCHUN, Daniel et al. Taking a stand: Consumer responses when companies get (or don't get) political. **Available at SSRN 2806476**, 2019.
- KORSCHUN, Daniel; BHATTACHARYA, C. B.; SWAIN, Scott D. CSR and the frontline context: How social programs improve customer service. **NIM Marketing Intelligence Review**, v. 8, n. 1, p. 24, 2016.
- KORSCHUN, Daniel; MARTIN, Kelly D.; VADAKKEPATT, Gautham. Marketing's role in understanding political activity. **Journal of public policy & marketing**, v. 39, n. 4, p. 378-387, 2020.
- KRISTOFFERSON, Kirk; WHITE, Katherine; PELOZA, John. The nature of slacktivism: How the social observability of an initial act of token support affects subsequent prosocial action. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 40, n. 6, p. 1149-1166, 2014.
- KUHLTHAU, Carol Collier. Seeking meaning: A process approach to library and information services. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- KUMAR, Vineet. Profitable customer engagement: Concept, metrics and strategies. SAGE Publications India, 2013.
- KUMAR, Viswanathan et al. Undervalued or overvalued customers: Capturing total customer engagement value. *Journal of service research*, v. 13, n. 3, p. 297-310, 2010.
- LAFFERTY, Barbara A.; EDMONDSON, Diane R. Portraying the cause instead of the brand in cause-related marketing ads: does it really matter?. **Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice**, v. 17, n. 2, p. 129-144, 2009.
- LAFFERTY, Barbara A.; LUETH, Annika K.; MCCAFFERTY, Ryan. An evolutionary process model of cause-related marketing and systematic review of the empirical literature. **Psychology & Marketing**, v. 33, n. 11, p. 951-970, 2016.
- LAZARUS, Richard S. Progress on a cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion. **American psychologist**, v. 46, n. 8, p. 819, 1991.
- LEAK, Roland L.; WOODHAM, Omar P.; MCNEIL, Kimberly R. Speaking candidly: how managers' political stances affect consumers' brand attitudes. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 2015.
- LECHELER, Sophie; BOS, Linda; VLIEGENTHART, Rens. The mediating role of emotions: News framing effects on opinions about immigration. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, v. 92, n. 4, p. 812-838, 2015.
- LEE, Eun Mi et al. Does perceived consumer fit matter in corporate social responsibility issues?. **Journal of Business Research**, v. 65, n. 11, p. 1558-1564, 2012.
- LEHMAN, David W. et al. Authenticity. **Academy of Management Annals**, v. 13, n. 1, p. 1-42, 2019.
- LI, Jo-Yun; KIM, Joon Kyoung; ALHARBI, Khalid. Exploring the role of issue involvement and brand attachment in shaping consumer response toward corporate social advocacy (CSA)



initiatives: the case of Nike's Colin Kaepernick campaign. **International Journal of Advertising**, p. 1-25, 2020.

LILGENDAHL, Jennifer Pals; HELSON, Ravenna; JOHN, Oliver P. Does ego development increase during midlife? The effects of openness and accommodative processing of difficult events. *Journal of Personality*, v. 81, n. 4, p. 403-416, 2013.

LIM, Joon Soo; YOUNG, Cayley. Effects of issue ownership, perceived fit, and authenticity in corporate social advocacy on corporate reputation. **Public Relations Review**, v. 47, n. 4, p. 102071, 2021.

LORD, Charles G.; ROSS, Lee; LEPPER, Mark R. Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. **Journal of personality and social psychology**, v. 37, n. 11, p. 2098, 1979.

LUAN, Mo; LI, Hong. Do maximizers maximize in private? The influence of public versus private context on maximizing. *Personality and Individual Differences*, v. 150, p. 109481, 2019.

MALHOTRA, Naresh K.; NUNAN, Daniel; BIRKS, David. *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach*, (5th ed - Eletronic). Harlow, UK, Pearson, 2017.

MARTÍNEZ-LÓPEZ, Francisco J. et al. Influencer marketing: brand control, commercial orientation and post credibility. **Journal of Marketing Management**, v. 36, n. 17-18, p. 1805-1831, 2020.

MATTEN, Dirk; CRANE, Andrew. Corporate citizenship: Toward an extended theoretical conceptualization. *Academy of Management review*, v. 30, n. 1, p. 166-179, 2005.

MCWILLIAMS, Abigail; SIEGEL, Donald. Corporate social responsibility: A theory of the firm perspective. *Academy of management review*, v. 26, n. 1, p. 117-127, 2001.

MEAD, Nicole L. et al. Social exclusion causes people to spend and consume strategically in the service of affiliation. **Journal of consumer research**, v. 37, n. 5, p. 902-919, 2011.

MOORMAN, Christine; DESHPANDE, Rohit; ZALTMAN, Gerald. Factors affecting trust in market research relationships. **Journal of marketing**, v. 57, n. 1, p. 81-101, 1993.

MORGAN, Robert M.; HUNT, Shelby D. The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. **Journal of marketing**, v. 58, n. 3, p. 20-38, 1994.

MOROZOV, E. "The Brave New World of Slacktivism." *Foreign Policy*, from <http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/05/19/thebravenewworldofslacktivism>. 2009.

NABAVI, Razieh Tadayon. Bandura's social learning theory & social cognitive learning theory. *Theory of Developmental Psychology*, p. 1-24, 2012.

NABI, Robin L.; GUSTAFSON, Abel; JENSEN, Risa. Framing climate change: Exploring the role of emotion in generating advocacy behavior. **Science Communication**, v. 40, n. 4, p. 442-468, 2018.

NALICK, Michael et al. Corporate sociopolitical involvement: A reflection of whose preferences?. **Academy of management perspectives**, v. 30, n. 4, p. 384-403, 2016.

NAPOLI, Julie et al. Measuring consumer-based brand authenticity. **Journal of business research**, v. 67, n. 6, p. 1090-1098, 2014.

- NEWELL, Stephen J.; GOLDSMITH, Ronald E. The development of a scale to measure perceived corporate credibility. **Journal of business research**, v. 52, n. 3, p. 235-247, 2001.
- NEWMAN, George E.; SMITH, Rosanna K. Kinds of authenticity. **Philosophy Compass**, v. 11, n. 10, p. 609-618, 2016.
- NOLAND, Aaron. Like, share, retweet: Testing competing models of the theory of planned behavior to predict slacktivism engagement. **Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing**, v. 32, n. 3, p. 264-285, 2020.
- NOLAND, Aaron. Social media activists: Analyzing the relationship between online activism and offline attitudes and behaviors. **The Journal of Social Media in Society**, v. 6, n. 2, p. 26-55, 2017.
- O'CONNOR, Amy; SHUMATE, Michelle; MEISTER, Mark. Walk the line: Active moms define corporate social responsibility. *Public Relations Review*, v. 34, n. 4, p. 343-350, 2008.
- ONU, Diana; SMITH, Joanne R.; KESSLER, Thomas. Intergroup emulation: An improvement strategy for lower status groups. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, v. 18, n. 2, p. 210-224, 2015.
- OVERTON, Holly et al. Examining consumer attitudes toward CSR and CSA messages. **Public Relations Review**, v. 47, n. 4, p. 102095, 2021.
- PANSARI, Anita; KUMAR, Vera. Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences. **Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science**, v. 45, n. 3, p. 294-311, 2017.
- PARCHA, Joshua M.; KINGSLEY WESTERMAN, Catherine Y. How corporate social advocacy affects attitude change toward controversial social issues. **Management communication quarterly**, v. 34, n. 3, p. 350-383, 2020.
- PARK, Keonyoung; JIANG, Hua. Signaling, verification, and identification: The way corporate social advocacy generates brand loyalty on social media. **International Journal of Business Communication**, p. 2329488420907121, 2020.
- PEREIRA, Natalia Peixoto et al. A influência das notícias de corrupção no comportamento antiético dos consumidores. 2019.
- PÉREZ, Andrea; DEL BOSQUE, Ignacio Rodríguez. Corporate social responsibility and customer loyalty: exploring the role of identification, satisfaction and type of company. **Journal of Services Marketing**, 2015.
- PERLIN, Joshua D.; LI, Leon. Why does awe have prosocial effects? New perspectives on awe and the small self. **Perspectives on Psychological Science**, v. 15, n. 2, p. 291-308, 2020.
- PERRINI, Francesco. Corporate social responsibility: doing the most good for your company and your cause. 2006.
- PETTY, Richard E.; CACIOPPO, John T.; SCHUMANN, David. Central and peripheral routes to advertising effectiveness: The moderating role of involvement. *Journal of consumer research*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 135-146, 1983.
- PIAGET, Jean. La evolución intelectual entre la adolescencia y la edad adulta. **J. Delval (Comp.)**, **Lecturas de psicología del niño**, v. 2, n. 02, p. 208-213, 1970.
- RAY, Michael L. et al. Marketing communication and the hierarchy-of-effects. 1973.

- RIM, Hyejoon; KIM, Sora. Dimensions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) skepticism and their impacts on public evaluations toward CSR. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, v. 28, n. 5-6, p. 248-267, 2016.
- RIM, Hyejoon; LEE, YoungAh; YOO, Sanglim. Polarized public opinion responding to corporate social advocacy: Social network analysis of boycotters and advocators. **Public Relations Review**, [s. l.], v. 46, ed. 2, 2020.
- ROMANI, Simona; GRAPPI, Silvia. How companies' good deeds encourage consumers to adopt pro-social behavior. *European Journal of Marketing*, 2014.
- ROMANI, Simona; GRAPPI, Silvia; BAGOZZI, Richard P. Corporate socially responsible initiatives and their effects on consumption of green products. *Journal of Business Ethics*, v. 135, n. 2, p. 253-264, 2016.
- ROMANI, Simona; GRAPPI, Silvia; BAGOZZI, Richard P. Corporate socially responsible initiatives and their effects on consumption of green products. **Journal of Business Ethics**, v. 135, n. 2, p. 253-264, 2016.
- ROTMAN, Dana et al. From slacktivism to activism: participatory culture in the age of social media. In: CHI'11 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems. 2011. p. 819-822.
- SCHULZ, M. An analysis of corporate responses to the Black Lives Matter Movement. **Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications**, v. 8, n. 1, p. 55-65, 2017.
- SEN, Sankar; BHATTACHARYA, Chitra Bhanu. Does doing good always lead to doing better? Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility. *Journal of marketing Research*, v. 38, n. 2, p. 225-243, 2001.
- SHREE, Deep; GUPTA, Ankush; SAGAR, Mahim. Effectiveness of cause-related marketing for differential positioning of market entrant in developing market: An exploratory study in Indian context. **International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing**, v. 22, n. 2, p. e1573, 2017.
- SIMON, Bernd; KLANDERMANS, Bert. Politicized collective identity: A social psychological analysis. **American psychologist**, v. 56, n. 4, p. 319, 2001.
- SPRY, A.; VREDENBURG, J.; KEMPER, J.; KAPITAN, S. Woke washing: What happens when marketing communications don't match corporate practice. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/woke-washing-what-happens-when-marketing-communications-dont-match-corporate-practice-108035>. 2018.
- STOLLE, Dietlind; HOOGHE, Marc; MICHELETTI, Michele. Politics in the supermarket: Political consumerism as a form of political participation. **International political science review**, v. 26, n. 3, p. 245-269, 2005.
- SUNG, Yoon Hi; LEE, Wei-Na. Doing good while playing: The impact of prosocial advergames on consumer response. **Computers in Human Behavior**, v. 106, p. 106244, 2020.
- THRASH, Todd M.; ELLIOT, Andrew J. Inspiration: core characteristics, component processes, antecedents, and function. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, v. 87, n. 6, p. 957, 2004.
- UTKARSH. Individual differences in consumer information search for services: A multiple mediation study. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, v. 37, p. 33-42, 2017.

- VAN DOORN, Jenny et al. Customer engagement behavior: Theoretical foundations and research directions. *Journal of service research*, v. 13, n. 3, p. 253-266, 2010.
- VANDER SHEE, Brian A.; PELTIER, James; DAHL, Andrew J. Antecedent consumer factors, consequential branding outcomes and measures of online consumer engagement: current research and future directions. **Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing**, 2020.
- VANVOORHIS, CR Wilson; MORGAN, Betsy L. Understanding power and rules of thumb for determining sample sizes. **Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology**, v. 3, n. 2, p. 43-50, 2007.
- VARADARAJAN, P. Rajan; MENON, Anil. Cause-related marketing: A coalignment of marketing strategy and corporate philanthropy. *Journal of marketing*, v. 52, n. 3, p. 58-74, 1988.
- VEG-SALA, Nathalie. The use of longitudinal case studies and semiotics for analysing brand development as process of assimilation or accommodation. **Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal**, 2014.
- VIVEK, Shiri D.; BEATTY, Sharon E.; MORGAN, Robert M. Customer engagement: Exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. *Journal of marketing theory and practice*, v. 20, n. 2, p. 122-146, 2012.
- VREDENBURG, Jessica et al. Brands Taking a Stand: Authentic Brand Activism or Woke Washing?. **Journal of Public Policy & Marketing**, v. 39, n. 4, p. 444-460, 2020.
- Vromen, A. 2017. "Digital Citizenship and Political Engagement." *Digital Citizenship and Political Engagement* 9: 9–49.
- WANG, Jianming et al. The impact of different emotional appeals on the purchase intention for green products: The moderating effects of green involvement and Confucian cultures. **Sustainable cities and society**, v. 34, p. 32-42, 2017.
- WANG, Liying et al. Influence of awe on green consumption: the mediating effect of psychological ownership. **Frontiers in psychology**, v. 10, p. 2484, 2019.
- WEBER, T. J. et al. Immigration, Abortion, and Gay Marriage—Oh My!. *ACR North American Advances*, 2018.
- WEINZIMMER, Laurence G.; ESKEN, Candace A. Risky business: Taking a stand on social issues. *Business Horizons*, v. 59, n. 3, p. 331-337, 2016.
- WETTSTEIN, Florian; BAUR, Dorothea. "Why should we care about marriage equality?": Political advocacy as a part of corporate responsibility. *Journal of business ethics*, v. 138, n. 2, p. 199-213, 2016.
- WHITE, Fiona A.; HOWIE, Pauline; PERZ, Janette. Predictors of moral thought in two contrasting adolescent samples. **Ethics & Behavior**, v. 10, n. 3, p. 199-214, 2000.
- WHITE, M. "Clicktivism is Ruining Leftist Activism." *The Guardian*, from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/aug/12/clicktivism-ruining-leftist-activism>. 2010.
- WHITEHEAD, Andrew L.; BAKER, Joseph O. Homosexuality, religion, and science: Moral authority and the persistence of negative attitudes. **Sociological Inquiry**, v. 82, n. 4, p. 487-509, 2012.

WINSTON, A. Business is taking action on LGBT rights. Will climate change be next? Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2016/05/business-istaking-action-on-lgbt-rights-will-climate-change-be-next>. 2016.

WOHLFORTH, William C. et al. Moral authority and status in International Relations: Good states and the social dimension of status seeking. **Review of International Studies**, v. 44, n. 3, p. 526-546, 2018.

XIE, Chunyan; BAGOZZI, Richard P.; GRØNHAUG, Kjell. The impact of corporate social responsibility on consumer brand advocacy: The role of moral emotions, attitudes, and individual differences. **Journal of Business Research**, v. 95, p. 514-530, 2019.

ZHENG, Chundong et al. Effects of the severity of collective threats on people's donation intention. **Psychology & Marketing**, v. 38, n. 9, p. 1426-1439, 2021.

## Appendix A. Measurement model results

Construct/measures	Loadings		Cronbach's alpha		AVE	
	Study 1	Study 2	Study 1	Study 2	Study 1	Study 2
<b><i>Attitude - Cause</i></b> ( <i>Bipolar 1 – 7</i> )			.96			
Strongly Dislike – Strongly Like	.88					
Very Unfavorable – Very Favorable	.87					
Very Negative – Very Positive	.89					
<b><i>Attitude - Firm</i></b> ( <i>Bipolar 1 – 7</i> )			.95			
Strongly Dislike – Strongly Like	.86					
Very Unfavorable – Very Favorable	.87					
Very Negative – Very Positive	.89					
<b><i>Accommodation</i></b> ( <i>1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree</i> )			.86	.91		
The company's positioning changes my attitude toward the LGBTQIA+ cause in some way.	.82	.80			.84	.83
The company's positioning changes my previous way of thinking about the LGBTQIA+ cause.	.81	.80			.85	.84
The company's positioning broadens my knowledge about the cause.	.67	.79			.75	.80
<b><i>Attention</i></b> ( <i>1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree</i> )					.84	
Compared with my own life, I am now paying more attention to the life of the people in LGBTQ+ community.		.74				.78
Now I am more concerned about the LGBTQ+ rights.		.78				.76
<b><i>Elevation</i></b> ( <i>1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree</i> )					.84	
I felt inspired about the cause.		.72				.57
I felt touched about the cause.		.68				.54
<b><i>Empathy</i></b> ( <i>1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree</i> )			.81	.92		
I felt the pain of the LGBTQIA+ community people.	.70	.67			.70	.58
I had tender and concerned feelings for people in the LGBTQIA+ community.	.72	.72			.79	.62
I would like to make people in the LGBTQIA+ community feel better.	.61	.71			.64	.62
I felt deep sympathy for people in the LGBTQIA+ community.	.74	.71			.76	.61
<b><i>Online Engagement</i></b> ( <i>1 – Very Unlikely; 7 – Very Likely</i> )			.85	.90		
I would share this post on my social network.	.73	.80			.74	.71

I would leave a positive comment on this post.	.75	.71	.77	.66
I would like this post.	.76	.71	.71	.53
<b>Endorsing</b>			.93	
<i>(1 – Very Unlikely; 7 – Very Likely)</i>				
I would promote the LGBTQIA+ cause.		.73		.54
I would try to get others interested in the LGBTQIA+ cause.		.77		.57
I would actively defend the LGBTQIA+ cause from its critics.		.76		.62
I would say positive things about the LGBTQIA+ cause to other people.		.78		.64
<b>Power</b>			.87	
<i>(1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree)</i>				
The company have the legitimate right based on their position to prescribe proper behavior for an individual.		.66		.48
The company have special knowledge regarding proper behavior for individuals.		.71		.55
I identify with what the company determines as proper behavior.		.67		.53
<b>Trust</b>			.92	.88
<i>(1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree)</i>				
I think the company is trustworthy.	.72	.73	.79	.81
I think this company makes truthful claims.	.62	.66	.69	.77
I think the company is honest.	.80	.71	.83	.79
<b>Moral Authority</b>			.77*	.90
<i>(1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree)</i>				
Because it has high moral authority, I believe this company can influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause.	.67	.71	.59	.78
I think this company is moral enough to influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause.		.70		.80
I think this company is powerful enough to influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause.		.69		.76
Compared to other clothing companies I know; this company seems to be more likely to influence peoples' thoughts and behaviors toward the LGBTQIA+ cause.	.64	.69	.59	.76
<b>Authenticity</b>			.92	.90
<i>(1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree)</i>				
The company is being true to itself with its LGBTQIA+ advocacy.	.76	.60	.80	.67
The company advocates LGBTQIA+ rights in a way that matches its core values.	.74	.70	.77	.72
The company is standing up for what it believes in.	.76	.63	.81	.66
The company's actions and communication are consistent over time.	.68	.63	.77	.69

The way the company communicates about LGBTQIA+ rights preserve what the company means.	.63		.70
---	-----	--	-----

***Influence***

.83

*(1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree)*

I think this company is popular.	.78		.66
----------------------------------	-----	--	-----

I think this company is influential.	.80		.67
--------------------------------------	-----	--	-----

*Bipolar (1 – 7)*

Few followers – Many followers	.75		.66
--------------------------------	-----	--	-----

***Ulterior Motives***

.59\*

.75

*Bipolar (1 – 7)*

Bad intentions – Good intentions	.64	.64	.66
----------------------------------	-----	-----	-----

Intend to take advantage of consumers – did not intend to take advantage of consumers	.54	.56	.41
---	-----	-----	-----

Primarily motivated by its own interests – primarily motivated by society’s interests	.69		.64
---	-----	--	-----

***Involvement***

.71

.89

*Bipolar (1 – 7)*

Unimportant – Important	.71		.72
-------------------------	-----	--	-----

Irrelevant – Relevant	.72		.73
-----------------------	-----	--	-----

Uninvolving – Involving	.76		.75
-------------------------	-----	--	-----


---

\*Correlation



Appendix B. Manipulation Stimuli (Study 2)

← [Profile Name] ⋮

 **1,060** Posts   **27.9M** Followers   **198** Following

Based on diversity and inclusion as our values  
 An ally of LGBTQIA+ issues for more than 10 years  
 A Best Place to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality  
 Check out the Pride Collection! All profit for NGOs.

📖 📷


← [Profile Name] ⋮

 **85** Posts   **37** Followers   **12** Following

Based on diversity and inclusion as our values  
 An ally of LGBTQIA+ issues for more than 10 years  
 A Best Place to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality  
 Check out the Pride Collection! All profit for NGOs.

📖 📷


← [Profile Name] ⋮

 **1,060** Posts   **27.9M** Followers   **198** Following

Based on innovation and team spirit as our values  
 Recently an ally of LGBTQIA+ issues  
 A Great Place to Work  
 Check out the Summer Collection!

📖 📷

← [Profile Name] ⋮

 **85** Posts   **37** Followers   **12** Following

Based on innovation and team spirit as our values  
 Recently an ally of LGBTQIA+ issues  
 A Great Place to Work  
 Check out the Summer Collection!

📖 📷