

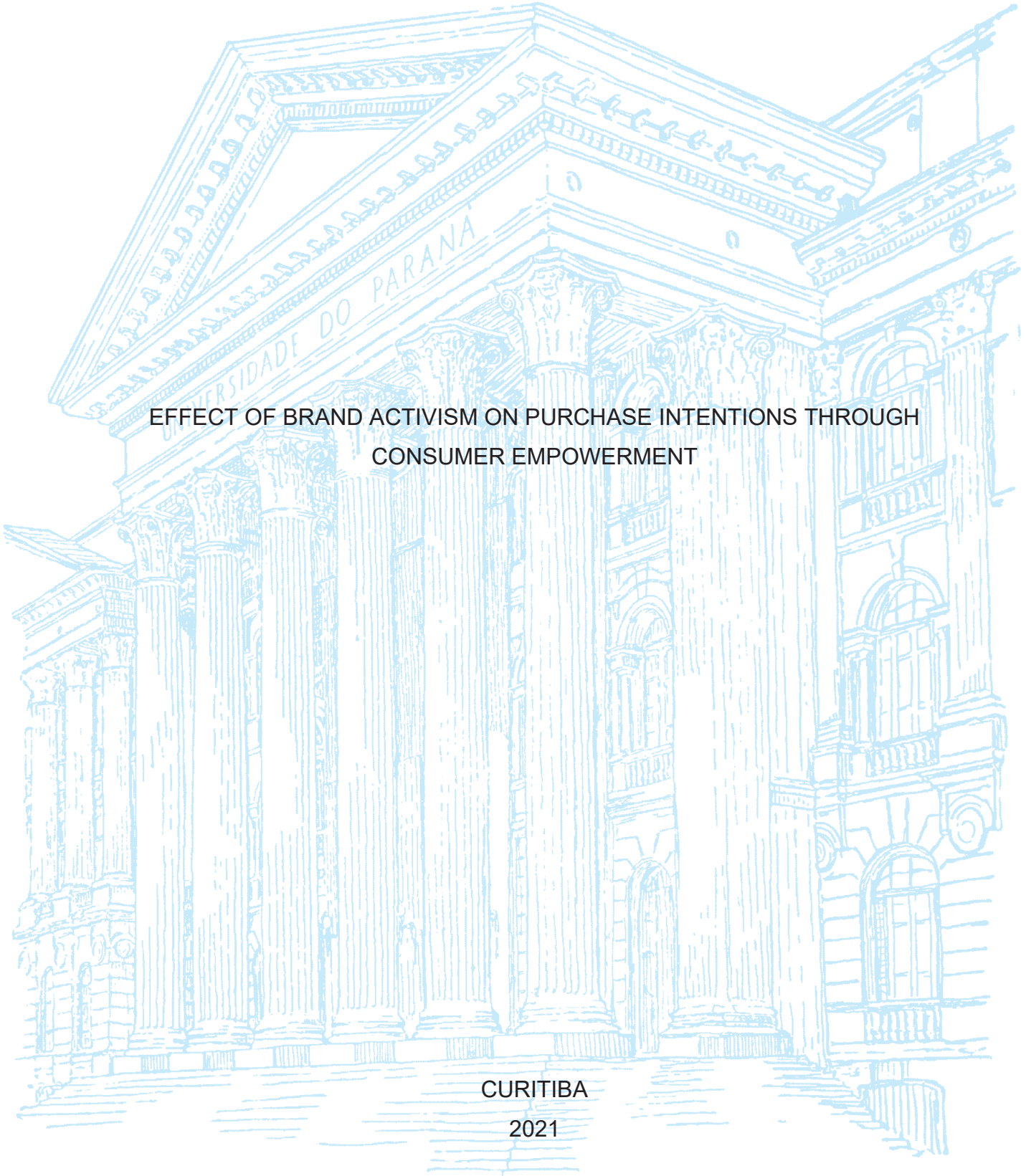
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PARANÁ

NAYARA PEREIRA DUARTE

EFFECT OF BRAND ACTIVISM ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS THROUGH
CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT

CURITIBA

2021



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EFFECT OF BRAND ACTIVISM ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS THROUGH
CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT

Tese apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração, área de Concentração Estratégia e Organizações, do Setor de Ciências Sociais Aplicadas da Universidade Federal do Paraná, como parte das exigências para obtenção do título de Doutora em Administração.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Paulo Henrique Muller Prado

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RESUMO

Apesar da crescente popularidade do ativismo da marca, pesquisas sobre os seus efeitos ainda estão em um estágio inicial. Esta tese lança luz sobre a questão de como o posicionamento público de uma marca à respeito de uma causa social ou política pode influenciar respostas positivas de consumidores em relação à marca. Trabalhos anteriores focam principalmente nos efeitos adversos que aparecem quando consumidores não concordam com o posicionamento político ou social de uma marca ou questionam a autenticidade deste posicionamento. O viés da negatividade tem sido bastante influente na explicação destes fenômenos, evidenciando como pode ser desafiador exibir efeitos positivos em situações que envolvem uma alta carga moral, como posicionamentos sociais e políticos controversos. Apoiado em três estudos experimentais, este trabalho fornece evidências iniciais de como o ativismo da marca conduz à uma maior percepção de empoderamento do consumidor que está alinhado às causas apoiadas pela marca, e de como essa relação pode levar a respostas positivas do consumidor tanto nas suas atitudes em relação à marca como nas intenções de compra.

Palavras-chave: Ativismo de Marca. Empoderamento do Consumidor. Alinhamento Moral.

ABSTRACT

Despite the growing popularity of brand activism, research about its effects is still at an early stage. This thesis sheds light on the question of whether a brand taking public stances on social and political causes can positively influence responses from consumers toward the brand. Prior works focused on the adverse effects that appear when consumers do not agree with the stand supported by the brand, or doubt the authenticity of its support. Negativity bias has been highly influential in explaining these phenomena and demonstrates how challenging it can be to exhibit positive effects in morally charged situations, such as divisive social and political stances. Supported by three experimental studies, this work provides initial evidence of how brand activism leads to greater consumer perceived empowerment when consumers are aligned with the brand's stand, and how this relationship can positively affect consumer responses such as attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions.

Keywords: Brand Activism, Consumer Perceived Empowerment, Moral Alignment

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1 INTRODUCTION

“There are lots of people who disagree with our positions, of course. Our statement last summer generated thousands and thousands of phone calls and emails from people who accused us of being anti-law-enforcement or promoting looting and rioting. But we have the courage to feel okay about getting some of that heat, and in some ways, it reinforces that what we've done is meaningful.” (Cristopher Miller, head of global activism strategy from Ben & Jerrys, in an interview to Harvard Business Review (Beard, 2021)).

Released in 1997, Apple's iconic ad “Crazy Ones”, part of its “Think Different” campaign, emphasized those “who see things differently” and “are not fond of rules”, stating that “while some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius”. Positioning Apple as undoubtedly revolutionary and progressist, the campaign was remarkably successful.

But, compared to today, the late '90s were brighter and easier times. The internet did not significantly impact people's lives yet, and there were no social media platforms. As far as it is possible to retrieve, “Crazy Ones” never was considered divisive or controversial, but instead inspiring and forward.

As the political and social scenarios slowly heated since then, the marketplace became more fragmented and possibly more dangerous to brands. The narrative adopted by Nike's “Dream Crazy” campaign, release in 2018, is not so distant from Apple's “Crazy Ones”. However, the presence of ex-NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick ignited both rage and support from individuals on social media. Furious consumers were pushing for boycotting, while enthusiastic consumers were eager to “*buycotting*” (i.e., buying products or services to reward a brand; Trudel & Cotte, 2009).

Nike was aware of the risks, as was Gillette on the releasing of its “The Best Man Can Be” ad in early 2019, or Starbucks when speaking out for immigrants' and refugees' rights. Ben & Jerry's, a major ice cream brand from Unilever's portfolio, even has its own “head of global activism strategy,” addressing how important cause-supporting is to the brand's strategy. These are not naïve actions.

When a brand enters a highly moralized public discussion sphere, it elicits multiple questions about how activism will impact consumers and brand assets. Brand activism is the most common label to approach these discussions, though not the only one. And the most defining characteristic of brand activism is the support for controversial, divisive causes.

Many of the causes supported by brand activism are progressist, but it is not so rare for a brand to associate with conservative values. In 2013, Barilla's chairman said on Italy's best-known radio talk show that he “would never do a commercial with a homosexual family” because he did not agree with them. And boosted the discussion declaring “that if gay customers didn't like that, they could go to another brand of pasta” (Buckley, 2019). It was not a planned advertising campaign, but given the position occupied by Guido Barilla and how close he is to the brand, his declarations almost automatically hit consumers. By then, his words were called “gaffe” and handled as a Public Relations crisis. Guido Barilla apologized for offending “the sensitivities of some people”, and, despite the shout for boycotts, Barilla kept succeeding (Valle, 2019).

The literature about morality frequently asserts that we experience our moral convictions as objective truths or facts (Feinberg et al., 2019). This assumption implies that moral beliefs are sacrosanct. Thus, it is highly improbable that consumers will change their position on a topic to align it with a brand's stand (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). In addition, interpersonal psychology observes that individuals see those who do not share the same moral beliefs as morally suspect (Feinberg et al., 2019; Skitka et al., 2005).

Hence, brand activism is not just about controversy and preferences. It concerns how the brand's advocacy and consumers' moral convictions align. There is plenty of evidence to suspect that when a brand's advocacy misaligns with consumers' moral convictions, this will negatively affect brand evaluations and other related variables.

Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) demonstrated that attitudes toward a brand decrease substantially among consumers who do not agree with a controversial socio-political cause supported by the brand, but did not find significant effect among consumers who line up with the brand's stand. This converges with other investigations on the formation of consumers' ethical perceptions. Generating positive ethical assessments is considered highly challenging (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011), and negative effects are generally stronger, as foreseen by negativity bias (Skowronski & Carlson, 1989). Interpersonal psychology also suggests that, while its important to be nice, being even nicer (i.e., acting selflessly) does not significantly translates into reputational gains (Klein & Epley, 2014) and that being perceived as excessively moral can even have detrimental effects (Minson & Monin, 2012).

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is necessary to go beyond the harmful effects observed when consumers misalign with a brand's stand. Assuming that brand activism is generally a conscious action, distinct from other brand crisis that hit companies by surprise, and that it is unlikely that brands will put themselves in a problematic situation gratuitously, a research question emerges:

When and how does the moral alignment between consumers' moral convictions and brand activism positively impact consumer responses?

Relying on the metaphor of consumption-as-voting (Shaw et al., 2006), I suggest that brand activism influences consumer empowerment perceptions because it triggers them to exercise their role as choosers (Papaoikonomou & Alarcón, 2017). Since perceived empowerment is related to a series of positive outcomes on consumer contexts, I then ask, can perceived empowerment triggered by brand activism positively influence consumer responses? Rewording:

Does consumer perceived empowerment mediate the relationship between brand activism and consumer responses in the context of moral alignment?

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

This thesis is an initial effort to demonstrate these downstream effects and provide a standpoint for future research. By establishing brand activism and brand-consumer moral alignment as drivers of consumer perceived empowerment, I propose a novel approach in the literature of brand activism and consumer perceived empowerment. Furthermore, I aspire to demonstrate how brand activism can positively impact consumer responses.

Evoking positive ethical perceptions is considered highly challenging (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011) and this is explained by Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) and Klein and Epley (2014) as a consequence of what is expected by consumers as the default behavior in these situations; and because individuals fail to make spontaneous comparisons between varying degrees of prosociality. People take for granted others

to act right, reject them quickly when acting wrong, but fail to acknowledge and reward them for doing better.

Brand activism, however, is not just an ordinary prosocial action. Brands are supporting causes that are highly moralized. When uncovering their moral values by supporting a divisive stance, brands are staging a scenario in which consumers can compare their moral convictions to the brands they relate with. When brand activism and consumer moral convictions align, consumers feel empowered, thus, impacting their subsequent evaluations.

The implications of this reasoning will be discussed further.

Following, I'll review the current literature about brand activism and consumer perceived empowerment to claim how the alignment between brand activism and consumer moral convictions can be empowering. Then I test my hypotheses in three experimental studies, providing evidence for the stated relationships. To conclude, I discuss the results, implications and suggest future research steps.

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

To introduce a conversation, here are the conceptual definitions of terms relevant to this research:

TABLE 1 Definition of Conceptual Terms

Brand Activism	An emerging marketing tactic for brands seeking to stand out in a fragmented marketplace by taking public stances on social and political issues (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018). While corporate social responsibility (CSR) or cause-related marketing (CRM) typically concern generally accepted, non-divisive, prosocial issues, the contentious nature of brand activism is what sets it apart (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).
Moralization	Moralization is the process through which preferences are converted into values, both in individual lives and at the level of culture. Through moralization, a previously morally neutral preference for an object or activity becomes something with moral status (Rozin, 1999), or morally charged.

Moral Convictions and Moral Beliefs	Moral conviction refers to a strong and absolute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral (Skitka & Mullen, 2002; Skitka et al., 2005).
	While brands use activism to stand out for supporting a cause, consumers might already have their own convictions about these divisive issues. Since individuals tend to regard their own moral convictions as objective truths or facts, it is improbable that they will change their position on the topic to align it with a brand's stand (Feinberg et al., 2019; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).
Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	Brand-consumer moral alignment happens when consumers are exposed to brand activism congruent to their own moral beliefs and positioning. Misalignment is when their moral beliefs are distinct from the brand's stand.
Consumer Empowerment	The theorists of subjective state of empowerment or "psychological empowerment" affirm that people perceived themselves as empowered if they feel they control and affect their environment (Bachouche & Sabri, 2019). Kozinets et al. (2021) point out that empowerment is an agentic process in which a person gains more freedom, capacity, or control without necessarily needing to engage in any sort of structural or activist system change, and that consumer empowerment considers empowerment within the institutional domain of consumption, translating into "the ability to exert power and influence the market" (Kotinetz et al., 2021; Adkins & Ozanne, 2005).
Absence of Moral Information	Taking public stances through socio-political causes is what defines brand activism. When a brand does not take a stand, it does not mean that it is <i>apolitical</i> , just it is not providing this information to consumers.
Attitude Toward the Brand	The first impact that a brand has on consumers' evaluations (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).
Purchase Intentions	An imperfect proxy to measure future purchases.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 BRAND ACTIVISM

Brand activism is a term used to refer to the emerging marketing tactic in which brands seeking to stand out in a fragmented marketplace take stances on social and political issues (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020; Sarkar & Kotler, 2018), or, as some might say, controversial causes that beyond political or social might include even economic and environmental causes (Eilert & Cherup, 2020).

In current literature, beyond brand activism, the discussion about brands and companies taking stances in the public sphere arises under other labels such as corporate social advocacy (Dodd & Supa, 2014; Abitbol et al, 2018; Waymer & Logan, 2021), corporate political advocacy (Hydock et al., 2020) or corporate activism (Eilert & Cherup, 2020). To this day, this field is mostly draw on theoretical developments and qualitative approaches.

Vredenburg and colleagues (2020) develop an extensive typology of brand activism to determine how and when a brand engaging with a sociopolitical cause can be viewed as authentic. These authors make an effort to differ authentic brand activism from previous corporate social responsibility (CSR) conceptualizations, establishing that (1) CSR strongly emphasizes actions, and the consequences of those actions (i.e., reputation, sales), more than it concerns about inherent company values (as brand activism does); (2) CSR activities are viewed as beneficial by the majority of society, while brand activism lacks this type of consensus because there is often no universally “correct” response to the sociopolitical issues involved (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Under the label of corporate political advocacy, Hydock et al. (2019) also suggest that whereas CSR often involves philanthropic support for widely popular causes, CPA is instead characterized by a vocal promotion of controversial values and ideals; and while consumers generally support CSR, the outcome for CPA’s controversy is probably polarization.

Brand activism, thus, is characterized by four key points: (1) the brand is purpose and values-driven; (2) it addresses a controversial, contested, or polarizing sociopolitical issue(s); (3) the issue can be progressive or conservative in nature (issues are subjective and determined by political ideology, religion, and other

ideologies/beliefs); and (4) the firm contributes toward a sociopolitical issue(s) through messaging and brand practice (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Prosocial behaviors are also defined by Vredenburg et al. (2020) as “voluntary, intentional, and motivated (whether positive, negative, or both) behaviors that result in benefits for another (Eisenberg, 1982)”. Whether based on progressive or conservative stances, they say, both envision their activities to benefit others and thus, both are considered prosocial. Prosocial practices are, then, subjective to sociopolitical stances that reflect political and/or religious ideology (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

I consider Vredenburg et al. (2020) the most relevant theoretical work about brand activism to this date and highly recommend it. Quantitative research about brand activism seems to be still in its early days, but some works should be considered. Dodd and Supa (2014), under corporate social advocacy (CSA) label, demonstrate through one experimental study that greater agreement with a corporate stance results in greater intentions to purchase, whereas lesser agreement with a corporate stance results in lesser intentions to purchase (Dodd & Suppa, 2014).

Kim et al. (2020), also under the CSA umbrella, conduct a survey to examine how much individual's perceptions of Nike's motives for engaging in corporate social advocacy guided their responses and the degree to which they were likely to engage in actions. Their findings support the idea that positive and negative word of mouth are driven by distinct perceived motives for a company engaging in CSA, and that attitude toward the brand mediates the relationship between perceived values-driven motives and positive word-of-mouth intentions.

Using the term corporate political advocacy (CPA), Hydock et al. (2020) 's six experiments demonstrate that, at the individual level, consumers are more (vs. less) likely to choose a brand that engages in CPA when its position is aligned (vs. misaligned) with their own, and that this effect stems from the (dis)identification with the brand. Since market-share is a central variable in the work (ahead of individual level effects), they initially contrast presence vs. absence of CPA in small vs. large share brands, demonstrating that the presence of CPA increases the choice of small share brands and decreases the choice of large share brands.

In the following studies, the comparisons are between pre CPA vs. post CPA (within subjects) in consumers who agree vs. disagree with the stand for small vs. large share brands (between subjects). The results indicate that the impact of CPA on choice likelihood varies depending on the alignment: positive when it is aligned with the

participants' stance and negative impact when it is misaligned. These results are explained by negativity bias and suggest that the risks of CPA outweigh the rewards. When these effects are aggregated at the market level, however, small brands can actually benefit from CPA, which would benefit small share brands but damage large share brands, who have more to lose. And although authenticity moderates the effects, it does not mitigate the negative effects of misaligned CPA. Summarizing the studies, this paper demonstrates that, for a brand to benefit from CPA, CPA must align (vs. misalign) with consumers' identity, the brand needs to have a small-share, and be perceived as authentic (Hydock et al. 2020).

Finally, Mukherjee & Althuizen (2020) conducted five experimental studies in which they demonstrate how attitudes toward a brand decrease substantially among consumers who disagreed with a brand's stand, whereas there was no significant positive effect among consumers who were supportive of the brand's stand (when contrasted with a control condition in which the brand is not associated with a cause). This asymmetric effect, they state, holds not only for brand attitude but also for consumers' behavioral intentions and actual choices, and is moderated by the source of the stand. When it is more distant, the negative effect was weaker. Only when a brand faced public backlash because of its moral stand, they found a marginal increase in attitude toward the brand among proponents of the stand.

These studies exhibit how, despite the expansion of brand activism as a marketing practice over the years, academic studies about its positive effects are still emergent and longing for more research and theoretical development. Given the circumstances, comparing consumers' alignment or misalignment with the brands' stand seems inadequate and does not contribute to disclose how these strategies might benefit the brand.

2.2 CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT

At their integrative review about consumer empowerment in marketing, Babouche and Sabri (2019) conceptualize consumer empowerment as “the perception on the part of consumers that they have more power than before, following the implementation of consumers deliberate or unintentional actions, and changes in the choice environment of free agents.”

The authors point out that empowerment is an ambiguous theoretical concept used in several disciplines, such as political science, sociology, human and social psychology, and management. And describe that despite the considerable level of conceptual breadth across the reviewed disciplines and context, three different approaches to empowerment shape the literature: empowerment as (1) a delegation of power, (2) a gain of power, and (3) a subjective state (Wathieu et al., 2002; Bachouche & Sabri, 2019).

This research relies on the third approach. My reasoning, however, is not restrained to it, considering that these concepts are intertwined across the literature.

In the management literature, the subjective state of empowerment has also been called “psychological empowerment” (Babouche & Sabri, 2019). A nomological model of psychological empowerment based on a characterization of perceived control, perceived self-efficacy, and perceived competence was developed by Zimmerman (1995), noting that “people perceive themselves as empowered if they feel they control and affect their environment”.

Empowerment is also described as an agentic process in which a person gains more freedom, capacity or control without the requirement to engage in any sort of structural or active system change; consumer empowerment is a more specific case that considers empowerment within the institutional domain of consumption, or the ability to exert power and influence the market (Adikins & Ozanne, 201; Kozinets et al., 2021)

Three strategies that related to consumer empowerment are mapped by Denegri-Knott et al. (2006): (1) information and participation as power, in which consumers use information as means for improve their decision-making skills; (2) control over the relationship and participation as power, from the consumer/company relationship, co-creation occurs as a result of participation; and (3) aggregation as power, which happens when consumers interact with other people.

Consumption-as-voting (Shaw et al., 2006) is also a meaningful metaphor for consumer empowerment. Consumption choices can be envisioned as a political vote within the marketplace, especially when consumers embrace the notion of responsibility for their choices and believe that consumption can influence oriented change. Either explicitly or implicitly, once setting their choices within perceived collective consumer behavior, consumers embrace the voting metaphor and characterize their consumption as empowering (Shaw et al., 2006). Converging,

Morrongiello et al. (2017) presume that consumers expect to exert relative power in the marketplace when they believe in their personal, relational, and/or collective capacities.

Empirical studies about consumer empowerment have focused on interaction tools and the participation of consumers in the development of new products. Fuchs and Schreier (2011) reveal that brands that empower consumers to select or created the products to be marketed are associated with increased levels of perceived customer orientation, more favorable corporate attitudes, and stronger behavioral intentions. Morrongiello et al. (2017) show that psychological empowerment positively impacts customer online engagement, proposing that companies who experience difficult in attracting audiences to online platforms should empower consumer and stakeholders.

And finally, in Cambier and Poncin (2020)'s paper about how transparency signals influence perceived brand integrity and behavioral intentions, perceived empowerment mediates the relationship between these variables. Transparency signals positively influence perceived empowerment, which in turn impact on perceived brand integrity.

2.3 HOW BRAND ACTIVISM PROMPTS CONSUMER PERCEIVED EMPOWERMENT

Moralization is the process through which preferences are converted into values, both in individual lives and at the level of culture. Through moralization, a previously morally neutral preference for an object or activity becomes something with moral status (Rozin, 1999). The moralization processes can have four types of outcomes: (1) positive moralization, through which a previously neutral activity becomes morally virtuous; (2) negative moralization, through which a previously neutral activity gains negative moral status; and two types of unmoralization (negative to neutral and positive to neutral) (Rozin, 1999). The whole process of moralization is well described by Feinberg et al. (2019). Consonant to other approaches in this review, Rozin (1999) mentions that there are relatively fewer examples of positive moralization than negative moralization in the literature, speculating that this happens because the most salient events in the moral world are moral violations.

In contrast to the causes supported by CSR and other prosocial activities in which companies are involved, brand activism implies involvement in highly moralized causes, to the point that I believe that, in most extreme cases, the brand itself becomes a “moral entity”.

The literature about moralization processes describes that these processes can be enacted to specific actions, attitudes on certain issues or behaviors (e.g., gun control, smoking) or to entities, in which the moralization is defined by the focus on an entire category of groups or entities which are perceived as deserving moral concern or can be considered moral patients/victims (Rhee et al., 2019). This means that, as a moral entity, not only the brand actions or attitudes are perceived as moral or immoral, right or wrong, good or bad, but the brand itself might acquire moral significance through brand activism.

As these are divisive causes, however, what determines if the moralization outcome is positive (i.e., moral, right, good) or negative (i.e., immoral, wrong, bad) are consumers' prior moral convictions about those stances.

Moral convictions are a strong and absolute belief that something is moral or immoral, right or wrong (Skitka & Mullen, 2002; Skitka et al., 2005). As individuals tend to regard their own moral convictions as objective truths or facts, it is improbable that they will change their position on the topic to align it with a brand's stand (Feinberg et al., 2019; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).

So, as brands become moralized entities through brand activism, they are no longer personal preferences but tokens for internalized values. When a brand supports the fight against racism, it becomes an anti-racist brand. And consumers can exert their power in the marketplace vicariously. Consumers who morally align with the brand can support, or “vote” for causes that are dear to them (and no longer just personal preferences) through consumption, and this power translates into consumer perceived empowerment.

H1: When aligned with consumers' moral convictions (brand-consumer moral alignment), brand activism (vs. absence of moral information) positively affects consumer perceived empowerment.

Consumer perceived empowerment is related in the literature to positive outcomes for brands, such as more favorable corporate attitudes, and stronger

behavioral intentions (Fuchs & Schreier, 2011), customer online engagement (Morrongiello et al., 2017) and behavioral intentions through brand integrity (Cambier & Poncin, 2017). Given these pieces of evidence, I predict that empowerment perceptions will positively affect attitude toward the brand and consequently drive purchase intentions, when compared to the absence of moral information (control condition).

H2: Consumers' perceived empowerment prompted by brand-consumer moral alignment (vs. absence of moral information) positively affects attitude toward the brand and consequently purchase intentions.

2.4 THE ASYMMETRIC EFFECTS OF BRAND ACTIVISM

As my mother would tell me when I was at school and got not just good grades, but grades that were above the class means: “*you are not doing more than your obligations*”. Humans fail to distinguish better things from the default options and to acknowledge and reward nicer things.

While those who care for others are admired, given that prosociality is considered a virtue, whereas those who only care for themselves are despised, individuals are highly insensitive to increasingly selfless actions. As portrayed by Klein & Epley (2014), humans fail to make spontaneous comparisons between varying degrees of selflessness. *It does not pay to be even nicer.*

Rozin (1999) affirms that positive moralization mentions are scarcer in literature than negative moralization, speculating that this happens because the most salient events in the moral world are moral violations. Mukherjee and Althuisen (2020), Brunk and Blümelhuber (2011) and Folkes and Kamins (1999) rely on negativity bias (Skowronski & Carlston, 1989) to justify why, in moral and ethical domains, negative effects are stronger than positive effects.

The consistency of negativity bias in judgments about ethicality and morality compels not to assume that the positive effects of empowerment through consumer-brand moral alignment will compensate for the negative impact of consumer-brand moral misalignment. I sustain that these judgments occur in separate domains.

So, the aim of this research is not to juxtapose alignment with misalignment once more. If the brand's stand is polarized, alignment and misalignment will happen

simultaneously, sharing the same baseline: the absence of moral information (my control condition). Through empowerment, I expect significant differences between brand-consumer moral alignment and the absence of moral information. When comparing brand-consumer moral alignment to brand-consumer moral misalignment, though, the effects still are going to be asymmetrical and more negative for misaligned consumers than positive for aligned consumers.

As established by Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) and congruent to negativity bias (Skowronski & Carlston, 1989), the effect of brand activism on brand attitude is asymmetric. Then:

H3: When brand activism misaligns with consumers' moral convictions, the negative effect of the misalignment (vs. absence of moral information) on brand attitude and purchase intentions is stronger than the positive effect prompted by the alignment (vs. absence of moral information) through consumer perceived empowerment on brand attitude and purchase intentions.

3 OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

I conducted three experimental studies to test the theory-driven hypotheses. I deliberately opted for fictional brands to avoid confounding effects of consumers' prior beliefs about brands. The only variation between the conditions in the studies is the mere mention that the brand stands for a determined moralized cause.

In Study 1 and Study 2, a fictional eyewear brand called Wowview declares to be a firm advocate for animal rights and says that it stands for veganism. As eyewear is generally made from synthetic materials and metals, being vegan does not change its final product, and this is why I choose to combine eyewear and veganism. To match brand-consumer alignment on the entry, I requested that only vegans, vegetarians, and supporters of these lifestyles take these questionnaires on the MTurk release for these two studies.

In Study 3, the focal brand is Linz, a fictional brand of backpacks. This study intended to test if empowerment perceptions could mitigate the asymmetric effects of moral (mis)alignment between brand and consumer demonstrated previously by Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020). Correspondingly, I adopted similar procedures to manipulate the moral (mis)alignment between brand activism and consumers' moral convictions and compare them to a control condition, in which no moral information is present.

The selected moralized causes were always unrelated to the products that these brands sell. As the focus of this research was to delineate the downstream effects, especially the empowering capacities of brand activism, I deliberately decided for the simplest possible stimuli. The intention was to keep the contrast between conditions manageable, avoiding possible confounds, unwanted outcomes, and new doubts at this moment.

3.1 RECRUITMENT OF RESPONDENTS

All reported studies rely on U.S. adult consumer samples. Participants were recruited on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), which is generally regarded as a reliable sample source for marketing and psychology research (Cambier & Poncin, 2020). Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the studies.

3.2 VARIABLES AND MEASURES ACROSS STUDIES

The measures employed in the current studies were selected from existing research and adapted to best suit each study context as necessary. Unless otherwise indicated, I used seven-point response formats, either Likert (ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree) or bipolar scales.

All items, factor loadings, Cronbach's alphas, and other statistics from these measures are available in the Study's corresponding Appendix.

TABLE 2 Overview of Studies

Study	Purpose	Hypotheses	Sample	Conditions	Measures
1	Does brand activism prompts consumer perceived empowerment?	H1	MTurk n = 117	Absence of Moral Information (Control) x Activist Brand	Consumer Perceived Empowerment Attitude Toward the Brand* Purchase Intentions Control Measures
2	Does consumers' perceived empowerment mediates the relationship between brand activism and attitudes toward the brand and purchase intentions?	H1 H2	MTurk n = 109	Absence of Moral Information (Control) X Activist Brand	Consumer Perceived Empowerment Attitude Toward the Brand* Purchase Intentions Control Measures
3	Can consumer perceived empowerment mitigate the asymmetric effects of brand activism (negative in the case of misalignment and no effect in case of alignment) on consumers' attitude toward the brand?	H3	MTurk n = 130	Absence of Moral Information (Control) X Anti-immigration X Pro-immigration	Consumer-brand Agreement Consumer Perceived Empowerment Attitude Toward the Brand* Purchase Intentions Control Measures

4 EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

4.1 STUDY 1



4.1.1 Study Design, Participants, and Procedures

A hundred and seventeen respondents (58,1% women, M_{age} 36.4 years) participated in a single-factor (absence of moral information vs. activist brand) between-subjects online experiment in exchange for a small monetary reward.

Since my initial focus was to investigate only consumers who morally align with the brand's stand, I requested on MTurk that only vegans, vegetarians and supporters of these lifestyles took the questionnaire (accordingly, 83,8% of the respondents declared to be vegan or vegetarian on the sociodemographic section).

After the consent term and research instructions, respondents were randomly allocated between conditions in which they were exposed to an advertisement from a fictional eyewear brand.

TABLE 3 Experimental Conditions from Study 1 and Study 2

wowview	wowview
	
<p>Our sunglasses speak for themselves.</p> <p>We use only the highest-grade sustainable materials.</p> <p>Our atemporal designs with certified low environmental impact make our shades the perfect choice for anyone who cares about the future of our planet.</p>	<p>Our sunglasses speak for themselves.</p> <p>We use only the highest-grade sustainable materials.</p> <p>Our atemporal designs with certified low environmental impact make our shades the perfect choice for anyone who cares about the future of our planet.</p> <p>As a company, Wowview stands for veganism. We defend animals as sentient beings and encourage you to change the world with us. Society can no longer afford our silence.</p>
<p>Control: Absence of Moral Information</p>	<p>Activist Brand</p>

As can be seen on Figure 1, both advertising pieces contained the same information about the product and the brand. The only difference across conditions was the mere mention, in the activist brand condition, that the brand's "stand for veganism and will not stay silent". In the control condition this piece of information was absent.

Following, they completed the questionnaire containing a series of measures (listed on Appendix 1) and sociodemographic items.

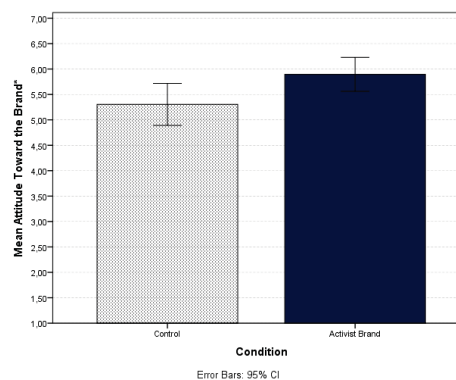
4.1.2 Measures

Consumer perceived empowerment ($\alpha = .89$) was measured using 6 items from the scale adapted by Cambier and Poncin (2020) from the organization-based self-esteem scale from Pierce et al. (1986). The items evaluate the extent to which individuals (in this case, consumers) feel that they are valuable, worthwhile, effectively influence the brand. The items, factor loadings, composite reliability and AVE are reported in Appendix 1.

4.1.3 Findings

An independent sample t-test revealed significant mean differences in consumer perceived empowerment across conditions: $t(115) = -3.570$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .099$ (medium effect size; Cohen, 1988), with higher mean for the activist brand condition ($M = 5.88$, $SD = .77$) when compared to the control condition ($M = 5.30$, $SD = .94$), as presented in figure 2:

FIGURE 1 Results from Study 1



These results suggest that the mere mention about a brand's moral stand, aligned with consumer moral beliefs (established on the selection of participants to the study), increased perceptions of consumer empowerment, when assessed through six items from Cambier and Poncin's measurement (2020).

These six items (Wowview has faith in its consumers; Consumers are taken seriously by Wowview; Wowview thinks that its consumers are cooperating; Consumers are important to Wowview; Wowview thinks that its consumers are effective; Consumers count for Wowview) evaluate the extent to which individuals (in this case, consumers) feel that they are valuable, worthwhile and effective influence de brand. The mere mention that the brand stands for something they believe in made consumers feel more empowered.

Hence, in line with Hypothesis 1, I provide initial evidence of the proposed relationship between brand activism and consumer perceived empower in a brand-consumer moral alignment context. Moral information, provided through brand activism (compared to its absence), when aligned with consumer's moral beliefs, triggered empowerment perceptions.

4.2 STUDY 2

4.2.1 Study Design, Participants, and Procedures

A hundred and nine respondents (50.5% women, Mage 38.0 years) participated in a single-factor (absence of moral information vs. activist brand) between-subjects online experiment in exchange for a small monetary reward.

The experimental conditions were the same from Study 1, with the only difference across conditions being the brand's stand for veganism and the absence of this information in control condition. Once more I requested that only vegans, vegetarians, and supporters took the questionnaire on MTurk (85.3% declared to be vegan on vegetarian on the sociodemographic section).

Replicating the procedures from Study 1, after the consent term and research instructions, respondents were randomly allocated between conditions in which they were exposed to an advertisement from a fictional eyewear brand. Following, they

completed the questionnaire containing my measures (listed on Appendix 2) and sociodemographic items.

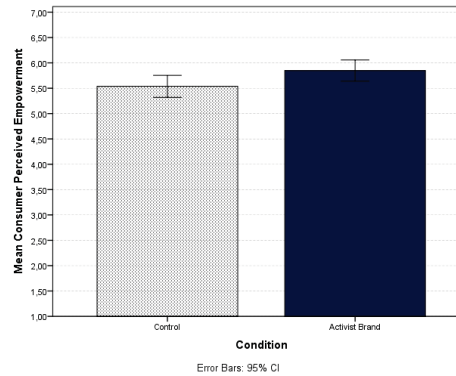
4.2.2 Measures

Consumer empowerment was measured using the same 6 items from the scale adapted by Cambier and Poncin (2020), from Study 1. Purchase intentions ($\alpha = .84$) was measured through three items (I am likely to purchase products from Wowview; It is possible for me to buy Wowview products; I could consider buying products from Wowview if I need sunglasses) also replicated from Cambier and Poncin (2020). Attitude toward the brand ($\alpha = .95$) reproduced the measure from Mukherjee and Althuizen (Good:Bad; Pleasant:Unpleasant; Like: Dislike; 2020). These items were reversed prior to the analysis so higher values could reflect a more positive attitude. The items, factor loadings, composite reliability and AVE are reported in Appendix 2.

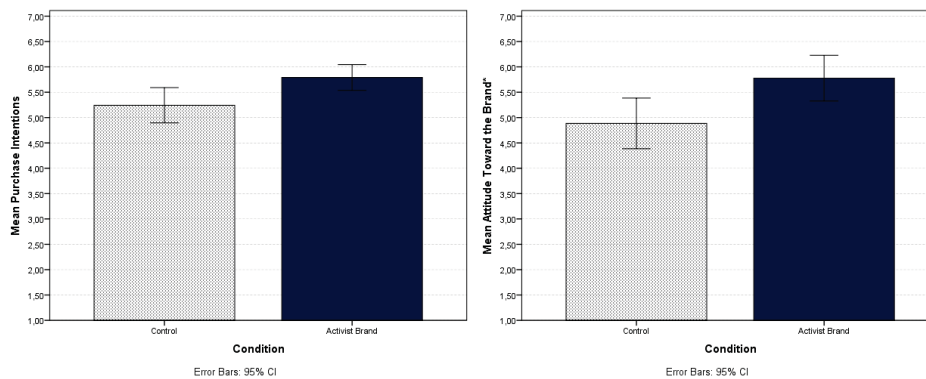
4.2.3 4.Findings

Consistent with the results from Study 1, an independent sample t-test revealed significant mean differences in consumer perceived empowerment across conditions: $t(107) = -2.081$, $p = .040$, $\eta^2 = .039$ (small effect size; Cohen, 1988), with higher mean for the activist brand condition ($M = 5.85$, $SD = .76$) when contrasted with the control condition ($M = 5.54$, $SD = .80$).

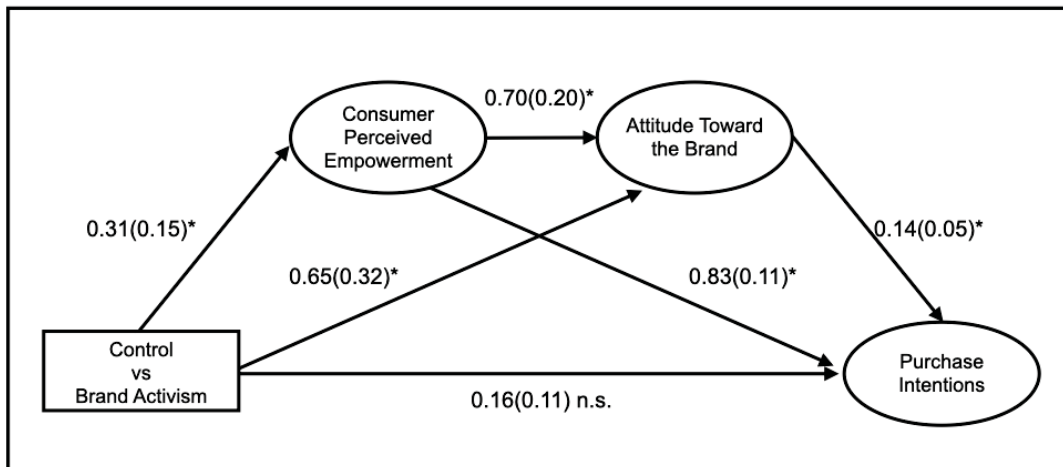
These results provided additional evidence that the mere mention about a brand's moral stand, aligned with consumers' moral beliefs increases consumer perceived empowerment, as proposed.

FIGURE 2 Results from Study 2

Independent sample t-tests also revealed significant mean differences in “purchase intentions”: $t(107) = -2.550$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2 = .057$ (medium effect size; Cohen, 1988), with higher means for the activist brand condition ($M = 5.79$, $SD = .93$) when compared to the control condition ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.29$); and in “attitude toward the brand” across conditions: $t(107) = -2.661$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .062$ (medium effect size; Cohen, 1988), with $M_{\text{ActivistBrand}} = 5.78$ ($SD = 1.65$) and $M_{\text{Control}} = 4.88$ ($SD = 1.85$).

FIGURE 3 Results from Study 2

To test whether consumer perceived empowerment mediates the positive effect of brand activism on attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions (H2), I conducted a serial mediation analysis on PROCESS (Model 6; see Hayes, 2017). As proposed, consumer perceived empowerment and brand attitude significantly mediated the effect of brand activism on purchase intentions (indirect effect: $\beta = .037$, bootstrap SE = .026, bootstrap 95% CI: .0015 to .1015).

FIGURE 4 Graphical Representation of Study 2 Serial Mediation

Note: Coefficients are unstandardized and are shown in the format $b(SE)$; * $p < 0.05$

These results provide further support for the hypothesized reasoning about how consumer empowerment impacts on brand attitude and boosts purchase intentions when consumers align with the brand's stand (H2).

Thus, the relationship between brand activism in the context of consumer-brand alignment and purchase intentions is mediated by consumer empowerment and its effects on attitude toward the brand. The mere presence of brand activism triggered higher perceived empowerment, which leads to higher attitude toward the brand and subsequent purchase intentions.

4.3 STUDY 3

4.3.1 Study Design, Participants, and Procedures

Study 3 aimed to test my third hypothesis and verify if consumer empowerment could mitigate the asymmetric effects of brand activism (negative in case of misalignment and no effect in case of alignment; Mukherjee and Althuisen, 2020) on consumers' attitude toward the brand.

A hundred and thirty respondents (40.0% women, Mage 38.56 years) participated in a single-factor (no information vs. activist brand pro-immigration vs. activist brand anti-immigration; see Figure 6) between-subjects online experiment in exchange for a small monetary reward.

My focal fictional brand was Linz, a backpacks' brand. Again, I didn't intend to relate the product attributes with the cause. The procedures followed the steps developed by Mukherjee and Althuisen (2020) to measure the level of consumer-brand agreement and divide participants into three analysis groups (brand-consumer moral alignment, brand-consumer moral misalignment, and control, without moral information). The supported cause was also based on these authors' stimulus and argumentation.

After the consent term and research instructions, respondents were randomly allocated between conditions in which they were exposed to an advertisement from the fictional backpacks' brand. Following, they completed the questionnaire containing study measures (listed on Appendix 3) and sociodemographic items.

TABLE 4 Experimental Conditions from Study 3

LINZ	LINZ	LINZ
		
<p>No matter where your walks are taking you. LINZ lightweight and resistant backpacks are ready to move through your day!</p>	<p>No matter where your walks are taking you. LINZ lightweight and resistant backpacks are ready to move through your day!</p>	<p>No matter where your walks are taking you. LINZ lightweight and resistant backpacks are ready to move through your day!</p>
<p>Control: Absence of Moral Information n = 40</p>	<p>Anti-Immigration n = 45</p>	<p>Pro-Immigration n = 45</p>

In the last section of the questionnaire, along with the sociodemographic items, participants rated how much they agree with the quote: “All illegal immigrants should be asked to leave a country irrespective of how long they have been there”.

This measure was based on Mukherjee and Althuisen (2020) procedures (scale: 1= “definitely no” to 4 = “definitely yes”) and was applied to divide participants in the activist brand conditions into two groups according to their moral convictions. If

their response was “definitely yes” ($n = 14$) or “probably yes” ($n = 36$), they were considered anti-immigration ($n = 50$); if their response was “definitely no” ($n = 43$) or “probably no” ($n = 37$), they were pro-immigration ($n = 80$).

These answers were matched to the brand's stand (conditions) creating two analysis groups. This procedure is also inspired by Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020)'s paper. The analysis groups were constituted by: consumer-brand moral alignment (52 respondents, 40% of the total sample), consumer-brand moral misalignment (38 respondents, 29.2% of the total sample) and neutral condition, in which moral information was absent (40 respondents, 30.8% of the total sample).

4.3.2 Measures

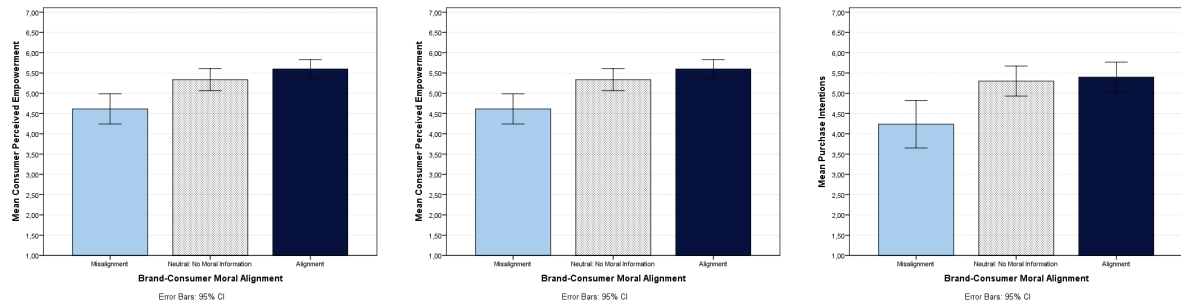
Consumer-brand agreement was measured asking participants to rate how much they agree with the following statement, in a four points scale (1= “definitely no” to 4 = “definitely yes”): “All illegal immigrants should be asked to leave a country irrespective of how long they have been there”. This measure was based on Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) procedures.

Purchase intentions ($\alpha = .84$) and attitude toward the brand ($\alpha = .95$) replicated the measures from Study 2. For consumer perceived empowerment ($\alpha = .85$), we added two items to Cambier and Poncin (202) items from the prior studies (LINZ has faith in its consumers; Consumers are taken seriously by LINZ; Consumers count for LINZ; Consumers are important to LINZ; LINZ thinks that its consumers are effective; LINZ thinks that its consumers are cooperating; Consumers are trusted by LINZ; LINZ consumers have a voice).

These measures are reported in Appendix III.

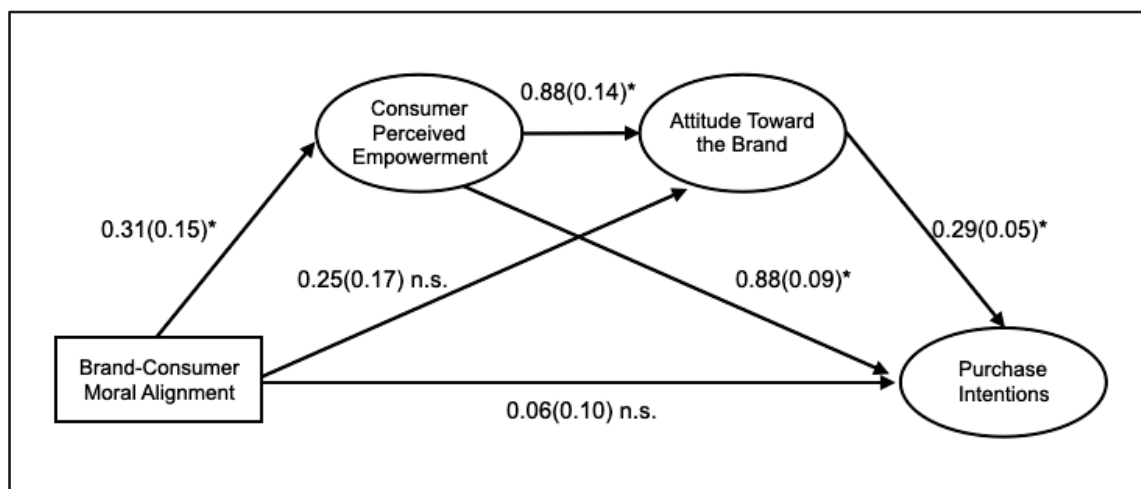
4.3.3 Findings

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant mean differences on consumer perceived empowerment across conditions $F(2, 127) = 12.54$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .165$ (large; Cohen, 1988); with $M_{\text{misalignment}} = 4.62$ ($SD = 1.13$), $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5.33$ ($SD = .86$), and $M_{\text{alignment}} = 5.60$ ($SD = .83$).

FIGURE 5 Results from Study 3

The same patterns repeat in “attitude toward the brand”: $F(2, 127) = 7.280, p = .001, \eta^2 = .103$ (large; Cohen, 1988; with $M_{\text{misalignment}} = 4.17$ ($SD = .28$), $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5.16$ ($SD = .27$), and $M_{\text{alignment}} = 5.54$ ($.24$); and “purchase intentions”: $F(2, 127) = 8.295, p = .000, \eta^2 = .116$ (large; Cohen, 1988); with $M_{\text{misalignment}} = 4.24$ ($SD = 1.78$), $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5.30$ ($SD = 1.15$), and $M_{\text{alignment}} = 5.40$ ($SD = 1.33$).

A serial mediation model analysis was conducted on PROCESS (Model 6; Hayes, 2017) to test the proposed relationship among variables (Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment → Consumer Perceived Empowerment → Attitude Toward the Brand* → Purchase Intentions). Once more, consumer perceived empowerment and brand attitude significantly mediated the effect of brand activism on purchase intentions (indirect effect: $\beta = .1230$, bootstrap $SE = .052$, bootstrap 95% CI: .0493 to .2550).

FIGURE 6 Graphical Representation of Study 3 Serial Mediation

Note: Coefficients are unstandardized and are shown in the format $b(SE)$; * $p < 0.05$.

Bonferroni post hoc tests reveal, however, that the significant mean differences in consumer perceived empowerment are due the differences between

misalignment and control conditions: $M_{\text{misalignment}} = 4.61$ ($SD = .15$), $M_{\text{control}} = 5.33$ ($SD = .15$), $p = .003$; and between misalignment and alignment: $M_{\text{misalignment}} = 4.61$ ($SD = .15$), $M_{\text{alignment}} = 5.60$ ($SD = .13$), $p = .000$. The differences between the control condition and alignment are non-significant: $M_{\text{control}} = 5.33$ ($SD = .15$), $M_{\text{alignment}} = 5.60$ ($SD = .13$), $p = .547$.

The data exhibits a similar pattern for attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. In spite of the higher means for perceived consumer empowerment, attitudes toward the brand, and purchase intentions, these differences are not statistically significant when compared to the control condition in paired comparisons.

These results are in line with the negativity bias effect but inconsistent with the outcomes from Study 1 and Study 2.

Since respondents were not questioned if they are immigrant themselves, I speculate that the proximity with the cause might affect perceived empowerment to some degree. In Study 1 and Study 2, respondents were vegans and vegetarians themselves, while in Study 3 I measured their moral alignment by asking the degree to which they agree with the brands stand. Further studies will be necessary to elucidate these results.

4.4 DISCUSSION

These studies are an initial effort to shed light on the relationship between brand activism and consumer perceived empowerment. Evidence is still not very clear, though, conceptually, activism and empowerment seem to orbit at least in the same galaxy, which justifies this exploration.

In the context of veganism (Study 1 and Study 2), in which most of the respondents were vegan, the differences were significant between our control (absence) and treatment (activist) conditions. Consumers reported feeling more empowered when the brand advocated for a cause that is precious to them. Their responses toward the brand (attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions) were significantly higher when contrasted to the absence of moral information. There were not respondents against veganism in this studies, but prior literature suggests strongly that their responses toward the brand would probably be significantly negative.

The metaphor of consumption-as-voting (Shaw et al., 2006) suggests that consumers envision their consumption choices as empowering when they believe that

their choices can influence oriented change. Also, consumers can use the information available as means for improve their decision skills (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006). Moral information, as the one provided through brand activism, thus, provides consumer a change to support, or vote, for causes they believe in through consumption.

It's important to discuss, however, that maybe, for consumers that are against a cause supported by a brand, rejecting the brand might also feel empowering. Since I was looking specifically for significant, positive effects, this has not been under my radar and was not something that I was looking for.

However, in Study 3, when the agreement between the brands' stand and consumers' moral convictions was measured and then matched in the analysis in a context that involves advocacy pro-immigration or anti-immigration, significant differences appeared only between misalignment and the absence and misalignment and alignment, but not between absence and alignment. This probably means that, while consumers did not feel significantly empowered (when compared to the absence of moral information), the misalignment between their moral convictions and the brand provoked feelings of disempowerment, something that could be explored in future studies.

Across three studies, notwithstanding, consumer perceived empowerment successfully mediated the relationship between brand activism in a context of moral alignment and consumer responses toward brands.

5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

This thesis is an initial effort to demonstrate the relationship between brand activism and consumer perceived empowerment and how it might affect consumer responses, especially purchase intentions.

The phenomena of brand activism might not be new but gains traction as societal forces tension. Brands are frequently demanded to assume sides and take risks advocating for causes that are highly moralized. And moral responses are distinct from mere preferences. Individuals judge their moral values as superior and suspect those who do not share them (Feinberg et al., 2019, Skitka et al., 2005).

When a brand associates with moralized causes, it assumes the risk of becoming a moralized entity. This is probably the most notable difference between CSR and other prosocial actions from brands and brand activism on consumer responses. Moral and ethical judgments are consistently influenced by negativity bias (Skowronski & Carlston, 1989), and positive effects beyond a baseline (i.e., initial neutral point) are challenging to obtain. What has been repeatedly highlighted is that the risks involved in brand activism are too high in the face of the possible gains (Hydock et al., 2020; Mukherjee & Althuisen, 2020). But, despite this, brands keep engaging with social and political causes.

I aimed to move this discussion further, surpassing the negative effects (especially the ones that happen when brand activism and consumer convictions do not align) to investigate how brand activism can generate a positive impact on brands and society.

Even though respondents self-reported their political position in all collected studies, the relevance of this hot topic right now, and the plausibility of the relationship between political positioning and activism, the choice of the author in this thesis was to address these discussions as a result of moralization processes and not of pure political positioning. Not reporting these data in the analysis is a deliberated choice. I do not ignore that consumers who identify as progressive or conservatives might react differently to a brand's advocacy for a particular cause that they associate with a given political position. My argument, however, is that these responses belong more in the spectrum of morality than pure political positioning.

In addition to these control items, there are incoming debates in the development of this research that are worth mentioning. My starting point was to investigate the effects of brand activism beyond the brand. I wanted to discuss how this marketing strategy might affect society, questioning, for example, whether brands could instigate behaviors similar to moral courage (Baumert et al., 2013). Hence, all collected studies had a section about it at the end of the form, described as an unrelated study.

This proposal, however, proved to be too challenging for my deadlines. When I realized that we still don't have explanations about the positive effects of brand activism on responses toward the brand, I took some steps back. These decisions, nevertheless, do not diminish the importance of the current investigation.

So, this initial evidence of how brand activism can improve consumers' empowering perceptions and how this effect impacts brands is still a small, but necessary first step to shed light on this issue.

5.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Brand Activism. Brand activism literature has been growing. Integrative and theoretical papers provide outstanding support for future research, but there's a gap in research about how to prompt positive responses. The current research is an initial effort to look at this problem. To my knowledge, the relationship between brand activism and consumer empowerment had not been considered yet. Since consumer empowerment is generally related to positive consumer outcomes, focusing on the empowering effects of brand activism (when brand activism and consumer moral convictions align) might be a path for future research advancements on brand activism.

Consumer Perceived Empowerment. Although established in the literature that empowerment is intrinsically linked to the action that triggers this state, the type of action that leads to the state of being empowered are described as still missing or inadequately articulated in the literature (Babouche & Sabri, 2019). What is clear, however, is that these actions must be deliberate changes to give more power and voice to consumers inside the company. When a company supports a moralized cause, consumers gain more power because now they have meaningful information about how the brand aligns with their convictions that they did not have before. To this date, this is the first research to demonstrate how a brand's support to prosocial causes

might influence consumer perceived empowerment. In doing so, I provide a new source of consumer perceived empowerment to the literature.

5.2 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the current research urge brand managers to examine carefully when considering to support a cause. Negativity bias effects are relevant, and practitioners should be aware that if a cause does not have enough supporters, this might generate a backlash that will be stronger than the positive effects between supporters. For instance, the message associated with this activism should focus on the empowering abilities of brand activism to amplify the exhibited positive impact between those who are morally aligned.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations to be addressed in future research. First, I emphasize that it is necessary to demonstrate that brand activism is clearly the source of empowerment and that the displayed effects were not due to a prior empowerment trait from a group of consumers. Second, future studies should move beyond fictional brands and use real-world brands, controlling confounding effects. Third, I would like to verify the effects of the empowering generated through brand activism beyond consumer responses to brands. Forth, it is necessary to investigate how this relationship influences when consumers have a strong brand-consumer bond.

6 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1 – OVERVIEW FROM STUDY 1

FIGURE 7 Study 1- Entry Request

We need vegans, vegetarians, and supporters of these lifestyles to complete a survey on consumer behavior!

Requester: **Nayara Pereira Duarte** Reward: \$0.30 per task Tasks available: 0 Duration: 1 Hour

Qualifications Required: HIT Approval Rate (%) for all Requesters' HITs greater than 60 . Location is US

Survey Link Instructions - PLEASE READ! (Click to collapse)

We are conducting two unrelated academic studies to understand consumers' perceptions and ethical decision styles combined in one questionnaire.

First, you will be exposed to an ad and answer questions about your own perceptions. Most of them are statements in which you must report to what extent you agree or disagree. Then you will read a short scenario and report what you would do in the described situation! It might take 10 minutes to complete the whole questionnaire.

At the end of the survey, you will receive a code to paste into the box below to receive credit for the survey.

Make sure to leave this window open as you complete the survey. When you are finished, you will return to this page to paste the code into the box.

For the sake of data quality, we appeal that only those who identify as vegans, vegetarians, or are sympathetic to this lifestyle complete this research.

Move forward only if your beliefs on spontaneously abstaining from animal products are inherently positive.

IMPORTANT: Please **don't answer this survey twice**. We will check the questionnaires and reject your rewards if you did.

Many thanks for considering these requests. =)

Survey link:

Provide the survey code here:

TABLE 5 Study 1 - Sample Composition

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Do you consider yourself...					
Vegan	47	40.2	40.2	40.2	
Vegetarian	51	43.6	43.6	83.8	
Flexitarian	13	11.1	11.1	94.9	
Other	6	5.1	5.1	100.0	
Total	117	100.0	100.0		
Which gender do you identify as?					
Male	48	41.0	41.0	41.0	
Female	68	58.1	58.1	99.1	
Non-binary	1	.9	.9	100.0	
Total	117	100.0	100.0		
Conditions					
Control	57	48.7	48.7	48.7	
Activist Brand	60	51.3	51.3	100.0	
Total	117	100.0	100.0		
Age					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What's your age? Use numbers only	117	23	76	36.43	12.146

TABLE 6 Study 1 - Items and Statistics for Each Construct

Construct/Measure	Factor Loadings
Attitude Toward the Brand* (CR = .93, AVE = .81, α = .92) (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020)	
Bad:Good*	.915
Unpleasant:Pleasant*	.901
Dislike:Like*	.889
Purchase Intentions (CR = .85, AVE .65, α = .77) (Cambier & Poncin, 2020)	
It is possible for me to buy Wowview products.	.827
I could consider buying products from Wowview if I need sunglasses.	.819
I am likely to purchase products from Wowview.	.768
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (CR = .91, AVE .64, α = .89) (Cambier & Poncin, 2020; Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989)	
Wowview has faith in its consumers.	.821

Consumers are taken seriously by Wowview.	.811
Wowview thinks that its consumers are cooperating.	.801
Consumers are important to Wowview.	.799
Wowview thinks that its consumers are effective.	.790
Consumers count for Wowview.	.766

* Item reversed previously;

CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Construct Correlation

	1	2	3
Attitude Toward the Brand* (1)	1	.440**	-.049
Purchase Intentions (2)	.440**	1	=.070
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (3)	-.049	=.070	1

** p < .01

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.805
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	df
	Sig.
	740.477
	66
	.000

TABLE 7 Study 1 - Results

Group Statistics

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Control	57	5.3041	1.56129	.20680
	Activist Brand	60	5.8944	1.28952	.16648
Purchase Intentions	Control	57	5.4211	.98908	.13101
	Activist Brand	60	5.7556	.95248	.12296
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Control	57	5.3070	.93583	.12395
	Activist Brand	60	5.8750	.77242	.09972

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Equal variances assumed	3.892	.051	-2.235	115	.027	-.59035
Purchase Intentions	Equal variances assumed	.827	.365	-1.864	115	.065	-.33450
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Equal variances not assumed	6.702	.011	-3.570	108.719	.001	-.56798

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Equal variances assumed	.26419	-1.11365	-.06705
Purchase Intentions	Equal variances assumed	.17950	-.69006	.02105
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Equal variances not assumed	.15909	-.88330	-.25267

TABLE 8 Study 1 – Questionnaire Items

Measures	Items	
Attention check do the stimulus	Indicate which of the sentences below are false	4 statements
Attitude toward the brand (Mukherjee & Althuisen, 2020)	Good – Bad Pleasant – Unpleasant Like – Dislike	7-points Bipolar scale, these items were reversed on the analysis.
Purchase Intentions (Cambier & Poncin, 2020)	I am likely to purchase products from Wowview. I could consider buying products from Wowview if I need sunglasses. It is possible for me to buy Wowview products.	7-points Likert Scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree
Brand Appreciation	I think that as a company, Wowview is great. I appreciated Wowview. I would recommend Wowview to others.	
Advocacy	Which cause Wowview's advocate for?	Open question.
Brand Perceptions	Wowview is committed to moral stands. Wowview is taking-risks when advocating for this cause. Wowview is defying-norms when it stands for this cause.	Indicate your agreement with the following statements:

	<p>Wowview cares about more than making profits.</p> <p>Not everyone will agree with the cause endorsed by Wowview.</p> <p>Most of consumers are not fond of Wowview's cause.</p> <p>Some consumers might perceive Wowview advocacy as nettling.</p> <p>Wowview might suffer public backlash due to its moral stand.</p> <p>Wowview might suffer some kind of rejection.</p> <p>Many consumers might reject Wowview for embracing this cause.</p> <p>I consider Wowview courageous for embracing this cause.</p> <p>Wowview will probably lose money for supporting this cause.</p> <p>Wowview advocacy can have negative financial consequences.</p> <p>Wowview seems to have a strong sense of justice.</p>	<p>7-points Likert Scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree</p>
<p>Consumer Perceived Empowerment (Cambier & Poncin, 2020 based on Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989)</p>	<p>Consumers count for Wowview</p> <p>Consumers are taken seriously by Wowview.</p> <p>Consumers are important to Wowview.</p> <p>Wowview has faith in its consumers.</p> <p>Wowview thinks that its consumers are effective.</p> <p>Wowview thinks that its consumers are cooperating.</p> <p>Wowview's consumers should reward the company for taking a stand.</p>	
<p>Brand Evaluations</p>	<p>Brave</p> <p>Courageous</p> <p>Norm-Defying</p> <p>Ethical</p> <p>Arrogant</p> <p>Virtuous</p> <p>Risk-Taking</p> <p>Fair</p> <p>Annoying</p> <p>Divisive</p> <p>Audacious</p>	<p>Do you think that Wowview is...</p> <p>7-points Likert Scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree</p>
<p>Self-Brand Connection Scale Items (Escalas, 2004)</p>	<p>Wowview reflects who I am.</p> <p>Wowview suits me well.</p> <p>I can identify with Wowview.</p> <p>I feel a personal connection with Wowview.</p> <p>Wowview brand reflects who I would like to be (my ideal self).</p> <p>Wowview is consistent with how I would like to see myself (my ideal self).</p>	<p>Indicate your agreement with the following statements:</p> <p>7-points Likert scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree</p>

	People who are similar to the person that I would like to be (my ideal self), would use Wowview sunglasses.	
SPANE - Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi, & Biswas-Diener 2009).	Positive Negative Happy Sad Afraid Joyful Angry Thankful	How intense are your feelings toward Wowview? None at all = 0 A lot = 10
Ethical Dilemma (Sims, 1999)	Section 7: MINOR STUDY - Ethical Decision Styles This is an unrelated minor study aiming to investigate ethical decision styles. Please read the scenario below and indicate how do you think you would probably behave. Remember there is no right or wrong answer.	Which of the alternatives below better describes how you would probably react in this situation? Say nothing. Casually mention to my supervisor that I was concerned about discriminatory practices. Quietly question the practices, stopping when resistance was given. Openly question the practices, going as far as necessary within the company, hoping to implement changes. Openly question the company's practices, and if necessary, go public, insisting on changes.
Ethical Dilemma	Say nothing. Casually mention to my supervisor that I was concerned about discriminatory practices. Quietly question the practices, stopping when resistance was given. Openly question the practices, going as far as necessary within the company, hoping to implement changes. Openly question the company's practices, and if necessary, go public, insisting on changes.	Rate how much do you consider each option from the last section appropriate or inappropriate given the situation you read. 5-points scale. 1 = Extremely Appropriate to 5 = Extremely Inappropriate
Demographics	Age Gender White/Non-White Diet Education Political Views	

APPENDIX 2 – OVERVIEW FROM STUDY 2

FIGURE 8 Study 2 - Entry Request

We need vegans, vegetarians, and supporters of these lifestyles to complete a survey on consumer behavior!

Requester: Nayara Pereira Duarte Reward: \$0.30 per task Tasks available: 0 Duration: 1 Hour

Qualifications Required: HIT Approval Rate (%) for all Requesters' HITs greater than 60. Location is US

Survey Link Instructions - PLEASE READ! (Click to collapse)

We are conducting two unrelated academic studies to understand consumers' perceptions and ethical decision styles combined in one questionnaire.

First, you will be exposed to an ad and answer questions about your own perceptions. Most of them are statements in which you must report to what extent you agree or disagree. Then you will read a short scenario and report what you would do in the described situation! It might take 10 minutes to complete the whole questionnaire.

At the end of the survey, you will receive a code to paste into the box below to receive credit for the survey.

Make sure to leave this window open as you complete the survey. When you are finished, you will return to this page to paste the code into the box.

For the sake of data quality, we appeal that only those who identify as vegans, vegetarians or are sympathetic to this lifestyle complete this research. **Move forward only if your beliefs on spontaneously abstaining from animal products are inherently positive.**

IMPORTANT: Please **don't answer this survey twice**. We will check the questionnaires and reject your rewards if you did.

Many thanks for considering these requests. =)

Survey link:

Provide the survey code here:

TABLE 9 Study 2 - Sample Composition

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Do you consider yourself...					
Vegan	39	35,8	35.8	35.8	
Vegetarian	54	49.5	49.5	85.3	
Flexitarian	12	11.0	11.0	96.3	
Other	4	3.7	3.7	100.0	
Total	109	100.0	100.0		
Which gender do you identify as?					
Male	53	48.6	48.6	48.6	
Female	55	50.5	50.5	99.1	
Non-binary	1	.9	.9	100.0	
Total	109	100.0	100.0		
Conditions					
Control	55	50.5	50.5	50.5	
Activist Brand	54	49.5	49.5	100.0	
Total	109	100.0	100.0		
Age					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What's your age? Use numbers only	109	20	69	38.02	11.436

TABLE 10 Study 2 – Items and Statistics for Each Construct

Construct/Measure	Factor Loadings
Attitude Toward the Brand* (CR = .97, AVE = .92, α = .95) (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020)	
Bad:Good*	.962
Unpleasant:Pleasant*	.958
Dislike:Like*	.952
Purchase Intentions (CR = .75, AVE .90, α = .84) (Cambier & Poncin, 2020)	
I am likely to purchase products from Wowview.	.897
It is possible for me to buy Wowview products.	.870
I could consider buying products from Wowview if I need sunglasses.	.836
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (CR = .75, AVE .34, α = .85) (Cambier & Poncin, 2020; Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989)	
Wowview thinks that its consumers are cooperating.	.810
Wowview has faith in its consumers.	.804
Wowview thinks that its consumers are effective.	.788
Consumers are important to Wowview.	.746
Consumers are taken seriously by Wowview.	.722
Consumers count for Wowview.	.684

* Item reversed previously;

CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Construct Correlation

		2	3
Attitude Toward the Brand* (1)	1	.469**	.384**
Purchase Intentions (2)	.469**	1	.673**
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (3)	.384**	.673**	1

** $p < .01$

KMO and Bartlett's Test - Attitude Toward the Brand*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.775
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	336.358
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

KMO and Bartlett's Test - Purchase Intentions

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.709
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	129.346
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

KMO and Bartlett's Test - Consumer Perceived Empowerment

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.814
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	267.195
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

TABLE 11 Study 2 - Results**Group Statistics**

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Control	55	4.8848	1.84727	.24909
	Activist Brand	54	5.7778	1.65214	.22483
Purchase Intentions	Control	55	5.2424	1.28693	.17353
	Activist Brand	54	5.7901	.93004	.12656
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Control	55	5.5364	.80232	.10818
	Activist Brand	54	5.8488	.76429	.10401

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Equal variances assumed	3.227	.075	-2.658	107	.009	-.89293
Purchase Intentions	Equal variances not assumed	5.998	.016	-2.550	98.369	.012	-.54770
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Equal variances assumed	.038	.845	-2.081	107	.040	-.31240

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Equal variances assumed	.33589	-1.55880	-.22706
Purchase Intentions	Equal variances not assumed	.21478	-.97390	-.12149
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Equal variances assumed	.15014	-.61003	-.01477

TABLE 12 Study 2 – Questionnaire Items

Measures	Items	
Attention check do the stimulus	"Indicate which of the sentences below are false"	4 statements
Attitude toward the brand (Mukherjee&Althuizen, 2020)	Good – Bad Pleasant – Unpleasant Like – Dislike	7-points Bipolar scale, these items were reversed on the analysis.
Purchase Intentions (Cambier & Poncin, 2020)	I am likely to purchase products from Wowview. I could consider buying products from Wowview if I need sunglasses. It is possible for me to buy Wowview products.	7-points Likert Scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree
Brand Appreciation	I think that as a company, Wowview is great. I appreciated Wowview. I would recommend Wowview to others.	
Advocacy	Which cause Wowview's advocate for?	Open question.
Brand Perceptions	Not everyone will agree with the cause endorsed by Wowview. Consumers might reject Wowview for supporting this cause. Most of the consumers are not fond of Wowview's cause. Wowview might suffer public backlash due to supporting this cause. Wowview is taking-risks when advocating for this cause. Wowview is defying-norms when it stands for this cause. Wowview cares about more than making profits. Wowview might suffer some kind of public rejection. Wowview is brave for embracing this cause. Wowview advocacy can have negative financial consequences. Wowview is committed to moral stands. Some consumers might perceive Wowview advocacy as nettling. Wowview seems to have a strong sense of justice. Wowview will probably lose money for supporting this cause.	Indicate your agreement with the following statements: 7-points Likert Scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (Cambier & Poncin, 2020 based on Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989)	Consumers count for Wowview Consumers are taken seriously by Wowview. Consumers are important to Wowview. Wowview has faith in its consumers. Wowview thinks that its consumers are effective.	

	<p>Wowview thinks that its consumers are cooperating.</p> <p>Wowview's consumers should reward the company for taking a stand.</p>	
Brand Evaluations	<p>Brave</p> <p>Courageous</p> <p>Norm-Defying</p> <p>Ethical</p> <p>Arrogant</p> <p>Virtuous</p> <p>Risk-Taking</p> <p>Fair</p> <p>Annoying</p> <p>Divisive</p> <p>Audacious</p>	<p>Do you think that Wowview is...</p> <p>7-points Likert Scale.</p> <p>1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree</p>
Self-Brand Connection Scale Items (Escalas, 2004)	<p>Wowview reflects who I am.</p> <p>Wowview suits me well.</p> <p>I can identify with Wowview.</p> <p>I feel a personal connection with Wowview.</p> <p>Wowview brand reflects who I would like to be (my ideal self).</p> <p>Wowview is consistent with how I would like to see myself (my ideal self).</p> <p>People who are similar to the person that I would like to be (my ideal self), would use Wowview sunglasses.</p>	<p>Indicate your agreement with the following statements:</p> <p>7-points Likert scale.</p> <p>1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree</p>
SPANE - Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi, & Biswas-Diener 2009).	<p>Positive</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Happy</p> <p>Sad</p> <p>Afraid</p> <p>Joyful</p> <p>Angry</p> <p>Thankful</p>	<p>How intense are your feelings toward Wowview?</p> <p>None at all = 0</p> <p>A lot = 10</p>
Ethical Dilemma (Simms, 1999)	<p>Section 7: MINOR STUDY - Ethical Decision Styles</p> <p>This is an unrelated minor study aiming to investigate ethical decision styles.</p> <p>Please read the scenario below and indicate how do you think you would probably behave. Remember there is no right or wrong answer.</p>	<p>Which of the alternatives below better describes how you would probably react in this situation?</p> <p>Say nothing.</p> <p>Casually mention to my supervisor that I was concerned about discriminatory practices.</p> <p>Quietly question the practices, stopping when resistance was given.</p> <p>Openly question the practices, going as far as necessary</p>

		<p>within the company, hoping to implement changes.</p> <p>Openly question the company's practices, and if necessary, go public, insisting on changes.</p>
Ethical Dilemma	<p>Say nothing.</p> <p>Casually mention to my supervisor that I was concerned about discriminatory practices.</p> <p>Quietly question the practices, stopping when resistance was given.</p> <p>Openly question the practices, going as far as necessary within the company, hoping to implement changes.</p> <p>Openly question the company's practices, and if necessary, go public, insisting on changes.</p>	<p>Rate how much do you consider each option from the last section appropriate or inappropriate given the situation you read.</p> <p>5-points scale. 1 = Extremely Inappropriate to 5 = Extremely Appropriate</p>
Demographics	<p>Age</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>White/Non-White</p> <p>Diet</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Political Views</p>	

TABLE 13 Study 2 - PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 3.5

Model : 6

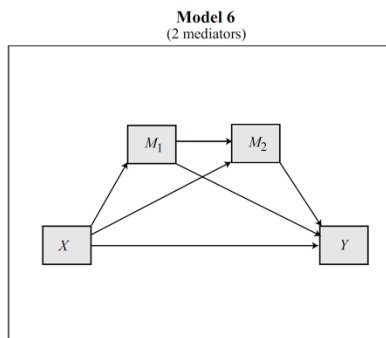


Image Source: Hayes (2017)

Y : Purchase Intentions
 X : Conditions: 0 = Control / 1 = Activist Brand
 M1 : Consumer Perceived Empowerment
 M2 : Attitude Toward the Brand*

Sample Size: 109

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Consumer Perceived Empowerment**Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.1972	.0389	.6142	4.3296	1.0000	107.0000	.0398

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.5364	.1057	52.3901	.0000	5.3269	5.7459
Conditions	.3124	.1501	2.0808	.0398	.0148	.6100

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Attitude Toward the Brand***Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4230	.1789	2.7163	11.5481	2.0000	106.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.5114	1.1473	.4457	.6567	-1.7632	2.7860
Conditions	.6461	.3221	2.0063	.0474	.0076	1.2847
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	.7899	.2033	3.8856	.0002	.3869	1.1930

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Purchase Intentions**Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7137	.5094	.6703	36.3372	3.0000	105.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-.0586	.5705	-.1026	.9184	-1.1897	1.0726
Conditions	.1568	.1630	.9621	.3382	-.1664	.4800
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	.8263	.1079	7.6551	.0000	.6123	1.0404
Attitude Toward the Brand*	.1486	.0482	3.0808	.0026	.0530	.2443

TOTAL EFFECT MODEL**OUTCOME VARIABLE: Purchase Intentions****Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.2387	.0570	1.2643	6.4650	1.0000	107.0000	.0124

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.2424	.1516	34.5774	.0000	4.9419	5.5430
Conditions	.5477	.2154	2.5426	.0124	.1207	.9747

TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y**Total effect of X on Y**

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.5477	.2154	2,5426	.0124	.1207	.9747

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.1568	.1630	.9621	.3382	-.1664	.4800

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	.3909	.1483	.0846	.6609	
Ind1	Condition → Consumer Perceived Empowerment → Purchase Intentions	.2581	.1181	.0135	.4786
Ind2	Condition → Attitude Toward the Brand* → Purchase Intentions	.0960	.0528	.0037	.2110
Ind3	Condition → Consumer Perceived Empowerment → Attitude Toward the Brand* → Purchase Intentions	.0367	.0256	.0014	.1015

APPENDIX 3 – OVERVIEW FROM STUDY 3

FIGURE 9 Study 3 - Entry Request

Answer a Survey About Your Perceptions of Brands

Requester: **Nayara Pereira Duarte** Reward: \$0.25 per task Tasks available: 0 Duration: 1 Hours

Qualifications Required: HIT Approval Rate (%) for all Requesters' HITs greater than 60 , Location is US

Survey Link Instructions - PLEASE READ! (Click to collapse)

We are conducting an academic study that aims to understand consumer's perceptions of brands.

Please, **if you already answered a survey with a similar description in the last hours, don't take it again!**

In this study, you will read a story about a brand and then answer around 60 questions arranged in eleven sections. The whole questionnaire might take around 10 to 15 minutes for you to answer. Select the link below to complete the survey. At the end of the survey, you will receive a code to paste into the box below to receive credit for the survey.

Make sure to leave this window open as you complete the survey. When you are finished, you will return to this page to paste the code into the box.

Survey link:

Provide the survey code here:

TABLE 14 Study 3 - Sample Composition

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Which gender do you identify as?				
Male	78	60.0	60.0	60.0
Female	52	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Age

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What's your age? Use numbers only	130	20	70	38.56	12.592

Brand Condition

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no information	40	30.8	30.8	30.8
pro immigration	45	34.6	34.6	65.4
anti immigration	45	34.6	34.6	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Procedures based on Mukherjee & Althuizen (2020):

Consumer Moral Convictions: Do you agree with the following statement? "All illegal immigrants should be asked to leave a country irrespective of how long they have been there"

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Definitely no.	43	33.1	33.1	33.1
Probably no.	37	28.5	28.5	61.5
Probably yes.	36	27.7	27.7	89.2
Definitely yes.	14	10.8	10.8	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Consumer Moral Convictions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
pro immigration	80	61.5	61.5	61.5
anti immigration	50	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Misalignment	38	29.2	29.2	29.2
Neutral: No Moral Information	40	30.8	30.8	60.0
Alignment	52	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 15 Study 3 – Items and Statistics for Each Construct

Construct/Measure	Factor Loadings
Attitude Toward the Brand* (CR = .97, AVE = .90, α = .95) (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020)	
Bad:Good*	.948
Unpleasant:Pleasant*	.943
Dislike:Like*	.959
Purchase Intentions (CR = .93, AVE .86, α = .89) (Cambier & Poncin, 2020)	
I am likely to purchase products from LINZ.	.881
It is possible for me to buy LINZ products.	.906
I could consider buying products from LINZ if I need sunglasses.	.921
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (CR = .92, AVE .59, α = .90) (Cambier & Poncin, 2020; Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989)	
LINZ has faith in its consumers.	.751
Consumers are taken seriously by LINZ.	.748
Consumers count for LINZ.	.819
Consumers are important to LINZ.	.731
LINZ thinks that its consumers are effective.	.797
LINZ thinks that its consumers are cooperating.	.772
Consumers are trusted by LINZ.	.758
LINZ consumers have a voice.	.762

* Item reversed previously;

CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Construct Correlation

	1	2	3
Attitude Toward the Brand* (1)	1	.659**	.546**
Purchase Intentions (2)	.659**	1	.771**
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (3)	.549**	.771**	1

** p < .01

KMO and Bartlett's Test – Attitude Toward the Brand*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.767
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	366.874
	df
	3
	Sig.
	.000

KMO and Bartlett's Test – Purchase Intentions

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.736
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	218.165
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

KMO and Bartlett's Test – Consumer Perceived Empowerment

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.877
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	542.670
	df	28
	Sig.	.000

TABLE 16 Study 3 - Results**Descriptive**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Misalignment	38	4.1667	1.95559	.31724	3.5239	4.8095	1.00	7.00
	Neutral: No Moral Information	40	5.1583	1.57796	.24950	4.6537	5.6630	1.33	7.00
	Alignment	52	5.5385	1.60494	.22257	5.0916	5.9853	1.00	7.00
	Total	130	5.0205	1.78797	.15681	4.7103	5.3308	1.00	7.00
Purchase Intentions	Misalignment	38	4.2368	1.77894	.28858	3.6521	4.8216	1.00	6.33
	Neutral: No Moral Information	40	5.3000	1.15421	.18250	4.9309	5.6691	1.00	7.00
	Alignment	52	5.3974	1.32849	.18423	5.0276	5.7673	1.00	7.00
	Total	130	5.0282	1.50682	.13216	4.7667	5.2897	1.00	7.00
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Misalignment	38	4.6118	1.13035	.18337	4.2403	4.9834	1.00	6.13
	Neutral: No Moral Information	40	5.3344	.85831	.13571	5.0599	5.6089	4.00	7.00
	Alignment	52	5.5986	.83407	.11566	5.3664	5.8308	4.00	7.00
	Total	130	5.2288	1.01731	.08922	5.0523	5.4054	1.00	7.00

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude Toward the Brand*	Between Groups	42.414	2	21.207	7.280	.001
	Within Groups	369.976	127	2.913		
	Total	412.390	129			
Purchase Intentions	Between Groups	33.842	2	16.921	8.295	.000
	Within Groups	259.055	127	2.040		
	Total	292.897	129			
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	Between Groups	22.020	2	11.010	12.542	.000
	Within Groups	111.485	127	.878		
	Total	133.504	129			

POST HOC TESTS - Attitude Toward the Brand*

Estimates

Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Misalignment	4.167	.277	3.619	4.715
Neutral: No Moral Information	5.158	.270	4.624	5.692
Alignment	5.538	.237	5.070	6.007

Pairwise Comparisons

(I) Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	(J) Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Misalignment	Neutral: No Moral Information	-.992*	.387	.034	-1.930	-.054
	Alignment	-1.372*	.364	.001	-2.256	-.488
Neutral: No Moral Information	Misalignment	.992*	.387	.034	.054	1.930
	Alignment	-.380	.359	.875	-1.251	.491
Alignment	Misalignment	1.372*	.364	.001	.488	2.256
	Neutral: No Moral Information	.380	.359	.875	-.491	1.251

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

POST HOC TESTS - Purchase Intentions

Estimates

Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Misalignment	4.237	.232	3.778	4.695
Neutral: No Moral Information	5.300	.226	4.853	5.747
Alignment	5.397	.198	5.006	5.789

Pairwise Comparisons

(I) Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	(J) Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Misalignment	Neutral: No Moral Information	-1.063*	.324	.004	-1.848	-.278
	Alignment	-1.161*	.305	.001	-1.900	-.421
Neutral: No Moral Information	Misalignment	1.063*	.324	.004	.278	1.848
	Alignment	-.097	.300	1.000	-.826	.631
Alignment	Misalignment	1.161*	.305	.001	.421	1.900
	Neutral: No Moral Information	.097	.300	1.000	-.631	.826

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

POST HOC TESTS - Consumer Perceived Empowerment

Estimates

Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Misalignment	4.612	.152	4.311	4.913
Neutral: No Moral Information	5.334	.148	5.041	5.628
Alignment	5.599	.130	5.341	5.856

Pairwise Comparisons

(I) Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	(J) Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Misalignment	Neutral: No Moral Information	-.723*	.212	.003	-1.237	-.208
	Alignment	-.987*	.200	.000	-1.472	-.502
Neutral: No Moral Information	Misalignment	.723*	.212	.003	.208	1.237
	Alignment	-.264	.197	.547	-.742	.214
Alignment	Misalignment	.987*	.200	.000	.502	1.472
	Neutral: No Moral Information	.264	.197	.547	-.214	.742

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

TABLE 17 Study 2 – Questionnaire Items

Measures	Items	
Attention check do the stimulus	"Indicate which of the sentences below are false"	4 statements
Attitude toward the brand (Mukherjee&Althuisen2020)	Good – Bad Pleasant – Unpleasant Like – Dislike	7-points Bipolar scale, these items were reversed on the analysis.
Purchase Intentions (Cambier & Poncin, 2020)	I am likely to purchase products from LINZ. I could consider buying products from LINZ if I need backpacks. It is possible for me to buy LINZ products.	Indicate your agreement with the following statements:
Word of Mouth (Fuchs, Prandelli & Schreier 2010)	I would recommend the products from this brand to my friends. I would talk about these backpacks to others. I would try to spread the word about these products..	7-points Likert Scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree Indicate your agreement with the following statements:
Consumer Perceived Empowerment (Cambier & Poncin, 2020 based on Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989)	LINZ has faith in its consumers. Consumers are taken seriously by LINZ. Consumers count for LINZ. Consumers are important to LINZ. LINZ thinks that its consumers are effective. LINZ thinks that its consumers are cooperating. Consumers are trusted by LINZ. LINZ consumers have a voice.	7-points Likert scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree
Psychological Ownership (Fuchs, Prandelli & Schreier 2010)	Its difficult to me to think of these backpacks as mine. The selected backpacks incorporate a part of myself. Although I do not legally own these backpacks yet, I have the feeling that they are 'my' backpacks. I feel that these products belong to me. I feel connected to these backpacks. I feel a strong sense of closeness with these products.	
Self-Brand Connection Scale Items (Escalas, 2004)	LINZ reflects who I am. I can identify with LINZ. I feel a personal connection with LINZ. LINZ brand reflects who I would like to be (my ideal self). LINZ is consistent with how I would like to see myself (my ideal self). People who are similar to the person that I would like to be (my ideal self), would use LINZ backpacks.	
Advertisement credibility (Prendergast, Liu, & Poon, 2009)	Overall, I think that this communication is... – credible. – plausible.	

	– realistic.	
Brand Perceptions	<p>LINZ is brave. LINZ is committed to moral stands. LINZ seems to have a strong sense of justice. LINZ is taking-risks. LINZ might suffer public backlash. Not everyone agree with LINZ. LINZ might suffer rejection. LINZ is defying-norms. LINZ cares about more than making profits. LINZ advocacy can have negative financial consequences. LINZ will probably lose money for it's advocacy. LINZ will probably suffer boycott for it's advocacy.</p>	
Ethical Dilemma (Sims, 1999)	<p>Section 7: MINOR STUDY - Ethical Decision Styles This is an unrelated minor study aiming to investigate ethical decision styles.</p> <p>Please read the scenario below and indicate how do you think you would probably behave. Remember there is no right or wrong answer.</p>	<p>Which of the alternatives below better describes how you would probably react in this situation? Say nothing. Casually mention to my supervisor that I was concerned about discriminatory practices. Quietly question the practices, stopping when resistance was given. Openly question the practices, going as far as necessary within the company, hoping to implement changes. Openly question the company's practices, and if necessary, go public, insisting on changes.</p>
Ethical Dilemma (Sims, 1999)	<p>Say nothing. Casually mention to my supervisor that I was concerned about discriminatory practices. Quietly question the practices, stopping when resistance was given. Openly question the practices, going as far as necessary within the company, hoping to implement changes.</p>	<p>Rate how much do you consider each option from the last section appropriate or inappropriate given the situation you read. 5-points scale. 1 = Extremely Appropriate to 5 =</p>

	Openly question the company's practices, and if necessary, go public, insisting on changes.	Extremely Inappropriate
Consumer Cynism (Helm, Moulard, & Richins, 2015).	<p>Most companies do not mind breaking the law; they just see fines and lawsuits as a cost of doing business.</p> <p>Most businesses are more interested in making profits than in serving consumers. Companies see consumers as puppets to manipulate.</p> <p>Manufacturers do not care what happens once I have bought the product.</p> <p>If I want to get my money's worth, I cannot believe what a company tells me.</p> <p>Most companies will sacrifice anything to make a profit.</p> <p>To make a profit, companies are willing to do whatever they can get away with.</p> <p>Most businesses will cut any corner they can to improve profit margins.</p>	<p>Indicate your agreement with the following statements:</p> <p>7-points Likert scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree</p>
Agreement with the brand's stand	All illegal immigrants should be asked to leave a country irrespective of how long they have been there"	1= Definitely no. 4= Definitely yes.
Demographics	<p>Age</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>White/Non-White</p> <p>Diet</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Political Views</p>	

TABLE 18 Study 2 - PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 3.5

Model: 6

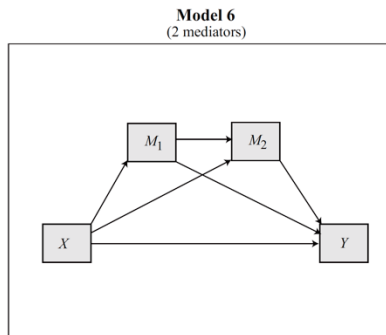


Image Source: Hayes (2017)

Y : Purchase Intentions

X : Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment -1 = Misalignment / 0 = Neutral / 1 = Alignment

M1 : Consumer Perceived Empowerment

M2 : Attitude Toward the Brand*

Sample Size: 130

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Consumer Perceived Empowerment**Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.3926	.1541	.8823	23.3223	1.0000	128.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.1769	.0831	62.3129	.0000	5.0125	5.3413
Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	.3124	.1501	4.8293	.0000	.2846	.6798

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Attitude Toward the Brand***Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5558	.3089	2.2242	28.3796	2.0000	127.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.3904	.7417	.5264	.5995	-1.0773	1.8582
Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	.2465	.1732	1.4235	.1570	-.0962	.5891
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	.8804	.1410	6.2454	.0000	.6015	1.1594

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Purchase Intentions**Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5558	.3089	2.2442	28.3796	2.0000	127.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-1.0426	.4303	-2.4230	.0168	-1.8942	-.1911
Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	-.0640	.1011	-.6326	.5282	-.2641	.1362
Consumer Perceived Empowerment	.8841	.0934	9.4657	.0000	.6993	1.0689
Attitude Toward the Brand*	.2898	.0514	5.6356	.0000	.1880	.3916

TOTAL EFFECT MODEL**OUTCOME VARIABLE: Purchase Intentions****Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.3060	.0937	2.0739	13.2281	1.0000	128.0000	.0004

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4.9682	.1274	39.0040	.0000	4.7162	5.2203
Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment	.5568	.1531	3.6370	.0004	.2539	.8597

TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y**Total effect of X on Y**

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.5568	.1531	3.6370	.0004	.2539	.8597

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-.0640	.1011	-.6326	.5282	-.2641	.1362

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	.6208	.1423	.3569	.9139	
Ind1	Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment → Consumer Perceived Empowerment → → Purchase Intentions	.4263	.1034	.2299	.6328
Ind2	Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment → Attitude Toward the Brand* → Purchase Intentions	.0714	.0557	-.0169	.2028
Ind3	Brand-Consumer Moral Alignment → Consumer Perceived Empowerment → Attitude Toward the Brand* → Purchase Intentions	.1230	.0519	.0493	.2550