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The Power of Controversy: An Experimental Study involving Brands' Market Share and
Consumers' Personal Power

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1. Abstract

This research aims at investigating the potential relationship between controversy, market share and consumers' perceptions of brand trust, power, and influence. Specifically, I examined whether controversial activities sponsored by brands with higher market share (vs. lower market share) may affect consumers' perception of these brands' power, influence, and trustworthiness. Furthermore, this research contributes to traditional compensatory consumption theories. Specifically, this research investigates the potential relationship existing between individuals with feelings of low personal power and low personal control and the purchase and referral intentions of controversial brands with higher (vs. lower) market share.

1.1 Keywords

Controversy; LGBTQ+; power; powerless.

2. Introduction and Research Question

The #metoo movement, concerns towards toxic masculinity, and the LGBTQ+ community's rights, are all examples of topics that spur daily controversies on moral issues in Western societies. Society has become progressively polarized, and debates concerning personal freedom, equality, and civil rights occur on a daily basis. Throughout the years, several companies launched initiatives and joined these debates by taking a specific side on controversial topics, especially through advertisements. Indeed, even though controversial initiatives carry the risk of potential disapproval among the public opinion, taking a stand on controversial issues is a growing phenomenon among companies (Bachnik, Nowacki 2018). In fact, companies deliberately started participating in controversial debates with the aim of increasing their attractiveness and therefore the interest of potential customers (Arnaud, Curtis, Waguespack, 2018). Interestingly, some brands received backlash for such decision, whereas other brands managed to expand their customer base. Prior research does not provide a clear explanation for these different results. Indeed, prior studies have mostly focused on how topic (e.g. sex, death; Sabri, Obermiller, 2012), culture (Chan, Li, Dihel, Terlutter, 2007), communication mean (Sabri 2017), and consumer emotions (Arnaud, Curtis, Waguespack, 2018), may play a role. However, this prior research has never focused on investigating the effect that brands' market share may have on the positive (vs negative) outcome of a controversial initiative. Therefore, I posit that this prior research is insufficient to fully understand the phenomenon, since it did not provide any explanation on the motives that may encourage consumers to perceive differently controversial activities sponsored by brands with higher (vs lower) market share.

In this research, I argue that brands that take a stand on a controversial issue are perceived as being more powerful, influential and trustworthy. This should happen because taking position in a controversy is a behaviour characterized by high degrees of risk, since it

may lead brands to incur in high social costs (e.g. social disapproval, punishment; Bellezza, Gino, Keinan, 2014). Consequently, I hypothesize that taking a stand in a controversy will work as a signaling factor of one brand's power, influence, and competence (an antecedent of trust; Becerra Badrinarayanan, 2013) among consumers. This assumption is based on prior research that proved how similar socially risky behaviours may work as signaling factors about the qualities of the agent (e.g., students at top schools tend to perceive unshaved male professors wearing a t-shirt as more competent than shaved professors wearing a tie; Bellezza, Gino, Keinan, 2014).

Furthermore, I argue that this holds true especially for brands with higher (vs lower market share). I posit that this should happen because in brands with higher market share the social cost for incurring in controversial initiatives should be higher than the possible benefits arising from it. This is the reason why I posit that consumers will perceive them as sincere, and their involvement in controversies should be less likely to be received with skepticism. On the other hand, I believe that at decreasing levels of market share, the same mechanism will tend not to apply. In fact, I argue that at low levels of market share, consumers might perceive that there are substantial potential benefits arising from controversial campaigns – for instance, in terms of gaining brand awareness. Therefore, I argue that these brands are more likely to be perceived as opportunistic, and their participation in controversy might be seen as more self-interested, since they have more to gain.

Finally, since I hypothesize that taking a stand on a controversial issue leads to higher perceptions of brands' power and influence (under the market share conditions above), I also hypothesize that these brands will be particularly appealing for consumers with low chronic personal power and personal control. Indeed, I claim that powerless consumers, as long as they agree with a brand's controversial position, will be positively inclined to buy and recommend controversial brands with higher market share, in an attempt to restore their personal sense of

power and control. This belief is in line with previous research on compensatory consumption, that suggests that consumers who experience a negative state, for instance a lack of status (O’Cass, Frost, 2002) or a lack of control (Beck, Rahinel, Bleier, 2019), tend to restore them by purchasing or recommending high-agency brands. The current research contributes to this literature because it shows a novel domain (controversy) that consumers might use to restore their sense of power and control in the marketplace. Moreover, the present research enriches the understanding of brands controversial activities’ effectiveness as well as the relationship between consumers’ personal control, personal power, and brand preferences. Investigating these relationships is extremely important in today’s marketplace, as numerous individuals feel powerless or with low control, for instance due to the current outbreak of COVID-19 but also to the generalized perception of living in a chaotic world (Beck, Rahinel, Bleier 2019).

2.1 The concept of Controversy

The notion of controversy is different from the concept of brand crisis resulting from brand misconducts (e.g. Volkswagen crisis in 2015; Baghi, Gabrielli, 2019). In this research, I consider as controversial activities displaying a gay couple in an advertisement (e.g. Ikea in 1994), using a commercial to take a stand against toxic masculinity (e.g. Gillette in 2019), or statements from leaders of a given company on a specific controversial topic (e.g. Barilla’s CEO against the use of gay couples in commercials in 2013 or Abercrombie’s CEO against curvy people in 2006). In conclusion, in the current research I define brand controversies as intentional activities carried out by brands and aimed at taking a position within a controversial topic, which is a topic characterized by heated debates and polarized views.

3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Generation

3.1 Controversy, Brand Trust, Authenticity and Skepticism

I argue that depending on their level of market share, controversial brands might elicit different perceptions of trust among consumers, defined as consumers’ willingness “to rely on the ability

of the brand to provide its stated functions” (Chaudhuri, Holbrook, 2002). Of note, I believe it is important to study brand trust in the current research since it is a crucial factor to consider in brand success (Rajavi, Kushwaha, Steenkamp, 2019), and companies should aim at preserving it. Nevertheless, evidence is suggesting how consumers’ trust on brands is sharply decreasing over time (Rajavi, Kushwaha, Steenkamp, 2019); for instance, in 2016 it was demonstrated that in the previous decade B2B brands with a high score in trust grew by 80%, whereas brands that scored low in the same parameter only grew by 25% (Millward, Brown 2016). I built my theorizing on the premise that by taking a stand on a controversial issue, brands are pursuing a non-conforming behaviour which involves potentially high social costs, since by definition this behavior is not universally accepted. Prior research as shown that agents that do this, are perceived as more sincere. For instance, people who choose socially risky behaviors, such as the adoption of a politically incorrect language, are perceived as more authentic (Rosenblum, Gino, Schroeder, 2019), an antecedent of trust (Hernandez-Fernandez, Lewis, 2019). However, no previous author investigated the impact that one brand’s market position can have on the perceived authenticity of its controversial positions, while I consider this an important variable that should be deeply analyzed. In fact, many studies already demonstrated how nowadays consumers are extremely skeptical and suspicious about the motives behind a brand’s decision to support a certain cause (Anuar and Mohamad, 2012; Campbell and Kirmani, 2000; Webb and Mohr, 1998). This is why, in line with previous research, I argue that this skepticism can lead consumers to question whether one brand’s decision to support a social cause was designed to actually benefit the social cause with sincere social concern, or to fulfill the company’s benefit (Bae, 2017). In fact, it has already been demonstrated that if consumers perceive one brand’s CSR activity as arising from self-interest and not benevolence, this will result in negative consequences in terms of brand trust (Chernev, Blair, 2015). Building on this finding, I claim that consumers will tend to be more skeptical about controversial activities (ex:

defending LGBTQ+ rights or immigration) sponsored by brands with lower (vs. higher) market share and will tend to perceive them as opportunistic behaviours (for instance: aimed at increasing brand awareness and maximizing their own profits rather than defending a social cause). Intuitively, the controversial activity will not result in higher levels of brand trust for these brands. On the other hand, the higher the market share, the higher the perceptions that brands might have more to lose than to gain (Bellezza, Gino, Keinan, 2013) from participating in the dispute, since being controversial may be extremely dangerous for companies (Bachnik, Nowacki, 2018). Brands with higher market share have a more secure position in the market, which they are exposing to risk. In sum, the higher (vs. lower) the market share, the more (less) consumers will be inclined to perceive brands' controversial activities as arising from benevolence and not self-interest (Chernev, Blair, 2015); thus, consumers should be less (more) skeptical about the brand's claims, and they will perceive the brand as more (less) authentic and trust it more.

3.2 Controversy, Power, and Influence

In the present research, brands pursue of a controversial activity is classified as a non-conforming behaviour. Indeed, controversies, such as non-conforming behaviours in general, can be risky and costly and may lead to punishment and rejection (Anderson *et al.* 2008). In fact, non-conforming behaviours often present a social cost (Levine, 1989), hence in order to avoid them, individuals tend to behave according to social norms and expectations regarding appropriate conduct (Bellezza, Gino, Keinan, 2014). Despite that, past research already demonstrated that under certain specific circumstances, deliberate non-conforming behaviours may be more beneficial than conforming behaviours and can help signaling higher status and competence to others (Bellezza, Gino, Keinan, 2014). Building on this finding, I argue that the higher one controversial brand's market share, the higher will be consumers' perception of its power and influence. In line with previous authors, in the present study I define power as “the

set of personal characteristics and/or roles that allow an individual to influence others and make them do things they would not do otherwise” (Lammers, *et al.* 2009). In addition, I define influence as “the psychological or behavioural effect that an agent has upon a target” (Bennett, 1988). As previously mentioned, in the current study I posit that controversial brands with higher market share will be perceived as more powerful and influential than before, whereas the same mechanism will tend not apply to brands with lower market share. This belief relies on the different perceptions of risk that consumers may attribute to controversial brands with higher (vs lower) market share. In fact, the higher the market share, the higher will be consumers’ perception of risk associated with the controversial activity, given that at increasing levels of market share, brands may have more to lose than to gain from the controversy. Consequently, I believe that the increasing perception of risk associated with higher levels of market share, will lead consumers to perceive the specific controversial behaviour as an expression of freedom and power (Bellezza, Gino, Keinan, 2013; Anderson, Galinsky, 2006), meaning that the brand can behave in a non-conforming manner since it can afford the cost of its actions (Bellezza, Gino, and Keinan 2013). Moreover, since controversies can be beneficial for companies (Dahl, Frankenberger, Manchanda, 2003; Sabri 2012), I argue that at decreasing levels of brands’ market share consumers will tend to perceive controversial behaviours as a result of necessity (e.g., an attempt aimed at spreading brand awareness and gain positions in the market). Consequently, since for brands with lower market share the risk of being involved in a scandal seems to be lower than the possible benefits arising from it, I argue that at decreasing levels of market share consumers will tend to perceive controversial brands as powerless.

Hypothesis 1: Controversy (vs non controversy) generates higher brand trust, perception of brand power and influence in brands with higher (lower) market share, provided that consumers share brand’s controversial position.

3.3 Chronic Personal Power and Personal Control

Power holds a crucial role in our own lives, and individuals are usually segmented into powerful and powerless roles (Rucker, Galinsky, 2008). However, the perception of personal power does not only depend on the official role that each individual covers in a specific hierarchical system, but it is strongly influenced by the context and specific situations (e.g. CEO could feel powerless when best employee leaves for a competitor; Rucker, Galinsky, 2008). Therefore, building on the previously mentioned concept of power, I define chronic personal power as the perception of one's capacity to influence others (Anderson, John, Keltner, 2012). Inside the notion of personal power, assumes relevance the concept of personal control. In the present research, the latter is delineated as the perception of one's capacity to obtain all desired outcomes, avoid all undesired outcomes and achieve personal goals (Landau, Kay, 2015). Consequently, it seems evident that powerlessness is often complemented by perceived loss of control over one's own behaviour and the behaviour of others (Rucker, Galinsky, 2008). Past research showed that having higher levels of power fosters optimism and action (Anderson, Galinsky, 2006), and benefits even physical health (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, Ickovics, 2000) and longevity (Marmot, 2004). Furthermore, having low power and low control is usually accompanied with important negative consequences (Weary, 1993; Operario and Fisk 2001). Therefore, this prior research suggests that personal power and control are desired states and that low personal power and low personal control are aversive states (Rucker, Galinsky, 2008). Therefore, I theorize that individuals who feel a lack of personal power and control will try to activate mechanisms to evade from this aversive state, through a mechanism dubbed "compensatory consumption". Compensatory consumption consists in purchasing symbols and objects, or engaging in behaviors (such as word-of-mouth, henceforth *WOM*) that are representative of desired traits and abilities (Mandel, 2017) or that allow to compensate a negative state/restore a desired state (e.g., a perceived lack of personal control; Consiglio, De

Angelis, Costabile, 2018). The aim is to resolve specific self-discrepancies, or rather incongruencies between current perceived state and desired state (Beck, Rahinel, Bleier, 2019). Many examples of compensatory consumption behaviours were identified in previous research. For instance, previous research already demonstrated how low social status (O’Cass, Frost, 2002), gender insecurities (Witkowski, 2020) or being physically short (Lisjak, 2014) can fuel compensatory consumption behaviours. However, the current research is specifically focused in studying specific compensatory mechanisms that would arise with the aim of restoring a loss in perceived personal power and control. Past research has provided evidence for the link between feeling powerless and purchasing from brand leaders (Beck, Rahinel, Bleier, 2019) or spreading positive WOM about them, in an attempt to boost personal self-image (Chark, Fong, Tang, 2019). In fact, being associated with such high-agency entities would contribute to restore an individual’s feelings of personal power and control (Beck, Rahinel, Bleier, 2019). Based on this, and given that I predict that brands with higher (vs. lower) market share are perceived as powerful and influential, I also predict that they will be particularly appealing to consumers who chronically feel powerless or who feel a lack of perceived control. Therefore, I hypothesize that consumers in a current state of low perceived personal power or control, as long as they agree with a brand’s controversial position, will try to restore either state by purchasing and recommending controversial brands with higher market share (vs lower market share).

Hypothesis 2: Controversy in brands with higher market share (vs low market share) generates higher purchase intentions and positive brand referrals in consumers with low (vs high) level of personal power and control, provided that they agree with the brands’ controversial initiative.

4. Methodology

For the purpose of this research, a pre-test and one experiment were conducted. The pre-test was performed on a small sample of participants, and it was aimed at selecting the controversial

topic to be presented in the experiment. In the main experiment, I tested the abovementioned hypotheses, as well as one potential alternative explanation for the hypothesized effects. Namely, there might be a potential positive relationship between controversy and perceived brand uniqueness, which in turn might increase purchase intentions in consumers with high (vs. low) need for uniqueness.

4.1 Controversial Topic: pre-test and results

As previously mentioned, in the present research I define controversial issues as topics generally characterized by opposing views which are difficult to reconcile. For the purpose of this research, I therefore needed to select a specific topic that matched this definition. In order to do so, an exploratory questionnaire was distributed within a small sample of individuals (n=30). Respondents stated whether they were favorable, against or neutral, with respect to specific controversial topics. Furthermore, they rated, according to their personal perception, the level of controversy characterizing each of the mentioned specific topics (1 = Not controversial at all, 5 = Very controversial). The controversial topics cited in the survey were abortion, LGBTQ+ adoptions, LGBTQ+ marriages, feminism, and toxic masculinity. Results showed that LGBTQ+ adoptions were perceived as being the most controversial topic (M = 4.3 SD = 1.21). Toxic masculinity was the least perceived controversial topic (M = 2.83, SD = 1.23). Of note, the majority of respondents showed support to LGBTQ+ marriages (97%) and LGBTQ+ adoptions (93%), therefore this represents a topic that is perceived as controversial, but that the majority of the sample would agree with. As a result, LGBTQ+ adoptions were selected as the controversial topic to be described in my final survey.

4.2 The main experiment

In order to test the abovementioned main hypothesis, an online survey was built and distributed. Specifically, participants took part in an experiment in which they were provided with a vignette concerning a controversial (vs non-controversial) advertising campaign sponsored by “Blue

Jeans”, a fictitious brand with very high market share (vs low market share). The survey was organized into three main sections, as follows:

Hypothetical Scenario. “Blue Jeans” was used as the brand name in the scenario, in order to keep the brand as neutral as possible. This is also the reason why for the purpose of the study, I took the decision not to use real brand names: I wanted to avoid the effect of pre-existing brand attitudes. Finally, the fictitious controversy concerned the launch of an advertisement on Facebook by “Blue Jeans” for Mother’s Day. The controversial ad was depicting a LGBTQ+ family composed by two mothers and a kid (vs non-controversial ad presenting a heterosexual couple). The launch of the advertisement occurred during Mother’s Day to emphasize even more the potential controversy.

Questions on the scenario. For the purpose of testing the first hypothesis, participants answered questions measuring their perception of brand trust, brand power, and influence concerning “Blue Jeans”. In this empirical study, I also addressed a potential alternative mechanism for the hypothesized effects: brand uniqueness (i.e. “the extent to which consumers regard one specific brand as different from the others”; Franke and Schreier, 2008). Indeed, controversy might work as a strong differentiating factor, resulting in higher levels of perceived brand uniqueness. Since brands that engage in controversy might be perceived as more unique, this in turn might be appealing for consumers who have higher need for uniqueness, that is those consumers who aim to differentiate themselves from others (Berger, Heath, 2007) through the acquisition of consumer goods (Tian, Bearden, Hunter, 2001).

Personal Questions. The last part of the survey contained questions measuring respondents’ chronic personal power, personal control and need for uniqueness. Furthermore, it also contained exploratory questions concerning the feelings of personal control and emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, even though my hypotheses deal with chronic personal

power and control, the current circumstances are exceptionally affecting our freedom as well as our perceptions of the order and predictability in our world. Therefore, I found relevant to measure this construct, since I argue that it may be reconducted to a form of temporary personal control. As a matter of fact, I believe that respondents who feel oppressed by Government restrictions and feel their own freedom violated, are no other than individuals who experience a loss in personal control. Thus, it is important to include this measure to account for any possible variation in perceived control due to the current situation since it might also affect our outcome variables, above and beyond chronic levels of power.

4.3 Procedure

An online survey was built on the Qualtrics platform and distributed on Prolific among 201 UK and US-based respondents. Participation in the research study was voluntary, and participants were paid 1.05£. Responses were anonymous and participants were not forced to respond to any question. At the beginning of the experiment, participants were provided with an initial consent form in which they indicated if they wanted to participate in the study or not, after reading detailed information about it. The experiment employed a 2 (market share: higher vs. lower) x 2 (advertisement: controversial vs. non-controversial) between-subject design, and participants were randomly assigned to one of the four resulting conditions, in which they read a hypothetical scenario. Namely, each participant read about a brand with high (*or low*) market share, using either a non-controversial [*or a controversial*] ad, as follows:

-Imagine that “Blue Jeans” is the jeans brand with the highest market share (*a very low market share*) in your country. This means that the majority of people (*only a few people*) who buy jeans choose this brand. This brand launched a campaign for Mother's Day, with a Facebook ad. This ad depicts a man and a woman [*two women*] sitting on a sofa in a nicely decorated living room. They are hugging each other and smiling, they seem very happy. Between them, a little kid around 5-6 years old is hugging both, he seems to be in

seventh heaven. They are all wearing "Blue Jeans". At the bottom of the ad, you read the following slogan: "Happy Mother's Day to all moms!"-

Next, because the success of my manipulation of controversy and market share hinges on participants reading the scenario, all participants completed an attention check. Namely, they answered a multiple-choice question asking whether the scenario depicted a brand with high (or low) market share, and whether it described a LGBTQ+ family (vs. not).

Questions on the scenario. Participants answered a battery of questions concerning the brand in the scenario, namely: brand power, brand trust, brand uniqueness, purchase intentions and positive referral intentions (full scales reported in Table 1 in appendix). I presented each set of questions (for each construct) in random order, and the order in which the scale items appeared in each set was also random.

Brand trust was assessed through a four-item scale (e.g., "I would trust "Blue Jeans;" 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Becerra, Badrinarayanan, 2013), whereas authenticity was measured using a three-item ad hoc scale, based on Rosenblum *et al.* (2019) (e.g., "Blue Jeans is authentic"; 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Skepticism was captured through a three-item scale (e.g., "I believe Blue Jeans ad for Mother's Day is credible"; 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Bae, 2017), and competence has been analyzed using another three-item scale, based on Rosenblum *et al.* (2019) (e.g.: "I believe Blue Jeans is good at what it does"; 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Furthermore, the construct of brand power and influence were assessed through two different scales: the first one, aimed at measuring brand power, comprised eight items (e.g.: "The brand Blue Jeans can get people to listen what it says"; 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Anderson, John, Keltner, 2012) whereas the latter, intended to observe brand influence, consisted of four items (e.g.: "Blue Jeans can have an effect on society"; 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree; Beck, Rahinel, Bleier, 2019). Moreover, uniqueness was captured through an ad-hoc four-item scale based on Southworth *et*

al. (2016) (e.g.: “I believe Blue Jeans is a unique brand”; 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree). The level of risk related to the specific marketing campaign was assessed through an ad-hoc four-item scale (e.g.: “With this marketing campaign, Blue Jeans is taking a great risk”; 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree). Purchase intentions was measured using a four-item scale (e.g.: “If Blue Jeans were real, and if it were available at a good price, I would probably buy Blue Jeans”; 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree; Becerra, Badrinarayanan, 2013). Finally, positive brand referrals were assessed by a three-item scale (e.g.: “If Blue Jeans were real, if it were available at a good price, and if my friends were looking for a new pair of jeans, I would recommend Blue Jeans”; 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Becerra, Badrinarayanan, 2013).

Personal Questions. Finally, participants completed a battery of more personal questions aimed at measuring their chronic level of personal power, personal control, need for uniqueness, and temporary personal control and emotions during the COVID-19 outbreak, (Table 1 in appendix). Each set of questions (for each construct) was presented in random order, and the order in which the scale items appeared in each set was also random.

Specifically, chronic personal power was measured by adapting the same scale formerly used to observe brand power (e.g.: “I can get people to do what I want”; 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree; Anderson, John, Keltner, 2012). Chronic personal control was assessed using a four-item scale (e.g.: “I like to be in control of most things that happen in my life”; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Burger, Cooper, 1979). Moreover, respondents’ need for uniqueness was captured utilizing a four-item scale (e.g.: “I often look at one of a kind brands to create my own style”; 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree; Tian, Bearden, Hunter, 2001). I also assessed the effects that the current confinement at home may have had on respondents through an ad-hoc four-items scale based on the reactance construct introduced by Levav *et al.* (2009) (e.g.: “Current government restrictions make me feel oppressed”; 1 =

Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree). Therefore, through this four-item scale, respondents' level of oppression, discomfort, and psychological malaise caused by the current Government restrictions was measured. In addition, I also assessed respondents' temporary level of personal control during the current pandemic adapting a four-item scale (e.g.: "Due to the spread of COVID-19, in the past weeks I felt that... I had control over my surroundings"; 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Burger, Cooper, 1979). Additionally, the PANAS scale was used to measure participants emotions during the current circumstances (e.g.: "In the past few weeks, the COVID-19 situation made me feel... upset"; 1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much; Watson, Clark, Tellegen, 1988). Finally, last questions concerned participants degree of agreement with LGBTQ+ adoptions ("To what extent do you agree with LGBTQ+ adoptions?"; 1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) and respondents' demographics were provided.

5. Results

Ten participants (4.9% of the sample) failed to answer the attention check and therefore were excluded from the following analyses. No significant difference between scenarios in terms of excluded participants ($\chi^2(3) = 5.535, p = 0.137$) were detected. Before performing the analysis, I also tested the reliability of all scales. All scales had sufficient reliability ($\alpha > 0.70$) and for each of them I computed an average index.

Hypothesis 1: Controversy (vs non controversy) generates higher brand trust, perception of brand power and influence in brands with higher (lower) market share, provided that consumers share brand's controversial position.

In order to test this first hypothesis, I used the procedure outlined by Hayes (2009) and studied the effect of the three-way interaction between controversy, level of market share, and level of agreement with LGBTQ+ adoptions (I will refer to this variable as "LGBTQ+" from now on) on each dependent variable: brand trust, brand power, brand influence, and brand uniqueness. No significant three way interactions emerged. In light of these results, I do not have evidence

supporting my first hypothesis. However, the following main effects and two-way interactions emerged.

Brand trust. A 2 (non-controversy vs controversy) x 2 (low market share vs market leader) between-subjects ANOVA was performed, using the ratings concerning the perceived level of brand trust as the dependent variable (Graph 2 in appendix). The analysis did not reveal a significant main effect for controversy ($F(1, 189) = 0.078, p = 0.78$), it revealed a significant main effect for market share ($F(1, 189) = 13.291, p < 0.001$), but no significant interaction ($F(1, 189) = 1.50, p = 0.222$). Therefore, no matter their level of controversy, participants trusted brands with high market share more ($M = 4.97, SD = 0.92$) than brands with low market share ($M = 4.48, SD = 0.91$).

Brand power. A similar ANOVA analysis was conducted for perceived levels of brand power and revealed a significant main effect for the level of market share ($F(1, 189) = 71.131, p < 0.001$), but no significant effect of controversy ($F(1, 189) = 0.239, p = 0.589$). A significant interaction between the two independent variables was found ($F(1, 189) = 4.92, p = 0.028$). As shown in Graph 3 (appendix), participants tended to perceive brands with high market share as more powerful ($M = 4.53, SD = 0.79$) than brands with low market share ($M = 3.54, SD = 0.78$), especially when these brands were non-controversial.

Brand influence. An analysis including brand influence as dependent variable, and controversy, LGBTQ+, and their two-way interactions ($R^2 = 0.16, F(3, 185) = 11.59, p < 0.001$) revealed a significant interaction between controversy and LGBTQ+ ($B = 0.29, t(185) = 2.35, p = 0.019; F_{change}(1, 185) = 5.54, p = 0.019$). The analysis revealed that at high LGBTQ+ (+1SD), respondents perceived controversial brands (vs. non-controversial brands) as more influential ($B = 1.35, t(185) = 5.48, p < 0.001$). Participants characterized by low LGBTQ+ (-1SD) did so to a lesser extent ($B = 0.52, t(185) = 2.13, p = 0.035$) (Graph 4 in appendix).

In addition, a significant main effect on both market share ($F(1, 189) = 28.525, p < 0.001$) and controversy ($F(1, 189) = 32.475, p < 0.001$) was detected, as well as a marginally significant interaction between the two variables ($F(1, 189) = 3.435, p = 0.065$). Controversy leads brands to be perceived as more influential ($M = 4.31, SD = 1.19$) than non-controversial brands ($M = 3.37, SD = 1.22$), and at the same time brands with high market share ($M = 4.27, SD = 1.08$) as more influential than brands with low market share ($M = 3.38, SD = 1.34$); in addition, according to Graph 5 (appendix), brands with low market share are perceived as less influential, especially when they are not controversial. Therefore, controversy seems to be particularly advantageous for brands with low market share in terms of perceived brand influence.

To prove the latter statement, I ran the analysis delineated by Hayes (2009) to study the interaction between controversy and market share and its potential effect on brand influence ($R^2 = 0.26; F(3, 185) = 21.95, p < 0.001$). I detected a marginally significant interaction between the two ($B = -0.60, t(185) = -1.85, p = 0.065; Fchange(1, 185) = 3.44, p = 0.065$); at low levels of market share, controversy has a significant positive effect on brand influence ($B = 1.23, t(185) = 5.32, p < 0.001$), even more than for brands with high market share ($B = 0.63, t(185) = 2.73, p = 0.0070$).

Brand uniqueness. Another analysis featuring controversy and LGBTQ+ as independent variables and brand uniqueness as dependent variable was completed ($R^2 = 0.15, F(3, 185), p < 0.001$). The analysis disclosed a significant two-way interaction between controversy and LGBTQ+ ($B = 0.39, t(185) = 2.87, p = 0.005; Fchange(1, 185) = 8.23, p = 0.005$). Decomposition of this interaction revealed that at low levels of LGBTQ+ (-1SD), participants' perception of brand uniqueness did not significantly differ from controversial to non-controversial brands ($p = 0.24$), whereas participants with high LGBTQ+ (+1SD) significantly

perceived non-controversial brands as less unique than controversial brands ($B = 1.42, t(185) = 5.27, p < 0.001$) (Graph 6 in appendix).

An ANOVA analysis performed using brand uniqueness as the dependent variable resulted in a significant main effect for controversy ($F(1, 189) = 20.61, p < 0.001$) and a significant main effect for market share ($F(1, 189) = 9.21, p = 0.003$). Respondents perceived as more unique controversial brands ($M = 3.93, SD = 1.37$) than non-controversial brands ($M = 3.06, SD = 1.32$), and at the same time brand leaders ($M = 3.79, SD = 1.27$) than brands with low market share ($M = 3.19, SD = 1.49$). Moreover, a marginally significant two-way interaction between the level of controversy and the level of market share was found ($F(1, 189) = 1.74, p = 0.055$). The graphical representation of this ANOVA analysis (Graph 7 in appendix) reveals that for both brands with high and low market share, controversy improves consumers' perception of their brand uniqueness; nevertheless, brands with low market share seem to particularly benefit from controversy in terms of brand uniqueness.

Benevolence. Additionally, I ran an analysis using respondents' level of perceived brand benevolence in the making of the marketing campaign ($R^2 = 0.08, F(3, 185), p = 0.01$), and found a significant two-way interaction between controversy and LGBTQ+ ($B = 0.2315, t(185) = 2.47, p = 0.01; F\text{-change}(1, 185) = 6.07, p = 0.01$). This interaction had a significant effect on the perception of the benevolence of the brand. In order to detect the effect of this two-way interaction on brand benevolence I ran a floodlight analysis, since significant effects emerge only beyond $\pm 1SD$, that is an even higher and lower levels of LGBTQ+. This analysis revealed that participants at very high levels of LGBTQ+ (> 6.54) tended to perceive controversial brands as benevolent in a significant way ($B = 0.30, t(185) = 1.97, p = 0.05$), whereas at very low levels of LGBTQ+ (< 2.2), participants were skeptical about the motives behind such controversial campaign ($B = -0.70, t(185) = -1.98, p = 0.05$) (Graph 8 in appendix).

Authenticity. Here, I studied the effect that the interaction between LGBTQ+ and controversy may have on the perceived authenticity of the brand ($R^2 = 0.06$, $F(3, 185) = 3.82$, $p = 0.01$). The analysis disclosed a significant two-way interaction effect on the perceived authenticity of the brand ($B = 0.23$, $t(185) = 2.46$, $p = 0.01$; $Fchange(1, 185) = 6.06$, $p = 0.01$). In order to detect the effect of such interaction on brand authenticity, I ran a floodlight analysis which revealed that at high LGBTQ+ (> 5.9) participants significantly perceived controversial brands as authentic ($B = 0.26$, $t(185) = 1.98$, $p = 0.05$), whereas at very low levels of LGBTQ+ (< 2.2), participants perception of controversial brands' authenticity decreased in a marginally significant way ($B = -0.60$, $t(185) = -1.65$, $p = 0.09$) (Graph 9 in appendix).

To summarize, higher levels of market share lead to higher levels of perceived brand trust, brand power, brand influence and brand uniqueness. Besides that, at increasing levels of LGBTQ+, participants tended to perceive controversial brands as more influential, authentic and benevolent, and perceived non-controversial brands as significantly less unique. At lower levels of LGBTQ+, participants believed controversial brands to be more influential, but significantly less authentic and benevolent.

5.1 Exploratory Analysis

Even if not part of the main hypotheses, I made use of the model introduced by Hayes (2009) to explore the effect that controversy, LGBTQ+ and their two-way interaction may have on purchase intentions and brand referrals as dependent variables.

Purchase Intentions. As previously mentioned, I investigated the potential effect that the interaction between controversy and LGBTQ+ may have on purchase intentions as the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.06$, $F(3, 185) = 4.11$, $p = 0.007$). The analysis revealed a significant two-way interaction between controversy and LGBTQ+ ($B = 0.43$, $t(185) = 3.19$, $p = 0.002$; $Fchange(1, 185) = 10.18$, $p = 0.002$). The two-way interaction had a significant effect on

purchase decisions, which was detected with a floodlight analysis. Specifically, participants with high LGBTQ+ (> 6.12) ($B = 0.39$, $t(185) = 1.97$, $p = 0.05$), showed higher intentions to purchase from controversial brands than from non-controversial brands. On the other hand, at low LGBTQ+ (< 3.68) participants' intention to purchase from controversial brands significantly decreased ($B = -0.67$, $t(185) = -1.97$, $p = 0.05$) (Graph 10 appendix).

Brand referrals. The same analysis was performed using brand referrals as the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.10$, $F(3,167) = 6.31$, $p = 0.004$). Concerning the previously mentioned two-way interaction, a significant effect on brand referrals was found ($B = 0.39$, $t(167) = 2.95$, $p = 0.004$; $F_{change}(1,167) = 8.70$, $p = 0.004$). Making use of a floodlight analysis, I was able to detect that at high LGBTQ+ (> 5.41) participants preferred to spread positive WOM about controversial brands than non-controversial brands ($B = 0.40$, $t(167) = 1.97$, $p = 0.05$), whereas at low LGBTQ+ (< 1.6), participants' intention to refer controversial brands significantly decreased ($B = -1.24$, $t(167) = -1.97$, $p = 0.05$). (Graph 11 in appendix).

5.2 Chronic personal power as moderator.

Hypothesis 2: Controversy in brands with higher market share (vs low market share) generates higher purchase intentions and positive brand referrals in consumers with low (vs high) level of personal power and control, provided that they agree with the brands' controversial initiative.

In order to test the second hypothesis, first of all, I ascertained whether the level of LGBTQ+ was a moderator, as hypothesized. I ran ANOVA analyses, with purchase intentions and brand referrals as dependent variables, controversy and level of market share (fixed factors), chronic personal power (covariate), and all interactions between these variables, taking into consideration respondents with a LGBTQ+ index > 4 (vs. < 4). No significant differences were found depending on the level of LGBTQ+. Therefore, the following analyses are performed without LGBTQ+ as a moderator. Not even significant three-way interactions between

controversy, level of market share and personal power or personal control were found, therefore the second hypothesis was not supported. I report below some interesting two-way interactions that emerged from the analysis.

Purchase Intentions. Following the procedure outlined by Hayes (2009), I investigated the potential effect that the interaction between level of market share and chronic personal power may have on purchase intentions ($R^2 = 0.12$, $F(3, 184) = 8.25$, $p < 0.001$). This analysis revealed a significant two-way interaction between the level of market share and the level of personal power ($B = 0.40$, $t(184) = 1.98$, $p = 0.05$; $F_{change}(1, 184) = 3.90$, $p = 0.05$). By further decomposing this interaction, it was possible to detect that at higher levels of chronic personal power (+1SD), individuals were more likely to purchase from brands with high market share ($B = 1.21$, $t(184) = 4.61$, $p < 0.001$). (Graph 12 in appendix).

Brand Referrals. The same analysis was conducted using controversy as the factor, the level of chronic personal power as the moderator, and studied their interaction with the aim of detecting possible effects on positive brand referrals ($R^2 = 0.07$, $F(3, 166) = 4.05$, $p = 0.008$). A marginally significant two-way interaction between controversy and chronic personal power was found ($B = -0.36$, $t(166) = -1.77$, $p = 0.078$; $F_{change}(1, 166) = 3.13$, $p = 0.078$), which resulted in a significant positive impact on the willingness to spread positive WOM about the brand at low levels of personal power (-1SD) ($B = 0.86$, $t(166) = 3.24$, $p = 0.001$). There was no significant difference in terms of brand referrals in respondents characterized by a high level of personal power (+1SD) ($p = 0.47$) (Graph 13 in appendix).

5.3 Exploratory analysis: Level of discomfort arising from confinement during the COVID-19 outbreak (temporary personal control) as moderator.

I investigated the interaction between controversy and temporary personal control and studied its potential effect on purchase intentions as the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.12$, $F(3, 185) =$

8.22, $p < 0.001$). As a result, a marginally significant two-way interaction on purchase intentions was detected ($B = 0.19$, $t(185) = 1.54$, $p = 0.1$; $F_{change}(1,185) = 2.38$, $p = 0.1$). Specifically, in line with the traditional compensatory consumption theory, a lack in temporary personal control due to Government restrictions (+1SD), led participants to increasingly purchase from brand leaders ($B = 1.09$, $t(185) = 4.17$, $p < 0.001$) (Graph 14 in appendix).

6. General Discussion, Limitations and Further Research.

Even though results did not provide sufficient data to support my hypotheses, I am still capable of drawing important conclusions that can have a great impact on further research.

Controversies. The present research confirmed how powerful brand's controversial behaviours may be. Indeed, and obviously, supporters of LGBTQ+ adoptions seemed to support controversial brands, no matter their level of market share. This simply indicates that consumers who support a certain cause will tend to support brands with the same ideals. On the other hand, the present study also confirmed how, at the same time, controversies may be particularly risky for brands. As a matter of fact, participants against LGBTQ+ adoptions reacted in the very opposite manner, meaning that they tended not to purchase nor recommend the controversial brand. However, it seems interesting the mechanism that led LGBTQ+ supporters/opponents to divergent behaviours in terms of purchase and referral intentions of controversial brands. According to the results, it was possible to detect a significant difference in terms of perception of the brand's motives to launch the controversial campaign between participants with high and low LGBTQ+. I argue that this result is key to understand the different outcomes in terms of purchase and referral intentions between the two groups. As a matter of fact, respondents with high LGBTQ+ perceived controversial brands as significantly more benevolent. This means that this portion of respondents, genuinely believed that controversial brands engaged in the LGBTQ-related controversial activity with the purpose of supporting the LGBTQ+ community and not for self-interest motives. This is the reason why the same respondents perceived the

brand as authentic and would purchase from it and recommend it. On the other hand, respondents with low LGBTQ+ were skeptical about the motives behind these controversial initiatives. There should be no surprise then, if the same portion of respondents ranked controversial brands as non-authentic and if they would not purchase nor recommend them. To conclude, this research suggests that controversies might lead to enlargement and retention of a customer base aligned with the cause. On the other hand, it also suggests that consumers misaligned with brand's specific controversial view, will tend to stop purchasing and recommending the brand.

Brand Trust, Power, Influence and Uniqueness. The performed analysis does not provide sufficient data to support the first hypothesis. I can conclude that the effect of controversy may be considered as stronger with respect to the effect that brand's market share may have. Indeed, LGBTQ+ supporters and opponents tended not care about brands' market position when evaluating whether to buy from the brand or recommend it. Besides that, there was a positive relationship between controversy and brand uniqueness, as well as between controversy and brand influence. It is intuitive that this is due to the perception of higher brand uniqueness and brand influence in controversial brands. As a matter of fact, it is possible to state that controversies work as a differentiating factor for brands, allowing them to enhance their brand uniqueness.

For what concerns brand influence, I assume that consumers tend to perceive controversial brands as more influential due to the fact that they recognize that every controversial brand, no matter its level of market share, may still have an impact on people's life and may therefore contribute to the designing of a future more open society. In addition, controversy seemed to enhance brand uniqueness and brand influence especially in brands with low market share. As a result, I can state that controversy works as a strong differentiating factor in such brands and provides them with more perceived power to influence and shape

society. Moreover, the present research also suggests that individuals, in general, tend to perceive as more trustworthy, unique, and powerful brands with high market share than brands with low market share. These findings seem to be in line with what demonstrated in previous research (Beck, Rahinel, Bleier, 2019; Chadhuri, Holbrook, 2001): at higher levels of market share, brands are perceived as more trustworthy, powerful, and unique.

Chronic Personal Power. A link between chronically powerful individuals and the purchase of brand leaders was detected. I reconstitute this finding to the concept of self-verifying consumption (Stuppy, Mead, Van Osselaer, 2019). Therefore, I hypothesize that participants who feel chronically powerful tended to purchase powerful brand leaders in an attempt to self-enhance (Stuppy, Mead, Van Osselaer, 2019) and confirm their existing self-views (Leary, 2007). On the other hand, chronically powerless individuals also revealed to be significantly keener to spread positive WOM about controversial brand. I consider this as an extremely relevant result, since in contrast with previous research. According to past research, powerless individuals tend not to expose themselves with other people, therefore hiding their emotions and beliefs (Mizerski, Lam, 2005). However, I am of the opinion that, in this specific circumstance, powerless individuals will spread WOM about controversial brands with the aim of indirectly sharing their own opinions. For instance, I argue that even if in favor of LGBTQ+ adoptions, powerless individuals would most likely not share their own opinions on the topic during a debate (e.g. on social medias). However, if another entity, in this case a brand, assumes the risk of taking a stand on a controversial topic, they will tend to spread positive WOM about it as a way to finally express themselves.

Low personal control during COVID-19. A link between temporary low personal control and purchase intentions of brands with high market share was detected. This finding proves once again the validity of the concept of compensatory consumption. As a matter of fact, and as previously demonstrated by Beck *et al.* (2019), individuals experiencing a loss in

personal control tend to purchase from brand leaders, most likely to solve a profound discrepancy between their perceived current and desired state in terms of personal power.

Managerial Implications. In light of these results, I recommend managers to detect the social causes that its customers support the most, as well as social causes generally supported in a certain geography. This analysis would provide to the brand enough information to decide whether to join a controversial debate or not. In addition, brands with low market share should take into consideration the possibility of taking a stand in a controversial issue, given that they may strongly benefit from it in terms of perceived uniqueness and influence.

Limitations and Further Research. The current research was performed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the unfortunate circumstances, I believe that some respondents' answers may be biased, and this represents a limitation of this study. Indeed, their level of patience, accuracy and reasoning may have been strongly impacted by the current situation. Furthermore, due to the extraordinarily high mean average for LGBTQ+ ($M_{LGBTQ+} = 5.76$, $SD = 1.41$), I am unable to draw reliable conclusions on unfavorable respondents. Additionally, the present research was conducted on a generic sample of British and US citizens. Since both countries are advanced in terms of LGBTQ+ rights (World Economic Forum, 2018), I suggest future research to test the same hypothesis on respondents from different countries (for instance, other European countries, such as Italy). I also encourage future research on other controversial topics, such as toxic masculinity.

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APPENDIX

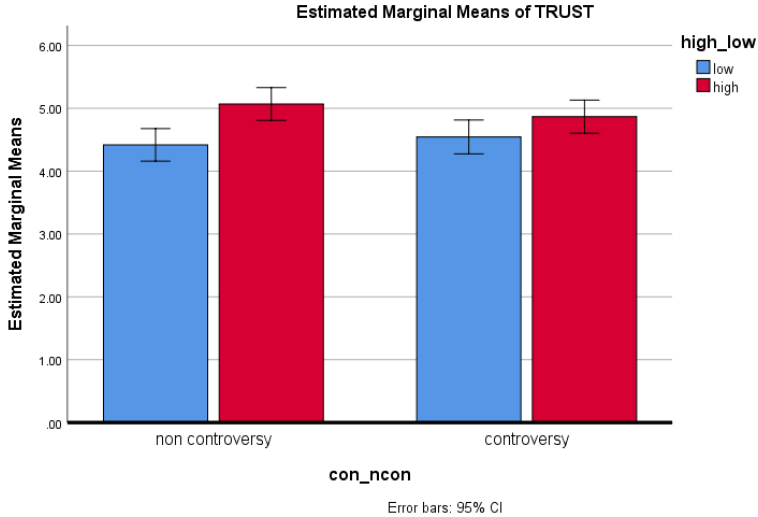
Table 1

Measurement Scale	Items	Source
Brand Trust	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.I would trust “Blue Jeans” 2.”Blue Jeans is trustworthy” 3. I could rely on “Blue Jeans” 4.”Blue Jeans” is honest 	Becerra, Badrinarayanan (2013)
Authenticity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.”Blue Jeans” is authentic 2.”Blue Jeans” is sincere 3.”Blue Jeans” is true to itself 	Rosenblum, Schroeder, Gino (2019)
Brand Benevolence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.I believe “Blue Jeans” ad for “Mother’s Day is truthful 2.I believe “Blue Jeans” ad for Mother’s Day is credible 3.I am skeptical about the truth of “Blue Jeans” ad for Mother’s Day 	Bae (2017)
Competence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.I believe “Blue Jeans” is competent 2.I believe “Blue Jeans” is good at what it does 3.Competence is definitely one feature of “Blue Jeans” 	
Power	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.The brand “Blue Jeans” can get people to listen to what it says 2.The brand “Blue Jeans” wishes do not carry too much weight 3.The brand “Blue Jeans” can get people to do what it wants 4.Even if it voices them, “Blue Jeans” opinions have little sway 5.I think the brand “Blue Jeans” has a great deal of power 6.The brand “Blue Jeans” opinions are often ignored 7.Even when it tries, the brand “Blue Jeans” is not able to get it its own way 	Anderson, John, Keltner (2012)

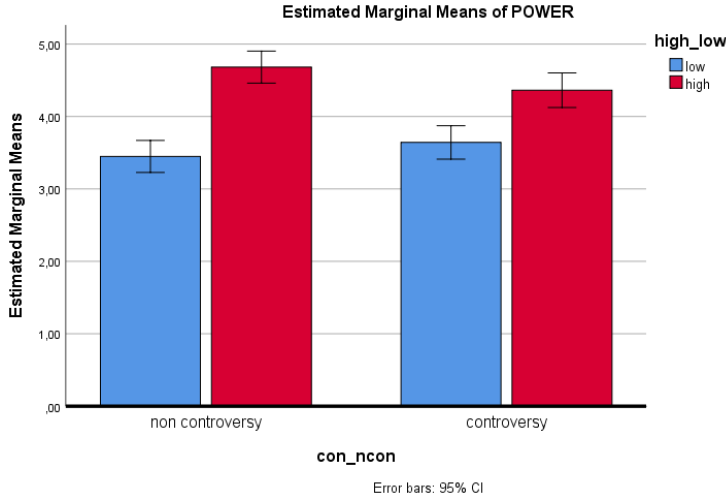
	8.If it wants to, the brand “Blue Jeans” gets to make decisions	
Influence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.”Blue Jeans” can have an effect on society 2.”Blue Jeans” has influence on the world 3.”Blue Jeans” can determine what happens to people 4.”Blue Jeans” can contribute changing the status quo 	Beck, Rahinel, Bleier (2019)
Uniqueness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.I believe “Blue Jeans” is a unique brand 2.I perceive “Blue Jeans” as a highly unique brand 3.I perceive “Blue Jeans” as a one of a kind brand 4.I believe “Blue Jeans” is a special brand 	Southworth, Brookshire (2016)
Risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.”Blue Jeans” is not afraid of taking risks 2.With this marketing campaign, “Blue Jeans” is taking a great risk 3.With this marketing campaign, “Blue Jeans” has everything to lose 4.With this marketing campaign, “Blue Jeans” has more to lose than to gain 	No source
Purchase intentions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.If “Blue Jeans” were real, and if it were available at a good price, I would probably buy “Blue Jeans” 2.If “Blue Jeans” were real, and if it were available at a good price, I would be likely to buy “Blue Jeans” 3.If “Blue Jeans” were real, and if it were available at a good price, I would consider buying “Blue Jeans” 	Becerra, Badrinarayanan (2013)
Positive brand referrals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.If “Blue Jeans” were real, if it were available at a good price, and if my friends were looking for a new pair of jeans, I would recommend “Blue Jeans” 2.If “Blue Jeans” were real, if it were available at a good price, I would spread positive word of mouth on the brand 3.If “Blue Jeans” were real, if it were available at a good price, I would recommend it to my friends 	Becerra, Badrinarayanan (2013)
Chronic Personal power	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.I can get people to listen to what I say 2.My wishes do not carry too much weight 3.I can get people to do what I want 4.Even if I voice them, my views have little sway 5.I think I have a great deal of power 6.My ideas and opinions are often ignored 7.Even if I try, I am not able to get it my way 8.If I want to, I get to make decisions 	Anderson, John, Keltner (2012)
Chronic Personal Control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.I enjoy having control over my own destiny 2.I like to be in control of most things that happen in my life 	Burger, Cooper, (1979)

	3.I prefer a job where I have a lot of control over what I do and when I do it	
Need for Uniqueness	<p>1.I often look at one of a kind brands to create my own style</p> <p>2.I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that cannot be duplicated</p> <p>3.I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands</p> <p>4.The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality</p>	Tian, Bearden, Hunter, (2001)
Lack of Personal Control COVID	<p>1.Current government restrictions make me feel oppressed</p> <p>2.I consider the current situation a threat to my freedom</p> <p>3.Confinement at home makes me feel uncomfortable</p> <p>4.Even if necessary, I find tough being confined at home</p>	Levav, Zhou (2009)
Personal Control During the Pandemic	<p>Due to the spread of COVID-19 in the past few weeks...</p> <p>1.I felt in control</p> <p>2.I had control over my surroundings</p> <p>3.I felt the situation out of my control</p> <p>4.I felt a loss of personal control</p>	Burger, Cooper (1979)
Emotions During the Pandemic	<p>In the past few weeks, the COVID-19 situation made me feel...</p> <p>1.Interested</p> <p>2.Distressed</p> <p>3.Excited</p> <p>4.Upset</p> <p>5.Strong</p> <p>6.Guilty</p> <p>7.Scared</p> <p>8.Hostile</p> <p>9.Enthusiastic</p> <p>10.Proud</p> <p>11.Irritable</p> <p>12.Alert</p> <p>13.Ashamed</p> <p>14.Inspired</p> <p>15.Nervous</p> <p>16.Determined</p> <p>17.Attentive</p> <p>18.Jittery</p> <p>19.Active</p> <p>20.Afraid</p>	Watson, Clark, Tellegen, (1988)
LGBTQ+	To what extent do you agree with LGBTQ+ adoptions'	

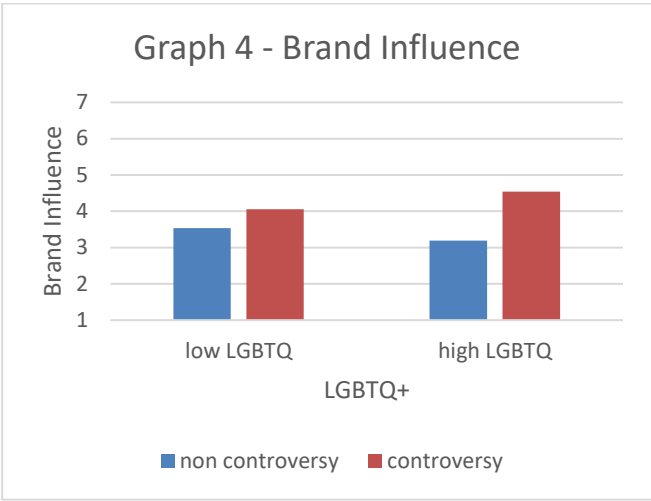
Graph 2



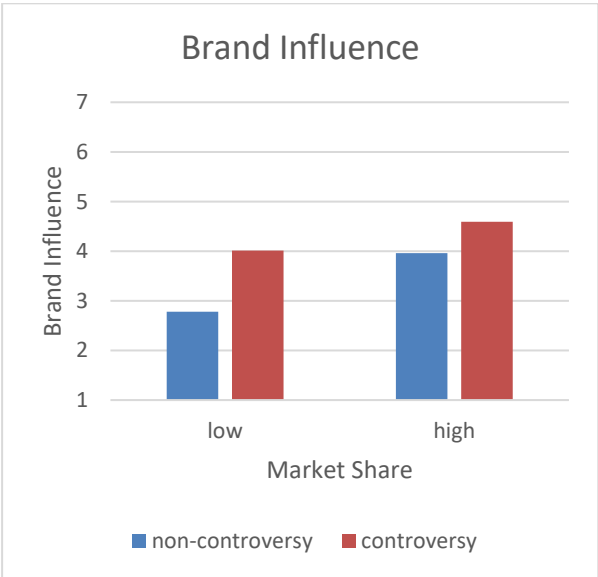
Graph 3



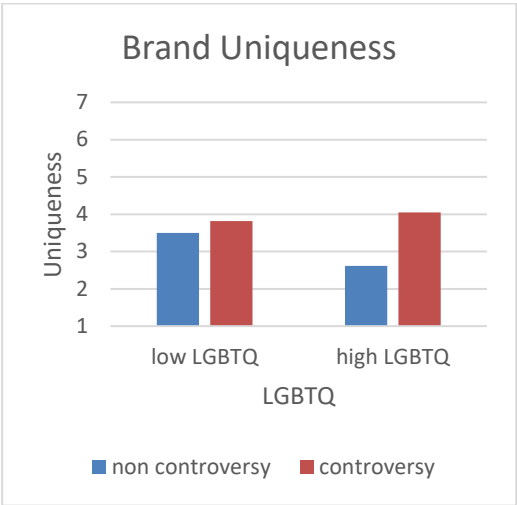
Graph 4



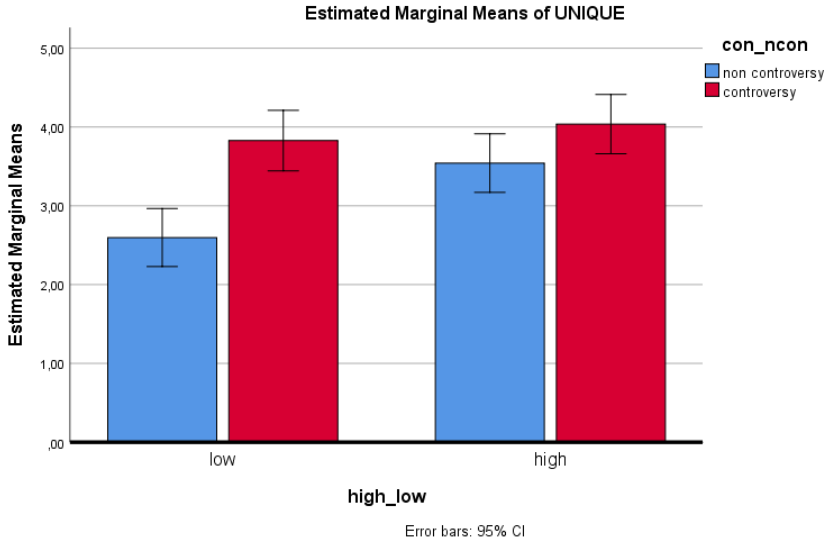
Graph 5



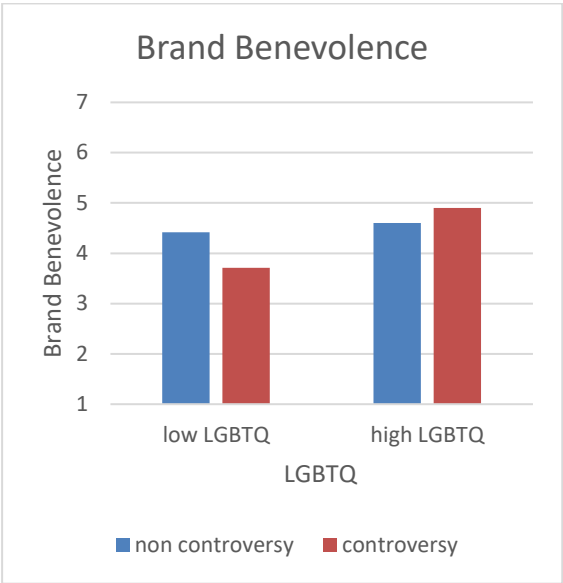
Graph 6



Graph 7

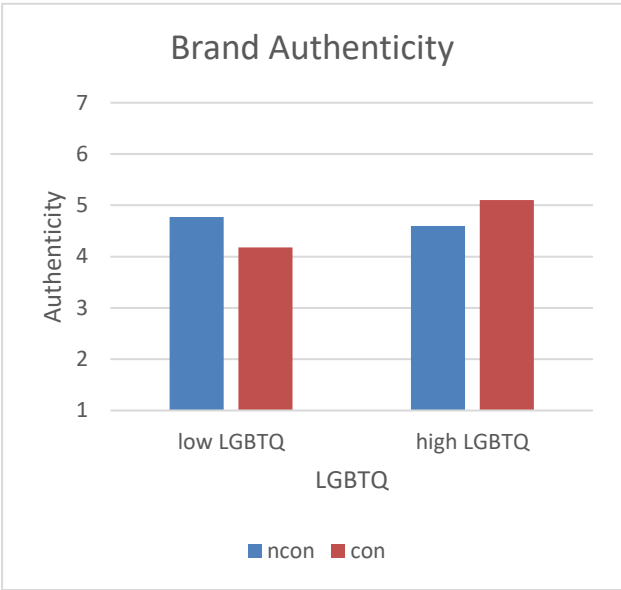


Graph 8



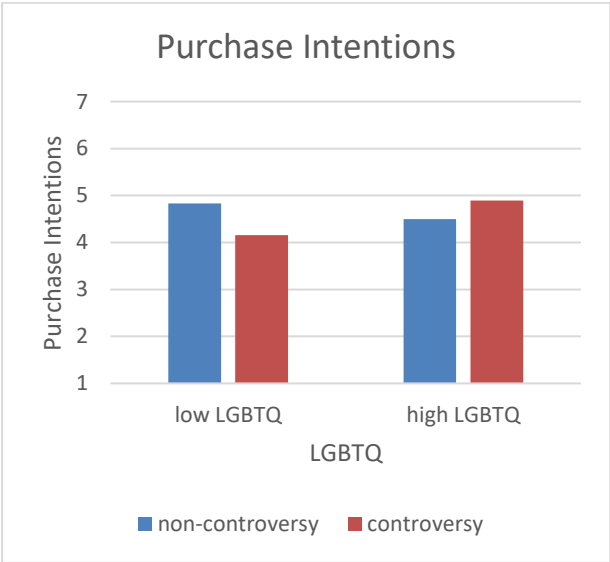
In Graph 8, low LGBTQ and high LGBTQ correspond, respectively, to the lower and upper Johnson-Neyman significance regions, that are $LGBTQ = 2.2$; $LGBTQ = 6.5$.

Graph 9



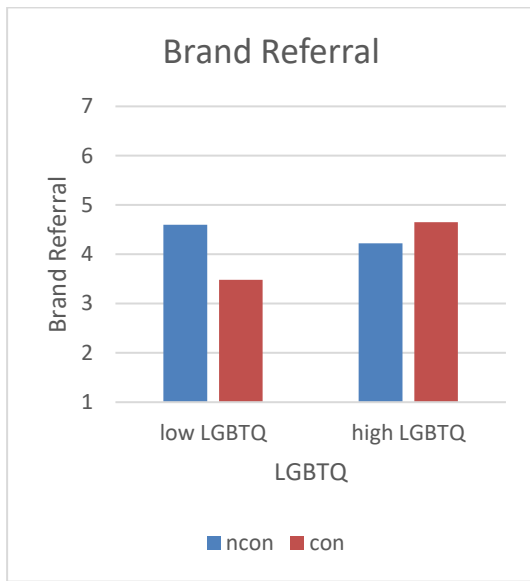
In Graph 9, low LGBTQ refers to participants with LGBTQ+ equal to 2.2. On the other hand, high LGBTQ+ refers to LGBTQ = 5.9. These values were extrapolated considering Johnson-Newman significance regions.

Graph 10



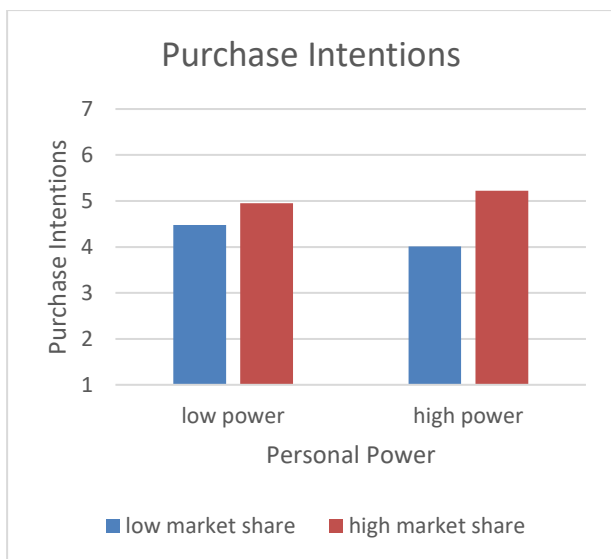
In Graph 10, LGBTQ+ values refer to Johnson-Newman significance regions (low LGBTQ = 3.67; high LGBTQ: 6.12).

Graph 11

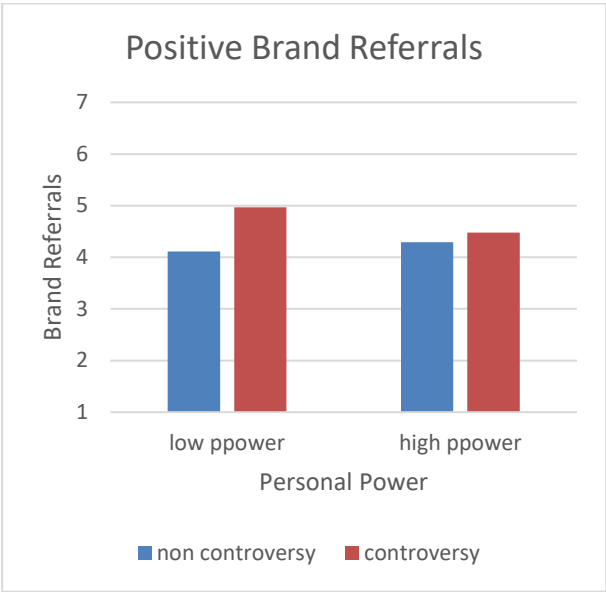


In Graph 11, low LGBTQ+ equals to 1.28, whereas high LGBTQ+ = 5.41

Graph 12



Graph 13



Graph 14

