

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

The Power of Controversy: Consumers' Reactions to Feminine and Masculine Brands

Francisca Serejo Neves de Freitas
Costa

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

Irene Consiglio

17-12-2021

Abstract

The current research investigates the potential relationships between brand controversy, brand power, brand personality and purchase intentions. Specifically, it examines if controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as more risk-takers and powerful, and if in turn those perceptions affect brands with different personalities such that feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands are purchased less. Through an experimental study, where controversy was manipulated, results showed that controversial brands are perceived as more risk-takers. For the other hypotheses, no evidence of support was found.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, controversial brands, risk, brand power, feminine brand personality, masculine brand personality

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Irene Consiglio and Lucas Franieck for their guidance and support throughout this project. Additionally, I would like to show gratitude to my family and friends for always encouraging and believing in me.

This work used infrastructure and resources funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UID/ECO/00124/2013, UID/ECO/00124/2019 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209), POR Lisboa (LISBOA-01-0145-FEDER-007722 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209) and POR Norte (Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209).

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1. Introduction

Socio-political topics such as immigration, racism (i.e. Black Lives Matter), gun control, sexual harassment and assault (i.e. Me Too movement), LGBTQ+ community rights, etc., play a relevant part in people's lives, minds and discussions. Society has become progressively polarized, with different people debating and strongly taking a side on these controversial topics. Furthermore, customers and other stakeholders have also increasingly pressured chief executive officers (CEOs) and firms to take sides on some of these issues (Hambrick and Wowak 2019; Hoppner and Vadakkepatt 2019). Consequently, to increase the attention of prospective customers and become more appealing (Arnaud, Curtis, and Waguespack 2018), brands have deliberately started launching initiatives and joining the debates through controversial campaigns, advertisements, and shocking-marketing tactics (Pope, Voges, and Brown 2004; Dahl, Frankenberger, and Manchanda 2003; Parry et al. 2013). For example, Starbucks pledged to hire refugees to show its disapproval for an immigration ban imposed in the US (Disis 2017; Bhagwat et al. 2020), Gillette launched *The Best a Man can Be* campaign to take a stand against toxic masculinity and sexual harassment (Kelly 2019), Delta Airlines publicly severed ties with the National Rifle Association (NRA) after a fatal school shooting (Dantes 2018; Bhagwat et al. 2020), and Nike made Colin Kaepernick, a National Football League (NFL) player who protests for racial inequality and police brutality, the face of its *Just Do It* campaign (Meyersohn 2018).

Nevertheless, even though some brands indeed managed to increase sales (e.g. Nike; Pengelly 2018), many also received mixed emotions and backlash from the public for such decisions (e.g. Gillette; Vizard 2019). In reality, producing successful controversial campaigns is difficult because many factors, such as individual and brand characteristics, can play a role in determining either positive or negative outcomes. Therefore, and given that current literature comes short in presenting, explaining, and relating these factors with

controversy, it is necessary to further explore them.

For the purpose of this research, I posit that overall brands that get involved in controversy are perceived as more powerful than the ones who do not. This should occur mainly because being controversial entails risk and social costs, and so, when getting involved in controversy, brands are signalling that they can afford to do so because they are powerful. This assumption is in line with previous literature that showed that risky behaviours, such as non-conformity, led to inferences of status, competence, and power (Bellezza, Gino, and Keinan 2014; Van Kleef et al. 2011).

Furthermore, I also argue that feminine (vs. masculine) brands that get involved in controversy will be purchased less. According to the brand personality theory and other studies (Aaker 1997; Grohmann 2009), brands can have human characteristics being attributed to them and so consumers can perceive them as having either a feminine (e.g. Virginia Slims) or masculine (e.g. Absolute Vodka) personality. In addition, according to past research on gender roles and stereotypes (e.g. Eagly and Steffen 1984; Eagly, Wood, and Diekmann 2000; Heilman 2012) characteristics of agency and power are usually more associated to masculinity than to femininity. Consequently, and also drawing on the role congruity theory (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Diekmann 2005; Diekmann and Goodfriend 2006) that says that group members are devalued when their characteristics misalign with their group role demands, there is an expectation that feminine (vs. masculine) brands, while getting involved in controversy and signalling power, will be perceived as being incongruent to its feminine personality traits and in consequence will be devalued and purchased less in comparison to masculine brands.

Overall, the main purpose of this study is to help brands and its managers understand the practical implications that their involvement in controversy will bring to their customers' purchase intentions, while also taking into consideration the different perceptions that

customers have on the brand's personality traits.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Controversy, Controversial Brands & Power

Defining Concepts of Controversy & Controversial Brands: The Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2021) describes *controversy* as a “public discussion and argument about something that many people strongly disagree about, think is bad, or are shocked by”. In addition, Chen and Berger (2013) argued that some topics are likely to be found more controversial than others (e.g. gay marriage/abortion vs the smell of soap), and that the view on controversy might vary for different people. These descriptions, convey the idea that controversy is then led by an overall conflict and polarization of opinions, that distinct people strongly uphold and defend, for topics that they believe are relevant.

Moreover, and hereafter, the concept of *controversial brand* will be defined as *a brand which intentionally takes a stance and/or action towards a side of a controversial topic*. This can be done either through CEO or company statements, campaign announcements or advertisements, brand (political) activism (Kotler and Sarkar 2017; Moorman 2020), CEO social activism (Hambrick and Wowak 2019), etc., as long as the issue that is being dealt with conveys controversy.

Controversy & Power: To link controversy and power, this study will draw from signalling theory and past research on the concept of non-conformity (vs. conformity). Nail, MacDonald, and Levy (2000, 456), define conformity as any “behaviour or belief that is consistent with norms, positions, or standards of group members”, and in contrast define non-conformity as behaviour which is not conformity. Conformity is driven by the need of obtaining social acceptance and status (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004), whereas non-conformity can have risks and costs and may lead to social disapproval, punishment, and rejection (Anderson and Galinsky 2006; Anderson, Ames, and Gosling 2008; Marques, Abrams, and

Serôdio 2001; Lin, Dahl, and Argo 2013; Miller and Anderson 1979; Schachter 1951). Moreover, Bellezza, Gino, and Keinan (2014) argued that people that engage in intentional non-conformity behaviour, can suggest a position of higher status and competence to others, through the costly signal theory that proposes that actions that are potentially costly for the actor indicate an implicit quality (Zahavi 1995; Spence 1973). To add to this inference, Van Kleef et al. (2011, 501) also showed that individuals can be seen as more powerful when violating norms, stating that “people who violate norms apparently experience the leeway to do so, suggesting that they have relatively high levels of power that enable them to behave as they please”.

Similarly, given that controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands can be perceived as incurring in high costs and risks, they will be perceived as being more powerful. By becoming involved in controversy and taking a stand towards a particular side of an issue, controversial brands could lose consumption from its customers with opposing views, especially given that customers favour brands that represent their own identities (Escalas and Bettman 2005). Indeed, Gomes’s (2020), on her work project, has later showed that controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as taking more risk. Thus, the present research hypothesizes that controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands will be perceived as more powerful (i.e. a positive relationship between controversy and power), since individuals will believe that by taking a stand on controversial issues, controversial brands will be able to afford and not worry about the risks and costs it demands because they are in a position of power.

H_{1A}: Controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as more powerful

H_{1B}: Controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as more risk-takers

2.2. Power & Purchase Intentions of Feminine and Masculine Controversial Brands

Following the creation of the previous hypothesis where it is argued that controversial

(vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as being more powerful, the following section will draw on past literature on brand personality (Aaker 1997), gender stereotypes, norms, and roles (e.g. Eagly and Steffen 1984; Eagly, Wood, and Diekmann 2000; Heilman 2012) and agency and communion (Bakan 1966), to explain how power relates to feminine and masculine brands. In addition, through the role congruity theory (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Diekmann 2005; Diekmann and Goodfriend 2006), the implications that these relationships will be expected to carry for purchase intentions of feminine (vs. masculine) brands that take a stand on controversial issues will also be analyzed.

Power and its links to Feminine and Masculine Brands: In the past, Aaker (1997, 347) has defined the concept of brand personality as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand”. Furthermore, it has also been argued that a brand’s personality can have demographic characteristics (i.e. age, gender, and class) (Levy 1959) and that these brand’s traits perceptions can be deduced from direct or indirect interactions that the customer has with the brand (Plummer 1985 stated in Aaker 1997). For example, Absolut vodka tends to be thought of as modern and cool, whereas Stolichnaya tends to be thought of as conservative and intellectual (Aaker 1997); Virginia Slim tends to be perceived as feminine whereas Marlboro tends to be thought of as masculine (Aaker 1997). Indeed, Grohmann (2009) later demonstrated that brands, through their perceived characteristics, can be recognized as having either a feminine or masculine personality. This implies that relationships between brands and individuals can resemble interpersonal relationships such that consumers can evaluate a brand in an identical approach to how they assess people or groups (Portal, Abratt, and Bendixen 2018). Subsequently, to better understand how power relates to feminine and masculine brands it is relevant to first assess how it relates to femininity and masculinity for individuals.

According to main research on gender stereotypes and social roles (e.g. Eagly and Steffen 1984; Eagly, Wood, and Diekmann 2000; Heilman 2012), people have shared beliefs

on what men and women are or should be like (i.e. descriptive and prescriptive stereotypes), based on their roles in society, and for that attribute them certain characteristics. On one hand, people often believe that women usually occupy social positions where caring for others is needed (i.e. nurse, homemaker) and so attribute them communal characteristics that these roles require (Diekmann and Goodfriend 2006). On the other, they often believe that men usually occupy social positions where leadership or power is needed, and so assign them agentic characteristics (Diekmann and Goodfriend 2006). Bakan (1966) introduced the notions of agency and communion to reflect two fundamental dimensions of human thought and behaviour. While agency portrays the focus of people on themselves and leads them to search for independence and personal striving, communion portrays the focus of people on others and leads them to desire a connection with others. In fact, many other studies have touched upon the idea that masculinity and power are associated with agency whereas femininity is associated with communion (see Abele and Wojciszke 2014). This means that men, by being perceived as agentic and being associated to power and leadership roles, are often described as ambitious, independent, dominant, self-confident, self-sufficient, and leader like (Eagly and Karau 2002), while women, by being perceived as communal and being associated to nurturant roles, are described as affectionate, helpful, kind, sensitive, sympathetic, gentle, and nurturant (Eagly and Karau 2002).

Consequently, given that the femininity and masculinity of a brand can be deduced through their perceived traits, and that masculinity and power share agentic characteristics while femininity is associated to communal characteristics, it can be inferred that masculine brands will be more associated with power than feminine brands.

Incongruency between Power Perceptions of Controversy & Feminine Brands: As briefly touched upon before, a stereotype can be defined as a generalized set of beliefs or thoughts that people have about the attributes of the members (i.e. something or someone) of

a category or social group (Augoustinos, Walker, and Donaghue 2014; Davvetas and Halkias 2019). These stereotypes, that are developed by people over time, are a result of accepted norms of a particular context and are used to evaluate and understand social relations (McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears 2002; Davvetas and Halkias 2019). Consequently, the violation of these stereotypes can lead to social retaliations and backlash (Rudman 1998). In fact, according to the role congruity theory (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Diekmann 2005; Diekmann and Goodfriend 2006), a group member is going to be rewarded when its characteristics are aligned with the requirements of that group's social role but will be devalued when its characteristics are not aligned with what the role requires.

Indeed, and in relation to gender stereotypes, several studies have demonstrated that, for individuals who step outside of their gender bounds and roles, backlash and penalization can be particularly prominent. For example, Heilman et al. (2004) demonstrated that, compared to men, women who become successful at male-typical tasks are seen as more hostile and less likable, which in turn impacts their evaluation and recommended rewards (ie. salary and job opportunities). Additionally, women suffer more punishments compared to men when they self-promote (Rudman 1998) or portray an autocratic leadership style (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992). In these cases, women are less likely than men to be favourably evaluated given that, to be perceived as qualified for high-status roles, women must demand masculine competencies, which ultimately is incongruent with the traditional female role (Eagly and Karau 2002; Heilman 2001).

Following the same reasoning, and in accordance with what has been previously discussed on feminine and masculine brand personality traits and power, it can be argued that feminine (vs. masculine) brands, while being controversial and signalling perceptions of power and agency, will be seen as incongruent to their feminine trait stereotypes, and thus will be devalued in the position that they are trying to portray. Therefore, there is an

expectation that customers, for feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands, will have lower purchase intentions.

H₂: Controversy (vs. non-controversy) will lead to a weaker increase of purchase intentions of feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands

2.3. Model

In summary, first I hypothesize that consumers will perceive controversial brands in general as being more powerful than non-controversial brands, because they are more risk-takers. Secondly, I also hypothesize that these power perceptions will lead to increased purchase intentions for controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands, but with a weaker effect for feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands.

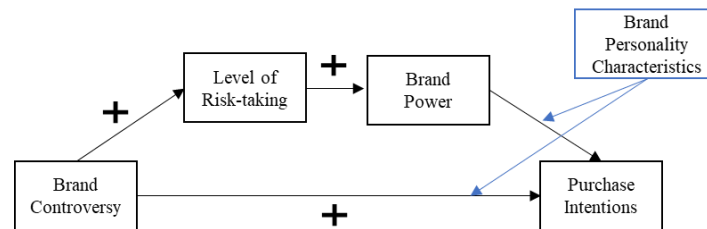


Figure 1. Illustration of Overall Hypothesized Model

3. Methodology

I ran two pre-tests and one main experiment. The pre-tests' purpose was not only to assess if the manipulation of controversy for the envisioned hypothetical scenarios worked, but also to select the real-life brands that were going to be used in the main experiment. The aim of the main experiment was to test my main hypotheses.

3.1. Real Life Brands & Hypothetical Scenarios: pre-tests and results

Pre-test 1: Feminine and Masculine Real-Life Brands

Given that I aimed to test the impact that perceptions of feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands will have on consumers' purchase intentions, I needed to identify real-life brands that people would be aware of and perceive as having either a feminine or masculine personality.

Procedure: Thirty-eight participants - 34% Male, 66% Female, 87% aged below 35 years old and 13% above - completed an exploratory study (for full questionnaire see Annex 1). The goal was to have a variety of brand categories represented in this pre-test, with at least two well-known brands within each selected category, that scored relatively high in either feminine or masculine brand personality.

Participants were presented with several different brand examples that were selected from a previous article study which assessed the level of Feminine Brand Personality (FBP) and Masculine Brand Personality (MBP) for over 140 brands in different categories (Lieven et al. 2014). I decided to re-test the personalities of the brands to validate the original article's findings and to decrease the probability of invalid results of the main experiment.

The brands selected and showcased were Nivea, Dove, Calvin Klein, Nike, Zara, H&M, Levi's, Smart, Porsche, Lindt and McDonald's, and the order in which they appeared on the survey was randomized. I chose these brands because they were the ones that in the original article presented a stronger value for the personality that they represented, the ones I believed would be more widely recognized and the ones that allowed for a better representation of different product categories. Participants were asked to assess, for each brand, to what extent they agreed to the statements presented regarding feminine and masculine brand personality traits (e.g. "This brand is sensitive", "This brand is adventurous", respectively; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Grohmann 2009).

Results: The overall mean for each personality perception (i.e. Feminine Brand Personality and Masculine Brand Personality) per brand was calculated and compared, leading to the conclusion that Calvin Klein, Nike, Zara, H&M, Levi's, Smart, Porsche and McDonald's were perceived as more masculine than feminine, while for Nivea, Dove and Lindt the opposite was true (Table 1).

With this in mind, for the main experiment and with the exception of Porsche, the two

brands with the strongest results per personality type were selected - Dove/Lindt for feminine brand personality and Nike/McDonald's for masculine brand personality. I later decided to exclude Porsche because, in contrast to the other chosen brands, it was thought to be in a premium position that did not fit the group. Moreover, I decided to have two brands instead of one representing each personality type and different product categories, to decrease the effect of possible pre-existing biases arising from a specific brand or product category.

Brand	MBP		FBP		MBP – FBP	
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean
Nivea	38	4.63	1.24	5.18	0.78	-0.55
Calvin Klein	37	4.93	0.96	3.96	1.04	0.97
Nike	38	5.86	0.80	3.62	1.17	2.24
Zara	37	4.99	0.92	4.00	1.08	0.99
H&M	38	4.32	1.09	3.97	0.95	0.35
Levi's	36	4.75	0.79	3.59	0.97	1.17
Smart	36	4.30	1.09	4.04	0.97	0.26
Porsche	37	5.53	0.86	3.10	1.18	2.42
Lindt	30	3.82	1.02	4.73	0.77	-0.91
McDonalds	38	5.13	1.03	3.55	0.83	1.58
Dove	38	4.67	1.17	5.43	0.82	-0.76

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Brands' Feminine and Masculine Personality

Pre-test 2: Hypothetical Scenarios – Controversial and Non-Controversial

In the same study as above, I also tested the level of controversy of the envisioned hypothetical scenarios to be presented in the main experiment.

Procedure: Two very similar but opposing scenarios (i.e. one controversial, one non-controversial) were set up to be randomly and evenly presented to the 38 participants in the pre-test - these scenarios are reported in Annex 1. Participants were then asked to what extent they perceived the scenarios as controversial (e.g. “This announcement is likely to cause opposing views”; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Gomes 2020).

Results: An independent-samples t-test, yielded a significant means' difference between scenarios ($t(36) = 3.18$; $p = 0.003$), suggesting that the manipulation of controversy

was successful: the controversial scenario ($M = 5.65$; $SD = 1.10$) was perceived as more controversial than the non-controversial scenario ($M = 4.48$; $SD = 1.17$).

3.2. The Main Experiment

After gathering the necessary information from the pre-tests, and to finally test the main hypotheses of this study, I conducted an online experiment (see Annex 2). Participants were randomly and evenly assigned to one of eight conditions concerning a controversial (vs. non-controversial) announcement made by Dove/Lindt (or Nike/McDonald's) on the topic of adoption. As explained before, I opted to use real-life brand examples to make sure that participants knew the brands and were able to evaluate, identify and point out to what extent they agreed with the different personality trait statements presented for a specific brand scenario.

Procedure

One online survey was created on Qualtrics platform and conveniently distributed among 322 individuals. The participations were voluntary and anonymous.

First, participants read an informed consent and the ones who agreed to participate were randomly assigned to one condition in a 2 [announcement: controversial vs. non-controversial] x 2 [brand personality: Masculine Brand Personality vs Feminine Brand Personality] between-subject design. Participants read about a hypothetical scenario portraying one of two brands with a feminine brand personality (or masculine brand personality), that made a non-controversial (or controversial) announcement, as follows:

Imagine that **Dove/Lindt** (*Or Nike/McDonald's*), a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support (*LGBTQ+*) couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a (*heated*) public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and **virtually no one** (*a great deal of people*) had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a **positive consensus** (*controversial response*).

Additionally, participants were asked if they knew or recognized the presented brand

(i.e. Yes/No) and a manipulation check was incorporated to evaluate, once more, if controversy was successfully manipulated and generated the anticipated effect. All participants were asked to assess on a 7-point Likert scale their level of agreement regarding 5 statements that relayed this study's definition of controversy (e.g. "This announcement is likely to cause opposing views"; 1= Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Gomes 2020).

Next, participants answered a series of questions concerning the scenario on brand power, brand purchase intentions, level of risk-taking, brand femininity and brand masculinity, through a 7-point Likert scale. Not only each set of questions (each variable) was randomly presented but also the scale items within each set were randomized. Brand power was assessed through a seven-item scale (e.g. "This brand can get people to listen to what it says"; 1= Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Anderson, John, and Keltner 2012), brand purchase intentions was measured using a three-item scale (e.g. "In the near future, and if it was available at a good price, I would probably buy from this brand"; 1= Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; P. Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013) and the level of risk-taking was captured through a four-item scale based on Pedretti's (2020) thesis (e.g. "This brand is not afraid of taking risks"; 1= Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Additionally, both feminine and masculine brand personality were evaluated through a six-item scale each (e.g. "This brand expresses tender feelings" and "This brand is dominant", respectively; 1= Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; Grohmann 2009).

Finally, last questions concerned participants' demographics (i.e. Age, Gender, Level of Education Completed and Nationality), participants' suspicion of what was being tested and, for the controversial scenarios, participants' support on LGBTQ+ adoptions and community (e.g. "I believe LGBTQ+ couples should have the right to adopt"; 1= Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; three-item ad-hoc scale).

4. Results & Analysis

Before performing the results' analysis, a general data cleaning was completed to ensure quality of data and derived insights. I considered one main factor for the exclusion of responses: whether participants knew the brand presented in the scenario. The reason is that participants who did not recognize the brand would not be able to assign feminine or masculine traits to the brand. I excluded 72 participants who did not know the brand or did not answer this question.

The final sample consisted of 250 entries, and missing cases were excluded pairwise. From this sample, 64% of participants were women and 36% were men, with 93% with ages below 35 years old and 7% above (see Annex 3 for complete demographics). Moreover, regarding the scenarios, 48% saw the controversial scenario while 52% saw the non-controversial scenario. Overall, there was a participations' split of 25% for Dove, 23% for Lindt, 26% for McDonald's and 26% for Nike.

4.1. Reliability of Measures

Given that in this study several variables use multi-item scales, I decided to evaluate their reliability. To do so, when appropriate, scales were reverse scored. According to Cronbach's alpha all variables were reliable: *manipulation of controversy* ($\alpha=0.87$), *level of risk-taking* ($\alpha=0.68$), *brand power* ($\alpha=0.74$), *feminine brand personality* ($\alpha=0.83$), *masculine brand personality* ($\alpha=0.77$), *purchase intentions* ($\alpha=0.95$) and *support for LGBTQ+ adoptions and community* ($\alpha=0.91$). Afterwards, the scale items of each variable were averaged into an index.

4.2. Manipulation Check of Controversy

The manipulation check of controversy was done to understand how subjects perceived controversy in the announcement. An independent sample t-test yielded a significant means' difference between scenarios ($t(248) = 8.17, p < 0.001$), suggesting that the

manipulation of controversy was successful: the controversial scenario ($M = 4.78$; $SD = 1.30$) was perceived as more controversial than the non-controversial scenario ($M=3.40$; $SD=1.35$).

4.3. Hypotheses & Overall Model Testing

H_{1A}: *Controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as more powerful*

To test the means' difference of brand power between the controversial and non-controversial brands, an independent sample t-test was performed. The results were not significant ($t(224) = -0.51$, $p = 0.611$), meaning that controversial brands ($M = 4.70$; $SD = 0.78$) were not perceived as more powerful than non-controversial brands ($M = 4.76$; $SD = 0.83$). Hence hypothesis H_{1A} was not proven.

H_{1B}: *Controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as more risk-takers*

To test the means' difference of the level of risk-taking between the controversial and non-controversial brands, an independent sample t-test was performed. The results were significant ($t(222) = 4.59$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that controversial brands ($M = 3.67$; $SD = 1.08$) were perceived as more risk-takers than non-controversial brands ($M = 3.03$; $SD = 0.98$). Hence hypothesis H_{1B} was proven correct.

Overall H₁ Dynamics

Next, I decided to analyze in detail the hypothesized mediation of the level of risk-taking between the brand controversy and brand power (Figure 2). To do this the model 4 of the Hayes's Process procedure (Hayes 2018) was used. Results showed that the brand controversy, had a positive significant direct effect on the level of risk-taking ($R^2 = 0.087$, $F(1, 217) = 20.55$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.628$, $t(217) = 4.53$, $p < 0.001$), but that the same was not true for the direct effect of the level of risk-taking ($R^2 = 0.006$, $F(2, 216) = 0.68$, $p = 0.510$; $\beta = -0.054$, $t(216) = -1.00$, $p = 0.317$) nor the direct effect of the brand controversy ($R^2 = 0.006$, $F(2, 216) = 0.68$, $p = 0.510$; $\beta = -0.031$, $t(216) = -0.27$, $p = 0.789$) on brand power.

Moreover, the results did not reveal a significant total effect of brand controversy on

brand power ($R^2 = 0.002$, $F(1, 217) = 0.35$, $p = 0.56$; $\beta = -0.064$, $t(217) = -0.59$, $p = 0.557$), nor a significant indirect effect of brand controversy on brand power through the level of risk-taking ($\beta = -0.034$, 95% bootstrap C.I. = [-0.1010, 0.0342] based on 5000 bootstrap samples). This means that the level of risk-taking does not mediate the hypothesized relationship between brand controversy and brand power.

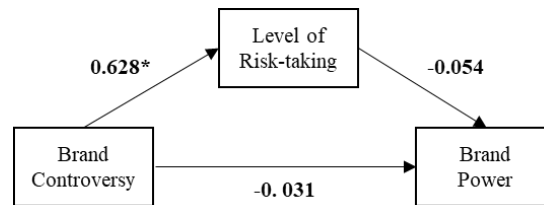


Figure 2. Statistical Illustration of Hypothesized Mediation Analysis (* $p < 0.001$).

Perceived Femininity and Masculinity of Real-Life Brands

Before testing the final hypothesis there was a need to understand if the four chosen real-life brands were perceived as expected in terms of personality: Dove and Lindt as feminine and McDonald's and Nike as masculine. To do so, I made use of two ANOVA test statistics to test the means' difference for each of the desired similar or opposing pairs for each personality type.

For the first significant ANOVA ($F(3,221) = 26.36$, $p < 0.001$), while testing for the brands' means difference for feminine brand personality, and given that the homogeneity of variances was violated, I used the Dunnett C's post-hoc test, and the results were as expected. Means were significantly different for the desired opposing pairs and not significantly different for the desired similar pairs: Dove and Nike (95% C.I. = [0.5627, 1.5643]); Dove and McDonald's (95% C.I. = [0.5783, 1.4785]); Lindt and Nike (95% C.I. = [0.7149, 1.6787]); Lindt and McDonald's (95% C.I. = [0.7327, 1.5907]) and then McDonald's and Nike (95% C.I. = [-0.4927, 0.5628]); Dove and Lindt (95% C.I. = [-0.5286, 0.2620]). Moreover, as intended, by observing the feminine brand personality mean for each brand, Lindt ($M = 4.85$; $SD = 0.72$) and Dove ($M = 4.71$; $SD = 0.85$) were perceived on average as

more feminine than McDonald's (M = 3.68; SD = 0.97) and Nike (M = 3.65; SD = 1.15).

For the second significant ANOVA ($F(3,222) = 11.85, p < 0.001$), while testing for the brands' means difference for masculine brand personality, and given that the homogeneity of variances was not violated, I used the Tukey HSD post-hoc test. This time, while relations were as expected between Dove, Lindt, and Nike (i.e. Dove and Lindt means as similar between each other but different from Nike's) - Dove and Lindt ($p = 0.906$); Dove and Nike ($p < 0.001$); Lindt and Nike ($p < 0.001$) - the same was not true for relations with McDonald's. McDonald's results showed, on one hand a marginally significant mean difference with Lindt ($p = 0.070$) and on the other, as opposed to what was expected, a significant mean difference with Nike ($p = 0.018$) and a not significant mean difference with Dove ($p = 0.278$). Nevertheless, as expected, when looking at the masculine brand personality for each brand Nike (M=5.04; SD=0.94) and McDonald's (M = 4.50; SD = 1.00) are perceived as more masculine than Dove (M = 4.17; SD = 1.02) and Lindt (M=4.05, SD=0.91).

All in all, I decided to assume Dove and Lindt as feminine and McDonald's and Nike as masculine for the analyses that follow, because that is the overall result when comparing the means for the femininity and masculinity of each brand (Table 2).

Brand	MBP		FBP		MBP-FBP (negative values = more feminine)
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Dove	4.17	1.02	4.71	0.85	-0.54
Lindt	4.05	0.91	4.85	0.72	-0.80
McDonald's	4.50	1.00	3.68	0.97	0.82
Nike	5.04	0.94	3.65	1.15	1.39

Table 2. Brands' Means of Feminine and Masculine Brand Personality

H₂: *Controversy (vs. non-controversy) will lead to a weaker increase of purchase intentions of feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands*

To test the last hypothesis of the study and the hypothesized moderation of brand personality between brand controversy and purchase intentions (Figure 3), I made use of model 1 of the Hayes Process procedure (Hayes 2018). Results showed that neither the brand

controversy ($R^2 = 0.007$, $F(3, 224) = 0.50$, $p = 0.686$; $\beta = 0.247$, $t(224) = 0.91$, $p = 0.364$) nor the brand personality ($R^2 = 0.007$, $F(3, 224) = 0.50$, $p = 0.686$; $\beta = -0.049$, $t(224) = -0.18$, $p = 0.858$) had a significant direct effect on purchase intentions. Also, when analyzing for the interaction effect between the brand controversy and brand personality, results did not show a significant effect ($R^2_{\text{chng}} = 0.001$, $F_{\text{chng}}(1, 224) = 0.27$; $\beta = -0.199$, $t(224) = -0.52$, $p = 0.602$), which means that brand personality does not moderate the hypothesized relationship between brand controversy and purchase intentions, and that I cannot say that controversy (vs. non-controversy) will lead to a weaker increase of purchase intentions of feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands.

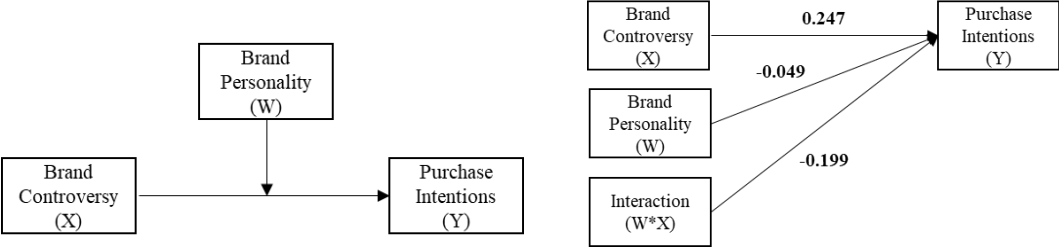


Figure 3. Conceptual and Statistical Illustration of Hypothesized Moderation Analysis

Moreover, to test the means' difference of purchase intentions between the controversial and non-controversial brands, an independent sample t-test was performed. The results were not significant ($t(226) = 0.75$, $p = 0.456$), meaning that controversial brands ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.39$) are not expected to have higher purchase intentions in comparison to non-controversial brands ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.48$).

Overall Hypothesized Model

All in all, since there was no evidence to support hypotheses H_{1A} and H_2 and given that the hypothesized mediations of the model were not significant, it is irrelevant to test the full hypothesized model.

5. General Discussion

From all the hypotheses that were presented throughout this study, only one

proposition was deemed true: brands that get involved in controversy are perceived as taking more risk than brands who do not. As argued before, brands risk losing customers when getting involved in controversy, given that they are taking a stance on a particular side of a divisive issue that most likely will not appeal to everyone. Indeed, this finding is in line with past research on controversy that showed that controversial brands are perceived as taking more risk than non-controversial brands (Gomes 2020).

Moreover, this study also hypothesized that by being perceived as more risk-takers, controversial brands would also be perceived as being more powerful than non-controversial brands. However, since no evidence was found to support this proposition, the present research was not able to prove that controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands are perceived as more powerful, nor that it is their level of risk-taking that leads them to be perceived as such. While the lack of significance in results for the mediation of the level of risk-taking between brand controversy and brand power is in line with past research, the same is not true for the lack of significance in results for the effect of brand controversy on brand power. For example, on one hand, a previous work project (Gomes 2020) was not able to support the idea that the level of risk-taking leads controversial brands to be perceived as more powerful, but on the other, it was able to show that non-controversial brands are perceived as more powerful than controversial brands. Thus, and given that the current research used real-life brands instead of an unknown hypothesized brand, it can be theorized that this lack of significance of effects, between brand controversy and brand power, could have occurred due to the possible participants' preconceived notions on the brands' power. Participants, for both scenarios, might have answered for the questions on brand power based on their pre-conceived beliefs of the brand itself and not on the brand's perceptions built from the scenario presented. Consequently, and given that the same set of brands were presented for both scenarios and participants would have the same evaluation on brand power for the same brands regardless of

the scenario, this would mean that no significant difference in means of brand power between the scenarios would be detected.

Finally, this research also hypothesized that controversy (vs. non-controversy) would lead to a weaker increase in purchase intentions for feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands. However, no evidence was found to support this theory either. In general, there was no evidence that there is even a difference in purchase intentions between controversial and non-controversial brands. This lack of significance in results may have occurred due to various reasons. On one hand, and in line with previous arguments, this might have occurred due to the possible participants' pre-conceived ideas on the brands. Participants, for both scenarios, might have decided if they would like to purchase or not the brand based on their pre-conceived notions of the brand itself and not based on their evaluations of the brand arising from the specific scenario. On the other hand, it could also simply be that there is no real effect of the brand personality on purchase intentions of controversial brands. Customers might not take into consideration or even care about the brand personality when shopping for controversial brands, nor even care if the brand involves itself on controversial matters while deciding to purchase the brand.

5.1. Limitations

It is then anticipated that the current research entails limitations derived from the methodology employed. By choosing to use real life brands on the scenarios (i.e. Dove, Lindt, McDonald's and Nike) I opened this study to inevitable pre-existent biases regarding the brands, some of which were intended (i.e. recognition of a brand personality) and some of which that were not (e.g. biased pre-existing feelings for the brand). Additionally, and given that I decided for a more standard scenario to be able to apply it unbiasedly to all the brands regardless of its category or personality type, it can also be argued that the hypothetical announcement was not perceived as a good or authentic fit for the brand presented. Same goes

for the controversial topic that was chosen based on its level of controversy and not on brand suitability. In general, these decisions might have affected the study since participants might have not been able to draw strong perceptions from a scenario that might have not made sense in their minds.

5.2. Managerial Implications

Even though this research was not able to shed light on most of its hypothesized relationships, due to lack of significance in results, it was still able to develop relevant theoretical implications and to further sustain previous research findings. In particular, and even if not able to advise brands and its managers on the exact consequences of controversy on their customers' purchase intentions, this study can at least advise to the fact that brands will be perceived as more risk-takers when getting involved in controversy. For that, brands should be cautious and analyse trade-offs in accordance with their specific situation.

6. Conclusion and Future Research

The main purpose of this study was to investigate if controversial (vs. non-controversial) brands would be perceived as more powerful, and in turn see if these power perceptions would lead to lower purchase intentions for feminine (vs. masculine) controversial brands. Nevertheless, due to a high level of insignificance of results, nothing could be said for these two main hypotheses. In fact, only one main conclusion was reached with this research: that controversial brands are perceived as more risk-takers than non-controversial brands.

Consequently, this topic could benefit from further research. Impending studies could not only, re-test the presented hypothesized model, while tackling its limitations and adjusting for the scenarios or brands presented (e.g. use other real-life brands or test with hypothesized brands instead), but could also analyse the impact of controversy on purchase intentions or other dependent variables (e.g. word-of-mouth, willingness to pay) for masculine and

feminine brands while checking for other mediators, such as leadership or dominance, given that these are traits that are also usually more associated with masculinity than femininity.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Online Pre-test Questionnaire

Q0. – Consent Form

Q1. Nivea



Q1.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q1.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q1.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q2. Calvin Klein



Q2.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q2.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q2.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q3. Nike



Q3.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q3.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q3.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q4. Zara

The logo for the brand ZARA, featuring the word "ZARA" in a bold, black, serif font. The letters are closely spaced and have a classic, elegant appearance.

Q4.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q4.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q4.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q5. H&M

The logo for the brand H&M, featuring the letters "H&M" in a bold, red, stylized font. The letters are slanted and have a modern, casual appearance.

Q5.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q5.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q5.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q6. Levi's



Q6.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q6.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring

5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q6.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q7. Smart



Q7.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q7.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q7.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q8. Porsche



PORSCHE

Q8.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q8.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q8.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q9. Lindt



Q9.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q9.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous

2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q9.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q10. McDonald's



Q10.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q10.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q10.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet

6. This brand is tender

Q11. Dove



Q11.1. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know this brand?

1. Yes
2. No

Q11.2. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q11.3. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding *Nivea*?

(1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q12. Brand Scenario Description

Controversial Scenario

Imagine that **Brand X**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support **LGBTQ+** couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a **heated** public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and a great deal of people had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a **controversial** response.

OR

Non-Controversial Scenario

Imagine that **Brand X**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and **virtually** no one had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a positive **consensus**.

Q13. Measure Topic Manipulation

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. This announcement is likely to cause opposing views
2. This announcement is likely to cause discomfort
3. This announcement is likely to divide people
4. This announcement is controversial
5. People will have strong opinions about this announcement

Q14. Demographics

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Nationality
4. Education Level Completed

Annex 2: Online Main Questionnaire

Q0. Consent Form

Q1. Brand Hypothetical Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Controversial, Nike (MBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **Nike**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support **LGBTQ+** couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a **heated** public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and a great deal of people had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a **controversial** response.



Brand Logo:

OR

Scenario 2 – Controversial, McDonald's (MBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **McDonald's**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be

donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support **LGBTQ+** couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a **heated** public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and a great deal of people had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a **controversial** response.



Brand Logo:

OR

Scenario 3 – Controversial, Dove (FBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **Dove**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support **LGBTQ+** couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a **heated** public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and a great deal of people had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a **controversial** response.



Brand Logo:

OR

Scenario 4 – Controversial, Lindt (FBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **Lindt**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support **LGBTQ+** couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a **heated** public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and a great deal of people had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a **controversial** response.



Brand Logo:

OR

Scenario 5 – Non-Controversial, Nike (MBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **Nike**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads,

Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and **virtually** no one had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a positive **consensus**.



Brand Logo:

OR

Scenario 6 – Non-Controversial, McDonald’s (MBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **McDonald’s**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and **virtually** no one had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a positive **consensus**.



Brand Logo:

OR

Scenario 7 – Non-Controversial, Dove (FBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **Dove**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and **virtually** no one had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a positive **consensus**.



Brand Logo:

OR

Scenario 8 – Non-Controversial, Lindt (FBP)

Please read the following scenario carefully, then answer the questions below.

Imagine that **Lindt**, a well-known multinational brand, announced that it would be donating 1 million euros per year, during the next 4 years, to non-profit organizations that legally support couples who want to adopt. This announcement was spread through television, Youtube ads, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and generated a public discussion. A great deal of people thought the initiative was positive and **virtually** no one had a negative reaction to it. Therefore, the announcement was met with a positive **consensus**.



Brand Logo:

Q2. Measure Brand Knowledge

Do you know/recognize the brand presented in the scenario?

1. Yes
2. No

Q3. Measure Topic Manipulation

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. This announcement is likely to cause opposing views
2. This announcement is likely to cause discomfort
3. This announcement is likely to divide people
4. This announcement is controversial
5. People will have strong opinions about this announcement

Q4. Measure Purchase Intentions

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. In the near future, and if it was available at a good price, I would probably buy from this brand
2. In the near future, and if it was available at a good price, I would likely buy from this brand
3. In the near future, and if it was available at a good price, I would possibly buy from this brand

Q5. Measure Brand Power

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. This brand can get people to listen to what it says
2. This brand wishes do not carry too much weight
3. This brand can get people to do what it wants
4. Even if it voices them, this brand's opinions have little sway
5. I think this brand has a great deal of power
6. This brand's opinions are often ignored
7. Even when it tries, this brand is not able to get it its own way

Q6. Measure Level of Risk

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. This brand is not afraid of taking risks
2. With this announcement, this brand is taking a great risk
3. With this announcement, this brand has everything to lose
4. With this announcement, this brand has more to lose than to gain

Q7. Measure Masculine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Brand X?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. This brand is adventurous
2. This brand is aggressive
3. This brand is brave
4. This brand is daring
5. This brand is dominant
6. This brand is sturdy (i.e. strong)

Q8. Measure Feminine Brand Personality

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Brand X?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. This brand expresses tender feelings
2. This brand is fragile
3. This brand is graceful
4. This brand is sensitive
5. This brand is sweet
6. This brand is tender

Q9. Measure Support for LGBTQ+ Adoptions

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree)

1. I believe LGBTQ+ people should have the right to adopt
2. I believe LGBTQ+ couples should have the right to adopt
3. I strongly support LGBTQ+ rights

Q10. Demographics

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Level of Education Completed
4. Nationality

Q11. Assess suspicion of hypotheses being tested

What do you think is the purpose of this study?

Annex 3: Sample Demographics

