Article Title Page

ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT:

The role of crisis typology and cultural belongingness in shaping consumers' negative responses towards a faulty brand

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Structured Abstract:

Purpose: Previous research on product-harm crisis (PHC) has introduced the difference between a values-related crisis and performance-related crisis. However, little remains known regarding consumers' varying negative responses towards these two different types of brand misconduct. The present study investigates and compares consumers' affective and behavioural negative reactions (i.e. negative word of mouth and purchase intentions) towards a faulty brand during a values-related and a performance-related crisis by testing the mediation of negative emotions and introducing the moderating role of cultural belongingness (collectivistic vs. individualistic).
Design: The authors test a model of moderated mediation in a cross-cultural investigation on a sample of 229 Italian and Asian consumers. The experimental design was a 2 (cultures: collectivistic vs individualistic) x 2 (crisis: performance-related vs values-related) between subjects. The moderated mediation model show that consumers' negative reactions (negative word of mouth and negative purchase intention) towards a faulty brand involved in different crisis typologies is explained by the mediating role of negative emotions, and that this mediation depends on a consumer's cultural belongingness.
Findings: The results suggest that consumers belonging to a collectivistic culture (e.g. Asian culture) tend to react in a more severe and strict manner when faced with a values-related brand crisis event, while consumers who share an individualistic cultural framework are more prone to negatively react towards a brand if the PHC involved a performance-related failure. The arousal of negative emotion towards a brand represents a mediating variable in behavioural responses (i.e. negative word of mouth and purchase intention).
Originality: The present study extends current knowledge in the field of consumer negative response to brand irresponsibility behaviours, while introducing the role of crisis typology and cultural belongingness. In individualistic cultures, consumers seem more negatively responsive to a performance-related crisis, while consumers belonging to a collectivistic culture are more sensitive to a values-related crisis. The findings of this study have strong managerial implications for defining effective response strategies to negative events involving brands in different markets.

Keywords: Product-harm crisis; negative response towards the brand; negative emotion; culture

Article Classification: Research paper

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The role of crisis typology and cultural belongingness in shaping consumers' negative responses towards a faulty brand

Abstract

Purpose: Previous research on brand crisis has introduced the difference between a values-related crisis and a performance-related crisis. However, little remains known regarding consumers' varying negative responses towards these two different types of brand misconduct. The present study investigates and compares consumers' affective and behavioural negative reactions (i.e., negative word of mouth and purchase intention) towards a faulty brand during a values-related crisis and a performance-related crisis by testing the mediation of negative emotions and introducing the moderating role of cultural belongingness (collectivistic vs individualistic).

Design: The authors tested a model of moderated mediation in a cross-cultural investigation on a sample of 229 Italian and Asian consumers. The study is a 2 (cultures: collectivistic vs individualistic) × 2 (crisis: performance-related vs values-related) between-subjects experimental design. The moderated mediation model shows that consumers' negative reactions (negative word of mouth and negative purchase intention) towards a faulty brand involved in different crisis typologies is explained by the mediating role of negative emotions, and that this mediation depends on a consumer's cultural belongingness.

Findings: The results suggest that consumers belonging to a collectivistic culture (e.g., Asian culture) tend to react in a more severe and strict manner when faced with a values-related brand crisis event then when faced with a performance-related crisis. The arousal of negative emotion towards a brand represents the mediating variable in behavioural responses (i.e., negative word of mouth and purchase intention).

Originality: The present study extends current knowledge in the field of consumers' negative response to

brand irresponsibility behaviours, while introducing the role of crisis typology and cultural belongingness. In particular, individualistic people are more sensitive to a values-related crisis in comparison with a performance-related one. The findings of this study have strong managerial implications for defining effective response strategies to negative events involving brands in different markets.

Keywords

brand crisis; negative response towards the brand; negative emotion; culture

1. Introduction

From Toshiba in Japan (Farrell, 2015) to Nike and Abercrombie & Fitch in the USA, several highly reputable organisations have suffered from negative events that demonstrate a lack of due concern for the environment or society, which can be interpreted as a sign of corporate social irresponsibility (CSI). One example is the 2015 Volkswagen "dieselgate" scandal: one of the world's largest vehicle manufacturers admitted to programming approximately 11 millions of its vehicles to detect when they were being tested and to alter the performance of their diesel engines to conceal the true record of polluting emissions. Recent crises involving brands such as Volkswagen in Europe and Firestone and Coca Cola in the United States have created consumer and media awareness as well as sensitivity to such crises. Throughout such situations, companies face consumer negativity towards their brands and products as an inevitable consequence of their misconduct. Scholars suggest that CSI and perceived wrongdoings by companies induce negative responses in consumers' behaviour and attitude in a wide range of contexts (e.g., Klein et al., 2004; Micheletti, 2003; Sen et al., 2001). Understanding consumers' negative responses towards brands during a negative event or crisis can help companies to respond effectively. The seriousness and frequency of brand crisis contrast with the relatively fragmented research in this area.

Previous literature has investigated brand crisis through a variety of interesting paths. Unfortunately, these research paths seem to be independent and isolated. The result is an incomplete and quite confusing overview of this phenomenon.

The first stream of research is focused on consumer reactions to brand crisis, and it assumes the central role of attribution of blame (Folkes, 1984; Weiner, 2000) in generating negative reactions among consumers in terms of: emotions, such as anger (Kim and Cameron, 2011; Vassilikopoulou et al., 2011); behaviours, such as purchase intention (Roehm and Brady, 2007; Klein and Dawar, 2004) and negative word of mouth (Grappi et al., 2013); and brand constructs, such as brand equity and brand image (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Dawar and Pillutla, 2000) and brand credibility (Cleeren et al., 2013). These dependent variables are frequently investigated separately, preventing the opportunity to give a complete and processual depiction of the phenomenon. In particular, the link between consumers' emotional and behavioural negative reactions

towards a brand crisis is severely under-investigated.

The second stream of research is focused on company reactions to different typologies of brand crisis in order to understand the effectiveness of response strategies (Coombs, 2010; 2014; Dutta and Pullig, 2011). Within this stream of research, Dutta and Pullig (2011) suggest an interesting conceptualisation of brand crisis, distinguishing two different typologies: performance-related versus values-related crisis. The former is related to defective or dangerous products or harm associated with some brands (Haas-Kotzegger and Schlegelmilch, 2013), while the latter is due to unethical conduct that may result in serious damage for society. The contribution of the present study is to link consumers' emotional and behavioural negative reactions to brand crisis to crisis typology (performance-related versus values-related) in order to better explain a consumer's internal process when facing a brand scandal. Moreover, the present research introduces, for the first time, the cultural framework for defining consumer reaction to brand misconduct. In fact, as a crisis spreads quickly in the globalisation era, the present research examines cultural belongingness as a crucial variable in determining consumers' responses to a brand crisis. Despite culture framing being characterised as an important variable affecting consumers' behaviour in the marketplace, no studies in marketing literature have examined how cultural belongingness affects peoples' reactions to a brand's negative events. Actually, the first consideration of how consumers differ in their sensitivities to brand crisis typologies was introduced by Jun et al. (2011). The authors stated that people with an independent self-construal were more likely to react negatively to a brand crisis related to product performance in comparison with values-related ones. The present study picks up on Jun et al.'s (2011) investigation to consider independent or interdependent consumer inclinations, but it adopts, for the first time, this perspective within a systematic intercultural framework. In particular, the present research assumes that the independent versus interdependent consumers' inclination might be respectively attributed to individualist or collectivist cultural belongingness (Hofstede, 2003; Triandis, 1995; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998). The assumption is that individualistic (independent people) versus collectivistic (interdependent people) are inclined to react differently to a brand crisis that involves single consumers (performance-related crisis) versus community-

shared rules and harmony (values-related crisis).

In summary, the present study contributes to existing debates in several ways. Firstly, it applies the brand crisis classification in defining consumers' different reactions facing a performance-related versus a values-related crisis. Secondly, the study introduces the mediation process of a wide spectrum of negative emotions (e.g., disgust, fear, sadness, and disappointment, besides anger alone) in shaping consumers' negativity toward the faulty brand (negative word of mouth and purchasing intention). Finally, the present research gives an initial insight into the consumer culture framework relevance within the phenomenon of brand crisis. In particular, the study demonstrates that individualistic consumers and collectivistic ones differently react when facing different kinds of crises.

2. Brand crisis typology: behavioural and affective response

Brand crises and CSI scandals are unexpected events that threaten a brand or product's perceived ability to deliver expected benefits, thereby weakening brand equity (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Dawar and Pillutla, 2000; Dawar and Lei, 2009; Roehm and Tybout, 2006). Akin to corporate scandals, a product-harm crisis is usually a form of corporate crisis that creates an unexpected threat to a firm's stability and performance (Seeger et al., 1998). Certainly, if a sudden, unforeseen negative event takes place, financial, relational, or reputational damages may quickly destroy a firm's accumulated intangible assets, such as brand equity, brand image, and reputation (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Dawar and Pillutla, 2000; Dawar and Lei, 2009; Pullig et al., 2006; Roehm and Tybout, 2006). Corporate crises often result in negative publicity, threatening brand equity and affecting consumer attitudes and future purchases (Griffin et al., 1991). An extensive literature base focuses on how consumers deal with negative information concerning a brand or company during a reputational crisis (see, e.g., Ahluwahlia et al., 2000; Griffin et al., 1991) and how consumers are influenced by blame attributions (Weiner, 2000; Dutta and Pullig, 2011; Klein and Dawar, 2004). Moreover, existing evidence suggests that the perceived severity of a crisis, as well as any blame attribution inferred, influences

consumers' reactions (Bradfield and Aquino, 1999; Grégoire et al., 2010). The existing literature supports the assumption that perceived severity should influence the appraisal of corporate social irresponsibility (Lange and Washburn, 2012), and scholars have observed that higher harm severity is related to stronger emotional reactions and subsequent motivation to retaliate against the firm (Bradfield and Aquino, 1999; Grégoire et al., 2010). After a negative event results in the harm of a third party, individuals experience intense negative emotions (Kim and Cameron, 2011; Vassilikopoulou, et al., 2011), and anger has been recognised as an important emotion associated with brand or product crisis events. According to the literature, attribution of blame positively affects consumers' feelings of anger during brand misconduct (Jorgensen, 1994; Coombs and Holladay, 2005; Coombs, 2010).

Some studies on brand crisis suggest that consumers' response patterns can vary depending on the crisis context and typology. Some authors focused their attention on the difference between accidental and intentional crises as the key predictor of consumers' reactions towards a faulty brand (Kim et al., 2009; Ham and Kim, 2017). In contrast, the seminal work of Brown and Dacin (1997) suggests that corporate associations can be used to distinguish different typologies of brand misconduct: crises which disconfirm brand associations related to corporate ability (CA) and crises which disconfirm corporate association related to corporate social responsibility (CSR). For example, the brand crisis of Ikea (Ikea product recall due to a safety issue) was triggered by functional defects of its products, damaging its CA image. In contrast, Starbucks unfair transaction of coffee beans in 2006 was not associated with the company's product quality, but with its CSR involvement in fair trade programmes. Jeon and Baeck (2016) used this distinction to investigate how consumers react to brand scandals. In particular, the authors demonstrated that the more consumers are exposed to brand associations related to CA – or, in turn, to CSR – the more they are likely to negatively react to a crisis related to, respectively, CA or to CSR. In their analysis, the authors manipulated the amount and nature of information (and thus the related brand associations) to which respondents have been exposed before the crisis. Their aim was to investigate how consumers change their beliefs about brands following negative information considering the relationship between the consumer and the faulty brand. The

aim of the present study is to investigate consumers' negative responses to misconduct by looking not only at brands which have strong CSR associations or only at brands with consumers who are strongly self-connected to them, thus going beyond the relational boundaries of Joen and Baeck's study. This is the reason why we adopt Dutta and Pullig's conceptualisation of brand crisis (2011). The latter is not based on the nature of associations that a company communicates to consumers, but rather on the nature of crisis consequences from a consumer perspective. Dutta and Pullig (2011) conceptualise two types of corporate crisis: performance-related or values-related. Performance-related crises commonly involve defective or harmful products, and primarily reduce a brand's perceived ability to deliver functional benefits (Roehm and Brady, 2007) – for example, the detection of lead in Mattel brand toys. A values-related crisis does not directly involve the product, but rather involves ethical issues surrounding the values espoused by the brand without previous specific involvement in a CSR programme – for example, Nike's alleged use of child labour. This crisis type does not involve specific product attributes that deliver functional benefits, but calls into question a brand's ability to deliver symbolic and psychological benefits (Dutta and Pullig, 2011). A performance-based crisis impacts expected benefits related to brand functionality, whereas a values-based crisis impacts the brand's expected symbolic and psychological benefits. Dutta and Pullig (2011) use this useful crisis classification to compare the efficacy of three different potential company response strategies after a crisis: denial, reduction of offensiveness, and corrective action. They determined that the relative effectiveness of response strategies depends on the nature of the brand crisis. In the case of a performance-related crisis, they determined that corrective action is uniquely the most effective response, as this type of crisis affects consumer functional risk perception, whereas for a values-related crisis, reduction of offensiveness is the most appropriate response to reduce the perception of psychological and social risk due to values-related misconduct (Dutta and Pullig, 2011). The present study is a first attempt to utilise Dutta and Pullig's brand crisis classification in order to investigate the step before brand response strategies: the consumers' reactions. We assume that when a brand crisis occurs, consumers are strongly exposed to negative information about the potential effects of the crisis. This information, depending on the crisis

typologies, might be related to functional benefits (performance-related crisis) or to ethical and symbolic benefits (values- related crisis). Other evidence (Pullig et al., 2006) indicates that negative information related to some functional benefits of a brand more strongly influence satisfaction and choice likelihood (Mittal et al., 1998, 1999), while negative information related to ethical or symbolic benefits of a brand directly affects both the psychological risk (Dutta and Pullig, 2011) and also the arousal of negative emotions and moral judgements (Vassilikopoulou et al., 2011; Trump, 2014). According to this evidence, Kim and Cameron (2011) explain that the existence of negative emotion (e.g., disappointment and sadness) in crisis situations results from the responsibility that consumers assign to an organisation and the resulting disappointment of their expectations.

Swann and Combs (1976) identify two categories of product benefit, with implications for consumer satisfaction and purchase intention. Thus, benefits are either instrumental (more functional in nature) or expressive (more symbolic in nature). During product evaluation, consumers emphasise the absence of functional benefits (e.g., basic quality of clothes) over the absence of expressive attributes (e.g., engagement in CSR programmes). Mittal et al. (1998, 1999) extend this work by demonstrating that poor performance on a functional attribute is more influential in defining product choice than poor performance on an expressive or symbolic attribute (e.g., charity commitment of a brand). Instead, as regards emotional reactions, Trump (2014) suggests that information about brand misconduct on ethical or values-related attributes induces a stronger negative emotional reaction before a future purchase (feelings of betrayal and disappointment) than transgressions related to product performance failure (Trump, 2014; Grégoire et al., 2010). In light of the above-mentioned literature, in the case of scandals with the same (and higher) attribution of blame to a faulty brand, it is assumed that negative emotional arousal and purchase intention are differently affected by the crisis typology (values-related vs performance-related), as the emotional sphere in comparison with the behavioural one is differently affected by functional versus symbolic information. On the basis of this evidence, the hypotheses for the present study are as follows:

H1 Crisis typology (performance-related vs values-related) has a significant effect on consumers' purchase intentions. In the case of performance-related crises, intention is lower than in the case of values-related crises.

H2 Crisis typology (performance-related vs values-related) has a significant effect on negative emotional arousal. In the case of values-related crises, consumers experience higher negative emotions (e.g., disgust, fear, anger, concern, sadness, annoyance, and irritability) than in the case of performance-related crises.

In the context of social psychology, Weiner (1980) developed the model of attribution-affect-action, which relates thoughts to emotions and behavioural outcomes with respect to ethical and moral issues. This model suggests that when a negative event occurs due to a controllable cause, the observer evaluates the action according to his/her moral beliefs, attributes, and responsibility, and subsequently becomes angry, with a desire to punish the subject. In other words, the judgement process is based on the assumption of the rationality of the observer and also on the impact of the individual's values, which produce effects on emotions and intentions (Alicke, 2000). Several researchers have also recognised the relationship between attribution, emotion, and behavioural outcome (Folkes, 1984; Jorgensen, 1994; Romani et al., 2013). However, one should consider that feelings and thoughts regarding a negative event impact the behavioural plans of consumers and, consequently, their future purchase behaviour (Jorgensen, 1994). In addition, compelling evidence from the literature suggests that negative emotions towards a faulty brand affect consumers' behaviour towards that brand, such as negative word of mouth and purchase intention (Romani et al., 2012, 2013). During crisis situations, anger, disappointment, and sadness particularly seem to serve as the mediating lens between the attribution of responsibility and blame and purchase intentions (Weiner, 1980; Jorgensen, 1994), and between ethical beliefs and behavioural intentions (Weiner, 1980, 2000; Frijda, 2000). Moreover, a study by Romani et al. (2013) offers compelling evidence that different moral emotions (e.g., anger and contempt) lead to varying punitive actions towards an irresponsible brand. In particular, the

authors suggest that constructive punitive actions (with the intent to achieve a modification of companies' conduct by maintaining relationships with them) are driven primarily by anger towards firms, while destructive punitive actions (directed at creating a negative image, such as negative word of mouth) are driven by consumers' feelings of contempt. Hence, emotions with different arousal levels have different purposes or functions (Ellsworth and Gross, 1994). Russell (1991, 1994) argued that high arousal emotions (e.g., anger and fear) are energised states that prepare us for different types of action. These emotions correspond to situations where mobilisation and energy are required. When a high arousal emotion is induced, decision-making becomes focused and simplified (Russel, 1991); thus, a strong impulse is transmitted to consumers' behaviour. By contrast, low arousal emotions are enervated states that prepare us for inaction or rest. According to this assumption, negative emotional stimulation due to a brand's negative event, such as anger, disappointment, or fear, has the potential to influence the purchase decision-making process of consumers – leading to negative purchase intentions (Coombs and Holladay, 2007) and activation of negative word of mouth (Romani et al., 2013). On the basis of this evidence, we introduce the mediating role of negative emotions on purchase intentions and consumers' tendency to spread negative word of mouth about a brand during a crisis.

H3 Negative emotions (disgust, fear, anger, disappointment, and sadness) mediate the effect of crisis typology on purchase intention. The higher the arousal of negative emotion, the lower the purchase intention becomes.

H4 Negative emotions (disgust, fear, anger, disappointment, and sadness) mediate the effect of crisis typology on negative word of mouth. The higher the arousal of negative emotion, the higher consumers' intention to spread negative word of mouth about a brand.

2.1 The moderating role of culture

From a global perspective, brand misconduct has become increasingly visible and influential due to the globalisation of markets (Pennings et al., 2002; Rea et al., 2014). Despite the disturbing impact of brand misconduct in global markets, no studies have considered the cultural variable as a possible determinant of human responses to this type of company crisis. Indeed, scholars have focused primarily on case-specific elements potentially affecting consumer reactions, such as attribution of blame, or the ability to recover from or reduce the damage severity of a crisis. The present research expands on this by including framework factors within which crises are embedded. In particular, the present study focuses on one factor external to the negative event: the "cultural lens" that defines reactions to brand crisis in a globalised marketplace.

Culture is a pervasive influence that underlies all facets of social behaviour and interaction, which is evident in the values and norms governing society and is embodied in the objects used in everyday life and modes of communication in society. The complexity of culture is reflected in the multitude of definitions of culture itself. Kroeber and Kluckholn (1952), in their classic review, listed over 160 different definitions of culture. McCracken (1986) adopts an all-encompassing view of culture, defining it as the "lens through which the individual views phenomena". Despite the exponential growth in marketing research addressing the relationship between culture and consumer behaviour, the domain of brand crisis has not undergone adequate cross-cultural investigation until now. An interesting study proposed by Jun et al. (2011) introduced the importance of consumers' orientation in defining their reaction to a brand crisis. The authors stated that consumers with an independent orientation are more sensitive to negative information about individual benefits, while interdependent consumers tend to react to negative information about group benefits. The authors consider independence versus interdependence orientation in a self-construal and inter-subjective framework, because their interest was to investigate brand crisis in a consumer–brand relationship framework. Their assumption was consistent with Schwarz's (1994) classification of the *conservatism versus autonomy* cultural dimension. Schwartz focuses on the role of the individual within society and examines the extent to which a society views the individual as either autonomous or embedded in the group. According to Schwarz (1994), Western cultures foster an autonomous perspective on the self. They conceptualise the self

as fundamentally distinct from others and define it in terms of internal features such as attributes, abilities, and attitudes (e.g., Markus and Kitayama 1991; Oyserman and Uskul, 2008). In contrast, Eastern cultures foster an interdependent perspective on the self. They conceptualise the self as fundamentally connected to others and define it primarily in terms of relationships, group memberships, and social roles. Schwartz's perspective is suitable for investigations of consumer behaviours related to self-expression in terms of self–brand congruity and normative influences. In our opinion, in the domain of brand crisis, it might be helpful to consider the independency or interdependency of consumers as a cultural lens by which people perceive, interpret, and evaluate products, brands and events in the marketplace (De Mooij, 2013, 2015; Steenkamp and Hofstede, 2002). Within the brand crisis phenomenon, the matter is not how consumers relate themselves to others in terms of behaviours and social norm adaptation, but rather how consumers have different interpretations of a brand scandal in light of their in-group or out-group perspective. That is the reason why we adopted Hofstede's (1991, 2003, 2011) cross-cultural classification, particularly referring to the individualism versus collectivism dimension. Collectivism is defined as a social pattern that consists of individuals who see themselves as an integral part of one or more collectives or in-groups, such as family and co-workers. People who are more collectivist give priority to the goals of the in-group, and try to emphasise their connectedness with the in-group, as stated by several research studies adopting Hofstede's theorisation (Triandis, 1995; Singelis et al., 1995; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998), whereas individualism is a social pattern consisting of individuals who view themselves as autonomous and independent. People who are more individualistic are motivated by their own preferences, needs, and rights, give priority to their personal goals, and emphasise a rational analysis of their relationships with others (Hofstede, 1991, 2003; Triandis, 1995; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998). The *individualism/collectivism* dimension of Hofstede's model is one of the most investigated cultural factors in consumer studies (Watkins and Liu, 1996; Kacen and Lee, 2002; De Mooij, 2013, 2015). Besides the individualism versus collectivism dichotomy, Hofstede's classification considers other five cultural dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, long-term orientation and indulgence vs restraint. Although Hofstede's complete metric scale has been

adopted as an interpretative framework in several studies in international business and consumer behaviour research (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007; Moon et al., 2008; Woodside et al., 2011; Kacen and Lee, 2002; Tellis et al., 2003; Yeniyurt and Townsend, 2003), in the domain of brand crisis, the dichotomy of individualism/collectivism appears particularly appropriate to reflect the asymmetric sensitivity to functional versus symbolic brand information between independent consumers versus interdependent consumers largely discussed by Jun et al. (2011). On the basis of these theoretical foundations, we hypothesised a stronger reaction to a performance-related crisis (involving individual and functional consequences) among individualistic consumers in comparison with collectivist consumers, who tend to be more sensitive to a values-related crisis involving symbolic meanings. As regards the domain of consumers' reactions linked to the cultural framework, Hofstede's dimensions have been frequently linked to consumer consumption behaviour, such as the intention to buy within several contexts, from tourism to green products (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007; Moon et al., 2008; Woodside et al., 2011; Kacen and Lee, 2002; Tellis et al., 2003; Yeniyurt and Townsend, 2003). The seminal contribution of Triandis (1995) explains consumer purchase behaviour on the basis of cultural belongingness, taking into consideration the differences between collectivistic (e.g., Arabic and Asian) and individualistic cultures (e.g., Western; Hofstede, 2003, 2011). Moreover, some studies in cross-cultural consumer research provide evidence of the effect of cultural values on word-of-mouth behaviours (Yaveroglu and Donthu, 2002; Lam et al., 2009). According to Yaveroglu and Donthu (2002), consumers in collectivist cultures are more likely to imitate each other in an effort to gain social standing and acceptance. Within collectivist cultures, word-of-mouth activity has great relevance because these societies encourage bonding within their in-group through advice from others (Lam et al., 2009) in order to favour and restore harmony and general well-being (Triandis, 1995; Lim, 2016; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002). Individualistic people are prone to engage in negative word of mouth against companies as well, but they have contrasting motivations (Cheung et al., 2007). They look for revenge when they feel endangered or potentially damaged by companies, and they engage in negative word of mouth to hurt the company responsible for the crisis (Chung and Darke, 2006). For

individualistic people, negative word of mouth is an expression of the consumer's ability to be mutually harmful against faulty brands.

To sum up, we expect that the "cultural lens" plays a central role in defining consumer responses to different negative events involving products or brands. In particular, we refer to the previously discussed emotional reactions and to the above-mentioned behavioural reactions (purchase intention and word of mouth). In collectivistic cultures, consumer reactions (affective and behavioural) towards a faulty brand responsible for causing harm should be more severe in the case of a values-related crisis than that of a performance-related crisis, because collectivistic cultures tend to emphasise control in order to preserve the well-being of the group, while a values-related crisis could undermine moral and ethical rules (Dutta and Pullig, 2001) presiding over the harmony of the entire social group (Tsai and Levenson, 1997). In contrast, consumers belonging to an individualistic culture should react in a more severe way during a performance-related crisis, as this type of negative event can directly damage their own personal well-being and satisfaction (Mittal et al., 1998; Triandis, 1995). According to this assumption, we postulate that:

H5: Cultural belonging (individualism vs collectivism) moderates the effect of crisis typology on purchase intention. The intention to purchase a product is lower (higher) during a values-related (performance-related) crisis for consumers who belong to a collectivistic (vs individualistic) culture than that of consumers belonging to an individualistic (collectivistic) one. As such, cultural belonging moderates the effect of crisis typology on purchase intention.

H6: Cultural belonging (individualism vs collectivism) moderates the effect of crisis typology on the intention to spread negative word of mouth. Negative word of mouth about a brand is higher (lower) during a values-related (performance-related) crisis for consumers who belong to a collectivistic (vs individualistic) culture than that of consumers belonging to an individualistic (collectivistic) one.

H7 Cultural belonging moderates the effect of crisis typology on negative emotion arousal. Consumers belonging to a collectivistic (individualistic) culture experience stronger (lower) negative emotions when facing a values-related crisis than facing a performance-related one.

Figure 1 summarises the hypotheses tested in this research.

--- Figure 1 about here ---

3. Methodology

Materials

The study is aimed at investigating how different consumer cultures (individualistic versus collectivistic) react to different types of brand crisis (performance-related versus values-related). In order to rule out any potential alternative explanations for the results, the experimental design showed different crises perceived as equal in terms of damage severity in the attribution of blame to a faulty brand (Weiner, 2000; Bradfield and Aquino, 1999). Indeed, according to the literature, the severity of a crisis and the attribution of blame play an important role in consumers' emotional and behavioural reactions to brand misconduct (Weiner, 2000; Bradfield and Aquino, 1999). For this reason, a pre-test was conducted to select one values-related crisis and one performance-related crisis that were equally high in terms of perceived severity of harmful consequences, and in terms of the attribution of blame to a brand for the main study. A separate sample of 55 students from an Italian university (68% female, mean age 23)[1] evaluated a list of four crises (environmental pollution, child labour in factories, toxic dye in clothing, and detection of lead in mobile phone batteries) in terms of perceived severity (three items on a seven-point Likert scale; Antonetti and Maklan, 2014), blame

[1] According to Hofstede's measures, Italy, with a score of 76, is an individualist culture.

attribution to the brand (three items on a seven-point Likert scale; Klein and Dawar, 2004), and crisis typology – performance-related versus values-related (two items on a seven-point Likert scale; Dutta and Pullig, 2011). The child labour and toxic dye in clothing scandals were perceived as equally high in terms of severity ($M_{\text{child labour}} = 5.70$ vs $M_{\text{toxic dye}} = 5.48$; t (1, 53) = –0.65; p = ns.) and in terms of blame attribution to the brand ($M_{\text{child labour}} = 4.80$ vs $M_{\text{toxic dye}} = 4.51$; t (1, 53) = .832; p = ns.), but significantly different in terms of product-performance damage ($M_{\text{child labour}} = 2.75$ vs $M_{\text{toxic dye}} = 5.23$; t (1, 53) = 3.94; $p < .05$) and in value undermining ($M_{\text{child labour}} = 5.67$ vs $M_{\text{toxic dye}} = 4.33$; t (1, 53) = 4.88; $p < .05$). Consequently, these two crises were selected for the main study.[2]

Participants and procedures

A total of 115 Italian consumers (44% males; mean age 42 years) and 114 Filipino consumers (42% males; mean age 45) took part in the study online.[3] The questionnaire was implemented using the software Qualtrics, and participants were recruited with an online invitation. The questionnaire was translated into the Filipino language by a bilingual (Italian and Tagalog) native speaker.[4] We selected Filipino culture as the Asian and collectivistic culture and Italian culture as the individualistic culture, according to Hofstede's classification of cultures (2003).[5] The study employed a 2 (cultures: Filipino vs Italian) × 2 (crisis: performance-related vs values-related) between-subjects experimental design. Participants were presented with a scenario in which we asked them to imagine reading an article about a brand misconduct in the newspaper (or online newspaper) they habitually read and to complete a survey about a "consumption situation". The questionnaire

[2] In response to a request from reviewers, a post-test to check the crises manipulation was conducted on a sample of collectivistic consumers. Fifty students from a Japanese university were presented with the same crises and answered the same questions. According to Hofstede's measures, Japan, with a score of 46 (out of 100), is considered a collectivistic culture. The results are consistent with those reported for the individualistic (Italian) sample in terms of perceived crises typology, severity and blame attribution. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this observation.

[3] The four independent samples show the same frequency distribution in terms of gender (X^2 =.632); age (X^2 =.503) and degree of instruction (X^2 =.857).

[4] We believe that the translations in the mother languages helped us to rule out any potential misunderstanding in the comprehension of the questions by participants. The use of the mother language in cross-cultural investigation is an important tool to guarantee the reliability of the findings (Malhotra et al., 1996; Tse, 1988). We thank the two native speakers who translated the questionnaire.

took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The two groups of participants (Italian and Filipino) were presented with a newspaper article about a scandal involving a fictitious apparel brand (IVY) that would soon open its first store in the Philippines (vs Italy). In the article, we described two different crisis typologies: a performance-related crisis (the use of toxic dye in clothes manufacturing) or a values-related one (child labour in factories).[6] In each experimental condition, participants (Filipino or Italian) read only one article about one crisis typology (see Appendix 1 for details).

Measures

After reading the newspaper article, participants were asked to rate their negative emotion arousal towards the brand involved in the scandal (disgust, fear, anger, disappointment, and sadness, on seven-point Likert scale; Grappi et al., 2013), their intention to buy the company's products in the future (three items on a seven-point Likert scale; Grewal et al., 1998), and their intention to spread negative word mouth about the brand (three items on a seven-point Likert scale; Romani et al., 2012). As manipulation checks, participants rated the perceived severity of the scandal, the blame attribution to the brand, and the perceived nature of the crisis as performance-related or values-related (the scales of the pre-test are retained in this study). In order to control for participants belonging to an individualistic or a collectivistic culture (Filipino vs Italian), they were asked to answer the Triandis and Gelfand (1998) individualism/collectivism scale prior to reading the newspaper article (see Appendix 2 for details).

4. Results

Manipulation checks: Participants rated the performance-related nature of the crisis ($M_{\text{child labour}} = 2.52$ vs $M_{\text{toxic dye}} = 6.01$; $t\ (1, 228) = 9.76$; $p < .05$) and values-related nature of the crisis ($M_{\text{child labour}} = 5.89$ vs M_{toxic}

[5] According to Hofstede's measures, the Philippines, with a score of 32 (out of 100), is considered a collectivistic culture, while Italy, with a score of 76, is an individualist culture.

[6] To ensure the plausibility of the scenario, the *Economist* was mentioned in the article as the source of information about the reported misconducts. We selected the *Economist* as it is a global newspaper widely available across Italy and the Philippines, and

$_{dye}$ = 4.20; t (1, 228) = 11.36; p < .05) in line with the expectations, which were also consistent with the pre-test results. No significant differences have been found between the collectivistic (Filipino) and individualistic (Italian) samples. Also, the perceived severity was not different for the two crises ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 5.41 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 5.14; t (1, 228) = .75; p = ns.). Moreover, Filipino consumers perceived the child labour scandal to be as severe as the toxic dye allegation ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 5.34 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 5.21; t (1, 112) = .62; p = ns.) in line with the perception of the Italian consumers ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 5.32 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 5.42; t (1, 113) = .55; p = ns.). Finally, the blame attribution to the brand was also not significantly different for the two crises ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 5.25 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 5.31; t (1, 228) = .86; p = ns.) or significantly different between the two samples ($M_{Filipino}$ = 6.05 vs $M_{Italian}$ = 5.91; t (1, 228) = .56; p = ns.).

Participants' responses to the individualism/collectivism scale also matched expectations. Filipino consumers were significantly more collectivistic ($M_{Filipino}$ = 5.02 vs $M_{Italian}$ = 3.12; t (1, 216) = 5.73; p < .05) and less individualistic ($M_{Filipino}$ = 2.98 vs $M_{Italian}$ = 4.86; t (1, 216) = 12.33; p < .05) than Italian consumers.

Negative emotion towards the brand: ANOVA analysis showed a main effect of the crisis typology (performance-related vs values-related) on negative emotions arousal ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 4.90 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 4.37; F (1, 226) = 8.73; p < .05). The values-related crisis induced people to experience more intense negative emotions than the performance-related crisis. Moreover, the same analysis showed a significant interaction effect between crisis typology and culture (collectivistic vs individualistic) on negative emotions towards the brand (F (1, 226) = 5.03; p < .05). Simple effect analysis showed that people from the collectivistic culture experienced stronger negative emotions towards the brand during a values-related crisis than during a performance-related crisis ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 5.08 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 4.11; F (1, 226) = 10.63; p < .05), whereas there was no significant difference in negative emotions towards the brand experienced by people from individualistic cultures facing different crisis events ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 4.70 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 4.63; F (1, 226) = -.11; p = ns.). The same analysis also showed that a performance-related crisis induced higher negative emotion arousal in individualistic people than in collectivistic people ($M_{individualistic}$ = 4.63 vs $M_{collectivistic}$ = 4.11; F (1,

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it is famous worldwide for its rigorous investigative reporting of economic and political issues. We used the *Economist* in both

226) = 4.02; $p < .05$), whereas a values-related crisis didn't induce higher negative emotion arousal in individualistic people than in collectivistic people ($M_{individualistic}$ = 4.70 vs $M_{collectivistic}$ = 5.08; F (1, 226) = 2.08; p =ns).

See the descriptions in Table 1.

Purchase intention. ANOVA analysis revealed an interaction effect between crisis typology and culture on purchase intention (F (1, 218) = 13.67; $p < .05$). Simple effect analysis revealed that people from collectivistic cultures showed less purchase intention for the faulty brand during a values-related crisis than during a performance-related crisis ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 1.86 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 2.23; F (1, 218) = 7.94; p <.05), whereas consumers from individualistic cultures expressed less purchase intention for the faulty brand in cases of a performance-related crisis than during a values-related crisis ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 2.76 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 1.29; F (1, 218) = 5.78; p <.05). The same analysis showed that following a performance-related crisis, collectivistic consumers had more intention to buy the product than individualistic ones ($M_{collectivistic}$ = 2.23 vs $M_{individualistic}$ = 1.29; F (1, 218) = 9.17; $p < .005$). Whereas, following a values-related crisis, collectivistic consumers showed less intention to buy the faulty brand than individualistic ones ($M_{collectivistic}$ = 1.86 vs $M_{individualistic}$ = 2.76; F (1, 218) = 9.82; $p < .05$). See the descriptive statistics in Table 1.

Negative word of mouth: ANOVA analysis revealed an interaction effect between crisis typology and culture on negative word of mouth (F (1, 218) = 4.48; $p < .05$). Simple effect analysis showed that collectivistic consumers were more prone to engage in negative word of mouth about the faulty brand in the case of a values-related scandal than in the case of a performance-related scandal ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 5.01 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 4.18; F (1, 218) = 4.95; $p < .05$), whereas there was no significant difference in the intention to engage in negative word of mouth about the brand in individualistic cultures facing different crisis events ($M_{child\ labour}$ = 4.49 vs $M_{toxic\ dye}$ = 4.66; F (1, 218) = .31; p = ns.). The same analysis showed that following a values-related crisis, collectivist consumers were more prone to engage in negative word of mouth about the faulty brand than individualistic consumers ($M_{collectivistic}$ = 5.01 vs $M_{individualistic}$ = 4.49; F (1, 218) = 4.78; $p < .05$) whereas,

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countries to avoid any bias due to the nationality of the source.

within a performance-related crisis, collectivist consumers weren't more prone to engage in negative word of mouth about the faulty brand than individualistic consumers ($M_{collectivistic}$ = 4.18 vs $M_{individualistic}$ = 4.66; F (1, 218) = 2.01; p=ns). See the descriptive statistics in Table 1.

--- Table 1 about here ---

Before testing the moderated meditation model, we verified that the measurement model has a satisfactory level of validity and reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). These results from the confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the constructs are reliably measured and are adequate for hypothesis testing. See Table 2.

--- Table 2 about here ---

To test the proposed model, moderated mediation analyses were conducted using PROCESS model 8 (Hayes, 2012; Muller et al., 2005). We used 5,000 bootstrap estimation resamples and 95% confidence intervals. The independent variable (crisis typology comparison) was coded −1 (values-related crisis) and +1 (performance-related crisis), with the culture of belongingness (individualistic vs collectivistic) as the moderator on negative emotion towards the brand on purchase intention and negative word of mouth[7]. Similarly, the individualistic condition was coded −1, while the collectivistic condition was coded +1. Overall, both analyses were conducted on 221 valid evaluations (9 cases were deleted due to missing values). We ran the model including age and gender as covariates in the analysis. The details of the estimated paths are presented

[7] To check whether the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension is the actual significant moderating variable, we also ran the model using the mean-centred individualism/collectivism variable (Triandis and Gelfand's scale used as a control measure) as the moderator in the model. The results were consistent and robust. All effects remain significant, suggesting that the individualism/collectivism dimension, as a cultural characteristic of the sample, acts as a significant moderator on negative emotion, purchase intention and negative word of mouth. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this observation.

in Table 3 and 4. Inconsistently with H1, performance-related crises did not reduce purchase intention more than values-related crises (H1 is not confirmed). Instead, crisis typology has a significant effect on negative emotions: values-related crisis induces a stronger negative emotional arousal when compared to performance-related crises (H2 is confirmed). Consistent with H3 and H4, crisis typology exerts a significant effect on purchase intention and negative word of mouth through negative emotions towards a brand. In particular, findings showed an indirect-only effect (Zhao et al. 2010) on purchase intentions (indirect effect = .15, CI from .02 to .31) and an indirect-only effect (Zhao et al. 2010) on negative word of mouth (indirect effect = -.33, CI from -.65 to -.04). Supporting H5 and H6, the effects of negative emotions on negative behavioural responses were moderated by cultural belongingness. The effect of crisis typology on purchase intention was moderated by the level of collectivism vs individualism. Consistent with H5, the indirect-only effect (Zhao et al. 2010) of crisis typology through negative emotions on purchase intention is significant for the collectivistic culture (effect = .19, CI from .08 to .33), whereas it is not significant for individualistic people (effect = .03, CI from −.05 to .12). Consistent with H6, the indirect-only effect (Zhao et al. 2010) of crisis typology through negative emotions on negative word of mouth is significant for the collectivistic culture (effect = -.40, CI from -.65 to -.16), whereas it is not significant for individualistic people (effect = -.07, CI from −.23 to .11). This result was consistent with the descriptive statistics and partially supports H5 and H6. Furthermore, the effect of crisis typology on negative emotional arousal was moderated by the level of collectivism vs individualism. Consistent with H7, collectivistic individuals experienced stronger negative emotions when facing a values-related crisis than a performance-related crisis. The same effect is not significant for individualistic people. H7 is partially confirmed as well. This result was consistent with the descriptive statistics. The details of the estimated paths are presented in Table 3 and 4. Figures 2, 3, and 4 offer a graphical representation of the interactions postulated in H5, H6, and H7, respectively.

--- Table 3 about here ---

--- Table 4 about here ---

--- Figure 2 about here ---

--- Figure 3 about here ---

--- Figure 4 about here ---

5. Discussion

This study aims to provide a deeper representation of consumer response to corporate irresponsibility, and a wider comprehension of this phenomenon within a cross-cultural framework. From a theoretical perspective, our findings corroborate previous research focused on emotional (Kim and Cameron, 2011; Vassilikopoulou et al., 2011) and behavioural (Jeon and Baeck, 2016; Roehm and Brady, 2007; Klein and Dawar, 2004; Grappi et al. 2013) reactions to brand scandals.

Referring to emotional reactions, results demonstrate that a wider spectrum of emotions is stimulated by a brand crisis: not only the already investigated anger but also disgust, fear, disappointment and sadness. These emotional reactions to a crisis, in turn, induce negative behavioural effects within consumers. Consistent with previous literature, the main dependent behavioural variables are purchase intention and negative word of mouth. One more contribution of the present study is to have, for the first time, related through a moderated mediation model, the emotional and behavioural responses to brand scandals in order to give a complete processing representation. Results confirmed the presence of another crucial variable in explaining consumer responses to a brand scandal: the crisis typology. Findings confirmed the ability of Dutta and Pullig's (2011) dichotomy of a performance-related crisis versus a values-related crisis to explain different reactions among consumers. Even though the authors proposed this dichotomy to predict the effectiveness of restore strategies by brands, the present study demonstrates that this classification is relevant for consumers evaluating information about a brand scandal as well. Findings demonstrate a moderation effect played by the cultural dimension (individualism versus collectivism). Moreover, the results clearly indicate that scandal typology is also a crucial variable together with the cultural framework in defining individuals' responses (negative emotions, intention to buy, and negative word of mouth) in a brand crisis event. In particular, consumers

belonging to a collectivistic culture are more sensitive to a values-related crisis in comparison with a performance-related one. In fact, they feel a significant higher arousal of negative emotions facing a values-related crisis then a performance-related one. The same effect is consistently observed in terms of behavioural reactions: purchase intention and negative word of mouth. This finding confirms that collectivistic individuals consider irresponsible company behaviours involving social or ethical issues as more dangerous and disgraceful because they could damage the harmony of their entire social group, and because these behaviours demonstrate that a company is capable of breaking shared rules (Tsai and Levenson, 1997). Consumers belonging to an individualistic culture appear to be, in comparison with collectivistic people, not only worry about the general harmony, but rather to their personal interests as well. In fact, they emotionally react to a brand crisis at the same level of collectivistic people facing a value-related crisis, but at the same time, they are equally sensitive to a performance-related crisis. This finding is consistent with previous literature explaining that individualistic people severely condemn a performance-related crisis because they are concerned about damages that can affect their own welfare, preferences, needs, and rights (Triandis, 1995), while collectivistic people as strictly interested in the general harmony regardless their personal interests.

Findings confirm the relevance of a cultural lens within brand crisis (Jun et al., 2011; Joen and Baeck, 2016; Ham and Kim, 2017) due to an independent versus interdependent consumer culture inclination (Triandis, 1995; Lim, 2016; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998; Triandis et al., 1998; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002; Hofstede 1991, 2002). The efficacy of the adoption of individualism versus collectivism cultural categorisation enables the present work to give a more generalizable representation of consumers' reactions to brand scandals. In fact, in comparison with previous studies, our confirmed moderated-mediation model is able to represent consumers' emotional and behavioural reactions regardless of the presence of a strong relationship and self-connection between a brand and consumers, and regardless the existence of CSR practice before the crisis.

To sum up, the present study confirmed the role of crisis typology in provoking consumers' behavioural responses, through a wide spectrum of emotional reactions and moderated by the individualism/collectivism

cultural lens. It offers a systematic and processual representation of consumers' reactions to brand crisis, going beyond the relational and CSR constraints embedded in previous research.

6. Managerial implications and further research

These findings also have interesting implications for the business community, since negative consumer reactions can be extremely harmful to companies and are difficult to recover from (Coombs, 2010). Globalisation and social network development favour great visibility of brand crisis in terms of speed, reach, and progression; as such, the need to develop effective global strategies for brand crisis remains urgent. The "cultural lens", even if it is not an element under the control of companies, is an increasingly relevant variable that should be taken into consideration by brands. As brand crises spread faster all over the world due to globalisation, digital communication and consumers' increasing concern, cross-cultural insights might provide useful suggestions for companies. The present study recommends that companies carefully plan the timing and boundaries of their communications in cases of scandals. Firstly, it is recommended that they promptly reply to negative events throughout the geographical boundaries of a crisis, as the reach of the effects may spread beyond the area involved. For example, collectivistic people may be sensitive to unethical practices all over the world, as in-group harmony might decline for all human beings. Companies tend to focus their recovery activities on their headquarters country or main destination markets without considering that a values-related crisis might become a global matter.

Another potential managerial implication of the present study relates to the use of different communication contents and tools related to the destination market. That is, within a global communication mix devoted to spreading the same initiatives all over the world, in case of a scandal, companies might activate specific communication activities addressed to collectivistic countries versus individualistic ones in order to simultaneously contribute to a global brand restore. In light of the present findings and previous literature (Dutta and Pullig, 2011), the reduction of offensiveness might be the first step of a restore communication strategy as both individualistic and collectivistic are strongly interested in comprehending if the crisis

involves any ethical issue and then the company social responsibility. The reduction of offensiveness might be coupled with eventual corrective actions (i.e., product recalls) within communication activities addressed to individualistic consumers in case of a performance-related crisis, because individualistic consumers are significantly involved in their personal interests. Simultaneous restore activities (reduction of offensiveness and corrective actions) are appropriate in particular within crisis that might be seen in both a performance-related and a values-related perspective. This is a very frequent topic. Dieselgate is an appropriate example: in a performance-related point of view, Volkswagen's involved vehicles were not consistent with brand promises in terms of product characteristics; in a values-related point of view, the matter was about brand honesty and potential negative environmental effects. In this case, our results suggest that it would have been more effective for Volkswagen to promptly limit the perception of the company's irresponsibility, activating a world-wide communication activity addressed to contain the potential environmental effects linked to the Volkswagen malpractice in consumers' mind and to reduce the attribution of blame towards the company. This first step might be useful for individualistic people as well as for collectivist ones in order to stem negative reactions and, in particular within collectivistic, in terms of negative word of mouth and purchase intention reduction. However, this first step might be coupled with an accurate communication activity devoted to specify the models, product lines and brands involved in the falsification malpractice within those countries characterised by an individualistic culture. In fact, individualistic consumers are particularly interested in detecting if their own vehicle are potentially involved in the malpractice as well.

Moreover, our findings might be reversed in a positive perspective referring to the fake news phenomenon, which occurs when a company is unfairly accused of misconduct. The significant behavioural reactions of both individualistic and collectivistic consumers to brand crisis, in particular in terms of word of mouth, are an additional confirmation of the propensity of consumers to exploit their contemporary empowerment by participating in brand co-creation (or destruction). Fuller et al. (2010) and Christodoulides et al. (2012) particularly refer to communication democracy, which enables consumers to express their views publicly, strongly reinforced by consumer-generated media and content. Several research studies highlight the

existence of growing consumer engagement in co-creating brand value (Berthon, 2008; Burmann and Arnhold, 2008; Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008), starting from a simple word-of-mouth action. In light of our findings, it might be possible for companies to benefit from consumer engagement in cases of fake news generating a brand scandal. In this type of undeserved crisis, they might address a "call to action", particularly within collectivistic cultures. It is likely that collectivistic people would react promptly, spreading information rejecting fake news in order to restore the harmony altered by misleading risk alerts. This unfair collective warning is not only related to crises that are potentially harmful for consumers (performance-related crises), but also to CSR misconducts as well (values-related crises).

Certainly, the present study has some limits. Firstly, in order to exclude the potential interference of previous knowledge and relationship with the brand, it is based on a fictitious brand. It may be interesting to investigate real brands and integrate the customer–brand relationship dimension into the theoretical perspective. Moreover, results might be more robust by extending the analysis to other examples of crisis within the same dichotomy, and to other countries that differ in their individualist/collectivist cultural belongingness. Another worthwhile stream of research might include investigating other cultural dimensions (e.g., power distance, or holistic vs analytic thinking) and involving other countries and cultures (e.g., Asiatic or American) or closer cultures that differ as much on the collectivism dimensions but not as much on others – such as, for instance, Italy and Romania – in order to include or to rule out other cultural dimensions in the phenomenon representation.

Interesting inputs may emerge in terms of future research by combining the findings of the present study with previous research (Dutta and Pullig, 2011). It would be useful to expand the present investigation with further research to go beyond initial consumer reactions to brand misbehaviour, and demonstrate with a dedicated investigation how different cultures potentially interact with recovery strategies. Matching our results with Dutta and Pullig's (2011) previous experiment, it seems that individualistic cultures might be more sensitive to performance-related crises but also might be more easily influenced by corrective actions, whereas collectivist cultures might be more easily influenced by strategies that reduce offensiveness.

ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics

		Performance-related crisis (toxic dye)			**Value-related crisis (child labour)**		
Dependant Variables		Total	Collectivistic	Individualistic	Total	Collectivistic	Individualistic
		N=115	N=57	N = 58	N=114	N=57	N=57
Negative emotions	Mean	4.37	4.11*	4.63	4.90*	5.08*	4.70
	SD	*1.09*	*1.12*	*1.27*	*1.11*	*1.00*	*1.23*
Purchase intention	Mean	1.76	2.23**	1.29	2.31**	1.86	2.76**
	SD	*1.20*	*1.30*	*1.00*	*1.19*	*1.01*	*1.24*
Negative word of mouth	Mean	4.42	4.18*	4.66	4.75	5.01*	4.49
	SD	*1.17*	*1.93*	*1.00*	*1.21*	*1.98*	*1.24*

** indicates $p < .001$; * indicates $p < .05$

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, correlation, CR and AVE of variables

Model construct	Mean	SD	CR	1	2	3
Negative emotions	4.63	1.34	.88	.89		
Purchase intention	2.03	1.19	.68	-.33	.72	
Negative word of mouth	4.58	1.66	.68	.73	-.51	.67

Note: The shared numbers in the diagonal row are squared roots of the average variance extracted, which is the square root of the variance shared between the constructs and their measure. Off diagonals are the correlations between constructs. The diagonal should be larger than any other corresponding row or column entry in order to support discriminant validity.

Table 3: Moderated mediation models for purchase intention with crisis typology comparison (value-related vs performance-related)

	Unstandardized Coefficient	*t* value	LLCI	ULCI
Crisis typology (X) → Negative emotions (M)	-.29	-3.07**	-.48	-.10
Culture (W) → Negative emotions (M)	-.03	- .35	-.22	.15
Crisis typology (X)* Culture (W) → Negative emotions (M)	-.20	-2.19*	-.39	-.02
Negative emotions (M) → Purchase intention (Y)	-.38	-7.02***	-.48	-.27
Crisis typology (X) → Purchase intention (Y)	-.08	-1.06	-.23	.07
Crisis typology (X) * Culture (W) → Purchase intention	.23	3.10**	.08	.38
Gender (control) → Negative emotions (M)	-.15	-.83	-.52	.21
Age (control) → Negative emotions (M)	.00	.20	-.02	.03
Gender (control) → Purchase intention (Y)	-.44	-.3.01**	-.72	-.15
Age (control) → Purchase intention (Y)	.02	2.12*	.00	.05
R^2 = 26%, F (5, 221) = 12.70, p < .001				

Legend: Crisis typology (X) = independent variable; Purchase intention (Y) = dependent variable; Negative emotion (M) = mediator; Culture (W) = moderator; SE = standard error; LLCI or ULCI = lower lever or upper level confidence intervals; all computations used 5,000 bootstrap samples to generate 95% bias corrected bootstrap confidence intervals; * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$.

Table 4: Moderated mediation models for negative word of mouth with crisis typology comparison (value-related vs performance-related)

	Unstandardized Coefficient	*t* value	LLCI	ULCI
Crisis typology (X) → Negative emotions (M)	-.29	-3.07**	-.48	-.10
Culture (W) → Negative emotions (M)	-.03	- .35	-.22	.15
Crisis typology (X)* Culture (W) → Negative emotions (M)	-.20	-2.19*	-.39	-.02
Negative emotions (M)→ Negative word of mouth (Y)	.81	12.51***	.68	.94
Crisis typology (X)→ Negative word of mouth (Y)	.04	.49	-.13	.22
Crisis typology (X) * Culture (W)→ Negative word of mouth (Y)	-.28	-1.86*	-.50	-.20
Gender (control) → Negative emotions (M)	-.15	- .83	-.52	.21
Age (control) → Negative emotions (M)	.00	.20	-.02	.03
Gender (control)→ Negative word of mouth (Y)	.02	.14	-.32	.37
Age (control)→ Negative word of mouth (Y)	-.02	-1.74	-.05	.00
$R^2 = 44\%$, $F(5, 221) = 28.14$, $p < .001$				

Legend: Crisis typology (X) = independent variable; Negative word of mouth (Y) = dependent variable; Negative emotion (M) = mediator; Culture (W) = moderator; LLCI or ULCI = lower lever or upper level confidence intervals; all computations used 5,000 bootstrap samples to generate 95% bias corrected bootstrap confidence intervals; * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$.

Figure 1: The moderated mediation conceptual model

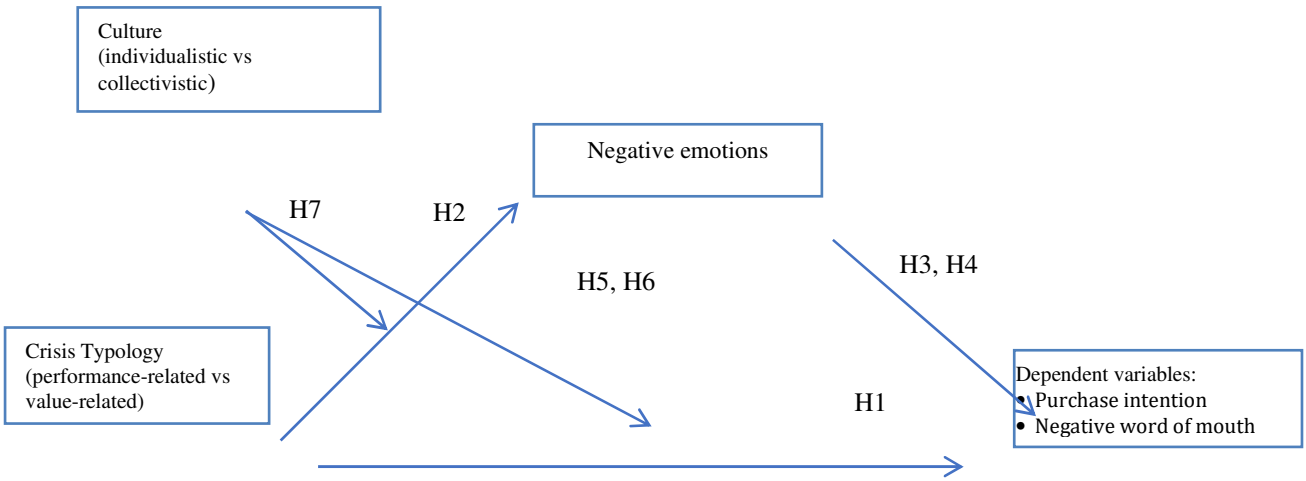


Figure 2: The interaction of culture and crisis typology condition on purchase intention

Figure 3: The interaction of culture and crisis typology condition on negative emotion toward the brand

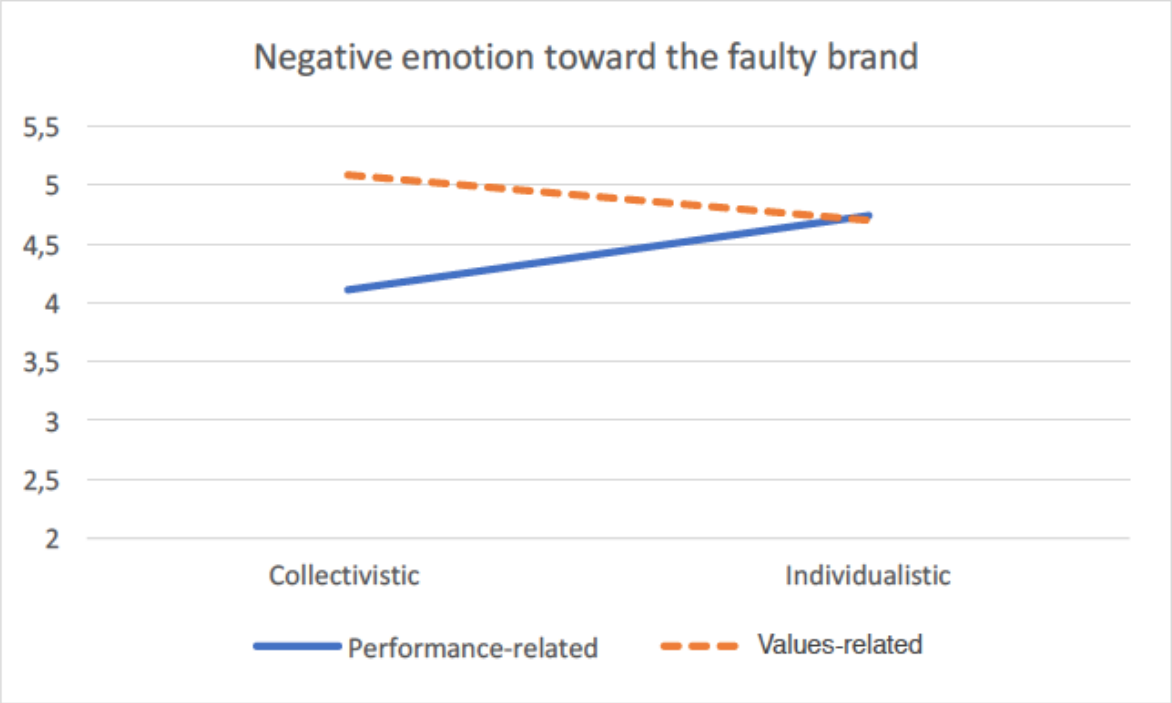
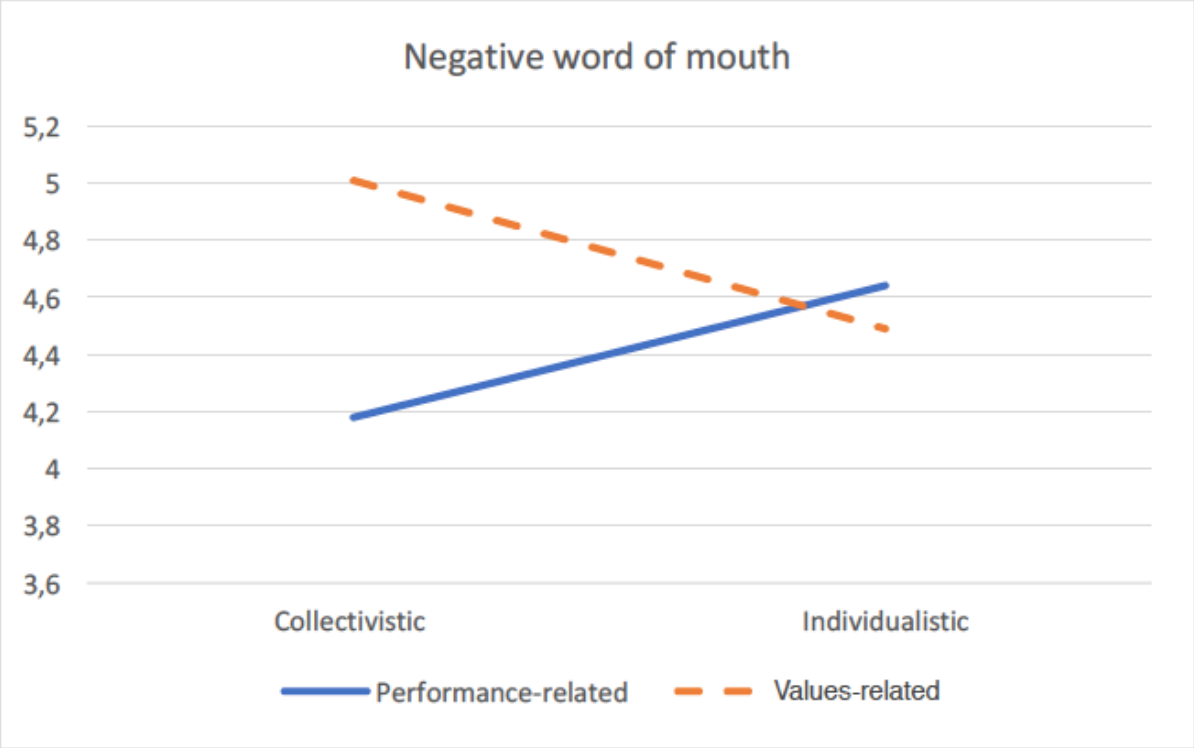


Figure 4: The interaction of culture and crisis typology condition on negative word of mouth



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