

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.

SHOULD WARM OR COMPETENT BRANDS TAKE A STAND?

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Abstract: This work project examines how brand characteristics (warmth vs. competence) lead consumers under the influence of personal values to expect certain brands to be actively involved in socio-political topics, but not all brands. Socio-political topics in this context include both controversial and non-controversial issues. The broad questions to answer are, "Which types of brands do consumers expect to take a stand on socio-political issues?" and "How do personal values influence consumer expectations on stance-taking?" Results of an online questionnaire suggest that consumers expect warm brand types to take a stand more, specifically in non-controversial scenarios, compared to competent brands.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, Controversy, Socio-political topics, Brand characteristics, Warmth vs. Competence, Personal values

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1. Introduction

Today, consumers expect brands to take a stand on socio-political issues more than ever (World Economic Forum 2022; Fournier, Srinivasan, and Marrinan 2021; Jungblut and Johnen 2021). According to Edelman (2021), 78% of consumers consider brands to influence socio-political scenarios through stance-taking. 86% of consumers expect brands to "go beyond their product and business" to effect positive social change by addressing societal challenges and political issues (Edelman 2021). Building upon these broad findings, it should be questioned if all brands are expected to take a stand equally. While in the past decade, brands avoided being part of the socio-political controversy, today, brands actively choose to take a stand on divisive issues. (Korschun 2021) The phenomenon of public stance-taking by brands is defined as "corporate sociopolitical activism" (CSA), which describes the public actions taken in support of or against one side of the socio-political controversy (Bhagwat et al. 2020).

Thus, what topics should brands speak up about? According to Bhagwat et al. (2020), current socio-political topics include "hot-button issues such as immigration, gun control, LGBTQ rights, and climate change." Furthermore, socio-political topics include the #MeToo movement, Black Lives Matter, COVID-19-related policy, and more. The range of sociopolitical issues is vast and increasing (Fournier, Srinivasan, and Marrinan 2021; Korschun 2021; Nalick et al. 2016). Since these topics are generally the focus of heated debate in societies, consumers' views on the relevance of brands getting involved steadily increase (Mukherjee and Althuisen 2020). Often, the brand's actions don't seem to relate directly to how the brand operates (Korschun 2021), which leads to the question of why brands engage in stance-taking. Brands are pressured into taking unwanted action for or against an often social movement by stakeholders without assessing whether engagement is favorable or damaging to the brand's performance. This is justified by the realization that maintaining neutrality is far more harmful than beneficial. Nalick et al. (2016) found that brands will likely take action on socio-political issues in response

to public pressure. In conclusion, consumers today can change brands, which comes with benefits and risks (Edelman 2021). Taking a stand brings only small chances of benefit for brands. These are mainly rewards from consumers supporting and “boycotting” the brand’s products, which leads to an increase in sales and brand image (Jungblut and Johnen 2021). Also, if a brand is backlashed for taking a stand, consumers are likely to defend it with an increased brand attitude (Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020). However, when consumers agree with the brand’s stand, it does not significantly enhance consumer attitudes due to the fact that the stand is seen as part of generally expected social behavior and thereby fails to live up to societal expectations (Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Fournier, Srinivasan, and Marrinan 2021).

Brands are threatened with the risk of “boycotting”, meaning consumers turning away from the brand as a form of punishment. This applies especially to controversial scenarios relevant to the brand’s target audience (Jungblut and Johnen 2021). From a managerial standpoint, brands are advised to carefully assess what opinions exist in society and in which socio-political issues to engage since taking a stand apart from the consumer’s opinion can be a harmful and risky endeavor toward the brand’s value and performance, whereas brands participating receive no significant gain (Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020; Jungblut and Johnen 2021; Hydock, Paharia, and Blair 2021).

So, what are the drivers behind consumers' expectations of brands taking a stand? According to Bhagwat et al. (2020), “a theoretically grounded understanding of how CSA affects stakeholders is missing in the academic literature.” Pöyry and Laaksonen (2022) state that “research on the effects of brand activism is still scarce.”

This work project aims to gain a greater understanding of how brand characteristics under the influence of consumers’ personal values lead to the expectation that only certain brands should be actively involved in controversial and non-controversial socio-political issues. The broad questions to answer are "Which type of brands do consumers expect to take a stand on socio-

political issues?" and "How do personal values influence consumer expectations on stance-taking?"

I draw on the methodology developed by Fiske et al. (2002); and Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2007); (2008), whose research consists of leading theories in the studies of intergroup and interpersonal relations with the main dimensions of warmth and competence as distinguishing factors. Models and theories are validated by the research community and continue to contribute to the study of social judgment, management, advertising, marketing, and other fields. Cuddy, Glick, and Beninger (2011) refined several future research directions. Whereby two of them are crucial for this project. First, future research should “investigate the causes and consequences of how organizations [...] are evaluated on warmth and competence.” Second, they suggest that consumers and brands are assessed along the identical trait dimensions of warmth and competence, which can overall affect a brand’s performance.

I aim to follow the route of research by studying the relationship between brands and consumers, applying warmth and competence as conditions to brands’ characteristics and consumers’ personal value. My predictions suggest causal effects on consumers’ expectations towards brands taking a stand in controversial and non-controversial socio-political scenarios on brand characteristics, under the moderating influence of consumers' personal values.

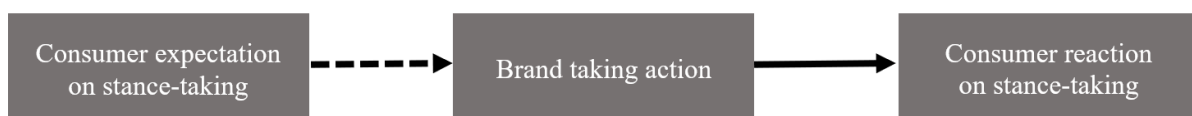


Figure 1: Visual representation of the hypothesized causal relationship

Specifically, I test the following hypotheses with this work:

- *H1: Warm brands are expected to take more action on given socio-political scenarios compared to competent brands*
- *H2: Consumers with more warm personal values expect warm (vs. competent) brands to take a stand on non-controversial socio-political topics more than consumers with less warm values*

- *H3: Consumers with more competent values expect competent brands to take a stand on controversial topics more than consumers with less competent values*

No study to date has simultaneously manipulated brand characteristics under the application of the trait dimensions (warmth vs. competence) derived from the stereotype content model and observed changes in consumer expectations on brand stance-taking. Therefore, the goal of this study is to validate that brand characteristics indeed impact consumers' expectations of brands taking a stand. These insights will have theoretical and managerial implications in ways that are useful to evaluate stance-taking from a brand perspective and will provide a distinctive perspective on the reasoning behind consumers' expectations. So far, broad insights on stance-taking are known which need to be questioned more closely. Thus, in this work, I contribute to that gap in the research by investigating if all brands are expected to take a stand equally.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of controversy

The Cambridge Dictionary (2022) defines controversy as a public debate involving opposing ideas, views, and opinions on a topic. Controversial socio-political topics derive from a group of people who have strongly held and differing views about a particular issue. Drivers can be individual political, sociocultural, religious, or economic views, whereby advocates of the socio-political issue can feel they are in the "right" and opponents are in the "wrong". Therefore, controversy heavily depends on a personal point of view (Chen and Berger 2013; Nalick et al. 2016). In conclusion, within this work project, the term "controversy" describes *issues that are of relevance among a group of many and divisive regarding individual interests and views.*

2.2 Controversial vs. Non-Controversial Issues

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2022), non-controversial is defined as something that is unlikely to cause society to disagree. Linking this definition to the research on brands shows that, on the one hand, brands use cause-related marketing to take action in rather pre-planned activities for non-controversial scenarios. Whereas political brand communication can relate to

controversial and non-controversial issues. Meaning that brands use their voice rather unscripted in order to create messages that stick with the consumer (Jungblut and Johnen 2021). In today's polarized world, controversial issues seem to occur more often as the divisiveness of society is increasing (Hydock, Paharia, and Blair 2021). Drivers of societal divisiveness are subject to political views, ethnic or racial backgrounds, diversity, religions, economic inequality, and area of living (Silver, Fetterolf, and Connaughton 2021).

Chen and Berger (2013) argue that even though controversy is commonly unpredictable, out of a given set of topics, brands can distinguish the ones that will polarize consumers more and are therefore considered more controversial. Also, controversial issues are the ones society discusses more about, which indicates a greater level of interest among consumers. Non-controversial issues are commonly less spoken and cared about (Chen and Berger 2013).

2.3 Brand characteristics

Brand characteristics are traits that together with consumer personality traits, build the brand personality (Milas and Mlačić 2007; Mathews 2015).

Warmth & Competence. Warmth and competence are characteristic dimensions of interpersonal interactions in the context of the stereotype content model (SCM) and brands as intentional agents (BIAS) framework (Fiske et al. 2002; Bennett and Hill 2012). The SCM is a well-established conceptual model that helps predict consumers' perceptions towards brands (Fiske et al. 2002; Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012; Bennett and Hill 2012; Aaker, Garbinsky, and Vohs 2012). An extension of the SCM, the BIAS framework, helps in understanding how warmth and competence judgments shape behavioral tendencies in social interactions (Cuddy, Glick, and Beninger 2011; Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007).

The dimensions of warmth and competence have arisen from Asch's (1946) theory of individual and group perception. Nowadays, warmth and competence are reliable and often used measures to describe other people (Fiske et al. 1999; Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007). Cuddy, Glick, and

Beninger (2011) found that warmth and competence judgments can also impact organizational outcomes. An organizational perception as highly warm and competent can lead to an increase in willingness to pay and have an impact on consumer emotions as well as cognitive, emotional, and behavioral consumer reactions (Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2008; Aaker, Garbinsky, and Vohs 2012). In sum, research on warmth and competence shows several lines of application, e.g., the extension to purchase intention or brand loyalty and future research opportunities (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007; Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012).

Relation to branding. The brand characteristics of warmth and competence impact branding as consumers tend to assess, relate to, and interact with brands as if they were people (Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012; Bennett and Hill 2012). Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone (2012) further state the importance of the relational effect between consumers and their brand perception along the dimension of warmth and competence impacts behavior towards the brand. These social interactions also provide insightful information on brand positioning (Leung et al. 2022).

Relation to stance-taking. According to Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2007), “the warmth dimension predicts active behaviors,” whereas “the competence dimension predicts passive behaviors”, which can be explained by the motivation of self-interest along the competent dimension and selflessness along the warmth dimension. As stated in the introduction, I suppose that consumers have higher expectations on stance-taking and towards the warm brand characteristics (H1), which is supported by the literature. This provides further support for the validity of the hypotheses tested in this research.

Relation to personal traits. Coming back to brand characteristics and the origin of brand personality, a close link to human characteristics can be drawn. Mathews (2015) found that brand characteristics are meaningful to consumers. Moreover, Judd et al. (2005) describe warmth and competence as commonly used dimensions that can be applied in various scenarios, which justifies the usage of one scale for multiple observations.

2.4 Influence of personal values

Consumers generally use personal traits to evaluate brands (Aaker 1997; Mathews 2015). On the other hand, brands communicate with personal traits to characterize themselves. Moreover, Mathews (2015) found that consumer personality is highly involved in the interaction between brands and consumers. Whereas the closer the consumer values are related to those of the brand, the greater the consumer preference (Aaker 1997), which can be linked to this research's hypothesis (H2) suggesting that consumers with high personal warmth expect warm brands to take a stand more compared to consumers with less warm values.

Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone (2012) state that consumers' personal values and traits are of increasingly high relevance due to the fact that "consumers perceive brands in the same way they perceive people." Therefore, social interactions between humans can be translated to interactions between consumers and brands.

For the simplification of judgment processes, consumers use warmth and competence as trait dimensions (Cuddy, Glick, and Beninger 2011). This provides reasoning on why warmth and competence dimension for both, the evaluation of brand perception and personal values are applied in this work project. Moreover, Cuddy, Glick, and Beninger (2011) suggested a further research direction towards consumers and brands being judged along the dimensions of warmth and competence, affecting the brand's performance.

In this study, Fiske et al. (2002) scale of warmth and competence will be applied. It captures the warmth traits warm, good-natured, sincere, friendly, well-intentioned, and trustworthy, and the competence traits competent, capable, intelligent, efficient, skillful, and confident.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Experimental Design

The aim of this experiment design is to investigate which brand types consumers expect to take a stand on current socio-political (non-) controversial issues. I expect consumers who are presented with a warm brand to have a greater expectation of the brand taking a stand in any

given scenario compared to consumers who are presented with a competent brand. Additionally, I examine the potential interference of personal values as a moderating variable. I expect consumers with rather warm personal values to have a higher expectation of brands taking a stand in socio-political scenarios compared to consumers with rather competent personal values.

Specifically, I test the following hypotheses:

- *H1: Warm brands are expected to take more action on given socio-political scenarios compared to competent brands*
- *H2: Consumers with more warm personal values expect warm (vs. competent) brands to take a stand on non-controversial socio-political topics than consumers with less warm values*
- *H3: Consumers with more competent values expect competent brands to take a stand on controversial topics more than consumers with less competent values*

This research aims to test the unrelated hypotheses mentioned above in a within-subject model to understand more about the following variables: *brand characteristics* (warm vs. competent), *consumer expectations on stance-taking in socio-political scenarios* (controversial vs. non-controversial), and consumers' *personal values*.

3.2 Procedure

To conduct quantitative research for this work project, online questionnaires and the platform Qualtrics were used. The practice of experimental design is appropriate to verify the hypothesized causal relationships since this procedure ensures comparability of the collected data, accuracy of recording, and unbiased reporting (Malhotra 2019, 318-319).

Participants were recruited through several convenience sampling techniques. The online questionnaire was mainly distributed among the personal and professional network using platforms like LinkedIn, concluding with participants from the research platform Prolific.

3.2.1. Study 1 - Pretest

A pretest study had the purpose to verify that the presented socio-political issues in the main experiment of this work project can clearly be distinguished as non-controversial and

controversial. Several socio-political scenarios have been used in previous master's theses for the study of brand controversy. Out of the given scenarios, four topics (Mental Health, Environmental Sustainability, Rise Against Hunger and Fridays for Future movements) were expected to be identified as non-controversial, and four additional topics (Immigration Laws, LGBTQ+ Rights, Gun Control, Abortion Laws) as controversial. 22 participants took part in the pretest, one participant submitted no answers, making it 21 valid participants. Participants were introduced to a brief definition of divisiveness followed by the eight short descriptions of the above mentioned non-controversial and controversial scenarios. Detailed descriptions can be found in Appendix 1. They were asked to rank the divisiveness of each topic on a 7-point Likert scale (1=not divisive at all; 7=very much divisive). As an outcome, the most controversial scenarios were *Abortion* (M=6.10; SD=0.625) with the highest mean value and *Immigration Laws* (M=5.95; SD=1.02). The respective non-controversial issues are the *Rise Against Hunger Movement* (M=3.33; SD=1.62) and *Mental Health* (M=4.05; SD=1.69).

3.2.2. Study 2 – Main experiment

204 participants took part in the main experiment, and 188 reported their age and gender. The average age was 31.3 (SD=11.03). Among participants who have answered, 59.0% were female, 39.9% were male, and 1.1% belonged to another gender identity.

Using the Qualtrics randomizer function, participants were randomly and evenly assigned to either the experimental condition of *warmth* or *competence*. The independent variable, *brand characteristics* (warm vs. competent), was manipulated using fictional brand descriptions from existing research on the brand types. According to the randomized condition, participants were presented with one of the following (high in warmth or high in competence) brand descriptions taken from Leung et al. (2022). Minor adaptations, including renaming the fictional persons and anonymizing locations, have been made to the below stated brand description. The brand description of the warm brand is the following:

David's Kitchen offers a warm and comfortable dining experience. Our dishes are prepared in the sincerest manner by our most caring chefs. We are proud of our friendly staff who provide the most attentive service for our guests. When guests come to our restaurant, they will be embraced by our friendly team.

David Schneider is the owner of David's Kitchen. When he opened the restaurant, he encountered many obstacles. However, he managed to overcome these challenges with the generous support from his own family-like team. After overcoming these obstacles, David has decided to donate frequently to different charitable causes to help people who are in need.

Recently, David told the reporters from Culinary Lifestyle Weekly: "Our restaurant is all about warmth. Our staff are selected for their friendliness and all our efforts are focused on communicating warmth to our guests."

Here are a few reviews from critics:

Tom Becker, editor from Culinary Restaurants' Guide: "David Schneider has one of the friendliness interior design out of all restaurants that are opened in the previous months. The use of bright theme colors gives the restaurant an energetic as well as warm look."

Julia Weber, critic from Culinary Lifestyle Weekly: "David's Kitchen has the warmest service out of all the restaurants that I have ever reviewed. The staff are all kind and willing to help. They actively answered their guests' requests and questions in an extremely friendly manner."

Participants presented with the competent condition read the following brand description:

Max's Kitchen offers an excellent and superb dining experience. Our dishes are prepared in the highest quality by our most skillful chefs. We are proud of our capable staff who provide the most professional service for our guests. When guests come to our restaurant, they will be served by our competent team.

Max Mayer is the owner of Max's Kitchen. When he opened the restaurant, he encountered many obstacles. However, he managed to overcome these challenges with the proficient support from his own capable staff. After overcoming these obstacles, Max has decided to maximize efficiency and to explore more business opportunities.

Recently, Max told the reporters from Culinary Restaurants Weekly: "Our restaurant is all about competence. Our staff are selected for their competence and all our efforts are focused on communicating competence to our guests."

Here are a few reviews from critics:

Nick Vogt, editor from Culinary Eat Out Guide: "Max's Kitchen has one of the most professional interior design out of all restaurants that are opened in the previous months. The use of dark theme colors gives the restaurant a composed yet professional look."

Anne Rieger, critic from Culinary Restaurants Weekly: "Max's Kitchen has the most professional service out of all the restaurants that I have ever reviewed. The staff are all well-informed and experienced. They actively answered their guests' requests and questions extremely expertly."

In order to test if participants perceived the presented brand as warm or competent, they were presented with features including "warm" (friendly, well-intentioned, trustworthy, warm, good-

natured, sincere) and "competent" (confident, capable, competent, efficient, intelligent, skillful) items. These were measured in a matrix table along a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree). All scales are reported in full in Appendix 2. In the following part of the survey, participants were asked to read short descriptions of four socio-political issues. According to the pretest, two of the described issues were controversial (Immigration Laws, Abortion), and two were non-controversial (Rise Against Hunger Movement, Mental Health). Participants answered the following three questions for all four scenarios presented: "Do you think the presented brand should take a stand on this issue?" "Do you think the presented brand has the ability to have an impact on this issue?" "Do you think the presented brand genuinely cares about this issue?" Answers were again measured along a 7-point Likert scale (1 = definitely not; 7 = definitely yes). As a third and last part, participants indicated how well the items of the warmth and competence scale (Fiske et al. 2002) meet their personal values to measure the effect of the moderating variable personal values. Participants at this point were already familiar with the scale since it was used to measure brand perception in the first part of the survey too. The questionnaire concluded with the demographic part, asking for information about gender, age, and nationality.

4. Data Analysis

In the following chapter, I report the results of the data analysis to test the hypotheses raised. Among the 204 participants who completed the survey, there were 11 participants with completely missing data that I deleted for the following data analysis.

4.1 Reliability of measures

Internal reliability measures to what extent each item reliably belongs to the same construct. Cronbach's alpha (α) was applied to identify values that represent the internal reliability of the scale (Tavakol and Dennick 2011). In order to test the reliability of the warmth scale for the brand, I averaged the items (friendly, well-intentioned, trustworthy, warm, good-natured,

sincere) to form a warmth index. The scale was tested as with a good reliability ($\alpha=0.92$). I entered this variable in the analysis and conducted an independent sample t-test. I followed the same procedure for the reliability test of the competent scale, averaging the competent items (confident, capable, competent, efficient, intelligent, skillful) to form a competence index with the result of good reliability ($\alpha=0.91$). Following the same procedure as for the warmth and competence scales that were used in the brand perception part of the main experiment, the warmth scale to measure personal values was determined ($\alpha=0.87$). The competence scale to measure personal values was tested with good reliability as well ($\alpha=0.85$).

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

4.2.1 Brand Characteristics (Warm vs. Competent)

H1: Warm brands are expected to take more action on given socio-political scenarios compared to competent brands

In order to test the above stated H1, I analyzed whether warm brands are perceived as warmer as compared to competent brands as a first step of the hypotheses testing. To do this, I conducted an independent samples t-test with the warmth index as the dependent variable and the condition (a warm or competent brand scenario) to which participants were assigned as the independent variable. This analysis revealed that participants in the warmth condition perceived the brand as warmer ($M=6.09$; $SD=0.99$; $t=7.02$; $df=190$; $p<0.001$) compared to participants assigned to the competent brand condition ($M=5.12$; $SD=0.92$). Participants that were assigned to the competent condition perceived the presented brand as somewhat more competent ($M=5.86$; $SD=0.88$; $t=3.85$; $df=190$; $p<0.001$) compared to participants assigned to the warm brand condition ($M=5.35$; $SD=0.97$). Follow up analyses to fully test H1 are conducted in the following parts of this chapter.

4.2.2 Controversial vs. Non-Controversial Issues

H2: Consumers with more warm personal values expect warm (vs. competent) brands to take a stand on non-controversial socio-political topics than consumers with less warm values

To test the above stated hypothesis, I analyzed which expectations participants of the randomized conditions (warmth and competence) along the variable “taking a stand” and under the moderating effect of “personal values” (warmth and competence) have towards controversial and non-controversial scenarios. The initial test of the within-subject effect on the variable “taking a stand” showed a non-significant effect of the interaction between the brand conditions of warmth, taking a stand, and personal warmth ($F=2.34$; $p=0.13$). However, I observed a marginally significant effect of the interaction between the brand condition warmth, taking a stand, and personal competence ($F=3.05$; $p=0.08$). Results from the general linear analysis are summarized in Appendix 3.

I conducted follow up analyses to investigate the effect of the variable “taking a stand” only among participants with high and low personal competence and towards controversial versus non-controversial scenarios. Therefore, a median split of personal competence was made. Results of all conducted median splits can be found in Appendix 4. The sample was split into high ($Mdn>5.5$) and low ($Mdn<5.5$) personal competence values, as defined by the median ($Mdn=5.5$). Subsequently, a paired samples t-test revealed a significant effect ($t= -7.50$; $df=36$; $p<0.001$) among participants with high personal competence who expect brands to take a stand more on non-controversial ($M=4.97$) than controversial issues ($M=3.77$).

Among participants with low competence, a similar significant ($t= -5.66$; $df=43$; $p<0.001$) however lower effect was determined with a lower difference in the expectation on stance-taking on non-controversial ($M=4.52$) versus controversial issues ($M=3.60$). The results are summarized in the table below.

Overview Paired samples t-test – Variable “Taking a Stand”								
Brand Condition	Personal Values	Mdn	Controversy	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Warmth	Competence	Mdn>5.5	Controversial	3.77	1.50	-7.50	36	<0.001
			Non-Controversial	4.97	1.18			
		Mdn<5.5	Controversial	3.60	1.49	-5.66	43	
			Non-Controversial	4.52	1.17			

Figure 2: Paired Samples T-Test - Randomized Condition Warmth

In conclusion, the effect “taking a stand” is stronger among participants who were assigned to the randomized brand condition “warmth” with personal competence values for non-controversial socio-political scenarios. The effect is marginally higher among participants with high personal competence values compared to participants with low personal competence.

H3: Consumers with more competent values expect competent brands to take a stand on controversial issues more than consumers with less competent values

In order to test the above mentioned H3, I proceeded in the same way as in the previous testing of H2, with adjusted variables. The within-subject effect test on the variable “taking a stand” showed a non-significant effect of the interaction between the brand condition competence, taking a stand, and personal competence ($F=1.45$; $p=0.23$). Nonetheless, I observed a marginally significant effect of the interaction between the brand condition competence, taking a stand, and personal warmth ($F=3.70$; $p=0.06$). I conducted further analyses to analyze the expression of the effect of “taking a stand” among participants with high and low personal warmth, applying a median split. The sample was split into high ($Mdn>6$) and low ($Mdn<6$) personal warmth values. Subsequently, a paired samples t-test revealed a significant effect ($t= -5.72$; $df=42$; $p<0.001$) among participants with high personal warmth who expect brands to take a stand more on non-controversial ($M=4.21$) than controversial issues ($M=3.34$). Among participants with low warmth, again a significant ($t= -3.75$; $df=42$; $p<0.001$) effect was determined with a similar difference in the expectation of stance-taking on non-controversial ($M=4.41$) versus controversial issues ($M=3.64$).

Overview Paired samples t-test – Variable “Taking a Stand”								
Brand Condition	Personal Values	Mdn	Controversy	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Competence	Warmth	Mdn>6	Controversial	3.34	1.65	-5.72	42	<0.001
			Non-Controversial	4.21	1.33			
		Mdn<6	Controversial	3.64	1.49	-3.75	42	<0.001
			Non-Controversial	4.41	1.17			

Figure 3: Paired Samples T-Test - Randomized Condition Competence

In conclusion, the effect of “taking a stand” is strongest among participants who were assigned to the randomized brand condition “competence” with personal warmth values for non-controversial socio-political scenarios. The expression of personal warmth (high vs. low) in this case deviates only marginally, showing a greater expectation of participants with low personal warmth values towards the brand taking a stand.

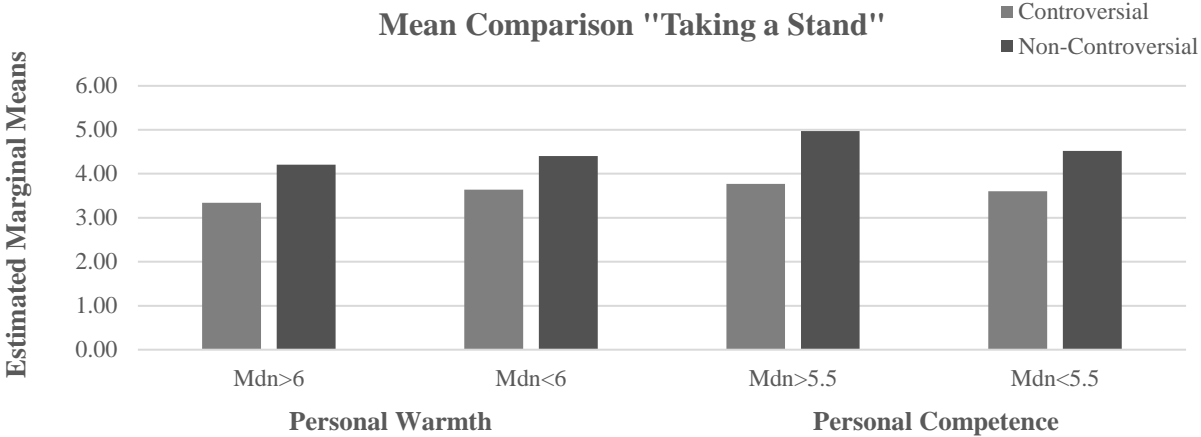


Figure 4: Mean Comparison Variable "Taking a Stand"

As it can be seen in the graph above, the median of controversial issues is in the range of $M_{\text{Controversial}}=3.34$ to $M_{\text{Controversial}}=3.77$. In comparison, the median of non-controversial issues lies between $M_{\text{Non-Controversial}}=4.21$ and $M_{\text{Non-Controversial}}=4.97$. These results indicate a greater expectation of stance-taking in non-controversial socio-political scenarios across personal values and the randomized brand conditions.

4.3 Further analyses

Since the so far carried out analyses stated only marginal significances, I conducted further analyses to gather more insights on the given data set. As a first step, I repeated the above mentioned procedure, leaving out the randomized conditions (brand warmth or competence) that participants were assigned to in the survey, in order to reduce the complexity of the compared variables and observe changes accordingly. The test of within-subject effect on the variable “taking a stand” showed a non-significant effect of issues (controversial vs. non-controversial) ($F= 0.08$; $p=0.78$) but a significant interaction between issues (controversial vs.

non-controversial) and personal competence ($F=4.33$; $p=0.04$). An overview of all results from the general linear analyses can be found in Appendix 5. I then conducted a median split to analyze the interaction in more depth. The sample was split into high ($Mdn>5.5$) and low ($Mdn<5.5$) personal competence values. Subsequently, a paired samples t-test revealed a significant effect ($t=9.13$; $df=82$; $p<0.001$) among participants with high personal competence who expect brands to take a stand more on non-controversial ($M=4.67$) than controversial issues ($M=3.61$). Among participants with low competence, a similar significant ($t=6.39$; $df=86$; $p<0.001$) however lower effect was determined with a lower difference in the expectation on stance-taking on non-controversial ($M=4.44$) versus controversial issues ($M=3.64$). In conclusion, the effect of “taking a stand” is strongest among participants with high personal competence values for non-controversial issues compared to participants with low personal competence and controversial issues.

I repeated the same procedure for the variable “taking a stand” in combination with personal warmth. The variable “taking a stand” showed a non-significant effect of issues (controversial vs. non-controversial) ($F=0.42$; $p=0.52$) but a significant interaction between issues (controversial vs. non-controversial) and personal warmth ($F=5.29$; $p=0.02$). For the follow up analyses, the sample was split into high ($Mdn>6$) and low ($Mdn<6$) personal warmth values. The paired samples t-test revealed a significant effect ($t=9.04$; $df=79$; $p<0.001$) among participants with high personal warmth who expect brands to take a stand more on non-controversial ($M=4.61$) than controversial issues ($M=3.56$). Among participants with low warmth, a similar significant ($t=6.89$; $df=86$; $p<0.001$) effect was determined, however, with a lower difference in the expectation of stance-taking on non-controversial ($M=4.42$) versus controversial issues ($M=3.53$). Which leads to the conclusion that this effect is stronger among participants with high personal warmth values for non-controversial issues.

In order to further analyze which of the presented non-controversial issues participants expect

the brand to take a stand on more, I compared the means within the category of non-controversial issues, again, regardless of the randomized condition (brand warmth or competence).

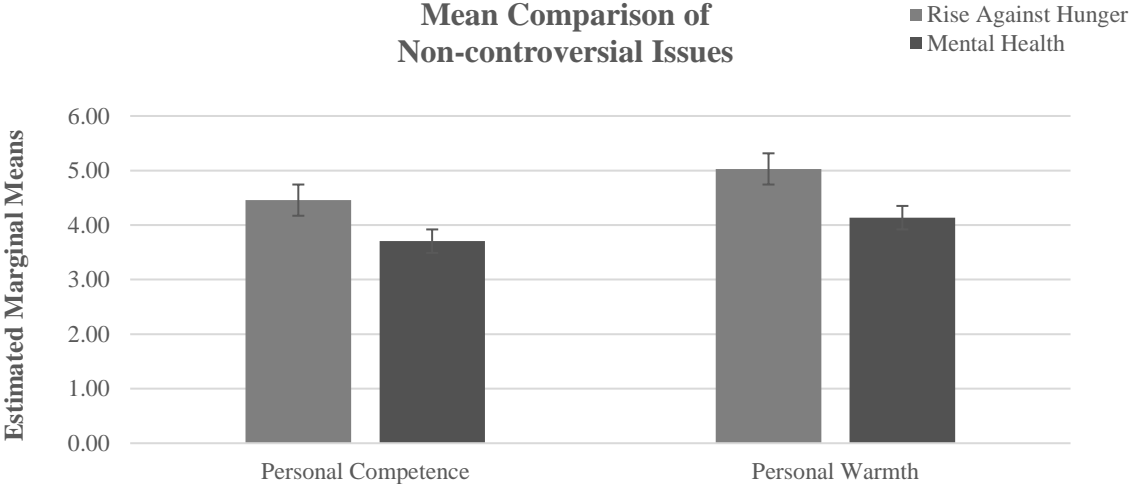


Figure 5: Mean Comparison of “Non-controversial Issues”

The outcome is visualized in the graph. Both participant groups (warm and competent personal values) expect the presented brand to take action more in the scenario of the Rise Against Hunger Movement ($M_{Warmth}=5.03$; $M_{Competence}=4.46$) compared to the scenario of Mental Health ($M_{Warmth}=4.14$; $M_{Competence}=3.70$) which leads to the conclusion that, among all tested socio-political scenarios, participants expect brands to take action most in the non-controversial scenario of the Rise Against Hunger Movement.

4.3.1 Ability to have an impact

I conducted further analyses on the variable “ability to have an impact” since results can contribute towards practical and theoretical implications. I therefore repeated the within-subject test approach, which revealed only a significant effect for the participants with personal warmth values. The effect of the within-subject test showed a significant interaction between issues (controversial vs. non-controversial) and personal warmth ($F=4.77$; $p=0.03$). For the follow up analyses, the sample was again split into high ($Mdn>6$) and low ($Mdn<6$) personal warmth values. The paired samples t-test revealed a significant effect ($t=9.39$; $df=79$; $p<0.001$) among

participants with high personal warmth who perceive the brands to have the ability to have an impact more on non-controversial (M=4.39) than controversial issues (M=3.33). Among participants with low warmth, a similar significant ($t=6.90$; $df=86$; $p<0.001$) however lower effect was determined, with a lower difference in the perception of the ability to have an impact on non-controversial (M=3.85) versus controversial issues (M=3.01). In conclusion, participants with high personal warmth values expect the presented brand to have the ability to have an impact on non-controversial issues.

4.3.2 Genuinely cares

Lastly, in the analyses of the variable “genuinely cares”, the effect of the within-subject test showed a significant effect for the participants with personal warmth values. The test revealed a significant interaction between issues (controversial vs. non-controversial) and personal warmth ($F=4.07$; $p=0.05$). Furthermore, I observed a significant effect ($t=7.89$; $df=79$; $p<0.001$) in the paired samples t-test among participants with high personal warmth ($Mdn>6$). This participant group expects the presented brand to genuinely care more about non-controversial issues (M=4.49) than controversial issues (M=3.78). Among participants with low warmth ($Mdn<6$) a similar significant ($t=3.74$; $df=86$; $p<0.001$) however marginal effect was determined, with a much lower difference in the perception of whether the brand genuinely cares about non-controversial (M=3.93) versus controversial issues (M=3.50). Which leads to the conclusion that this effect is stronger among participants with high personal warmth values but is overall less strong than in the previously reported tested variables.

5. Discussion

5.1. Summary of Findings

The goal of this research was to gain a greater understanding of how brand characteristics, under the influence of consumers personal values, lead to the expectation that only certain brands should be actively involved in controversial and non-controversial socio-political issues. Furthermore, this work intends to answer the following research questions: "Which type of

brands do consumers expect to take a stand on socio-political issues?" and "How do personal values influence consumer expectations on stance-taking?"

The results indicate that consumers distinctly perceived warm brands as warm and competent brands as competent. However, results have also shown that both dimensions of brand characteristics are perceived with the opposite characteristic trait, whereas perception in these cases is lower compared to the accurate match of brand characteristics. Further analyses have shown that consumers expect warm brands to take a stand more than competent brands. Which is in line with the first hypothesis and findings from previous research by Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick (2007), which state that active behaviors align with the warmth dimension and passive behaviors align with the competence dimension.

The main effect of "taking a stand" is strongest in scenarios for non-controversial issues in relation to warm brand characteristics linked with personal competence, as well as among competent brand characteristics that are linked with personal warmth. In both cases, the difference between high and low personally expressed values on the effect is only marginal. An overview of the significance of the main effects is given below.

Overview significance of main effects		
Interaction	Condition Warmth	Condition Competence
Issue & Personal Warmth	NOT significant (p=0.13)	marginally significant (p=0.08) --> further analyses
Issue & Personal Competence	marginally significant (p=0.06) --> further analyses	NOT significant (p=0.23)

Figure 6: Significance of main effects

This indicates that consumers with high personal warmth (competence) expect brands to take a stand nearly in the same way as consumers with low personal warmth (competence). Clear differences between the expression (high vs. low) of personal values cannot be made. Generally, it seems that consumers have very high identification with personal values for both warmth and competence, since the median is way above the middle point of the scale for both dimensions.

Performed data analyses have shown that consumers expect brands more to take a stand on non-controversial issues compared to controversial issues, regardless of given brand characteristics and personal values. Based on these and the above stated findings, the second and third hypotheses must be rejected. However, it is interesting that consumers expect brands to take action more in non-controversial scenarios since the literature suggests that non-controversial issues are the ones that consumers care and speak less about (Chen and Berger 2013).

Additional analyses disregarded the brand characteristics to look at the remaining variables in a more broad way and revealed that, among all tested socio-political scenarios, consumers expect brands to take action most in the non-controversial scenario of the Rise Against Hunger Movement. This could be justified by the fact that the presented randomized brand descriptions were about restaurants and therefore close in content to the socio-political scenario of the Rise Against Hunger Movement.

Moreover, further analyses indicate that consumers with high personal warmth expect brands to have the ability to have an impact and to genuinely care more about non-controversial issues compared to controversial scenarios. A simplified test of variable interaction revealed significance for all dependent variables tested under the influence of personal warm values and for all dimensions along the dependent variable “taking a stand” for controversial and non-controversial issues.

Overview of significances from additional analyses:

Significance of additional effects		
Dependent variable	Personal Competence	Personal Warmth
Taking a stand	significant (p=0.04)	significant (p=0.02)
Ability to have an impact	NOT significant (p=0.09)	significant (p=0.03)
Genuinely cares	NOT significant (p=0.43)	significant (p=0.05)

Figure 7: Significance of additional effects

To conclude on the findings, the research questions can be answered by stating that consumers expect warm brands to take a stand more on socio-political issues and that personal values heavily influence consumer expectations on stance-taking along the dimensions of the issues (controversial vs. non-controversial), between the dimensions of warmth and competence, and within the expression of high and low warmth and competence.

5.2. Implications and Contributions

As one of the main contributions, this work adds more depth to the generic insights of consumer expectations towards stance-taking, such as Edelman's (2021) report, for example, by differentiating between controversial and non-controversial issues. This work questioned if all brands are expected to take a stand equally by using a broad questionnaire wherefore insights are deviating from general known consumer expectations towards stance-taking.

Managerial implications require first and foremost a careful assessment of the socio-political environment before taking a stand, since possible benefits are lower than the risk of potential loss of performance, reputation, and other factors. In general, brands should observe the development of non-controversial issues among the society and keep in mind that the divisiveness of the society is increasing, which implies that rather controversial issues are on the rise among society. This research further advises brands to take a stand on non-controversial socio-political topics instead of not taking a stand at all or taking a stand on controversial issues. Warm brands are furthermore challenged with the fact that consumers expect them to take action more compared to competent brands. Also, the consumers' personal values are influencing the expectation towards stance-taking, which indicates the challenge of evaluating consumers along this dimension since values are highly individual among consumers.

This work's theoretical contributions include the combination of brand characteristics, controversy, personal values, and stance-taking as examined variables. Whereas especially the distinction within the variables makes this work interesting. For example, the level of

controversy distinguishes controversial from non-controversial scenarios. Additionally, personal values have been investigated building upon existing research from Fiske et al. (2002); and Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2007); (2008), with an additional layer of distinction between the levels high and low.

5.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

One main limitation of this work includes the sample size of the conducted experiment. Since the sample was presented with a randomized condition and split in regards to the median for further data analyses, it seemed that results may vary if the sample size was larger since the outcome was of low significance.

As results from additional analyses have shown, further research on the relationship between controversy, personal values, and the variables "ability to have an impact" and "genuinely cares" could lead to more insights on the examination of consumers' expectations towards brands. Possible research questions could include "Which expectations do consumers have towards brands being able to have an impact on socio-political issues?" or "Do all brand types genuinely care about socio-political issues in the same way?"

Building upon my work, future research could examine how interactively presented brand descriptions, such as videos and pictures, in the experiment would change findings since these are commonly used elements these days to communicate brands' values and personalities.

With this research, I aimed to find further insights into the gap in the literature of consumers influencing CSA as mentioned by Bhagwat et al. (2020) as well as contribute to the research on brand activism as mentioned by Pöyry and Laaksonen (2022). This research furthermore contributed to the investigation of organizations' evaluations of warmth and competence and the assessment of both consumers and brands along the dimensions of warmth and competence, according to the stated direction of research by Cuddy, Glick, and Beninger (2011).

Although my research offers interesting findings, it could not address a number of issues such

as, firstly, a bias towards warmth. Cuddy, Glick, and Beninger (2011) state that “warmth judgments are made more quickly than competence judgments and have a greater impact on overall attitudes toward others”. Referring this to my work, this could mean that participants of the survey choose warm personal traits over competent traits, which would have an effect on the main findings of this study. Moreover, Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick (2007) found that gender plays a role in detecting warmth over competence. This could mean that female participants in the study were more likely to evaluate the presented brand with warm or competent items compared to male participants, and vice versa.

Overall, this study aimed to fill an existing research gap by contributing to the limited research on the evaluation of stance-taking on socio-political scenarios from a brand perspective, as well as the role of consumers’ expectations under the influence of personal values.

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7. Appendix

Appendix 1: Descriptions of (non-) controversial socio-political issues - Pretest

Level of Controversy	Issues	Description
Controversial	Immigration Laws	The World Migration Report 2022 states that "the current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020."(<i>World Migration Report 2022</i> 2021) The reasons therefore are tragic scenarios, such as injustice, poverty, armed conflict, and violence. In particular, uncontrolled and irregular migration that is poorly managed is likely to lead to immigration law issues, which can lead to migrants choosing irregular pathways of migration outside the legal structure. ("The Critical Challenges of Migration and Displacement" 2017)
Controversial	LGBTQ+ Rights	"LGBTQ is an initialism for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning."(Campbell 2022) In recent years, an increase in LGBT identification can be determined. (Inc 2022) Still, members of the LGBTQ+ community experience discrimination in their daily lives. ("LGBTQ Discrimination" n.d.)
Controversial	Gun Control	"Mass shootings in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom prompted those governments to tighten gun laws. The debate over U.S. gun laws has raged for decades, often reigniting after high-profile mass shootings. Gun violence has surged amid the COVID-19 pandemic." ("U.S. Gun Policy: Global Comparisons" n.d.)
Controversial	Abortion Laws	"Women seeking abortions everywhere must navigate distinct rules, in a variety of health care systems, if access is available at all. Abortion is now banned in at least eight U.S. states, a shift toward criminalization that runs counter to the longstanding policies of some close allies, like Canada, and to recent easings in several nations that had long imposed bans, like Ireland, Mexico and South Korea." (Times 2022)
Non-Controversial	Mental Health	According to (Atkinson and Boyon 2022), "Mental health now ranks 2nd among global health concerns, overtaking cancer." Overstretched healthcare systems are

		overwhelmed with increasing signs of stress and depression among the population. The Covid-19 pandemic has consequently fostered mental health issues in our society. (Grover et al. 2020)
Non-Controversial	Sustainability	Environmental pollution, global warming, climate change, and other factors are some of the biggest environmental issues of our lifetime. Policymakers still fail to support green innovations, renewable energy sources, and other solutions to slow down environmental issues. (Robinson 2022)
Non-Controversial	Rise Against Hunger Movement	The Rise Against Hunger Movement “is an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world’s most vulnerable, mobilizing the necessary resources to end hunger by 2030.” (“Rise Against Hunger” 2022)
Non-Controversial	Fridays for Future	The Fridays for Future Movement “is a youth-led and -organised global climate strike movement that started in August 2018, when 15-year-old Greta Thunberg began a school strike for climate. [...] Along with other groups across the world (e.g. School Strike for Climate), Fridays for Future is part of a hopeful new wave of change, inspiring millions of people to take action on the climate crisis [...].” (“Fridays for Future – How Greta Started a Global Movement” 2022)

Appendix 2: Questionnaire – Main experiment

<p>Q1. Introduction:</p> <p>Brand description (randomly assigned brand characteristic: warmth or competence)</p> <p><i>Adapted from (Leung et al. 2022)</i></p>	<p>Please take your time and study the information presented carefully. Note that you cannot return to this page.</p> <p><u>Warm brand description:</u></p> <p>David's Kitchen offers a warm and comfortable dining experience. Our dishes are prepared in the sincerest manner by our most caring chefs. We are proud of our friendly staff who provide the most attentive service for our guests. When guests come to our restaurant, they will be embraced by our friendly team.</p> <p>David Schneider is the owner of David's Kitchen. When he opened the restaurant, he encountered many obstacles. However, he managed to overcome these challenges with the generous support</p>
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from his own family-like team. After overcoming these obstacles, David has decided to donate frequently to different charitable causes to help people who are in need.

Recently, David told the reporters from Culinary Lifestyle Weekly: “Our restaurant is all about warmth. Our staff are selected for their friendliness and all our efforts are focused on communicating warmth to our guests.”

Here are a few reviews from critics:

Tom Becker, editor from Culinary Restaurants' Guide: “David Schneider has one of the friendliness interior design out of all restaurants that are opened in the previous months. The use of bright theme colors gives the restaurant an energetic as well as warm look.”

Julia Weber, critic from Culinary Lifestyle Weekly: “David’s Kitchen has the warmest service out of all the restaurants that I have ever reviewed. The staff are all kind and willing to help. They actively answered their guests' requests and questions in an extremely friendly manner.”

Competent brand description:

Max's Kitchen offers an excellent and superb dining experience. Our dishes are prepared in the highest quality by our most skillful chefs. We are proud of our capable staff who provide the most professional service for our guests. When guests come to our restaurant, they will be served by our competent team.

Max Mayer is the owner of Max's Kitchen. When he opened the restaurant, he encountered many obstacles. However, he managed to overcome these challenges with the proficient support from his own capable staff. After overcoming these obstacles, Max has decided to maximize efficiency and to explore more business opportunities.

Recently, Max told the reporters from Culinary Restaurants Weekly: “Our restaurant is all about competence. Our staff are selected for their competence and all our efforts are focused on communicating competence to our guests.”

Here are a few reviews from critics:

Nick Vogt, editor from Culinary Eat Out Guide: “Max's Kitchen has one of the most professional interior design out of all restaurants that are opened in the previous months. The use of dark

	<p>theme colors gives the restaurant a composed yet professional look.”</p> <p>Anne Rieger, critic from Culinary Restaurants Weekly: “Max's Kitchen has the most professional service out of all the restaurants that I have ever reviewed. The staff are all well-informed and experienced. They actively answered their guests' requests and questions in an extremely expertly manner.”</p>																																																																																																								
<p>Q2. Perception of the brand</p> <p><i>Competence and Warmth Scales (Fiske et al. 2002)</i></p>	<p>Please identify the features that you relate to the presented brand.</p> <p><i>(1=Strongly disagree; 7=Strongly agree)</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="518 629 1370 967"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>7</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Capable</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Sincere</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Confident</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Skillful</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Friendly</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Good-natured</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Efficient</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Competent</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Well-intentioned</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Trustworthy</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Warm</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Intelligent</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Capable								Sincere								Confident								Skillful								Friendly								Good-natured								Efficient								Competent								Well-intentioned								Trustworthy								Warm								Intelligent							
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<p>Q3. Consumer expectation to take a stand - <i>Scenario 1 (Rise Against Hunger)</i></p>	<p>In the following part of the study, you will read about socio-political issues. Please answer the questions with reference to the presented brand.</p> <p>The Rise Against Hunger Movement “is an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world’s most vulnerable, mobilizing the necessary resources to end hunger by 2030.”(“Rise Against Hunger” n.d.)</p> <p><i>(1=Definitely not; 7=Definitely)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Do you think the presented brand should take a stand on this issue? 2) Do you think the presented brand has the ability to have an impact on this issue? 3) Do you think the presented brand genuinely cares about this issue? 																																																																																																								
<p>Q4. Consumer expectation to take a stand - <i>Scenario 2 (Immigration Laws)</i></p>	<p>The World Migration Report 2022 states that "the current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020."(World Migration Report 2022 2021) The reasons therefore are tragic scenarios, such as injustice, poverty, armed conflict, and violence. In particular, uncontrolled and irregular migration that is poorly managed is likely to lead to immigration law issues, which can lead to migrants choosing irregular pathways of migration outside the legal structure. (“The Critical Challenges of Migration and Displacement” 2017)</p>																																																																																																								

	<p><i>(1=Definitely not; 7=Definitely)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Do you think the presented brand should take a stand on this issue? 2) Do you think the presented brand has the ability to have an impact on this issue? 3) Do you think the presented brand genuinely cares about this issue? 																																								
<p>Q5. Consumer expectation to take a stand - Scenario 3 (<i>Mental Health</i>)</p>	<p>According to (Atkinson and Boyon 2022), “Mental health now ranks 2nd among global health concerns, overtaking cancer.” Overstretched healthcare systems are overwhelmed with increasing signs of stress and depression among the population. The Covid-19 pandemic has consequently fostered mental health issues in our society. (Grover et al. 2020)</p> <p><i>(1=Definitely not; 7=Definitely)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Do you think the presented brand should take a stand on this issue? 2) Do you think the presented brand has the ability to have an impact on this issue? 3) Do you think the presented brand genuinely cares about this issue? 																																								
<p>Q6. Consumer expectation to take a stand - Scenario 4 (<i>Abortion</i>)</p>	<p>“Women seeking abortions everywhere must navigate distinct rules, in a variety of health care systems, if access is available at all. Abortion is now banned in at least eight U.S. states, a shift toward criminalization that runs counter to the longstanding policies of some close allies, like Canada, and to recent easings in several nations that had long imposed bans, like Ireland, Mexico and South Korea.” (Times 2022)</p> <p><i>(1=Definitely not; 7=Definitely)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Do you think the presented brand should take a stand on this issue? 2) Do you think the presented brand has the ability to have an impact on this issue? 3) Do you think the presented brand genuinely cares about this issue? 																																								
<p>Q7. Measuring consumer values</p> <p><i>Competence and Warmth Scales (Fiske et al. 2002)</i></p>	<p>Please indicate how well the stated features describe your personal values.</p> <p><i>(1=Strongly disagree; 7=Strongly agree)</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="518 1915 1369 2042"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>7</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Capable</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sincere</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Confident</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Skillful</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Capable								Sincere								Confident								Skillful							
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	Well-intentioned								
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	Intelligent								
Q8. Demographics	Gender Age Nationality								

Appendix 3: General Lineal Model

Test of within-subjects				
Brand condition	Effect	Variables	F	p-value
Warmth	Personal Warmth	Issue	0.82	0.78
		Issue * Warmth	2.34	0.13
Competence	Personal Competence	Issue	0.46	0.50
		Issue * Competence	3.05	0.08
Competence	Personal Warmth	Issue	0.27	0.61
		Issue * Warmth	3.70	0.06
Competence	Personal Competence	Issue	0.01	0.94
		Issue * Competence	1.45	0.23

Comments: Marginally significant combinations are highlighted in bold font. Issue = controversial vs. non-controversial socio-political scenarios.

Appendix 4: Median Split

Frequencies			
	Mdn	Mdn High	Mdn Low
Personal Warmth	6	> 6	< 6
Personal Competence	5.5	> 5.5	< 5.5

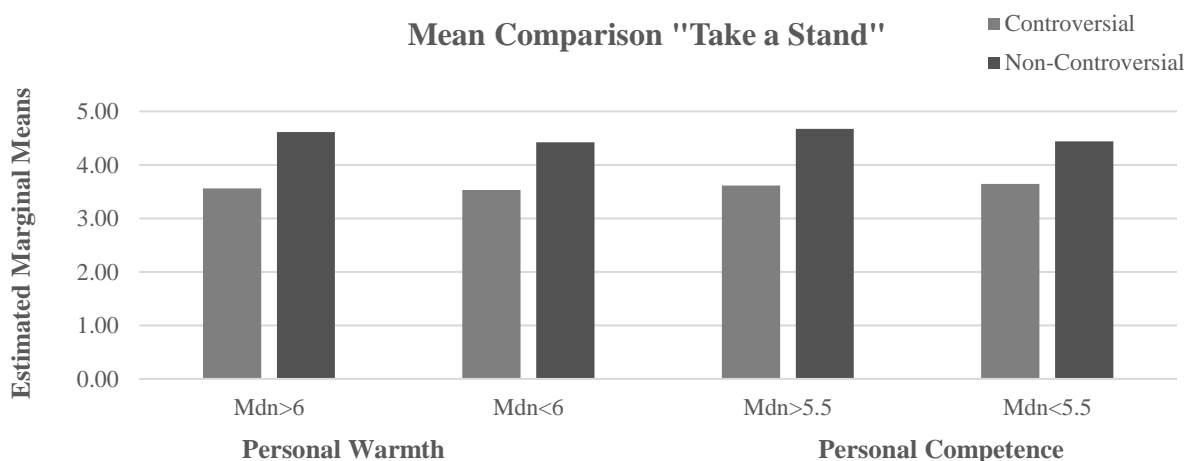
Appendix 5: Additional Analyses

General Linear Model:

Test of within-subjects				
Dependent variable	Moderating variable	Variable	F	p-value
Taking a stand	Personal Warmth	Issue	0.42	0.52
		Issue * Warmth	5.29	0.02
	Personal Competence	Issue	0.08	0.78
		Issue * Competence	4.33	0.04
Ability to have an impact	Personal Warmth	Issue	0.28	0.60
		Issue * Warmth	4.77	0.03
	Personal Competence	Issue	0.10	0.92
		Issue * Competence	2.87	0.09
Genuinely cares	Personal Warmth	Issue	0.81	0.37
		Issue * Warmth	4.07	0.05
	Personal Competence	Issue	0.16	0.69
		Issue * Competence	0.64	0.43

Comments: Significant combinations are highlighted in bold font. Issue = controversial vs. non-controversial socio-political scenarios.

Mean Comparison of variable "Take a Stand" (without randomized condition brand):



Results Paired samples t-test – Variable “Take a Stand”:

Overview Paired samples t-test - Controversial vs. Non-Controversial Issues

Personal Values	Mdn	Controversy	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Competence	Mdn>5.5	Non-Controversial	4.67	1.22	9.13	82	<0.001
		Controversial	3.61	1.55			
	Mdn<5.5	Non-Controversial	4.44	1.21	6.39	86	<0.001
		Controversial	3.64	1.52			
Warmth	Mdn>6	Non-Controversial	4.61	1.30	9.04	79	<0.001
		Controversial	3.56	1.64			
	Mdn<6	Non-Controversial	4.42	1.19	6.89	86	<0.001
		Controversial	3.53	1.49			

Results Paired samples t-test – Ability to have an impact:

Overview Paired samples t-test - Ability to have an impact

Personal Values	Mdn	Controversy	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Warmth	Mdn>6	Non-Controversial	4.39	1.50	9.39	79	<0.001
		Controversial	3.33	1.60			
	Mdn<6	Non-Controversial	3.85	1.21	6.90	86	<0.001
		Controversial	3.01	1.34			

Results Paired samples t-test – Variable “Genuinely cares”:

Overview Paired samples t-test - Genuinely cares

Personal Values	Mdn	Controversy	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Warmth	Mdn>6	Non-Controversial	4.49	1.57	7.89	79	<0.001
		Controversial	3.78	1.61			
	Mdn<6	Non-Controversial	3.93	1.42	3.74	86	<0.001
		Controversial	3.50	1.29			