

IS CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING ALL THE SAME FOR DIFFERENT CULTURES?

ABSTRACT

Design/methodology/approach: A quasi-experimental approach is adopted. An international sample of 1,232 respondents from Spain, England, and Ecuador is exposed to a video viral cause marketing stimulus. A structural equation modeling analysis has been applied to the collected data. SPSS 26 and EQS 6.2 software were used to test the measurement instrument and our hypotheses.

Purpose: This research analyses how high emotional cause-related marketing claims influence attitudes and viral behaviors such as sharing and e-WOM intentions. To achieve this goal, we analyze the link between three blocks of variables: emotions (I), attitudes (II), and viral behaviors (III).

Findings: From a global international perspective, five main aspects could be highlighted: firstly, the influence of emotions on attitudes; secondly, the attitudinal constructs consistency; thirdly, the simultaneous impact of the antecedent emotions also on viral behaviors; fourthly, the effect of attitudes variables on viral behaviors; and fifthly, the strong viral consequences connection. From a cross-cultural perspective, significant differences are identified in the two cases. Firstly, emotions toward an advertisement differently influence the advertisement attitudes depending on the culture. Secondly, the ad-sharing intention impacts social cause eWOM.

Research limitations/implications: Diverse research implications can be addressed. (I) Cause-related videos generate emotions that impact the viewer's attitudes. (II) The ad attitude strongly influences the brand-cause alliance attitude. (III) Emotions influence viral behaviors. (IV) Viral behaviors are influenced by both brand-cause alliance attitudes and ad attitudes. (V) Viral behaviors are strongly connected. (VI) Culture could modulate emotions aroused by viral video advertising under certain conditions. (VII) Attitudes toward cause-related marketing exhibit universal patterns. (VIII) The intention to viralise an advertisement may differ from collectivist to individualistic cultures.

Practical implications: From these findings, it is extracted as the first managerial implication the convenience of including emotional claims in cause-related marketing spread in social networks. It will enhance audiences' positive attitudes and viral behaviors. Additionally, these findings show that adapting international campaigns to local cultures can strengthen certain advantages. However, tailoring locally a global campaign cannot be affordable.

Originality/value: Firstly, this work sheds light on the consumers' cause-related marketing decoding process when considering emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral consequences. Secondly, it delves into the positive influence emotional claims have on the viralisation. Thirdly, it clarifies the relationship between affective and cognitive constructs. Fourthly, this study accomplishes international validity when applied in (I) European, (II) English-speaking, and (III) Latin American cultures. And at the same time, cross-cultural differences are emphasized.

Keywords: cause-related advertising; cross-cultural analysis; viral videos; dog adoption

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cause-related and viral advertising are two marketing strategies in trend in the modern communication context, where consumer values have become the center of marketing practices (Kotler et al., 2010). The popularization of online advertising formats has done more complex to create effective marketing campaigns (Lee & Hong, 2016). Due to this, selecting appropriate ad claims is a crucial determinant of communication effectiveness (Grigaliunaite & Lina, 2016). Promoting charitable causes and events is done by combining offline and online activities, and in both contexts, emotions have proved to be influential in the results of prosocial decisions (Paulin et al., 2014).

Cause-related marketing campaigns generate different types of cognitive, affective, and behavioral consumer responses (Huertas-García et al., 2014). Firstly, emotion is an essential precursor of audiences' reactions to cause-related communicative actions (Dobele et al., 2007). Secondly, attitude is an excellent measure of social network advertising efficacy (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). Thirdly, viral behaviors such as video sharing intention and online word of mouth (eWOM) need to be measured to evaluate consumers' reactions to online advertising (Castronovo & Huang, 2012).

Brand marketing strategies are also influenced by Culture (Swaidan, 2012). Previous literature suggests that advertising adaptation to different cultural environments could be profitable, and for this purpose, it is crucial to identify the features or kinds of claims being able to be standardized and those that don't (Orth et al., 2007). When considering communication activities through social networks, even the same brand could be perceived differently in different cultures when evaluating the brand's social advertising (Deraz et al., 2015). Cultural

variations in the opinions about the ads explain the cultural background effect in assessing social network ads (Deraz, 2019).

Culture influences consumer decisions and social actions (Singhapakdi et al., 1999). Considering cause-related actions, consumers' perceptions and behaviors motivated by social campaigns differ across cultures (Chu & Lin, 2013). Therefore, to develop effective cause-related marketing campaigns internationally, brands must learn about consumer social and ethical concerns (Auger et al., 2007).

The comparison between collectivist and individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 2001) has been extensively used in cross-cultural studies about consumer behavior (Shim, 2002). Individuals in individualistic cultures view themselves as autonomous, while individuals in collectivist cultures view themselves in relation to others (Triandis, 2018). Similarly, high-context cultures could also be differentiated from low-context cultures (Hall, 1976)

Based on these premises, this quantitative aims: (I) quantify the impact of emotions towards a cause-related ad on audience attitudes and viralizing behaviors and (II) confirm the cultural moderation in the emotions, attitudes, and viral behaviors produced by a cause marketing ad watched on social networks. To this aim, 1,232 online viewers have answered a digital questionnaire incorporating a video cause-related ad. The form was distributed to three different cultural backgrounds: Spain, the United Kingdom, and Ecuador. The total sample was formed of 465 Spanish, 195 British, and 572 Ecuadorian participants.

Four main contributions to scientific knowledge are expected. Firstly, this study decodes the consumer way of processing online cause-related marketing, analyzing emotions, attitudes, and behaviors jointly. Secondly, this research analyses the positive influence of emotion on cause-related messages viralizing. Thirdly, it clarifies the affective-cognitive connection between constructs by assessing the multivariable sequence "emotions—attitudes—behavior". Fourthly, this research is internationally generalizable because of its application in (I) Spain as a European

country, (II) the United Kingdom as an English-speaking country, and (III) Ecuador as a Latin American country. In addition, it emphasizes dissimilarities across countries and cultures.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Attitudinal effects of emotion in cause-related marketing

2.1.1. Direct consequences of emotions

Personality Theory states that personalities play a substantial role in selecting dependency relationships and engagement (Robins et al., 2000). The Congruence Theory explains that people are more likely to generate positive attitudes toward an object or phenomenon when they perceive it as consistent with their personality or identity (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). Research on self-image congruence applied to brands suggests that consumers' attachments to brands depend on their perceptions of a brand's personality and how it interacts, contributes, and promotes their self-concept (Orth et al., 2010).

Brands or causes can become powerful drivers of symbolic meanings for the consumer. They will be essential to generate emotional congruence in a cause-related marketing campaign (Ringer *et al.*, 2005). The consumer evaluates the alliance brand-cause, and its symbolic meaning could only be effective when the message's recipient shares the same values. The interpretation of these meanings as congruent with them will generate an emotional bond with the brand, the cause, and the alliance, creating favorable attitudes toward them (Ringer *et al.*, 2005). So that the following could be hypothesized:

H1a: The emotions towards a cause-related marketing ad directly and positively influence the brand-cause alliance's attitude.

Incorporating a social cause into brand advertising has proven to be an effective way to increase the persuasiveness of corporate messages by providing a valuable brand experience. Therefore, more and more companies are promoting alliances with social causes in their advertising to improve their image (Huertas et al., 2017). This is because brand messages supporting a social

cause transfer the positive feelings and emotions generated by this support to the brand itself (Rivera et al., 2016).

According to the Stimulus-Response-Reinforcement Behavioral Logic (Heath & Feldwick, 2008), the recipients of messages do not play a purely passive role; if not, they experience a series of cognitive and emotional processes that interact with persuasive advertising (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003). So, if an ad campaign advertises a brand supporting a social cause, the message will generate positive consumer sentiments. Then, consumers will be attracted by the opportunity to contribute to society's betterment, providing them with self-satisfaction and emotional well-being. Then, following this theory, we could state:

H2a: The emotions towards a cause-related marketing ad directly and positively influence the advert's attitude.

2.1.2. Indirect consequences of emotions

When a brand-cause alliance is known through an ad, Associative Learning is the key mechanism through which the links between stimuli are developed: the ad and the Alliance link in this case. Previous studies have tested this theory in marketing to explain the value of co-branding relationships. There are also co-branding applications to the advertising area, where it is common to see advertisements in which two brands are deliberately paired (Grossman, 1997). Associative Learning has also been applied to cause-related marketing, providing us with a robust theoretical framework (Till & Nowak, 2000).

Likewise, according to the Information Integration Theory, attitudes toward an object are formed and modified as people receive, interpret, evaluate, and incorporate new information integrated with their previous attitudes (Anderson, 1981). This theory applied to the context of a brand-cause alliance means that the further information transmitted through the cause-related marketing ad produces new attitudes towards the partnership between them (Lafferty et al., 2004). So, it could be stated that:

H3a: The attitude towards the advert directly and positively influences the attitude towards the brand-cause alliance.

2.2. Behavioural effects of emotion in viral cause marketing

2.2.1. Direct consequences of emotions

Many empirical studies have examined the influence of viewers' emotions on the video-sharing intention (Rubenking, 2019). Existing literature concludes that the main motivations that lead to sharing viral videos online are the intense experimentation of emotions, entertainment, or educational value (Southgate et al., 2010; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Hsieh et al., 2012; Guadagno et al., 2013; Yang & Wang, 2015).

In the case of a digital video advert, the positive and negative emotions observed in the performers are transferred to viewers (Tseng & Huang, 2016). Furthermore, viral message transmitters tend to experience positive emotions when sharing a communication, which are also passed on to the receivers (Phelps et al., 2004). That is, according to the Theory of Emotional Contagion, there will be a direct interaction between the emotions experienced by the main characters of the video and the viewer and, in addition, forwarding the video to another person can also indirectly spread a shared emotion (Guadagno et al., 2013). Based on this Theory, we could propose:

H4a: The emotions towards a cause marketing ad directly and positively influence the intention to share the advert.

2.2.2. Indirect consequences of emotions

Based on the Theory of Prosocial Behavior, consumers viewing a cause-related ad could become more prosocial (Mantovani et al., 2017). Prosocial behavior consists of any action carried out by a significant group of society beneficial to other people (Penner. et al., 2005). In these terms, when a brand supports a social cause, this is similar to prosocial behavior, considering that the principal result of the action is directed toward society as a whole (Carroll,

1979). Likewise, it could be regarded as prosocial behavior when a user contributes to disseminating a message of support for a social cause by forwarding it to their contact network. In viral advertising, where the ultimate intention of a viral marketing campaign is to promote forwarding behavior (Chiu et al., 2007), the attitude towards the viral video ad plays a fundamental role in integrating attitude formation and intention to share a video. Indeed, the attitude towards the viral video ad is one of the main factors affecting video sharing. However, the attitude generated toward the brand can also significantly impact the intention to share (Huang et al., 2013). When the promotional objects are the brand, the cause and the brand-cause alliance, this positive connection between brand attitude and sharing intention could be extended towards the brand-cause alliance. Consequently, we formulate:

H5a: The attitude towards the advert directly and positively influences the Ad sharing intention.

H6a: The attitude towards the brand-cause association directly and positively influences the intention to share the Ad.

In social media, personal identity and group norms influence consumer response to advertisements (Zeng et al., 2009). Ads with self-identity claims can encourage volunteer behaviors (Folse et al., 2012). People frequently have social identities linked to social causes or charities (Winterich & Barone, 2011). Social categorization creates boundaries between groups by producing distinctive perceptions of the included group. Consumers respond favorably to certain ads with which they identify (Tajfel & Turner, 2019). These ads may contain identities of social responsibility (Currás et al., 2009) related to social causes.

In addition, supported by Cialdini's Commitment-Consistency Theory (2001), a cause-related marketing campaign would simultaneously create a consumer commitment to both the brand and the social cause. So, a cause-related ad will affect consumer attitudes and behaviors toward the brand and the cause, such as user-generated content and comments and sharing and re-

sharing intentions (Huang *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2015; Payne *et al.*, 2017). Considering this, we could state:

H7a: The intention to share a cause-marketing directly and positively influences the social cause eWOM intention.

H8a: The intention to share a cause-marketing ad directly and positively influences the brand eWOM intention.

The Classical Conditioning Theory (Pavlov, 2018) justifies the efficacy of cause marketing in which two key elements interact: a social cause and a commercial brand. According to this theory, when individuals see a conditioned familiar stimulus paired with an unconditioned unfamiliar stimulus, they will transfer their attitudes from the conditioned to the unconditioned element. (Shimp *et al.*, 1991). Cause-related marketing campaigns aim to transfer the affective, attitudinal, and behavioral responses of a cause to a brand. Even if users are unfamiliar with the specific cause, the idea of "giving" will serve as a positive conditioned stimulus (Buford *et al.*, 2012). Based on this, we propose:

H9a: The cause eWOM intention promoted in a cause-related marketing ad influences direct and positively the brand eWOM intention.

These nine research hypotheses together form our proposal for a theoretical research model whose graphic representation is presented in Figure 1.

2.3. Cross-cultural differences in emotions, attitudes, and viral behaviours

2.3.1. Cross-cultural differences in emotions

Previous literature has analyzed cross-cultural dissimilarities in the effectiveness of emotional versus functional claims (Zarantonello *et al.*, 2013) and the persuasiveness of ego-focused versus other-focused emotions (Kim & Johnson, 2014). But it is also worth considering brand emotions happening in different cultural environments. It will determine consumer responses (Jakubanecs *et al.*, 2019).

Although positive and negative emotions can be universally viewed as desirable and undesirable, cultural differences exist in the relevance of such emotional experiences. Positive emotional experiences have a stronger positive relationship with life satisfaction in individualistic nations than in collectivist ones. In contrast, negative emotional experiences are more negatively related to life satisfaction in countries emphasizing self-expression than in nations valuing survival (Kuppens et al., 2008).

Based on the Self-Construal Theory, Jakubanečs et al. (2019) report significant differences in emotional responses to advertisements in collectivist countries compared to individualistic ones. These authors conclude that the higher levels of interdependent self-construction, the greater the influence of the advertising context on the emotional response to it. Following this theory, we formulate the following:

H1b: CULTURE moderates the impact of cause-related ad emotions on the attitude towards the cause-brand partnership, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

H2b: CULTURE impact of cause-related ad emotions on the attitude towards the ad, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

H4b: CULTURE moderates the impact of cause-related ad emotions on the intention to share the ad, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

2.3.2. Cross-cultural differences in attitudes

Exploring the dimensions of culture on general attitudes toward advertising indicates how people view the role of advertising in society. Collectivist countries consider advertising beneficial for society and have more favorable attitudes than individualist countries. Consequently, collectivist consumers may be less skeptical of advertising and more open to brand messages, including cause-based advertisements (La Ferle et al., 2013).

The signaling Theory (Spence, 1974) supports the preference for local versus multinational companies and local versus international causes. Brands and causes' origin could influence attitudes toward cause-related campaigns. The type of sponsoring company (national versus multinational) and the location of the supported cause (national versus international) influence the effectiveness of cause marketing (La Ferle *et al.*, 2013). Supported by this theory, we propose:

H3b: CULTURE moderates the effect of ad attitudes on brand-cause alliance attitude, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

H5b: CULTURE moderates the effect of ad attitudes on the ad-sharing intention, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

H6b: CULTURE moderates the effect of the brand-cause alliance attitudes on the ad-sharing intention, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

2.3.3. Cross-cultural differences in viral behaviors

Social media makes it possible for people to express themselves in a global context. Many people use this power to become promoters and creators of positive eWOM, especially about events or causes that are important to the individual (Davis et al., 2016). Based on the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), the consumer can be considered an active co-creator of meaning and, as such, uses viral content as an extension of their desired self. Consumers' decisions to share viral messages are based on judgments about the potential value such action will have in promoting their identity goals (Beverland et al., 2015).

Hartzel et al. (2016) highlight cultural differences in adopting online social networks for social purposes. In this regard, they corroborate that individualist countries are less involved in social causes and less inclined to use social networks to search for information about a social cause compared to collectivist countries showing significantly higher investment in social issues through social media. Therefore, we state:

H7b: CULTURE moderates the impact of the ad-sharing intention on the cause eWOM intention, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

H8b: CULTURE moderates the impact of the ad-sharing intention on the brand eWOM intention, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

H9b: CULTURE moderates the influence of the social cause eWOM intention on the brand eWOM intention, being more intense in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Stimuli, sample, and data collection

A unique real cause-related marketing ad in video format was used to improve the external validity of this experiment (Alexander, 2009). In it, the pet food brand Pedigree promotes dog adoption. This spot won the International Festival of Creative Advertising Cannes Lions 2014 award. In this regard, a study by Tapia et al. (2016) defends these awards given to spots as a reliable measure of success.

Sample collection was done on the Internet. Participants were requested to answer an online questionnaire requiring them to confirm a viral cause-related advertising video viewing. People living in Spain, Ecuador, or The United Kingdom were aimed to participate. We used a convenience non-probability sampling procedure. After this primary data collection process, a total sample of 1,232 respondents has achieved: 465 Spanish viewers, 195 British viewers, and 572 Ecuadorian viewers. Table 1 summarizes the technical details of the study. And Table 2 reflects the sample sociodemographic profile.

(Table 1 and Table 2)

3.2. Variables

The theoretical model comprises six variables belonging to three groups of variables: emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral. For measuring the six variables, a total of 4 measurement

scales previously validated have been used: (I) an emotions scale to measure a single variable: "emotions generated by the advertisement"; (II) the same attitude scale used to measure two attitudinal variables: "attitude towards the brand-cause alliance" and "attitude towards the advertisement"; (III) a scale to measure the behavioral variable of "intention to share the ad"; and (IV) an eWOM scale to measure two variables: "intention to eWOM about the cause" and "intention to eWOM about the brand." The corresponding six Cronbach's α coefficients ratify the scale reliability [0.94; 0.97; 0.96; 0.96; 0.94 y 0.95], exceeding in all cases the value of 0.94, thus being above the acceptable value of 0.80 (Carmines & Zeller, 2012). The specific scales are shown in Annex 1.

3.3. Data analysis techniques

A structural equation modeling analysis has been applied to the collected data. SPSS 26 and EQS 6.2 software were used to test the measurement instrument and our hypotheses (See Table 1).

4. RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Measurement scales validation

Previously to the model testing, the psychometric properties of the measurement model were assessed (Table 3). After that, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the robust maximum likelihood test. Discriminant validity was assured through the pairs of factors variance-covariance matrix (matrix Φ) and their corresponding confidence intervals (Φ value + two standard errors) (Table 4). Fit indicators indicate a good fit [SRSR=0.04; RMSEA (90%)=0.04 (0.04; 0.05); TLI=0.98; CFI=0.98].

(Table 3 and Table 4)

4.2. Hypothesis testing of the global international model

After the CFA, the model was estimated using the robust maximum likelihood method. One more time, we obtained optimal fit index values [SRSR= 0.07; RMSEA (90%)=0.04(0.06; 0.07); TLI=0.97; CFI=0.98]. See Table 5.

(Table 5)

Table 5 shows that 8 of 9 hypotheses are accepted with a level of 1% of significance, reflecting t values above 2.56 (H2-H9). Just H1 is not supported.

These results confirm the connection and cohesion between the variable block of emotions, attitudes, and viral behaviors. Firstly, the influence of emotions in both attitudes (H2: $\beta=0.68^{**}$) and viral behaviors (H4: $\beta=0.18^{**}$) is verified. Secondly, the impact of attitudes on viral behaviors is noted (H5: $\beta=0.15^{**}$ & H6: $\beta=0.49^{**}$). And thirdly, the internal cohesion of blocks of attitudinal (H3: $\beta=0.62^{**}$) and viral behavior variables (H7: $\beta=0.61^{**}$, H8: $\beta=0.38^{**}$ & H9: $\beta=0.30^{**}$) is proven.

4.3. Hypothesis testing of the *cross-cultural* multi-sample model: Spanish, Ecuadorian and British internet users

The sample was divided into four cultural groups: 465 Spanish, 572 Ecuadorian, and 195 British respondents. Firstly, we verified the same nine hypotheses for each sub-sample independently, and we accepted the same 8 of the 9 hypotheses (H2-H9). Once again, H1 is not supported in the three sub-samples. See Table 6.

Secondly, we verified the existence of significant differences between the three sub-samples by applying the Lagrange multiplier test (Lmtest). We obtain the Chi-square statistic of the differences between groups for each pair of sub-samples (Spain-Ecuador, Spain-UK, and Ecuador-UK).

On the one hand, results determine that cultural differences are partially observed in the hypothesized way in two cases. This evidence that cultural adaptation of an advertising stimuli helps to increase its efficacy (Orth et al., 2007).

- Firstly, emotions aroused by the ad cause a more significant impression on the attitude towards the ad in high-context cultures than in low-context cultures (H2b). This relationship is significantly stronger when comparing the pairs of cultures Ecuador-Spain and Ecuador-UK [$P(X^2 \text{ diff.}) < .05^*$]. No significant differences were detected between Spain and the UK [$P(X^2 \text{ diff.}) < .05 \text{ n.s.}$], which indicates that both cultures behave in an equally individualistic way. Therefore, we partially accept H2b.
- Secondly, eWOM about the cause is more influential than brand eWOM in the case of high-context cultures in comparison to low-context ones (H7b). This relationship is significantly stronger when comparing the pairs of cultures Spain-UK and Ecuador-UK [$P(X^2 \text{ diff.}) < .05^*$]. However, the comparison Ecuador-Spain is an exception since the hypothesis is accomplished opposite to expected, leading to its rejection. In this case, it would be convenient to analyze whether this could be caused by a low collective cultural awareness of the selected social cause. Consequently, we can partially accept H7b.

On the other hand, no significant differences have been identified as hypothesized in six cases (H3b, H4b, H5b, H6b, H8b, and H9b). These results favor cause-related marketing international standardization (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002; Zou & Volz, 2010). Notice that H9b could be considered an exception requiring more profound analysis in future research. The intention to express cause eWOM influences differently the cause eWOM intention (H9b) depending on cultures [$P(X^2 \text{ diff.}) < .05^*$]. However, the effect seems more significant in individualistic or low-context cultures, opposite to what was expected. Consequently, H9b is rejected. This result could reflect a decrease in cause-related marketing efficacy in attitudinal terms (Buford & Daniels, 2012). However, it may not be generalized to online contexts such as eWOM in social networks.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. GLOBAL INTERNATIONAL STUDY

The results of the global international study let us conclude:

1. The emotions produced by a cause-related viral video directly and positively influence the audience's attitudes by improving their attitude toward the ad. The direct influence of emotions on attitudes is appreciated through a double path: brand-cause alliance attitudes and advertisement attitudes.
2. The solid attitudinal constructs connection is observed in the positive and direct influence the ad attitude has on the brand-cause alliance attitude.
3. Emotions impact positively and directly viral behaviors via ad-sharing intention (Hsieh et al., 2012; Rubenking, 2019). And in the case of a cause-related claim in video format, our study shows that disseminating an image of a social cause supporter is essential for viral spreading (Buford & Daniels, 2012).
4. Brand-cause alliance attitudes and ad attitudes positively and directly influence viral behaviors via ad-sharing intention.
5. There is a strong connection between viral behaviors. Firstly, there is a positive and direct influence of the ad-sharing intention on cause and brand eWOM intentions. And secondly, there is a direct positive effect of cause eWOM intention on brand eWOM intention.

From these findings, it is extracted as the first managerial implication the convenience of including emotional appeals in social network cause-related advertising because this will produce more significant positive attitudes and encourage viral behaviors.

5.2. CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

The findings of the cross-cultural study indicate:

1. Culture could moderate the emotional reaction to viral advertising in some cases. On the one hand, a high emotional ad-sharing intention will be homogeneous between cultures. On the other hand, the link between emotion and ad attitude varies culturally, being greater in collectivist than in individualist cultures.

2. Attitudes towards cause-related marketing are pretty universal. And as a result, attitudinal effects are culturally homogeneous as well. This favors the international standardization of brand campaigns with social appeals (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002; Zou & Volz, 2010).
3. The intention to viralize an advertisement may differ between collectivist and individualistic cultures. However, significant differences are not always appreciated when considering online cause-related marketing ads.

These findings show that adapting international cause-related advertising campaigns to the local culture could have benefits. However, adapting an international campaign to each country can be expensive. Therefore, brands should find a balance between adaptation and standardization.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research opportunities appear when considering the major limitations of this research. Firstly, although using a single version of the stimulus is useful to increase the external validity (Alexander, 2009), it reduces the opportunity to extrapolate these findings to other industries and geographical areas. Consequently, future studies could include different causes, brands, industries, and cultures.

Secondly, a generic social cause is defended in the selected stimuli. Future studies could analyze alliances between private and public organizations, including several brands and charities.

Thirdly, the experimental stimulus of this study consists of an online video (Buford & Daniels, 2012). Future research could consider new audio-visual formats.

And finally, the results have highlighted certain inconsistencies that may be due to the impact of uncontrolled variables such as familiarity or cause and brand involvement (Lafferty *et al.*, 2004 and 2009). Accordingly, future studies should analyze the moderating effects of involvement (Bigné *et al.*, 2010), familiarity (Lafferty *et al.*, 2004), age (Mora & Vila, 2020), or gender (Fisher & Dubé, 2005).

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Figure 1. Theoretical model and hypothesis.

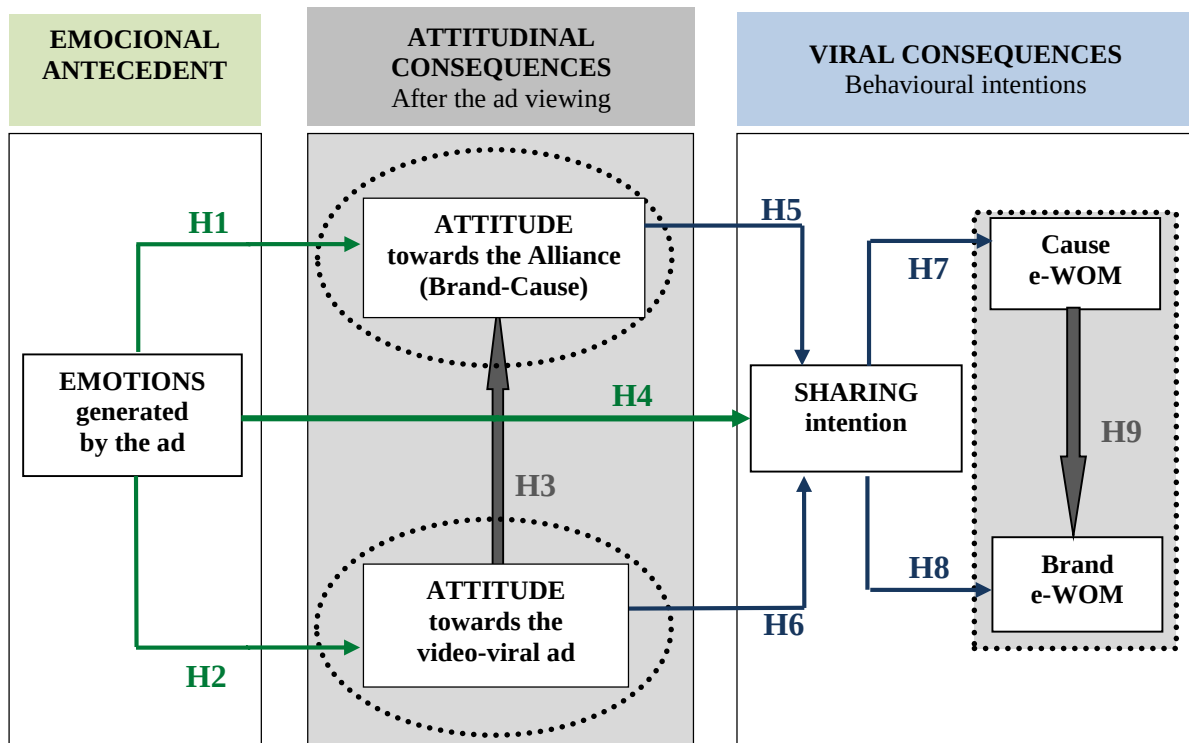


Table 1. Sample and method

COUNTRY	SPAIN	UNITED KINGDOM	ECUADOR
Language	Spanish	English	Latin Spanish
Sample size (n=1232)	465 internet users	195 internet users	572 internet users
Sampling method	Convenience sample Non-probabilistic sampling method		
	8 animal shelters spread the survey	Mechanical Turk platform	University students
Experimental Stimuli	Cause-related marketing video Spot belonging to the campaign 'Tenemos que hablar' Brand: Pedigree; Cause: Dogs adoption		
	Audio: Latin Spanish	Latin Spanish *Subtitles: English	Audio: Latin Spanish
Data analysis	<u>Software</u> : SPSS 26, EQS 6.2 <u>Analysis</u> : (I) CFA (II) SME (III) Multi-sample analysis		
Estimation method	Robust maximum likelihood. Fit indicators: X^2 , SRMR, RMSEA, CFI y TLI.		

Table 2. Sociodemographic sample profile

MULTICULTURAL	n=1232 respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
Previous experience with CAUSE	Adopter	601	48.78%
	Know any adopter	496	40.26%
	Has not adopted or knows	135	10.96%
Previous experience with BRAND	Knows and buyer	678	55%
	Knows but non buyer	554	45%
GENDER	Male	391	31.74%
	Female	841	68.26%
SD			
AGE	Average 28 years old		11.74

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis

FACTOR	Indicator	Load	t robust	CR	AVE
F1 Emotions aroused by the ad	EMO1	0.84**	31.97	0.94	0.74
	EMO2	0.91**	38.85		
	EMO3	0.92**	37.71		
	EMO4	0.80**	35.17		
	EMO5	0.87**	36.70		
	EMO6	0.80**	32.22		
F2 Attitude towards the brand- cause alliance	ATT.AL1	0.92**	31.44	0.97	0.89
	ATT.AL2	0.97**	36.18		
	ATT.ALI3	0.96**	35.88		
	ATT.ALI4	0.93**	32.84		
F3 Attitude towards the ad	ATT.A1	0.92**	31.22	0.96	0.87
	ATT.A2	0.96**	36.19		
	ATT.A3	0.95**	35.20		
	ATT.A4	0.91**	31.91		
F4 Ad sharing intention	SHI1	0.95**	40.20	0.96	0.90
	SHI2	0.97**	42.14		
	SHI3	0.92**	42.26		
F5 Intention to eWOM about the cause	eWOM.C1	0.90**	29.83	0.95	0.86
	eWOM.C2	0.93**	33.48		
	eWOM.C3	0.95**	36.54		
F6 Intention to eWOM about the brand	eWOM.B1	0.87**	43.95	0.95	0.87
	eWOM.B2	0.98**	60.57		
	eWOM.B3	0.96**	56.98		

S-B $\chi^2(215) = 673.79$ $P = 0.00$; **SRMR = 0.04**; **RMSEA (90%) = 0.04** (0.04; 0.05); **CFI = 0.98**; **TLI = 0.98**

* $P < 0,05$ ** $P < 0,01$ **CR** = Composite Reliability; **AVE** = Average Variance Extracted.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	0.74	[0.40-0.52]	[0.64-0.73]	[0.52-0.62]	[0.44-0.55]	[0.30-0.42]
F2	0.21	0.89	[0.59-0.70]	[0.48-0.59]	[0.33-0.46]	[0.41-0.51]
F3	0.47	0.41	0.87	[0.66-0.74]	[0.43-0.55]	[0.34-0.44]
F4	0.33	0.29	0.49	0.90	[0.55-0.65]	[0.51-0.60]
F5	0.25	0.16	0.24	0.36	0.86	[0.48-0.57]
F6	0.13	0.21	0.15	0.31	0.28	0.87

1. Diagonal: AVE, Average Variance Extracted; 2. Above the diagonal: confidence interval for interfactor correlation; 3. Below the diagonal: estimated inter factor squared correlation.

Table 5. Global international model testing

HYPOTHESIS		β Standard	t robust
X			
	H1: Emotions ad→Attitude alliance B-C	0.03n.s.	0.87
√	H2: Emotions ad→Attitude ad	0.68**	21.35
√	H3: Attitude ad→Attitude alliance B-C	0.62**	13.70
√	H4: Emotions ad→Sharing Intention	0.18**	4.91
√	H5: Attitude alliance B-C→Sharing Intention	0.15**	4.31
√	H6: Attitude ad→Sharing Intention	0.49**	11.58
√	H7: Sharing Intention→eWOM Cause	0.61**	16.54
√	H8: Sharing Intention→eWOM Brand	0.38**	10.83
√	H9: eWOM Cause→eWOM Brand	0.30**	9.06

S-B.X² (221)= 1571 P = 0.00; **SRMR** = **0.07**; **RMSEA** (90%)= **0.04** (0.06; 0.07); **CFI** = **0.98**; **TLI** = **0.97**

* P < 0.05 ** P < 0.01

Table 6. Cross-cultural moderation: Spanish, Ecuadorian and British internet users

		Gr. 1-2 Gr. 1-3 Gr. 2-3		Grup 1: Spain (N=465)	Grup 2: Ecuador (N=572)	Grup 3: Britain (N=195)
HYPOTHESIS		χ^2 Diff.	t Robust	Stand. β	Stand. β	Stand. β
H1b: Emotions→Attitude alliance			1.72	0.06 n.s.	0.07 n.s.	0.07 n.s.
X	(Spain=Ecuador)	0.99 n.s.				
X	(Spain=Britain)	2.56 n.s.				
X	(Ecuador=Britain)	0.09 n.s.				
H2b: Emotions→Attitude ad			21.60	0.699***	0.703***	0.67***
√	(Spain<Ecuador)**	8.19**				
X	(Spain=Britain)	1.74 n.s.				
√	(Ecuador>Britain)*	4.24*				
H3b: Attitude ad→Attitude alliance			13.34	0.56***	0.61***	0.69***
X	(Spain=Ecuador)	1.80 n.s.				
X	(Spain=Britain)	2.97 n.s.				
X	(Ecuador=Britain)	0.04 n.s.				
H4b: Emotions→Sharing Int.			3.17	0.10***	0.11***	0.09***
X	(Spain=Ecuador)	3.34 n.s.				
X	(Spain=Britain)	0.06 n.s.				
X	(Ecuador=Britain)	2.94 n.s.				
H5b: Attitude Alliance→Sharing Int.			4.84	0.16***	0.16***	0.12***
X	(Spain=Ecuador)	0.00 n.s.				
X	(Spain=Britain)	0.04 n.s.				
X	(Ecuador=Britain)	0.00 n.s.				
H6b: Attitude ad→Sharing Int.			13.98	0.54***	0.57***	0.47***
X	(Spain=Ecuador)	3.21 n.s.				
X	(Spain=Britain)	0.57 n.s.				
X	(Ecuador=Britain)	2.05 n.s.				
H7b: Sharing Int.→eWOM cause			14.79	0.582***	0.578***	0.53***
X	(Spain>Ecuador)* <i>*opposite to hypothesised</i>	4.48*				
√	(Spain>Britain)*	4.10*				
√	(Ecuador>Britain)**	10.29**				
H8b: Sharing Int.→eWOM brand			11.20	0.35***	0.36***	0.42***
X	(Spain=Ecuador)	0.16 n.s.				
X	(Spain=Britain)	2.26 n.s.				
X	(Ecuador=Britain)	3.41 n.s.				
H9b: eWOM Causa→eWOM Marca			11.09	0.32***	0.34***	0.43***

X	(Spain=Ecuador)	0.27 n.s.				
X	(Spain<Britain)* <i>*opposite to hypothesised</i>	3.87*				
X	(Ecuador<Britain)** <i>*opposite to hypothesised</i>	8.38**				

Differences among groups: * P < 0.05 ** P < 0.01

ANNEX I. Measurement scales

Items	Authors
(I) Emotions towards the ad	
Pleasure sub-scale (PAD) 1) Unhappy-happy 2) Annoyed-pleased 3) Dissatisfied-satisfied 4) Melancholic-sontented 5) Despairing-hopeful 6) Boring-relaxed	Mehrabian&Russell, 1974 Fisher&Dubé, 2005
(II) Attitudes: ad/brand-cause alliance	
1) Good-bad 2) Like-dislike 3) Favorable-unfavorable 4) Positive-negative	Coulter&Punj, 2004 Nan&Heo, 2007 Eckler & Bolls, 2011
(III) Sharing Intention: ad	
1) I think it's worth sharing this video with others 2) I would recommend this video to others 3) I would share this video with my friends through the Internet	Chiu et al., 2007 Hsieh et al., 2012
(IV) eWOM intention: brand/cause	
1) Likely of saying positive things 2) Likely of encouraging friend and relatives 3) To recommend to others	Zeithaml <i>et al.</i> , 1996 Eisingerich <i>et al.</i> , 2015