

Developing successful cause-related marketing campaigns through social-networks

The moderating role of users' age.

Abstract

This paper joins two streams of literature: caused-related marketing and viral advertising. Three main objectives guide our work: (i) to test whether a transfer of attitudes occurs in a viral cause-related marketing campaign (ii) to test the effectiveness of viral videos promoting a social cause (intention to share through social networks); (iii) to analyze the moderating role of users' age. An investigation was done with 431 netizens who expressed their opinions in a questionnaire after viewing an online cause-related video about dog adoption sponsored by a pet food brand. Our results show that previous attitudes towards viral adds will improve cause-brand alliance attitudes (H1) and brand attitudes (H3). Also, cause-brand alliance attitudes will improve brand attitudes (H2). The intention to share cause-related viral videos will increase when positive attitudes exist for the add (H5), the brand (H5) and the alliance (H6). Finally, age differences affect the strength of the relationships in 3 of the cases.

Key words:

Attitudes, Cause marketing, Intention to share, Pets, Viral videos,

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, companies are forced to develop their activity in complex markets saturated by competing brands, where the possibilities to be different based on traditional attributes is declining (Marin and Ruiz, 2007). In this scenario, more firms are searching for an association with symbolic values like altruism or citizenship to reach a better place in consumers' minds (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Maybe for this reason, cause-related marketing has been postulated in recent years as the preferred brand strategy to establish long-term differentiation and add value (Nan and Heo, 2007). In terms of Ahluwalia and Bedi, (2015, p. 178) "simply providing quality products or services does not suffice in today's competitive business environment to win and establish the brand". Most of the companies are using Cause Related Marketing as a strategic tool to build a positive corporate brand image in the minds of consumers (Ahluwalia and Bedi, 2015).

Moreover, excessive exposure to corporate messages has generated negative and evasive attitudes towards advertising in general (Tsang et al., 2004). Maybe for this reason, "cause-related marketing has evolved from its modest beginnings as a short-term sales promotion strategy in 1983 (i.e. with every purchase made with the card and for every new member that joined American Express, a donation was made to the Statue of Liberty Restoration project), to the use of more sophisticated communication tools to involve consumers' and make them aware of a social cause (Lafferty, Lueth and McCafferty, 2016). As these authors explain Communication Theory (Lasswell, 1949) and Integration Information Theory (Anderson, 1971) provide theoretical support to understand the Evolutionary Process Model of Cause-Related marketing strategy. In this scene, the advertising industry is investigating nowadays new channels of

communication to reach the audiences based on new technologies at the expense of (or complementing) traditional advertising media.

On one side, in spite of its tremendous growth from a practical approach, cause-related marketing has received limited attention among academics. Literature in business excellence needs to progress, for example, investigating how cause-related marketing affects persuasion (Berger et al., 1999) and permits other advances (Lafferty and Edmondson, 2009; Moosmayer and Fuljahn, 2010). On another side, despite the increase importance of viral advertising, the key factors of its effectiveness (Godes et al., 2005) and its possibilities to promote social causes remain largely unknown. To fill both gaps, empirical research is needed to study the link between cause-related viral messages and intention of sharing (Hsieh et al., 2012).

Then, our starting point is based on the idea that emotions play a key role in viral behavior, because “the more intensely viewers experience the emotions, the more likely they are to share the viral message” (Botha and Reyneke, 2013, p. 168). Indeed successful cause-related marketing campaigns are those that consumers support based on moral emotions and no on personal benefit (Kim and Johnson, 2013). So, if a cause-related marketing campaign stirs emotions and viral activity increases when emotions are stirred, the link between cause-related marketing and viral adds is expected to prosper. Even more, as Ho and and Dempsey (2010) have remarked, factors critical to viral marketing effectiveness remain largely unknown to both marketing academics and practitioners despite the increasing shift of advertising spending to viral marketing. In this vein, literature has not paid much attention to the effect of consumer demographic characteristics (Bigné-Alcañiz, Currás-Pérez and Sánchez-García, 2009). Thus, factors

such as social network users' age should be studied to better understand the effectiveness of this communication channel to promote a social cause.

Based in these premises, the present research aims to reach three main objectives: (i) to test whether a transfer of attitudes occurs in a viral cause-related marketing campaign: from pre-exposure attitudes (towards the media and the cause-brand alliance), to post-exposure attitudes (towards the sponsoring brand); (ii) to test the effectiveness of viral videos promoting a cause in terms of users' behaviours (intention to share through social networks); (iii) to analyse if cause related marketing campaigns based on viral adds work better for young social-network users' or for adult ones. To this end, we carried on an investigation based on the opinions of 431 netizens (223 young and 208 adults) who expressed their opinions in a questionnaire after viewing an online cause-related video about dog adoption sponsored by a pet food brand. Eight animal shelters have helped to spread the survey link and the ad on their Facebook walls.

Our results add four main contributions to scientific knowledge. First, the integration of two research areas that have frequently been studied separately: cause-related marketing and viral video advertising. Indeed, previous research on cause-related marketing has traditionally worked with textual descriptions or printed stimuli (e.g. ; Lafferty et al., 2004; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006 and Nan and Heo, 2007), and viral video advertising research has not paid so much attention to cause-related marketing campaigns (For example: Eckler and Bolls, 2011; Hsieh et al, 2012; Huang et al., 2013). To join both streams of literature, a reference model was borrowed from each of them: the Lafferty et al. (2004) attitudinal model developed to explain cause-related marketing effects and the Huang et al. (2013) attitudinal model use to explain the effectiveness of viral

advertising. Based on both proposals and integrative model was specified. Second, a real viral video, promoting a real cause with a real brand, were used in this study. Previous research has worked almost exclusively with fictitious names and/or with manipulated messages (For example: Berger et al., 1999; Bigné et al., 2009; Lafferty et al., 2004). Third, the selected campaign in our study belongs to a sector usually forgotten by marketing researchers, since you can hardly find empirical works about marketing incentives for pet-related causes (Emmanuel et al., 2012). However, it is a sector with huge growth expectations for the coming years (Flaquer, 2012). Finally, previous studies have occasionally analysed the relevance of users' age to explain viral videos effectiveness (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr, 2010); and this kind of investigation is really scarce when viral videos promoting a social cause are considered.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Cause-related marketing and viral adds

In recent decades, the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has gradually increased among companies. Of the many paths that corporate social responsibility can follow, cause-related marketing seems a good option to link business benefits and social benefits, as far as it's based on a marketing campaign selling a commitment to collaborate with a social project.

The detailed revision of Brønn and Vrioni (2001) explains in what way companies use corporate social responsibility in their marketing communication activities, a practice known as cause-related marketing. So, a cause-related marketing strategy can be understood as how a firm communicates its corporate social responsibility through their advertising, packaging, promotions (Brønn and Vrioni (2001) and, recently, through

social media. Since now advertising has been the most important way to communicate social causes and brand associations among consumers. However, the abundant exposure to hundreds of brand messages through various formats and media has created negative attitudes towards advertising in general; leading the receiver to avoid mass messages using increasingly sophisticated ways (Tsang et al., 2004). However, some studies have shown that Internet advertising generates more positive attitudes in consumers than other media (Kim and McMillan, 2008; Chung-Hui Tseng Tseng-Lung Huang, 2016), which has encouraged companies to continue researching new ways to captivate their audiences and make them familiar with their social marketing concerns. In this scene, viral advertising through social networks is postulated as one of the most efficient ways to communicate with consumers, capable of influencing brand awareness and spreading its social responsibility (Chiu et al., 2007).

Combining the two lines of research exposed in the previous lines (cause-related marketing and viral advertising), our proposal will be based on an integrative model of both fields of study. We follow the stream of research of Martensen and Mouritsen (2016), using as starting point the shortage of works based on the joint study of Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) and marketing activities, with no attention to how these two processes simultaneously influence consumer responses. Specifically, in our work, two models have been borrowed from previous literature to support our mixed-proposal: (I) an attitudinal model developed by Lafferty et al. (2004) to investigate cause-related marketing effects and (II) an attitudinal model developed by Huang et al. (2013) to measure viral video advertising effectiveness. Their common denominator is their focus on attitudes. All of this complemented with the final impact on the behavioural intention to broadcast the video. Figure 1 represents our proposed model.

(Figure 1)

2.3.1. Increasing cause-brand alliance attitudes: the moderating role of users' age

The Associative Learning theory will be used to explain why positive attitudes for viral video ads will lead to positive attitudes towards the cause- brand alliance that uses this media. This theory has been used in the past to explain value improvements after establishing co-branding relationships. We can also find applications of this method in the advertising area, where co-branding is a growing phenomenon and the use of advertisements in which two brands are deliberately matched is recurrent (Grossman, 1997). It is also possible to find applications of associative learning in the cause- related marketing field (Till and Nowak, 2000). Associative learning has been described as the way consumers learn about relationships between elements of the environment through bonding different elements (Shimp et al., 1991).

From this perspective, cause-related marketing and advertising can create an associative link, in a way that a brand attitude can be enhanced thanks to its connection with a good cause (Till and Nowak, 2000). However, poorly performed matches can damage a positive image and create negative attitudes towards the sponsoring brand (Aaker, 1991). Several investigations have shown that consumers tend to favour brand association with social causes through CRM strategies (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005; Till and Nowak, 2000), improving their attitudes.

Attitudes have been a common topic of research in the advertising industry (Spears and Singh, 2004), and are still an interesting theme of research in emerging advertising media, as happened years ago with television (Huang et al, 2013; Porter and Golan,

2006). Attitudes measurement is also a very useful way in predicting consumer behaviour (Mitchell and Olson, 1981), as several theoretical frameworks taken from Psychology have demonstrated since years (Spears and Singh, 2004).

Specifically, online advertising is one of those new media that has undergone major changes over the last decade and, more specifically, the use of viral videos (Golan and Zaidner, 2008). Viral video advertising is mainly based on provocative and interesting contents which try to motivate the user to share for fun, entertainment and social connection (Phelps et al., 2004). A viral video fits into the context of a track marketing strategy, when advertisers want consumers to associate their brands with the good feelings aroused after experiencing the viral contents (Porter and Golan, 2006; Shukla, 2010). This fact justifies why surfers concentrate their attention more on video contents (Brown and Cox, 2009), being viral videos an adequate channel to promote social causes.

So, based on the Associative Learning theory, we can speak of a transfer from the interest in viral video ads, to the attitude toward the cause-brand alliance that is communicated using this media (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; Huang et al., 2013).

In addition, following the Self-Expansion Theory, we can appreciate that consumers communicate with and about brands due to overlapping identities and parasocial relationships with the brands (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Consequently, it's expected that if you like the media (viral videos) you will like the brands that use this media and, consequently, the cause-brand alliances which are promoted using this media.

This attitudes' transfer (from the media to the content of the message which is announced) will be stronger for adult consumers than for younger ones because older people has lived more, so that they have had more time to learn and make fluent associations as the Associate Learning Theory postulates (Huang et al., 2013). That's because consumers develop associations between a brand, brand attitudes, and brand benefits over time (Washburn, Till and Priluck, 2004).

So, it could be stated that:

H1a: Positive attitudes for viral videos lead to positive attitudes towards the cause- brand alliance that uses this media.

H1b: The relationship between attitudes for viral videos and attitudes towards the cause- brand alliance that uses this media will be stronger for the adult segment than for the young one.

2.3.2. Increasing brand attitudes: the moderating role of users' age

Two main theories can be used to explain why cause-brand alliances are used to improve brand attitudes.

On one side, the Impressions Management Theory, which supports that causes lacking self-interest, such as altruism, are expected to be better evaluated; unknown causes or self-interested causes would be less favourably evaluated; and finally selfish motives or those with a lot of self-interest would be much less favourably rated (Sallot, 2002). In short, this theory supports that heaving positive attitudes for a cause-brand alliance will lead to better attitudes towards the sponsoring brand. Inference making is common in marketing because advertisements provide only partial information for decision-making, thus requiring consumers to either consciously or unconsciously develop stimulus-based inferences about the brand (Minton and Cornwell, 2015).

On another side, the Theory of Integration, that supports that attitudes are not completely stable. They can be changed as new information is incorporated (Anderson, 1981). Based on this theory, it's expected that new information gained through viral video advertising will produce new attitudes for the alliance between the announced brand and the promoted cause (Lafferty et al., 2004), resulting, lastly, on brand attitudes' improvements. In sum, allying a cause with an appropriate brand improves attitudes towards the brand (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005).

Even more, this relationship (between a cause-related marketing campaign and brand acceptance) will be stronger among older people, because they are less concerned about social causes (Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle and Attmann, 2010), so their responses to cause-related marketing campaigns in terms of brand acceptance will be greater. That's because the inference making process (Minton and Cornwell, 2015) works better for older people. They are less spontaneous and they use their considerable knowledge and experience to compensate for the impact of any age-related changes (Yoon, Cole and Lee, 2009). So, cause-related marketing campaigns seem to be more useful for older people because this segment looks for more support to accommodate decision making process (Yoon, Cole and Lee, 2009). Older people needs more evidence to accept a brand and cause-related marketing campaigns could be a useful tool to get this.

So we could state that:

H2a: Positive attitudes for a cause-brand alliance lead to positive attitudes for the sponsoring brand.

H2b: The relationship between attitudes for a causa-brand alliance and attitudes for the sponsoring brand will be stronger for the adult segment than for the young one.

As mentioned previously, attitudes towards viral video advertisements significantly affect attitudes toward the object that is being promoted (Huang et al., 2013). In the specific case of cause-related marketing, the ad is promoting an alliance between a brand and a cause. So, viral ad attitudes will affect brand attitudes. This is due to the presence of a source effect deeply study from the The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). This stream of research, early developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1984, p. 668), supports that viewers that love the media (i.e. viral videos), will better accept what the media is announcing (sponsoring brand), because “people are neither universally thoughtful in evaluating persuasive messages nor universally mindless. Instead, a variety of individual and situational factors will determine how much cognitive effort a person devotes to processing a message”.

Even more, the source effect will be stronger for the older segment because this group looks for more support to accommodate decision making process (Yoon, Cole and Lee, 2009), as stated in previous lines. As these authors have remarked, within each age stage, there can be considerable differences in decision making abilities due to cohort effects or health history.

Then, the following this theory:

H3a: Positive attitudes for viral videos lead to positive attitudes for the sponsoring brand.

H3b: The relationship between attitudes for viral videos and attitudes for the sponsoring brand will be stronger for the adult segment than for the young one.

2.3.3. Increasing intention to share a viral add: the moderating influence of users; age

A stream of literature supports the power of attitudes to influence behavioural intentions (Tsang et al., 2004). In the field of viral marketing, the final porpoise is to promote the conduct of forwarding (Chiu et al., 2007). As Socializing Theories support, socialization is one of the gratifications that motivate individuals to use new technologies and to share news and information (Qing, Xuefeng and Shan, 2016).

Focusing on viral videos, the intention to share an specific viral video will be higher, first, if previous attitude toward viral videos is good (Chung-Hui Tseng Tseng-Lung Huang , 2016). Second, if consumers' like the brand, because sharing intention attains higher levels of sharing among brand lovers (Huang et al., 2013). Third, if consumers love the cause that this brand promotes, as the Gratification Theory postulates (Qing, Xuefeng and Shan, 2016). The relevance of these three factors to stimulate viral videos sharing intentions are really important because “cconsumers generally react positively to word-of-mouth recommendations by friends and acquaintances and perceive them as more reliable and trustworthy than advertising messages” (Liljander Gummerus and Söderlund , 2015, p. 613). Consequently, we formulate that to increase intention to share a viral video three factors can play an important role:

H4a: Positive attitudes for viral videos increase the intention to share a specific viral video.

H5a: Positive attitudes for a brand increase the intention to share a viral video concerning this brand.

H6a: Positive attitudes for a cause-brand alliance increase the intention to share a viral video concerning this cause-brand alliance.

In this point we cannot forget that age may be closely associated with social network users' tendency to pass along viral advertising (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 331); because "especially young individuals have moved online and the use of traditional media channels has declined". From this approach, Chu (2011, p. 34) has remarked that "young people engage in more mediated social interactions and are key targets for viral advertising campaigns". More specifically, this author concludes that college students (younger users) spend more time on the site daily than adults. The young segment has remained the age group that is most likely to go online. This group uses this media to connect with friends and they like sharing collective messages (self-created content, online like photos, videos, artwork or stories). They frequently join groups in social networks (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr, 2010). On the contrary, adults seem to spend less time on Internet, they are more averse to use social networks and share information that is published in this medium (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr, 2010). So, based on these premises we could hypothesized that:

H4b: Positive attitudes for viral videos increase the intention to share a specific viral video more among the young segment than among the adult one.

H5b: Positive attitudes for a brand increase the intention to share a specific viral video concerning this brand more among the young segment than among the adult one.

H6b: Positive attitudes for a cause-brand alliance increase the intention to share a specific viral video concerning this cause-brand more among the young segment than among the adult one.

2. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Stimuli, sample and data collection procedure

Following Chu (2011), we did an online interview to measure viral advertising in social media (in our study before and after the exposure to a viral video concerning a cause-brand alliance). Specifically, the selected stimulus was an ad from a pet food brand worried about pet adoption. This video belongs to a more extensive cause marketing campaign followed by the company to promote pet adoption. This spot was the winner at the International Festival of Creative Advertising Cannes Lions 2014. In addition, the video has been viewed more than 16,900 times on YouTube and shared more than 4,900 times through Facebook. Consequently, we consider it a really good example of cause marketing viral video commercials.

The online survey has been aimed at people of all ages, living in Spain. We used a snowball non-probability sampling procedure. Eight animal shelters have helped to spread the survey link on their Facebook walls, encouraged with the incentive of winning a donation in a prize draw among the participating organizations: Modepran Valencia, Felcan, SOS Sagunto, SPAB Burjassot, Apradec Turis, Podencos and more, Small Legs Action and Love Animals and Respect Them. From the total of 458 questionnaires collected, 27 were removed in order to exclude respondents who didn't know any dog adopters. Lastly, the final sample was formed for 431 respondents both being dog adopters and knowing any dog adopters (223 young and 208 adults). Table 1

shows the technical specifications of the research. In short, table 2 shows the sociodemographic profile of the sample (Table 2).

(Table 1 and Table 2)

3.2. Variables

The specific scales used in our study can be shown in Annex 1.

- Attitudes towards an ad (viral video), a cause-brand alliance and a brand were measured using 7-point Likert scales with four semantic differential items each: good-bad, positive-negative, favourable-unfavourable, I like-I do not like (Coulter and Punj, 2007; Nan and Heo, 2007). The suitability of this scale to measure brand attitudes after viewing a viral advertising stimulus is supported by previous research (Eckler and Bolls, 2011). In this study, we have extended its application to measure attitudes toward the ad and the alliance (Annexe 1).
- The intention to share the spot was also measured using a 7-point Likert scale with three items (Chiu et al., 2007), as Annex 1 shows.

3.3. Data analysis techniques

For validating the measuring instrument and to test our hypothesis we use SPSS 19 and EQS 6.2 software.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Scales validation

Before testing the proposed model, the measurement model's psychometric properties were evaluated (table 3). Then, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed using the robust maximum likelihood method. Several changes were introduced following various

criteria to improve the initial measurement model (Table 3). To demonstrate discriminant validity, we analysed the variance–covariance matrix between pairs of factors (matrix Φ) and their corresponding confidence intervals (Φ value + two standard errors) (Table 4). Adjustment indices allow us to speak of a good fit [SRMR = 0.03; CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.94].

(Table 3 and Table 4)

4.2 Hypotheses testing of the global model

As we did in the Factorial Confirmatory Analysis (CFA), the model was estimated using the robust maximum likelihood method. Again we observe optimal values for the adjustment indexes [SRMR = 0.03; CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.94]. See Table 5.

(Table 5)

Our results in table 5 show that all hypotheses can be accepted at a 1% significance, which is reflected with t values above 2.56 in all cases.

First, we have verified that positive attitudes towards viral ads lead to positive attitudes towards cause-brand alliances employing this media, so H1 can be accepted. Therefore, a better attitude toward viral advertising will lead to a better perception of the cause-brand alliance (Huang et al., 2013; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). This is the strongest relationship identified in our model ($\beta = 0.58$). So, viral advertising is useful channel to consolidate a brand when a cause-brand alliance is promoted using this media.

Second, it is confirmed that a good attitude toward the cause-brand alliance helps to improve post-exposure brand attitudes (after viewing the virtual campaign), accepting

H2 ($\beta = 0.40$). Therefore, post-exposure attitudes towards the brand will be higher when partnered with an appropriate cause (Lafferty et al., 2004), because if the alliance is accepted, the brand will be strengthened. So, cause-related marketing campaigns help to stimulate brand acceptance.

Third, it is also confirmed a brand used in viral videos will be strengthened if previous attitudes towards viral video ads are favourable, so H3 must be accepted. These results are in line with the findings of Huang et al. (2013) which also demonstrated that the attitude towards a viral ad significantly affects the attitude towards the sponsoring brand that uses this media of its marketing purposes. However, the value of coefficient β is somewhat lower than in the previous hypothesis ($\beta = 0.27^{**}$). Therefore, according to these results, it can be said that to consolidate a brand, the relevance of choosing a suitable cause is stronger than the media employed for disseminating it. More specifically, in our study, the association of an animal's food brand with the cause of pet adoption plays a more important role than using a viral video ad format to communicate it.

Lastly, results demonstrate that attitudes towards a viral ad positively influences the intention of sharing the announcement, accepting H4 ($\beta = 0.50^{**}$). That is, if you like to see viral video ads, you will share more videos than if you do not like this media, as previous authors have demonstrated (Huang et al., 2013). Also the intention to share viral ads will be greater as surfers' attitudes, both towards the brand being advertised and towards the alliance, improve. So, H5 ($\beta = 0.13^{**}$) and H6 ($\beta = 0.22^{**}$) should also be accepted. In sum, our data demonstrates that three key factors play an active role in predicting the success of a cause-related marketing campaign in terms of sharing

intentions: pre-exposure viral videos attitudes, cause-brand attitudes and post-exposure brand attitudes.

4.3 Hypotheses testing of the multi sample model: young users' versus adult users'.

The sample was divided into two similar size groups by using the median value (35 years old) in order to analyze age differences. As a result we obtained a first sub-group of 223 young people until 35 years old and a second sub-group formed by 208 adults over 35 years old. Firstly, we tested the same six hypotheses for each sub-group separately, and we obtained that all the hypotheses were accepted for both sub-samples: young and adults. See Table 6.

Secondly, we tested the significant differences between the parameters in both sub-groups, using the Lagrange multiplier test (Lmtest). Our results demonstrate that age differences can be observed in three cases:

- Previous attitudes toward viral ads cause a greater impression to promote cause-brand alliances among adults than among young users': $\beta_{(young)} = 0,56 < \beta_{(adults)} = 0,65$. Thus, **H1a** should be accepted as the Associative Learning Theory postulates.
- In the second instance, when sharing intentions were observed, results show that young users' will share viral videos more than adult users' when positive attitudes towards the alliance exist. So, **H6b** should be accepted: $\beta_{(young)} = 0,23 > \beta_{(adults)} = 0,22$ (Table 6). On the contrary the effect of viral adds attitudes on sharing intention is significantly stronger among adults users: $\beta_{(young)} = 0,14 < \beta_{(adults)} = 0,15$. So, **H4b** should be rejected, because we had hypothesized just the opposite: young people would share viral videos more if the media (viral

ads) is accepted. This may be because in our sample all young users already accept the media (viral videos), so the effect is greater in those adults who have begun to accept it.

For the rest of hypotheses, no significant differences have been obtained between young users' and adult users. So, **H2b**, **H3b** and **H5b** should be also rejected. These results are aligned with Cui, Trent, Sullivan and Matiru (2003) proposal, supporting that there is no relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics (age in our study) and the acceptance of a cause-related marketing campaign. Age did not have a significant effect on respondents' evaluations concerning these three hypotheses.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study support some brand benefits related to the use of viral marketing to promote social causes.

First, our evidence allows us to suggest a main theoretical implication: viral advertising attitudinal model (Lafferty et al. (2004) and cause-related attitudinal model (Lafferty et al. 2004) can be integrated in a successful way. From a business perspective, this leads us to recommend brand managers to use social networks to make viral videos to spread a cause-related marketing campaign. Although Nan and Heo (2007) obtained that for participants with low brand consciousness, brand/cause fit had no impact on either ad or brand evaluations, a common approach is that the promoted cause should be coherent with the sector to which the brand belongs (Emmanuel, 2012). That's because "in cause-related marketing as well as the endorsement literature, similarity between a

product and a cause is important and results in improved attitudes” (Minton and Cornwell, 2015). This has been case in our studied campaign: a brand of dog food that promotes pet adoption.

Second, the transference of attitudes from a marketing communicating tool (social networks) to a brand has been probed in this study, as the Theory of Integration postulates (Anderson, 1981). So, we would recommend firms to develop viral videos to be spread on social networks to strengthen the brand. Therefore, brands from industries like ours (pet industry) could take advantage of viral marketing connecting with that part of the Internet audience familiar with new technologies and who appreciate viral videos. So, social marketing campaigns should be designed to increase consumers’ responses. Some emotional elements could be included in a viral video to incentivize sharing intentions (Guerreiro, and Trigueiros, 2015). In short, following Castells (2007 p. 248), we conclude that the medium (social networks) does not determine the content and effect of its messages. “But it makes possible the unlimited diversity and the largely autonomous origin of most of the communication flows that construct, and reconstruct every second the global and local production of meaning in the public mind”. Thanks to the medium, a brand can reach success.

Third, our results support the postulations of the Socializing Theories (Qing, Xuefeng and Shan, 2016), as far as the intention to share cause marketing viral videos through social networks will increase when positive attitudes exist for viral ads, for the cause-brand alliance and for the sponsoring brand. So, from a practical approach, companies should: (i) take advantages of the opportunities offered by new technologies, spreading viral videos through their social networks, their website or their YouTube channels; (ii)

choose the causes in a consistent way, that is, looking for a good fit with the brand to reach the audience in the best manner, because our findings provide insight for inference making from the cause-brand alliance to the sponsoring brand (Minton and Cornwell, 2015).; (iii) to build a strong brand prior to launching a cause marketing campaign, developing a true corporate social responsibility that goes beyond an isolated cause-related ad (Nan and Heo, 2007). By contrast, a brand with little virtual presence, that chooses inconsistent causes or is disconnected from the target, with poor attachment among consumers, will probably take less advantage of this marketing tool.

Even more, communication managers should know that when sending viral messages through social networks, it is crucial to consider age users' differences (Chu, 20011). On one side, using Facebook to promote effective viral advertising campaigns about cause-related marketing will be more recommendable for young users than for adult ones, because young users' intention to share is significantly stronger than adult users' once they have accepted the cause-brand alliance. On another side, cause-related marketing campaigns based on viral ads can also work for the adult segment. In this case, getting adult users to accept the medium (viral advertising) is a pre-requisite for getting the cause-brand alliance accepted, as our results have demonstrated. In short, following Minton and Cornwell (2015, p. 23), we conclude that cause-related marketing is pervasive across individual difference variables, although the way in which it is applied must consider the specificities of each segment, such as the habit to use a certain medium.

In addition, based on Internet effectiveness and cost, we would recommend viral videos to promote social causes to all types of businesses and not just large companies with

powerful marketing departments and exorbitant advertising budgets, especially focused to young consumers.

To conclude, in line with Martensen and Mouritsen (2016, p. 927), this paper supports the addition of P-WOM as a fifth P in the marketing mix, “so the different marketing activities’ effect can be amplified by the power of WOM and brands can be created as much out of PWOM as out of marketing activities”.

The four main inherent limitations of this study present future research opportunities. First, there are restrictions on the generalization of the study results because a single stimulus (just one brand) and a specific cause in a particular sector were used. Therefore we would recommend completing the model with a wider range of brands, causes and sectors. Second, we used a non-probability sampling snowball method, which can make the sample unrepresentative. And third, this study focuses on a type of generic cause marketing without attribution to any particular association. Future research could analyse possible collaborations between specific organizations of different types: private and public (Nan and Heo, 2007b); or involving more than two subjects: a brand with multiple causes or several brands that share the same cause (Lafferty et al., 2004).

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Tabla 1. Sample and method

Kind of research	Quantitative Research
Method	Online questionare
Stimuli	Spot belonging to the campaign “Tenemos que hablar” Brand: <i>Pedigree</i> Cause: Dogs adoption
Sample size	431persons.
Kind of sample	Sampling procedure: non probabilistic snowball. 8 animal welfare agree to help spreading the questionnaire: Modepran Valencia, Felcan, SOS Sagunto, SPAB Burjassot, Apradec Turis, Podencos and more, Small Legs Action and Love Animals and Respect Them.
Data	From 21 th of July 2015 to 21 st of August 2015.
Data analysis	<u>Software</u> : SPSS, EQS <u>Techniques</u> : Confirmatory Factor Analysis Structural Equation Modeling Multi-sample analysis

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2: Sociodemographic sample profile

		Frecuencias	Percentages
Current user of social networks	Yes	388	90%
	No	43	10%
Involvement with dogs adoption	He/she has adopted	305	71%
	Knows some adopter	126	29%
Age distribution	<u>Average</u> 36	<u>By Intervals</u>	
		Up to 30	164
		31-40	171
		40 & above	96
			38%
			40%
			22%
Gender	Men	58	14%
	Women	373	86%
Studies	Basics	40	9%
	Profesional Formation	79	18%
	Bachelor	70	16%
	University	186	43%
	Postgraduate	56	13%
		Frecuencias	Percentages
Current user of social networks	Yes	408	89,1%
	No	50	10,9%

Source: Own elaboration base on the questionnaire

Table 3: Confirmatory factor analysis

FACTOR	Indicator	Load	t	CR	V.A.
F1 Cause-brand alliance attitude	ACT.ALI1	0,93**	25,45	0,97	0,91
	ACT.ALI2	0,98**	28,20		
	ACT.ALI3	0,98**	28,22		
	ACT.ALI4	0,92**	24,87		
F2 Viral video ad attitude	ACT.A1	0,91**	24,71	0,96	0,87
	ACT.A2	0,98**	27,93		
	ACT.A3	0,97**	27,25		
	ACT.A4	0,88**	23,03		
F3 Brand attitude	ACT.MA1	0,95**	26,39	0,98	0,93
	ACT.MA2	0,99**	28,92		
	ACT.MA3	0,98**	28,34		
	ACT.MA4	0,94**	26,19		
F4 Intention to share the add	ICOMP1	0,97**	27,43	0,97	0,92
	ICOMP2	0,96**	26,74		
	ICOMP3	0,95**	26,60		

$X^2(84) = 650,89$ $P < 0,05$; CFI = 0,95; TLI = 0,94; SRMR = 0,03

* $P < 0,05$ ** $P < 0,01$

Table 4: Discriminant validity

	F1	F2	F3	F4
F1	0,91	[0,51-0,65]	[0,49-0,63]	[0,49-0,63]
F2	0,34	0,87	[0,43-0,57]	[0,60-0,72]
F3	0,31	0,25	0,93	[0,40-0,56]
F4	0,31	0,44	0,23	0,92

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

Table 5: Global model testing

HYPOTHESES		β STANDARDIZED	t
✓	H1a: Ad attitude → Alliance attitude	0,58**	12,63
✓	H2a: Alliance attitude → Brand attitude	0,40**	8,00
✓	H3a: Ad attitude → Brand attitude	0,27**	5,45
✓	H4a: Ad attitude → Intention to share	0,50**	9,47
✓	H5a: Brand attitude → Intention to share	0,13**	2,87
✓	H6a: Alliance attitude → Intention to share	0,22**	4,44

* P < 0,05 ** P < 0,01. χ^2 (84)= 650,89 P < 0,05. CFI = 0,95. TLI = 0,94. SRMR = 0,03

Table 6: Moderating effect of age: Young users versus adult users.

HYPOTHESES			Young ≤ 35	Adults >35	
χ^2 (Differences)			Standardi β	Standar d β	T Robust
✓	4,41**	H1b: Ad attitude → Alliance attitude (Adults > Young)	0,56**	0,65**	13,17
X	0,45	H2b: Alliance attitude → Brand attitude (Adults > Young)	0,41**	0,37**	7,82
X	1,76	H3b: Ad attitude → Brand attitude (Adults > Young)	0,27**	0,28**	5,55
✓	3,26**	H4b: Ad attitude → Intention to share (Young > Adults)	0,42**	0,48**	9,16
X	0,03	H5b: Brand attitude → Intention to share (Young > Adults)	0,13**	0,15**	3,20
✓	2,29*	H6b: Alliance attitude → Intention share (Young > Adults)	0,23**	0,22 **	4,59

Differences among groups: * P < 0,1 ** P < 0,05

CHI CUADRDO → X2 DIFERENCIAS

UNIVARIATE TEST STATISTICS:

NO CONSTRAINT CHI-SQUARE PROBABILITY CHANGE

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1	CONSTR:	1	0.206	0.650
2	CONSTR:	2	0.015	0.901
3	CONSTR:	3	0.000	0.984
4	CONSTR:	4	0.032	0.858
5	CONSTR:	5	0.882	0.348
6	CONSTR:	6	0.808	0.369
7	CONSTR:	7	1.346	0.246
8	CONSTR:	8	18.016	0.000
				0.460

BETAS ESTANDARIZADOS RESTO

$$F4 = F4 = -.032 * F1 + .676 * F2 + .228 * F3 + .608 D4$$

$$F5 = F5 = .644 * F6 + .765 D5$$

$$F6 = F6 = .619 * F4 + .786 D6$$

$$F7 = F7 = .610 * F5 + .792 D7$$

$$F8 = F8 = -.374 * F5 + .928 D8$$

$$F9 = F9 = .556 * F5 + .832 D9$$

CONSTRUCT EQUATIONS WITH STANDARD ERRORS AND TEST STATISTICS
STATISTICS SIGNIFICANT AT THE 5% LEVEL ARE MARKED WITH @.

SIGNIFICATIVIDAD DE LOS BETAS ESTANDARIZADOS

$$F4 = F4 = -.016 * F1 + .333 * F2 + .113 * F3 + 1.000 D4$$

$$F5 = F5 = .580 * F6 + 1.000 D5$$

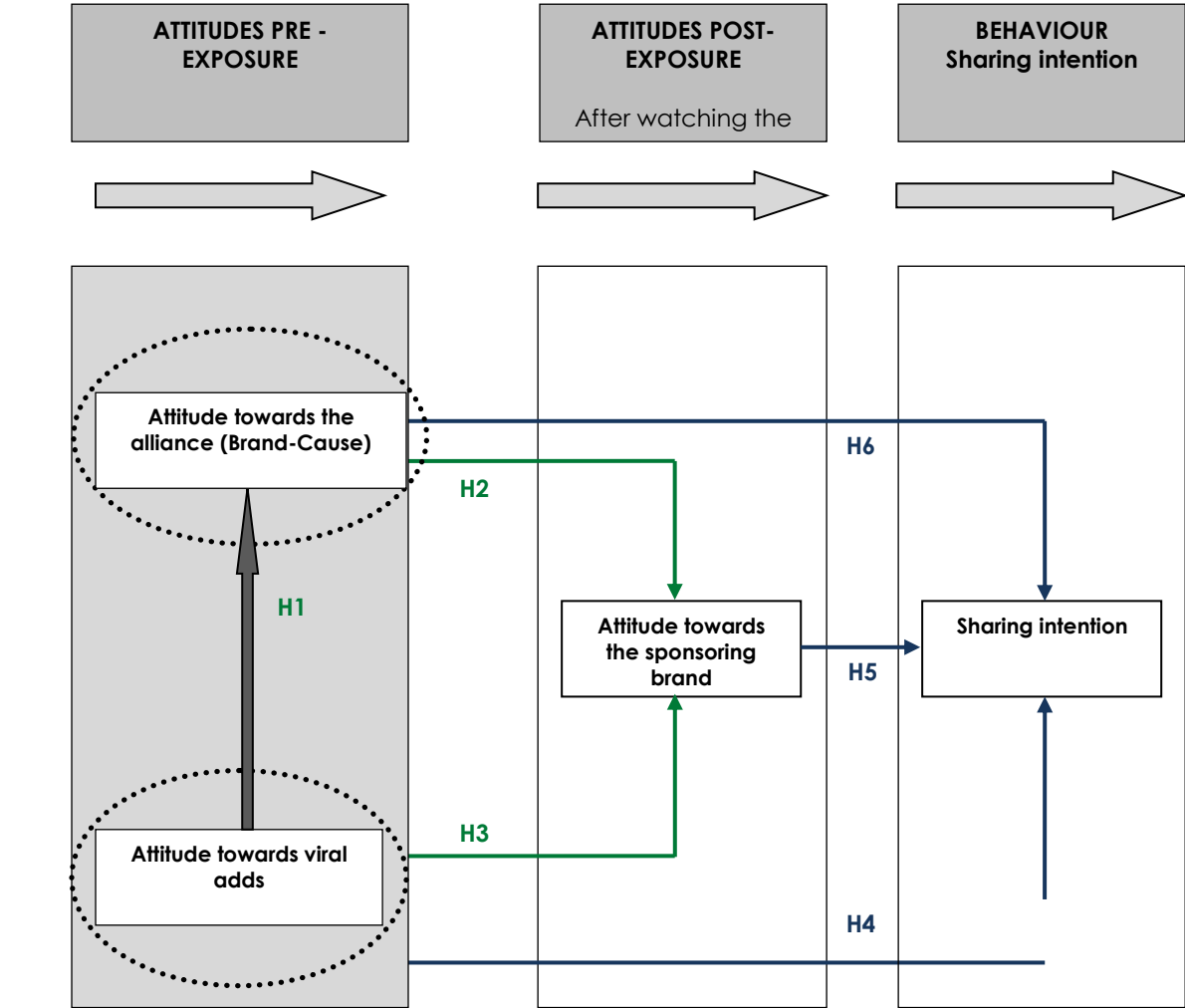
$$F6 = F6 = .661 * F4 + 1.000 D6$$

$$F7 = F7 = .908 * F5 + 1.000 D7$$

$$F8 = F8 = -.634 * F5 + 1.000 D8$$

$$F9 = F9 = .774 * F5 + 1.000 D9$$

Figure 1. Proposed model.



SOURCE: Own elaboration from Lafferty et a., 2004 & Huang et al., 2013.

Annex 1. Measurement scales

FACTOR	ITEMS	ATHORS
Attitude toward viral adds	1. good/bad, 2. like/dislike, 3. favorable/unfavorable 4. positive/negative	Eckler y Bolls (2011)
Attitude toward sponsoring brand	1. good/bad, 2. like/dislike, 3. favorable/unfavorable 4. positive/negative,	Coulter y Punj (2007) Nan y Heo (2007)
Attitude toward alliance brand-cause	1. good/bad, 2. like/dislike, 3. favorable/unfavorable 4. positive/negative,	Coulter y Punj (2007) Nan y Heo (2007)
Intention to share	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 via the Internet	Chiu et al. (2007)

(*) Attitudes were measured using four seven-point semantic differential items anchored by the four adjectives showed below

SOURCE: Own elaboration