What Can We Learn from #StopHateForProfit Boycott Regarding Corporate Social Irresponsibility and Corporate Social Responsibility?

Hongwei He, Ph.D.*
Professor of Marketing
Alliance Manchester Business School
The University of Manchester
Manchester, UK
M13 9SS
Phone: +44 (0)161 306 4327
Email: hongwei.he@manchester.ac.uk
* Corresponding author

Sumin Kim
Doctoral Candidate
Alliance Manchester Business School
The University of Manchester
Manchester, UK
M13 9SS
Email: sumin.kim@manchester.ac.uk

Anders Gustafsson, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Marketing
BI – Norwegian Business School
Nydalsveien 37, 0484 Oslo
Norway
Phone: +47-730754373
Email: anders.gustafsson@bi.no

What Can We Learn from #StopHateForProfit Boycott Regarding Corporate Social Irresponsibility and Corporate Social Responsibility?

Abstract

In July 2020 more than 1,100 companies paused their paid advertising on Facebook to demand clear and unequivocal actions to stop its platform from being used to spread and amplify racism and hate. This Business-to-Business (B2B) boycott phenomenon is related to both corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) and corporate social responsibility (CSR), as Facebook and other social media platforms can be seen to be engaging in CSI, while the boycotting advertisers are engaging in CSR. Understanding how consumers respond to this hybrid form of B2B boycotting, involving both CSI and CSR elements, is critical for marketing and branding practice and theories. This research develops a preliminary framework on the factors influencing consumer responses to both the transgressing brand (i.e., Facebook) and the boycotting brands (i.e., the advertisers). We then discuss the implications for the literature on traditional CSI and CSR. Finally, future research directions are presented on this under-studied issue.

1. Introduction

Starting on the 1st of July, 2020, more than 1,100 large and small businesses and 100 non-profit organizations participated in boycotting Facebook on the basis that it was not doing enough to stop hate speech on the social media platform (Aziz, 2020; Stop Hate for Profit, 2020). Facebook and other social media platforms have faced mounting criticism over the years for failing to moderate hate speech and valuing profit over hate. A campaign called "Stop Hate for Profit" encouraged Facebook's advertisers to hit the pause button on ad spending on Facebook in July 2020 to demand clear and unequivocal action from Facebook to stop its platform from being used to spread and amplify racism and hate. As a result, the campaign led some of Facebook's biggest clients, including Adidas, Best Buy, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, and Clorox, to pull their ads from the social media platform for July, with some brands continuing the campaign for longer than a month.

This phenomenon could have a significant impact on consumers and their reactions to the brands involved. This research aims to address these issues. The phenomenon can be understood from the perspectives of corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) and corporate social responsibility (CSR). First, it was triggered by the belief that Facebook is not doing enough to regulate hate speech on the platform despite its ability to control it. This inaction of Facebook can be seen as an example of CSI. The social contract perspective suggests that an implied contract exists between firms and society; and that avoidance of harm targeting employees and customers is one of the implied contracts that firms should follow to improve societal welfare (Donaldson, 1982). Thus, failure to avoid harm is a violation of a company's social contract (Russell, Russell, & Honea, 2016). Facebook can be regarded as a "violator" of the social contract, as it has allowed hate and extremism to spread faster and further than ever before, causing real harm to real people. Furthermore, Facebook ad boycotting is relevant to CSI in the sense that boycotting is one of the reactional behaviors commonly explored in the extant CSI literature (e.g., Antonetti & Maklan, 2017; Grappi, Romani, & Bagozzi, 2013; Lindenmeier, Schleer, & Pricl, 2012; Russell et al., 2016; Scheidler & Edinger-Schons, 2020; Xie, Bagozzi, & Grønhaug, 2015; Xie & Bagozzi, 2019).

Second, the phenomenon can also be understood from a CSR perspective. CSR is widely conceived as "a firm's commitment to maximize long-term economic, societal, and environmental well-being through business practices, policies, and resources" (Du, Bhattacharya,

& Sen., 2011, p. 1528). CSR has broadened the scope of the firm's duties from economic and legal perspectives to social and ethical ones. Thus, brands' support of a social, political, economic, or environmental issue that goes beyond the interests of the firm is generally understood as part of CSR (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Followed by this notion, supporting key social issues (i.e., hate speech) by boycotting Facebook ads can be seen as a way of a brand demonstrating its CSR. Therefore, this phenomenon can be partly explained by the existing CSI and CSR literature.

The phenomenon merits further research, as it is a unique and unexplored setting for a boycott, namely, business to business boycotting (B2B boycotting). Although boycotting behavior has been commonly studied as a consumer reaction to CSI, no research has examined the phenomenon of companies engaging in boycotting behavior against CSI. In the context of the growing trend of understanding consumer movements that strive for market change (e.g., Gollnhofer, Weijo, & Schouten, 2019; Weijo, Martin, & Arnould, 2018), B2B boycotting can be viewed as an extension of the consumer movement literature. This is because B2B boycotting can be understood as a collective consumer action that calls for change by the business. Furthermore, B2B boycotting can be seen as a new form of corporate collaborative works for social well-being beyond the traditional collective efforts for market driving (e.g., Maciel & Fisher, 2020). Specifically, further investigation is required to understand the impact of B2B boycotting on consumers. The complexity of this phenomenon involving more than two parties requires examination that goes beyond the dyadic relationship to at least triadic relationships: consumers, the boycotted brand, and the boycotting brand. Moreover, this B2B boycotting phenomenon differs from traditional CSR. Brand participation in ad boycotts is a form of CSR that highlights societal objectives. It is a form of CSR emphasizing socially driven objectives through voluntary participation in a boycott, potentially forfeiting and sacrificing marketing opportunities and benefits on the platform of Facebook. Brands boycotting a major social platform to promote a social cause is a sign of CSR commitment, which is distinguished from traditional forms of CSR with clearer marketing objectives, such as cause-related marketing.

The aim of this research is to explore the Facebook ad boycott phenomenon from the perspective of consumers. Like traditional CSI and CSR, one of the key research themes relates to the impact on consumers, which, in turn, could significantly impact the performance of the brands involved in the marketplace and the development of the social cause. To achieve this aim,

the paper starts with a brief review of both the CSI and CSR literature and its implications for, and relevance to, the B2B boycotting phenomenon. We then introduce an overall framework depicting the complex relationships among the involved parties and explain how different types of factors (i.e., social issue factors, transgressing brand factors, boycotting brand factors, consumer factors) can influence consumer responses. We further discuss how the newly developed framework contributes to the literature, particularly in terms of advancing the theoretical understanding of consumer responses to CSI and CSR, and we demonstrate the potential managerial implications. Finally, we explain the limitations of this framework and suggest avenues for future research.

2. Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI)

CSI can be defined as a violation of the social contract between society and the corporate world (Russell et al., 2016). A firm has a duty of acting responsibly to improve social welfare based on an implied social contract that exists between society and firms (Donaldson, 1982). According to social contract theory (Donaldson, 1982), an important aspect of corporate duty is to avoid causing harm (physical, financial, or mental) to other societal members, including consumers and employees. Typical CSI examples include the corporate act of causing physical harm, such as consumers being injured by a product defect (e.g., Antonetti & Maklan, 2018; Carvalho, Muralidharan, & Bapuji, 2015) or a corporate oil spill that contaminates the environment (e.g., Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Xie et al., 2015). Furthermore, some CSI examples involve mental harm aspects, such as employee stress caused by an employer spying (Lindenmeier et al., 2012) or gender discrimination in the workplace (Trump, 2014). Similarly, in the case of the Facebook ad boycott, Facebook's inaction in terms of regulating and controlling hate speech on its platform is seen as an irresponsible act that causes mental harm to the customer group being discriminated against (Stop Hate for Profit, 2020).

The Facebook ad boycott phenomenon can be understood from the CSI literature for the following reasons relating to boycotting. Although the CSI literature on consumer reactions has focused mainly on individual consumer behavior, such as negative word of mouth (NWOM) and complaints (e.g., Antonetti & Baghi, 2019; Xie & Bagozzi, 2019), and a tendency to reduce consumption (e.g., Van den Broek, Langley, & Hornig, 2017), boycotting is an important outcome of CSI at both individual and collective levels (e.g., Russell et al., 2016; Grappi et al.,

2013; Lindenmeier et al., 2012). An individual act of boycotting comes in forms similar to general individual consumer behavior, such as NWOM and reduced consumption (e.g., Russell et al., 2016), but a collective act of boycotting comes in a more organized form, such as consumer participation in groups with other consumers and anti-brand activists (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Therefore, a collective boycott is further intended to encourage more people to join (Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz, 2001) and is more effective at changing other consumers' attitudes and consumption habits concerning the boycotted target (Van den Broek et al., 2017). More specifically, a boycott can be triggered by certain motives, including punishing the boycotted company through various forms of consumer retaliation (Smith, Palazzo, & Bhattacharya, 2010; Russell et al., 2016) and restoring fairness and social justice to serve the larger common good (Lindenmeier et al., 2012). Such a prosocial motive seeks change, particularly regarding the schemes or behavior of the boycott targets (Balabanis, 2013).

A Facebook ad boycott is linked to the CSI literature, because boycotting is one typical behavioral response to a firm's CSI, and a Facebook ad boycott takes the form of a collective boycott. Similar to typical boycotting motives shown in the literature, a Facebook ad boycott seeks to change Facebook's behavior concerning social justice and fairness (Stop Hate for Profit, 2020). Despite the aforementioned commonalities, B2B boycotting represents a unique new phenomenon that the existing literature has not yet addressed directly. Most of the previous research focused on consumer boycotting, with no reference to B2B boycotting, especially not collective boycotting by a group of businesses.

3. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The Facebook ad boycott can also be partially understood from the CSR perspective. CSR refers to company actions that enhance social good beyond that which is required by law (e.g., McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). CSR initiatives come in various forms, such as cause-related marketing, employee volunteerism, environmental care, and fairtrade practices (e.g., He, Chao, & Zhu, 2019; Mattila & Hanks, 2013). It has been widely supported that CSR helps a company to demonstrate its commitment to social causes and strengthen its stakeholder relationships (Bhattacharya, Korschun & Sen, 2009; Peloza & Shang, 2011; Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). Companies even undertake CSR initiatives as an essential part of their marketing strategy (Chahal & Sharma, 2006; Lamberti & Lettieri, 2009). In particular, CSR initiatives such as

cause-related marketing are explicitly associated with marketing resources and objectives and the economic goals of a brand (He, Zhu, Gouran, & Kolo, 2016; Husted, 2015; McAlister & Ferrell, 2002).

Since CSR can be undertaken by companies to achieve both societal and marketing objectives, beholders' attribution of the company's CSR motives becomes a key issue. In general, a CSR motive can be perceived as either more intrinsic (i.e., reflecting sincere social concerns) or extrinsic (i.e., serving economic/marketing ends). Each motive has sub-motives; for instance, an intrinsic motive includes value-driven and stakeholder-driven motives, and an extrinsic motive includes strategic and egoistic motives (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006). Extant research supported the different role of each motive in the stakeholder response, such as word-of-mouth, purchasing intention, investment intention for investors, and employment intention for future employees (Skarmeas, & Leonidou, 2013; Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Sen et al., 2006). Perceived intrinsic motives tend to induce positive responses, while perceived extrinsic motives tend to elicit negative responses.

A recent growing theme of the CSR literature is the examination of a relatively new phenomenon called corporate sociopolitical activism (CSA), which involves companies adopting social initiatives to support controversial causes (Hambrick & Wowak, 2019). CSA can be defined as "a firm's public demonstration (statements and/or actions) of support for, or opposition to, one side of a partisan sociopolitical issue" (Bhagwat, Warren, Beck, & Watson, 2020, p.1). Both CSR and CSA are examples of corporate engagement in promoting a social cause; however, unlike traditional CSR initiatives promoting the cause that is widely favored, CSA typically promotes a controversial cause that might not be universally favored or praised (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Eilert & Nappier Cherup, 2020). Furthermore, unlike CSR, CSA aims to promote societal change by influencing the attitudes and behavior of members of society beyond a company's immediate stakeholders (Eilert & Nappier Cherup, 2020). Therefore, a Facebook ad boycott (as a form of B2B boycotting) can be seen as a unique form of CSR. Like other CSR initiatives, a B2B boycotting attempts to promote social good by forcing irresponsible firms to change their behavior. Thus, influential factors such as consumer attribution on the perceived motive for the boycott can also significantly influence how consumers react to a Facebook ad boycott. However, notably, a Facebook ad boycott shares common traits with CSA, and such commonality with CSA leads to B2B boycotting being distinct from traditional CSR initiatives.

Hence, more exploration is needed on how, and in what condition, B2B boycotting can be considered part of CSR.

4. An Initial Framework

Figure 1 illustrates an overview of how consumers can respond to an ad boycott. The framework delineates the possible relational dynamics among the different parties in this phenomenon to open up new opportunities for theoretical and conceptual development. An ad boycott is a mixture of CSI (eg. Facebook's inaction in terms of controlling hate speech on the platform) and CSR (eg. brands boycotting Facebook to reduce hate speech). Unlike traditional phenomena of consumers responding to CSI or CSR, the relationships are not just dyadic or linear. Instead, consumers are exposed to multiple objects simultaneously, such as Facebook (the transgressing brand) and the advertisers (the boycotting brands). All of these objects can have their own properties that are pertinent to consumer responses.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

The focus of this article is consumer responses to the phenomenon of B2B boycotting. It does not examine how the boycotting influences the B2B relationship between the boycotting brands (e.g., the advertisers) and the boycotted brand (e.g., Facebook). We organize the discussion below based on two main involved parties (the transgressing brand and the boycotting brands) in terms of consumer responses. The discussion will be followed by an explanation of how different types of factors (i.e., social issue factors, transgressing brand factors, boycotting brand factors, consumer factors) can influence consumer responses.

4.1. Consumer Responses to the Transgressing Brand (Facebook)

One of the most important issues surrounding the B2B boycotting phenomenon is how consumers respond to the transgressing brand. First, it can depend on how much consumers believe that, in this case Facebook, is the "bad" guy. Intuitively, Facebook can be seen as a transgressor because of its inaction with tackling hate speech on its platform, despite its potential capability and resources to do so. In this sense, Facebook can be regarded as being socially irresponsible, which renders it a CSI issue. Therefore, how consumers respond to Facebook can

be understood from the perspective of consumer responses to CSI. Perceived harm has been identified as a major factor in determining consumer responses, and its role has been linked to the perceived severity of CSI (Ingram, Skinner, & Taylor, 2005; Ganesan, Brown, Mariadoss, & Ho, 2010; Rotman, Khamitov, & Connors, 2018); and unethicality of CSI (Bechwati, Sisodia, & Sheth, 2009; Leonidou, Kvasova, Leonidou, & Chari, 2013; Lindenmeier et al., 2012; Trump & Newman, 2017). So, how consumers evaluate Facebook's inaction concerning hate speech on its platform is influenced by how much harm Facebook's inaction could cause. In the following sections, we will examine some potential factors that affect consumer responses to the transgressing brand.

4.1.1. Social Issue Factors on Consumer Responses to the Transgressing Brand

Social issue attributes can influence the perceived harm of CSI. Drawing upon expectancy violation theory (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993), we expect issue salience (i.e., the degree to which an issue resonates in society) and issue urgency (i.e., the degree to which an issue requires a swift action) can influence consumer reaction to the transgressing brand. It is because these social issue factors enhance perceived violation of CSI and in turn increase perceived harm of CSI. According to expectancy violation theory, an entity's behavior against existing expectations evokes stronger negative evaluations of that entity (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993). The theory also postulates that the more the behavior goes against initial expectations, the greater the perceived violation (Afifi & Burgoon, 2000). In turn, perceived harm becomes enhanced by the perceived violation of social contract, and the perceived threat of broken moral value and well-being of social entities or/and society in general (Sweetin, Knowles, Summey, & McQueen, 2013; Lin-Hi & Müller 2013).

Similarly, issue salience can increase consumer expectation of the focal brand to take action to demonstrate their care (Clark, Bryant, & Griffin, 2017). Thus, if a brand does little to correct or address a salient social issue, its inaction can be seen as a more severe form of CSI that fails to meet societal expectations and causes stronger harm. In the case of the Facebook ad boycott, the death of George Floyd was known to be a key trigger that rendered the social issue of "hate speech" (particularly regarding race) more salient, and hence Facebook's inaction more harmful. This, in turn, motivates the boycott (Stop Hate for Profit, 2020). Hence, the more salient

the social issue, the more likely consumers respond negatively to the transgressing brand as a result of the stronger perceived harm caused by the brand.

Issue urgency is another social issue factor that increases consumer expectations towards the brand. A social issue becomes urgent when it requires urgent responses and recovery action from the transgressing brand to prevent more harm. Thus, the more urgent is the focal social issue, the more likely consumers would be to expect brands to contribute to the resolve of the focal social issue. Examples of urgent issues include product harm (e.g., a product defect posing a risk of injury to the consumer because of its potential to overheat and explode) (Carvalho et al., 2015) and some environmental issues (e.g., water contamination due to an oil spill, resulting in killing a significant number of marine animals) (e.g., Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2013; Xie et al., 2015). In the case of the Facebook ad ban, the hate speech issue, particularly in an online setting, could be seen as urgent because the online platform facilitates quick and widespread dissemination of hateful messages, thereby affecting more victims (Gagliardone, Gal, Alves, & Martinez, 2015). Therefore we propose:

> *Proposition 1a: The more salient the CSI issue is, the more likely consumers are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.*

> *Proposition 1b: The more urgent the CSI issue is, the more likely consumers are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.*

4.1.2. Transgressing Brand Factors on Consumer Responses to the Transgressing Brand

Some factors regarding the transgressing brand can also influence how consumers perceive the harm of CSI (i.e., Facebook's inaction). Beyond their influence on perceived harm, factors of transgressing brand can influence how much consumers believe that the transgressing brand is, or should be, responsible for the harm (*brand culpability*). Studies have shown that consumers tend to react negatively to the transgressing brand, as they have a strong perception of corporate responsibility toward CSI (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Scheidler & Edinger-Schons, 2020) and corporate controllability regarding CSI (Sinha & Lu, 2016). Brand culpability can be highly subjective in the eyes of the beholders and subject to normative influence.

The attribution theory can explain what causes brand culpability. According to the attribution theory (Kelley, 1972; 1973), attribution of an incident or blame can involve the following issues, such as the locus of causality and controllability of the incidents by the actor, that are closely related to the role of brand culpability regarding its CSI (Facebook's failure to stop hate speech in its platform). In terms of locus of causality, the causes of an incident can be divided into internal/dispositional (the actor) and external (situational or circumstance). Individuals tend to react more negatively to the actor when the cause is internally attributed (Carvalho et al., 2015; Kelley, 1972). In terms of controllability, attribution theory suggests that blame attribution to the transgressing brand can vary by whether the social issue is under the brand's control or not. Attribution to non-controllable factors diminishes perceived responsibility and culpability of the focal actor/brand and results in less negative reactions (Klein & Dawar, 2004; Monga & John, 2008). On the contrary attribution to controllable factors decreases consumer intentions to forgive (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999) and increases consumer engagement in aggressive behaviors towards the focal brand (Folkes, 1984). Following the findings from the extant CSI literature (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Scheidler & Edinger-Schons, 2020), we expect consumers who believe more strongly that Facebook is culpable are more likely to develop negative reactions to Facebook.

In particular, the marketplace power (e.g., brand status, leadership, size, and influence) enjoyed by the boycotted brand can influence perceived culpability and harm. Consumers can reply to heuristic and intuitive judgment (e.g., with greater powers comes greater responsibility) when assessing the extent to which the transgressing brand should be held responsible. Furthermore, high status signifies trustworthiness that creates a high expectation on the behavior and ethical conducts of the focal entities (Wahrman, 2010). Specifically, in the case of Facebook, because of the significant power that Facebook enjoys as a social networking platform, most consumers believe that it should be held responsible.

The impact of power on perceived harm can happen directly and indirectly. The more power the transgressing brand has, the more damage and harm it can cause because of its wider and deeper influence and impact. CSI literature has supported that a strong marketplace power of the transgressing firm can lead consumers to judge its unethical behavior more harshly (De Bock, Vermeir, & Van Kenhove, 2013). In the case of Facebook, inaction to curb hate speech on its platform can cause significantly more harm than on other platforms because of its sheer size.

Indirectly, marketplace power influences perceived harm through perceived culpability. As we noted earlier, power enhances perceived culpability, and culpability enhances perceived harm; hence, power indirectly enhances perceived harm through enhanced culpability. As a result, consumers are more likely to respond negatively to the focal brand with a stronger marketplace power.

Existing CSR reputation is another transgressing brand factor that can influence consumer reactions to the transgressing brand. A strong CSR reputation can attenuate negative responses to CSI. A strong CSR reputation can shield a firm from consumers perceiving negative information (Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011) because the CSR reputation signals how well the firm has fulfilled expectations and met its commitments in the past and if it is likely to do the same in the future (Siltaoja, 2006). A strong CSR reputation (i.e., positive brand attribute) could shield the brand from CSI as it lessens internal consumer attribution towards the cause of the CSI to the brand, and instead enhances external attribution to the external factors. According to attribution theory (Kelly, 1973), consistency (the same or similar behavior across time) influences the local of casualty (internal or external). When a behavior or act occurs often over time, the consistency is high, which results in internal attribution. Otherwise situational or circumstance attribution is more likely to happen. When the focal brand's existing CSR reputation is higher (lower), it suggests a lower (higher) consistency, which in turn influences the perceived culpability of the brand and consumers' reactions. Indeed, the existing literature has supported that a strong existing CSR buffers the focal brand from backfires in the face of future negative events (e.g., Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009; Williams & Barrett, 2000).

> *Proposition 2a: The stronger marketplace power the transgressing brand has, the more likely consumers are to perceive the transgressing brand to be culpable and react negatively towards the focal brand.*

> *Proposition 2b: The stronger CSR reputation the transgressing brand has, the less likely consumers are to perceive the transgressing brand to be culpable and react negatively towards the focal brand.*

4.1.3. Boycotting Brand Factors on Consumer Responses to the Transgressing Brand

The marketplace power (e.g., brand status, leadership, size, and influence) of boycotting brands is a critical influencer of consumer reactions to the transgressing brand, albeit for a different reason. The marketplace power of the boycotting brands can enhance the perceived seriousness of CSI committed by the boycotted brand. According to the categorization theory (Smith & Medin, 1981), a brand's typicality signifies the extent to which the brand represents the product/industry category (Farquhar, Herr, & Fazio, 1990). In particular, consumers are more likely to perceive dominant brands (with stronger marketplace power) as a more typical and representative brand of a product/industry category (Loken &Ward, 1990). In the CSI literature, it is also found that dominant brands can be seen to be more typical of a category (i.e., industry), hence have a stronger spill-over effect on other brands in the same industry (Borah & Tellis, 2016). That means the action of dominant brands may be recognized as the typical behavior of the industry. In the case of the Facebook ad boycott, the more brands that join the boycott, the more likely consumers will develop negative responses to Facebook.

Additionally, the attribution of boycotting brands' motives can spill over to influence consumer responses to the transgressing brand. Attribution of motives is a central cognitive response to CSR initiatives (Ellen et al., 2006). In alignment with the attribution theory (Kelley, 1972), various motives of CSR have been identified, but they broadly consist of intrinsic (i.e., reflecting sincere social concerns) versus extrinsic (i.e., serving economic/marketing ends) motives (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000). Prior research has established that motives matter in terms of consumer responses to the actor (the boycotter, in our case). In general, consumers who perceive intrinsic or prosocial motives of a brand's CSR are more likely to respond to the brand favorably. This is because the intrinsic motives show an element of altruism and enhanced societal interest whereas extrinsic or self-interested motives signify an opportunistic perspective (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). Accordingly, we further argue that boycotters' motives can also influence how consumers respond to the brand being boycotted (eg. Facebook). First, when the boycotting brands' motive is seen as intrinsic or prosocial, and more extrinsic or self-interested, it could shift consumers' attention away from the "wrongdoing" of the transgressing brand to the boycotting brands' questionable intentionality. As a result, the transgressing brand might be judged less harshly. Second, it can encourage consumers to be more cynical and skeptical about the whole campaign, hence undermining the salience and legitimacy of the focal social issue.

Therefore, consumers might apply a less stringent moral standard to evaluate the transgressing brand.

This is more likely to happen when the boycotting brand has a weak CSR reputation. A weak existing CSR reputation reduces consumer trust in the focal brand (Davies & Olmedo-Cifuentes, 2016). Attributors tend to see the motives of one's behavior as more intrinsic when the behavior is consistent and repeated across time (Sjovall & Talk, 2004). On the contrary, a weak CSR reputation can lead consumers to attribute boycotting the transgressing firm to an extrinsic and self-interested motive. Therefore, a weak existing CSR reputation leads consumers to easily cast doubt on the credibility and motives of the brands' boycotting behavior (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). In this case, the transgressing brand might be seen not as the "bad" guy but as the "victim" of the boycotting brands.

Proposition 3a: The stronger marketplace power the boycotting brand has, the more likely consumers are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.

Proposition 3b: The stronger CSR reputation the boycotting brand has, the more likely consumers are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.

4.1.4. Consumer Factors on Consumer Responses to the Transgressing Brand

A wide range of consumer factors have been found to influence the consumer response to CSI. The factors include individual morality traits such as moral identity or other-regarding virtues (Newman & Trump, 2017; Xie et al., 2015) and individual cultural traits such as uncertainty avoidance or self-construal (Sinha & Lu, 2016; Trump & Newman, 2017). Additional widely studied factors are related to consumer-brand relationships. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that individuals form their self-concept based on their group (including brand) membership (Fournier, 1988). Consumer-brand relationships have been studied under a variety of constructs, including brand attachment (Schmalz & Orth, 2012), brand connection (Trump, 2014), brand fusion (Lin & Sung, 2014), and brand commitment (Ganesan et al., 2010). In general, their effect in buffering the negative impact of CSI has been widely supported (e.g., De Bock et al., 2013). In the case of B2B boycotting, there exist two distinct consumer-brand relationships: one with the transgress brand and one with the boycotting brands.

Both relationships can impact on consumer response towards the transgressing brand but in different ways. Those who have a strong relationship with the transgressing brand would react less negatively to the transgressing brand. However, those who who have a strong relationship with the boycotting brands tend to be more supportive of the boycotting brands, leading them to react more negatively to the transgressing brand.

In addition to consumer-brand relationships, consumer involvement in the focal issue is a critical factor influencing consumer reactions to a transgressing brand. For example, research has demonstrated the impacts of self-relevance of the violated cause (Trump, 2014) and perceived similarity with the victims of CSI (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Antonetti & Maklan, 2018) on consumer responses to CSI. Consumer self-relevance in the issue lessens the buffering effect of consumer-brand relationships on consumer responses to CSI (Trump, 2014). The more consumers perceived similarity with the victims, the more sensitively they reacted to CSI (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Antonetti & Maklan, 2018). In the context of the Facebook ad boycott, consumers who feel that the cause (here, hate speech) is highly relevant to them, and who have a perceived high degree of similarity with the victims of hate speech, may react more negatively to Facebook.

Furthermore, the role of customer culpability is worthy of consideration. *Customer culpability* suggests that consumers come to perceive that customers of the transgressing brand have partial responsibility for certain CSI in terms of how their consumption habits drive irresponsible company conduct (Scheidler & Edinger-Schons, 2020). It is based on the belief that customers directly or indirectly cause CSI. Thus, the customers are perceived as perpetrators of CSI. In the case of Facebook ad boycott, people might opine that Facebook is just a platform and Facebook users (particularly those who spread hate speech) are culpable and should be blamed. Accordingly, their reaction to Facebook tends to be less negative. A similar attributional dislocation can be found in the CSI literature. For example, Carvalho et al. (2015) found that, in the context of product harm, consumers can blame the manufacturing company that produces the products and excuse the brand owner and free it from blame. Similarly, consumers may blame Facebook users who spread hate speech on its platform because users are perceived to be more culpable than Facebook itself, and they may treat user misconduct as being independent of Facebook.

Besides, it was found that perceived customer culpability is enhanced when a product/service is co-created with the consumer (Paharia, 2020). In the context of the Facebook ad boycott, consumers may have a stronger perception of customer culpability regarding hate speech because the hate speech content is generated by users, not from Facebook. As found in the co-creation literature (Paharia, 2020), this effect may get stronger when they have experience of generating such content. Therefore, considering the role of customer culpability, some consumers may be less likely to react negatively to Facebook, instead of considering it to be a victim.

Proposition 4a: The stronger the consumer-brand relationships consumers have with the transgressing brand, the less likely they are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.

Proposition 4b: The stronger the consumer-brand relationships consumers have with the boycotting brands, the more likely they are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.

Proposition 4c: The stronger consumers are involved with the social issue, the more likely they are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.

Proposition 4d: The stronger the perceived customer (of transgressing brand) culpability, the less likely consumers are to react negatively towards the transgressing brand.

4.2. Consumer Responses to the Boycotting Brands (Advertisers)

On the contrary, intuitively consumer responses to advertisers can be seen as an issue in terms of consumer responses to CSR or, as we explained earlier, a new form called CSA (Bhagwat et al., 2020). In general, the more negative (positive) the responses to Facebook, the more positive (negative) the responses to the advertisers, and vice versa, as the causal direction between them can bidirectional. In other words, consumers who respond negatively to the transgressing brand are more likely to respond positively to the boycotting brands. Facebook can

be seen as a transgressor or a "bad guy" because of its inaction in terms of tackling hate speech on its platform, despite its potential capability and resources to do so. Therefore, advertisers can be seen as a "good guy" based on their efforts to seek the well-being of society by stopping Facebook from continuously engaging in negative acts (i.e., insufficient controls on hate speech).

4.2.1 Social Issue Factors on Consumer Response to the Boycotting Brands

In the previous section, we have explained that social issue factors such as issue salience and urgency can lead to negative consumer reactions to the transgressing brand as a result of the increasing perceived harm of CSI (i.e., Facebook's inaction in terms of controlling hate speech). Although the perception of harm varies across consumers, in general consumers are motivated to participate in boycotts based on their belief that a company has been involved in ethical or harmful conduct (Klein, Smith & Johnson, 2004). Therefore, factors (e.g., issue salience and urgency) enhancing the perception of CSI harm are also likely to enhance consumer support for boycotting brands. Contrary to their effects on consumer responses to the transgressing brand (propositions 1a and 1b), these factors can lead to positive consumer responses to the boycotting brands. According to the expectancy violation theory (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993), the salience and urgency of the CSI issue can positively influence the perceived severity of harm caused by the CSI. Thus, consumers are more likely to appreciate those brands boycotting the transgressing brand committing CSI on salient and urgent social issues, because the boycotting can be seen as a response to minimize or reverse the harm.

> *Proposition 5a: More salient the CSI issue is, more consumers are likely to react positively towards the boycotting brands.*

> *Proposition 5b: More urgent the CSI issue is, more consumers are likely to react positively towards the boycotting brands.*

4.2.2 Transgressing Brand Factors on Consumer Response to the Boycotting Brands

Transgressing brand factors can spill over to influence consumer reactions to boycotting brands. Similar to their effect on the transgressing brand, the influence of these factors on perceived harm and culpability by the transgressing brand explains their effects on the

boycotting brands, but oppositely. In the consumer boycott literature, perceived harm has been found to induce consumer boycott participation (Friedman, 1999; Klein et al., 2004). Similarly, consumers could react to the boycotting brands favorably because these brands try to correct or minimize the (potential) harm caused by the transgressing brand. As explained earlier, the transgressing brand factors (e.g., marketplace power, CSR reputation) enhance the perceived harm and culpability by the transgressing brand. We argue that as a result, these factors can potentially enhance the internal attribution of CSI to the transgressing brand, which in turn leads consumers to support the act of boycotting and respond to the boycotting brands more positively.

The discounting principle in the attribution theory (Kelly 1972) can elucidate the potential role of CSR reputation of the transgressing brand on perceived harm and culpability. For a transgressing brand with a strong CSR reputation, consumers might not attribute CSI solely to the brand. The discounting principle states that "the role of a given cause in producing a given effect is discounted when other plausible causes are also present" (Kelley, 1972, p.8). Following this logic, consumers may discount the "bad deed" of Facebook because the action could have other plausible causes. As a result, the CSR reputation of the transgressing brand (Facebook) can make it less culpable for the harmful act (i.e., spreading hate speech in the case of Facebook). Consumers might consider the act of the boycotting brands less justifiable, hence respond negatively to those brands.

Proposition 6a: The stronger marketplace power the transgressing brand has, the more likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.

Proposition 6b: The stronger CSR reputation the transgressing brand has, the less likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.

4.2.3 Boycotting Brand Factors on Consumer Response to the Boycotting Brands

The aforementioned boycotting brand factors that can influence consumer reactions to the transgressing brand can also affect consumer reactions to the boycotting brands. First, the marketplace power of boycotting brands influences consumer reactions to boycotting brands, because of its effect on the credibility of the campaign. According to the source credibility model (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953), the perceived credibility of the message depends perceived

expertise and trustworthiness of the communicator (Grewal, Gotlieb, & Marmorstein, 1994). Trust and expertise of brands are acquired, developed, and nurtured through past and present activities. In a similar sense, the marketplace power of a brand can influence the perceived expertise and quality of its newly launched product (Aaker, 1996). Brands with a stronger marketplace power tend to enjoy higher perceived expertise and credibility. Thus, we expect that the boycotting behavior and the associated message (e.g., call for change action on Facebook) from brands with more substantial marketplace power or status would be seen as more credible, which, in turn, increases consumer's favorable responses towards the boycotting brands.

Moreover, boycotting brand factors such as existing CSR reputation can influence the perceived motives of boycotting brands. This would enhance the trustworthiness and message credibility of boycotted brands. Compared to boycotting brands with a strong CSR reputation, boycotting brands with a weak CSR reputation are more likely to be seen as opportunistic or self-driven, which refers to the belief that the company is exploiting rather than supporting the cause (Ellen et al., 2006). Consumers may view brands with such self-driven motives as unethical or greenwashing (Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, & Avramidis, 2009). Similarly, this unfavorable attribution derived from the weak CSR reputation of the boycotting brands can lead consumers to perceive the boycotted brand as a victim, which, in turn, results in a less favorable reaction to the boycotting brands. Future research should empirically examine the effects of the aforementioned factors, focusing particularly on the perception of source credibility of the boycotting brands.

Proposition 7a: The stronger marketplace power the boycotting brands have, the more likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.

Proposition 7b: The stronger CSR reputation the boycotting brands have, the more likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.

4.2.4 Consumer Factors on Consumer Response to the Boycotting Brands

A wide range of consumer factors has also been found to influence consumer responses to CSR, including implicit moral beliefs (He et al., 2016), ethical ideologies (Palihawadana,

Oghazi, & Liu, 2016), self-construal (Yang & Yen, 2018), and so on. These factors could influence consumer responses to the boycotting brands. Surprisingly, unlike in CSI literature, the role of the consumer-brand relationship has not been widely studied in the CSR literature. Rather, much CSR literature has found that CSR increases the consumer relationship with the brand (e.g., Deng & Xu, 2017; Cha, Yi, & Bagozzi, 2016). Similar to the buffering effect shown among consumers with strong relationships with the transgressing brand (e.g., De Bock et al., 2013; Lin & Sung, 2014), consumers with strong relationships with the boycotting brands can positively influence their responses to those brands. On the other hand, when consumers are more strongly attached to the transgressing brand, their responses to the boycotting brand can be less favorable (e.g., De Bock et al., 2013; Lin & Sung, 2014). As an extension of the buffering effect, consumers may end up viewing the transgressing brand as a victim and feeling compassion for the boycotted brands. This could result in a skeptical view of the boycott. As a result, the boycotting brands can be seen as an offender attacking the victim (the transgressing brand), inducing negative consumer responses.

Consumer involvement in the issue can also play a critical role. Those who are highly involved in the cause will respond favorably to the boycotting brands. Cause involvement motivates consumers to support the resolution of the issue and to react positively to the boycotting brands fighting for the issue to be resolved. Customer (i.e., users of Facebook) culpability for the incident can lead consumers to react negatively to the boycotting brands as their boycott can be perceived to be an attack on the wrong target.

> *Proposition 8a: The stronger the consumer-brand relationships with the transgressing brand, the less likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.*

> *Proposition 8b: The stronger the consumer-brand relationships with the boycotting brands, the more likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.*

> *Proposition 8c: The stronger the consumer involvement with the focal social issue, the more likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.*

Proposition 8d: The stronger the customer culpability, the less likely consumers are to react positively towards the boycotting brands.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Implications

Unlike traditional models of CSI or CSR, the model presented in this research incorporates three core parties (i.e., consumers, boycotting brands, and the transgressing brand – see Figure 1) and explains how they interact in influencing consumer reactions towards both the boycotting brands and the transgressing brand. Although intuitively the transgressing brand (i.e., Facebook, in the case of the Facebook ad boycott) is the focal one that consumers react to, as it is the target of the boycott, our analysis suggests that this is not necessarily true, as consumers will react to the boycotting brands, and their reactions can influence each other. One way to understand this complexity is to acknowledge that consumers are exposed to CSI and CSR events simultaneously. As a result, although traditional frameworks of CSI and CSR are still relevant, the same factors can play a more complicated role. For example, harm, such as the traditional model of CSI, is a key factor influencing consumer responses. However, in our model, it influences not only consumer responses to CSI (the transgressing brand, i.e., Facebook) but also the boycotting brands. Similarly, factors influencing the attribution of boycotting motives not only affect consumer responses to the focal brands but also can spill over to influence how consumers respond to the transgressing brand.

Besides establishing an initial conceptual model to explain the new phenomenon of B2B boycotting, this research also has implications for the traditional literature on consumer responses to both CSI and CSR. As noted earlier, although both issues have been widely studied, most existing conceptual models are predominantly dyadic, in that they assume a dyadic relationship between the focal brand and consumers. Therefore, understandably, brand and consumer factors are the focal factors that have been examined concerning their influences on consumer responses to the brand in the context of CSI or CSR. Our model, despite its original intent to explain consumer responses in the context of B2B boycotting, suggests that even in the context of conventional CSI and CSR, additional factors need to be considered. For example, the factors of other brands should also be considered concerning consumer responses to conventional

22

CSI and CSR. In the context of CSI, such as tax avoidance, consumer responses to a focal company's tax avoidance scheme can be influenced by how prevalent the practice is among other brands in the same industry or across different sectors. Similarly, the Volkswagen emission scandal provides some anecdotal evidence that its impact on Volkswagen waned as more such practices were later discovered among other car manufacturers. In a similar vein, in the case of CSR, consumer responses to a brand's CSR initiatives can be affected by the CSR practice in the broader context, including its competitors and other comparative targets, such as brands with similar target markets or similar status and social standing. Such factors are especially critical in the context of B2B boycotting because boycotting is highly encouraged by socially embedded expectations or social pressures (Sen et al., 2001).

Our analysis suggests that culpability (who to blame) influences consumer responses to both the transgressing brand and the boycotting brands. In the CSI literature brand culpability has largely been assumed, for example, in the case of profiteering. Brand culpability can differ in the eyes of consumers. In the case of the Facebook ad boycott, Facebook might not be seen as being solely responsible for spreading hate speech. Perceived brand culpability can differ in different CSI events. For example, the culpability of the branded company for product harm may be seen differently because of the role of the manufacturing company, and the culpability of the brand in terms of bribery may also be viewed differently because of the potential individual (e.g., CEO, employee) engagement leading the decision on receiving bribery. Therefore, brand culpability should be considered an important factor in traditional CSI as well.

Our initial framework also highlights the important role of factors regarding the social issues and any associated campaigns in explaining consumer reactions. Although previous research has begun to examine these and related factors such as self-relevance to CSI (Trump, 2014) and perceived similarity with the victim of CSI (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Antonetti & Maklan, 2018), more research needs to systematically examine the influences of the various attributes and properties of the social issues and campaign factors. More importantly, it is necessary to distinguish the social issues from any specific campaigns or movements. The social issue behind the campaign relates to inter-group relationships (e.g., conflict, discrimination, inequality), while the campaign focuses on boycotting Facebook. They are like the means-to-the-end relationship. In this case, consumers might have different reactions to the means versus the end. For example, they might identify with the social issue (the end) but disapprove of the

campaign (the means), which, in turn, can influence how consumers react to the brands involved, both the transgressing brand and the boycotting brands. A similar effect can occur when consumers respond to traditional CSR or CSI events. For example, consumers might identify with the social issue (promoted by CSR or violated by CSI) (the end) but disapprove of the CSR (this may be due to perceived extrinsic motive) or CSI (which may be due to low brand culpability), which, in turn, can impact how consumers react to the brands involved in CSR or CSI.

Furthermore, B2B boycotting contributes to the field of CSR in terms of suggesting a new way in which brands can engage in CSR. Overall, a B2B boycotting can be understood as a form of CSA, which promotes the controversial social cause and speaks up for social change. Traditional types of CSR remain mainly supporting widely accepted and favored social causes, such as helping fight breast cancer (Bhagwat et al., 2020). Furthermore, traditional forms mostly focus on "participation" that is favorable to the social cause, encouraging a "call for action and change" (Eilert & Nappier Cherup, 2020). This new emphasis on a "call for action" challenges the traditional view of CSR. B2B boycotting can be seen as a new form of CSR, which suggests that for brands to be socially responsible, they might need to go beyond being a passive "participant" to being a proactive "activist" calling for progressive change. In summary, the new phenomenon of the "B2B boycotting" opens up the discussion about future CSR and the need for CSR innovation. Like the call for marketing innovation to fit into the new market environment, CSR should also keep innovating to meet new and emerging societal needs.

5.2 Managerial Implications

This research has implications for brands in the positions of both boycotting and being boycotted. For the boycotting brands, it is important to assess the triadic dynamism of B2B boycotting before jumping on the bandwagon, as doing it wrong can jeopardize their own brands. It is important to assess the harm caused by the transgressing brand and the perceived culpability of the target brand. It is more sensible for them to participate in the B2B boycotting when both harm and culpability are high. However, participating out of principle, when the social issues match the brand's core values and CSR/ethical policy, is also recommended.

CSA has recently become increasingly popular. Besides the traditional way of brand activism, such as donations to the cause or putting cause-related information on their ad banner,

this research suggests that B2B boycotting can be a viable option. Companies need to take a strategic approach to brand activism or B2B boycotting, placing it under the broader strategic CSR framework of the company. A brand needs to be decided at two levels: the social issue level and the campaign level. Having decided on the social issue does not automatically mean that the brand should jump on the bandwagon of any of the latest specific campaigns. Campaign factors should be considered in the decision-making process. The brand should join a campaign with a genuine prosocial motive and manage consumer perceptions of such a motive.

For the brands being boycotted, this research has implications for how they should manage a situation of B2B boycotting, including the adoption of a recovery strategy. Although this research does not directly address the issue of recovery, the triadic framework suggests that some additional factors, such as those relating to the boycotting brands and consumer responses to the brands, need to be considered alongside traditional CSI recovery.

6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research provides an overview of how B2B boycotting can influence consumer responses to the brands involved. Therefore, the most important future research avenues include those that empirically investigate which theoretical angles and perspectives, or a combination thereof, can best explain their impact on consumers. One particular challenge for this kind of future research is the operationalization and measure developments of some new constructs that emerged from this framework.

One limitation of this research is that the framework does not specify the consumer responses. Future research should investigate the different types of consumer reaction, which could potentially include communication behavior (e.g., NWOM, complaint intention for the transgressing brand, positive-word-of-mouth, advocacy intention for the boycotting brands), consumption behavior (e.g, purchasing intention, repurchasing intention), or punishment behavior by engaging in an unethical act (e.g., lying, cheating, stealing) (especially for the transgressing brand). Possibly, future research can explore the rippling effects and spillover effects by focusing on consumer responses that are not necessarily related to either the boycotting brand or the transgressing brand. These responses can include consumer ethical

behavior (e.g., prosocial consumption) or boycotting participation in other causes (e.g., climate change).

Although our analysis is conducted with the general belief that consumers may end up reacting based on two extremes, we cannot ignore the possibility that consumers end up having either positive or negative reactions to both parties. In other words, intuitively the above analyses on the relationship between responses to Facebook and advertisers might mean that future research needs to entertain the possibility that consumers could have positive or negative responses to both parties. The first possible scenario is that consumers react negatively to both the transgressing brand (Facebook) and the boycotting brands. In this case, the transgressing brand can be perceived as the "bad" guy, who is culpable for their wrongdoings, and such a perception would cause the boycotting brands to be seen as the "sly" guys, who have doubtful and opportunistic motives for engaging in boycotting the transgressing brand. In contrast, consumers may react favorably to both the transgressing and the boycotting brands. The transgressing brand can be seen as not being bad, as it is portrayed throughout the B2B boycott. At the same time, consumers still appreciate boycotting brands that show an interest in societal issues and actively engage in activities for social improvement.

In this paper, the explanation and interpretation of the triadic framework are predominantly cognitive. Consumer emotional reactions can be important responses in this context given the emotion-laden nature of the event. The literature on both CSR and CSI has begun to pay increasing attention to emotional reactions. For example, other-praising emotions (e.g., admiration, elevation, gratitude) tend to be aroused to brands engaged in CSR, while other-condemning emotions (e.g., anger, contempt, disgust) tend to be aroused to brands engaged in CSI. Future research should examine consumer emotional reactions to both transgressing and boycotting brands and how they interact in the case of B2B boycotting. Moral emotions (e.g., pride, anger, disgust) and other-praising emotions (e.g., admiration, elevation, gratitude) could be particularly relevant.

This research does not examine how B2B boycotting influences the B2B relationship between the transgressing brand and the boycotting brands. Future research should examine this issue. For instance, future research can explore how the transgressing brand responding to the boycott can influence future reactions from boycotting brands, as well as consumer responses. Besides, although the framework in this paper is developed within the context of B2B

boycotting, it could be relevant to similar phenomena, such as CSR and CSI practices within the supply chain and supplier/distributor selection. Future research should examine the application of this framework or develop a revised one to suit those contexts. Furthermore, future research should examine how consumer responses to the involved brands affect one another. Moreover, the framework does not examine the potential recovery strategies that the transgressing brand can adopt. Future research should examine this issue and assess its effectiveness in different circumstances.

In addition, this research mainly focuses on the impact of B2B boycotting on consumers. Future research should examine how it influences other stakeholders (e.g., policy-makers, employees), as well as how it affects the development of the focal social issue and the effectiveness of the movement/campaign. Moreover, even consumers can be categorized into three groups: customers of the transgressing brand, customers of the boycotting brand, and general consumers. Future research could examine how B2B boycotting influences these groups differently, as well as how their reactions can influence one another.

Furthermore, this research focuses on consumer responses to the brands involved in the B2B boycott: the transgressing brand and the boycotted brands. Future research could further explore how B2B boycotting influences consumer reactions to the social cause behind the boycotting. In the recent literature on boycotting it has been noted that increasing awareness of the social cause behind the boycott is a crucial and considerable outcome for boycotting (Makarem & Jae, 2016). Similarly, the role of B2B boycotting in consumer awareness of, and attitudes to, the social cause (e.g., stopping hate speech, in the case of the Facebook ad boycott) would be an interesting future research question.

Finally, it is important to assess how B2B boycotting can potentially backfire for the boycotting brands and the campaign. The nature of B2B boycotting can be controversial, which can be exacerbated by the controversy of certain focal issues behind it. For example, it could backfire for boycotting brands if employees do not approve of the activist behavior of the companies or identify with the social issues being tackled. It could also be detrimental if the motive were ostensibly self-interested or virtue-signaling or if the boycotting companies have their own share of problems relating to the focal social issues. Future research should examine how and when B2B boycotting could backfire.

7. Conclusion

The recent phenomenon of the Facebook ad boycott, and the associated advertisers boycotting Facebook, has received widespread public attention. However, it has not yet received sufficient academic attention from business ethics and CSR perspectives. The purpose of this research was to explore, on a preliminary basis, how consumers respond to this kind of phenomenon and its implications for CSI and CSR research. We argue that this B2B boycotting phenomenon is a matter of simultaneous CSI and CSR events. As a result, a more complex triadic framework is more suited to understanding consumer responses than any traditional dyadic framework. This triadic framework explains how consumers can react to both the transgressing brand and the boycotting brands and how the reactions can influence one another. Moreover, this framework has implications for both conventional CSI and CSR research, and it opens up many important future research avenues.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1996). Measuring brand equity across products and markets. *California Management Review*, *38*(3).

Afifi, W. A., & Burgoon, J. K. (2000). The impact of violations on uncertainty and the consequences for attractiveness. *Human Communication Research*, *26*(2), 203-233.

Antonetti, P., & Maklan, S. (2016). Social identification and corporate irresponsibility: a model of stakeholder punitive intentions. *British Journal of Management*, *27*(3), 583-605.

Antonetti, P., & Maklan, S. (2017). Concerned protesters: From compassion to retaliation. *European Journal of Marketing*.

Antonetti, P., & Maklan, S. (2018). Identity bias in negative word of mouth following irresponsible corporate behavior: A research model and moderating effects. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *149*(4), 1005-1023.

Antonetti, P., & Baghi, I. (2019). When Blame-Giving Crisis Communications are Persuasive: A Dual-Influence Model and Its Boundary Conditions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-20.

Aziz, A. (2020, June 24). Facebook Ad Boycott Campaign 'Stop Hate For Profit' Gathers Momentum And Scale: Inside The Movement For Change. Retrieved November 07, 2020, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/afdhelaziz/2020/06/24/facebook-ad-boycott-campaign-stop-hate-for-profit-gathers-momentum-and-scale-inside-the-movement-for-change/

Balabanis, G. (2013). Surrogate boycotts against multinational corporations: consumers' choice of boycott targets. *British Journal of Management*, *24*(4), 515-531.

Barone, M. J., Miyazaki, A. D., & Taylor, K. A. (2000). The influence of cause-related marketing on consumer choice: does one good turn deserve another?. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *28*(2), 248-262.

Bechwati, N. N., Sisodia, R. S., & Sheth, J. N. (2009). Developing a model of antecedents to consumers' perceptions and evaluations of price unfairness. *Journal of Business Research*, *62*(8), 761-767.

Becker-Olsen, K. L., Cudmore, B. A., & Hill, R. P. (2006). The impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, *59*(1), 46-53.

Bhagwat, Y., Warren, N. L., Beck, J. T., & Watson IV, G. F. (2020). Corporate sociopolitical activism and firm value. *Journal of Marketing*, *84*(5), 1-21.

Bhattacharya, C. B., Korschun, D., & Sen, S. (2009). Strengthening stakeholder–company relationships through mutually beneficial corporate social responsibility initiatives. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *85*(2), 257-272.

Borah, A., & Tellis, G. J. (2016). Halo (spillover) effects in social media: do product recalls of one brand hurt or help rival brands?. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *53*(2), 143-160.

Bradfield, M., & Aquino, K. (1999). The effects of blame attributions and offender likableness on forgiveness and revenge in the workplace. *Journal of Management*, *25*(5), 607-631.

Burgoon, J. K., & Le Poire, B. A. (1993). Effects of communication expectancies, actual communication, and expectancy disconfirmation on evaluations of communicators and their communication behavior. *Human Communication Research*, *20*(1), 67-96.

Burgoon, J. K. (1993). Interpersonal expectations, expectancy violations, and emotional communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 12(1-2), 30-48.

Carvalho, S. W., Muralidharan, E., & Bapuji, H. (2015). Corporate social 'irresponsibility': Are consumers' biases in attribution of blame helping companies in product–harm crises involving hybrid products?. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *130*(3), 651-663.

Cha, M. K., Yi, Y., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2016). Effects of customer participation in corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs on the CSR-brand fit and brand loyalty. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *57*(3), 235-249.

Chahal, H., & Sharma, R. D. (2006). Implications of corporate social responsibility on marketing performance: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Services Research*, 6(1).

Clark, C. E., Bryant, A. P., & Griffin, J. J. (2017). Firm engagement and social issue salience, consensus, and contestation. *Business & Society*, 56(8), 1136-1168.

Davies, G., & Olmedo-Cifuentes, I. (2016). Corporate misconduct and the loss of trust. *European Journal of Marketing*.

De Bock, T., Vermeir, I., & Van Kenhove, P. (2013). What's the harm in being unethical? These strangers are rich anyway! Exploring underlying factors of double standards. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *112*(2), 225-240.

Deng, X., & Xu, Y. (2017). Consumers' responses to corporate social responsibility initiatives: The mediating role of consumer–company identification. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *142*(3), 515-526.

Donaldson, T. (1982). *Corporations and morality*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Du, S., Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2011). Corporate social responsibility and competitive advantage: Overcoming the trust barrier. *Management Science*, *57*(9), 1528-1545.

Eilert, M., & Nappier Cherup, A. (2020). The activist company: Examining a company's pursuit of societal change through corporate activism using an institutional theoretical lens. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *39*(4), 461-476.

Ellen, P. S., Webb, D. J., & Mohr, L. A. (2006). Building corporate associations: Consumer attributions for corporate socially responsible programs. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *34*(2), 147-157.

Farquhar, P. H., Herr P. M., & Fazio R. H. (1990). A relational model for category extensions of brands. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 17 (1), 856–60.

Folkes, V. S. (1984). Consumer reactions to product failure: An attributional approach. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *10*(4), 398-409.

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *24*(4), 343-373.

Friedman, M. (1999). Consumer boycotts: Effecting change through the marketplace and the media. Psychology Press. New York: Routledge.

Gagliardone, I., Gal, D., Alves, T., & Martinez, G. (2015). *Countering online hate speech*. Unesco Publishing.

Ganesan, S., Brown, S. P., Mariadoss, B. J., & Ho, H. (2010). Buffering and amplifying effects of relationship commitment in business-to-business relationships. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *47*(2), 361-373.

Godfrey, P. C., Merrill, C. B., & Hansen, J. M. (2009). The relationship between corporate social responsibility and shareholder value: An empirical test of the risk management hypothesis. *Strategic Management Journal*, *30*(4), 425-445.

Gollnhofer, J. F., Weijo, H. A., & Schouten, J. W. (2019). Consumer movements and value regimes: Fighting food waste in Germany by building alternative object pathways. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *46*(3), 460-482.

Grappi, S., Romani, S., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2013). Consumer response to corporate irresponsible behavior: Moral emotions and virtues. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(10), 1814-1821.

Grewal, D., Gotlieb, J., & Marmorstein, H. (1994). The moderating effects of message framing and source credibility on the price-perceived risk relationship. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *21*(1), 145-153.

Hambrick, D. C., & Wowak, A. (2019). CEO sociopolitical activism: A stakeholder alignment model. *Academy of Management Review*.

He, H., Zhu, W., Gouran, D., & Kolo, O. (2016). Moral identity centrality and cause-related marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*

He, H., Chao, M. M., & Zhu, W. (2019). Cause-related marketing and employee engagement: The roles of admiration, implicit morality beliefs, and moral identity. *Journal of Business Research*, *95*, 83-92.

Hovland, C. E., Janie I. L., & Kelley H. H. (1953). Communication and persuasion. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Husted, B. W. (2015). Corporate social responsibility practice from 1800–1914: Past initiatives and current debates. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *25*(1), 125-141.

Ingram, R., Skinner, S. J., & Taylor, V. A. (2005). Consumers' evaluation of unethical marketing behaviors: The role of customer commitment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *62*(3), 237-252.

Kelley, H. H. (1972), Casual Schemata and the Attribution Process, Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.

Kelley, H. H. (1973). The processes of causal attribution. American Psychologist, 28(2), 107–128.

Klein, J. G., Smith, N. C., & John, A. (2004). Why we boycott: Consumer motivations for boycott participation. *Journal of Marketing*, *68*(3), 92-109.

Klein, J., & Dawar, N. (2004). Corporate social responsibility and consumers' attributions and brand evaluations in a product–harm crisis. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *21*(3), 203-217.

Kozinets, R. V., & Handelman, J. M. (2004). Adversaries of consumption: Consumer movements, activism, and ideology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *31*(3), 691-704.

Lamberti, L., & Lettieri, E. (2009). CSR practices and corporate strategy: Evidence from a longitudinal case study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *87*(2), 153-168.

Lange, D., Lee, P. M., & Dai, Y. (2011). Organizational reputation: A review. *Journal of Management*, *37*(1), 153-184.

Leonidou, L. C., Kvasova, O., Leonidou, C. N., & Chari, S. (2013). Business unethicality as an impediment to consumer trust: The moderating role of demographic and cultural characteristics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *112*(3), 397-415.

Lewicki, R. J., McAllister, D. J., & Bies, R. J. (1998). Trust and distrust: New relationships and realities. *Academy of Management Review*, *23*(3), 438-458.

Lin-Hi, N., & Müller, K. (2013). The CSR bottom line: Preventing corporate social irresponsibility. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(10), 1928-1936.

Lin, J. S & Sung, Y. (2014) Nothing can tear us apart: The effect of brand identity fusion in consumer–brand relationships. *Psychology & Marketing,* 31, 1, 54-69.

Lindenmeier, J., Schleer, C., & Pricl, D. (2012). Consumer outrage: Emotional reactions to unethical corporate behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(9), 1364-1373.

Loken, B., & Ward, J. (1990). Alternative approaches to understanding the determinants of typicality. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *17*(2), 111-126.

Maciel, A. F., & Fischer, E. (2020). Collaborative market driving: How peer firms can develop markets through collective action. *Journal of Marketing*, 0022242920917982.

Makarem, S. C., & Jae, H. (2016). Consumer boycott behavior: An exploratory analysis of twitter feeds. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, *50*(1), 193-223.

Mattila, A. S., & Hanks, L. (2013). Corporate volunteering programs and consumer perceptions: an information processing perspective. *Journal of Services Marketing*.

McAlister, D. T., & Ferrell, L. (2002). The role of strategic philanthropy in marketing strategy. *European Journal of Marketing*.

McWilliams, A., & Siegel, D. (2001). Profit maximizing corporate social responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, *26*(4), 504-505.

Monga, A. B., & John, D. R. (2008). When does negative brand publicity hurt? The moderating influence of analytic versus holistic thinking. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *18*(4), 320-332.

Newman, K. P., & Trump, R. K. (2017). When are consumers motivated to connect with ethical brands? The roles of guilt and moral identity importance. *Psychology & Marketing*, *34*(6), 597-609.

Paharia, N. (2020). Who receives credit or blame? The effects of made-to-order production on responses to unethical and ethical company production practices. *Journal of Marketing*, 84(1), 88-104.

Palihawadana, D., Oghazi, P., & Liu, Y. (2016). Effects of ethical ideologies and perceptions of CSR on consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(11), 4964-4969.

Peloza, J., & Shang, J. (2011). How can corporate social responsibility activities create value for stakeholders? A systematic review. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *39*(1), 117-135.

Romani, S., Grappi, S., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2013). My anger is your gain, my contempt your loss: Explaining consumer responses to corporate wrongdoing. *Psychology & Marketing*, *30*(12), 1029-1042.

Rotman, J. D., Khamitov, M., & Connors, S. (2018). Lie, cheat, and steal: How harmful brands motivate consumers to act unethically. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *28*(2), 353-361.

Russell, C. A., Russell, D. W., & Honea, H. (2016). Corporate social responsibility failures: How do consumers respond to corporate violations of implied social contracts?. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *136*(4), 759-773.

Scheidler, S., & Edinger-Schons, L. M. (2020). Partners in crime? The impact of consumers' culpability for corporate social irresponsibility on their boycott attitude. *Journal of Business Research*, *109*, 607-620.

Schmalz, S., & Orth, U. R. (2012). Brand attachment and consumer emotional response to unethical firm behavior. *Psychology & Marketing*, *29*(11), 869-884.

Sen, S., & Bhattacharya, C. B. (2001). Does doing good always lead to doing better? Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *38*(2), 225-243.

Sen, S., Gürhan-Canli, Z., & Morwitz, V. (2001). Withholding consumption: A social dilemma perspective on consumer boycotts. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *28*(3), 399-417.

Sen, S., Bhattacharya, C. B., & Korschun, D. (2006). The role of corporate social responsibility in strengthening multiple stakeholder relationships: A field experiment. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *34*(2), 158-166.

Siltaoja, M. E. (2006). Value priorities as combining core factors between CSR and reputation–a qualitative study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *68*(1), 91-111.

Sinha, J., & Lu, F. C. (2016). "I" value justice, but "we" value relationships: Self-construal effects on post-transgression consumer forgiveness. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *26*(2), 265-274.

Sjovall, A. M., & Talk, A. C. (2004). From actions to impressions: Cognitive attribution theory and the formation of corporate reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, *7*(3), 269-281.

Skarmeas, D., & Leonidou, C. N. (2013). When consumers doubt, watch out! The role of CSR skepticism. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(10), 1831-1838.

Smith, E. E. & Medin, D. L. (1981), Categories and Concepts. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Smith, N. C., Palazzo, G., & Bhattacharya, C. B. (2010). Marketing's consequences: Stakeholder marketing and supply chain corporate social responsibility issues. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 617-641.

Stop Hate for Profit. Retrieved November 07, 2020, from https://www.stophateforprofit.org/

Sweetin, V. H., Knowles, L. L., Summey, J. H., & McQueen, K. S. (2013). Willingness-to-punish the corporate brand for corporate social irresponsibility. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(10), 1822-1830.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of inter-group conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), The social psychology of inter-group relations (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Trump, R. K. (2014). Connected consumers' responses to negative brand actions: The roles of transgression self-relevance and domain. *Journal of Business Research*, *67*(9), 1824-1830.

Trump, R. K., & Newman, K. P. (2017). When do unethical brand perceptions spill over to competitors?. *Marketing Letters*, *28*(2), 219-230.

Van den Broek, T., Langley, D., & Hornig, T. (2017). The effect of online protests and firm responses on shareholder and consumer evaluation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *146*(2), 279-294.

Vlachos, P. A., Tsamakos, A., Vrechopoulos, A. P., & Avramidis, P. K. (2009). Corporate social responsibility: attributions, loyalty, and the mediating role of trust. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *37*(2), 170-180.

Wahrman, R. (2010). Status, deviance, and sanctions: A critical review. *Small Group Research*, *41*(1), 91-105.

Weijo, H. A., Martin, D. M., & Arnould, E. J. (2018). Consumer movements and collective creativity: The case of Restaurant Day. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *45*(2), 251-274.

Williams, R. J., & Barrett, J. D. (2000). Corporate philanthropy, criminal activity, and firm reputation: Is there a link?. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *26*(4), 341-350.

Xie, C., Bagozzi, R. P., & Grønhaug, K. (2015). The role of moral emotions and individual differences in consumer responses to corporate green and non-green actions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *43*(3), 333-356.

Xie, C., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2019). Consumer responses to corporate social irresponsibility: The role of moral emotions, evaluations, and social cognitions. *Psychology & Marketing*, *36*(6), 565-586.

Yang, H. T., & Yen, G. F. (2018). Consumer responses to corporate cause-related marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*.
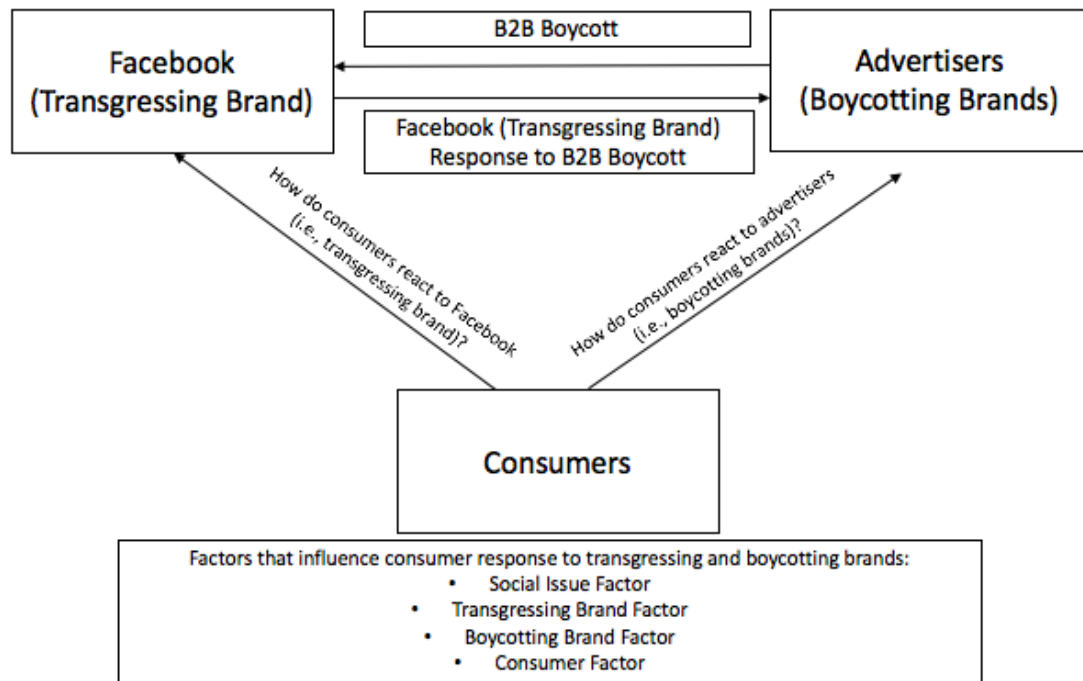
Figure 1: An Overview of How Consumers Respond to Facebook Ad Boycotting (B2B Boycotting)