CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT WITH SPECIFIC BRAND AND AS A GENERAL MEASURE: RELATIONSHIP AND BENEFITS FOR COMPANIES AND CONSUMERS

Abstract
In this article, we jointly analyze two streams of study of engagement in marketing literature: consumer engagement with a specific brand and brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) as a generalized tendency to include brands as a part of the self-concept. More specifically, our objective is to test a nomological network in which BESC represents an antecedent of the consumer engagement, and the latter has consequences for companies (corporate reputation) and consumers (perceived value) in social media. To validate this nomological network, we conducted two studies, one in the United States and one in Brazil, followed by a multigroup analysis to check the cross-cultural group invariance of the structural model. As a result, we showed that BESC is discriminant and an important antecedent of consumer engagement, and that consumers engaged with brand on Facebook generate benefits for companies, improving their corporate reputation, and for consumers, improving their perceived value.

Keywords: consumer engagement; corporate reputation; perceived value.

1. Introduction

Managers and researches are more concerned with how to best engage consumers (Marbach, Lages, & Nunan, 2016), specially because is a strategic way of looking at customer and stakeholder relationships. Besides a real competitive advantage, consumer engagement in social media promotes advantages for consumers and companies (Wirtz et al., 2013).

Previous studies have shown that engagement is a multidimensional construct composed of emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011; Brodie, Ilić, Jurić, & Hollebeek, 2013; Hollebeek, 2011a; 2011b), and also tested their nomological validity with antecedents as personality traits (Marbach et al., 2016), brand involvement (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014) or communication channel (Li, Berens, & Maertelaere, 2013), and with consequence as a corporate reputation (Dijkmans, Kerkhof, & Beukeboom, 2015), perceived value (Marbach et al., 2016), self-brand connection and brand usage intent (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

However, most studies have focused on engagement with a specific brand (e.g., Vivek, Beatty, Dalela, & Morgan, 2014), while few studies have analyzed brand engagement as a general measure (Sprott, Czellar, & Spangenberg, 2009) or the relationship between these two types of engagement (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2012). Likewise, while social media emerge as one of the main fields of study of consumer engagement, there are no quantitative studies that jointly analyze the benefits to consumers and brands.

Thus, in this research we analyzed the relationship between consumer engagement with a specific brand and brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) as a general measure of engagement. Being a trend to include important brands as part of their self-concept, we considered BESC as an antecedent of specific brand engagement, and we used corporate reputation (Dijkmans et al., 2015) and perceived value (Vivek et al., 2014) as consequence of the model, representing the benefits for brands and consumers respectively.

With the main objective of testing these relationships and validating the proposed theoretical framework, we conducted two surveys, one with Americans and the other with Brazilians. Our findings have shown that the dimensions of consumer engagement with specific

brands, conscious attention, enthused participation and social connection, are positively correlated and discriminant of BESC.

Regarding the model, our findings indicated that BESC is an important antecedent of consumer engagement, and the latter has a positive impact on corporate reputation and (directly and indirectly) on perceived value. Employing the multigroup analysis, we also confirmed the invariance of the models in the path and model level, guaranteeing nomological and cross-cultural validation.

We contribute to the literature by reinforcing theoretical relations, testing our theoretical framework, and especially by proposing and showing that brand engagement, in general, is different and important antecedent to engagement with specific brand. While the former acts as a tendency for people to consider important brands as part of their self-concept, the latter refers to engagement with a single brand.

Managerially, these findings show that marketers and managers could focus their efforts on people with higher levels of BESC for greater engagement with a brand, which in turn improves the corporate reputation and perceived value of consumers.

This research is divided into five other sections. In the following we define the constructs analyzed in this research, followed by hypotheses and theoretical framework. Next, we report the methodological procedures to operationalize the two studies, followed by their respective results and discussions. Finally, we conduct a cross-cultural validation and present the conclusions, limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review

Considering that consumer engagement is one of the most important constructs for analyzing the brand-consumer relationship in social media, in this section we review consumer engagement with specific brands and general engagement. Next, we present the discussion on corporate reputation and perceived value, representing the benefits of companies and consumers, respectively.

2.1. Consumer engagement and brand engagement in self-concept (besc)

Consumer engagement has been extensively studied in a number of areas (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a; 2011b) such as education, psychology, organization and more recently in marketing. Because the amplitude of studies on engagement, which varies depending on the subject, object, and context in which it is analyzed (Hollebeek, 2011a), terms as customer engagement and brand engagement reflect the same conceptual scope (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

We verify the coexistence of works that measure engagement as a one-dimensional and multidimensional construct. Researchers who opt for one-dimensional scales have attempted to aggregate cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects into this single dimension (Thomas, 2007), as well as others replicate multidimensional scales as a one-dimensional construct (Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2017).

Like most recent studies, we understand consumer engagement as a multidimensional construct, defined as a consumer's positive level of cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment with a focal object (Hollebeek, 2011b; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014), in specific direct (Hollebeek, 2011a) or indirect interactions.

We analyze consumer engagement with brand (object) in social media (context) and use the Vivek et al. (2014) as a measure of this construct. According to the authors, the engagement is composed of three dimensions: conscious attention (cognitive aspects), enthused participation (emotional and behavioral aspects) and social connection.

One implication of the definition adopted is that consumer engagement is analyzed with a specific object, for example, brands such as Apple (Vivek et al., 2014), LinkedIn (Hollebeek et al., 2014) or various brands (Dessart et al., 2016). However, there is a theoretical trend that has studied engagement as a general construct, without specifying a brand. This trend emerged with Sprott et al. (2009), who developed brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) scale that captures consumer's overall engagement with brands.

For the authors, BESC is "an individual difference representing consumers' propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves" (p. 92). In addition to developing the scale, Sprott et al. (2009) have shown that the consumer's BESC has effect on the memory links between themselves and favorite brands, have a positive effect on the attention, preference, and loyalty to brands that consumers see as part of themselves.

While Sprott et al. (2009) assume that individuals may include important brands from various product categories as part of their self-concept, Razmus and Laguna (2017) in a study conducted in Poland analyzed 20 product categories and showed that consumers include different product categories as part of the self-concept.

We believe that these two approaches (engagement with a specific brand and global brand engagement) are complementary and non-exclusive. Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012), for example, measured these two scales in a single study. They used a scale from Keller (2001) to engagement with a specific brand and six items from the scale of Sprott et al. (2009) as global engagement. As a result, the authors found that in addition to reliability and (convergent and discriminant) validity, scales are positively correlated.

2.2. Corporate reputation

Since the early 1980's Fortune's 'America's Most Admired Companies' is one of the key corporate reputation measures. In the marketing literature, Herbig and Milewicz (1993) have highlighted reputation in a historical perspective and by the consistency of actions over time, defining as an "aggregate composite of all previous transactions over the life of the entity, a historical notion, and requires consistency of an entity's actions over a prolonged time" (p. 18).

After, Weiss, Anderson, and MacInnis (1999) differentiate from image by defining reputation as an "overall judgment regarding the extent to which a firm is held in high esteem or regard" (p. 75). More recently, Walsh and Beatty (2007) kept the idea of general assessment but focused on the consumer, arguing that the literature focused on multiple stakeholder groups but largely neglecting end-use customers.

By recognizing the importance of consumers in relation to other stakeholders, we follow the assumption that all stakeholders share similar perceptions of the firm and we use the definition of corporate reputation as the "customer's overall evaluation of a firm based on his or her reactions to the firm's goods, services, communication activities, interactions with the firm and/or its representatives or constituencies (such as employees, management, or other customers) and/or known corporate activities" (Walsh & Beatty, 2007, p. 129).

Although consumers have perceptions regarding specific aspects of the company, fairness, quality or good practices, the literature suggests that consumers tend to have a global assessment of the organization, which justifies the use of reputation as a one-dimensional construct (Weiss et al., 1999). Therefore, we analyze corporate reputation through consumers and as a one-dimensional construct.

2.3. Perceived value

Perceived value is a concept widely studied in the business literature. Zeithaml (1988), in one of the main and most widely used definitions, indicated that perceived value is the

“consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given” (p. 14). However, its definition has been extended and used to measure the perceived value of services, brands and social media such as Facebook. Thus, perceived value is understood as consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product, service, brand or brand interaction based on perceptions of what the individual receives and gives.

Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007) showed in a systematic review of the literature how different currents measured perceived value. On the one hand, price-based studies generally treat it as one-dimensional, whereas approaches based on utilitarian and hedonic values or value hierarchy measure perceived value as a multidimensional construct. Finally, there are still works that use the means-end theory as uni- or multidimensional.

As there is no consensus on multidimensional measurement, whether in terms of which dimensions to use or whether they are formative or reflective constructs, despite critiques we used a one-dimensional measure of perceived value. In addition to this being the most common form of construct analysis (e.g., Kim et al., 2013; Vivek et al., 2014; Yang & Peterson, 2004), there is a greater facility in the quantitative operation of the construct.

3. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

3.1. Relation between consumer engagement with a specific brand and brand engagement in self-concept

As mentioned earlier, the consumer engagement literature indicates that people can engage with specific brands (e.g., Vivek et al., 2014), but also have a propensity to engage with brands in general (e.g., Sprott et al., 2009).

Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012) conducted an online survey of 366 American students, where they indicated the degree of engagement with the North Face, well-known brand of clothing, through a one-dimensional scale of Keller (2001) as well as the Level of engagement with brands in general by means of 6 of the 8 items of the scale of Sprott et al. (2009).

As a result, the authors found that the constructs were significantly ($p < .05$) and positively (.26) correlated. Although the measures have reliability and (convergence and discrimination) validity, the brand-specific engagement scale of Keller (2001) has some problems, such as multiple objects (brand website, news and merchandise) and a single dimension that includes affective, cognitive and behavioral items, besides Keller (2001) do not detail the development of this measure.

Considering the results of Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012) and using a multidimensional scale for specific brand engagement, we also propose that the measure of general engagement can act as an antecedent of engagement with specific brands:

H1: The dimensions of consumer engagement with a specific brand, conscious attention (H1a), enthused participation (H1b) and social connection (H1c), are positively correlated with brand engagement in self-concept (global brand engagement).

H2: Brand engagement in self-concept (global brand engagement) is positively associated with consumer engagement with a specific brand.

3.2. Relation between consumer engagement and corporate reputation

The relationship between consumer engagement and reputation has broad theoretical and empirical support (e.g., Alloza, 2008; van Doorn et al., 2010). Among the quantitative studies, Li et al. (2013) found that user engagement has a positive direct effect on corporate reputation, as well as mediating the relationship between channel credibility and corporate

reputation. Dijkmans et al. (2015) also found that engagement in company's social media activities have a direct effect on corporate reputation, as well as mediating the relationship of gender, age, customer (yes / no) and intensity of participants' social media use with the corporate reputation. In addition, the interaction between customer and engagement has also shown an effect on reputation, especially among non-customers. Considering these results, we hypothesize that:

H3: Consumer engagement with a specific brand is positively associated with corporate reputation.

3.3. Relation between consumer engagement and perceived value

Brodie et al. (2013) have identified that consumer engagement has many outcomes that may result from a level of perceived value co-creation. More recently, Kim et al. (2013) found that engagement motivations have a positive effect on the perceived value of mobile users. Vivek et al. (2014) also argue that customers positively engaged with the organization is likely to increase his/her perceived value, which makes this construct one of the most important outcomes of consumer engagement. Following the literature, we hypothesize that:

H4: Consumer engagement with a specific brand is positively associated with perceived value.

3.4. Relation between corporate reputation and perceived value

Despite this lack of consensus, most of the research that related these constructs generally considers corporate reputation as the antecedent of perceived value. For example, Hansen, Samuelsen, and Silseth (2008) found that corporate reputation had a substantially stronger effect on customer perceived value than the other drivers measured in B2B service relationships. Cretu and Brodie (2007) also empirically found that company reputation positively influences customer value. Considering these and other studies that have found a positive influence of corporate reputation on perceived value, we finally hypothesize that:

H5: Corporate reputation is positively associated with perceived value.

4. Method

To test the hypotheses and check the fit of the conceptual model, we performed two samplings. As the measures used were developed in the American context, we sampled with respondents from the United States. Besides, to increase the generalization potential of the findings, we translated the scales and revalidated the model with Brazilians. Finally, we performed a multigroup analysis to confirm the cross-cultural validity of our model.

4.1. Sample

In the first sampling, we used Amazon Mechanical Turk to access American respondents. As filter, we prevented people from other nationalities from viewing and responding to the survey. For a better guarantee, we have inserted questions related to the native language and the country of origin of the respondents. Also, only users with an active profile on Facebook who indicated a brand that used to interact in this space, and those who did not miss any of the attention checks could complete the survey.

In the second sample, we sent the survey through Vidi Shoppers, a Brazilian online database that has about 50 thousand people from different regions of the country. The survey was also sent for convenience to students from two institutions in different regions of the

country and acquaintances on Facebook. As an incentive, we offered five prizes of $15.00 to draw among respondents who completed the survey and did not miss paychecks. The filters were similar in both samples.

4.2. Measures

For the Portuguese sampling, we follow the steps recommended in the literature for translation of the measurements. Following Douglas and Craig (2007) for equivalence of measures, we asked five Ph.D. students or professors with various skills and experiences to translate the items. The English items were adapted to the context of the research, and in the two samplings we used seven-points for Likert scales.

Consumer engagement. There are several scales to measure consumer engagement, and the scale of Vivek et al. (2014) is one of the most widely used when a multidimensional scale is desired with good reliability and discrimination among its dimensions. Previous research has also used this scale in the context of social media composed of three dimensions: conscious attention (three items), enthused participation (four items) and social connection (three items).

BESC. In addition to measuring engagement with a specific brand, we adopted the scale of Sprott et al. (2009) as a measure of the tendency of consumers to engage with brands in general. Composed of a single dimension with eight items, this scale does not specify a brand, presenting items as "I have a special bond with the brands that I like" and "My favorite brands are an important indication of who I am".

Corporate reputation. Corporate reputation is measured as a global assessment of the company, not contextual. For example, we ask respondents to assess whether "[Brand] has a good overall reputation" instead of "[Brand] has a good overall reputation on social media". According to Walsh and Beatty (2007), considering the consumer as one of the most important stakeholder, we limit ourselves to measuring corporate reputation through this group. As the literature suggests that consumers tend to have an overall assessment of the organization (Weiss et al., 1999), we used a one-dimensional scale composed of 4 items adapted from Ponzi et al. (2011) and Nguyen and Leblanc (2001).

Perceived value. Perceived value is one of the most problematic measurement constructs due to its contextual character that often requires major adaptations. For example, there are specific measures for durable products (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), services (Petrick, 2002) or brands (Vivek et al., 2014). On the other hand, there is also no consensus on the dimensionality and the formative or reflexive nature of the construct. Among the measures analyzed, we selected the one-dimensional scale of Kim et al. (2013), composed of three items that originally analyzed the perceived value of the use of mobile technology, in which we adapted to interact with publications related to the brand on Facebook.

4.3. Pretests

In the sampling with Americans, we received 68 complete answers, of which 63 were considered valid. Most were women (63.5%), married (54%), with higher education level (39.7% complete and 22.2% incomplete), income between US$3,000 and U$$6,000 (42.9%) and with a mean age of 36.35 (12.68) and 47 different brands were indicated. Most of these brands belonged to sectors such as technology, retail, clothing, beverage and food.

In the sampling with Brazilians, we received 76 complete answers. Of these, 55 were considered valid after excluding answers with a response time of less than three minutes and with a standard deviation of less than .50 among all items in the scales. Most were women (70.9%), married (49.1%), with higher education level (41.8% complete and 25.5% incomplete), income between US$1,000 and US$3,000 (34.5%) and with a mean age of 36.16

(10.81) and 48 different brands were indicated. Most of these brands belonged to sectors such as technology, beverage, food, football club, retail, and clothing.

As can be seen, the two samples, although using different strategies and having been carried out in different countries, presented great similarity. Both the pretests and the final surveys were elaborated in the Qualtrics. As the pretests indicate small adjustments.

4.4. Analysis and Procedure

Considering that we prioritize the fit of the model, we use Amos 22.0 software to analyze the data employing covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM), most suitable when testing, confirming or comparing theories. We first performed the confirmatory factor analysis for each of the constructs, analyzing the reliability and validity of the constructs separately, and then performing the structural model analysis.

As a criterion of reliability, convergent and discriminant validity we follow Fornell and Larcker (1981). Besides, we used Cronbach's alpha as a measure of reliability and Bagozzi and Phillips (1982) discriminant test as a complementary analysis. Finally, the adjustment of the structural model took into account the chi-square per degree of freedom ($\chi 2/df$), GFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA indices for the model fit. According to the literature, the fit of the model is confirmed with the following values: $\chi 2/df < 5.0$; GFI > .90; TLI > .95; CFI > .95 and RMSEA < .08 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Besides, we also check the common method bias by Harman single factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

5. Results and discussion

Although we have conducted two surveys, in this section we report together the results of each step of the two surveys, making it easier to compare the results between the two surveys.

5.1. Sample description

In the survey with Americans, we received 406 complete answers, 341 of which were considered valid after excluding answers that presented problems in the degree of agreement or response time. After standardization of the data, only 24 discrepant observations were recoded at least non-discrepant in the valid responses.

Of these, most were of women (54.8%), single (47.5%) or married (41.6%), with higher education level (36.7% complete and 12% incomplete), income between US$3,000 and US$6,000 (31.4%) and with a mean age of 35.1 (11.12). A total of 219 different brands were cited, in which the most frequent were Apple (31), Nike (25), Coca-Cola (9), Adidas (5), Microsoft (5), Target (5). We highlight technology, beverage, food, clothing and retail sectors.

In the survey with Brazilians, we received 654 complete answers, of which we considered 445 valid after excluding the answers with problems in the attention checks, low standard deviation or questionnaires answered quickly. Only 19 discrepant observations were verified. In relation to the description of the sample, most were of women (61.1%), single (55.7%) or married (36.9%), with higher education level (29.7% complete and 28.5% incomplete), income between US$1,000 and US$3,000 (33.9%) and with a mean age of 33.1 (10.13). A total of 214 different brands were cited, in which the most frequent were Netshoes (33), Cacau Show (24), Apple (19), Heineken (17), Corinthians (16), Netflix (15), Nike (15), Flamengo (9), Samsung (8) and Coca-Cola (7). Among the sectors most cited, we highlight the football club, beverage, food, technology, retail, clothing, cosmetics and beauty.

The two surveys showed similar results regarding gender, age, education and marital status, differing more and relation to income, something expected if we consider that the

average income of the American is well above Brazilian. The results are also similar to those found in the pretests, showing stability in the different collections.

Regarding the items of the scales (Table 1), we observed that in the sample with Americans the consumer engagement with a specific brand was greater for the dimension conscious attention (5.28), and smaller for the dimension enthused participation (4.09), closer to the central point and was also the least average construct. BESC was slightly above the midpoint (4.55), while the corporate reputation was the highest average (5.84), and perceived value of brand interaction on Facebook was also slightly above the midpoint (5.10).

For the research with Brazilians, the results were very similar. Among the dimensions of consumer engagement with specific brands, conscious attention presented the highest mean (5.19), while enthused participation had the lowest (4.01). BESC was also close to the American sample (4.59), as well as the high corporate reputation (5.88). The mean perceived value was slightly lower than that reported by Americans (4.93).

Table 1. Scales for constructs measurement and descriptive statistics.

Construct	Source	Item	Items description	Americans		Brazilians	
				M	SD	M	SD
Conscious Attention	Vivek et al. (2014)	CA1	Publications related to the [Brand] community on Facebook grabs my attention	5.47	1.15	5.24	1.54
		CA2	I like to learn more about [Brand] through its Facebook community	5.28	1.23	5.00	1.62
		CA3	I pay a lot of attention to the publications related to the [Brand] community on Facebook	5.08	1.37	5.34	1.48
Enthused Participation	Vivek et al. (2014)	EP1	I spend a lot of my discretionary time interacting with [Brand] community on Facebook	3.99	1.61	3.55	1.90
		EP2	I am heavily into [Brand] community on Facebook*	4.49	1.51	4.47	1.82
		EP3	I am passionate about publications on [Brand] community on Facebook*	4.53	1.49	5.12	1.55
		EP4	My days would not be the same without the [Brand] community on Facebook	3.33	1.57	2.92	1.86
Social Connection	Vivek et al. (2014)	SC1	I like to interact with the [Brand] community on Facebook when my friends are also interacting	4.78	1.34	4.53	1.76
		SC2	I enjoy [Brand] community on Facebook more when there are other people interacting	4.88	1.37	4.69	1.63
		SC3	It is more fun to interact with the [Brand] community on Facebook when other people participate in the interaction	5.04	1.33	4.83	1.67
BESC	Sprott et al. (2009)	Besc1	I have a special bond with the brands that I like	4.67	1.50	4.98	1.65
		Besc2	I consider my favorite brands to be a part of myself*	4.39	1.55	4.09	1.82
		Besc3	I often feel a personal connection between my brands and me	4.56	1.47	4.62	1.73
		Besc4	Part of me is defined by important brands in my life*	13	1.55	3.98	1.82
		Besc5	I feel as if I have a close personal connection with the brands I most prefer	4.55	1.45	4.62	1.79
		Besc6	I can identify with important brands in my life	5.00	1.32	4.93	1.60
		Besc7	There are links between the brands that I prefer and how I view myself	4.63	1.44	4.85	1.59
		Besc8	My favorite brands are an important indication of who I am	4.47	1.49	4.62	1.70
Corporate Reputation	Adapted from Ponzi et al. (2011) and Nguyen and Leblanc (2001)	Rep1	[Brand] is a company that I trust	5.87	1.00	5.14	1.49
		Rep2	[Brand] has a good overall reputation	5.98	1.04	5.31	1.42
		Rep3	In general, I believe that [Brand] always fulfills the promises it makes to its customers	5.52	1.12	5.37	1.39
		Rep4	[Brand] has a good reputation	5.99	1.02	5.33	1.34
Perceived Value	Kim et al. (2013)	PV1	Interacting with publications related to [Brand] on Facebook is an enjoyable experience	5.33	1.16	5.42	1.29
		PV2	The overall value of my experience with publications related to [Brand] on Facebook is outstanding	5.24	1.21	4.92	1.42
		PV3	Interacting with publications related to [Brand] on Facebook represents a good use of my time	4.74	1.44	4.45	1.64

Notes — *Excluded items; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; n = 341 for Americans and n = 455 for Brazilians.

Probably, as we asked respondents to choose the brand they most interacted with, they chose brands with a high corporate reputation, explaining the high average for this construct. It is also easy to understand the lower mean for enthused participation in the two surveys, considering that this dimension involves behavioral aspects that demand greater effort on the part of the respondents.

5.2. Result for each construct

As previously mentioned, before analyzing the structural model we perform the CFAs for each construct. Results for research with Americans showed high factorial loads (between .66 and .86) and good composite reliability of the scales (between .83 and .95). Despite this, the scale of consumer engagement with specific brand presented a problem of discrimination between conscious attention and enthused participation, and even with good initial adjustment ($\chi2$ (32) = 90.319 ($p < .001$); $\chi2/df$ = 2.822; GFI = .946; TLI = .957; CFI = .970; and RMSEA = .073), we opted to exclude EP2 and EP3, which correlated with the conscious attention dimension. In addition to improving model fit ($\chi2$ (17) = 46.115 ($p < .001$); $\chi2/df$ = 2.713; GFI = .966; TLI = .963; CFI = .978; and RMSEA = .071), the exclusion of these items resulted in discriminatory constructs.

The BESC scale did not present a good RMSEA (.11) due to the high modification indices of items Besc2 and Besc4. As Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012), who excluded these two items, we reanalyzed the construct with the other 6 items and found a substantial improvement in the model adjustment indexes ($\chi2$ (9) = 22.882 ($p = .006$); $\chi2/df$ = 2.542; GFI = .976; TLI = .986; CFI = .991; and RMSEA = .067). The 4 items of corporate reputation (factor-loading ranged from .72 to .86) and the 3 items of perceived value (factor-loading ranged from .75 to .83) also showed good composite reliability (CR> .70) and high average variance extracted (AVE > .50).

The research with Brazilians showed very similar results, with factor-loading ranged from .63 to .87 and composed reliability ranged from .77 to .94. Again, there was no discrimination between conscious attention and enthused perceived, indicating that EP2 and EP3 do not fit well in the context of social media, presenting high relation with the conscious attention and enthused participation. With the exclusion of these items, we found discrimination between the dimensions of engagement, good reliability and model fit ($\chi2$ (17) = 31.801 ($p = .016$); $\chi2/df$ = 1.871; GFI = .982; TLI = .983; CFI = .989; and RMSEA = .044).

Again, the high modification indices between Besc2 and Besc4 (24.85) reduced the adjustment indices. When we excluded these items, the fit of the model was better ($\chi2$ (9) = 22.960 ($p = .006$); $\chi2/df$ = 2.551; GFI = .983; TLI = .987; CFI = .992; and RMSEA = .059). The corporate reputation scale (factor-loading ranged from .71 to .86) and perceived value (factor-loading ranged from .71 to .78) also presented high composite reliability and AVE.

5.3. Result of the structural model

Initially, we performed a CFA correlating all the constructs of the model to verify the existence of correlation between the constructs, in addition to the reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs.

In Table 2 below, we detail the results of the American survey. All constructs are positively and significantly correlated, ranging from .32 to .88. The constructs also showed good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha between .75 and .93, and composed reliability between .75 and .94. The AVE varied between .61 and .71, indicating the convergent validity of the constructs.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix, reliability, convergent and discriminant validity (sampling with Americans).

	M	SD	α	CR	CA	EP	SC	BESC	REP	PV
Conscious attention (CA)	5.28	1.27	.84	.84	**.64**	.45	.61	.32	.42	.77
Enthused participation (EP)	3.66	1.63	.75	.75	.67***	**.61**	.41	.40	.10	.42
Social connection (SC)	4.90	1.35	.83	.83	.78***	.64***	**.62**	.35	.18	.49
BESC	4.65	1.46	.93	.94	.56***	.63***	.59***	**.71**	.24	.44
Corporate reputation (REP)	5.84	1.06	.88	.88	.65***	.32***	.42***	.49***	**.66**	.60
Perceived value (PV)	5.10	1.30	.83	.84	.88***	.65***	.70***	.66***	.77***	**.63**

Notes — M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composed reliability; ***bivariate correlations between the constructs significant at $p < 0.001$; AVEs are shown on the diagonal (in bold); squared correlations are shown above the diagonal; n = 341.

Concerning discriminant validity, we compared the AVEs of all possible pairs of constructs with the square of the correlation between them. Of the 15 possible combinations, 14 presented discrimination according to Fornell and Larcker (1981). The only exception was between the constructs conscious attention and perceived value, with the square of the correlation (.77) greater than AVE of CA (.64) and PV (.63).

As there was no discrimination between CA and PE, we performed an additional test following the procedures suggested by Bagozzi and Phillips (1982). Comparing the model with the two unconstrained constructs with another model in which the correlation between the constructs is constrained equal to 1.0, we compared the difference of $\chi 2$ and the difference of chi-square ($\Delta\chi 2$/ (Δdf)). As a result, $\Delta\chi 2$ (1) was 35.14, was 35.14, which exceeded the 10.83 threshold and suggests that the constructs are discriminant with $p < .001$.

In relation to the structural model in American research (see Figure 1), we found a good fit of the model ($\chi 2$ (182) = 413.087 ($p < .001$); $\chi 2/df$ = 2.270; GFI = .897; TLI = .945; CFI = .952; and RMSEA = .061). The standardized regression weights (βs) between constructs were positive (between .34 and .71) and significant ($p < .001$).

Finally, we also checked the common method variance to see if our data were affected by the collection strategy. As the first factor with all items explained less than 50% of the data variance (46.6%), we understand that the results are not very influenced by the bias of the method (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Concerning the survey with Brazilians, our results showed some similarity with the results found with the sampling with Americans. All correlations were also significant and positive, varying between .15 and .81. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .74 to .92, and composite reliability ranged from .75 to 92, while AVE ranged from .52 to .66, indicating the reliability and convergence of constructs, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix, reliability, convergent and discriminant validity (sampling with Brazilians).

	M	SD	α	CR	CA	EP	SC	BESC	REP	PV
Conscious attention (CA)	5.19	1.55	.77	.77	**.52**	.50	.35	.18	.23	.65
Enthused participation (EP)	3.23	1.91	.74	.75	.71***	**.60**	.35	.22	.02	.55
Social connection (SC)	4.68	1.69	.85	.85	.59***	.59***	**.65**	.15	.04	.25
BESC	4.77	1.69	.92	.92	.44***	.47***	.38***	**.66**	.12	.25
Corporate reputation (REP)	5.88	1.15	.88	.88	.47***	.15**	.19***	.35***	**.65**	.29
Perceived value (PV)	4.93	1.51	.79	.80	.81***	.75***	.50***	.50***	.54***	**.56**

Notes — M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composed reliability; ***bivariate correlations between the constructs significant at $p < 0.001$ or at **$p < 0.01$; AVEs are shown on the diagonal (in bold); squared correlations are shown above the diagonal; n = 445.

Again, the discriminant validity by Fornell and Larcker (1981) indicated that 14 of the 15 possible pairs of constructs are discriminant, in that the pairs have AVE greater than the square of the correlation between them. Again, we turn to Bagozzi and Phillips (1982) for further verification of the discrimination between conscious attention and perceived value.

Comparing the model with the two constructs unconstrained with another model in which the correlation between the constructs is constrained equal to 1.0, the chi-square per degrees of freedom ($\Delta\chi2/\Delta df$) variation was 52.31, which exceeded the 10.83 threshold and suggests that the constructs are discriminant with $p < .001$.

The structural model of the research with Brazilians (see Figure 1) showed a higher model fit than that found in the American survey ($\chi2$ (182) = 379.730 ($p < .001$); $\chi2/df$ = 2.086; GFI = .925; TLI = .956; CFI = .962; and RMSEA = .049). The standardized regression weights (βs) between constructs were positive (between .23 and .80) and significant ($p < .001$). Regarding the common method bias, the Brazilian research showed that the first factor extracted with all the items of the research presented only 33.1% of the data variance, not having a great influence on the data, which leads us to discard common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In a brief comparison, although the results were similar, the US base presented constructs with higher reliability and AVE (except for social connection), while the Brazilian survey presented a better adjustment indices of the model.

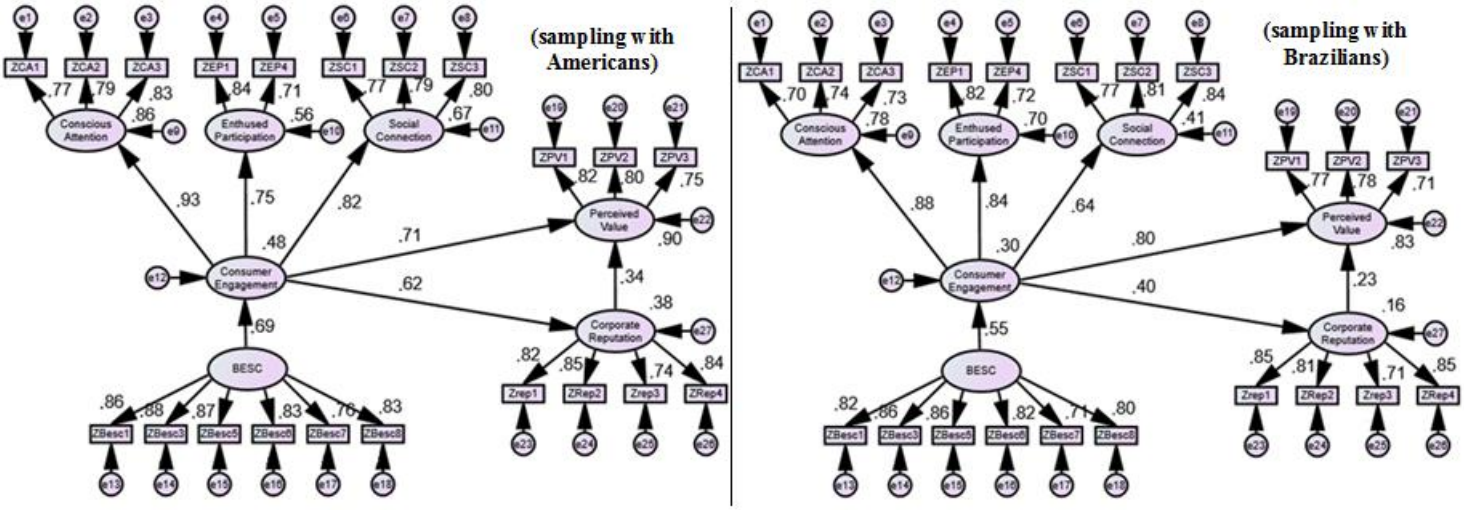


Figure 1. Hypothesized structural model (sampling with Brazilians).

5.4. Hypothesis test

As we hypothesized earlier, we expected that the dimensions of consumer engagement with a particular brand and BESC, a measure of overall engagement, would be positively correlated (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2012). According to results presented in Table 2 and 3, these constructs also have reliability and are discriminant.

In Table 4 below, we show that this result was confirmed in the two surveys, with Americans and Brazilians, supporting H1a, H1b, and H1c. In both surveys, BESC was more correlated with the dimension enthused participation, while conscious attention presented lower correlation in the research with Americans and social connection was the lowest in the Brazilian survey. Regarding H2, H3, H4, and H5, the results of the structural model (see Figure 1) also indicated support in the two surveys. Table 5 below details these results, confirming H2, H3, H4 and H5.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing results (correlations).

No.	Hypothesis	Americans		Brazilians		Result
		Cor	($t_{critical}$)	Cor	($t_{critical}$)	
H1a	Conscious attention is positively correlated with brand engagement in self-concept (global brand engagement).	.56	7.604	.44	6.722	Confirmed
H1b	Enthused participation is positively correlated with brand engagement in self-concept (global brand engagement)	.63	8.277	.47	7.469	Confirmed
H1c	Social connection is positively correlated with brand engagement in self-concept (global brand engagement)	.59	7.767	.38	6.443	Confirmed

Notes — Cor = Correlation; $p < .001$; American sample n = 341; Brazilian sample n = 445.

Table 5. Hypothesis testing results.

No.	Hypothesis	Americans		Brazilians		Result
		β	($t_{critical}$)	β	($t_{critical}$)	
H2	BESC (global brand engagement) is positively associated with consumer engagement with a specific brand.	.69	11.058	.55	8.976	Confirmed
H3	Consumer engagement with a specific brand is positively associated with corporate reputation.	.62	9.411	.40	6.482	Confirmed
H4	Consumer engagement with a specific brand is positively associated with perceived value.	.71	10.335	.80	10.581	Confirmed
H5	Corporate reputation is positively associated with perceived value.	.34	6.392	.23	4.947	Confirmed

Notes — β: Standardized regression weight; $p < .001$; American sample n = 341; Brazilian sample n = 445.

In the US survey, the effect of BESC on consumer engagement was above of the Brazilian research (β = .69 versus .55), as well as the effect of corporate reputation on consumer engagement (β = .62 versus .40) and corporate reputation on perceived value (β = .34 versus .23).

Concerning the effect of consumer engagement on perceived value, the effect of the survey among Brazilians was slightly higher than in the US survey (β = .80 versus .71). On the other hand, if we consider only the indirect effect (mediated by reputation), it was higher among Americans (β = .21 versus .09) with 5000 bootstrap samples at 95% confidence level. Besides the partial mediation in the two samples ($p < .001$), this result shows that the engagement has a strong direct and indirect effect on the perceived value in both surveys.

In our model, 48% of the consumer engagement variance was explained by BESC among Americans and 55% among Brazilians. Regarding dependents, in the American survey, 38% of the variance of corporate reputation and 16% among Brazilians was explained by consumer engagement. Finally, 90% of the variance of perceived value was explained by the model among Americans (consumer engagement and corporate reputation), while among Brazilians this value drops to 83%.

If we consider as a direct relation the correlations of the dimensions of consumer engagement with corporate reputation and perceived value (see Table 2 and 3), the mean correlation tends to be higher in the US survey, especially between corporate reputation and CA (.65 versus .47), PE (.32 versus .15) and SC (.42 versus .19), and between perceived value and SC (.70 versus .50). Across the two contexts, conscious attention presented the highest correlations with corporate reputation and perceived value. Social connection showed a higher correlation with corporate reputation and perceived value among Americans, while enthused participation was higher among Brazilians.

5.5. Cross-cultural validation

As the isolated analysis of the bases indicated many differences between the two

samplings, such as reliability and validity of the constructs, model fit or relation between variables, we decided to check the cross-cultural validity of the model. For Dessart et al. (2016), the global nature of social media interactions justifies the cross-cultural validation of our model.

To verify intercultural validity, we used the invariance test in AMOS multigroup analysis function. We carry the two bases distinguishing one group as Americans and the other as Brazilians. Then, we set up two models, one unconstrained (Figures 1). As a result, the adjustment indexes were excellent ($\chi2$ (364) = 792.865 ($p < .001$); $\chi2/df$ = 2.178; GFI = .913; TLI = .951; CFI = .958; and RMSEA = .039), being a good indicator of the invariance of the models.

In addition, to perform a more formal test, we set up another model, now constrained ($\chi2$ (385) = 822.830 ($p < .001$); $\chi2/df$ = 2.137; GFI = .909; TLI = .953; CFI = .957; and RMSEA = .038). As cut-off criterion, we adopted $p < .05$ in the comparison of the difference of chi-square per degrees of freedom and $p < .01$ in the comparison of the other indexes reported (GFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA). As a result ($\Delta\chi2(29.965)$ / Δdf (21) = 1.43 ($p = .093$); ΔGFI = .004 ΔTLI = -.002; ΔCFI = .001; ΔRMSEA = .001), we confirm the invariance at the structural model level.

As some regression weights showed a large difference between the US and Brazilian surveys, we also performed path level tests. According to Table 6, even when we constrained only one path between the constructs (H2-H5), we found the invariance of the results between the two samples ($p < .01$), indicating that there was also invariance in the path level.

Table 6. Invariance test among the sample with Americans and Brazilians.

Level	$\Delta\chi2/\Delta df$	*p*-value	ΔGFI	ΔTLI	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Structural model	1.430	.093	.004	-.002	.001	.001
BESC-Eng	5.338	.021	.001	.000	.001	.000
Eng-Rep	3.274	.070	.001	.000	.001	.000
Eng-PV	1.760	.185	.001	.000	.001	.000
Rep-PV	2.999	.083	.001	.000	.001	.000

6. Conclusion

Our main objective in this research involved the operationalization of the proposed theoretical framework. To do so, we conducted two surveys with respondents from different countries, from the United States and Brazil, and showed the cross-cultural stability of the model tested. In addition to empirically testing this model, we have analyzed the relationship between consumer engagement with a particular brand and BESC as a measure of overall engagement. While a general measure, BESC represent a trait of the individual, in which individuals have different levels of engaging with brands in self-concept. As Marbach et al. (2016) have already indicated that personality traits are important antecedents of consumer engagement, we proposed that BESC predicts consumer engagement with a specific brand.

Just as Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012), who had correlated the constructs, we found that these constructs are positively related. Differently from these, we observed consumer engagement as a multidimensional construct, in which all dimensions presented a high correlation with BESC, either for research with Americans or with Brazilians.

Besides the correlation and discrimination between BESC and consumer engagement, our results showed that BESC is an important predictor of consumer engagement (second order construct), explaining 48% of the variance in the research with Americans and 30% in the research with Brazilians.

Regarding the consequences of the model, we find that companies can improve corporate reputation by engaging consumers in social media. In addition to the significant and positive correlation with conscious attention, enthused participation and social connection, consumer engagement explained 38% of the variance of reputation in the sample with Americans and 16% among Brazilians, reinforcing other studies that analyzed this relationship

(Alloza, 2008; Dijkmans et al., 2015, Li et al., 2013).

We also confirm that consumers perceived value in their interaction with the brand in social media. The effect of consumer engagement on perceived value has already been confirmed in other contexts (Kim et al., 2013; Vivek et al., 2014), and we confirm it in social media. As these constructs are contextual, our results reinforce this theoretical relationship, in which 50% of the variance of perceived value was explained by engagement in American research, and 64% in Brazilian research. These results are in agreement with previous research, which showed that the engagement is directly linked to the perception of value of the consumers (Marbach et al., 2016). Also, we found an indirect effect of engagement, partially mediated by corporate reputation.

Although the relationship between corporate reputation and perceived value is still the subject of strong discussion, our results support that corporate reputation has a positive relation with perceived value, accounting for 12% of its variance in research with Americans and 5% in research with Brazilians, in the presence of consumer engagement as another antecedent. Together, 90% of the variance of perceived value was explained in the research with Americans and 83% in the research with Brazilians.

The analysis of the model with Americans and Brazilians allowed us to check the invariance of the model. We confirmed through multigroup analysis that both in model and path level the models are equivalent, indicating cross-cultural validity and model invariance.

In addition to the theoretical implications, our results have some managerial implications. First, our theoretical model has cross-cultural validity and was carried out in relation to several brands. This suggests that in addition to the internal validity, our findings have good external validity and are valid for companies from multiple sectors.

Second, we have shown that an important predictor of consumer engagement with a brand is something intrinsic, defined as BESC. In addition to managing the brand in social media in order to promote greater engagement, managers could attract people with a greater tendency to engage with brands in the self-concept, since this represents a trait that explains part of the engagement of the consumers.

Third, we have also found that brand management in social media can improve corporate reputation and is important in planning relationship marketing strategies. Other research outcome, perceived value, indicates that consumers perceive advantages in engaging with brands in social media. Nielsen (2012) reports have already indicated that consumers perceive positively the interaction with brands in social media, and managers can take advantage of the fact that consumers also perceive benefits of this interaction and increase perceived value, whether through utilitarian, hedonic, identity or social aspects.

Finally, our research presents some limitations that also represent research opportunities. First, we do not study the processes that promote higher BESC. Not even Sprott et al. (2009) who developed the scale, filled this gap. Future research could analyze the process that facilitates BESC or how to segment and attract consumers with this feature.

As we asked respondents to indicate the brands with which they interacted the most, our data showed a high average for the corporate reputation construct. Possibly, respondents chose the strongest brands in their respective sector. In this way, our results can be limited to companies with a high corporate reputation, representing an opportunity for future research, in which one could focus on brands with low reputation.

We analyze consumer engagement as a second-order construct, using the correlation of its dimensions for nomological validation with antecedent and consequence. Future studies could prioritize direct relationships (with dimensions of engagement) and check the discrimination between conscious attention and perceived value. Finally, we also use one-dimensional measures of corporate reputation and perceived value, facilitating nomological validity, but simplifying the nature of constructs.

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