The risks of online ambassadorship: can unethical organizational behavior spill-over on employee's reputation?

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ABSTRACT

Practices such as encouraging employees to promote the company's actions on private social media accounts are today part of corporate reputation strategies and contribute to the normalisation of employees as communication agent for corporate interests. While those practices are sometimes encouraged within organisations, employees also engage spontaneously in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook, sharing corporate posts, thereby signalling their support and loyalties to a vast and diverse audience. Employees are often oblivious of the possible repercussions and risks of presenting themselves as ambassadors of their company's actions on Facebook. In controversial industries however, employees sometimes intentionally do not disclose the identity of their employer and their job satisfaction to protect their personal reputation.

The present research argues that stigma transfer from tainted corporate reputation to employees' reputation is a resulting risk of engaging in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook. The objective of this project is to understand the mechanisms and the key characteristics of stigma transfer from organisations to employees through the moral judgements of outsiders. The context of this type of stigma transfer is analysed in depth, from the mediated and framed information acquisition to the human tendency to be attracted by negative information and the role of negative emotions in the formation of moral judgements of others. The motivations for employees to engage in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook are also investigated.

A hundred and eighty representant of the general working population participated in an online experiment. The experimental design was aimed at measuring participants' experience of negative emotions and their judgments of a fictitious employee's morality and ability after reading negatively framed information about his fictitious company. The employee was sharing a post from his company active in the oil and gas industry, along with

his pride to be working for the company. The conducted experiment followed a 3 (framing: positive vs negative vs neutral) by 2 (engagement: low vs high) factorial design. The findings confirmed that negative media frames negatively impact the judgements of the employee's morality made by outsiders. Moreover, the employee's active display of engagement with his company on Facebook also influences outsiders' judgements of his morality, albeit positively, which emphasizes the importance of adherence to social media norms. The significant mediator role of negative emotions in the relationship of negative media framing and the formation of judgements of morality is also highlighted by the results. This study contributes to organizational and stigma by association literature by integrating framing theories, negativity bias, the role of emotions in moral judgements, and employee engagement in its framework. Its findings might inform both employees' behaviours on Facebook and Human Resources departments in establishing best practices around social media use outside work.

KEYWORDS: *Organizational Stigma, Moral Judgment, Framing, Emotions, Facebook*

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1. Introduction

A person hiding the identity of her employer and her job satisfaction to protect her personal reputation, illustrates the organisational stigma transfer to employees. Indeed, the stigma by association effect has been observed in work-related relationships, between individuals, groups, and organisations (Pryor et al., 2012). What Goffman (1963) called "courtesy stigma", is today referred to as "stigma by association" and is the process by which a "'normal" individual is stigmatised by others as a function of his or her association with a marked individual or group" (Neuberg et al., 1994, p. 197). Sociology and psychology have identified stigmatizing elements such as race, social classes, illnesses, physical and mental disabilities, or sexual orientations (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). Meanwhile, organisational literature has directed its attention to the associations of high-status members with low-status members, or to the transfer of stigma from members to non-members (Kulik et al., 2008).

Employees are increasingly using social media to support their organisations, in the hope to benefit from the positive organisational reputation of the company. High organisational identification is also likely to motivate employees to engage in behaviours that demonstrate their support to collective goals, making them part of a desirable team (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). On social media, those behaviours turn employees in voluntary, genuine, and valuable ambassadors of the organisation (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). While the risks and benefits of employees' ambassadorship behaviours for companies have been discussed in the literature, the potential transfer of corporate stigma to employees has received little attention. Employees' ambassadorship behaviours on social media are considered in this research to align with a high degree of online engagement with a company, while employees' affiliation on social media is considered to reflect a low degree of engagement. Ambassadorship behaviours are conceptualised as the voluntary and spontaneous promotion of the company's goals by employees on social media. It is characterised by the spreading of information that favours the company, such as sharing recruitment information, organizational news, or events, and promotional/marketing content (Van Zoonen et al., 2016).

Hudson and Okhuyzen (2009) explain that organisations negatively stigmatized because of their core business, sometimes need shielding strategies to protect their

stakeholders and employees' moral reputations. Additionally, consumers with new expectations, the development of mobile technologies, and evolving paradigms on the meaning of work and business, has made it increasingly easier for a company to be on the wrong side of public's moral perceptions (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). Moreover, ethical norms regarding business conduct have become stricter as media coverage of corporate and environmental scandals have increased (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). Media practices have also evolved partly due to the incredible competitiveness of the market, which has pushed media outlets into a battle for the public's attention. As a result, the coverage of scandals and the use of negative media frames has increased as they tend to stick more and longer in people's mind (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Sensationalism, reductionism, and short stories progressively replace in depth journalistic investigations (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Those new practices coupled with negative news and media frames motivate outsiders to question the morality of organisations active in controversial industries, such as the oil and gas industry. This increased attention and scepticism can potentially spill over to an employee's reputation, provided they show a tight association with the stigmatised company. Media framing is conceptualized in this research as a process that impacts attitudes by purposefully "altering the underlying considerations used in one's evaluation" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 117). As the same negative frames are used, and repurposed by different actors, they become more salient in the public perception (Walsh & Cramer, 2004). This thesis considers the transfer of organisational stigma to employees by using the fictional example of a petrochemical company featured in a newspaper article for greenwashing and data falsification. This research's ambition is to analyse whether and how negative frames about a stigmatized company significantly influence human perceptions of its employees (Hilbig, 2009). As the threat of detrimental stigma for companies is amplified by media frames, so is potentially, the threat of stigma transfer to their employees. In addition, the spill over of positive reputation from a company to its employees is also considered.

The predominance of emotional reasoning in moral evaluations is integrated to this project . Moral judgement is conceptualised as the range of diverse affective and cognitive processes in which people engage when evaluating others' opinions and behaviours in relation with moral values (Haidt & Green, 2002). Building upon Haidt's work (2001) and his intuitionist model, this project regards the role of emotions in the process of moral judgement as highly significant. Furthermore, and due to the impact of negativity biases and

increased use of negative media frames, the focus is placed on the role of negative emotions in the formation of the outsiders' moral judgements of the employees behaving as an organisational ambassador on Facebook. The concept of negative emotions is regarded as "a general dimension of subjective distress and unpleasurable engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states, including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear and nervousness" (Watson, 1988, p. 1063).

With framing theories, negativity bias, stigma by association, the role of emotions in moral judgement, and employee engagement, this project research the potential influence of media framing on moral judgements of an employee behaving as ambassador for his company, on Facebook. Since Goffman (1963), stigma by association has been extensively studied, however, organisational literature has yet to focus on the moral judgement of outsiders to the organisation, mediated by social media (Kulik et al., 2008). The research question of this thesis is therefore "to what extent do media framing of an organisation's activities and employee's engagement with the organisation on Facebook, influence outsiders' evaluation of the employee's morality?"

1.1 Relevance

The theoretical relevance of this thesis is threefold. First, this project addresses a gap in organisational literature about the risks connected to online boundaries management of work and private identities. Moreover, the specific threat to the personal and moral reputation of employees is studied, which adds on to the literature on the impact of boundaries management on employees' careers and well-being (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Ollier-Malaterre and colleagues (2013) recognised that Facebook users are likely to experience a collision of their private and professional life, however their research focuses on the influence of social media behaviours on professional relationships. For example, how an employee is evaluated by their colleagues in regard with their Facebook activities and postings. Second, this research answers Ashforth's (2020) call to extend theories and studies on the ways people consider organisations as human entities. For example, employees tend to relate to their company using human moral traits such as honesty, kindness, or friendliness (Ashforth et al.,2020). Outsiders are also likely to evaluate a company and its actions with human moral features (Ashforth et al.,2020). The possible transfer of moral stigma from an

organisation to its employee through outsiders' judgements is another illustration of the mechanism, not yet analysed. Third, and as Leach et al., (2007) pointed out, understanding the importance of morality to in-group members, such as employees of the same organisation, is a crucial step towards understanding the importance of morality in intergroup perceptions of each other's, in this case, outsiders' perceptions of employees. Signalling one's virtue can promote the inclusion in organisations and employees are likely to be more motivated to be part of a group that is perceived to be moral by outsiders (Ellemers et al., 2013).

In addition to its theoretical relevance, this thesis is also socially relevant. First, its findings might inform employees' decision to engage in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook. Researching the possible transfer of corporate stigma to employees contribute to raise awareness of the consequences of online activities to offline ones. Given that overall, users tend to act on social media driven by emotions, insecurities, and misconceptions (Wang et al., 2011), this research might encourage employees to act as intentional and informed agents. Second, and from an organisational standpoint, Human Resources (H.R.) departments might also benefit from the findings of this research. Given that employees' online ambassadorship behaviours have been showed to contribute to a positive corporate reputation (Dreher, 2014), companies might be inclined to encourage those behaviours. Before doing so, HR should be fully informed of the possible repercussions of online ambassadorship behaviours for all the stakeholders involved. This project might thus guide HR recommendations and best practices regarding employees' social media activities.

1.2 Chapter Outline

Each chapter of this thesis aims to describe transparently the steps undertaken to answer the research question, from the theoretical rationale to the practical research choices. The hypotheses are framed by theoretical assumptions, which are discussed in chapter 2. In this chapter, framing and organizational identification theories and the social intuitionism model are combined to explain the process of potential stigma transfer from a corporation to its employee engaging in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook. The methodology of the project is detailed in chapter 3, which starts with a justification for the choice of the experimental design, followed by a description of the sampling method, the

stimulus material, and the operationalisation of the variables. The scales used to measure the variables of interest are also discussed in chapter 3, which ends on a section about the reliability and validity of the research. The results of the statistical analyses conducted on the collected data are presented in chapter 4. Based on those analyses, the hypotheses of this research are accepted or rejected. In chapter 5, the results are discussed in depth. Key findings are highlighted, together with their theoretical and practical implications, and followed by the limitations of the project and the directions for future research. The objective of chapter 5 is to provide the reader with a comprehensive interpretation of the results in the context of the research question. Lastly, chapter 6 concludes the thesis and provide an answer to the research question. The appendices offer additional methodological information and materials, such as the consent form for participation, tables of participants' demographics and the complete experiment.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Business Conduct in Controversial Industries

A shift in business practices in controversial industries such as the oil and gas sector has been characterized by an increased investment in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions and programs (Frynas, 2005). Endorsed CSR plans range from building schools, and hospitals, to the development of micro-credit systems and programs supporting young professionals in developing countries. Oil and gas companies partner with renowned agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to coordinate their CSR projects and rely on local NGOs to deploy them locally. Corporate codes of conducts and public reporting of social, environmental, and developmental goals have also become the norm (Frynas, 2005). Oil and gas companies, such as Royal Dutch Shell and British Petroleum (BP) have taken up the market of renewable energy and have declared their commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of their activities and products across their divisions (Frynas, 2005). "It is often assumed that the rise of CSR can be traced directly back to globalization and a concomitant expectation that firms would fill gaps left behind by global governance failures" explains Frynas (2005, p. 583). The digital revolution has also made it easier to expose corporate misconducts in developing countries. Accordingly, the public developed new expectations towards companies, pressuring them to "do something" about climate change, the environment or social development (Frynas, 2003). However, environmental, and social scandals have over the years highlighted the gap between the stated intentions of oil and gas companies' top executives and their actual conduct (Frynas, 2000). Additionally, the impact of CSR actions has not always been as positive as expected by both corporations and public (Frynas, 2000). Consequently, the public has grown increasingly sceptical towards the motives of oil and gas companies to launch CSR programs and towards the effectiveness of their CSR actions.

Companies active in controversial sectors, launch, report and promote CRS actions to first, manage external perceptions and second, to keep employees satisfied (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). The oil and gas industry is regarded by some stakeholders such as activists, media outlets and the public, as being intrinsically detrimental for the environment and some believe it should therefore not exist (Frynas, 2005). CSR actions help to manage those stakeholders' perceptions, in showing that companies right the "wrongs' of their core

business activities (Frynas, 2005). Moreover, CSR projects help companies to demonstrate to their own employees that they contribute to a positive impact on society. Because of media coverage of oil scandals and increased moral condemnation of oils companies, employees might feel disenchanted. CSR actions can thus be an internal communication tool for employee retention, recruitment and for employees to feel more positive about their company and in turn, about themselves (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012).

News media are considered one of the institutional actors drawing the lines between ethical and unethical corporate behaviours (Greve et al., 2010). Media are regarded as decentralized actors of the democratic checks and balances system for government and corporations. Their monitoring function results in regular reporting on business conduct. As such, and because their communication frames influence perceptions, judgments, and attitudes, they play a significant role in citizens assessment of corporate wrongdoings (Greve et al., 2010). A positive or poor corporate reputation is therefore tightly connected to media reporting of organisational actions and the type of communication frames used. The public perception of a company (positive, negative, or neutral) is thus partly the result of media portrayal of the company's actions. The mechanisms of media framing and media effects are detailed in section 2.4 and section 2.5.

2.2 Moral Judgements

Most of the twentieth century has seen 2 opposing schools of thoughts regarding the formation on moral judgements. Indeed, followers of Piaget (1965) and Kohlberg's (1969) theories argued that moral judgements are the product of rational reasoning whereas reinforcement behaviorists and Freudian internalization theories explained that emotional and non-rational mechanisms generate moral judgements. New findings in the field of evolutionary psychology (Trivers, 1971; Pinker, 1997) and primatology (Flack & de Waal, 2000) highlighted the importance of the role of emotions in human moral judgements. It became agreed upon that rational reasoning theories alone could not fully explain the formation of moral judgements. Being concerned about others, but also, about principles of cooperation, about cheating and norm-following, appeared to find their source in moral emotions (Trivers, 1971; Pinker, 1997). Additionally, studies demonstrated that the human mind could make complex social decisions and solve problems automatically and

unconsciously, that is, without the person being aware of the mechanism (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Haidt (2001) compares moral judgements with aesthetic ones. He argues that upon hearing about an event or an anecdote, an automatic reaction occurs in the form of a positive or negative feeling (Haidt, 2001). Characterized by their rapid and effortless occurrence, those feelings are like affective intuitions, and are not the result of a research or a reasoning process, nor the conclusion of the evaluation of evidence (Haidt, 2001). Instead, those intuitions are driven by moral values, such as loyalty, purity, reciprocity, or suffering, and are conditioned by natural selection and culture (Haidt, 2001). Thus, both rational reasoning and emotional processes are involved in the formation of human moral judgements. However, it seems that emotional reasoning is the stronger force behind moral judgements compared to rational reasoning, as emotional reasoning is faster, more intuitive, and subconscious (Greene & Haidt, 2002). Furthermore, Galotti (1989) found out that when people reason rationality it is often partial and justify preconceived ideas and opinions.

Perceived morality is a key component in the ways people evaluate themselves and each other (Goodwin et al., 2014). Furthermore, appearing moral in the eyes of observers is crucial for most individuals (Batson, 2008; Pagliaro et al., 2011). To be recognized as moral, people are likely to adhere to social norms and engage in behaviors that do not necessarily correspond to their true preferences (Batson, 2008; Pagliaro et al., 2011). Although morality can be conceptualized in diverse ways depending on the scope one wishes to cover, this research bases its definition of morality on Leach et al., (2007) work. Morality is considered a set of ethical principles that guide people in distinguishing between “right” and “wrong”, between “good” and “bad” behaviours, attitudes, or opinions (Ellemers et al., 2013). Moral character is evaluated based on traits such as honesty, sincerity, or trustworthiness. Perceived ability, or competence, has also been shown to influence the judgement of others, however its causal relation with morality is less clear (Stellar & Willer, 2018). Competence is regarded as the ability to use knowledge and/or skills to pursue and fulfil objectives (Fiske et al., 2012). According to Stellar and Willer (2018), “people readily use information about another’s morality when judging their competence, despite holding folk intuitions that these domains are independent” (p. 195). Thought the focus of this research are judgements of morality, judgements of competence are also discussed. The next section describes how reputational spillover from an organisation to an employee might occur.

2.3 Stigma by Association

The stigma by association effect has been identified in several types of situations, including in work-related relationships (Neuberg et al., 1994; Darley & Gross, 1983). Indeed, studied have showed that when publicly displaying associations with stigmatized or negatively stereotyped groups and organizations, a person is likely to be judged more harshly by observers (Neuberg et al., 1994; Darley & Gross, 1983). The same effect seems to appear in the case of an association with an organization responsible for wrongdoings (Neuberg et al., 1994; Darley & Gross, 1983). The pathway for the transfer of stigma by association from a company to an employee is like the one between groups of people and an individual as organizations are often perceived to have human traits (Ashforth et al., 2020). Therefore, the actions of a company are likely to be judged as if they were a person's actions (Ashforth et al., 2020). In turn, those actions are evaluated against the observers' set of moral values. Regular allegations of greenwashing, that is, the expression of environmental concerns as a cover for corporate activities, and the perceived discrepancies between organizational intentions and actual actions have heighten mistrust and suspicion towards companies on the oil sector (Frynas, 2005). Given that the core business of organisations in controversial industries are often considered by the public as being intrinsically immoral (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012), feelings of anger, contempt, disgust fear, or sadness, might be experienced by the observer. Therefore, an employee showing high level of engagement with a company negatively perceived and considered immoral by outsiders, is at risk to also be negatively judged. In other words, reputational damages are likely to transfer to employees highly engaged with the stigmatized organisation.

Framing theory and framing effects on judgments and opinions are discussed below to facilitate the understanding of the formation of perception of organisations by outsiders. As communication frames are not equally impactful, research on the negativity bias and negative emotions is used to explain the prevalence of negative frames on human's perceptions. The following literature shed light on how the increase media coverage of environmental scandals, and negative framing, is likely to activate negativity bias (Baumeister et al., 2001) and to generate negative emotions in the public.

2.4 Communication Frames in Media

Framing theory is built on the assumption that a topic can be considered from various angles and interpreted as having consequences for multiple values and considerations (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Also, De Vreese (2005) highlights that framing is a continuous process, or a sum of processes involved when people conceptualize an issue or when they modify their stance on an issue. Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) expectancy value model of attitudes has been commonly used in framing theory research, as it offers a useful theoretical understanding of human attitudes (Chong & Druckman, 2007). According to the model, a person's general attitude towards a topic is the sum of the person's various judgements of the topic 'attributes balanced by the attributes' importance (Ajzen & Fischbein, 1980). The expectancy value model of attitude is an idealized conceptualisation of people's attitude as it presupposes that they hold defined and conscious beliefs on any topic at hand (Chong & Druckman, 2007). However, as Chong and Druckman (2007) point out, the model might at best, generate a survey that "elicits an imperfect representation of a person's feelings based on the subset of beliefs that are accessible at that moment" (p. 105).

Communication frames structure the conception of people's reality by attributing meaning to an otherwise confusing and sometimes unrelated sequence of events (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). In addition, communicational frames encourage specific interpretations of social and political matters (Shah et al., 2002). Politicians, news media, citizen, institutional and private organizations frame their communication and identical frames oftentimes circulate and are repurposed from one communication agent to another (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). For example, politicians sometimes reuse a frame employed by news media, or by citizens, and media outlets borrow frames from politicians or social organizations to structure their content production. Citizens also gradually become familiar with certain frames over others, while they engage with others (Walsh & Cramer, 2004). Therefore, the public perception of an organization active in a controversial sector is not likely to be influenced by a diverse range of frames but rather by 1 or 2 frames repeated over and over (Scheufele, 1999). Despite disagreement on the most efficient method to measure framing effects, scholars agree that framing impacts attitudes by purposefully "altering the underlying considerations used in one's evaluation" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 117).

2.5 Framing Effects on Public Perception of Corporate Actions

The underlying psychological mechanisms explaining framing effects have been researched by many scholars (Nelson et al., 1997; Brewer, 2001; Chong & Druckman, 2007). Indeed, framing effects are connected to several interrelated psychological processes. First, and for framing effects to occur, the considerations used by individuals to evaluate a topic must be available in their memory (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Chong and Druckman (2007) provide the example of the issue of a hate group's right to rally and the consideration of the concept of free speech to evaluate the issue. If someone does not understand the concept of free speech, the concept will not be available in their memory. Thus, a free speech communication frame will not have effects on the person. In addition to the availability in memory, the consideration of a concept should be accessible when a frame is communicated (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In short, the considerations involved in the evaluation of a certain topic must outreach a threshold of activation to be recovered from long-term memory. Interestingly, the more familiar the communication frame is, the more likely considerations connected to the frame will become accessible (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Both processes of availability and accessibility of information can happen consciously or unconsciously (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Media coverage of corporate scandals therefore heavily contributes to keep negative information about an organization readily available and accessible in the public's memory.

Second, the perceived applicability of the frame is evaluated in regard with its strength and relevance (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Indeed, frames considered strong or relevant are more likely to have a greater influence on judgments and attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The strength/relevance evaluation happens provided the person is sufficiently motivated and/or if the frame invokes contradictory considerations (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). So, only some beliefs are available and/or accessible at a given time and out of those beliefs only some will be considered relevant and applicable to the issue framed (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In sum, the effects of framing are threefold. They can "make new beliefs available about an issue, making certain available beliefs accessible, or making beliefs applicable or 'strong' in people's evaluations" (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 111). Due to framing effects, increased media reporting of greenwashing accusations, and of environmental activism, is therefore likely to negatively impact the public perception of oil

companies. Media acute attention on corporate wrongdoings can also trigger emotional responses and associations in people's mind, which are emphasized by media frames. Consequently, media framing is likely to play a crucial role in the formation of judgements of organisations in controversial sector and in their stigmatization.

2.6 Negativity Bias and Negative Emotions

According to Trussler and Soroka's study (2014), people are more attracted by negative media content compared to positive media content, regardless of their self-reported answers. This finding aligns with the concept of human negativity bias imbedded in cognition processes. The negativity bias is the general unconscious tendency of humans' attitudes and behaviors to be impacted to a greater extent by negative information, events, or emotions compared to neutral or positive ones (Baumeister et al., 2001). This bias results in the salience of negative information in individuals' minds and in the influence of their perceptions and judgments (Baumeister et al., 2001). Additionally, when present, negative information weight more heavily in people's decision-making processes compared to neutral or positive information. Negative information is also retrieved more easily from memory compared to neutral or positive ones (Baumeister et al., 2001). Not only does negative framing tends to impact human cognition processes more heavily, but it also weighs on people's notions of truth (Hilbig, 2009). Indeed, after controlling for optimistic and pessimistic personal tendencies, Hilbig's experiments (2009) reveal that information framed negatively lead participants to find it more likely to be "true", compared to positively framed information. In other words, the increased reporting of negative news coupled with the natural tendency to be negatively biased, is likely to contribute to the stigmatisation of oil companies and their actions by outsiders.

Negative emotions such as fear, sadness, guilt, anger, hostility, unhappiness, boredom, unsatisfaction, despair or melancholia are also likely to be experienced by the outsider judging a person or an organisation (Diener et al., 1995). According to Watson et al., (1988), negative emotion is "a general dimension of subjective distress and unpleasurable engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states, including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear and nervousness" (p. 1063). A low level of negative emotions is characterized by a state of serenity and calmness (Watson et al., 1988). As mentioned

previously, the moral judgement of others is a process in which emotions are playing an important role. Experiencing negative emotions because of negative media framing is thus likely to negatively influence the moral judgement made by outsiders. In addition, judgements of morality are a crucial tool to assess oneself, others, groups, and organisations (Ashforth et al., 2020; Goodwin et al., 2014). As individuals and groups interact and associate, their moral assessments of one another and of themselves evolve. For example, a tight association between a non-stigmatised person and a stigmatised organisation may result in a transfer of stigma from the later to the first (Neuberg et al., 1994).

2.7 Ambassadorship Behaviours on Facebook

This section aims at explaining employees' ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook with the help of the literature on organizational identification and self-concept theory. Organizational identification and self-concept theory are then bridged with segmentation preference principles.

Social media offer employees' new ways to display their affiliation with the company they work for and to actively support the company's objectives (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). For example, on Facebook, employees can share recruitment information, organizational news, or events, and promotional/marketing content (Van Zoonen et al., 2016). Ambassadorship behaviours are the voluntary and spontaneous promotion of the company's goals by employees on social media. It is characterised by the spreading of information that favours the company (Van Zoonen et al., 2016). Diverse audiences on Facebook might regard an employee ambassadorship behaviour as enhanced support for an organisation. Due to repeated negative media framing of corporate actions, negatively connotated information are likely to be readily available and accessible to the observer, viewing the employee's post about a CSR organizational project for example (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In turn, the employee's Facebook post might be perceived as proclaimed organizational membership, which can trigger emotions and associations in the mind of the observer. Because oil and gas companies tend to be negatively portrayed in media, the emotions and associations triggered are also likely to be negative and/or uncomfortable.

Ambassadorship behaviours are more likely to occur when a high organizational identification with the company is experienced (Fieseler et al., 2015). On the other hand, if

the employee's identification with the company is weak, his/her professional role is less valuable. In turn, the employee is less likely to engage in active ambassadorship behaviors for the company. In this case, a mention on Facebook of the employee's affiliation with the company is likely to replace active ambassadorship behaviors (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). Organizational identification is the ongoing cognitive and emotional processes that connect employees to the organization for which they work (Scott & Stephens, 2009). The key characteristic of organizational identification is the feeling of oneness and belongness to the company, experienced by employees (Scott & Stephens, 2009). Furthermore, employees that strongly identify with a company tend to be motivated to take on extra roles for the company's benefit, as they value the achievement of the company's goals (Van Dick et al., 2008). Employees tend to identify with their organisation in similar ways as with other groups of people. When they identify with a company, they tend to consider it more as a group of individuals than as an institution (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). As organisation morality was shown to increase organizational identification, employees' perception about a company's morality and indicators of the company's moral intentions are likely to strengthen employees' trust in the company (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). In turn, the heighten trust will reassure employees' potential concerns about the risks of showing an online public association with the company. In controversial industries, such as the oil sector, companies start to understand the value of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions to consolidate employees' organisational identification and gain employees' support (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012).

Individual segmentation preferences might also mitigate employees' ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). Segmentation preferences refer to the boundaries people set around their digital communication usages and to the self-imposed limits framing work related communication outside work hours (Olson et al., 2006). Therefore, employees with low segmentation preferences are more likely to engage in online ambassadorship behaviours such as sharing posts from their company compared to employees with higher segmentation preferences (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). According to Van Zoonen et al., (2018) segmentation preferences have a greater influence on individuals' potential ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook compared to LinkedIn. Indeed, as Facebook is a digital network connecting various social groups such as friends, family and colleagues, stronger segmentation preferences increase the desire for boundaries between

those social groups. In turn, and to protect those boundaries, an employee will less likely behave as an ambassador for their organisation on Facebook (Van Zoonen et al., 2018).

When people understand the variety of audiences susceptible to view their posts, they are more likely to sense the risk of judgement based on their posting behaviours and in turn, to display a lower degree of engagement with their company. However, in Wang and colleagues' study (2011), users have reported posting when feeling emotional and misjudging who their audience could be. As mentioned, business conduct attracts the media attention, new stories focus on scandals and sensationalism and negative information tend to stick in observers' mind (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Corporate reputation and outsiders' perception of an organisation depend on the portrayal of the organisation in the media and on the type of frame, i.e., positive, negative, used to communicate information about the company (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In this context, an outsider to an oil and gas organisation seeing an employee' s posts praising their company, might experience negative emotions if the nature of the posts contradicts the outsider's opinion of the company's reputation. The spillover of a company's negative reputation to an employee is likely to occur due to the stigma by association effect. This effect has been identified in several types of situations, including in work-related relationships (Neuberg et al., 1994; Darley & Gross, 1983). As explained, publicly displaying an association with a stigmatized or negatively stereotyped company, is likely to generate harsher judgements by observers (Neuberg et al., 1994; Darley & Gross, 1983).

Research has showed that outsiders to an organization expect employees to support their company, and to implicitly endorse the company's actions and values (Effron et al., 2015). Furthermore, observers expect employees to adhere to the social norms of social media, prescribing the display of interactions and of cues about ones' identity. Observers might therefore expect employees' ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook. Nonetheless, despite the confirmation of their expectations, and if observers condemn the company's actions, they might also in turn condemn the company's employee. Indeed, a public display of support on Facebook would enhance the association (Effron et al., 2015). Therefore, the transfer of stigma by association between an organization and an employee is likely to occur through the experience of negative emotions by observers.

The extended review of the relevant literature support that as business conduct is covered by media, the public form an opinion about companies. When using Facebook, the

public also view employees' posts about their company, portrayed in the media. Viewing an employee's post might trigger emotions, previously primed by media frames. Experiencing emotions in turn, is likely to influence the judgement of the morality of the employee as emotions are intrinsically embedded in the formation of moral judgements. Given that oil and gas companies' actions are often framed negatively in the media, and that observers/outsiders tend to be negatively biased, their emotions experienced are likely to be negative, leading to harsher moral judgements. Stigma by association theory found out that being tightly connected with a negatively perceived organisation is likely to taint a person's reputation. Therefore, an employee acting as ambassador for a company negatively perceived by outsiders is likely to result in a transfer of damaged reputation from the company to the employee. The following hypotheses will thus be tested:

H1: Negative media framing of a company's actions will lead to harsher judgment of employees showing a strong association with the company (behaving as ambassadors) on Facebook, sharing the company's posts for example, compared to positive media framing of the company's actions.

H2: Negative media framing of a company's actions will lead to harsher judgment of employees showing a strong association with the company (behaving as ambassadors) on Facebook, sharing the company's posts for example, compared to an absence of information about the company's actions in the media.

H3: The effect of negative media framing of a company's actions on moral judgment is moderated by employee's association with the company. Negative framing effects are stronger when employees are strongly associated with the company, behaving as active ambassadors on Facebook, for example sharing the company's posts, than when they passively mention their affiliation with the company on their Facebook profile.

H4: The effect of negative media framing of a company's actions on moral judgment is mediated by negative emotions. Negative media frames generate more negative emotions that in turn, lead to harsher moral judgments of the employee behaving as ambassador on Facebook, sharing the company's posts for example.

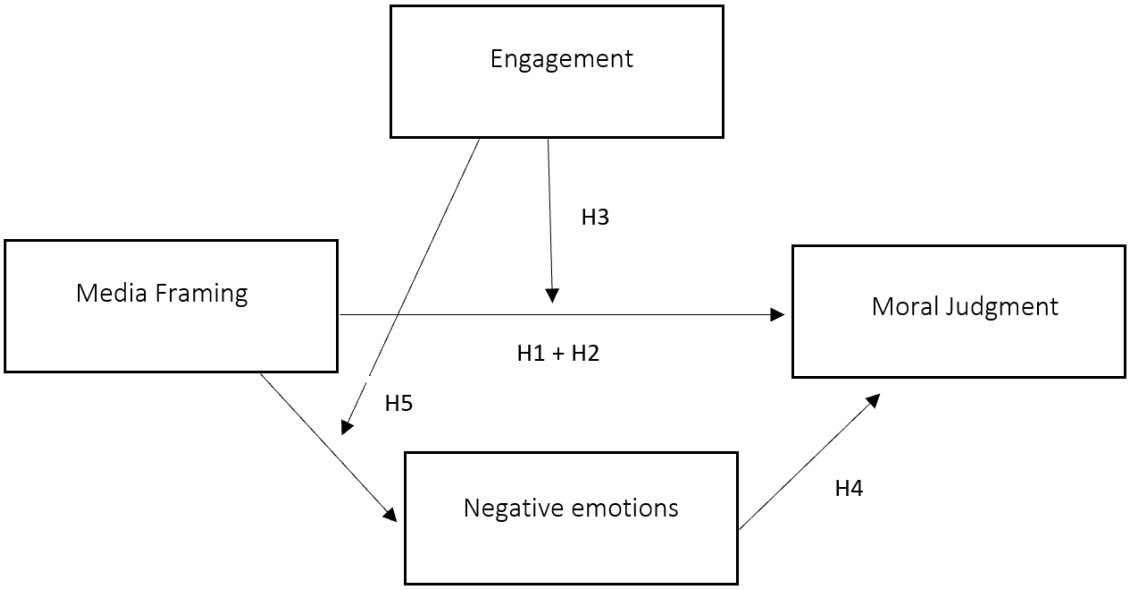
H5: The effects of negative media framing of a company's actions on negative emotions are moderated by employees' level of engagement with the company on Facebook. The difference between framing conditions is strengthened when employees behave as ambassador for the company, sharing its posts, rather than show passive affiliation, i.e.,

mentioning the name of the company in their bio. Thus, employees' ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook will lead to stronger negative framing effects on negative emotions compared to employee's passive affiliation.

Figure 1 shows the experimental design of the study with the hypotheses, a 2 (engagement: high vs. low) by 3 (media framing: negative vs. positive vs. none) factorial design.

Figure 1

2 by 3 Experimental Design with Hypotheses



3. Method

This chapter is dedicated to the description of the methodology used in this thesis. The choice of the research method is first justified, and the experimental design described. Then the sampling procedure is discussed, followed by the operationalisation of the variables. Lastly, the reliability and validity of the experimental design are reviewed.

3.1 Choice of Research Method

A quantitative research approach was implemented to generate, collect, and analyze the data. The choice of a quantitative research method was motivated by the desire to uncover hypothetical relationships between the observed variables, namely, media framing, negative emotions, engagement, and moral judgement. As this study's objective is to investigate the direct and indirect effect(s) of media framing, engagement and negative emotions on moral judgement, the use of a quantitative approach was the most appropriate choice. The following section further explains the characteristics of the chosen methodology and introduces the experimental design of the study.

3.1.1 Quantitative Method and Experimental Design

As previously mentioned, a quantitative method of analysis is suitable in regard with the research design of this study. According to Babbie (2017), the main difference between qualitative methods of analysis and quantitative ones lies in the type of data collected and analyzed. Whereas qualitative methods of analysis allow for the observation of nonnumerical data, quantitative methods on the other hand, are based on numerical data (Babbie, 2017). As quantitative methods of analysis rely on statistical calculations, researchers can collect a larger amount of data compared to qualitative methods (Babbie, 2017). Being quantitative, this study is unsurprisingly also of a nomothetic nature, thus offering rather broad and general explanations that are based on a few factors (Babbie, 2017). Therefore, its objectives are not to offer an exhaustive list of answers to the research question as it is the case with idiographic approaches, more suitable for qualitative research design (Babbie, 2017). Additionally, the design of this research calls for both deductive and inductive reasonings. Indeed, expectations coming from the review of the relevant literature are formulated in the form of hypotheses and the results are drawn from the empirical observations of the

collected data (Babbie, 2017).

To adequately address the research question, the quantitative data gathering method of this study is an experiment. Indeed, experiments are arguably the most suitable method to infer causal relationships between variables (Vargas et al., 2017). In short, the cause(s), i.e., the independent variable(s), produce(s) the effect(s), i.e., the dependent variable(s) (Vargas et al., 2017). To be valid, causal relationships need to meet three criteria (Mill, 1843). First, the cause(s) and the effect(s) must be correlated. Second, the cause(s) should appear before the effect(s). Lastly, the effect(s) observed should not be explained by other possible causes or explanations, called spurious variables (Mill, 1843). This last criterion is crucial in establishing reliable causation and its control protects the internal validity of the study (Vargas et al., 2017). Experiments allow the control of independent variables and the observation of the dependent variables when manipulations are applied, while excluding potential confounding conditions (Vargas et al., 2017). Internal validity will be discussed later in section 3.5 of this chapter.

In experimental designs with a single treatment, main effects can be observed on the dependent variable, that is the effects caused by the treatment on the dependent variable (Neuman, 2014). However, when several treatments are applied, as in factorial designs, the dependent variable can be impacted by main effects and interaction effects (Neuman, 2014). Interaction effects occur due to the possibility of various combinations between the categories of the independent variables (Neuman, 2014). For example, positive media framing combined with affiliation (low engagement) might impact the moral judgement of the employee by outsiders. This interaction effect might also differ from the impact of negative media framing combined with ambassadorship behaviour (high engagement) on moral judgement. Both examples illustrate interaction effects on the dependent variable. Factorial experimental designs first help researchers understand the main effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Second, they are useful to understand the more complex effects resulting from the interactions of the combinations formed by the independent variables' categories on the dependent variable (Neuman, 2014). The experimental design of this thesis is thus helpful to identify the main effects of media framing and its 3 categories, i.e., negative media framing, positive media framing, no framing, on the moral judgement of the employee by outsiders (H1 + H2). This design is also useful to spot the interaction effects of the 3 categories of media framing with the 2 categories of

engagement, i.e., affiliation, ambassadorship behaviour, on the moral judgement of the employee by outsiders.

In addition, and as presented in Figure 1, the variable negative emotions is hypothesized (H4) to act as a mediator variable between media framing and moral judgement. In a causal relationship between variables, the mediator variable is considered to enable the process of influence of the independent on the dependent variable (Preacher & Hayes, 2018). Lastly, Figure 1 shows the moderation effect of the variable engagement on the mediated causal relationship between media framing and moral judgement (H3 and H5). Baron and Kenny (1986) explain that a moderator variable modulates the direction and the strength of the correlational relationship between an independent and a dependent variable. The experimental design of this study hypothesizes that the strength of the effect of media framing on moral judgement of the employee by outsiders, varies depending on the degree of employee's engagement. So, the higher the engagement of the employee, the stronger the relationship between media framing and moral judgement.

3.1.2 Prolific

Due to monetary and organizational constraints, but also to governmental measures to combat the spread of the covid19 pandemic, the experiment was designed to be fully conducted online. Qualtrics was first used to create the experiment and the crowdsourcing platform Prolific, to recruit participants. Section 3.2 elaborates on participants' recruitment. Via an URL link on Prolific, participants were directed to the experiment hosted in Qualtrics. According to Palan and Schitter (2018), Prolific is one of the most valuable options for implementing online experiments, mostly due to its transparency. Indeed, as a research-oriented platform, Prolific clearly informs participants about their rights and obligations, their financial compensation, and the studies they participate in. Researchers also benefit from Prolific transparency (Palan & Schitter, 2018). They can count on informed participants, have great insights on participants' profiles and consequently, increased control on the recruitment process (Palan & Schitter, 2018).This will be further detailed in section 3.2 on sampling. Despite the environment quality provided by Prolific, the common pitfalls of online research experiments cannot be fully avoided. Indeed, the lack of control over the online experimental environment might remain, which can result in participants' distraction or multitasking during the experiment (Palan & Schitter, 2018). It is reasonable to argue that

participants' lack of attention is harder to control online, thought the issue has been reported in the case of both online and offline experiments (Necka et al., 2016). To compensate for the lack of control of participants' attention preventive measures were taken. The experiment was kept to the minimum depth and breadth necessary to maintain its quality, and participants' attention. The complete process of material stimuli and questionnaire design are explained in section 3.2.3 and section 3.3.4.

3.2 Sampling

This section is dedicated to the sampling and recruitment process. First the type of sample and its randomization between experimental groups is explained, followed by elements of the recruitment process such as participants' payments and participants' inexperience in research participation. The section ends on ethical research guidelines regarding participants' rights.

The unit of analysis of this study is the participant (Neuman, 2014). As mentioned previously, participants were recruited on Prolific to reach a probability sample. Indeed, in their study comparing several crowdsourcing platforms such as MTurk, Prolific or CrowdFlower, Peer et al. (2017) found out that Prolific seems to offer a more diverse population in terms of ethnicities and other demographics compared to the other platforms. Prolific also assesses participants' characteristics in advance which help prevent participants misrepresentation of their profile. Indeed, Maclnis et al., (2020) found out that between 2.2% and 28% of Mturk participants were misrepresenting themselves in their study despite best practices recommendations in place. This might bias effect sizes and threaten internal and external validity (Chandler & Paolacci, 2017).

Probability sampling techniques assume and expect that the sample derived from the population present similar variations to the ones found in the population (Babbie, 2017). To meet this expectation, methods of probability sampling usually involve a randomized selection process of participants (Babbie, 2017). Additionally, experimental and control groups should be relatively alike to argue that changes observed are the results of experimental treatments (Vargas et al., 2017). Consequently, to increase internal validity, hundred and eighty participants were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions with the help of the randomizer function in Qualtrics. In short, 6 groups of 30 participants experienced

the experiment differently depending on the conditions they were in. It has been shown that random assignment of large samples increases internal validity more significantly compared to random assignment of smaller samples (Vargas et al., 2017). The internal validity of this study would therefore increase with the use of a larger sample. This point will be developed further in the limitations section (5.3) of the thesis.

Subjects' monetary compensation for their participation in experiments matters because of ethical considerations but also for its potential impact on the validity of the results (Necka et al., 2016). In Prolific, a minimal payment per unit of time is fixed and communicated in advance to participants. As participants are compensated per unit of time (minute), an estimation of the duration of the experiment is initially made by the researcher and updated in real time by the platform when submissions start. This process help prevent participants to be lured into studies only for the monetary compensation (Necka et al., 2016). In addition to prevent participants feeling cheated and behaving dishonestly, it also ensures a fair payment for participation (Necka et al., 2016). Participants were compensated with 0.76 euros for their participation.

The quality of the collected data has been shown to depend on the recruitment process (Peer et al., 2017). In addition to the diversity of its pool of participants, its ease of use and transparency, Prolific provide on average a higher response rate and higher data quality compared to university pools of participants (Peer et al., 2017). Interestingly, Prolific's pool of participants also seems to display a higher level of inexperience in taking part in experiments (Peer et al., 2017). Participant's inexperience was measured in Peer at al., study (2017) with the item "is it the first time that you have seen this task or question?" (p.157). As experience can lead to response biases and lowered effect sizes, higher participant's inexperience arguably contributes to higher data quality (Peer et al., 2017).

In addition to the information provided by Prolific on participant's rights, on their data privacy and their anonymity, a consent form (see Appendix A) explaining the ethical standards of the study was presented before the start of the experiment. Participants were asked to read the form and give their consent for participation to be able to move forward with the experiment. All participants confirmed their knowledge of their rights and gave their consent. The option "I disagree and wish to stop the study" was set to redirect participants to the end of the study. The consent form specified that the collected data remain confidential, are not shared with third parties, and are processed anonymously. The voluntary nature of

the participation was explained together with participant's freedom to stop the experiment. Lastly, the email address of the researcher was made available for participants to ask questions.

Participants with a profile fitting the sampling criteria (described in the following section) were notified by Prolific. They read the following description of the study: "The purpose of this study is to investigate perceptions of behaviours occurring on Facebook. You will be first asked to carefully read and review some material, such as a Facebook profile for example. Then you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each question carefully and honestly. The study must be completed on a desktop and will take you approximately 5 minutes to complete." The study was titled "Perceptions of behaviours on Facebook". At the end of the experiment and to comply with ethical research standards, participants were informed of the fictitious nature of the material of the study.

3.2.1 Sampling Criteria and Demographics

This section discusses the choice of the sampling criteria in the recruitment process and the demographics included in the study. The sampling criteria entered in Prolific were the following: Participants were to be over eighteen years old, have the United Kingdom (UK) nationality, use Facebook regularly (at least once a month), have English as their first language and display an approval rate of 100 %.

As the goal was to reach a sample as representative as possible, the sampling criteria were limited. However, some criteria were indispensable to the sampling process, for ethical, practical or relevance related reasons. For example, participants needed to be eighteen years old minimum, as ethical regulations regarding underage participants are stricter. This research observed judgement of employees and their behaviours in regard of their employer, thus it also made sense to recruit participants over eighteen years old, who are more likely to be employed or/and have had some work experience. The criterion of English as first language was set to maximize participants comprehension of the questionnaire and material stimuli, which were written in English. The UK nationality criterion is a complementary safeguard again the misunderstanding of the language of the experiment. In addition, and as nationality is connected to culture, selecting participants of a specific nationality, aimed at reducing cultural variances and influence on the findings. For this reason, the United States

(US) was not selected as additional sampling criteria as cultural norms and beliefs regarding work and social media behaviours arguably differ from the ones in Europe and UK (Tang et al., 2002). The regular use of Facebook was a necessary criterion for the relevance of the collected data. Lastly, the approval rate criterion was added to filter participants having shown potentially undesirable behaviours in previous studies. The approval rate is the ratio of the number of participation approvals by researchers on the number of studies the person has participated in. This rate thus indicates that participants complete the study seriously.

On the one hand, sampling criteria can increase the relevance of the sample for this study, but on the other hand, it might limit representativeness of the sample and only allow for partial generalization of the findings (Babbie, 2017). The choice to select UK nationals for example, consequently, gives this thesis an Eurocentric or even UK-centric nature. The limitations section will address this point.

As mentioned in section 3.1.1, one caveat of online experiment is the imperfect control of participant's attention during the experiment. To mitigate this, demographics related items were kept to their absolute minimum in the questionnaire. The goal was to encourage participants to dedicate most of their time on experimental material and on crucial items such as the ones measuring negative emotions (Watson et al., 1988) and the ones measuring the judgement of the employee's morality and competence (Effron & Monin, 2010; Leach et al., 2007). Therefore, only 2 items were dedicated to demographics at the end of the questionnaire, age, and gender.

Age and gender have been shown to moderate and/or interact with other variables in framing effect experiments but also in the ways people experience negative emotions or engage in moral judgements (Fujita et al., 1991; Fumagalli et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2005; McNair et al., 2018; RÖnnlund et al., 2005; Ross & Mirowsky, 2008). For example, because older adults tend to rely more on heuristic processes compared to younger adults, they are more likely to display framing effects (Kim et al., 2005; RÖnnlund et al., 2005). However, framing effects dissipate when older adults are nudged to process information systematically or provide explanations for their decision (Kim et al., 2005). Age and gender also seem to influence the experience of emotions in their type, valence, and intensity (Ross & Mirowsky, 2008). As people age, their emotions seem to shift towards positive and less intense, however women might experience emotions more intensely overall compared to men (Fujita et al., 1991; Ross & Mirowsky, 2008). Unsurprisingly, age and gender also play a role in the

type of moral judgements people engage in (Fumagalli et al., 2010; McNair et al., 2018). For example, older adults seem to make more deontological moral judgements compared to younger adults. When confronted to personal dilemma, men tend to turn more towards utilitarian judgements compared to women (Fumagalli et al., 2010; McNair et al., 2018). Given that this research hypothesised that moral judgements are mediated by emotions, in accordance with Greene and colleagues' work (Greene et al, 2001; Greene & Haidt, 2002), gender and age were thus relevant demographics to measure.

3.2.2 Sample

The sample included 180 participants aged from 18 to 68 years old (*M* = 35.84, *SD* = 12.63). The sample was composed of 62.2% females and of 36.7% males. One participant, .6% of the total sample, reported to identify as "other", and another participant, .6% of the total sample, chose the answer "rather not say". As mentioned in section 3.2 Sampling, participants were randomly assigned to 1 of the 6 conditions, using the randomizer function available in Qualtrics. Table 1 summarizes the number of participants allocated to each condition with their demographics. The total sample (*N* = 180) was thus divided in groups of approximatively equal size across the 6 conditions. The age and gender frequencies tables can be found in Appendix B.

Table 1

Participants Allocation to Conditions

	Positive Media Framing and Affiliation	Positive Media Framing and Ambassadorship Behaviour	Negative Media Framing and Affiliation	Negative Media Framing and Ambassadorship Behaviour	No Media Framing and Affiliation	No Media Framing and Ambassadorship Behaviour
N	30	30	29	30	31	30
Age						
M	30.10	34.60	36.14	38.00	38.42	37.70
SD	9.50	12.94	12.01	13.24	13.76	12.85
Gender						
Female	22	13	20	21	17	19
Male	8	16	9	9	13	11
Rather Not Say					1	
Other		1				

3.2.3 Stimulus Material

This section describes the stimulus material and manipulations included in the experiment, starting with the 3 conditions of media framing, followed by the 2 conditions of engagement. Figures (Figure 2, 3, 4, 5) of the stimulus material are also presented to support the description.

The stimulus material was shown to participants in the first part of the experiment. After agreeing to the consent form, and filling in their Prolific identification number, participants were randomly assigned to 1 of the 6 conditions.

Section 2.1 explained that media framing is conceptualised as the frame set up by media outlets on the communication of information that influences people' attitudes by purposefully "altering the underlying considerations used in one's evaluation" (Scheufele,

1999, p. 117). The material for negative media framing consisted of a short fictitious newspaper article reporting on the corporate transgression of a fictitious oil and gas company, PetrOnergy. In the first section of the article, the journalist explains how PetrOnergy claims to lead the way to carbon footprint reduction in its industry thanks to its recent Net Carbon Footprint program. The second part of the article reveals that PetrOnergy has been attacked in court by Greenpeace and the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures for greenwashing and data falsifications. Figure 2 shows the full article presented to participants in the negative media framing condition.

Figure 2

Negative Media Framing Stimulus Material

In January 2019, **PretrOnergy** was the first international oil and gas company to introduce an ambition to **reduce the Net Carbon Footprint of the energy products it sells,** expressed as a carbon intensity measure, taking into account their full lifecycle emissions. These include emissions from its own operations, from the use of the energy products by its customers, as well as those generated by third parties in its supply chains. In developing its Net Carbon Footprint program, PetrOnergy is **claiming to take a leadership position within the oil and gas sector.**

On the 13th of March 2019, the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) together with **Greenpeace,** has filed a complaint to the International Chamber of Commerce against PetrOnegry for **data falsifications and green washing.** Upon examination of PetrOnergy's Net Carbon Footprint program, the TCFD uncovered several **data frauds**. When asked about the complaint, PetrOnergy did not comment.

An identical fictional newspaper article was shown to participants in the positive media framing condition, with its second section modified to portray PetrOnergy positively. The second section thus reports the reception of an award by PetrOnergy for its positive impact on matter related to climate change in the oil and gas industry. Figure 3 shows the positive media framing stimulus material as presented to participants in the positive media framing condition.

Figure 3

Positive Media Framing Stimulus Material

In January 2019, **PretrOnergy** was the first international oil and gas company to introduce an ambition to **reduce the Net Carbon Footprint of the energy products it sells,** expressed as a carbon intensity measure, taking into account their full lifecycle emissions. These include emissions from its own operations, from the use of the energy products by its customers, as well as those generated by third parties in its supply chains. In developing its Net Carbon Footprint program, PetrOnergy has taken **a significant leadership position within the oil and gas sector**.

By **awarding PetrOnergy its SustainableClimate label**, the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recognized **the important role the company played in promoting climate change related actions and recommendations** in the oil and gas industry.

For both negative and positive media framing conditions, participants were instructed to "read the news report below carefully". The fictitious articles were designed to be as similar as possible to control for other factors that could influence participants' perceptions and/or influence framing effects. In addition, to counter the caveat of the lack of control of participants 'attention described in section 3.1., the articles were kept relatively short. When pretested, both articles took less than 45 seconds to read.

The choice to create and use a fictitious company and fictitious newspaper articles in the experiment was motivated by the desire for a clean experimental environment. Indeed, using the example of an existing company would involve too many additional variables to control, exceeding the ambitions of this project. Choosing an existing company could indeed biase the results as participants' prior attitudes towards the company would have probably influenced their answers (Kervyn et al., 2012). Nonetheless, this point will be further discussed in section 5.4 Future Research of the thesis. In the control condition, participants did not read a newspaper article.

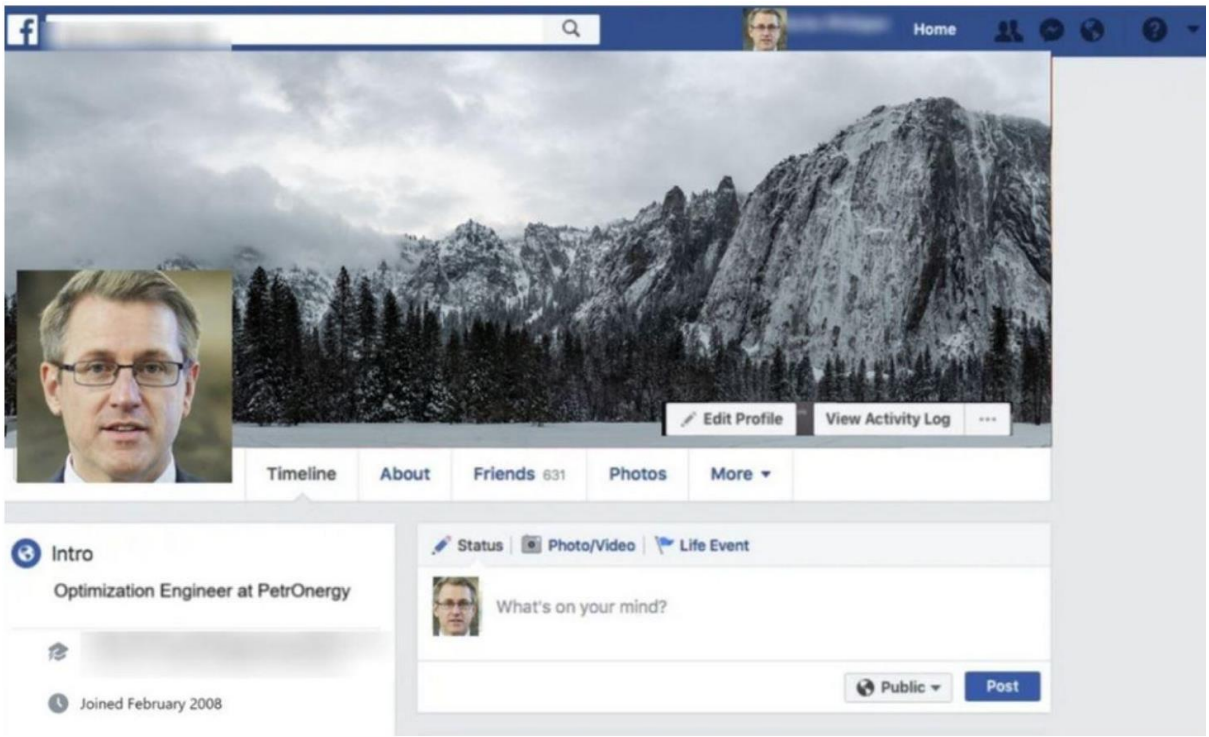
The concept of employee engagement with a company is considered as the level of association an employee displays publicly (Van Zoonen et al., 2016). In the affiliation condition, participants were provided with a fictitious Facebook profile and instructed the following: "Please look at the Facebook profile. In the next page you will be asked about your first impression of the person to whom belong the Facebook profile." As mentioned in section 2.4 of the literature review, employees might display a low degree of engagement

with their company on Facebook when they experience a low degree of organizational identification (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). A low degree of engagement was conceptualized in this thesis as a mention of affiliation with the company on the employee's Facebook profile. A high degree of segmentation preferences might also motivate employees to show a low degree of engagement with their company on Facebook (Van Zoonen et al., 2018). Those segmentation preferences are the self-imposed boundaries users set around their work-related communication on social media outside working hours (Olson et al., 2006).

As Facebook allows its users to mention in their bio/intro section their job title and their employer, the affiliation stimulus material consisted in the profile of a middle-aged Caucasian man mentioning his employment at PetrOnergy and its job title. The cover picture is a generic black and white landscape and was selected for its neutrality. It was found in Canvas' free of rights photography databank. The employee of the profile picture does not exist. Its photography was generated using the website This Person Does Not Exist (https://thispersondoesnotexist.com/), that relies on Artificial Intelligence to create portraits of people that do not exist and look realistic. Additional information, such as name or education were blurred so participants would think the profile is real and the employee's identity is relatively protected. While the choice of the employee's portrait was once again dictated by the desire to maintain neutrality and a clean experimental environment, the employee's gender, ethnicity, and age might have influenced participants' judgement and/or negative emotions. However, this was identical across conditions. Sections 5.3 Limitations and 5.4 Future Research further discuss the choice of the employee's profile. The stimulus material for the affiliation condition is presented in figure 4.

Figure 4

Affiliation Stimulus Material



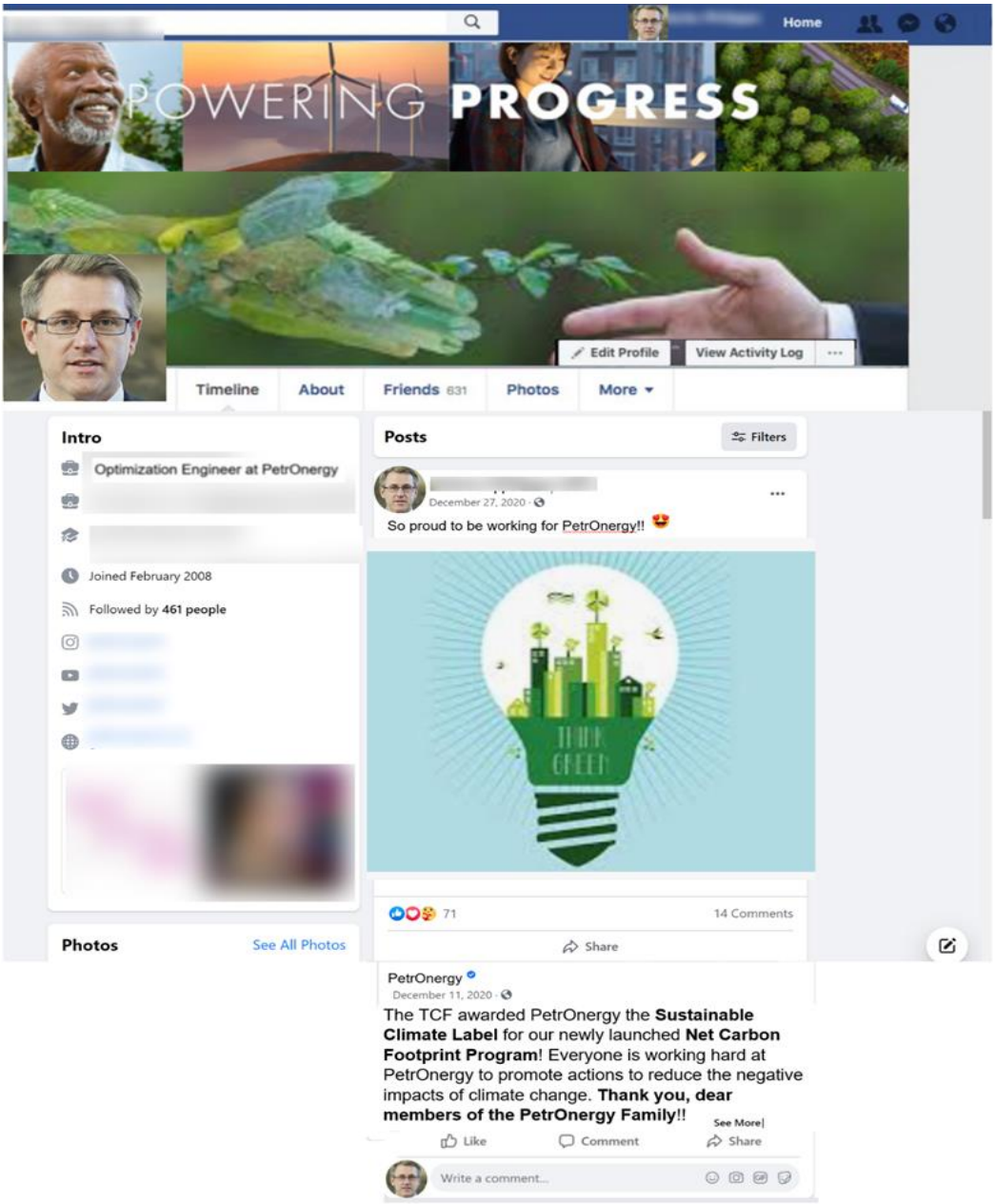
The ambassadorship behaviour condition corresponds to the higher degree of engagement of the employee with PetrOnergy. It is here conceptualized as the sharing of organizational information, such as recruitment related information, corporate news or events and promotional/marketing content by employees (Van Zoonen et al., 2016). As it is the case with affiliation, ambassadorship behaviours seem to vary depending on the depth of employees' organizational identification and their segmentation preferences on Facebook (Olson et al., 2006; Van Zoonen et al., 2018).

The stimulus material for the ambassadorship behaviour condition thus consisted of the fictional Facebook profile of the same employee sharing a post from PetrOnergy and expressing his pride to be working for the company. Once again, and for the sake of clean experimental environment the same employee's photograph was used. The cover picture of the Facebook profile is a combination of a picture from Shell website (http: //www.shell.com) and a picture from Ecomaniac website (https://www.ecomaniac.org). The post shared by the

employee on Facebook had been created with a picture from the website Scrubbing (scrubbing.in). Its text refers to the award received by PetrOnergy described in the positive media framing stimulus materiel (Figure 3). Participants were instructed to engage with the material in the same way as in the affiliation condition: “Please look at the Facebook profile. In the next page you will be asked about your first impression of the person to whom belong the Facebook profile.” Remarks on the choice of the employee’s profile discussed in section 5.3 and 5.4 will also apply to the ambassadorship behaviour condition. Figure 5 displays the ambassadorship behaviour stimulus material presented to participants in the corresponding condition.

Figure 5

Ambassadorship Behaviour Stimulus Material



The first part of the experiment mostly consisted in stimulus material. The second part of the experiment is made of the questionnaire and is described in the following section.

3.2.4 Questionnaire Procedure

Considerations about questionnaire design such as scales used, optimization and pretesting, are discussed in this section. The items of the questionnaire will only be briefly reviewed as section 3.3 Operationalization is dedicated to the systematic description of those items alongside factor and reliability analyses.

After viewing the affiliation or the ambassadorship behaviour condition as described in the previous section, participants were directly submitted to manipulation checks corresponding to the condition they were allocated to. The control conditions were presented with one statement, verifying the effect of the engagement manipulation. A manipulation check for framing was not needed as participants in the control conditions were not exposed to the framing manipulation. The other 4 conditions were asked their opinions about 2 statements. Then a question asked participants to rate the employee to whom the Facebook profile belong, on fourteen traits relating to morality and competence. 10 items were selected from the condemnation scale (Effron & Monin, 2010) and 4 items came from Leach et al., (2007) competence scale. Following this question, participants were asked about the emotions that looking at the employee's Facebook profile invoked. Participants had to answer between 5 negative emotions and were encouraged to answer spontaneously. Those items were selected out of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) scale (Watson et al., 1988).

An open-ended question was included in the questionnaire to help spot bots' participants. The question asked participants about their overall opinion of PetrOnergy's employee. During data cleaning, the answers to the open question were carefully reviewed. An answer that seemed to not have been written by a human and/or that did not make sense would have indicated that the participant is a machine. The review of the answers did not reveal signs of bots' activities. Following the open-ended question, participants were presented with 3 statements about their pre-existing opinions. Those statements were about their own propensity to engage in ambassadorship behaviours, their opinion on employee responsibility in a company's actions and employee's contribution to the company' s

reputation when engaging in ambassadorship behaviour on social media. As individuals tend to confirm their prior beliefs when perceiving others (Darley & Gross, 1983), it seemed relevant to include those items in the questionnaire. Lastly, demographic questions were asked, first about participants' gender and second, about their age. To the question about gender, participants had the choice to answer "male", "female", but also "rather not say" and "other". The question about age was an open-ended question, allowing participants to type in their exact age. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants were thanked for their participation and provided with the researcher email address for further information. As mentioned in section 3.2, participants were also notified of the fictitious nature of the material they saw during the experiment.

Except for the demographics and for the open-ended questions, a 7-points Likert scale was used to improve validity and reliability (Krosnick, 2018). This type of measurement allows participants to answer from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" to a statement. The whole experiment, stimulus material and questionnaire, took a maximum of 5 minutes for participants to complete, depending on the condition they were randomly assigned to. Due to the nature of the stimulus material, it was decided to optimize the experiment for desktop use only, excluding mobile use. This decision has been motivated by the wish for clarity and ease of use for participants as a mobile view of the stimulus material would have cut the images. The experiment was tested among 3 participants before its launch on Prolific to check for spelling, vocabulary, and grammar mistakes but also for technical and flow related errors. The full experiment can be found in Appendix C.

3.3 Operationalisation

Operationalisation is considered "an extension of conceptualisation that specifies the exact procedures that will be used to measure the attributes of variables" (Babbie, 2017, p. 43). As the quality of the operationalisation process is determined by precision, accuracy, validity, and reliability (Babbie,2017), those elements will be addressed in the subsections.

The manipulation checks are described below, followed by the description of the independent variables, negative emotions, and moral judgement. The results of factor and reliability analyses are also presented. For a complete overview of the analyses, see Appendix D.

3.3.1 Manipulations Checks

Manipulation checks are "separate measure of independent or dependent variables to verify their measurement validity" (Neuman, 2014). In other words, those checks are used by researchers to ensure that the experimental manipulation produced the expected effect on participants (Neuman, 2014). In this experiment, 2 manipulations checks were implemented for the media framing and engagement manipulations. The manipulation checks asked participants the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with 2 statements on a 7-points Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The first statement was "PetrOnergy is dedicated to make the oil and gas industry more sustainable" and was a check for the media framing manipulation. The second was "the employee shares his pride to be working for PetrOnergy on his Facebook page" and was a check for the engagement manipulation. For the control conditions, 1 manipulation check was included in the questionnaire, corresponding to the engagement manipulation. The purpose of this item was to evaluate participants' perception of the engagement manipulation. In other words, it was meant to verify that participants in the ambassadorship conditions perceived a higher level of the employee's pride, compared to participants in the affiliation conditions. The manipulation checks were placed in the questionnaire, right after the stimulus material and was measured with the help of a continuous variable, i.e., on a continuum (Privitera, 2015).

3.3.2 Negative Emotions

Negative emotions is one of the 2 independent variables of the study and is expected to be a mediator between media framing and moral judgement of the employee by outsiders. Negative emotions is also a continuous variable. As described in section 2. 5, negative emotions are the intuitive and negative reactions to perceptions of situations (Haidt, 2001). It can be experienced as fear, sadness, guilt or anger and hostility (Diener et al., 1995). Negative emotions was measured with 1 question asking participants to "What emotions did you feel when you looked at the Facebook page of the employee? Please answer spontaneously". Participants answered choosing from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" on a 7-points Likert scale to the following emotions: irritated, annoyed, hostile, indignated, angry (Watson et al., 1988).

The 5 items have been analysed with an Exploratory Factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation. The factor analysis confirmed the

expectation set by the literature (Watson et al., 1988), as it confirmed that all items belong to 1 factor with Eigenvalues (> 1.00), KMO = .88, $\chi2(N = 178, 10) = 1123.66$, $p < .001$. $N = 178$ and not 180, as 2 missing answers were excluded from the analysis by SPPS. The resultant model explained 87.5% of the variance in negative emotions. Factor loadings of individual items onto the factor found are presented in Table 1. The reliability analysis of the scale revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .96, which means the scale is highly reliable. Given that deleting an item from the scale would have lowered the Cronbach's alpha, the 5 items were kept in the scale. Based on the results of the factor and reliability analysis, a new variable was computed in SPSS by averaging the score of the 5 items. The mean of this new variable was 2.76 with a standard deviation of 1.46.

Table 2

Factor and Reliability Analysis for the Scale of Negative Emotions

Item	Negative Emotions
Annoyed	.96
Hostile	.94
Indignated	.94
Irritated	.92
Angry	.91
R^2	.87

3.3.3 Moral Judgement

The second independent and continuous variable of the experiment is moral judgement. In section 2.5, moral judgement was conceptualized as the range of diverse affective and cognitive processes in which people engage when evaluating others' opinions and behaviours in relation with moral values (Haidt & Green, 2002). The question addressing moral judgements was "You have seen the Facebook profile of someone working for PetrOnergy. How would you rate this employee on the following traits?". Participants had to choose an answer from "very low" to "very high" on a 7-points Likert scale for fourteen items. The items relating to morality were the following: likability, fairness, honesty, humility, trustworthiness, reliability, sincerity, morality, goodness, warmth, agreeability (Effron &

Monin, 2010). Additional items related to ability were also assessed, namely: competence, skilful, intelligence (Leach et. al 2007). There has been some debate in the literature on the distinction between traits relating to morality and traits signalling ability and their interactions (Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013). Whereas it has been argued that morality and ability domains are intrinsically different from one another (Reeder, 2006), the neural pathways of impression formation based on morality and based on competence differ only slightly (Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013). According to Stellar and Willer (2018), " people readily use information about another's morality when judging their competence, despite holding folk intuitions that these domains are independent" (p. 195). Given, the theoretical discussion, it seems relevant to add items measuring competence to the scale.

A Confirmatory Factor analysis with Principal Components extraction and Direct Oblimin rotation was run on the 14 items in SPSS. The results of the analysis confirmed that the items should be divided between 2 factors with Eigenvalues (>1.00), KMO = .93, $\chi 2(N = 176, 91) = 2096.27$, $p < .001$. $N = 176$ and not 180 because SPSS excluded 4 missing answers from the factor analysis. The resultant model explained 71.5% of the variance in moral judgement. The first factor, measuring morality, is made of the following eleven items: likability, fairness, honesty, humility, trustworthiness, reliability, morality, sincerity, goodness, warmth, agreeability. The second factor, measuring competence, is made of the following 3 items: competence, skilful, intelligence. Factor loadings of individual items onto the 2 factors found are presented in Table 2. Reliability analyses of the 2 new scales were run in SPSS. The first scale was named "morality scale "and showed a Cronbach's alpha of .96, which indicates that the scale is highly reliable. Given that deleting items from the scale would have lower the Cronbach's alpha, the eleven items were kept in the scale. Based on the results of the factor and reliability analysis, a new variable was computed in SPSS by averaging the score of the eleven items ($N = 180$). The mean of this new variable was 4.35 with a standard deviation of 1.02. The Cronbach's alpha of the second scale, named "competence scale", was .88, which indicated its reliability. The 3 items allocated to the scale were conserved as deleting one of them would result in all cases in a lowered Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3

Factor and Reliability Analysis for the Scales of Morality and Competence

Item	Morality	Competence
Goodness	.94	
Morality	.91	
Sincerity	.91	
Warmth	.88	
Honesty	.86	
Likability	.80	
Agreeability	.75	
Trustworthiness	.74	
Fairness	.72	
Humility	.67	
Reliability	.48	(.44)
Skilful		.96
Intelligence		.88
Competence		.77
R^2 (variance explained)	.60	.10
Cronbach's alpha	.95	.88

3.4 Relationship Analyses

This thesis is motivated by the objective of uncovering relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. To do so, several analyses of the collected data were conducted in SPSS. Several Univariate Analysis of Variance, commonly referred to as ANOVA were run to test the hypotheses and analyse the relationship between media framing ad judgements of morality and competence, and between the employee's engagement with PetrOnergy and with media framing. To test the mediation effect of negative emotions in the relationship between media framing and judgment of the employee's morality and competence a mediation analysis was conducted with Preacher and Hayes (2018) bootstrapping syntax.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

This section discusses the reliability of the measurements of the research method, and the relevant considerations regarding the internal and external validity of the

experimental design. The potential impact of the decisions made in the experimental design on reliability and validity will also be addressed.

Babbie (2017) describes reliability of measurements as “the methods that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon” (p. 511). To heighten the reliability of the measurement methods several precautions were followed. First, the scales used in the questionnaire were validated in previous studies (Effron & Monin, 2010; Leach et. al 2007) and confirmed by high Cronbach’s alphas (see section 3.3). Second, participants could answer the question on a 7-points Likert scale, which seems to be favourable to a higher level of reliability and validity compared to shorter or longer scale (Krosnick, 2018; Preston & Colman, 2000). Lastly, the formulation of the instructions and the questions were designed to not use complex or conceptual terminology, to not be double-barrel, and to not steer participants in one way or another (Babbie, 2017).

The internal validity of an experiment refers to the researcher’s decisions that “strengthen the logical rigor of a causal explanation by eliminating potential alternative explanations for an association between the treatment and dependent variable through an experimental design” (Neuman, 2014, p. 298). The choices taken for this thesis’s experiment design preserve its internal validity from several threats, namely, selection bias, maturation effect, and demand characteristic (Neuman, 2014). Experimental groups that are not equivalent might indicate selection bias (Neuman, 2014). To avoid this bias, participants were randomly assigned to 1 of the 6 conditions of the experiments. Also, Qualtrics randomizing function allows the specification of the size of the groups in which participants are allocated to, ensuring similar size across conditions. Maturation effects are more likely to occur when experiments last several hours, days or weeks compared to shorter experiments (Neuman, 2014). Those effects can result in participants getting bored, losing their attention and focus on the experiment, which might in turn affect the dependent variable (Neuman, 2014). As explained in section 3.1.1 and 3.2 of this chapter, maturation effects were contained with the short length of the experiment, i.e., 5 minutes. Demand characteristic has also briefly been mentioned previously in this chapter, in section 3.2. It refers to the phenomenon that happens when participants try to guess the hypotheses of the study and accordingly alter their behaviour or answers (Neuman, 2014). To prevent participants to guess the hypotheses tested in the experiment, mild deception was used in the form of a cover story. Manipulation

checks were also added to the experiment to preserve internal validity and ensure that the manipulations had the intended effects on participants' answers (Neuman, 2014).

Whereas internal validity might be maintained by the researcher's decisions concerning the experimental design, external validity is arguably more difficult to guaranty as it refers it the generalization of the experimental findings (Neuman, 2014). According to Babbie (2017), the replication of the study heightens the external validity and representativeness of the findings. This will be included in the recommendations for future research in chapter 5.

4. Results

This chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the results of the statistical analyses conducted in SPSS on the data of the experiment, downloaded from Qualtrics. First the effects of the manipulation checks will be tested with ANOVA's, followed by the analyses of the demographics and background variables, age and gender. Second, preliminary analyses will be conducted on participants' self-reported prior attitudes toward ambassadorship behaviors, employees' contribution to corporate reputation and employees' responsibility in corporate actions. Those analyses will help understand the distribution of the variables across conditions and highlight potential significant differences in age, and gender. In addition, the potential connections between participants' prior attitudes and their judgements of morality and competence will be explored. Measuring the demographics and background variables is useful as it informs the decision to control the variables when testing the hypotheses. Lastly, the 5 hypotheses will be tested, and the results of the analyses described separately.

4.1 Manipulation Checks

To verify that the manipulation had the intended effects, 2 (Media framing: negative vs. positive) by 2 (Engagement: affiliation vs. ambassadorship behaviour) ANOVA's were conducted in SPSS. The first ANOVA with PetrOnergy's estimated dedication to sustainability as dependent variable did not show a significant main effect of the media framing manipulation, $F(2, 113) = .45$, $p = .641$. Engagement did not have a significant main effect on PetrOnergy's estimated dedication to sustainability either $F(1, 113) = .18$, $p = .668$. Likewise, the interaction effect of media framing and engagement was not significant on PetrOnergy's estimated dedication to sustainability $F(2, 113) = .13$, $p = .881$. Therefore, the results on framing must be interpreted with caution.

The second ANOVA with the estimation of the degree of the employee's pride to be working for PetrOnergy as dependent variable, resulted in a significant main effect of the manipulation of engagement $F(1, 174) = 18.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Given that engagement has only 2 groups, post-hoc tests were not conducted. The descriptive statistics showed though, that participants in the affiliation condition estimated the degree of pride of the employee to be working for PetrOnergy to be lower ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.59$) than participants allocated to the ambassadorship behaviour condition ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 1.26$). Media framing

also had a significant main effect $F(2, 174) = 16.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$ on the estimation of the degree of the employee's pride to be working for PetrOnergy. Tuckey post-hoc test showed that participants in the negative media framing condition estimated the degree of pride of the employee to be working for PetrOnergy to be higher ($M = 5.76$, $SD = 1.26$) than participants allocated to the control condition ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.67$), $p < .001$. Participants in the control condition estimated the degree of pride of the employee to be working for PetrOnergy to be lower compared to participants in the positive media framing conditions ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.21$), $p < .001$. Lastly, the interaction effect of media framing and engagement on the estimation of the degree of the employee's pride to be working for PetrOnergy was significant $F(2, 174) = 19.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$. As media framing did have a direct and moderating effect on the manipulation check for engagement, the issue is likely to be with the design of the manipulation check item for media framing. The ANOVA also shows that media framing has a greater influence on the manipulation check for engagement than the actual manipulation for engagement. Nevertheless, the results for media framing and engagement should be interpreted with caution. The limitation section addresses this matter further.

4.2 Control Variables

The analyses of the age and gender distributions across conditions are conducted to verify that the randomization of participants' allocation to conditions worked as intended. It might indeed be useful to include demographic variables such as age and gender in later statistical testing of hypotheses when groups of randomly assigned participants significantly differ from each other ($\alpha = .05$) on those demographics. It is thus relevant to compare the means of age and gender across the groups before testing this study hypotheses. A one-way ANOVA was first conducted on age, followed by a Chi-Squared test on gender. In case of non-significant difference between means on age and gender, those variables are not included in the analyses run to test the hypotheses. However, if the comparison of means of age and gender reveals a significant difference across conditions, the relevant demographic(s) are included in the analyses testing the hypothesis.

4.2.1 Age

Given that age is a continuous variable, a one-way ANOVA was run in SPSS to examine the age means across media framing and engagement conditions. To do so, a new variable with participants' allocation to the conditions was created and entered as independent variable. The results of the one-way ANOVA with age as dependent variable, revealed that there are no significant differences in participants' age across the 6 conditions $F(5, 174) = 1.91$, $p = .095$. Given that there are no significant differences in participants' age across the 6 conditions, age will not be controlled for in the hypotheses testing.

4.2.2 Gender

Given that gender is a categorical variable, a Chi-squared test was run in SPSS to examine gender distribution across conditions. Participants who answered, "rather not say" and " other" to the age-related item ($n = 2$) were not included in the analyses as the groups were too small to allow conclusions. The Chi-squared test revealed there is a significant difference in gender across conditions χ^2 ($N = 178, 3) = 19.29$, $p < .001$. Nevertheless, a t-test showed that females did not have a significant higher score for judgements of the employee' morality ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.09$) than males ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .86$), $t(176) = 2.24$, $p = .102$. Similarly, a second t-test showed that females did not have a significant higher score for judgements of the employee's competence ($M = 5.03$, $SD = .98$) than males ($M = 4.74$, $SD = .87$), $t(176) = 1.96$, $p = .466$. Given, that gender does not seem to impact the dependent variables, it will not be included in the following statistical analyses.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Media Framing's Impact on Moral Judgment and the Moderation of Engagement

Morality. A two-ways ANOVA with judgement of morality as dependent variable revealed that media framing has a significant main effect on the judgement of the employee's morality $F(2, 174) = 13.15$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Indeed, Tukey post-hoc test showed that participants in the negative media framing condition judged the morality of PetrOnergy's employee more harshly ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.02$) compared to participants in the positive media framing condition ($M = 4.62$, $SD = .94$), $p < .001$. Participants in the negative media framing condition also judged the morality of PetrOnergy's employee more harshly

compared to participant in the control condition (*M* = 4.58, *SD* = .92), *p* < .001. In addition, engagement has also a significant main effect on the judgement of the employee's morality *F*(1, 174) = 4.20, *p* = .042, η_p^2 = .02. The comparison of means revealed that the employee's morality was judged more negatively by participants in the affiliation condition (*M* = 4.21, *SD* = .98), than by participants in the ambassadorship behaviour condition (*M* = 4.49, *SD* = 1.04). Lastly, the interaction effect of media framing and engagement on the judgement of the employee's morality was not significant *F*(2, 174) = 1.02, *p* = .364. The assumptions of H1 and H2 were thus confirmed, however H3 must be rejected.

Competence. The two-ways ANOVA with judgement of competence as dependent variable showed that media framing has a significant main effect on the judgement of the employee's competence *F*(2, 174) = 7.28, *p* < .001, η_p^2 = .08. Tukey post-hoc test showed that regardless of the engagement conditions, participants in the negative framing condition judged more harshly the competence of PetrOnergy's employee (*M* = 4.59, *SD* = .86) compared to participants in the positive media framing condition (*M* = 5.23, *SD* = .87), *p* = .001. However, and regardless of the engagement conditions, no difference in judgements of competence was found compared to participant in the control condition, *p* = .092. Interestingly, there was also no difference in judgement of competence between participants in the positive media framing condition and participants in the control condition, *p* = .187. Engagement did not show a significant main effect on the judgement of the employee's competence *F*(1, 174) = 1.95, *p* = 165. Lastly, the interaction of media framing and engagement had also no significant effect on judgements of the employee's competence *F*(2, 174) = 2.59, *p* = 078.

4.3.2 Negative Emotions Mediate the Relationship of Media Framing and Moral Judgement

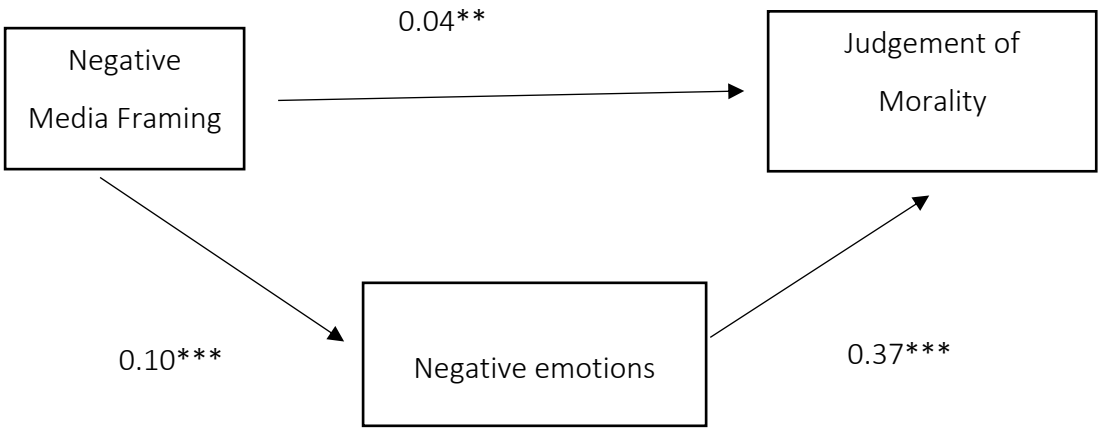
To examine Hypothesis 4, 2 bootstrapping procedures (5000 iterations, bias-corrected) were conducted in SPSS to examine potential mediation effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). A first dummy variable was created for negative media framing and a second dummy variable was created for positive media framing, for which the control condition functioned as a reference group.

Morality. In the first mediation analysis, the media framing dummies were entered as the independent variables, negative emotions as mediator, and judgement of morality as the

dependent variable. A significant positive relation between the negative media framing dummy and negative emotions was revealed by the mediation analysis, *b* = 1.07, *p* < .001. As expected, positive media framing was not significantly related to negative emotions *b* = .20, *p* = .435. Additionally, negative emotions was found to have a significant negative relation with judgement of morality *b* = -.36, *p* < .001. The indirect effect of negative media framing on judgement of morality was mediated by negative emotions, *b* = -.39, CI95% = [-.64, -.19]. H4 is thus validated. Figure 9 summarizes the significance of the effects of the variables.

Figure 9

Significance of the Relationship Between the Variables

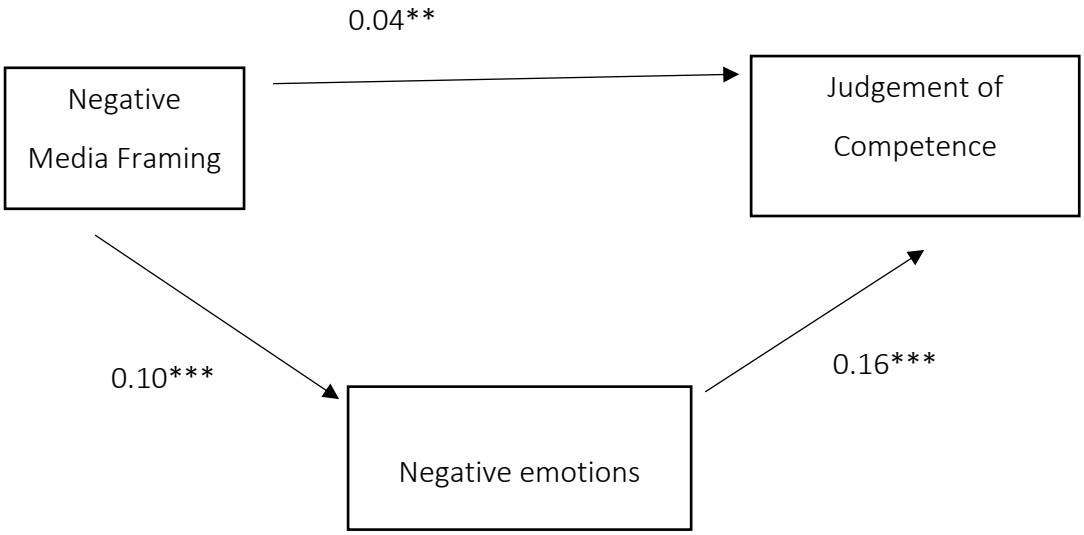


Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between negative media framing and moral judgements as mediated by negative emotions.
N = 180, p* < .05, p** < .01, p*** < .001

Competence. In the second mediation analysis, judgement of competence was the dependent variable. Negative and positive media framing were related to negative emotions similarly as in the mediation analysis run for judgement of morality. The analysis revealed that negative emotions had a significant negative relation with judgement of competence, *b* = -.20, *p* < .001. The indirect effect of negative media framing on judgement of competence was also mediated by negative emotions, *b* = -.22, CI95% = [-.41, -.09]. Figure 10 shows the significance of the effects of the variables.

Figure 10

Significance of the Relationship Between the Variables



Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between negative media framing and judgement of competence as mediated by negative emotions.
N = 180, p* < .05, p** < .01, p*** < .001

4.3.3 Engagement Moderates the Influence of Media Framing on Negative Emotions

Negative Emotions. The two-ways ANOVA with negative emotions as dependent variable revealed that engagement does not have a signification main effect on negative emotions $F(1, 174) = 3.23$, $p = .074$. However, media framing has a significant main effect on negative emotions $F(2, 174) = 10.01$, $p < .000$. Tukey post-hoc test found out that participants in the negative media framing experienced more negative emotions ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.48$) compared to participants in the positive media framing condition ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.34$), $p = .002$. Participants in the negative media framing also experienced more negative emotions that participants in the control conditions ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.36$), $p < .001$. Lastly, the interaction between media framing and engagement does not have a significant effect on negative emotions $F(2, 174) = .74$, $p = .929$. Therefore, engagement does not moderate the influence of media framing and negative emotions and H5 is rejected.

4.4 Additional Analyses

4.4.1 Prior Attitudes

Participants prior attitudes regarding employee's responsibility in a company actions and employees' contribution to the company's reputation when engaging ambassadorship behaviours where measured. Participants' tendency to engage in ambassadorship behaviours was also measured. To evaluate the relationship between participants prior attitudes and their judgements of morality and competence, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted.

A first hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with judgements of morality as dependent variable (criterion). Media framing and engagement were included in the first block. Participants' self-reported ambassadorship behaviour, their opinions about employees 'responsibility in corporate actions and employees' contribution to corporate reputation when sharing posts on Facebook were added to the second block. When media framing (β = .30, $p < .001$) and engagement (β = .14, p = .050) were used as predictors, the model reached significance , R^2 = .11, $F(2, 177) = 10.82$, $p < .001$. However, adding the 3 variables measuring prior attitudes improved the model significantly, ΔR^2 = .31, $F(3, 174) = 16.55$, $p < .001$. Interestingly, participants willingness to engage in ambassadorship behaviours was not a significant predictor of their judgements of the employee's morality (β = .07, p = .298). However, participants' perceptions of the employee's contribution to the reputation of the company when sharing corporate posts on Facebook showed a significant positive influence on participants' judgements of the employee's morality (β = .35, $p < .001$). Lastly, participants' opinions about the employee's responsibility in the company's actions also has a significant positive influence on participants' judgements of the employee's morality (β = .15, p = .026).

A second hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with judgements of competence as dependent variable (criterion). The independent variables were entered in the same way as in the first analysis. When media framing (β = .15, p = .050) and engagement (β = -.10, p = .160) were used as predictors, the model did not reached significance , R^2 = .03, $F(2, 177) = 2.97$, p = .054. However, adding the 3 variables measuring prior attitudes improved the model significantly, ΔR^2 = .18, $F(3, 174) = 10.25$, $p < .001$. Participant's willingness to engage in ambassadorship behaviours was still not a significant predictor of

their judgements of the employee's competence (β = .02, *p* = .800). Participants' perceptions of the employee's contribution to the reputation of the company when sharing corporate posts on Facebook showed a similarly significant positive influence on participants' judgements of the employee's competence (β = .35, *p* < .001). However, participants' opinions about the employee's responsibility in the company's actions was not a significant predictor of participants' judgements of the employee's competence (β = .09, *p* = .195) anymore. Thus, it appears that believing that promoting an employer on Facebook influences its reputation leads to more positive evaluations of the morality and competence of employees engaging in the behaviour. In addition, thinking that employees share the responsibility of corporate actions seems to predict more positive judgement of the employee morality, but not of his competence. This might signal the participants' acknowledgement to social norms prescribing employees to act as a loyal and committed group member. Being a loyal employee thus means sharing the burden of responsibility and contributing to positive corporate reputation (Pagliaro et al., 2011). In doing so, people show their adherence to commonly valued moral behaviours. The fact that opinions about employees' responsibility are predictive of judgements of morality but not of judgements of competence might indicates that participants considered corporate actions in term of their moral impact and less in term of efficiency. This might be explained by the fact that organizational morality has a greater influence on consumers and employees compared to organizational competence (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012; Kervyn et al., 2012). However, participants' personal preference regarding their own online behaviour seems to not be related with their judgements of the morality and competence of the employee. Prior attitudes will be further discussed in section 5.4, dedicated to future research.

5. Discussion

Goffman's work (1963) on stigma by association opened the path for researchers to study a long list of potential stigmatizing elements. Over time, this list evolved alongside with social norms and alongside with the definition of identity and identity politics. While race, social class, illnesses, or sexual orientation remain stigmatising elements today, organizational affiliation can arguably be included in the list (Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). Organizational identification has been facilitated by the development of social and mobile technologies and by the human need to define one's identity in a complex and changing world. Stigma transfer not only occurs because of who people are but also because of what they identify with. The definition of the phenomenon encompasses key elements on which this research focuses on, "the process by which a 'normal' individual is stigmatized by others as a function of his or her association with a marked individual or group" (Neuberg et al., 1994, p. 197). Stigma transfer thus occurs through the observation, and the judgement of other people (Neuberg et al., 1994). Stigmatizing elements might be characteristic of a person, a group, or a company, and are value driven (Pryor et al., 2012). For this reason, this thesis focuses on the process of the formation of judgements of morality and of competence, and on the influence of negative emotions. Partly due to the abundance of information, the access to information is mediated by media outlets and their communication frames. The experimental design of this research was constructed to answer the question: " to what extent do media framing of an organisation's activities and an employee's engagement with the organisation on Facebook, influence outsiders' evaluation of the employee's morality?"

The following sections highlight key findings that help answering the research question, and the theoretical and practical implications of the findings. The limitations of the experimental design are also discussed. This chapter ends with directions for future research.

5.1 Key Findings

The first finding validates H1 and H2 that assume that negative media framing of a company's action leads to harsher judgement of the morality and competence of the company's employee, compared to positive media framing of the company's actions. The same is assumed to be true, compared to an absence of information about the company's actions in the media. A significant influence of negative media framing on the perceptions of

morality and competence of the employee has been found. This finding is a direct illustration of the possibility of stigma transfer from a company with a compromised reputation to its employees. It is also important to note that the negative frame of this experiment only consisted in a short article with few details about the corporate transgression. Consequently, it did not take much effort, nor many arguments, to activate participants' negativity bias towards the portrayed company (Baumeister et al., 2001). Interestingly, the positive media frame did not influence participant's perception of the employee's morality more than an absence of information, which aligns with Baumeister et al. (2001) conclusion on the negativity bias. People are thus indeed impacted to a greater extent by negative information compared to neutral or positive one, which in turn influence their perceptions and judgements (Baumeister et al., 2001). This is especially true in the case of judgements of morality (Goodwin et al., 2014). The greater impact of immoral behaviours on judgements compared to moral behaviours was emphasized by Skowronski and Carlston' s study (1987). When people judge the ability of others, positive information are usually more diagnostic of the target' competence, compared to negative information (Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). The experiment showed that both negative and positive information from the media frames influenced the judgements of the ability of the employee, though when compared to an absence of information, the impact was not significant anymore. So, in this case, positive information was not more diagnostic of the employee's competence than an absence of information. Therefore, positive spillover from a company with a moral reputation was not transferred to the employee's reputation in term of competence. This might be explained by the fact that the media frame used to depict PetrOnergy was a moral frame, not directly related to competence and ability. Nevertheless, while negative information impacted both type of judgements, the effect was stronger for judgements of morality (Skowronski & Carlston, 1987).

Second, while the effect of media framing of a company's actions on judgments of morality and competence is not moderated by the employee's association with the company, engagement by itself still influenced judgements. It indeed appears that regardless of media framing, the employee's association with its company was taken into consideration by outsiders when judging the morality of the employee. However, this was only the case for judgement of morality, and not for judgement of competence. Surprisingly, and contrary to H3 expectation, the employee sharing a company post, thus behaving as ambassador on

Facebook was judged more moral overall by outsiders than the employee being affiliated and less engaged with the company. Employees showing active ambassadorship behaviours and probably high organizational identification on Facebook, are more likely to be perceived more moral, albeit not more competent, by observers than employees displaying a passive affiliation. According to Darley and Gross (1983), when observers are asked to judge someone without much behavioural cues from the target person, they tend to rely on social norms to inform their judgements. Without communication frames and thus with very little information about the employee, outsiders might consider the employee's degree of adherence to social norms when judging him. Given that Facebook is a social tool commonly used to display interactions and one's identity, ambassadorship behaviours might be regarded as a higher adherence to social media norms. Furthermore, supporting one's employer on Facebook might be viewed as being loyal, which in turn might influence positively the overall judgement of the employee's morality. Facebook users adhere to the platform's social norms in the hope of receiving positive feedbacks from peers (Pagliaro et al., 2011).

Third, it appears that the experience of negative emotions mediates the influence of media frames on the judgements of the employee's morality and of the employee's competence. The experience of negative emotions by outsiders leads to more negative judgement of the employee's morality and competence. This finding emphasizes the importance of the role played by emotions and specifically, negative emotions in the formation of human perceptions (Greene & Haidt, 2002; Haidt, 2001). Interestingly, negative emotions have a stronger impact on the relationship of media framing and judgements when outsiders judge the morality of the employee compared to when they judge the employee competence. This finding should be considered in light with the ongoing discussion in the literature about perceptions of morality and competence. As Goodwin argues, moral cues largely influence the perception of others. In this research, the influence of moral cues and information from media was mediated by negative emotions in both perceptions of morality and competence, albeit less strongly in the case of competence. Contrary to Reeder's conclusion (2006), it appears that the morality and ability domains are not inherently different when it comes to the perceptions and judgments of others. Reasonably, people tend to use the available information about the morality of the employee to evaluate his competence (Stellar and Willer, 2018).

Lastly, and as expected, negative media framing impact the experience of negative emotions by outsiders. In his research, Haidt (2001), demonstrated the significance of emotions in the process of judgement' formation. Upon reading about an event or an anecdote in a newspaper for example, an automatic reaction occurs in the form of a positive or negative feeling (Haidt, 2001). Characterized by their rapid and effortless occurrence, those feelings resemble affective intuitions, and are not the result of a research or a reasoning process, nor the conclusion of the evaluation of evidence (Haidt, 2001). The process described by Haidt (2001) seems to have been activated by the negative frame in the experiment. As the negativity bias results in a greater influence of negative information on people's judgements and impressions (Baumeister et al., 2001), it makes sense that people reading information framed negatively would experience negative emotions to a greater extent.

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

There are several implications of the findings of this research from an academic and from a practical standpoint. The theoretical implications will be first discussed, followed by the practical ones.

Fifty-five years ago, Goffman sparked the interest of scholars with his classical "Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity". Over time, social psychology, sociology, neuroscience, law, and political science, have researched the transfer of stigma, and stigma by association (Bos et al.,2013). Organizational literature has also focused its attention on the transfer of stigma in the workplace. While it recognizes new trends in corporate culture, corporate organization, and identification (Fieseler et al., 2015; Sievers et al., 2015; Van Prooijen et al., 2018), it remains one step behind the rapidly changing meaning of work and new practices. For example, the use of social media during working hours and outside working hours or the blend between "private" life and "work" life in relation with the use of social media (Fieseler et al, 2015). This research contributes to the growing body of literature on evolving work practices and on the transfer of corporate stigma to employee mediated by social media. Building up on Fieseler et al. (2015) and on Ashforth et al. (2020) work on online self-presentation, boundary management on social media, and organizational identification literature, this project considers behaviours on Facebook as the results of both

professional and private motivations. While the blurred boundaries of users' communication on Facebook are recognized by the literature, behaviours on Facebook are often conceptualized separately, with on one side of the spectrum "private use" and on the other side "professional use" (Fieseler et al, 2015). Given that this research focuses on the process of corporate stigma transfer to employee and on the judgement of the employee by observers, it is crucial to conceptualize the observed behaviours on Facebook as closely as would the observers. Behaviours on social media, while not entirely segmented from offline behaviours, answer to a different set of norms and result from a different set of affordances (Baccarella et al., 2018). This research acknowledges thus Baccarella et al. (2018) call for the use of combinations of existing theories from different disciplines to inform research of social media behaviours. The findings shows that the transfer of corporate stigma to employee mediated by social media is a likely to occur on a regular basis. As negative communication frames are increasingly use in media, and especially when reporting corporate actions, people are likely to be familiar with negative media framing. One's familiarity with negative frames does not necessarily mitigate their effects on one's judgements of others as this research shows. Thus, those negative frames are likely to influence one's judgements when coming across information shared by employees on Facebook. This research thus contributes to the stigma by association literature, reiterating the likelihood of stigma spill over from an organization to individuals (Ashforth et al., 2020), but in a digital context. Indeed, while research on stigma is extensive, it has yet to direct its attention to the stigmatizing potential of social media behaviours. In addition, the use of social media by employees and its associated risks is increasingly studied, however those risks are assessed from a corporate standpoint (Dreher, 2013; Sherer et al., 2019). This project's findings show that social media behaviours and the degree of disclosed engagement with an organization might also threaten employees' reputation. Lastly, this research's findings suggest that the formation of judgements of competence and morality presents some similarities. Despite the claim that the ability and morality realms differ essentially from one another (Reeder, 2006), it has been demonstrated that " the neural signatures of impression formation based upon ability and morality information" (Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013, p. 19444) are similar. In addition, it appears that an identical statistical principle ground the process of updating judgements of morality and ability through the perceived frequency of behaviours (Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013). Given that highly immoral behaviours and highly competent behaviours are perceived

to be less frequent, they tend to influence to a greater extent judgement of others (Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013). The present research highlights two additional similarities between judgements of morality and judgements of competence. First, both types of judgement are negatively impacted by negative media framing. Second, negative emotions mediate the relationship between negative media framing and both type of judgements.

The findings of the study have also practical implications for employees, and HR departments. Employees might engage in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook driven by internal and/or external motivations. The perception of someone's morality has been shown to be a central component in the formation of judgement by observers (Goodwin, et al., 2014). It also appears to be the case when people evaluate organizations and brands, as companies are judged by their adherence to human moral characteristics (Ashforth et al., 2020). An internal motivation for an employee to engage in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook might thus be to signal to their peers that they value moral organizations, with the expectation to also be considered virtuous (Van Prooijen, 2018). The recognition of one's moral values by their peers is desirable, as the recognition of one's morality is integrated in one's social self-concept (Pagliaro et al., 2016). In addition, while an employee might unconsciously seek to signal their morality when actively associating themself with a company on Facebook, often consequences of posting are disregarded. Users have indeed reported not thinking about the reasons of their posting, posting when feeling emotional and misjudging who their audience could be (Wang et al., 2011). This research's findings highlight the fact that promoting one's organization on Facebook might be detrimental to the perception of the employee' moral values. Call-out culture encourages the shaming and punishing of people displaying online behaviours deemed morally inappropriate or associating, and supporting organizations belonging to perceived immoral industries (Woodruff, 2014). Employees might also be motivated by external desires such as career progress, positive performance evaluations or increase in social capital (Van Prooijen, 2018; Bazarova & 2014). In short, employees are likely to engage in ambassadorship behaviours in part with the hope that a positive organisational reputation will spill over to them. This study's findings showed that partially due to negativity bias, positive media frames, and thus positive corporate reputation, did not influence participant's perception of the employee's morality more than an absence of information. Not only, promoting one's company on

Facebook might not result in positive career's outcomes, but it might damage one's reputation if the company is perceived negatively.

HR practices in general have evolved with the development of digital technologies and it is today common to review an applicant profile on social media (Roulin 2014). Already in 2010, 44% of professionals reported having conducted online searches about potential future employees (Roulin 2014). As this study showed, negative reputational spill over can occur from an organisation to an employee and sharing corporate posts on Facebook influence judgements of the employee's morality made by observers. Thus, those online background checks might be of concern as they might result in the discrimination of prospect employees (Baccarela et al., 2018). For example, someone applying for a new position might be negatively judged if they engaged in ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook, promoting a former employer from a controversial sector. Based on the review of his Facebook profile, their application might become negatively connotated. As Haidt (2001) pointed out, moral judgements are characterised by their rapid, autonomous, and unconscious occurrences. Because the formation of moral judgements is autonomous and complex (Haidt, 2001), the impact of engaging in ambassador behaviours on Facebook on future career prospects might seem inconsequential. However, this research's findings imply otherwise and might encourage intentional reflection among HR practitioners and management executives on their company recruiting practices. Hiring policies should also address the issue and encourage best practices, protecting future employees from discrimination. Some organizations might be tempted to encourage ambassadorship behaviours among employees as the posted information is considered more authentic in comparison with corporate communication (Dreher, 2014). Additionally, ambassadorship behaviours on Facebook can contribute to a positive corporate reputation (Dreher, 2014). Regardless of the obvious conflict of interest residing in a company encouraging its employees into positive word of mouth on Facebook, this research highlighted the potential threats to employees' reputation. Though the risks for the reputation of employees are likely to vary greatly depending on individuals and sector of activities, and while companies are not responsible for what their employees do on Facebook, employers should refrain from encouraging ambassadorship behaviours.

5.3 Limitations

This section is dedicated to the limitations of this thesis, defined as "a realistic (and adequately self-critical) delineation of limitations and weaknesses" of the research presented" (Campion, 1993, p. 717). The limitations of this research contribute to replace it in its context and to evaluate its credibility (Ioannidis, 2007). Considerations about the sample will be first discussed, followed by considerations regarding the experiment. Lastly, the section will end on the theoretical limitations. The limitations of this project inspire the recommendations for future research, described in the following section.

This research is limited by its sample size, set to hundred and eighty participants, due to monetary constraint. Indeed, and as mentioned in section 3.2, representativeness of the population is better achieved with larger samples (Babbies, 2014). Additionally, the randomized allocation of a larger sample to conditions, increases the internal validity of the study (Vargas et al., 2017). Sample size also matters in most statistical analyses. For example, mediation analyses such as the ones conducted in this study, generate more solid results when run on larger samples, from two hundred and fifty participants and up (Hayes, 2009). Also, and as touched upon in section 3.2.1, fewer sampling criteria might heighten the representativeness of the findings, and therefore, their generalization to the population. For example, while it is likely that the findings would apply to other nationalities with similar culture, the criterion of the UK nationality limits the generalization to other nationalities. Recruiting participants of one nationality was aimed at reducing cultural variances that could impact the findings (Tang et al., 2002). Thus, the findings of this research are to be considered mainly valid for UK nationals. Some characteristics of the stimulus material likely set the boundaries of the findings. Once again, as clean experimental environments require neutrality, the picture of the employee was selected with this objective in mind. Nevertheless, the employee's gender, ethnicity and age might have influenced the findings. It is noteworthy to mention that the replication of this research would increase the reliability of the findings (Babbie, 2017). Lastly, the findings of this thesis in regard with media framing are limited by the non-significance of media framing on its corresponding manipulation check. It is likely that the design of the media framing manipulation check is the reason why media framing had no significant influence on the item. Indeed, the analyses showed that media framing had significant and large impact on the item designed to be the manipulation check

for engagement. It is also possible that the oil sector setting chosen for the experiment, coupled with the design of the item, i.e., focused on sustainability, influenced participants' responses.

Building on Ashforth et al, findings, (2020), this research assumes that outsiders tend to anthropomorphise organisations and attribute human characteristics to them, such as morality and competence. Within this theoretical framework, the transfer of corporate stigma to the employee occurs via media framing and negative emotions. While reasonable, this theoretical assumption limits the scope of this research. For example, perceived organisational characteristics were not assessed. Lastly, the conceptualisation of morality and of competence also limits the scope of the findings. The framework of this research is built upon Leach et al., (2007) conceptualisation of morality and Fiske et al., (2002) conceptualisation of competence. Consequently, morality is in this research mostly concerned with traits relating to the moral dimensions of ham, fairness, and rights (Leach et al., 2007). While the conceptualisation of morality is commonly limited to those dimensions in social psychology, it is argued to mostly represent the views of educated liberal westerners (Graham et al., 2011). Haidt and Graham's (2007) research with different socio-economics groups and cultures, such as less educated American, Hindus, Brazilians, or conservatives, highlighted additional moral dimensions. Broadening the conceptualisation of morality beyond harm and fairness, to loyalty, authority and sanctity would thus improve the representativeness of the findings and fit a more diverse population. Nonetheless, the conceptualisation of morality matches the Westerners' sample of this research. Given the conceptualisation of morality, competence was also conceptualised as a separate entity. A broadened conceptualisation of morality might however also include Fiske et al., (2002) definition of competence, i.e., someone's abilities to pursue and fulfil their intentions.

5.4 Future Research

Recommendations for future research is discussed in regard with methodological considerations and in regard with theoretical considerations. The formation of human judgements and stigma transfer are intricated processes with multiple components. Future research could further study those components and compare them. For example, diverse profiles of employee should be used in experiments, and their findings compared. This would

help to understand whether the age, gender, or ethnicity of the employee influence the judgements of his competence and his morality made by outsiders. By extension, it would highlight which characteristics of the employee's profile favours the transfer of stigma from an organization to its employee. Indeed, while gender, age, and culture of the outsiders/observers are important, it seems that gender of the observed person also plays a role in the formation of judgements, and the experience of negative emotions in work-related environments (Miner & Eischeid, 2012). Research has showed that age, gender, and culture significantly impact the formation of judgements of morality and competence (Dupoux & Jacob, 2007; Fujita et al., 1991; Fumagalli et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2005; McNair et al., 2018; RÖnnlund et al., 2005; Ross & Mirowsky, 2008). It is also the case for stigmatizing processes, in which age, gender and ethnicities/culture of the observer influence the outcome of the stigmatization (Corrigan & Watson, 2007). So, researching further individual characteristics and differences in work related behaviours on Facebook would help understand both processes.

In addition, using an existing company in the stimulus material instead of a fictitious one, would allow useful comparisons between the methods. Ideally, the opinions and perceptions of participants about the company should be measured beforehand. Because people form judgements based on values, which often are rooted in culture, future studies should replicate the research design across continents, and compare the findings. It is also recommended that future research recruit large samples, i.e., above two hundred and fifty participants, to yield solid results in their statistical analyses. Replication of this research with a different design of the manipulation check's item for media framing is also desirable to validate the findings.

Lastly, Fieseler and colleagues' hypothesis (2015), that the pursuit of credibility and professionalism is likely to motivate women and young professionals to blur their professional and private identities online, should be further researched. To compensate for lack of experience and/or because of professional insecurities, specific groups of the population, such as young people or women, might engage in ambassadorship behaviours on social media. Future research might thus want to explore and compare the outcomes of ambassadorship behaviours on the moral reputation of individuals of those specific groups.

6. Conclusion

To argue that social media have considerably disrupted people habits is today a truism in many aspects. While academics and laymen alike would probably agree with this statement, most would debate on the specifics. Communication, media, culture, and business studies, but also psychology and behavioural sciences research how social media influence the ways people socialise, consume information, create new ideas and social movements, market their products and date each other's. The fast pace of the technology, its adoption rate, and the evolution of new practices around it, contribute to the delay in academic knowledge on the topic. Organizational literature has also focussed its attention to the phenomenon, in the context of shifting organisational practices and evolving philosophical paradigm. This research aimed to contribute to the academic understanding of the formation of judgements and the transfer of organizational stigma to employee mediated by social media.

Its findings highlight the powerful influence of negative communication and media frames on the emotional states of outsiders and on their judgements of both morality and competence of employees. It is important to note that even a relatively light frame, without previous priming, and in a synthetic environment has a considerable effect on the ways people feel and judge others. Despite being stronger in the case of judgements of morality, this effect occurs for both judgements of morality and competence (Pallant, 2013). It thus suggests that even in the case of judgements of "rationality", namely related to a person's competence, the formation of judgements, rely on values and intuition (Haidt, 2001). Moreover, this study showed how effortlessly the negativity bias can be activated by media framing and the prevalence of negative emotions in the formation of judgements of morality and competence. It also appeared that the intensity of the connection an employee discloses on Facebook, significantly, albeit slightly, impacts the ways observers consider them. Interestingly, this was only the case for judgements of morality and the direction of the effect was not as expected. Behaving as ambassador for a company negatively framed resulted in more positive judgements of morality. More research is obviously required to shed light on specific aspects of the process of stigma transfer from organisations to employees.

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Appendix A

Consent Form in Qualtrics

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Its purpose is to investigate opinions on behaviours occurring on Facebook.

Reading the material and filling in the questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each question carefully and honestly.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

All research data remain completely confidential and are processed anonymously. The personal data we collect (e.g., age, education), will be stored in a coded way. The research data will not be made available to third parties.

VOLUNTARY

If you now decide not to participate in this survey, this will not affect you. If you decide to cease your cooperation during the research, this will in no way affect you either. You can also withdraw your permission to use your data within 24 hours after finishing the questionnaire. You can cease your cooperation at any time during the research without giving reasons. If you terminate your cooperation during the research, or afterwards, within 24 hours, or if you withdraw your consent, your data will be removed from our files and be destroyed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions about this research, in advance or afterwards, you can contact the responsible researcher: Helene Attardi, 548844ha@eur.nl

If you understand the information above and freely consent to participate in this study, click on the “I agree” button below to start the survey.

Appendix B

Table 1 : Age of Participants (*N* = 180)

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18	1	.06	0.6
19	9	5.0	5.6
20	7	3.9	9.4
21	6	3.3	12.8
22	9	5.0	17.8
23	4	2.2	20.0
24	7	3.9	23.9
25	8	4.4	28.3
26	4	2.2	30.6
27	6	3.3	33.9
28	3	1.7	35.6
29	4	2.2	37.8
30	5	2.8	40.6
31	9	5.0	45.6
32	5	2.8	48.3
33	6	3.3	51.7
35	2	1.1	52.8
37	3	1.7	59.4
38	3	1.7	61.1
39	2	1.1	62.2
40	2	1.1	63.3
41	3	1.7	65.0
42	4	2.2	67.2
43	4	2.2	69.4
44	3	1.7	71.1
45	3	1.7	71.8
46	6	3.3	71.1
47	6	3.3	79.4
48	3	1.7	81.1
49	4	2.2	83.3
50	3	1.7	85.0
51	5	2.8	87.8
52	2	1.1	88.9
53	3	1.7	90.6
54	4	2.2	92.8
55	1	0.6	93.3
56	2	1.1	94.4
57	1	0.6	95.0
58	1	0.6	95.6
60	1	0.6	96.1
62	2	1.1	97.2
64	1	0.6	97.8

65	1	0.6	98.3
66	1	0.6	98.9
67	1	0.6	99.4
68	1	0.6	100.0
Total	180	100.0	100.0

Table 2 : Gender of Participants (N = 180)

Gender	Frequency	*N* = 180 %
Male	66	36.7
Female	112	62.2
Other	1	0.6
Rather not say	1	0.6
Total	180	100.0

Appendix C

Complete Experiment in Qualtrics

The risks of online ambassadorship

I understand the information above and:

- ○ I agree
- ○ I disagree and stop this study

Please fill in your prolific ID

_____

Positive Framing and Affiliation

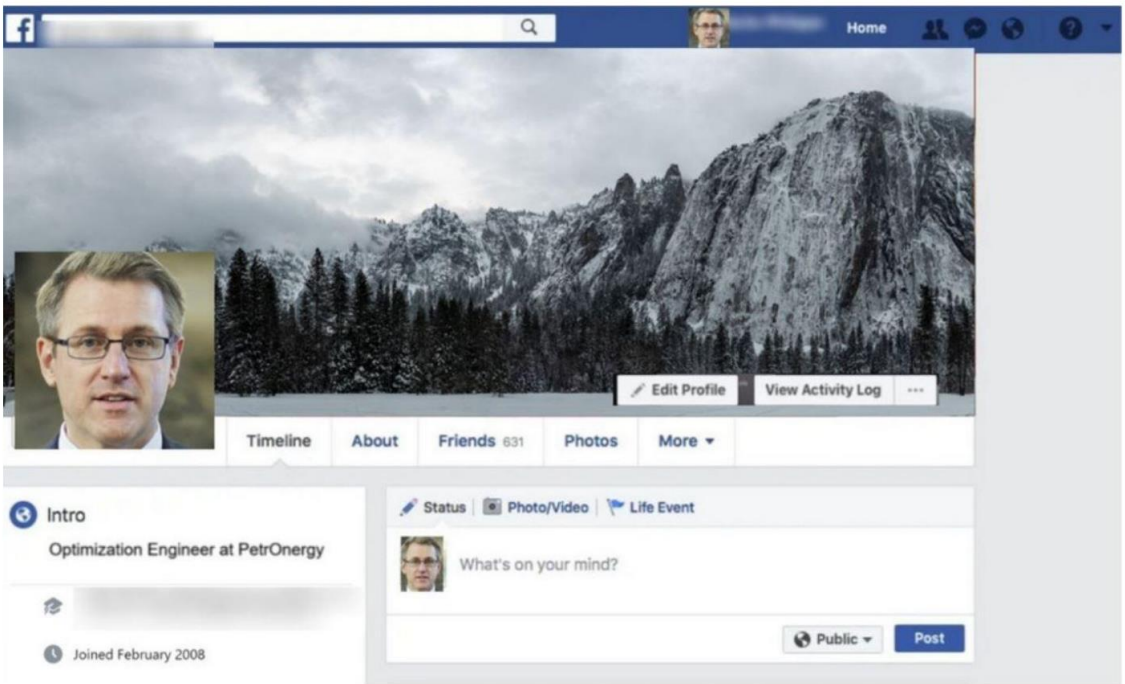
Please read the news report below carefully.

In January 2019, **PretrOnergy** was the first international oil and gas company to introduce an ambition to **reduce the Net Carbon Footprint of the energy products it sells,** expressed as a carbon intensity measure, taking into account their full lifecycle emissions. These include emissions from its own operations, from the use of the energy products by its customers, as well as those generated by third parties in its supply chains. In developing its Net Carbon Footprint program, PetrOnergy has taken **a significant leadership position within the oil and gas sector**.

By **awarding PetrOnergy its SustainableClimate label**, the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recognized **the important role the company played in promoting climate change related actions and recommendations** in the oil and gas industry.

Please look at the Facebook profile.

In the next page you will be asked about your first impression of the person to whom belong the Facebook profile.



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
PetrOnergy is dedicated to make the oil and gas industry more sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
The employee shares his pride to be working for PetrOnergy on his Facebook page.	○	○	○	○	○

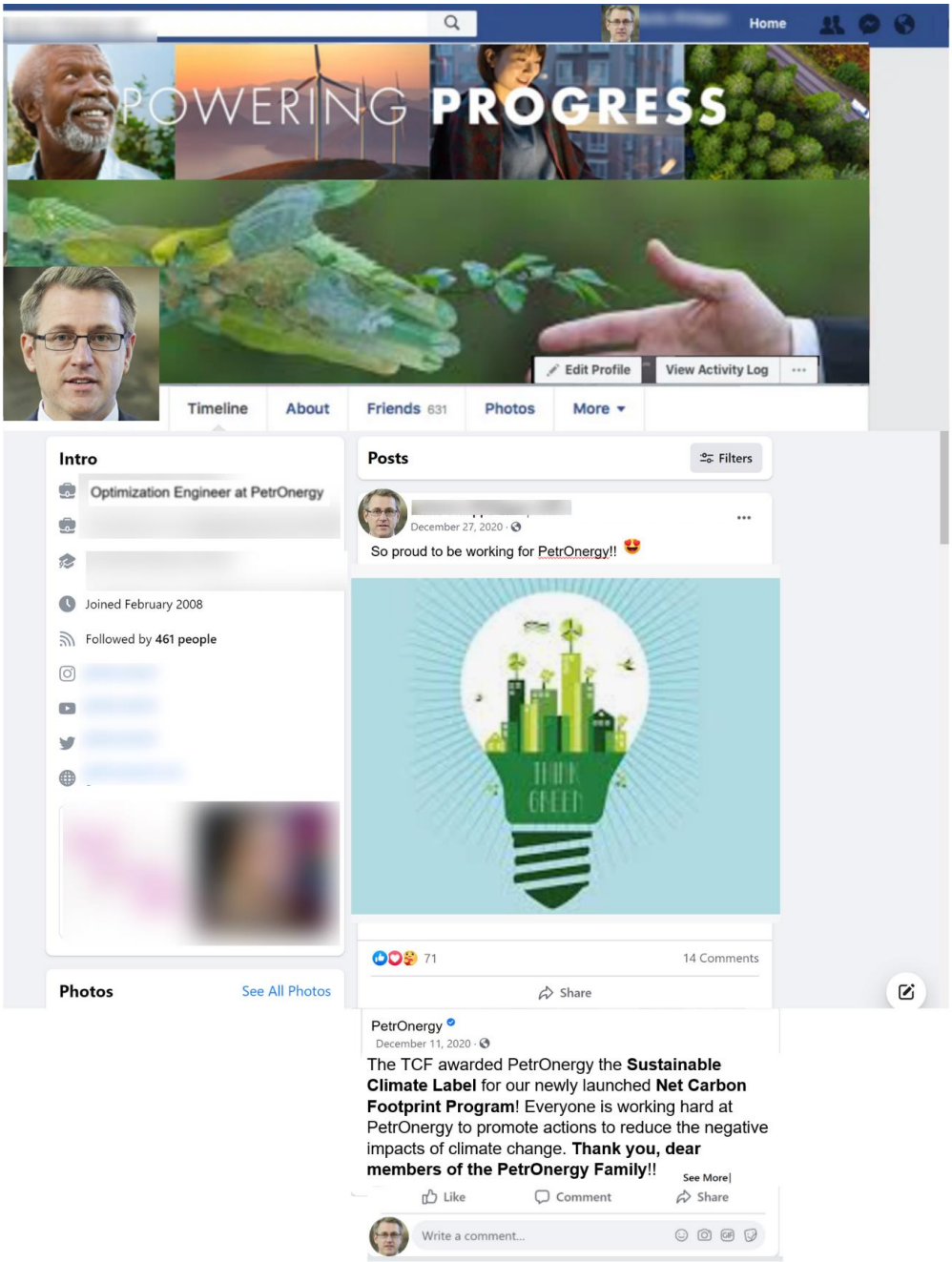
Positive Framing and Ambassadorship

Please read the news report below carefully.

In January 2019, **PretrOnergy** was the first international oil and gas company to introduce an ambition to **reduce the Net Carbon Footprint of the energy products it sells,** expressed as a carbon intensity measure, taking into account their full lifecycle emissions. These include emissions from its own operations, from the use of the energy products by its customers, as well as those generated by third parties in its supply chains. In developing its Net Carbon Footprint program, PetrOnergy has taken **a significant leadership position within the oil and gas sector**.

By **awarding PetrOnergy its SustainableClimate label**, the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recognized **the important role the company played in promoting climate change related actions and recommendations** in the oil and gas industry.

Please look at the Facebook profile. You will be later asked about your first impression of the person to whom belongs the Facebook profile.



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
PetrOnergy is dedicated to make the oil and gas industry more sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee shares his pride to be working for PetrOnergy on his Facebook page.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

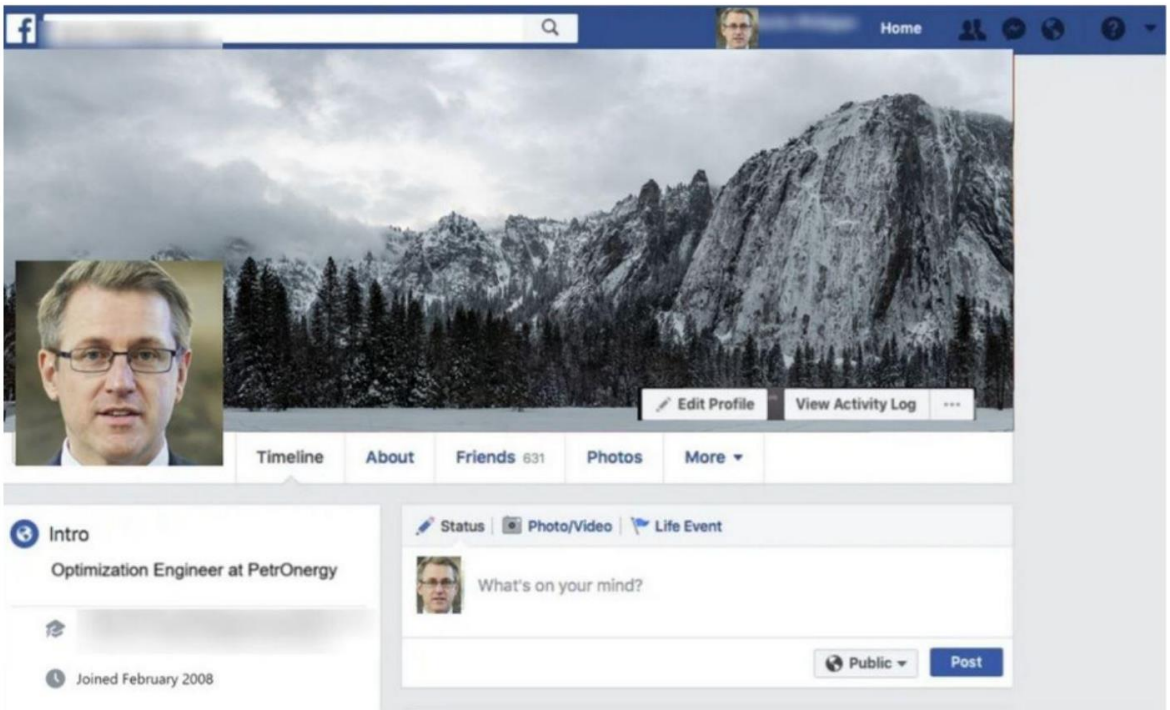
Negative Framing and Affiliation

Please read the news report below carefully.

In January 2019, **PretrOnergy** was the first international oil and gas company to introduce an ambition to **reduce the Net Carbon Footprint of the energy products it sells,** expressed as a carbon intensity measure, taking into account their full lifecycle emissions. These include emissions from its own operations, from the use of the energy products by its customers, as well as those generated by third parties in its supply chains. In developing its Net Carbon Footprint program, PetrOnergy is **claiming to take a leadership position within the oil and gas sector.**

On the 13th of March 2019, the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) together with **Greenpeace,** has filed a complaint to the International Chamber of Commerce against PetrOnegry for **data falsifications and green washing.** Upon examination of PetrOnergy's Net Carbon Footprint program, the TCFD uncovered several **data frauds**. When asked about the complaint, PetrOnergy did not comment.

Please look at the Facebook profile. You will be later asked about your first impression of the person to whom belong the Facebook profile.



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
PetrOnergy is dedicated to make the oil and gas industry more sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee shares his pride to be working for PetrOnergy on his Facebook page.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Negative Framing and Ambassadorship

Please read the news report below carefully.

In January 2019, **PretrOnergy** was the first international oil and gas company to introduce an ambition to **reduce the Net Carbon Footprint of the energy products it sells,** expressed as a carbon intensity measure, taking into account their full lifecycle emissions. These include emissions from its own operations, from the use of the energy products by its customers, as well as those generated by third parties in its supply chains. In developing its Net Carbon Footprint program, PetrOnergy is **claiming to take a leadership position within the oil and gas sector.**

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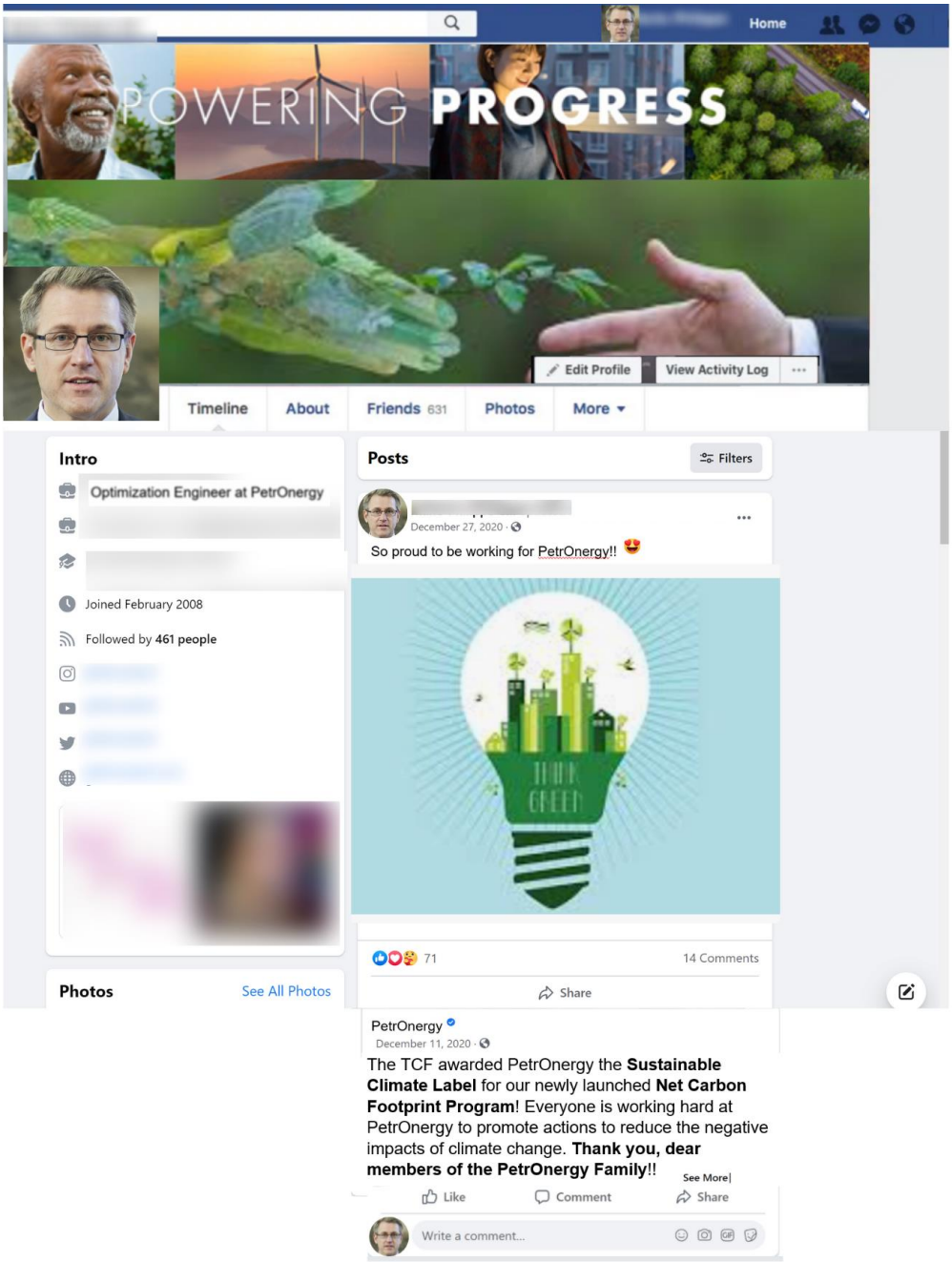


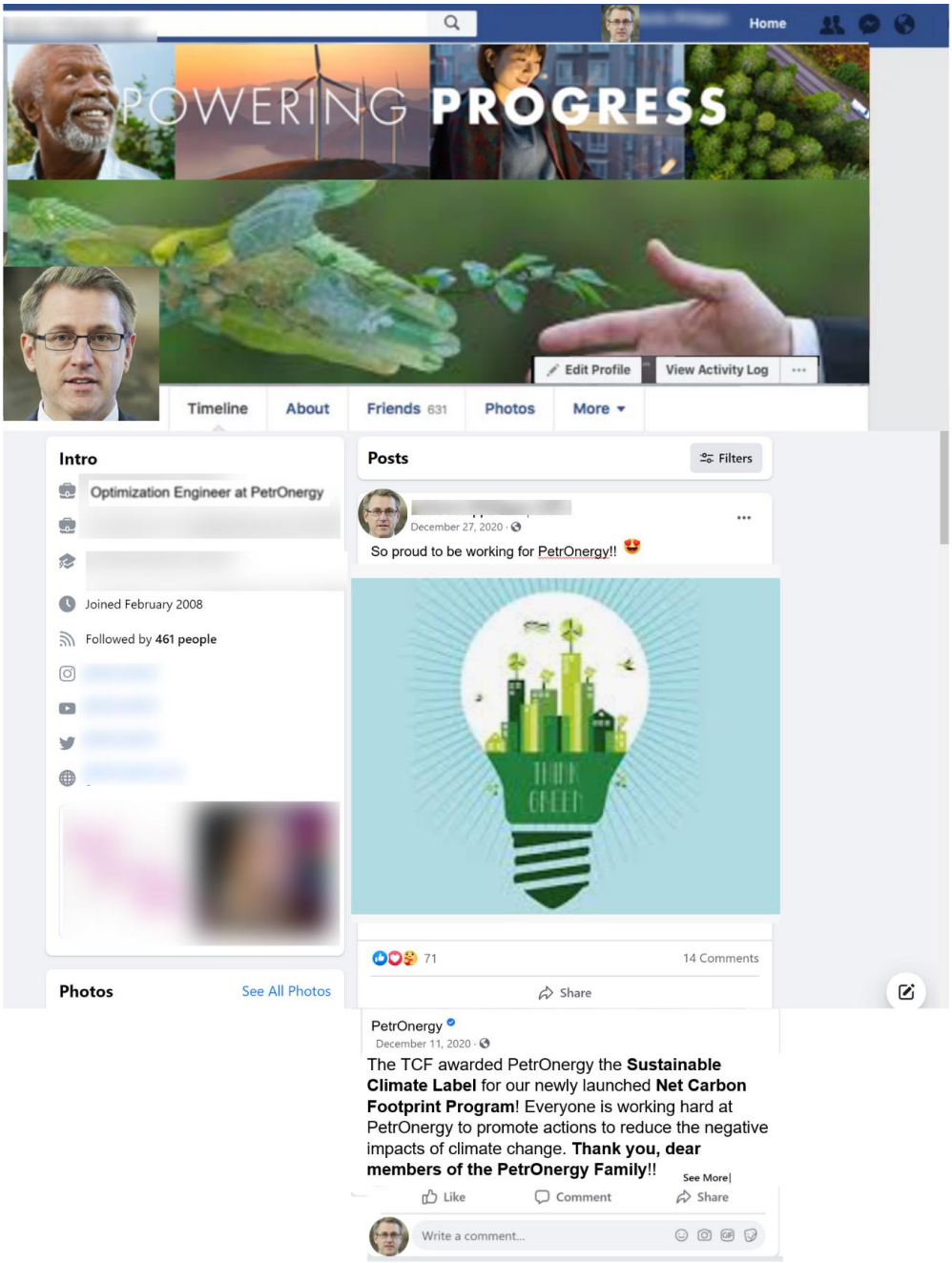
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
PetrOnergy is dedicated to make the oil and gas industry more sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee shares his pride to be working for PetrOnergy on his Facebook page.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

No Framing and Ambassadorship

Please look at the Facebook profile.

You will be later asked about your first impression of the person to whom belong the Facebook profile.


Home
POWERING PROGRESS
Edit Profile
View Activity Log
Timeline
About
Friends 631
Photos
More
Intro
Optimization Engineer at PetrOnergy
Joined February 2008
Followed by 461 people
Photos
See All Photos
Posts
Filters
December 27, 2020
So proud to be working for PetrOnergy!!
THINK GREEN
71
14 Comments
Share
PetrOnergy
December 11, 2020
The TCF awarded PetrOnergy the Sustainable Climate Label for our newly launched Net Carbon Footprint Program! Everyone is working hard at PetrOnergy to promote actions to reduce the negative impacts of climate change. Thank you, dear members of the PetrOnergy Family!!
See More
Like
Comment
Share
Write a comment...

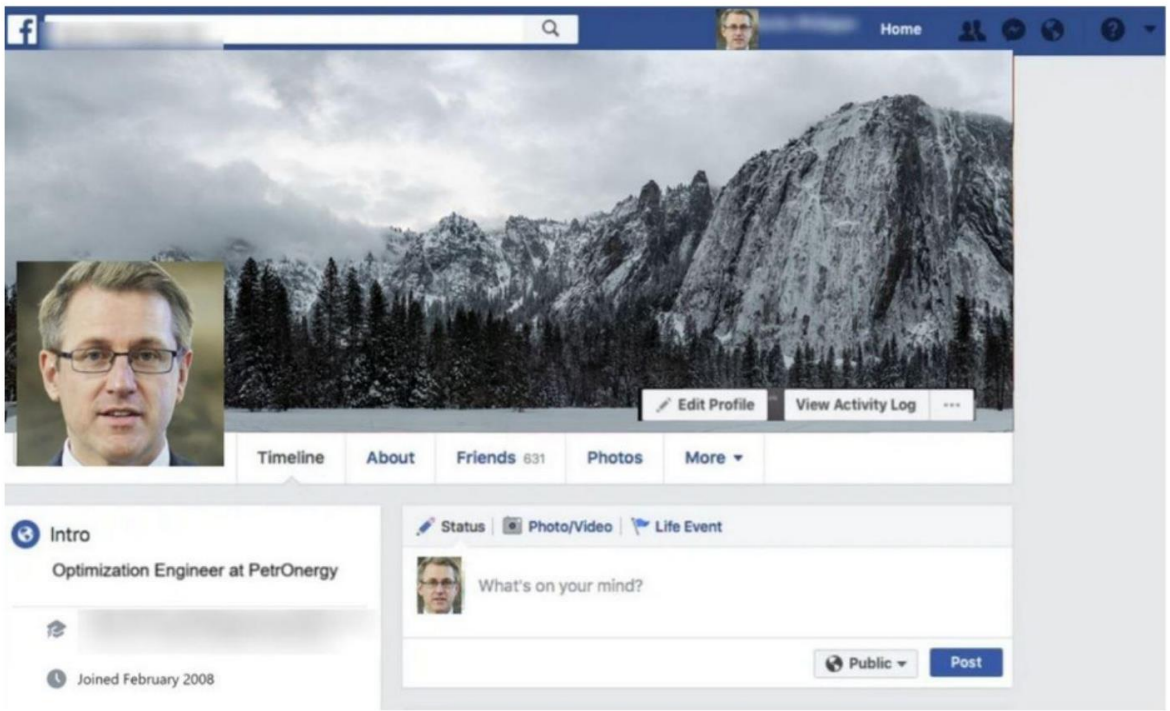
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The employee shares his pride to be working for PetrOnergy on his Facebook page.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

No Framing and Affiliation

Please look at the Facebook profile.

You will be later asked about your first impression of the person to whom belong the Facebook profile.



To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The employee shares his pride to be working for PetrOnergy on his Facebook page.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Moral Condemnation Scale - All Participants

You have seen the Facebook profile of someone working for PetrOnergy. How would you rate this employee on the following traits?

	Very low	Moderately low	Slightly low	Neither low nor high	Slightly high	Moderately high	Very high
Competence	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Likability	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fairness	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Honesty	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Humility	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Skillful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Intelligence	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trustworthiness	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reliability	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Morality	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sincerity	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Goodness	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Warmth	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Agreeability	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

PANAS - Negative Emotions - All participants

What emotions did you feel when you looked at the Facebook page of the employee? Please answer spontaneously.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Irritated	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Annoyed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hostile	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Indignated	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Angry	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Ambassadorship Behaviours on Facebook - All participants

You looked at the Facebook page of someone working for PetrOnergy. What is your impression of the employee as a person? Please answer below.

_____

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would support the company I work for and I would share their posts and information on social media.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think employees contribute to the reputation of PetrOnergy when they share PetrOnergy's posts.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think the employee shares responsibility for PetrOnergy's actions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Demographics - All Participants

You are nearly at the end of the questionnaire! Please answer those two last questions about you.

What is your gender?

- ○ Female
- ○ Male
- ○ Other
- ○ Rather not say

What is your age?

_____

Debrief - All Participants

Thank you for your precious participation!

The material, the company and the person that you have seen have been created for the purpose of this study and were fictitious.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 548844ha@eur.nl.