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Consumer Arrogance and Word-of-Mouth

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Consumer Arrogance and Word-of-Mouth

Abstract

We investigate the widespread yet under-researched social phenomenon of consumer arrogance—the propensity to broadcast one’s superiority over others in the consumption domain. Building on the theory of positive illusions, we examine how and under what conditions triggering people’s consumer arrogance prompts their positive and negative word-of-mouth communication. In a pilot study and five experiments, we establish that triggering people’s sense of consumer arrogance will increase their word-of-mouth inclinations and behaviors. We show that triggering consumers’ sense of arrogance will result in a greater propensity for word-of-mouth communication than triggering their sense of superiority or desire to brag independently. While most consumers engage in positive word-of-mouth, consumer arrogance fuels both positive and negative word-of-mouth communication. Furthermore, whereas the former stems from self-enhancement needs, negative word-of-mouth communication arises from the needs for both self-affirmation and self-enhancement, especially in a social context. Overall, the results highlight the uniqueness and strategic potential of consumer arrogance as a social phenomenon.

Keywords: consumer arrogance, word-of-mouth communication

Introduction

What does the future hold for marketers and advertisers? Some argue that the future of marketing will be largely ad-free, with word-of-mouth (WOM) communication dominating commerce (e.g., Nouredine and ZeinEddine 2018). Indeed, 83% of consumers (Nielsen 2015) find WOM communication to be the most trusted way for people to obtain product and service information. For that reason, many marketers in today's media landscape employ "word-of-mouth marketing" and "word-of-mouth advertising," leveraging the new reality where one person can affect large numbers of consumers through a variety of platforms. In addition to the trust that such WOM communication enjoys, consumers also increasingly seek advice and input about products and brands from others (e.g., Adjei et al. 2010; Berger 2014; Dubois et al. 2016; Duhan et al. 1997), who are typically more than willing to share it. With over 2.1 billion WOM recommendations that are shared each day by 83% of Americans (Baer and Lemm 2018), accounting for more than \$7 trillion in annual consumer spending in the U.S. alone (Fay et al. 2019), the power of WOM communication is undeniable.

Recognizing the importance of WOM communication, both online and offline, marketers have increasingly devoted resources to fueling it by triggering consumers' natural inclination to brag and show off their purchases. A quick glance at what people post on social media confirms that we live in an "age of arrogance" (Gibbs 2009), or, more precisely, in an age of "consumer arrogance" where consumers are eager to share their experiences with products and brands with other potential consumers. For example, RetailMeNot, one of the leading coupon websites, recently launched its #dealbrag campaign, encouraging consumers to brag about their savings on the company's social media platforms to motivate others to do the same. Undoubtedly, finding ways to prompt consumers' WOM communication is critical to companies' marketing efforts and will be even more strategically important in the future.

In this research, we focus on the growing social phenomenon of consumer arrogance and maintain that by triggering consumer arrogance, marketers can promote WOM communication in unique and strategically important ways. Consumer arrogance is defined as the propensity to broadcast one's superiority over others in the consumption domain. As such, consumer arrogance incorporates a person's display and communication of superiority over others through consumption, and subsequent social interaction (online and offline). In effect, consumer arrogance encompasses the internal aspect of one's personal sense of superiority as well as the external aspect of expressing it in a social context. Consumer arrogance requires both the internal and external aspects to be manifested. Since consumption offers consumers a convenient and persuasive route to self-expression (Belk 1988; Kleine et al. 1995), boasting about consumption triumphs might be perceived as an immediate and effective outlet to establish a sense of superiority.

But *how* does consumer arrogance relate to WOM communication? At the outset, we can expect consumer arrogance to prompt positive WOM due to its self-enhancement benefits (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Barasch and Berger 2013; De Angelis et al. 2012; Lovett et al. 2013; Packard and Wooten 2013). However, the relationship between consumer arrogance and negative WOM is less obvious. The latter involves social costs, as it can reflect unfavorably on communicators (Hamilton et al. 2014) and impair their image as superior consumers (Richins 1984). These costs seemingly imply that consumer arrogance will suppress negative WOM. On the other hand, negative WOM might help communicators overcome their negative consumption experiences and reaffirm their self-view (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Dunn and Dahl 2012; Wilson et al. 2017), suggesting that consumer arrogance will prompt negative WOM. Consequently, we address the gap that exists in the literature regarding the complex link between consumer arrogance and both positive and negative WOM communication. In five studies, we present evidence about how consumer arrogance can be triggered externally,

resulting in greater online and offline WOM communication that marketers can leverage (see Table 1 for an overview of all our studies).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Our research makes several important theoretical and managerial contributions. First, we show that consumer arrogance is associated with a greater inclination to engage in WOM as well as with a greater volume of such communication. Second, we establish consumer arrogance as a unique social phenomenon embedded in the domain of consumption that is different from other related constructs such as narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence (Study 1b). Third, we show that triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance is much more effective in generating WOM than triggering their sense of superiority, bragging, or simply asking them to write a review, as companies often do (Study 2). Fourth, we determine that while most consumers tend to engage more in positive WOM and refrain from negative WOM (Baker et al. 2016; Berger and Milkman 2012; East et al. 2007), triggering consumer arrogance drives consumers to engage in both forms of WOM communication (Study 3). Fifth, we extend previous findings on negative WOM by establishing that triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance evokes their need for self-enhancement (Study 3), not just their need for self-affirmation (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Dunn and Dahl 2012; Wilson et al. 2017). These needs play a critical role in WOM communication, especially in the case of a negative consumption event in the presence of others (Study 4).

Taken together, our research emphasizes the uniqueness of consumer arrogance as a social phenomenon that affects WOM communication. The findings provide marketing managers with a strategic mechanism to add to their arsenal of managerial options for how to engage in the marketplace, particularly on social media. The ability of companies to identify and mitigate consumers' inclinations to engage in WOM, both online and offline, is especially important in the case of negative WOM, which has a greater impact on consumers' behavior than positive WOM (East et al. 2008). These are critical findings, particularly in light of the

probability that future marketing could become largely ad-free and instead WOM-based (e.g., Nouredine and ZeinEddine 2018). Thus, managers overseeing the flow and type of information that come from consumers about their products and brands should strategically consider consumer arrogance and its effect on WOM communication.

Theory and hypotheses

As noted earlier, we define consumer arrogance as the propensity to broadcast one's superiority over others in the consumption domain. We base our conceptualization of consumer arrogance on the theory of positive illusions (e.g., Taylor and Brown 1988), and the notion of illusory superiority in particular. The theory posits that people have inherent self-favoring cognitive biases that distort their sense of worth, control, and optimism in a way that positions them on a higher level than others (Taylor and Brown 1988; 1994). One of these unrealistically self-favoring biases is illusory superiority (Hoorens 1993; 1995), which reflects people's favorable self-view compared to how they view the desirable traits and abilities of others. While most people have some degree of illusory superiority bias (Robins and Beer 2001; Sedikides and Gregg 2008), they regulate its expression and even refrain from expressions of superiority to avoid social sanctions (Anderson et al. 2006). The illusory superiority bias motivates arrogant behavior, leading to self-enhancement behaviors (Sedikides and Gregg 2008) and an inflated sense of superiority (Anderson et al. 2006).

Social and interpersonal contexts are key to arrogant behavior and set the phenomenon apart from closely related self-exaggerating concepts such as narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence (Munichor and Steinhart 2016). Arrogance involves benchmarking one's superiority over others, which makes the presence of others an essential aspect of arrogance. It also must be expressed and communicated to others (Johnson et al. 2010; Munichor and Steinhart 2016). By contrast, narcissism is defined as an enduring trait (not a behavior) of self-

love and inflated self-view that is independent of any interpersonal context (Campbell et al. 2002; Johnson et al. 2010; Verbeke et al. 2004). Hubris is viewed as an anti-social emotion and reflects an exaggerated sense of pride (McFerran et al. 2014; Tracy and Robins 2007). Unlike arrogance, it does not require benchmarking it to others or communicating it. Finally, overconfidence reflects a person's internal belief about his or her ability and efficacy (Bearden et al. 2001). Like hubris and narcissism, overconfidence does not require a social context, and it does not imply that overconfident people see themselves as superior to others (Munichor and Steinhart 2016). Aligned with the illusory superiority bias, arrogant communication reflects a person's *perceived* performance in a specific domain, not necessarily a person's *actual* performance (Hareli and Weiner 2000).

Another element that sets arrogance behavior apart from narcissism and hubris is the fact that it requires broadcasting a sense of superiority to others in a specific domain of importance and can be contextual (Hareli and Weiner 2000; Johnson et al. 2010). Thus, consumer arrogance is a context-specific type of arrogance that is anchored in the domain of consumption. As such, consumer arrogance reflects the expression of superiority over others in one's consumption-related abilities. In contrast, narcissism and hubris are aspects of the global self and are not contextual. Products, brands, and consumption triumphs (e.g., getting the best deals) can symbolically signal accomplishment and achievement, enabling the possessor to communicate personal efficacy and superiority to others (Sivanathan and Pettit 2010). Notably, the manifestation of consumer arrogance depends on the individuals' view of themselves as superior to others in terms of their consumption related abilities.

Another social aspect of consumer arrogance that sets it apart from narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence is the fact that it can be externally triggered and is situational in nature. While all these traits are anchored internally, consumer arrogance can be triggered by others who acknowledge the consumers' superiority over others or provide them with an opportunity to brag about their superior shopping abilities or purchases. Consumers who engage in

arrogant behavior make a direct inference from their consumption triumphs or the superior quality of the products they own to their abilities and expertise, using them as markers of their superiority over others. Critically, we maintain that arrogant behavior in the consumption domain can be triggered externally and will lead to WOM communication online and offline (e.g., Baker et al. 2016; Berger and Milkman 2012; Packard et al. 2016).

Consumer arrogance and WOM communication

According to the theory of positive illusions, certain individuals will actively engage in self-enhancing behaviors aimed at fueling and supporting their sense of superiority over others and sustaining their positive self-view (Robins and Beer 2001). In the context of WOM and consumers' exchange of information (either positive or negative) about products and brands (Westbrook 1987), research has provided mounting evidence that consumers will engage in WOM communication to showcase their expertise and knowledge (Berger 2014; Lovett et al. 2013). Whether online or offline, consumers broadcast their expertise through both the content and volume of their WOM communications (Packard and Wooten 2013). As such, WOM communication provides consumers with self-enhancing benefits (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Barasch and Berger 2013; De Angelis et al. 2012; Packard et al. 2016; Sundaram et al. 1998) and an opportunity to project a superior image as consumers.

Ample research has established that consumers have a strong inclination to engage in WOM communication to bolster and enhance their self-view as superior to others (Packard et al. 2016). For example, De Angelis et al. (2012) reported that consumers with a strong need to enhance their self-image brag more about their positive consumption experiences. Similarly, Packard et al. (2016) showed that when the communicator is trustworthy, recipients of such messages regard boastful WOM as a signal of expertise and as very persuasive.

Negative WOM can also have self-bolstering benefits since negative information is more influential than positive information (Baumeister et al. 2001; Hamilton et al. 2014) and

has a stronger impact on consumers' behaviors (East et al. 2008). Chen and Lurie (2013), for example, showed that negative online reviews have greater value than positive ones. Similarly, Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) found that one-star online book reviews are more impactful than five-star reviews. Likewise, Amabile (1983) reported that people regard negative evaluators as more intelligent, competent, and expert than positive evaluators. Finally, the volume of WOM can also be used to signal superiority and expertise. Mudambi and Schuff (2010), for example, reported that lengthier and more detailed reviews, either positive or negative, in terms of number of words were regarded as more helpful and as having greater diagnostic value, both of which reflected positively on the communicator. To sum, research suggests that consumers can use negative WOM to position themselves as superior consumers.

As such, we posit that regardless of the WOM medium (online or offline) or the valance of the experience (positive or negative), triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance will lead to greater intentions to engage in WOM communication as well as greater volumes of such communication. Hence, while we examine both intentions and volumes of communication to provide a robust view of the effect of consumer arrogance on WOM, we do not predict different effects on the measures of communication, be they online or offline. Therefore, we assert that:

H1: Consumer arrogance will lead to more (a) *positive* WOM communication as well as more (b) *negative* WOM communication.

Consumer arrogance and self-enhancement

Self-enhancement, defined as the need to project a favorable self-image to others (Baumeister 1998), has been recognized as one of the strongest drivers of WOM communication (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Barasch and Berger 2013; De Angelis et al. 2012; Packard et al. 2016; Sundaram et al. 1998). Studies have shown that consumers actively regulate their WOM communication to meet their self-enhancement needs. As a result,

consumers typically prefer to share positive rather than negative WOM communication (Baker et al. 2016; Berger and Milkman 2012; East et al. 2007). Consumers also favor sharing positive WOM about their own consumption experiences with close friends and larger audiences. In contrast, they favor sharing negative WOM about the consumption experiences of others with distant people and smaller audiences where they feel more secure (Barasch and Berger 2014; De Angelis et al. 2012; Dubois et al. 2016).

Projecting such a desired self-image to others will drive consumers to engage more in WOM communication about products that are interesting (Berger and Schwartz 2011), surprising (Berger and Milkman 2012), original and novel (Moldovan et al. 2011), and self-relevant (Chung and Darke 2006)—all of which have self-enhancement properties. Additionally, Buffardi and Campbell (2008) established that individuals with a narcissistic personality, which is closely related to arrogance, engage extensively in online social activities and share more self-promoting content. Hence, we posit that self-enhancement will mediate the relationship between consumer arrogance and positive WOM. Therefore:

H2: The need for *self-enhancement* will positively mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on *positive* WOM communication.

Consumer arrogance and self-affirmation

While the relationship between consumer arrogance and positive WOM is relatively straightforward, its effect on negative WOM is less obvious. Generally, negative events challenge people's illusion of superiority and threaten the integrity of their self-view and worth (Sedikides and Gregg 2008; Taylor and Brown 1994). Under self-threat, people will seek to restore the integrity of their self-image and reaffirm their self-worth (Sherman and Cohen 2006; Steele 1988). In the context of negative WOM, communicating about a negative consumption experience can potentially exaggerate the threat to oneself or alleviate it. Sharing information about a consumption experience that was unsuccessful might imply that the

communicators are not as good shoppers as they present themselves to be (Berger and Milkman 2012; Richins 1984). Consequently, consumers who engage in arrogant behavior would be reluctant to share negative WOM so that they can maintain their superior self-perception and social image.

Conversely, self-affirmation, defined as the motivation to restore one's self-worth (Steele 1988), might be the driver of consumers' inclination to engage in negative WOM (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Dunn and Dahl 2012; Wilson et al. 2017). Studies show that negative information is valued more than positive information (Chen and Lurie 2013; Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006) because it originates from non-marketing sources (Richins 1984). Thus, sharing such valuable negative information can help restore one's self-image and sense of superiority. In addition, Dunn and Dahl (2012) found that a consumer's complaint after experiencing self-threat from a product failure is a form of self-defense and a coping mechanism for self-affirmation. They also noted that consumers "may use this vocal opportunity as a means of protecting self-worth by shifting the blame to external resources" (p. 672). Similarly, Alexandrov et al. (2013) posited that negative WOM allows the transmitter to "represent the reality in a way that defends the self and ego" (p. 536). They also established that the self-affirmation benefits of negative WOM are attributed to the transmitter's intentions to share social information and help others. This goal of helping others is regarded as an altruistic gesture (Richins 1984) that enables the transmitters to restore both their private and public images.

Hence, when triggering people's consumer arrogance, negative WOM might address their need for self-affirmation as a way to restore their self-view as superior to others. As such, the benefits to the self that negative WOM offers outweigh its potential costs. Based on the collective research, theoretical and empirical, we posit that self-affirmation will mediate the relationship between consumer arrogance and negative WOM. Therefore:

H3: The need for *self-affirmation* will positively mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on *negative* WOM communication.

Pilot study: Field data

Our pilot study seeks to provide initial insights into the consumer arrogance phenomenon through survey data collected in the field. We explore whether consumer arrogance is indeed a near universal behavioral tendency that most people experience at least to some degree. We also examine whether a person's degree of consumer arrogance relates to a greater inclination for offline WOM intentions as well as the actual behavior of producing a greater volume of online WOM communication.

Method and procedure

One thousand, six hundred and eighty-two members of two consumer panels (58.3% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 51.56$, $SD = 13.11$)—an automobile company's panel and an unbranded automotive online community—completed an online survey in exchange for monetary compensation. The combined responses from the two panels were used for the pilot study.

First, we asked participants to indicate the brand of the car that they currently own, and then asked them to respond to 10 items from a consumer arrogance scale (see Table 2 for a summary of the psychometric measurements for all of our constructs and their items) adapted from Ruvio and Shoham (2016). Next, participants indicated their likelihood of sharing information about their car using Cheema and Kaikati's (2010) 3-item offline WOM scale (see Table 2). Following this task, we asked them to evaluate a new model of a car that was not yet on the market, and to list everything they liked about the interior and exterior of the car. We counted the number of favorable evaluations of the car (interior and exterior) and used it as a measure for online WOM communication. Participants also answered demographic questions about age and gender.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Results and discussion

As predicted, consumer arrogance exhibited a positive association with offline WOM intentions ($r = .26, p < .001$) and favorable evaluations of the car ($r = .06, p = .010$).

In accordance with the general tenets of our work, the pilot study demonstrated that consumer arrogance is associated with a greater propensity to engage in WOM and the actual volume of such communication, as reflected in favorable evaluations of the product.

Importantly, in this study we measured consumer arrogance as an overall behavioral tendency. In our next studies, we manipulated it to establish a causal relationship between consumer arrogance and WOM communication.

Study 1a: Manipulating consumer arrogance

Marketers often reach out to consumers to solicit their opinion of their products and brands. In Study 1a, we manipulated consumer arrogance and tested if indeed it could be triggered externally. Then, we used a real-life consumer review task in a manner similar to how marketers normally engage with consumers to examine the effect.

Method and procedure

One hundred and fifty-eight students (54.4% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 22.56, SD = 5.46$) from a large public U.S. university completed the survey in exchange for extra course credit. They were randomly assigned to either an arrogance or control condition with a between-subjects design.

We informed the participants that they would be asked to perform two unrelated tasks. In the first task, we told them that we were interested in the language people use when sharing information with others. In the arrogance condition, we asked participants to imagine that they were being interviewed for a local TV station, and that the reporter asked them to describe all

of the qualities that made them better consumers than other people and brag about all the things that made them superior to other consumers (see the Appendix for the exact wording of all of our scenarios). The goal of manipulating consumer arrogance in this fashion was to establish that it could be triggered externally. In the control condition, we asked participants to imagine that the reporter asked them to describe their latest trip to the grocery store (see Rucker and Galinsky 2008). We pretested the arrogance manipulation using 275 undergraduate students (55.3% females, $M_{age} = 20.83$, $SD = 1.35$). Participants answered two manipulation check questions representing the two facets of arrogance: “To what extent do you feel that you are a better shopper compared to other people?” (1 = “not at all better,” 7 = “significantly better”) and “How likely are you to brag about a product that you purchased” (1 = “highly unlikely,” 7 = “highly likely”). An independent t-test revealed significant differences between the arrogance and control conditions as to participants’ overall assessment of their superiority as consumers ($M_{arrogance} = 3.81$, $SD = 1.35$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.17$, $SD = 1.72$, $t(273) = 3.40$, $p = .001$) and their likelihood of bragging about their purchase ($M_{arrogance} = 3.90$, $SD = 1.62$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.28$, $SD = 1.80$, $t(273) = 3.13$, $p = .002$), indicating that our manipulation was successful.

In the second task, participants were presented with a video of an eco-friendly portable air conditioner and were told that the company was targeting college students who lived in dorms or apartments with no air conditioning, and asking for their opinions about it. After watching the video, the students were directed to what looked like the company’s review page, and were asked to provide a written review of the product. We used the number of words included in the review as one of our online WOM indicators. The students also rated the air conditioner using four items based on Kim, Lim, and Bhargava’s (1998) scale (see Table 2). Next, the students indicated their WOM intentions using the two questions presented in Table 2. Having completed these tasks, all participants were directed back to the survey, answered the two manipulation check questions and reported their gender and age.

Results and discussion

Manipulation check An independent t-test revealed that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance led them to report a significantly higher sense of superiority as consumers ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.05$, $SD = 1.66$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 3.06$, $SD = 1.69$, $t(152) = 3.67$, $p < .001$) and a greater likelihood of bragging about their purchase ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 5.14$, $SD = 1.49$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 3.81$, $SD = 1.74$, $t(152) = 5.12$, $p < .001$) than those in the control condition. These findings support our manipulation.

Online and offline WOM A t-test analysis determined that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance led them to write lengthier reviews ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 68.29$, $SD = 50.32$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 53.18$, $SD = 36.81$, $t(156) = 2.16$, $p = .032$), and to have greater offline WOM intentions ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.93$, $SD = 1.74$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.34$, $SD = 1.71$, $t(156) = 2.13$, $p = .035$) than those in the control group, supporting the main tenet of the paper. Overall, participants in both conditions rated the product the same ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 5.38$, $SD = 1.35$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 5.17$, $SD = 1.27$, $t(156) = 1.02$, $p = .309$), suggesting that the greater intentions to engage in WOM were not due to a more favorable view of the product. See Table 3 for a summary of these results and the results of all of the other experiments.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Study 1b: Controlling for narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence

Study 1b contributes to our inquiry by replicating the results of Study 1a with a different consumer arrogance manipulation and sample. In addition, Study 1b tests the effect of consumer arrogance on WOM communication, while controlling for three constructs that are closely related to arrogance: narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence.

Method and procedure

One hundred and thirty-two mTurk workers (50.0% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.67$, $SD = 11.57$) participated in Study 1b in exchange for monetary compensation. Participants were randomly assigned to either an arrogance or control condition with a between-subjects design.

First, we asked participants to write down the name of a store at which they frequently shopped or a brand they often purchased. Next, in the arrogance condition, we asked them to imagine that they received an email from this store/brand notifying them that they had been identified as one of their superior consumers. We also explained that by superior we meant a consumer who was a better shopper than most people (indication of superiority). Thus, the store/brand asked these participants if they would be willing to write a review of their experience with the store/brand and share their opinion about something they had purchased. In other words, they were offered the opportunity to tell other people about the products they had purchased, brag about them, and show them off (indication of bragging). Similar to Study 1a, this form of manipulation utilizes an external source of consumer arrogance. In the control condition, participants were simply asked if they would be willing to write a review for the store/brand, without any reference to superiority or bragging (see Appendix for scenarios).

Following the scenario, similar to Study 1a, we asked participants to indicate their WOM intentions (see Table 2). Next, they completed the following scales: the 13-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory ($\alpha = .95$; Raskin and Terry 1988), Tracy and Robins' (2007) 7-item hubris scale ($\alpha = .96$), Shrauger and Schohn's (1995) 6-item general confidence scale ($\alpha = .73$), and Ruvio and Shoham's (2016) arrogance scale used in the pilot study ($\alpha = .94$). Finally, they answered the same manipulation check questions used in Study 1a about their sense of superiority and likelihood of bragging, and reported their gender and age.

Results

Manipulation check An independent t-test revealed that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance led them to report a significantly higher sense of superiority as consumers ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.91$, $SD = 1.63$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.26$, $SD = 1.94$, $t(130) = 2.09$, $p = .039$) and a greater likelihood of bragging about their purchase ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 5.36$, $SD = 1.37$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.71$, $SD = 1.96$, $t(130) = 2.22$, $p = .028$) compared to those in the control condition, supporting our manipulation.

WOM intentions We ran an ANCOVA analysis to control for consumer arrogance, narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence as well as age and gender. The analysis revealed that triggering the participants' sense of consumer arrogance led to more offline WOM intentions ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 6.01$, $SD = 0.91$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 5.53$, $SD = 1.21$, $F(1, 121) = 5.91$, $p = .017$; $\eta_p^2 = .047$) compared to the participants in the control condition, supporting H1a.

Consumer arrogance, narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence We conducted several analyses with regard to consumer arrogance (the trait), narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence. First, we tested for discriminant validity using Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips' (1991) procedure. The results are presented in the Web Appendix and show significant differences between consumer arrogance and the other constructs. We also ran a t-test to check if any of the four constructs were affected by our consumer arrogance manipulation. The results indicate non-significant differences between the consumer arrogance and control conditions with regard to the arrogance measure, narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence ($p > .1$), indicating that triggering consumer arrogance has no effect on these other enduring traits.

Additionally, there were significant correlations between the consumer arrogance measure and online ($r = .19$, $p = .033$) and offline WOM intentions ($r = .21$, $p = .015$). However, there were no significant relationships between narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence on one hand and online or offline WOM intentions on the other ($p > .1$).

Discussion of Study 1a and Study 1b

Taken together, the results of Studies 1a and 1b support our conceptualization of consumer arrogance as being situational in nature and capable of being triggered externally. The results also show that when consumer arrogance is triggered, it will lead to greater WOM intentions both online and offline as well as the volume of that communication. These results provide initial support for H1a and H1b. In addition, Study 1b indicates that triggering consumer arrogance has no effect on stable and enduring traits such as narcissism, hubris, and overconfidence. Our findings strongly suggest that marketers can trigger consumers' arrogance, if needed, and that doing so is strategically beneficial. In Study 2, we extend our investigation about consumer arrogance by manipulating its facets (superiority and bragging) independently.

Study 2: Manipulating arrogance, superiority, and bragging

Do marketers need to trigger consumers' arrogance to generate greater WOM, or is it enough to trigger only superiority or bragging? Study 2 aims to strengthen our conceptualization of consumer arrogance by testing whether manipulating only one of its facets (superiority or bragging) would have the same effect on WOM as manipulating consumer arrogance as a whole. Establishing the two facets of consumer arrogance would also provide further support for the conceptual distinctiveness of this phenomenon.

Method and procedure

Four hundred and five people (51.2% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 37.38$, $SD = 15.22$) from a consumer panel of a popular smartphone brand participated in Study 2. Participants were randomly assigned to four conditions (arrogance, superiority, bragging, and control) in a between-subjects design.

These participants received what appeared to be an email from the smartphone company asking them to review and rate their experience with the company's smartphone. We controlled for this experience variable to ensure that the results were not affected by the valence of the experience. We manipulated consumer arrogance and the control conditions by using the same manipulation as in Study 1b. In addition to these two conditions, we manipulated superiority by providing participants with only the part of the consumer arrogance scenario that referred to their superiority, without any reference to bragging. Finally, we manipulated bragging by providing participants with only the bragging part of the arrogance scenario, without any reference to superiority (See Appendix for the scenarios).

After participants wrote their reviews and rated their experience with their smartphone on a scale ranging from one to five stars, they indicated their intentions to engage in WOM communication, similar to Studies 1a and 1b (see Table 2). They also answered the two manipulation check questions used in Studies 1a and 1b about their sense of superiority and likelihood of bragging, and reported their gender and age.

Results

Manipulation check A MANCOVA analysis (controlling for age and gender) revealed no significant differences in the level of experience across conditions ($p > 1$). Nevertheless, we controlled for the experience rating in our analyses.

There was a significant main effect for the consumer arrogance conditions with regard to the participants' assessment of their superiority as consumers ($F(3, 399) = 2.79, p = .040; \eta_p^2 = .021$). Notably, triggering their sense of consumer arrogance led them to report a greater sense of superiority compared to those in the bragging and control conditions ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.09, SD = 1.92$ vs. $M_{\text{bragging}} = 3.57, SD = 1.81; F(1, 399) = 4.52, p = .034; \eta_p^2 = .011$; vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 3.63, SD = 1.69; F(1, 399) = 3.81, p = .050; \eta_p^2 = .009$). Likewise, triggering superiority alone led participants to report a greater sense of superiority compared to those in

the bragging and control conditions ($M_{\text{superiority}} = 4.12$, $SD = 1.88$ vs. $F_{\text{bragging}}(1, 399) = 4.59$, $p = .033$; $\eta_p^2 = .011$; vs. $F_{\text{control}}(1, 399) = 3.86$, $p = .050$; $\eta_p^2 = .010$). Triggering consumer arrogance or superiority led participants to report the same high level of superiority ($p > .1$), while those in the bragging and the control conditions reported the same low level of superiority ($p > .1$).

There was also a main effect for the consumer arrogance conditions with regard to participants' likelihood of bragging about a product they had purchased ($F(3, 399) = 3.29$, $p = .021$; $\eta_p^2 = .024$). Specifically, triggering their sense of consumer arrogance led them to report a greater likelihood of bragging compared to those in the superiority and control conditions ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 5.02$, $SD = 1.77$ vs. $M_{\text{superiority}} = 4.42$, $SD = 2.01$ $F(1, 399) = 5.86$, $p = .016$; $\eta_p^2 = .014$; vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.44$, $SD = 2.03$; $F(1, 399) = 5.88$, $p = .016$; $\eta_p^2 = .015$). Likewise, triggering participants' inclination to brag led them to report a greater likelihood of bragging compared to those in the superiority and control conditions ($M_{\text{bragging}} = 4.97$, $SD = 1.85$ vs. $F_{\text{superiority}}(1, 399) = 3.86$, $p = .050$; $\eta_p^2 = .010$; vs. $F_{\text{control}}(1, 394) = 3.91$, $p = .049$; $\eta_p^2 = .010$). The participants in the consumer arrogance and bragging conditions reported the same high level of likelihood to brag ($p > .1$), while those in the superiority and control conditions reported the same low level of likelihood to brag ($p > .1$).

Online WOM An ANCOVA analysis (controlling for age, gender, and the experience rating) revealed a significant main effect for the consumer arrogance conditions ($F(3, 398) = 2.69$ $p = .046$; $\eta_p^2 = .020$) as to the number of words in the review. A planned comparison indicated that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance resulted in lengthier reviews compared to those in the bragging ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 19.81$, $SD = 20.99$ vs. $M_{\text{bragging}} = 13.62$, $SD = 17.59$; $F(1, 398) = 5.76$, $p = .017$; $\eta_p^2 = .014$) and control conditions ($M_{\text{control}} = 13.25$, $SD = 14.16$; $F(1, 398) = 6.24$, $p = .013$; $\eta_p^2 = .015$), but not compared to those in the superiority condition ($M_{\text{superiority}} = 16.08$, $SD = 19.81$; $p > .1$). None of the other conditions demonstrated any

significant differences ($p > .1$) with regard to the length of the review.

Offline WOM intentions An ANCOVA analysis (controlling for age, gender, and the experience rating) revealed a significant main effect for the consumer arrogance conditions ($F(3, 398) = 5.30, p = .001; \eta_p^2 = .038$) with regard to offline WOM intentions. A planned comparison indicated that triggering participants' sense of arrogance led them to report greater offline WOM intentions compared to the participants in all of the other conditions ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 6.17, SD = 0.99$ vs. $M_{\text{superiority}} = 5.76, SD = 1.67; F(1, 398) = 4.41, p = .036, \eta_p^2 = .011$; vs. $M_{\text{bragging}} = 5.34, SD = 1.76, F(1, 398) = 15.85, p < .001; \eta_p^2 = .038$, vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 5.76, SD = 1.60; F(1, 398) = 4.80, p = .029; \eta_p^2 = .012$). Surprisingly, triggering participants' inclinations to brag resulted in significantly fewer WOM intentions compared to those in the superiority ($F(1, 398) = 3.79, p = .052; \eta_p^2 = .009$) and control conditions ($F(1, 387) = 3.80, p = .052; \eta_p^2 = .010$). There was no significant difference between the participants in the superiority and control conditions ($p > .1$) with regard to their offline WOM intentions.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 have several important theoretical and practical implications. First, the lack of significant differences between consumer arrogance and the superiority conditions with regard to superiority, and the arrogance and bragging conditions with regard to bragging (manipulation check questions) provide empirical support for our conceptualization of consumer arrogance as encompassing a sense of superiority as well as bragging inclinations. Second, Study 2 provides further support for our assertion that triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance increases their intentions to engage in WOM online and offline. Furthermore, Study 2 shows that while triggering consumers' sense of superiority alone will increase their online WOM intentions compared to a neutral message, it will not increase their likelihood of engaging in WOM offline or generate the same level of

response as triggering their sense of consumer arrogance. Unexpectedly, the results also establish that triggering consumers' bragging tendencies will actually slightly dampen their WOM intentions, both online and offline, compared to the control conditions. This finding might reflect the fact that consumers are reluctant to "toot their own horn" in the absence of something tangible about which to boast. Asking people to boast in a vacuum is unlikely to result in significant WOM, because doing so might result in social stigma.

The results suggest that soliciting consumers to merely write a review is not as effective as triggering their sense of consumer arrogance. These findings cast doubt on the effectiveness of campaigns such as #dealbrag in generating WOM communication. In Study 3, we expand our examination of the effect of consumer arrogance on WOM by testing its effect on positive and negative WOM communication.

Study 3: The mediating role of self-affirmation and self-enhancement

In Study 3, we provide further evidence of the amplifying effect of consumer arrogance on both positive and negative WOM communication and investigate the mechanisms that drive these effects. For consumers, WOM addresses different needs when it comes to positive or negative consumption experiences (Alexandrov et al. 2013). Positive WOM enables consumers to fulfill their self-enhancement needs, improving and bolstering their self-view in the eyes of others (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Barasch and Berger 2013; Berger 2014; De Angelis et al. 2012; Lovett et al. 2013; Packard and Wooten 2013), and maintaining their illusory superiority. Negative WOM, on the other hand, fulfills consumers' self-affirmation needs (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Dunn and Dahl 2012; Wilson et al. 2017), reflected in their desire to restore their perceived superior image and self-worth (Sherman and Cohen 2006; Steele 1988). Thus, we expect self-enhancement to positively mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on positive WOM intentions (H2), and self-affirmation to positively

mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions (H3).

Method and procedure

Two hundred and fifty mTurk workers (49.2% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.94$, $SD = 18.57$) participated in the study in exchange for monetary compensation. The participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (consumer arrogance vs. control) X 2 (WOM valence: positive vs. negative) between-subjects design. We used the same manipulation of consumer arrogance as in Study 1a. After completing the writing task, participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would share the information about six positive ($\alpha = .73$) or negative ($\alpha = .78$) consumption events with others (see Table 2 for a full list of events), based on an adapted list of events from Barasch and Berger (2013). Additionally, participants reported their self-enhancement and self-affirmation motivations for WOM using Alexandrov et al.'s (2013) scales (See Table 2). They also answered the manipulation check questions about their superiority and bragging, and reported their gender and age.

Results

Manipulation check An independent t-test revealed that triggering the participants' sense of consumer arrogance led them to report a significantly greater sense of superiority as consumers ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.94$, $SD = 1.43$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 3.55$, $SD = 1.95$, $t(248) = 6.46$, $p < .001$) and more intentions of bragging ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.54$, $SD = 1.86$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 3.07$, $SD = 1.88$, $t(248) = 6.20$, $p < .001$) than those in the control condition, supporting our manipulation.

WOM intentions Consistent with Study 2 and the literature, a MANCOVA analysis (controlling for age and gender) revealed that overall, participants reported significantly greater intentions of sharing positive events than negative ones ($M_{\text{positive}} = 4.99$, $SD = .95$ vs. $M_{\text{negative}} = 4.51$, $SD = 1.10$, $F(1, 244) = 16.71$, $p < .001$; $\eta p^2 = .064$).

Nevertheless, the results also indicated that triggering the participants' sense of consumer arrogance led to greater intentions of sharing their consumption events (positive or negative) with others ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.98, SD = 1.02$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.52, SD = 1.03, F(1, 244) = 12.35, p < .001; \eta_p^2 = .048$) compared to those in the control condition. This pattern of behavior was significant for positive events ($M_{\text{positive_arrogance}} = 5.20, SD = 0.92$ vs. $M_{\text{positive_control}} = 4.79, SD = 0.94; t(123) = 2.48, p = .015$) as well as negative events ($M_{\text{negative_arrogance}} = 4.76, SD = 1.07$ vs. $M_{\text{negative_control}} = 4.25, SD = 1.08; t(123) = 2.65, p = .009$), further supporting H1a and H1b. Finally, there was no significant interaction between the consumer arrogance conditions and the WOM valence conditions ($p > .1$).

Self-enhancement and self-affirmation A MANCOVA analysis (controlling for age and gender) revealed that triggering the participants' sense of consumer arrogance led them to express a greater need for self-enhancement ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.76, SD = 1.24$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.22, SD = 1.36, F(1, 244) = 11.74, p = .001; \eta_p^2 = .046$) and self-affirmation ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.91, SD = 1.26$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.45, SD = 1.32; F(1, 244) = 8.97, p = .003; \eta_p^2 = .035$) than those in the control condition. There was no significant main effect for the WOM valence for either self-enhancement ($p > .1$) or self-affirmation ($p > .1$). There was also no significant consumer arrogance x WOM valence interaction for self-enhancement ($p > .1$) or self-affirmation ($p > .1$).

Mediation analysis As Figure 1 illustrates, we used PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes 2018) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples (controlling for age and gender) to test the mediating role of self-enhancement and self-affirmation on the effect of consumer arrogance on positive and negative WOM communication.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Positive WOM. As expected, there was a significant indirect effect of consumer arrogance on positive WOM intentions through self-enhancement ($b = .05, SE = .03, 95\% CI$

[.005, .12]). Specifically, triggering the participants' sense of consumer arrogance led to a greater need for self-enhancement ($b = .21$, $t(121) = 1.99$, $p = .048$), which increased their intentions to engage in positive WOM ($b = .23$, $t(121) = 2.32$, $p = .022$). In contrast, consumer arrogance had no significant indirect effect on positive WOM intentions through self-affirmation ($b = .01$, $SE = .02$, [95% CI = -.02, .07]). There was no significant direct effect of consumer arrogance on positive WOM intentions ($b = .14$, $SE = .08$, [95% CI = -.02, .30]), indicating full mediation through self-enhancement and support of H2.

Negative WOM. As expected, there was a significant indirect effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions through self-affirmation ($b = .07$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [.04, .12]). Triggering the participants' sense of consumer arrogance led to a greater need for self-affirmation ($b = .29$, $t(121) = 2.61$, $p = .010$), which increased their intentions to engage in negative WOM ($b = .19$, $t(119) = 1.98$, $p = .050$), supporting H3. However, unexpectedly, there was also a significant indirect effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions through self-enhancement ($b = .05$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [.004, .13]). In this case, triggering consumers' arrogance led to a greater need for self-enhancement ($b = .34$, $t(119) = 2.78$, $p = .006$), which increased the participants' intentions to engage in negative WOM ($b = .18$, $t(119) = 1.98$, $p = .049$). There was no significant direct effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions ($b = .16$, $SE = .09$, [95% CI = -.03, .37]), indicating full mediation through self-affirmation and self-enhancement.

Discussion

Study 3 replicates the results of Study 2 and provides further support for the contention that consumer arrogance leads to both positive and negative WOM communication. Study 3 also indicates that when triggering consumer arrogance, positive WOM addresses consumers' self-enhancement needs, while negative WOM addresses their self-affirmation and self-enhancement needs. The mediation effect of self-enhancement in the case of negative WOM is

somewhat unexpected, because self-enhancement has commonly been discussed only in the context of positive WOM. In Study 4, we will follow up on these results.

Study 4: The moderating effect of the social context in the case of negative WOM

Study 4 aims to explore why and under what conditions negative WOM addresses self-enhancement needs when consumer arrogance is triggered. As we noted earlier, the social and interpersonal context is inherent to consumer arrogance behavior. In a similar manner, self-enhancement is also embedded in a social context (Baumeister 1998). Paulhus (1998) noted that in the presence of others, negative experiences that threaten people's self-views should evoke a need for self-enhancement (in addition to self-affirmation) designed to bolster their self-view in the eyes of others. De Angelis et al. (2012) demonstrated that such self-threat prompts consumers' need for self-enhancement, resulting in the transmission of negative WOM. Indeed, negative WOM can provide consumers with social benefits (Alexandrov et al. 2013) and promote their desired image (Berger 2014). Other researchers have also argued that negative reviews have self-enhancement value because people see such reviews as more valuable and more impactful (Chen and Lurie 2013; Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006). As such, we posit that the social context, or lack of it, is key to understanding the mediating effect of self-enhancement on the relationship between consumer arrogance and negative WOM. Thus:

H4: Self-enhancement will positively mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM in the case of (a) a social context, (b) but not in the case of a non-social context.

In contrast, based on the same theoretical rationale provided for H3, we expect self-affirmation to mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on WOM regardless of the social context of the negative consumption experience. As previously argued, negative experiences

pose a threat to the integrity of people's self-worth (Sedikides and Gregg 2008; Taylor and Brown 1994). For people whose consumer arrogance has been triggered, such a threat will lead to a greater willingness to share negative WOM with others to restore their self-view as superior, regardless of the social context of the experience. As a result, we hypothesize:

H5: Self-affirmation will positively mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM in the case of (a) social and (b) non-social contexts.

Method and procedure

Two hundred and twelve people from a Qualtrics panel (51.4% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 33.73$, $SD = 9.62$) were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (consumer arrogance vs. control) X 2 (social context: social vs. non-social) between-subjects design.

We used the same manipulation of consumer arrogance as in Study 1a and Study 3. After completing it, participants read a scenario about going to lunch alone (a non-social context) or with colleagues (a social context) at a restaurant. In both cases, the consumption experience was a negative one and involved a poor experience (see the Appendix for the scenarios). Following the scenario, participants indicated their likelihood of engaging in negative WOM using a modified version of the scale used in the pilot study.

In addition, participants reported their self-enhancement and self-affirmation motivations for sharing WOM using the same scales as in Study 3. They also answered a manipulation check question about the quality of the experience described in the scenario (1 = "extremely poor" to 7 = "extremely good"). Two additional questions adopted from Argo, White, and Dahl (2006) assessed participants' concerns about their social image following the scenarios: "Makes me look foolish in the eyes of my friends" and "Makes others think that I made a bad choice" (1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree," $r = .75$). We expected participants in the social context scenario to express greater concerns about their social image.

Participants also answered the manipulation check questions about their sense of superiority and likelihood of bragging, and reported their gender and age.

Results

Manipulation check A MANCOVA analysis (controlling for age and gender) revealed that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance led them to report a significantly greater sense of superiority as consumers ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 5.14$, $SD = 1.24$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.04$, $SD = 1.87$, $F(1, 209) = 25.66$, $p < .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .109$) and a greater likelihood of bragging ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.71$, $SD = 1.67$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 3.94$, $SD = 1.92$, $F(1, 209) = 11.16$, $p = .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .051$) than those in the control condition. There was no significant difference between the social context conditions with regard to superiority ($p > .1$) or bragging ($p > .1$).

In addition, participants in the social context condition (vs. non-social context condition) indicated greater concerns about their social image ($M_{\text{social}} = 4.44$, $SD = 1.74$ vs. $M_{\text{non_social}} = 3.30$, $SD = 1.63$, $F(1, 209) = 26.65$, $p < .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .105$), supporting our social context manipulation. There was no significant difference between the consumer arrogance conditions with regard to participants' concerns about their social image ($p > .1$).

Overall, participants rated the experience described in the scenario as a poor one ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 2.01$), and significantly under the midpoint of 4 ($t(211) = -11.30$, $p < .001$). There was no significant difference in the evaluation of the experience across the consumer arrogance conditions ($p > .1$) or social context conditions ($p > .1$).

Offline WOM intentions An ANCOVA analysis (controlling for age and gender) revealed that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance increased their intentions of engaging in negative WOM offline compared to those in the control condition ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 5.30$, $SD = 1.21$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.95$, $SD = 1.35$, $F(1, 206) = 4.62$, $p = .033$; $\eta_p^2 = .022$). There was no main effect for the social context conditions ($p > .1$) and no interaction between the

consumer arrogance and social context conditions.

Self-enhancement and self-affirmation A MANCOVA analysis (controlling for age and gender) revealed that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance led them to report a greater need for self-enhancement compared to those in the control condition ($M_{\text{arrogance}} = 4.23$, $SD = 1.40$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 3.76$, $SD = 1.30$, $F(1, 206) = 6.11$, $p = .014$; $\eta_p^2 = .029$). There was no main effect for the arrogance conditions for self-affirmation and no main effect for the social context conditions for self-enhancement or self-affirmation ($p > .1$).

In addition, there was a significant interaction between the arrogance conditions and the social conditions with regard to self-enhancement ($F(1, 206) = 4.14$, $p = .043$; $\eta_p^2 = .20$) and self-affirmation ($F(1, 206) = 11.22$, $p = .001$; $\eta_p^2 = .52$). A planned comparison indicated that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance in a social context led them to report a greater need for self-enhancement compared to those in all other conditions ($M_{\text{social_arrogance}} = 4.52$, $SD = 1.21$ vs. $M_{\text{non_social_arrogance}} = 3.94$, $SD = 1.53$, $F(1, 206) = 10.14$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .047$; $M_{\text{social_control}} = 3.70$, $SD = 1.33$, $F(1, 206) = 5.23$, $p = .023$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$; $M_{\text{non_social_control}} = 3.82$, $SD = 1.28$, $F(1, 206) = 6.71$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .032$). There was no significant difference between any of the other conditions ($p > .1$).

With regard to self-affirmation, a planned comparison indicated that triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance in a social context led them to report a greater need for self-affirmation compared to those in the non-social-arrogance condition ($M_{\text{social_arrogance}} = 4.62$, $SD = 1.21$ vs. $M_{\text{non_social_arrogance}} = 3.96$, $SD = 1.36$, $F(1, 206) = 4.78$, $p = .030$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$) and those in the social-control condition ($M_{\text{social_control}} = 4.09$, $SD = 1.17$, $F(1, 206) = 7.65$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .036$). Similarly, participants in the non-social-control condition reported more need for self-affirmation than those in the non-social-arrogance condition ($M_{\text{non_social_control}} = 4.56$, $SD = 1.17$, $F(1, 206) = 6.54$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .031$) and those in the social-control condition ($F(1, 206) = 3.91$, $p = .049$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$). There was no significant difference between

the social-arrogance and the non-social-control conditions ($p > .1$) or between the social-control and the non-social-arrogance conditions ($p > .1$).

Mediation analysis We used PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes 2018) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples (controlling for age and gender) to test the mediating effect of self-affirmation and self-enhancement on the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM in a social and a non-social context. Figure 2 presents these results.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Social context. As predicted, there was a significant positive indirect effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions through self-enhancement ($b = .16$, $SE = .10$, [95% CI = .01, .41]). Specifically, triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance heightened their need for self-enhancement ($b = .81$, $t(102) = 3.25$, $p = .002$), which increased their intentions to engage in negative WOM ($b = .19$, $t(102) = 2.05$, $p = .043$), supporting H4a. Similarly, there was a significant positive indirect effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions through self-affirmation ($b = .11$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [.008, .29]). Specifically, triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance heightened their need for self-affirmation ($b = .56$, $t(102) = 2.43$, $p = .017$), which increased their intentions to engage in negative WOM ($b = .19$, $t(100) = 2.05$, $p = .043$), supporting H5a.

There was no significant direct effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions ($b = .30$, $SE = .20$, [95% CI = -.10, .70]), indicating full mediation through self-affirmation and self-enhancement. There was also no significant difference in the strength of the mediation between self-enhancement or self-affirmation ($\Delta b = .021$; $SE = .13$, 95% CI = -.21, .31). Overall, these results replicate the results of Study 3 with regard to negative WOM and the mediating role of self-affirmation and self-enhancement in the case of consumer arrogance, and support H4a and H5a.

Non-social context. Unexpectedly, and contrary to H5b, there was a significant negative indirect effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions through self-affirmation ($b = -.16$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI [-.38, -.03]). Specifically, in a non-social context, triggering participants' sense of consumer arrogance reduced their need for self-affirmation ($b = -.59$, $t(102) = -2.39$, $p = .019$), leading to greater intentions to engage in negative WOM ($b = .26$, $t(100) = 2.16$, $p = .033$). In addition, and as predicted, there was no significant indirect effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions through self-enhancement ($b = .01$, $SE = .06$, [95% CI = -.12, .15]), supporting H4b. There was also no significant direct effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM intentions ($b = .34$, $SE = .27$, [95% CI = -.20, .88]), indicating full mediation through self-affirmation. These results suggest that when participants' sense of consumer arrogance is triggered in a non-social context, negative WOM does not address their self-affirmation or self-enhancement needs.

Discussion

The results of Study 4 expand those of Study 3, underscoring the importance of the social context for negative WOM communication and as a key element in the case of consumer arrogance. As in Study 3, we demonstrate in Study 4 that triggering consumer arrogance can backfire on marketers in cases of negative consumption experiences, as it fuels negative WOM. Furthermore, Study 4 shows that while the social context of negative consumption experiences will suppress consumers' intentions to engage in negative WOM, triggering their sense of arrogance will actually inflame their intentions.

In addition, our findings reveal that when the sense of consumer arrogance is triggered and the consumption event occurs in a social context, negative WOM addresses both consumers' self-affirmation and self-enhancement needs. These findings also make a novel contribution by providing initial support for theoretical assertions about the self-enhancing benefits of negative WOM, which have not been previously demonstrated.

However, this is not the case in the non-social situation. In fact, our results indicate that the absence of a social context suppresses the need for self-affirmation when consumer arrogance is triggered. This finding might suggest that under these conditions consumers do not view the negative consumption event as a threat to their superiority. Therefore, it does not evoke the need for affirmation. If so, this finding underscores the importance of the social context with regard to consumer arrogance.

Discussion and implications

Our research sheds light on a very prevalent, yet understudied, social phenomenon: consumer arrogance and its effect on word-of-mouth communication. The five studies we undertook in this research consistently show that companies and marketing managers can trigger consumer arrogance. Furthermore, doing so will promote these consumers' inclinations to engage in WOM communication, both online and offline. Triggering consumers' sense of arrogance is significantly more effective in generating WOM communication than triggering their sense of superiority, desire to brag, or simply asking them to write a review about a product or brand, as most companies currently do.

However, marketers need to be strategic and careful in designing WOM triggers. While such triggers increase consumers' positive WOM intentions, they also heighten their intentions to engage in negative WOM, which are influential and often costly to marketers. In this vein, we demonstrate that while the need for self-enhancement drives the effect of consumer arrogance on positive WOM (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Barasch and Berger 2013; Berger 2014; De Angelis et al. 2012; Lovett et al. 2013; Packard and Wooten 2013), both the need for self-affirmation (Alexandrov et al. 2013) and self-enhancement mediate the effects of consumer arrogance on negative WOM in a social context. These findings have important theoretical and managerial implications and are summarized in Table 4.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

Theoretical implications

Our work addresses the broad-based research question: what drives WOM communication? While previous research has investigated the *consequences* of WOM for consumer behavior, research on the *drivers* of WOM is less developed (for a review see Berger 2014; De Matos and Rossi 2008). Our research contributes to this important literature by showing that triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance will intensify their WOM intentions. The findings support the notion that WOM serves self-related motives (Berger 2014). We establish that just as consumers showcase their superiority over others via their purchase or ownership of products and brands (Dubois et al. 2011; Han et al. 2010), they also showcase it via WOM behavior. We can assume that talking about products and brands enables consumers to derive greater superiority utility from the products and brands they buy (e.g., Lovett et al. 2013).

Second, and more importantly, we demonstrate that while previous studies show that most consumers refrain from engaging in negative WOM (e.g., Baker et al. 2016; Berger and Milkman 2012; East et al. 2007), a sense of arrogance will lead them to engage more in negative WOM. While the social context of a consumption experience often suppresses consumers' inclinations to engage in negative WOM, it has the opposite effect when consumer arrogance is triggered.

Kowalski (1996) maintained that people evaluate the utility of their responses to an adverse event and adopt the option that is most likely to restore their self-view and change the impressions of others. Our findings show that for most consumers the costs of engaging in negative WOM outweigh its benefits. However, when people's sense of consumer arrogance is triggered, the perceived benefits of negative WOM meet their self-affirming and self-enhancing needs, overriding its potential costs, especially when the consumption experience

has a social context to it. A sense of arrogance might prompt consumers to regard negative WOM as an active coping mechanism (Carver et al. 1989) for restoring their sense of superiority. Future research should include longitudinal assessments to determine in what sense arrogant consumers regard negative WOM as an active coping mechanism.

Third, the roles of self-affirmation and self-enhancement are especially intriguing in the case of consumer arrogance because they answer the question of how consumer arrogance influences WOM. While researchers in previous studies argued that self-affirmation is a driver of negative WOM communication (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Dunn and Dahl 2012), very little empirical evidence exists to support such claims. For example, Alexandrov et al. (2013) failed to demonstrate a direct relationship between self-affirmation and negative WOM. Our results establish that when triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance in a social context (but not in a non-social context), they tend to engage in negative WOM communication to satisfy their self-affirmation needs. These findings suggest that under certain conditions a direct relationship between self-affirmation and negative WOM can be established.

Fourth, in previous research self-enhancement was associated mostly with positive WOM (Alexandrov et al. 2013; Barasch and Berger 2013; Berger 2014; De Angelis et al. 2012; Lovett et al. 2013; Packard and Wooten 2013). Nevertheless, De Angelis et al. (2012) provided initial evidence of the self-enhancing benefits of negative WOM for consumers who share information they hear from others. We extend these findings by demonstrating the self-enhancing benefits of WOM about consumers' *own* negative experiences in a social context and when their sense of arrogance is triggered. Our findings highlight the uniqueness of consumer arrogance as a social phenomenon and its effect on WOM communication.

Managerial implications

Marketers and their traditional marketing strategies are (potentially) losing their grip on consumers. One example is the increasing ineffectiveness of television ads because

millennials and other young consumers watch so little television. In this new world, WOM communication has become increasingly critical to companies' success, and will become even more important in the future as the scope and reach of social media increase. Yet, while marketers have mastered the use of traditional marketing strategies, the strategic use of WOM is largely an enigma (Berger 2014). Thus, our findings have two essential implications for marketers seeking to leverage WOM communication among current and potential consumers.

First, as previously noted, research on the drivers of WOM communication is less developed compared to its outcomes or consequences (Berger 2014; De Matos and Rossi 2008). In these studies, the focus has been on drivers that are largely outside the marketers' control. Examples include the type of product (Berger and Milkman 2012; Berger and Schwartz 2011; Moldovan et al. 2011), type of communication (De Angelis et al. 2012), and the size of the audience (Barasch and Berger 2013). Our research clearly shows that marketers can trigger consumers' sense of arrogance as a strategic tool and that doing so will generate more WOM communication. Hence, we provide marketers with an effective tool for prompting their customers' reviews and encouraging them to share their opinions with others. Instead of sending out benign requests for reviews in the form of "please share your opinion about this product," our work suggests that marketers are better off using messages that highlight the superiority of their consumers as well as the opportunity to brag about their purchases to others across social media and in their everyday face-to-face encounters. In fact, our findings reveal that the traditional way of soliciting reviews via appeals to bragging might diminish consumers' inclinations to do so.

Second, our research indicates that in the case of a negative consumption event, triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance might backfire because it will prompt them to share their negative WOM. Given that negative WOM is highly influential (Chen and Lurie 2013; Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006), being able to identify and mitigate the inclinations of consumers to spread negative WOM is imperative for companies. Our study offers firms

potential ways of doing so. Providing consumers with ways to reaffirm their self-view or bolster their social image are essential for overcoming negative WOM. Offering consumers who have had poor experiences various incentives, such as higher status in their rewards programs or exclusive offers not available to other consumers, both of which should trigger their sense of superiority, addresses their need for self-affirmation and self-enhancement. In other words, by transforming consumption failures into consumption triumphs, marketers can reduce the risk of negative WOM and potentially increase the likelihood of positive WOM.

Future research

Our contemporary bragging culture (Athanasίου 2015) is indeed alarming because it might indicate a societal shift in the way we view arrogance. Commonly regarded as a personality vice, arrogant communication may become stripped of its negative connotation. In the context consumer arrogance, an interesting question is: what would be the reaction of other consumers to arrogant communication? Given that marketers hope to boost WOM communication to prompt people to buy their products, understanding the effect of boastful communication is critical. Packard et al.'s (2016) study provides initial findings that under certain conditions (high trust cues) consumers might view boastful communication favorably and regard it as persuasive. However, an in-depth inquiry is needed to fully understand the impact of incidental or occasional consumer arrogance on the transmitter's behavior as well as on how the recipients of such messages perceive and evaluate them.

Our findings also show that neither self-affirmation nor self-enhancement plays a driving role in the case of negative WOM in a non-social context. This result suggests that other mediators or moderators might affect the relationship between consumer arrogance and negative WOM. Dunn and Dahl (2012), for example, demonstrated that a self-attributed product failure poses a greater threat to consumers' self-view, especially when it relates to their competency. Self-attributed consumption failures might affect the relationship between

consumer arrogance and negative WOM. Dunn and Dahl (2012) acknowledged that an unfavorable outcome that stemmed from the consumers' own actions might heighten the experienced discrepancy between their actual and ideal self-view. Likewise, if the unfavorable outcome occurred in the presence of others, it might potentially lead to the use of negative WOM as a means of fulfilling the consumers' need for self-affirmation or self-enhancement (Alexandrov et al. 2013). Further research is needed to explore the potential consequences of self-attributed consumption failures for consumer arrogance and negative WOM.

Finally, future research could also fruitfully examine whether triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance will have an effect on their consumption decision making. Prior behavioral studies indicate that hubris impairs managers' judgments and decision making (Hayward and Hambrick 1997; Picone et al. 2014). For example, in their study on CEOs' decision making regarding the premiums paid for large acquisitions, Hayward and Hambrick (1997) reported that hubristic CEOs overpaid for acquisition premiums, causing shareholder losses. They posited that hubris caused these CEOs to engage in "loss-of-reality-based decision making" because they overestimated their ability to execute the acquisitions and underestimated the risks involved (Kroll et al. 2000). Similarly, it is reasonable to assume that triggering people's sense of consumer arrogance might lead them to engage in loss-of-reality-based consumption decision making, causing them to incur greater costs. Future work in the context of judgment and decision making is needed to explore the potential biases of the decision-making processes related to consumer arrogance.

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TABLE 1

Overview of the Research and a Summary of its Findings

	Pilot Study	Study 1a	Study 1b	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4
Method	Online survey	Experiment	Experiment	Experiment	Experiment	Experiment
Arrogance manipulation	-	TV reporter	Email from a store	Email from a smartphone firm	TV reporter	TV reporter
WOM context	A new car evaluation	An eco-friendly air conditioner review	Review of a favorite brand/store	Review of a favorite brand/store	Sharing information about positive or negative consumption events	Poor restaurant experience
IV	Consumer arrogance scale	2 conditions: arrogance vs. control	2 conditions: arrogance vs. control	4 conditions: arrogance, superiority, bragging, control	2 arrogance (arrogance vs. control) X 2 WOM valence (positive vs. negative)	2 arrogance (arrogance vs. control) X 2 social context (social vs. non-social)
DV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online review (# of words) • Offline WOM intentions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online review (# of words) • Offline WOM intentions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offline WOM intentions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online review (# of words) • Offline WOM intentions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 positive or 6 negative consumption events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offline WOM intentions
Mediators					Self-enhancement Self-affirmation	Self-enhancement Self-affirmation
Sample size (N)	1,682 Adults	158 Students	132 Adults	405 Adults	250 Adults	212 Adults
Hypotheses						
H1a, b - Consumer arrogance leads to more (a) positive WOM and (b) negative WOM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
H2 - Self-enhancement positively mediates the effect of consumer arrogance on positive WOM					✓	✓
H3 - Self-affirmation positively mediates the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM					✓	✓

H4a, b - Self-enhancement positively mediates the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM in (a) a social context, (b) but not in a non-social context						✓
H5a, b - Self-affirmation positively mediates the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM in (a) social and (b) non-social contexts						✓H5a, *H5b

TABLE 2

Measures of the Constructs and Assessments of Their Validity

Constructs & items	Factor Loading	A	CR	AVE
Pilot Study: Consumer arrogance (Ruvio and Shoham 2016; 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)				
Bragging		.93	.92	.66
1. I often buy products that emphasize my social status.	.85			
2. I tend to choose showy products.	.84			
3. It is important to me that others realize that I have the best things.	.87 .78			
4. I like to show others what I buy.	.83			
5. I often make sure that others know what I buy.	.71			
6. I often tell others how my purchases are the best.				
Sense of Superiority		.88	.90	.70
7. Compared to others, I usually know what the best buy is.	.84			
8. Not many people know the best buy as well as I do.	.86			
9. I tend to buy better products than most people I know.	.86			
10. I usually know where to get the best deals better than others.	.78			
Pilot Study: Word-of-Mouth intentions (Adopted from Cheema and Kaikati 2010)				
	.78	.94	.87	.58
1. 1= Say negative things about this car; 7 = Say positive things about this car.	.76 .68			
2. 1= Warn others not to buy this car; 7 = Recommend others to buy this car.	.79			
3. 1 = Complain to your friends and family about this car; 7 = Tell your friends and family about this car.				
Studies 1a, 1b, 2: Word-of-Mouth intentions (Based on Cheema and Kaikati 2010; 1= highly unlikely; 7 = highly likely)				
1. Tell others about the air conditioner ^a / store/brand ^b / smartphone ^c		r = .90 ^a /.69 ^b /.88 ^c		
2. Recommend this conditioner/ store/brand/smartphone to others.				
Study 1a: Product evaluation (Kim, Lim, and Bhargava 1998)				
		.91	.92	.74
1. 1 = Bad quality; 7 = Excellent quality.	.83			
2. 1 = Don't like it at all; 7 = Like it very much.	.92			
3. 1 = Boring; 7 = Interesting.	.84			
4. 1 = Undesirable; 7 = Highly desirable.	.85			

Study 3: Likelihood of sharing information about consumption events				
(Barasch and Berger 2013; 1= highly unlikely; 7 = highly likely)		.73	.72	.32
	.47			
Positive consumption events:	.62			
A fun movie that you watched in the theater.	.54			
A great new recipe from a food website.	.69			
A beautiful shirt from your favorite brand.	.38			
A great discount coupon for a store you often shop at.	.62			
A tasty beer you had at your local bar.				
A restaurant with great service you ate at.	.51	.78	.78	.37
Negative consumption events:	.69			
A boring movie that you watched in the theater.	.69			
A bad new recipe from a food website.	.63			
An unflattering shirt from your favorite brand.	.48			
A bad discount coupon from a store you often shop at.	.63			
A not very tasty beer you had at your local bar.				
A restaurant with poor service you ate at.				
Studies 3 and 4: Self-enhancement and Self-affirmation				
(Alexandrov et al. 2013; 1 = highly unlikely; 7 = highly likely)		.89/.90	.90/.90	.74/.75
Self-enhancement	.79 ^d /.86 ^f			
It will create the impression that I am a "good" person.	.87/.83			
I will receive positive feedback from others about my gesture.	.92/.91			
I will create a positive impression on others.				
Self-affirmation	.80/.77	.94/.88	.92/.88	.69/.60
It will reveal who I am.	.85/.85			
It will reveal what I stand for.	.86/.78			
It will make the other person aware of what I value about myself.	.81/.71			
It will make the other person understand what is important to me.	.84/.77			
It will make me think about positive aspects of myself.				
Study 4: Word-of-Mouth intentions				
(Based on Cheema and Kaikati 2010; 1= highly unlikely; 7 = highly likely)		.87	.84	.64
3. Say negative things about this restaurant.	.85			
4. Warn others about this restaurant.	.76			
5. Complain to your friends and family about this restaurant.	.79			

^a Study 1a, ^b Study 1b, ^c Study 2, ^d Study 3, ^f Study 4.

TABLE 3

Results Summary of All Experiments

Studies & DVs	Conditions				
	Arrogance	Control			
<i>Study 1a</i>					
Online review (# words)	68.29 (50.32)	53.18 (36.81)			$t(156) = 2.16^*$
Offline WOM intentions	4.93 (1.74)	4.34 (1.71)			$t(156) = 2.13^*$
<i>Study 1b</i>					
Offline WOM intentions	6.01 (0.91)	5.53 (1.21)			$F(1, 121)^a = 5.91^*$
Consumer arrogance	2.98 (1.13)	2.99 (1.03)			n.s.
Narcissism	2.95 (1.14)	2.95 (0.95)			n.s.
Hubris	2.12 (1.20)	2.22 (1.76)			n.s.
Overconfidence	2.59 (0.65)	2.70 (0.61)			n.s.
<i>Study 2</i>					
Online review (# words)	Arrogance	Superiority	Bragging	Control	$F(3, 398)^c = 2.69^*$
Offline WOM intentions	19.81 (20.99)	16.08 (19.81)	13.62 (17.59)	13.25 (14.16)	$F(3, 398)^c = 5.30^{**}$
<i>Study 3</i>					
	Positive events		Negative events		
	Arrogance	Control	Arrogance	Control	
WOM intentions	5.20 (0.92)	4.79 (0.94)	4.76 (1.07)	4.25 (1.08)	n.s. ^b
Self-enhancement	4.85 (1.20)	4.43 (1.24)	4.67 (1.28)	4.01 (1.44)	n.s. ^b
Self-affirmation	5.01 (1.26)	4.65 (1.33)	4.81 (1.27)	4.24 (1.29)	n.s. ^b
<i>Study 4</i>					
	Social context		Non-social context		
	Arrogance	Control	Arrogance	Control	
WOM intentions	5.51 (1.03)	5.02 (1.16)	5.09 (1.34)	4.89 (1.52)	n.s. ^b
Self-enhancement	4.52 (1.21)	3.70 (1.33)	3.94 (1.53)	3.82 (1.28)	$F(1, 206)^b = 4.14^*$
Self-affirmation	4.62 (1.21)	4.09 (1.17)	3.96 (1.36)	4.56 (1.17)	$F(1, 206)^b = 11.22^{**}$

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

^a Interaction value controlled for consumer arrogance, narcissism, hubris and overconfidence, gender and age.

^b Interaction value controlled for gender and age.

^c Interaction value controlled for product rating, gender and age.

TABLE 4

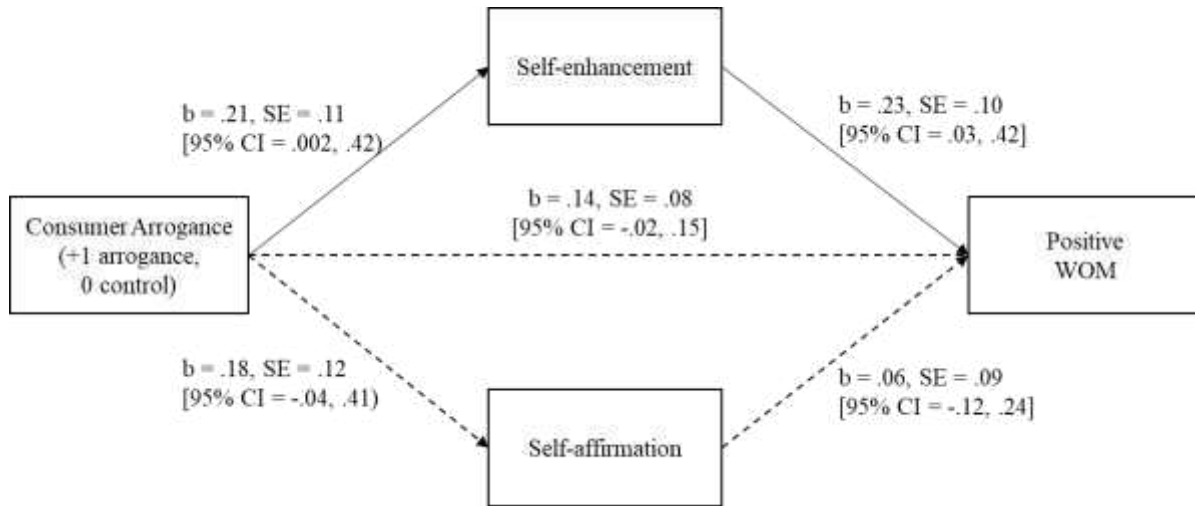
Summary of the Focus of the Studies and Their Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Studies	Focus	Results	Managerial implications
Pilot Study	Focuses on consumer arrogance as a universal behavioral tendency and its relationship with offline WOM intentions and actual behavior (greater volume of online WOM).	Consumer arrogance is associated with greater WOM intentions and behaviors.	Marketers should appeal to consumers' arrogant tendencies to generate WOM communication that complements the firm's marketing messaging.
Studies 1a, 1b	Focus on manipulating consumer arrogance to test whether the phenomenon can be triggered externally and its effect on WOM intentions and behaviors.	Triggering consumer arrogance increases WOM intentions and behaviors.	Marketers should trigger consumers' arrogance to increase WOM intentions and behaviors situationally; that is, a firm should selectively trigger consumer arrogance when it is strategically beneficial, not as an ongoing tactical marketing measure.
Study 2	Focuses on testing whether manipulating one of the facets of consumer arrogance (superiority or bragging) would have the same effect on WOM intentions and behaviors as manipulating consumer arrogance as a whole.	Supports the two facets of consumer arrogance: superiority and bragging. Triggering consumer arrogance increases WOM communication more than triggering superiority, bragging or using neutral messages.	To be more effective in generating WOM communication, firms should trigger both facets of consumers' arrogance, rather than triggering their sense of superiority, bragging or using neutral messages.
Study 3	Focuses on the amplifying effect of consumer arrogance on both positive and negative WOM and investigates the mechanisms that drive these effects.	Self-enhancement mediates the effect of consumer arrogance on positive WOM. Self-affirmation and self-enhancement mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM.	Firms need to carefully develop trigger mechanisms that focus on consumers' self-enhancing needs to promote the likelihood of their engaging in positive WOM communication.
Study 4	Focuses on exploring why and under what conditions negative WOM addresses the self-enhancement needs of people whose sense of consumer arrogance was triggered.	In a social context, self-affirmation and self-enhancement mediate the effect of consumer arrogance on negative WOM.	For products with high social visibility, firms should use caution when triggering consumers' arrogance. The focus should be on triggering consumers' arrogance about products and brands, with careful distancing from the social context of negative consumption experiences.

FIGURE 1

Study 3: Mediating role of self-enhancement and self-affirmation

Positive WOM



Negative WOM

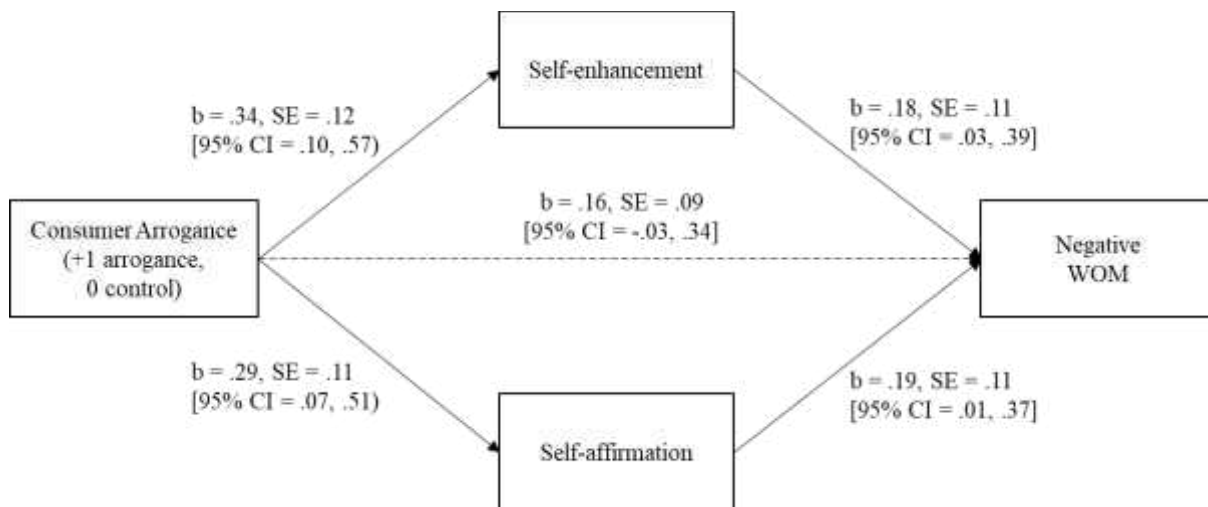
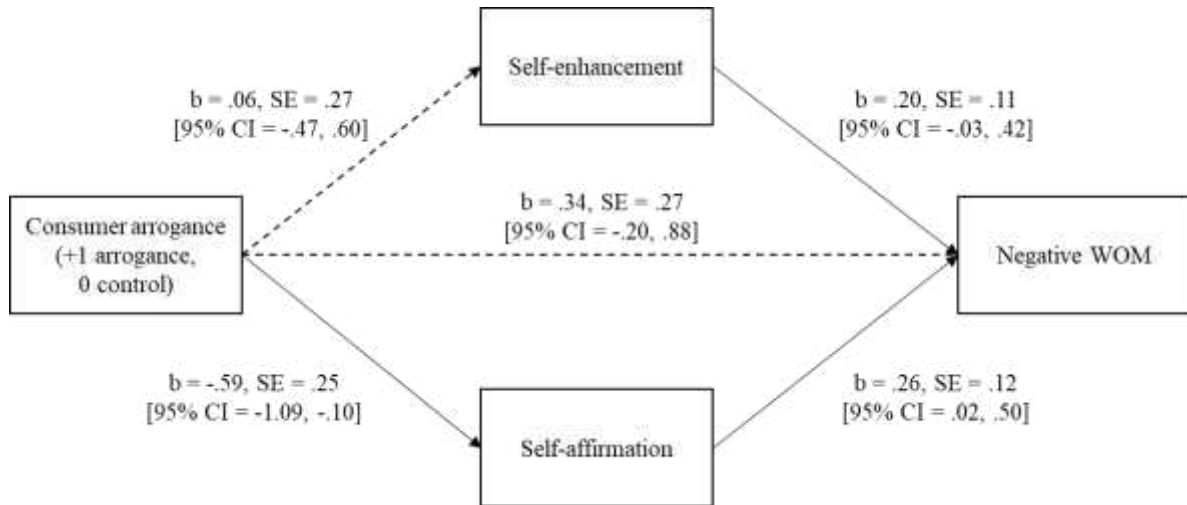


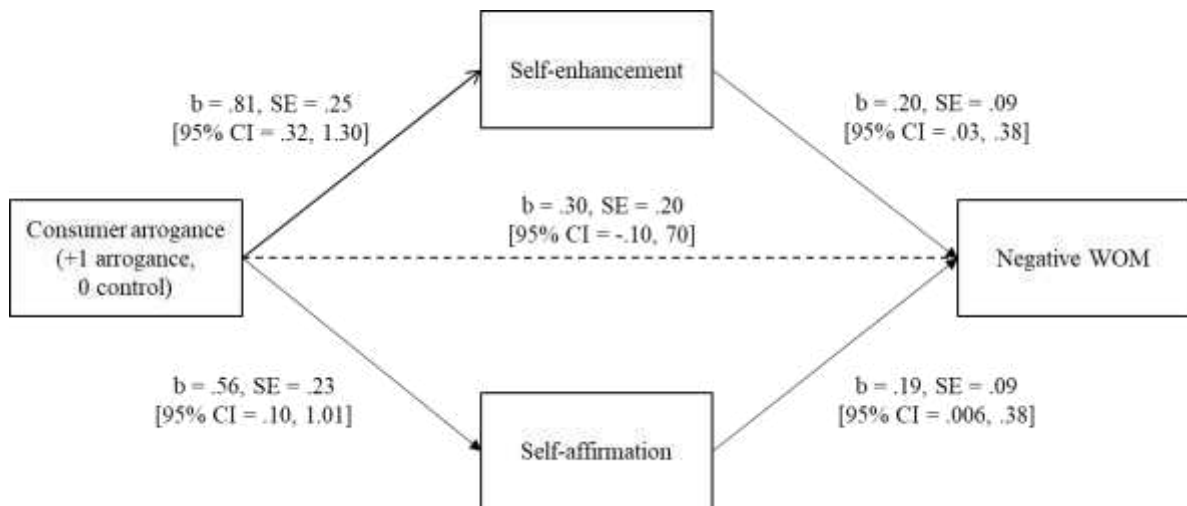
FIGURE 2

Study 4: The moderating role of the social context

Non-social context



Social context



APPENDIX

Studies 1a, 3, and 4: Consumer arrogance manipulation

Consumer arrogance

You are being interviewed for a local TV station. The reporter asks you to describe all the qualities that make you a better consumer than other people.

Focus on the qualities that make you superior to others as a consumer - what qualities would you mention? How do they help you be a better shopper than others? What examples can you give? Be as detailed as possible.

Control

You are being interviewed for a local TV station. The reporter asks you to describe your latest shopping trip to the grocery store. What can you tell the reporter about your latest trip to the grocery store? How did you get there? What did you purchase? Be as detailed as possible.

Studies 1b: Manipulation of consumer arrogance, and control

Think about a store that you frequently shop at or a brand that you purchase often. Please write the name of this store/brand: _____

Consumer arrogance

Imagine that you get an email from this store or brand notifying you that you have been identified as one of their superior consumers. By superior, they mean a consumer who is a better shopper than most people.

The store/brand asks you if you would be willing to write a review of your experience with the store/brand and to share your opinion of some of your purchases. In other words, to tell other people about the products you've purchased, brag about them and show them off.

Control

Imagine that you get an email from this store or brand asking if you would be willing to write a review of your experience with the store/brand, and to share your opinion of some of your purchases.

Study 2: Manipulation of superiority and bragging

Arrogance

Thank you for being a BRAND NAME superior customer!

As a BRAND NAME superior customer, a consumer who is a better shopper than most people, what you think matters to us, and we care about providing you with a meaningful customer experience.

Please take a moment and share your experience with the BRAND NAME smartphone you own. In other words, please tell other customers about the BRAND NAME smartphone you've purchased, feel free to brag about it and show it off.

APPENDIX *Continued*

Superiority

Thank you for being a BRAND NAME superior customer!

As a BRAND NAME superior customer, a consumer who is a better shopper than most people, what you think matters to us, and we care about providing you with a meaningful customer experience.

Please take a moment and share your experience with the BRAND NAME smartphone you own.

Bragging

Thank you for being a BRAND NAME customer!

As a BRAND NAME customer, what you think matters to us, and we care about providing you with a meaningful customer experience.

Please take a moment and share your experience with the BRAND NAME smartphone you own. In other words, please tell other customers about the BRAND NAME smartphone you've purchased, feel free to brag about it and show it off.

Control

Thank you for being a BRAND NAME customer!

As a BRAND NAME customer, what you think matters to us, and we care about providing you with a meaningful customer experience.

Please take a moment and share your experience with the BRAND NAME smartphone you own.

Study 4: Manipulation of the social context of a consumption experience

Social context

You invite a few of your work colleagues to a lunch in a highly rated, well-known restaurant. However, at the restaurant you and your colleagues receive very poor service, the waiter is unpleasant, you and your colleagues waste a lot of time waiting for your order and the food is served cold. A social disaster! You and your colleagues are very disappointed that you wasted money on a lunch and did not enjoy at all. It's not just a very poor experience overall; it's a poor experience in the presence of your work colleagues.

Non-social context

You decide to go for lunch to a highly rated, well-known restaurant. However, at the restaurant you receive very poor service, the waiter is unpleasant, you waste a lot of time waiting for your order and the food is served cold. A complete disaster! You are very disappointed that you wasted money on a lunch and did not enjoy at all. It's just a very poor experience overall.