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Citation for final published version:

Bozkurt, Siddik, Colmekcioglu, Nazan and Gligor, David 2026. Cultural echoes in e-WOM: the role of self-presentation in brand agility perception. *International Marketing Review* 10.1108/imr-05-2025-0234

Publishers page: <https://doi.org/10.1108/imr-05-2025-0234>

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Cultural Echoes in e-WOM: The Role of Self-Presentation in Brand

Agility Perception

Purpose: This study seeks to expand the current understanding of perceived social media agility (PSMA) within the dynamic capabilities perspective by exploring its influence on positive electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) across culturally diverse settings. Specifically, it examines how cultural orientation (collectivist versus individualistic) and self-presentation behaviors moderate the relationship between PSMA and positive e-WOM.

Methodology: Three experimental studies were conducted using online adult samples to test the research hypotheses. Studies 1 and 2 utilized a cross-national design with participants drawn from Türkiye (representing a collectivist culture) and the United Kingdom (representing an individualistic culture). In these studies, standard linear regression was used to evaluate the primary baseline relationship, while the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Models 1 and 3) was employed to test moderation and moderated moderation structures, exploring the conditional effects and interaction patterns among PSMA, self-presentation, and cultural context. Additionally, a post hoc analysis was performed to validate the use of nationality as a proxy for cultural orientation. Finally, Study 3 was conducted within a single-country framework (the United Kingdom) to rigorously evaluate and replicate the model at the individual psychographic level, utilizing a refined experimental design, an alternative operationalization of PSMA, and an individual-level measure of collectivism.

Findings: The findings across all three studies demonstrate that PSMA consistently and significantly enhances consumers' intentions to engage in positive e-WOM. In the cross-national framework (Studies 1 and 2), this main effect is heavily conditioned by cultural context and self-presentation tendencies. Specifically, the positive impact of PSMA on e-WOM is greater for Turkish participants than for UK participants, and a significant three-way interaction reveals that self-presentation behaviors play a more pronounced moderating role for UK consumers. Crucially, the single-country framework of Study 3 successfully replicates this cultural boundary condition at the micro-psychological level within an individualistic market, revealing a statistically significant interaction between brand agility and individual-level collectivism. Johnson-Neyman threshold analysis further demonstrates that even within an individualistic society, the positive returns of brand agility are significantly unlocked and amplified once a consumer's individual collectivism score crosses a critical activation baseline.

Originality/Value: This research advances the literature on social media agility by positioning PSMA within the dynamic capabilities perspective, incorporating a psychological perspective through the lens of self-presentation, and addressing the scarcity of cross-cultural comparative studies through an explicit integration of cultural analysis. It offers a multilayered, cross-level framework that highlights culture not merely as contextual background, but as a central interpretive lens through which consumers understand and evaluate agile brand behavior on social media. In this way, the study provides robust multi-method validation demonstrating how

both macro-level national culture and micro-level individual cultural traits systematically shape consumers' engagement with agile brands.

Keywords: Perceived Social Media Agility, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM), Self-Presentation, Cross-Cultural Comparison, Dynamic Capabilities Perspective, Individualism vs. Collectivism

1. Introduction

Social media provides brands with an important channel for communicating with consumers across culturally diverse markets. Social media has emerged as one of the most transformative technologies of the digital era, engaging billions of users worldwide (Appel et al., 2020). Its rapid proliferation has significantly reshaped consumer behavior, positioning social platforms as central arenas for brand engagement. Unlike traditional advertising, which operates through one-way messaging, social media enables multidirectional interaction, allowing users to engage with brands via likes, comments, shares, and user-generated content (Colmekcioglu et al., 2022). As a result, the distinction between brand–consumer communication and interpersonal interaction has become increasingly blurred (Wu et al., 2020; Bozkurt et al., 2021a). Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages but active participants in brand discourse, co-creating value and amplifying messages through their own networks (Welch et al., 2024). Empirical research further shows that positive electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and peer recommendations are often perceived as more credible than firm-generated advertising, amplifying the importance of consumer-driven brand advocacy (Hochstein et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2024; Mayrhofer et al., 2020; Roy et al., 2024; Shahzad et al., 2024). These shifts underscore the necessity for brands to maintain perceived social media agility (PSMA), which refers to consumers’ perceptions of a brand’s ability to quickly detect and respond to shifts in user needs, public discourse, or broader social media trends (Welch et al., 2024; Bozkurt, 2025a). In other words, agility here is evaluated from the customer’s viewpoint through visible social media actions, such as timely responses, relevant content updates, sensitivity to trending conversations, and adaptation to platform or consumer expectations.

However, an important question for international marketing is whether consumers in different cultural contexts respond to such agile brand behavior in similar ways. Specifically, is

agile brand behavior interpreted uniformly across international markets, or is its value shaped by differences in cultural expectations? The ways in which consumers interpret and respond to such agile brand behavior may vary across cultural contexts, as cultural norms shape expectations regarding communication style, responsiveness, and brand-consumer interaction (Caligiuri & Caprar, 2023; Pohlmann et al., 2024). This issue is particularly relevant in international marketing because multinational brands communicate with consumers across markets that differ in their cultural expectations. Thus, understanding whether and why the effects of PSMA vary across cultures represents an important gap in international marketing research.

To shed further conceptual light on why agility matters in such environments, this study draws on dynamic capabilities theory, which explains how firms build and sustain advantage in rapidly changing contexts by sensing shifts in the environment, seizing opportunities through timely action, and reconfiguring resources to maintain alignment with evolving market demands (Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2007). In social media settings, where consumer sentiment, cultural discourse, and brand meanings can change quickly, this agility can be viewed as a market-facing expression of these higher-order capabilities. However, in international markets, the effectiveness of such agile responses may also depend on how consumers in different cultural settings interpret and respond to firms' actions. In addition, the effectiveness of such agile responses may depend not only on organizational capabilities but also on the cultural lenses through which consumers interpret brand actions (Dove, 2002).

Although the extant literature has thoroughly addressed various aspects of consumer behavior in social media contexts, including engagement (Dessart, 2017), electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Akbari et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2024), commenting patterns (Bozkurt et al., 2021b; Colmekcioglu et al., 2022), interactive behaviors (Liu et al., 2022; Akbari et al., 2022), and sentiment dynamics (Zhao et al., 2023; Lappeman et al., 2022), relatively little scholarly

attention has been paid to the concept of perceived social media agility (PSMA). Specifically, emerging evidence suggests that PSMA enhances consumer-brand relationships (Chuang, 2020), supports value co-creation and brand attachment (Welch et al., 2024), and encourages behaviors such as engagement, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing (Bozkurt et al., 2021a). However, existing research has rarely examined how these effects may differ across cultural environments, leaving open the question of whether PSMA operates similarly among consumers from different cultural backgrounds.

Recent studies have begun to illustrate the practical significance of PSMA in brand communication. For instance, Duffy and Pooley (2019) describe how brands like Wendy's garnered notable consumer engagement by responding in real time with witty, culturally relevant commentary on Twitter, demonstrating agile, socially attuned communication. Likewise, de Vries et al. (2017) show how brands facing crises, such as airline service disruptions, mitigated reputational damage by delivering timely updates and empathetic messaging. These examples emphasize how consumers value brands that respond quickly, appropriately, and with tonal sensitivity in dynamic digital environments. However, these examples also raise an important question about whether consumers in different cultural contexts attach similar value to such agile brand responses. Also, the underlying psychological and cultural factors that condition how PSMA is received and interpreted by consumers remain underexplored, leaving a key conceptual gap that this study addresses.

Self-presentation theory (Goffman, 1959) holds that individuals manage their behavior to influence how others perceive them, especially in socially visible settings. In digital environments, where audience visibility, content persistence, and quantifiable feedback are ubiquitous, self-presentation concerns become especially salient (Hollenbaugh, 2021). This study contributes to theory by placing self-presentation at the center of the PSMA evaluation process. While previous studies have primarily linked PSMA to engagement or responsiveness

outcomes (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021; Bozkurt et al., 2024), no research has explored how personal image concerns influence consumers' interpretation of brand agility. We argue that consumers do not merely respond to agile brand behavior but evaluate it in terms of how it can be leveraged for identity signaling in socially visible environments. Importantly, these identity-related evaluations may also differ across cultural contexts, making self-presentation relevant to understanding how consumers respond to agile brands in international markets. At the same time, the importance of such image-related evaluations may vary across cultures, where norms surrounding self-expression, social approval, and group alignment differ (Dortyol et al., 2026). Furthermore, we demonstrate how this effect is shaped by cultural orientation, particularly individualism versus collectivism, which affects the salience and function of self-presentation motives. In doing so, the study offers a more comprehensive and culturally grounded theory of PSMA, capturing both individual-level and contextual dynamics in consumer-brand interaction.

Bozkurt (2025a) conceptualizes PSMA as a functional exchange cue that enhances perceived fairness and reduces fear of negative evaluation, thereby driving positive e-WOM. While highly insightful, this perspective does not address how consumers may interpret agility as an identity-relevant signal, nor does it provide insight into the identity-based or culturally grounded boundary conditions that may shape when PSMA most strongly influences consumer behavior. Moreover, our study responds directly to the future research recommendations of Bozkurt (2025a), who notes that Welch et al. (2024) highlight the potential impact of cultural differences and calls for greater attention to this issue. Bozkurt (2025a) further encourages scholars to examine whether the findings hold in more individualistic countries and to systematically compare results across cultural contexts. Building on this research gap, we position culture not as a background variable but as a central boundary condition that may shape how PSMA is translated into consumer advocacy across markets. By incorporating self-

presentation and cultural orientation as boundary conditions, we extend PSMA research along the exact theoretical trajectory identified as necessary in prior work. Thus, rather than explaining why PSMA affects e-WOM, we clarify *when* and *for whom* this effect becomes stronger.

Integrating self-presentation with the dynamic capabilities perspective clarifies *when* and *for whom* perceived capability deployment translates into visible advocacy, as the market impact of agile brand responses depends on how consumers interpret and leverage such agility in socially performative spaces. This perspective is particularly relevant to international marketing because consumers may bring different cultural expectations and identity-related motivations to their interactions with brands. Crucially, we argue that these interpretations are culturally embedded rather than universal.

Focusing on the moderating role of self-presentation, this study further examines how perceived social media agility (PSMA) influences positive e-WOM across different cultural contexts. While cultural values are known to shape consumer behavior, it remains unclear how these cultural effects interact with, or are potentially overridden by, self-presentation motives. Self-presentation theory suggests that individuals actively manage their public image, which may lead them to engage in positive e-WOM regardless of cultural background when the brands offer opportunities for effective impression management. In this sense, self-presentation may exert a distinct influence that is not merely a function of cultural conditioning.

Nonetheless, cultural frameworks might still play a role in how PSMA is evaluated. In collectivist cultures, where maintaining social harmony and group norms is prioritized (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011), agile brand behavior may be perceived as aligning with communal responsiveness, thereby encouraging positive e-WOM. In contrast, in individualist cultures, where autonomy and personal expression are emphasized, agility may be viewed as a reflection of innovation and adaptability, qualities that support self-directed identity goals. Examining

these dynamics can help clarify whether agile social media strategies are likely to generate similar consumer responses across markets or whether their effectiveness may depend on the cultural context. By examining these dynamics, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of how self-presentation and culture independently and interactively shape consumers' responses to social media agility. These culturally grounded considerations diverge conceptually from fairness-based explanations in Bozkurt (2025a) and underscore the need to examine cultural orientations as moderators of the PSMA-e-WOM link.

Beyond cultural variation, self-presentation, the desire to manage one's image in public digital spaces, emerges as a critical moderator of consumer-brand engagement (Colmekcioglu et al., 2023). Individuals high in self-presentation motives are more selective in their brand interactions and may prefer brands that enhance their social identity. For such consumers, affiliating with agile brands can serve as a means of signaling relevance, social awareness, and responsiveness. We therefore hypothesize that the positive effect of PSMA on e-WOM will be more pronounced among individuals with heightened self-presentation concerns. Whereas prior research has primarily linked PSMA to relational and co-creative outcomes (e.g., Welch et al., 2024; Bozkurt et al., 2024), we advance the dynamic capabilities perspective by conceptualizing positive e-WOM as a capability-driven advocacy outcome and by identifying identity-based and cultural boundary conditions that shape *when* PSMA translates into consumer amplification. Taken together, these arguments position the study as an international marketing investigation of how social media agility is translated into consumer responses across different cultural contexts and levels of cultural orientation. To bridge the identified international and cross-cultural theoretical gaps, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

- 1) Does the positive impact of PSMA on e-WOM vary across cultures?

2) Are consumers in collectivist cultures more influenced by agile brands than those in individualist cultures, and if so, why?

3) Does self-presentation moderate the relationship between PSMA and positive e-WOM?

4) To what extent does self-presentation shape the PSMA–e-WOM link across cultural contexts?

To examine these questions, we conducted three experimental studies across distinct cultural and analytical levels. Studies 1 and 2 utilize a large-scale, cross-national combined dataset contrasting the United Kingdom (individualist) and Türkiye (collectivist) to test our framework against macro-environmental cultural forces. Study 3 subsequently shifts the analytical lens to an experimental design within a single country context to isolate individual psychological scale variations and map the empirical boundaries of these macro cultural effects. Results indicate that while consumers generally report stronger e-WOM intentions in response to highly agile brands, the strength of this effect varies by both cultural orientation and individual differences in self-presentation.

These findings yield important implications for theory and practice. Theoretically, the study contributes to international marketing research by showing that the effects of PSMA on consumer behavior can vary across cultural contexts. It deepens our understanding of how PSMA influences consumer behavior by revealing the cultural and self-representational dynamics that shape its effectiveness. The findings further suggest that perceived social media agility is not a universally effective capability, but a culturally contingent signal whose impact varies according to consumers' cultural orientation and self-presentation motives. From a managerial perspective, international marketers seeking to develop agile brand communication strategies across culturally diverse markets should consider cultural context and consumer

characteristics. Rather than assuming that agile brand communication will generate similar responses everywhere, managers are encouraged to evaluate these factors when designing social media strategies. The remainder of this paper details the theoretical framework, methodology, findings, and practical implications, concluding with directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses

2.1. Perceived Social Media Agility

The concept of agility first emerged in the manufacturing sector, where it was defined as the ability to quickly adjust production processes to meet fast-changing customer demands (Yusuf et al., 1999). In this early context, agility emphasized two core dynamic capabilities: sensing changes in the environment and responding rapidly to those changes (Chuah et al., 2021). Over the years, agility has evolved into a broader strategic concept applied across international marketing (e.g., Asseraf et al., 2019; Gomes et al., 2020; Weng et al., 2024), supply chain management (SCM) (e.g., Agarwal et al., 2007; Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021), organizational management (e.g., Teece et al., 2016; Motwani & Katatricia, 2024) and strategic management (e.g., Weber & Tarba, 2014; Junni et al., 2015). As digital platforms have become central to business and consumer life, agility has increasingly been explored in the setting of social media (e.g., Chuang, 2020; Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021; Welch et al., 2024; Bozkurt, 2025a).

Agility is significant because it links organizational capabilities with consumer outcomes. Theoretically, it provides a dynamic capability framework that explains how brands can sense environmental shifts and respond quickly to remain competitive (Asseraf et al., 2019). Practically, agility signals attentiveness and responsiveness, which help build consumer trust, credibility, and satisfaction. Beyond this, agility enables personalized and timely interactions that enhance perceived value, while also strengthening engagement and fostering co-creation (Gomes et al., 2020). These interactions make consumers feel more connected to the brand and create a sense of relational closeness. Such closeness encourages advocacy behaviors such as

e-WOM and, over time, nurtures long-term loyalty. In this way, agility influences consumer responses through a set of interrelated mechanisms that combine trust, satisfaction, engagement, co-creation, and advocacy, all of which are essential for sustaining brand-consumer relationships in digital environments (Chuang, 2020).

Social media agility, however, represents a conceptual shift from traditional operational agility. Chuang (2020) initially defined it from the organizational perspective, describing it as the company's ability to use social media to detect changes, respond to customer demands, and adapt to the evolving competitive landscape. This conceptualization focuses primarily on internal processes and managerial evaluations of agility. Managers are asked to assess how well their firm's internal structures and external responsiveness enable real-time adaptation to change within social media platforms and broader digital trends.

Building on this foundation, Gligor and Bozkurt (2021) reframed social media agility from the consumer's perspective. They argue that while brands may perceive themselves as agile, what ultimately matters is how agile consumers perceive them to be. Through an extensive review of the literature, Gligor and Bozkurt (2021) identified two core dimensions of agility: the ability to detect and the ability to respond. Specifically, organizations must first identify changes by examining shifts in consumer demands and market opportunities and subsequently take appropriate actions in response to these changes (Chuang, 2020; Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021). From the perspective of customers, perceived social media agility has been defined as "customers' perceptions of a company's or brand's capacity to quickly recognize and react to the dynamic social media environment and the evolving needs of customers within this interactive context" (Bozkurt et al., 2024, p. 525). Thus, perceived social media agility captures customers' perception of a brand's capability to recognize and react to shifts in preferences, competitive dynamics, and technological developments within the social media landscape. This shift from a firm-centric to a consumer-centric view underscores the importance of agility in

shaping brand value: consumer perceptions directly influence trust, satisfaction, and loyalty in digital environments.

Recently, Welch et al. (2024) highlighted that perceived social media agility affects co-creation activities and fosters brand attachment. This evidence shows that agility extends beyond quick responsiveness; it also operates as a relational mechanism that builds closeness and shared value between brands and consumers. In practice, perceived agility influences consumer responses through mechanisms such as strengthening engagement, encouraging advocacy behaviors like e-WOM, and fostering long-term loyalty. These outcomes highlight both the theoretical relevance of agility as a lens for understanding consumer-brand dynamics and its practical importance for managers seeking to enhance consumer relationships in increasingly interactive digital contexts.

A key theoretical contribution of this study lies in clarifying the conceptual boundaries of perceived social media agility, which has not yet been clearly delineated in the literature. As such, a discussion of perceived social media agility in the context of adjacent constructs, such as brand involvement, responsiveness, or communication tone, is warranted. In this vein, it is important to describe and define these terms, then highlight how they differ from perceived social media agility.

First, brand involvement can be described as “the consumer’s degree of interest or arousal for a given brand” (Bian & Haque, 2020, p. 440). That is, the more interest or arousal a customer/consumer shows for a brand, the more involved with the brand he or she is. For example, if a customer has high levels of interest in a particular brand of smartphone, he or she is likely to be motivated to invest time and cognitive effort to learn more about it. The more time and effort the customer exerts, the more involved with the brand he or she will be (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021). Second, social media is a communication-rich environment where relationship building is more complex than simply increasing interactions because customers,

empowered by social technologies, actively initiate contact with brands (Karampela et al., 2020). Consequently, brands must monitor conversations, respond to comments, and resolve problems online to sustain relationships (Leek et al., 2016). Such activities by suppliers are referred to as responsiveness, the ability to respond proactively to information within the social media environment (Yang et al., 2016). Third, because a brand acts as a user among users on social platforms, it is partly personified and engages consumers with an identifiable pattern of communication style. Communication tone can be defined as the stylistic choices in this pattern of communication, and it includes attributes such as humanness and closeness (Barcelos et al., 2018).

With this theoretical background in mind, we can highlight some of the noteworthy differences between perceived social media agility and these three concepts. First, brand involvement reflects how much consumers are mentally engaged with a brand (interest/arousal), while perceived social media agility reflects what the brand can do (as perceived by consumers) when conversations change (detect + respond). Second, responsiveness concerns how promptly a brand replies and resolves issues at the thread level, while perceived social media agility concerns how quickly the brand detects broader conversational shifts and reconfigures its content/actions across channels in response. Third, while communication tone captures the style/effect of messaging (e.g., warmth, humor, formality), perceived social media agility is a capability perception tied to speedy recognition and adaptive response, independent of stylistic choices.

2.2. Positioning PSMA within the Dynamic Capabilities Perspective

Dynamic capabilities theory (DCT) explains how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage in changing environments by sensing shifts, seizing opportunities through timely resource reconfiguration, and transforming their asset base and routines over time (Teece et al., 1997; Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010). Unlike operational capabilities, which are geared to

efficient, “as-is” execution, dynamic capabilities are higher-order, path-dependent processes that embed learning, managerial orchestration, and governance choices (Teece, 2007). In moderately dynamic markets, they often take the form of identifiable, experience-based routines; under high velocity, they rely more on simple, rapidly reconfigurable processes and real-time decision heuristics (Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010). In both cases, competitive advantage derives from timely alignment between changing external conditions and internal reconfiguration.

This perspective offers a distinctive conceptual angle for PSMA by shifting attention from *what brands do on social media* to *what those actions reveal about underlying capability building and renewal*. In the broader dynamic capabilities literature, agility and responsiveness are typically treated as outcomes of sensing and reconfiguring processes that enable firms to remain aligned with changing market conditions (Wang & Ahmed, 2007; Wilden et al., 2013). Applying this lens to social media suggests that consumer perceptions of agility may capture whether brands are deploying these higher-order capabilities in a way that is visible and meaningful to external audiences. Accordingly, PSMA can be interpreted not merely as a communication characteristic but as a market-facing signal that the brand is actively monitoring shifts in social discourse and adapting its customer-facing responses in line with evolving expectations. This framing helps distinguish PSMA from narrower notions of operational responsiveness by positioning it as an outcome of higher-order adaptation rather than routine execution alone (Teece, 2007; Wilden et al., 2013). Because these capability displays are publicly observable, they can also become resources for identity signaling in social media environments, allowing consumers to associate themselves with brands that appear responsive, current, and socially attuned.

Within this logic, perceived social media agility is a market-facing manifestation of a dynamic capability. Additionally, building on the view of agility as the ability to detect change

and the ability to respond appropriately (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021; Chuang, 2020), perceived social media agility captures how audiences judge a brand's capacity to recognize emerging conversations on social platforms and react coherently to evolving customer needs. Thus, perceived social media agility reflects externally observable sensing (early topic detection), seizing (rapid, cross-channel adaptation of content and timing), and transforming (iterative learning that refines subsequent actions), mapping cleanly onto the DCT triad (Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010; Teece, 2007).

2.3. Positive e-WOM

In the literature, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) is typically described as consumers exchanging opinions, experiences, and recommendations regarding products, services, or brands via digital platforms. It is considered an extension of conventional word-of-mouth (WOM) communication (Liu, 2006); however, the impact of e-WOM on individuals is stronger than WOM since it can extend its reach through the internet to wider networks and preserves shared information in written form for an extended time (Babic Rosario et al., 2020), thereby playing a significant role in shaping positive or negative perceptions among consumers (Colmekcioglu et al., 2022; Park & Jeon, 2018).

Under dynamic capabilities theory, brands that sense fast-moving social conversations and seize opportunities by rapidly reconfiguring content and channel mix (i.e., high perceived social media agility) achieve tighter, timely alignment with evolving customer needs; such fit fosters perceived relevance and reliability that audiences translate into positive e-WOM (Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2007). Thus, perceived social media agility operates as a market-facing dynamic capability that creates competitive advantage by catalyzing advocacy behaviors, amplifying reach and lowering persuasion costs via positive e-WOM. Building on this perspective, perceived social media agility (PSMA) represents a

consumer-facing, market-observable reflection of a brand's dynamic capability deployment on social media platforms. Specifically, when consumers perceive a brand as agile, they infer that the brand can detect emerging issues and opportunities in real time and respond with appropriate, timely, and adaptive actions. This aligns with the view that agility captures a short-cycle capability for recognizing and responding to transient opportunities and threats, an essential form of dynamic capability under conditions of high velocity (Ye et al., 2022). From a DCT standpoint, such externally observable capability signals should translate into favorable marketplace behaviors because they reduce uncertainty and increase perceived relevance, reliability, and relational fit in a fluid environment. In social media platforms, where consumers frequently act as co-communicators and brand amplifiers, these inferences are likely to manifest as advocacy behaviors, particularly positive e-WOM (Garrido-Moreno et al., 2020).

Perceived social media agility, the extent to which consumers believe a brand can swiftly and effectively respond to social media interactions, plays a pivotal role in fostering positive e-WOM. This connection is influenced by intermediary factors like customer engagement and brand equity (Bozkurt, 2025a; Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021). Indeed, brands perceived as agile in their social media interactions tend to engage customers more effectively. This heightened engagement encourages consumers to share their positive experiences, thereby generating favorable e-WOM. Recent studies also confirm that PSMA is associated with outcomes such as co-creation and emotional bonds (Welch et al., 2024), shaping purchasing intentions through favorable e-WOM by customer engagement (Bozkurt et al., 2023) and a strong relationship between e-WOM and various brand characteristics (Maru and Vijay, 2024). Thus, e-WOM represents a distinct downstream advocacy outcome with direct implications for marketplace diffusion and persuasive reach. Whereas Bozkurt (2025) focuses on a fairness-based psychological pathway from PSMA to e-WOM and examines fear of negative evaluation as a risk-oriented moderator, we retain the expectation of a positive main effect of PSMA on e-

WOM but additionally theorize identity-based (self-presentation) and culturally grounded (cultural orientation) boundary conditions that shape the strength of this link.

However, while not exclusively focused on agility, those studies underscore the importance of brand attributes in generating positive e-WOM, implying that agility could be a contributing factor. Moreover, brands perceived as agile in their social media interactions are more likely to foster positive e-WOM by enhancing customer satisfaction and encouraging the sharing of positive experiences. Therefore, this research posits the following hypothesis:

H1: Perceived social media agility positively influences positive e-WOM.

2.4. Self-Presentation

Self-presentation is a widely observed behavior on social networking platforms, closely linked to interpersonal communication. It involves a deliberate effort by individuals to regulate or shape the image they project to others (Fan et al., 2019). According to self-presentation theory, consumers share their experiences with products or services to enhance their social status or gain positive recognition from others (Amatulli et al., 2015; Bian & Forsythe, 2012). Self-presentation influences how consumers plan and carefully consider their online communication (König et al., 2022; Walther, 2007). While prior research has frequently positioned self-presentation as a direct driver of e-WOM (Berger & Iyengar, 2013), in this study it is instead conceptualized as a boundary condition that moderates the relationship between perceived social media agility (PSMA) and e-WOM. This framing provides theoretical clarity by distinguishing between the independent variable and the moderating construct and by emphasizing that self-presentation shapes the strength, rather than the existence, of the PSMA-e-WOM link.

Essentially, self-presentation is thought to influence how consumers interpret and respond to brand agility on social media (Peng & Jung, 2024), which in turn affects their

likelihood of engaging in e-WOM (Colmekcioglu et al., 2023; Dedeoglu et al., 2023). Social media agility provides individuals with the opportunity to project favorable images in dynamic, visible, and interactive environments, and self-presentation determines the extent to which individuals capitalize on these opportunities. When consumers perceive social media platforms as agile, capable of quickly adapting to trends, user needs, and interactions, they are more likely to view these platforms as effective venues for impression management (Goffman, 1959). However, this effect is particularly pronounced among individuals with strong self-presentation motives. For these consumers, the agility of the brand provides a highly conducive environment for impression management, making positive e-WOM a compelling strategy for reinforcing their desired social image. In other words, PSMA provides the situational conditions, while self-presentation provides the psychological motive, and their interaction produces stronger e-WOM outcomes. This boundary-condition logic differs from fear-based moderators such as those examined in Bozkurt (2025), because self-presentation reflects proactive identity expression rather than evaluative anxiety.

Individuals engage in self-presentation behaviors to influence how they are perceived by others, especially in public or socially rewarding settings (Berger, 2014). Social media agility heightens this dynamic by offering real-time visibility, interactivity, and feedback, making impression management more salient and rewarding (Labrecque et al., 2011). As such, individuals with strong self-presentation motives may be more inclined to create positive electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) as a strategic form of identity expression, but only when they perceive brands to be agile in their social media communication. Positive e-WOM, in this context, functions not as a direct outcome of self-presentation but as the result of the interaction between agility and self-presentation, reinforcing one's desired image within a social community. Thus, self-presentation serves as a boundary condition that shapes whether and to what extent perceived agility translates into consumer advocacy. We also distinguish self-

presentation from conceptually adjacent constructs that could otherwise be conflated with our moderator. Recent e-WOM research highlights mechanisms such as social self-disclosure, which focuses on the extent and depth of personal information shared in persuasive contexts; this differs from self-presentation as we use it here, which refers to the *motive to manage public image* rather than the disclosure content itself (Alrabiah et al., 2022). Self-presentation also differs from self-expressive brand routes, where the brand's capacity to express an inner or social self-drives outcomes through brand-level meaning; by contrast, our argument focuses on the consumer's identity motive that conditions whether a perceived capability cue (PSMA) is converted into public advocacy (Wallace et al., 2021). Finally, recent work suggests that e-WOM sharing can be shaped by individuals' perceptions of themselves as credible originators of information; this "self-as-source" logic is related but distinct, because it centers on source role perceptions, whereas self-presentation centers on impression goals that are amplified by agile brand signals (Levy & Gvili, 2024).

In addition, integrating self-presentation into the PSMA framework, the study also extends the dynamic capabilities perspective into a consumer-facing domain. Specifically, it suggests that the value of perceived agility is partly realized through socially visible behaviors that depend on identity motives. This complements prior research that treats agility as a higher-order adaptation outcome by showing how its market consequences are filtered through individual-level impression management needs in digital environments (Teece, 2007; Wang & Ahmed, 2007). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Self-presentation on social media positively moderates the link between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM. Individuals with high perceived social media agility are more likely to engage in positive e-WOM when their level of self-presentation is high rather than low.

2.5. The Moderating Role of Culture

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals create, interact with, and make sense of content on social media. Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions framework outlines fundamental distinctions between individualistic and collectivist societies. In collectivist cultures, emphasis is placed on maintaining group cohesion, fostering social ties, and valuing interdependence, factors that significantly affect both communication styles and consumer behavior (Zhao et al., 2024). Studies indicate that people from collectivist cultures tend to depend more on social context and are more inclined to share content that serves the interests of their in-group (Colmekcioglu et al., 2023; Colmekcioglu et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2017). Therefore, positive e-WOM in collectivist cultures is often more socially motivated than in individualistic cultures, where personal expression and self-enhancement play a more dominant role (Chandra, 2024; Liu et al., 2024). Studies also highlight that collectivist consumers exhibit stronger engagement in positive e-WOM when they perceive a brand as socially responsible and responsive (Wang & Ngai, 2020). In such contexts, brand behavior is frequently evaluated not only in terms of individual utility but also in terms of its implications for group harmony and relational signaling within the social network. This aligns with the argument that highly agile perceived brands, which adapt to consumer needs efficiently, are more likely to receive positive e-WOM in collectivist societies. Agile responses on social media, such as quickly addressing consumer concerns, adapting to emerging conversations, or demonstrating cultural sensitivity, may signal attentiveness to collective expectations and reinforce perceptions that the brand is responsive to the community it serves (Umezurike et al., 2025). For instance, Lin et al. (2024) found that in East Asian markets, consumers were significantly more likely to recommend brands that demonstrated agility in addressing customer concerns and local market changes. This cultural logic within the dynamic capabilities perspective also provides a stronger theoretical explanation for *why* the market value of PSMA should differ across contexts. Dynamic capabilities research emphasizes that the benefits of higher-order adaptive capabilities

are contingent on environmental conditions and on stakeholder interpretations of firm actions (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Wang & Ahmed, 2007; Wilden et al., 2013). In social media platforms, PSMA represents a consumer-level assessment of whether a brand is effectively sensing and adapting to fast-evolving conversations. However, the extent to which such perceived adaptation converts into observable advocacy should vary across cultural environments because cultures shape what is considered socially meaningful, appropriate, and worth sharing.

Despite growing interest in PSMA (e.g., Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021; Welch et al., 2024; Bozkurt, 2025a), the literature has not sufficiently examined whether a consumer-perceived dynamic capability signal yields systematically different advocacy outcomes across cultural contexts. Notably, Bozkurt (2025) explicitly calls for research that examines whether the findings extend to more individualistic countries and that systematically compares results across cultural contexts, yet empirical work addressing this issue remains scarce. Addressing this gap is important because agility may be evaluated through different social lenses: in collectivist societies, where relational obligation and group benefit are more salient, perceived agility may be interpreted as a form of socially attentive responsiveness that strengthens communal trust and motivates recommendation behavior. In this sense, positive e-WOM becomes not only an individual response to brand performance but also a socially oriented mechanism through which consumers support group-aligned brands. Consequently, the cultural context does not merely provide background conditions but actively moderates how PSMA translates into consumer advocacy.

Conversely, individualistic consumers prioritize personal expression, making them less influenced by brand agility in their positive e-WOM activities (Kim et al., 2023). Therefore, brands perceived as highly agile may not receive significantly more positive e-WOM than those perceived to be less agile, as individualistic consumers prioritize personal brand experiences

over communal benefits. This suggests that the signaling value of PSMA may be comparatively weaker in individualistic environments where social sharing is less driven by group-oriented motivations. The literature suggests that collectivist consumers are more likely to engage in positive e-WOM for brands perceived to be highly agile due to their group-oriented and socially motivated behaviors. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3: Cultural orientation (collectivist versus individualist) moderates the link between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM. Individuals in collectivist societies, compared to those in individualistic societies, show a greater willingness to engage in positive e-WOM toward brands perceived to be highly agile rather than toward brands perceived to be less agile.

Although earlier studies have demonstrated a direct link between perceived social media agility and positive electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Bozkurt, 2025a; Bozkurt et al., 2024), the boundary conditions of this relationship remain insufficiently investigated. In particular, the role of self-presentation (i.e., consumers' deliberate efforts to manage and project their image on social media) has not been adequately considered, even though emerging research highlights its significance in shaping online behaviors (Zhang et al., 2023; Shulman, 2022; Wang & Chen, 2021; Schlosser, 2020). Moreover, existing research has paid limited attention to how broader cultural contexts shape the conditions under which perceived social media agility translates into consumer advocacy. The current study addresses these gaps by examining self-presentation and culture as moderating factors in the relationship between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM, thereby positioning culture as a contextual lens through which consumers interpret and respond to agile brand behavior and offering practical insights for managing consumer engagement in diverse cultural settings.

Research indicates that consumers in individualistic cultures engage in positive e-WOM primarily for self-expression and personal benefits, with an emphasis on authenticity and individual identity (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Rawal et al., 2024). While brand agility remains

a positive attribute, its impact on positive e-WOM may be less pronounced because consumers in these cultures value independence and uniqueness over social conformity (Goodrich & de Mooij, 2014). This suggests that the perceived value of agile brand responses may depend on whether such responsiveness supports consumers' personal identity goals rather than collective expectations. Unlike collectivist cultures, where self-presentation is strongly influenced by group norms, individualist consumers also engage in positive e-WOM primarily as a form of personal branding. Research suggests that in these cultures, consumers are more likely to share brand-related content when it aligns with their self-concept rather than social conformity (Berger & Iyengar, 2013; Filieri, 2015; Hong et al., 2018; Verma et al., 2023). This means that the agility of a brand on social media does not necessarily dictate positive e-WOM engagement unless it enhances the consumer's individual identity. For example, Escalas and Bettman (2005) found that individualist consumers prefer to associate with brands that reflect their unique traits rather than those that simply respond quickly to market changes. Consequently, a brand perceived to be highly agile may receive positive e-WOM only if its agility contributes to a consumer's perceived distinctiveness, such as by demonstrating innovation, exclusivity, or alignment with personal values.

This interpretation aligns with the logic that dynamic capabilities create value when they are meaningful to the audience's goals and when the environment amplifies the benefits of acting on those signals (Teece, 2014). Importantly, cultural environments shape what kinds of signals are considered meaningful and worthy of amplification. In individualistic settings, the market value of PSMA may therefore depend more heavily on whether agility can be leveraged for personal identity signaling rather than for reinforcing group-oriented expectations. In contrast, in collectivist environments where relational harmony and group affiliation are prioritized, agile brand responses may carry stronger social meaning because they signal attentiveness to community expectations and shared concerns (Ramesh et al., 2017).

This implies that the moderating effect of self-presentation on the connection between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM is influenced by cultural context. In collectivist societies, where maintaining group harmony and reinforcing shared identity are key values, self-presentation tends to center on adherence to group expectations. As a result, consumers in collectivist cultures may interpret agile brand behavior as a signal of social responsiveness and relational attentiveness, increasing the likelihood that they publicly endorse such brands through positive e-WOM. Consequently, consumers from these cultures may be more inclined to share positive e-WOM when brands exhibit agility that aligns with collective preferences and social norms. In contrast, in individualistic cultures, self-presentation is more centered on personal identity and uniqueness. Here, the relationship between brand agility and positive e-WOM is more nuanced, with consumers responding to brands that enhance their sense of individuality rather than those that simply react to market trends. Thus, culture shapes not only why consumers engage in e-WOM but also how self-presentation motives translate into advocacy behavior in response to agile brand communication. Therefore, the impact of self-presentation on positive e-WOM is shaped by cultural context, leading to the following hypothesis (see Figure 1):

H4. Cultural orientation (collectivist versus individualist) moderates the moderating effect of self-presentation on the relationship between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM. The positive interaction between self-presentation and perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM is stronger in collectivist contexts than in individualist contexts.

*****INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE*****

3. Methodology

In this paper, we conducted three experimental studies across distinct cultural and analytical settings, supported by two pretests and a post hoc analysis, to test our research hypotheses. Studies 1 and 2 utilized a cross-national design to compare consumer responses between a collectivist society (Türkiye) and an individualist society (the United Kingdom). After testing our hypotheses separately within each national context, we combined the datasets to statistically evaluate the baseline relationships, moderation effects, and interaction patterns across the two groups. We also performed a post hoc analysis to validate the use of nationality as a proxy for cultural orientation. Finally, Study 3 shifted the analysis to a single-country framework (the UK) to evaluate the core relationships using a refined experimental design, an alternative operationalization of PSMA, and an individual-level measure of collectivism to provide a robust micro-psychological replication of our macro-level findings.

3.1. Study 1

3.1.1. Pretest-Türkiye

Perceived social media agility remains a relatively new concept in academic literature, with limited scholarly attention to date. From a methodological perspective, and to the best of our knowledge, only one recent study has investigated this construct using an experimental design, conducted within the Turkish context (Bozkurt, 2025a). Based on that study, we developed our agility scenarios (see Appendix A) and followed its methodology. The scenarios and other instruments were originally in Turkish, adapted from Bozkurt (2025a). To ensure consistency in meaning, we translated both the Turkish and English versions of the manipulations and instruments and verified that they conveyed the same content. Specifically, we made some updates to the manipulations and shared them, along with the definition and items for the social media agility construct, with several colleagues. We asked for their feedback and, based on their input, refined the manipulations accordingly.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the manipulations, a pretest was shared through our social media platforms and promoted within our personal networks, encouraging further distribution. This pretest included several attention-check items to verify that participants were engaging with the questions attentively. A total of 109 participants (59 females and 50 males, $M_{age} = 26.77$, $SD=8.24$) took part and were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions. Participants were then instructed to read the scenarios provided carefully and adopt the perspective of a customer. This method has been widely used in prior research (e.g., Weun et al., 2004; Bozkurt, 2025a).

To verify the effectiveness of the manipulation, three validation questions were included in the pretest. The first asked participants to evaluate how agile they believed the brand appeared on social media, based on the scenario provided (1=non agile at all, 7=extremely agile). One-way ANOVA demonstrated that those who assigned to the high-agility condition rated the condition ($M_{high_agile}=5.98$, $SD=1.02$) significantly more agile than those who assigned to the low agility condition ($M_{low_agile}=2.89$, $SD=1.53$) ($F(1, 107)=156.56$, $p<0.01$). Based on these pretest results and the structural feedback received, we proceeded to design the main study.

3.1.2. Main Test-Türkiye

Study 1 examined whether perceived social media agility (PSMA) enhances consumers' positive electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and examined the potential moderating effect of self-presentation on social media. To evaluate this hypothesis, we utilized a 2-level factorial design (high vs. low PSMA). Participants were randomly placed into one of the two experimental groups (see Appendix A for detailed information on the manipulation).

We collected data from adult participants through our social media accounts. Specifically, we designed an experimental survey using the Qualtrics platform and distributed

the link with our followers and connections, encouraging them to distribute it within their networks. To increase participation and improve data quality, we organized a shopping gift card raffle. Participants were informed in the consent form that upon successfully completing the survey, they would have a chance to enter the raffle. Those interested in participating were asked to provide their Gmail address at the end of the survey. As with the pre-test, we involved attention-check questions to ensure data quality. Those who failed these checks were automatically removed from the study using Qualtrics' filtering function. This process left us with a total of 319 adult subjects (206 females and 113 males, $M_{age}=32.37$; $SD=8.67$).

For the manipulation checks, we asked the same validation questions as in the pre-test. A one-way ANOVA indicated that individuals assigned to the high-agility condition ($M_{high_agile}=5.95$, $SD=1.14$) reported a significantly higher perception of agility compared to those in the low-agility condition ($M_{low_agile}=2.30$, $SD=1.41$; $F(1, 317)=647.88$, $p<0.01$).

3.1.3. Measure

The measurement constructs used in this study were based on previously validated scales. Specifically, the positive e-WOM scale was adapted from Chu and Chen (2019), while the self-presentation measure was sourced from Colmekcioglu et al. (2023). Both scales demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.91 for the positive e-WOM scale and 0.89 for the self-presentation scale. Consistent with the procedures used by Bozkurt (2025) and Bozkurt et al. (2024), three bilingual researchers independently translated the items. They subsequently convened to resolve any discrepancies. After reaching agreement, the translated items and experimental materials were reviewed by colleagues to ensure both clarity and readability (see Appendix B for the constructs).

3.1.4. Hypothesis Testing

To evaluate Hypothesis 1 (H1), a standard linear regression analysis was conducted with the perceived social media agility (PSMA) condition predicting positive e-WOM. The analysis revealed that participants in the high-agility condition were significantly more inclined to engage in positive e-WOM compared to those in the low-agility condition ($b=1.24$, $SE=0.16$, $t=7.80$, $p<0.01$). To ensure empirical robustness, we also calculated 95% percentile bootstrap confidence intervals based on 5,000 bootstrap samples, which confirmed that the positive effect remained highly stable and statistically significant ($BCI= [0.927, 1.557]$). Because the confidence interval entirely excludes zero, H1 is strongly supported.

To test Hypothesis 2 (H2), we used PROCESS Model 1 (Version 5.0) with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals (Hayes, 2022; Dhir et al., 2024; Bauer & Johnson, 2024). The analysis indicated that self-presentation on social media does not significantly moderate the relationship between perceived social media agility (across groups) and positive e-WOM engagement ($b=0.15$, $SE= 0.11$, $t=1.32$, $p=0.19$), with a bootstrap confidence interval ($BCI=[-0.0944, 0.3934]$ ¹. In other words, participants in the high perceived social media agility condition did not differ from those in the low condition in terms of their likelihood to engage in positive e-WOM based on their level of self-presentation. As such, H2 is not supported.

3.2.Study 1 Discussion

This study not only sought to extend the findings of Bozkurt (2025a) but also explored whether the main effect was influenced by consumers' self-presentation on social media. We

¹ By default, PROCESS applies the bootstrap approach only to indirect and conditional indirect effects; it does not use bootstrapping for direct, total, or interaction effects. However, beginning with PROCESS Version 5.0, an option called "*Bootstrap inference for model coefficients*" allows users to obtain bootstrap estimates for all model coefficients. In the previous version, this option was available only through syntax (via the command `modelbt=1`). In the new version, it can be activated either through syntax or the graphical interface.

propose that when individuals perceive a brand as agile within the social media environment, they are more inclined to engage in positive e-WOM. Moreover, we theorize that certain personal traits, such as self-presentation tendencies, might alter this behavior. Specifically, we argue that those who aim to make a favorable impression, emphasize their positive traits, or manage their image strategically are more prone to respond favorably to brands seen as highly agile, in contrast to brands viewed as less adaptive.

The results of Study 1 showed that participants exposed to high perceived social media agility (compared to those exposed to low perceived social media agility) were more willing to engage in positive e-WOM, which is consistent with the findings of Bozkurt (2025a). However, Hypothesis 2 was not supported, as the effect of perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM did not depend on consumers' self-presentation on social media. In other words, the positive impact of perceived social media agility remained stable regardless of individuals' level of self-presentation. One possible explanation is that agile brand behavior on social media may signal responsiveness and attentiveness to customers in a way that encourages positive e-WOM broadly, regardless of whether consumers are highly motivated to manage impressions online.

It is also vital to point out that the data were collected from Turkish consumers. One could argue that the results might not hold if a different sample, particularly from a different culture, was used. To test this possibility and compare cultural differences, we conducted another study and collected data from an individualistic country, the UK. This comparative approach allows us to investigate whether these consumer responses vary under a distinct macro-cultural matrix.

3.3.Study 2

3.3.1. Pretest-UK

To generalize the findings of Study 1 and examine whether the results hold in a different cultural context, we conducted a second study in the UK. Before the main study, we performed

a pretest to ensure that the manipulation of perceived social media agility was interpreted as intended by UK participants. Although the manipulation had already been validated in the Turkish sample, we considered it important to confirm that participants in the UK perceived the scenarios in the intended manner given potential differences in language and cultural context.

We collected data from a total of 100 UK adult subjects from Prolific (35 males and 65 females, $M_{age}=40.87$; $SD=13.55$). We included both attention check and manipulation check questions in the survey. Participants who failed the attention check were automatically excluded from the dataset. For the manipulation checks, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on the full sample. The analysis demonstrated that those assigned to the high-agility condition rated the brand ($M_{high_agile}=6.26$, $SD=0.85$) as significantly more agile than those assigned to the low-agility condition ($M_{low_agile}=2.60$, $SD=1.50$; $F(1,98)=225.38$, $p<0.01$), confirming that the experimental manipulations were successful.

3.3.2. Main Test-UK

As in the first study, we tested the first two hypotheses in Study 2, following the same procedure as in Study 1. We collected data through Prolific and recruited 300 adult subjects (118 males and 182 females, $M_{age}=40.26$; $SD=11.75$). When a one-way ANOVA was conducted on the full sample, the results indicated that those assigned to the high-agility condition rated the brand ($M_{high_agile}=6.21$, $SD=0.63$) as significantly more agile than those assigned to the low-agility condition ($M_{low_agile}=2.36$, $SD=1.01$; $F(1,298)=1568.57$, $p<0.01$), confirming a highly successful manipulation.

We used the same measures as in Study 1. Their reliability and validity scores exceeded the recommended thresholds. More specifically, each item had high standardized factor loadings (above 0.50), each construct had a high AVE (above 0.50), and all constructs had high alpha levels (above 0.70) (Hair et al., 2013). Specifically, the positive e-WOM scale

demonstrated excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.926$), and the self-presentation scale was similarly robust with an alpha ($\alpha= 0.88$).

3.3.3. Hypothesis Testing

To evaluate Hypothesis 1 (H1), a standard linear regression analysis was conducted with the perceived social media agility (PSMA) condition predicting positive e-WOM. The analysis revealed that participants in the high-agility condition, compared to those in the low-agility group, reported greater willingness to engage in positive e-WOM ($b=0.70$, $SE=0.15$, $t=4.59$, $p<0.01$; $BCI= [0.393, 0.992]$). Since the BCI does not include zero (0) and the p-value is lower than 0.05, we conclude that H1 is supported.

To test H2, we applied PROCESS Model 1 (Bozkurt, 2025b; Hayes, 2022). The analysis revealed that self-presentation on social media positively moderated the relationship between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM engagement ($b=0.64$, $SE=0.11$, $t=5.57$; $p<0.01$; $BCI= [0.3757, 0.8721]$)². Specifically, participants in the high perceived social media agility group (versus those in the low group) showed a stronger inclination to engage in positive e-WOM depending on their level of self-presentation. In other words, as self-presentation increased, individuals who perceived brands as highly agile were more likely to share positive word-of-mouth. Therefore, H2 was supported.

Although our hypothesis was supported by a significant interaction effect, we further tested the nature of this moderation to offer deeper insight, as we did in Study 1. Since the moderator is a continuous variable, we used the Johnson-Neyman (JN) technique (Hayes, 2022; Bozkurt, 2026). As illustrated in Figure 2, the positive effect of perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM becomes more pronounced as self-presentation increases, as reflected by

² The same option was used to implement the bootstrap testing approach in this analysis and across all subsequent analyses.

the significant interaction term. Notably, when self-presentation levels are at or below 2.71 ($W \leq 2.71$), participants with high perceived social media agility (relative to those with low perceived agility) are less likely to engage in positive e-WOM. In contrast, when self-presentation is at or above 4.01 ($W \geq 4.01$), individuals with high perceived agility tend to report stronger intentions to engage in positive e-WOM. However, when self-presentation levels range between 2.71 and 4.01 ($2.71 < W < 4.01$), the difference in positive e-WOM behavior between the groups is not statistically significant.

*****INSERT FIGURE 2*****

3.4. Study 2 Discussion

Study 2 was conducted to assess whether the outcomes observed in Study 1 would be replicated. The findings confirmed that perceived social media agility positively influences consumers' intention to engage in positive electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Participants who perceived brands as more agile were significantly more inclined to share favorable e-WOM than those who viewed the brands as less agile. These results are consistent with Study 1. Furthermore, self-presentation on social media moderated this relationship. Specifically, the positive effect of perceived agility on positive e-WOM was significantly amplified among individuals with high self-presentation tendencies. Conversely, this effect was neutralized at moderate levels of self-presentation and inverted to become significantly negative at low levels.

Overall, our first hypothesis was supported in both studies, as expected. Conversely, while the second hypothesis was not supported in Study 1, it was supported in Study 2. One might assume that because the same hypothesis was not supported in both studies, consumers' self-presentation tendencies vary by culture. In other words, cultural differences may play a role in the moderating effect of self-presentation. Although this appears to be a meaningful difference, we cannot conclude that it is statistically significant. As several scholars remind us,

a significant effect in one group but a non-significant effect in another does not necessarily imply that the two effects differ significantly (Igartua & Hayes, 2021; Montoya & Hayes, 2017; Hayes, 2015). Therefore, we need to statistically test whether the moderating role of self-presentation differs based on consumers' cultural backgrounds. In this regard, we combined the two datasets and conducted all preliminary analyses. These results are reported under "Additional Data Analysis."

3.5.Additional Data Analysis

This analysis serves two primary goals. The first is to examine whether the influence of perceived social media agility (i.e., group differences) on positive e-WOM varies by cultural context. Specifically, we test whether individuals from individualistic cultures, in contrast to those from collectivist cultures, are more inclined to express positive e-WOM toward brands they perceive as highly agile. The second objective is to examine whether the moderating influence of self-presentation on social media also differs across cultural backgrounds. More precisely, this analysis examines whether cultural context shapes how self-presentation affects the relationship between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM. To test these hypotheses, we combined the datasets from the two studies to create a new dataset.

After combining the datasets, the final sample included 619 participants (231 males and 388 females, $M_{age}=36.19$; $SD=11$). A one-way ANOVA was performed again to assess whether participants in the high-agility condition perceived the brand as more agile than those in the low-agility condition. The analysis revealed that individuals in the high-agility group ($M_{high_agile}=6.07$, $SD=0.94$) rated the brand as significantly more agile compared to participants in the low-agility group ($M_{low_agile}=2.32$, $SD=1.23$; $F(1,617)=1818.56$, $p<0.01$). These findings confirm the effectiveness of the manipulation in the merged dataset as well.

As the reliability and validity of each construct were already assessed in the initial two studies, we sought to minimize repetition. Nonetheless, we rechecked these metrics using the combined dataset and confirmed that the findings aligned with those obtained in the previous studies.

3.5.1. Measurement Invariance Results

To enhance the validity of cross-cultural comparisons, we employed structural equation modeling (SEM) in Stata 16.1 to assess measurement invariance across samples from Türkiye and the United Kingdom. Following the stepwise multi-group framework proposed by Vandenberg and Lance (2000), we evaluated three levels of invariance, configural, metric, and scalar, to determine whether the constructs were conceptualized similarly across cultural contexts.

We began by testing configural invariance, which involved specifying an identical factor structure for both groups while allowing all parameters to be freely estimated. The model showed an acceptable baseline fit ($\chi^2(68)=262.96$, $p<0.01$; CFI = 0.945, TLI=0.941, RMSEA =0.096, SRMR=0.118), indicating that participants from both cultural groups shared a comparable basic understanding of the latent constructs' configurations.

Next, we assessed metric invariance by constraining all factor loadings to be equal across groups. The metric model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2(66)=262.96$, $p<0.01$; CFI= 0.944, TLI=0.939, RMSEA= 0.098, SRMR= 0.118). The change in fit from the configural baseline model was exceptionally minimal ($\Delta\text{CFI}= -0.001$ and $\Delta\text{RMSEA}= 0.002$). These findings provide strong support for full metric invariance, establishing that the scale items possess an equivalent measurement unit and meaning across the two cultural contexts.

Finally, scalar invariance was tested by further constraining the intercepts of the observed variables to be equal across groups. The scalar model exhibited an acceptable fit to

the data ($X^2(66) = 262.96, p < 0.01, CFI = 0.944, TLI = 0.939, RMSEA = 0.098, SRMR = 0.118$). The change in model fit relative to the metric baseline model was entirely non-existent. These results provide robust support for full scalar invariance, confirming that both item factor loadings and operational baselines are equivalent across cultural groups, which fully justifies subsequent direct comparisons of their latent means.

3.5.2. Hypothesis Testing

We used PROCESS Model 1, following the same procedure described above, to test H3 (Hayes, 2022; Cowan & Kostyk, 2024). The results demonstrated that cultural orientation significantly moderates the positive effect of perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM. More specifically, the positive interaction term indicated that Turkish consumers (coded as 1), compared to UK consumers (coded as 0), exhibited a significantly greater increase in their willingness to engage in positive e-WOM toward brands perceived to be highly agile rather than those perceived to be less agile ($b = 0.54, SE = 0.22, t = 2.45, p = 0.015; BCI = [0.0962, 0.9537]$). Thus, H3 was supported.

While a significant positive interaction effect was observed, this indicates that the positive influence of perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM does not apply with equal magnitude across both cultures. To thoroughly investigate and unpack this variation in effect size across groups, we employed the widely used Pick-a-Point approach to probe the conditional effects in greater detail (Hayes, 2022; Bozkurt, 2026).

As shown in Figure 3, the Pick-a-Point Technique results indicated that individuals with high perceived social media agility (compared to those with low perceived agility) exhibited greater willingness to engage in positive e-WOM across both cultures. In other words, both UK ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W=0) = 0.70, SE = 0.16, t = 4.41, p < 0.01$)³ and Turkish consumers ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W=1) = 1.24,$

³ $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y}$ denotes the conditional effect of X on Y.

SE=0.15, $t=8.07$, $p<0.01$) were more inclined to engage in positive e-WOM when they perceived the brand as highly agile rather than less agile. However, it is important to emphasize that this effect was stronger among Turkish consumers ($b=0.54$, SE=0.22, $t=2.45$, $p=0.015$; BCI=[0.0962, 0.9537]).

*****INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE*****

The Moderated Moderation Role of Cultural Orientation: To assess whether cultural context further moderates the influence of self-presentation on the link between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM, we applied PROCESS Model 3 (Version 5.0) in SPSS, using the same procedures outlined previously (Hayes, 2022; Bozkurt, 2025b). The results indicated a significant three-way interaction involving perceived social media agility, self-presentation, and culture on positive e-WOM behavior ($b=-0.49$, SE=0.16, $t=-3.04$, $p<0.01$; BCI= [-0.8288, -0.1386]).

The significant interaction observed indicates that the moderating role of self-presentation on the link between perceived social media agility (i.e., the distinction between high- and low-agility groups) and positive e-WOM varies across cultural contexts. In other words, the impact of perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM, when influenced by self-presentation, depends on the consumer's cultural background. Given that the interaction term was negative (contrary to our expectations), this finding provides valuable insights for understanding cultural differences in consumer behavior.

It is worth highlighting that the significant three-way interaction validates that the conditional two-way interaction between perceived social media agility and self-presentation on positive e-WOM varies significantly by culture. Specifically, the two-way interaction between perceived agility and self-presentation was statistically significant for UK consumers ($F(1,611)=26.20$, $p<0.01$), but did not reach statistical significance for Turkish consumers ($F(1,$

611)=1.98, $p=0.16$). To probe this interaction pattern more thoroughly across both cultural contexts, we applied the Pick-a-Point probing method (Hayes, 2022; Bozkurt, 2025b). In line with Hayes's (2022) guidance, we defined low, moderate, and high levels of self-presentation using the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles, respectively.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the conditional two-way interaction between perceived social media agility and self-presentation on positive e-WOM is statistically significant for UK consumers ($\theta_{XW \rightarrow Y} | (Z=0)=0.64$, $F(1,611)=26.20$; $p<0.01$), but not for Turkish consumers ($\theta_{XW \rightarrow Y} | (Z=1)=0.15$, $F(1,611)=1.98$; $p=0.16$). In short, self-presentation on social platforms significantly moderates the effect of perceived agility on positive e-WOM among UK consumers, whereas this moderating effect is not observed among Turkish consumers. This suggests that as self-presentation on social media increases, the impact of perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM becomes more pronounced for UK consumers but remains uniform for Turkish consumers. The significant three-way interaction confirms that this two-way interaction pattern changes significantly across cultural contexts ($b=-0.49$, $SE=0.16$, $t=-3.04$, $p<0.01$; $BCI=[-0.8288, -0.1386]$).

As shown by the Pick-a-Point analysis (see Figure 5), for UK consumers with low levels of self-presentation, there was no statistically significant difference in positive e-WOM between those perceiving high versus low social media agility ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W,Z)=-0.12$, $SE=0.22$, $t=-0.54$; $p=0.59$). In contrast, among those with moderate self-presentation ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W,Z)=0.84$, $SE=0.15$, $t=5.52$; $p<0.01$) and high self-presentation ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W,Z)=1.48$, $SE=0.21$, $t=7.05$; $p<0.01$) this difference became significant. This significant conditional interaction indicates that as self-presentation on social media increases, the impact of perceived social media agility (i.e., the difference between high and low perceived agility) on positive e-WOM becomes more pronounced. Specifically, consumers who perceive high brand agility on social media,

compared to those who perceive low agility, are more likely to engage in positive e-WOM when their self-presentation motives are high rather than low.

For Turkish participants, individuals in the high perceived social media agility condition (compared to those in the low-agility condition) demonstrated a greater likelihood of engaging in positive e-WOM at low ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W,Z)=1.09$, SE=0.19, $t=5.61$; $p<0.01$), moderate ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W,Z)=1.31$, SE=0.15, $t=8.82$; $p<0.01$), and high ($\theta_{X \rightarrow Y} | (W,Z)=1.45$, SE=0.20, $t=7.42$; $p<0.01$) levels of self-presentation. However, the non-significant conditional interaction term confirms that the positive influence of perceived social media agility on positive e-WOM does not meaningfully change as self-presentation increases for these consumers, remaining consistently robust across all levels.

*****INSERT FIGURES 4 AND 5 HERE*****

Additional Analysis Results Discussion

Using the combined dataset, we tested Hypotheses H3 and H4. Specifically, we evaluated whether individuals from collectivistic cultures are more likely than those from individualistic cultures to engage in positive e-WOM toward brands perceived as highly agile. Additionally, the analysis examined whether cultural background influences the moderating role of self-presentation in the relationship between perceived social media agility (measured by group differences) and positive e-WOM.

The results indicate that Turkish consumers, compared to UK consumers, exhibit a greater willingness to engage in positive e-WOM toward brands perceived to be highly agile rather than those perceived to be less agile. That is, people from collectivist cultures are more likely to reciprocate favorably toward brands perceived to be highly agile compared to brands perceived to be less agile. It is critical to note that all consumers, regardless of their cultural

background, are willing to reward brands perceived to be highly agile relative to those perceived to be less agile. However, this effect is more pronounced among those from collectivist cultures.

The findings also indicate that self-presentation on social media enhances the positive effect of perceived social media agility on e-WOM among UK consumers, but this conditional pattern does not hold for Turkish consumers, where the effect remains consistently robust across all levels. Specifically, UK participants who view brands as highly agile (in contrast to low-agility perceptions) are more inclined to engage in positive e-WOM as their self-presentation increases. These results highlight the significant role that self-presentation plays in shaping consumer responses in individualistic cultures, while demonstrating its irrelevance in collectivistic consumer settings.

Post Hoc Analysis

To assess the validity of using nationality as a proxy for cultural orientation, we conducted a post hoc analysis to examine whether participants from Türkiye and the UK exhibit cultural tendencies consistent with Hofstede's typology. Specifically, we tested whether Turkish participants reported higher levels of collectivism compared to participants from the UK.

To do this, we conducted two additional surveys using procedures consistent with our prior studies. We administered a six-item collectivism scale adapted from Yoo et al. (2011) (see Appendix B). The Turkish version of the scale was used for participants in Türkiye, while the original English version was administered to participants in the UK. In both samples, the scale demonstrated high reliability.

To ensure consistency with our original participant pool, we made efforts to re-contact individuals who had previously participated in the main studies. In Türkiye, we followed up via email and social media platforms previously used for recruitment. In the UK, we utilized

Prolific's recontact feature, which allowed us to limit participation in the post hoc study to individuals who had completed the earlier survey (based on their participant IDs).

A total of 95 participants in Türkiye began the post hoc survey, and 82 completed it successfully (46 females, 36 males, $M_{age}=37.21$; $SD=8.42$). In the UK, 85 participants (33 male, 52 females, $M_{age}=44.04$; $SD=12.35$) were recruited via Prolific. The final combined sample consisted of 167 respondents (88 females, 79 males, $M_{age}=40.68$; $SD=11.11$). Demographic characteristics were broadly consistent with those observed in the original datasets.

We conducted a one-way ANOVA to compare collectivism scores across the two cultural groups. Results showed that participants from Türkiye reported significantly higher collectivism ($M= 4.69$, $SD=1.25$) than participants from the UK ($M= 4.27$, $SD=0.99$; $F(1, 165)=5.77$, $p=0.02$). These findings support the assumption that cultural orientation differs between the two national groups and help validate the treatment of nationality as a meaningful cultural grouping variable in our main analyses⁴.

To further address concerns raised during the review process regarding the operationalization of perceived social media agility and the measurement of cultural orientation, we conducted an additional study.

Study 3

To further strengthen the robustness of our findings and to examine cultural orientation at the individual level, we conducted an additional study in the UK. In this study, we refined the experimental scenarios to focus more clearly on the core characteristics of perceived social

⁴ Although both cultural groups scored near the midpoint of the collectivism scale (on a 7-point Likert scale), the statistically significant difference between Turkish and UK participants ($F(1,165)=5.77$, $p=0.017$, $\eta^2=0.034$) suggests a meaningful cultural distinction. In line with cross-cultural research using individual-level cultural value measures (e.g., Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011), these findings reflect meaningful group differences despite modest absolute mean values. Cultural value dimensions often manifest as subtle but consistent variations, and such relative differences can still carry theoretical and practical significance in comparative studies.

media agility while avoiding wording that could potentially signal other brand attributes (see Appendix A for the revised manipulations). We also measured collectivism at the individual level, allowing us to examine whether individual differences in cultural orientation moderate the relationship between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM.

In this study, we collected data from a total of 300 UK adult subjects from Prolific (148 males and 152 females, $M_{age}=40.46$; $SD=10.93$). We included both attention check and manipulation check questions in the survey. Participants who failed the attention check were automatically excluded from the dataset.

To assess the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation, three custom Likert-type items (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) were developed to measure perceived brand agility immediately following the scenario: “This brand adapts quickly to changes on social media,” “This brand responds to changes in customer needs in a timely manner,” and “This brand manages its social media activities in an agile (fast and adaptable) way.” In accordance with standard psychometric practices for multi-item indicators, these three items were averaged to form a composite manipulation check index, which demonstrated excellent internal reliability ($\alpha=0.98$). A one-way ANOVA revealed a highly successful manipulation; participants in the high-agility condition reported significantly higher composite perceptions of brand agility ($M_{high_agile}=6.46$, $SD=0.62$) than those in the low-agility condition ($M_{low_agile}=2.60$, $SD=1.52$; $F(1,298)=825.82$, $p<0.01$).

We also checked for potential confounds by asking participants about the brand’s communication politeness (“The communication style of this brand is polite and respectful”) and response helpfulness (“The responses provided by this brand are helpful”). We averaged these two items into a single confound index. Participants gave the brand high scores on this index in both the low-agility condition ($M_{low_agile}=5.06$, $SD=0.96$) and the high-agility

condition ($M_{high_agile}=5.58$, $SD=0.86$). These consistently high baseline scores show that the brand maintained a helpful and polite presence across all scenarios. This ensures that any differences we find later in consumer responses are actually driven by our brand agility manipulation, rather than simple variations in how polite or helpful the brand seemed⁵

We used the same measure of positive e-WOM as in the previous studies and employed a six-item collectivism scale adapted from Yoo et al. (2011) (see Appendix B). Both measures demonstrated high reliability, as their Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended cutoff of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2013). Specifically, the collectivism scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.91$), and the positive e-WOM scale was similarly robust with an alpha ($\alpha=0.85$).

Hypothesis Testing

To test Hypothesis 1, a standard linear regression analysis was conducted using 5,000 bootstrap samples to compute 95% confidence intervals (CI). In this model, the perceived social media agility (PSMA) condition (0=low agility, 1=high agility) was entered as the independent variable to predict consumers' positive e-WOM behavior. The results indicated that participants in the high-agility condition, compared to those in the low-agility condition, reported a significantly greater willingness to engage in positive e-WOM ($b= 0.52$, $SE= 0.14$, $t=3.64$, $p< 0.01$; $BCI= [0.238, 0.794]$). Because the bootstrap confidence interval does not include zero and the p-value is below 0.05, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

To test Hypothesis 2, we estimated a moderation model using PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2022). The results indicated that individual collectivism significantly moderates the

⁵ To make sure our main interaction wasn't accidentally driven by these baseline perceptions, we re-ran our moderation model while entering this confound index as a covariate. Even when strictly controlling for this variance, the key interaction between brand agility and individual collectivism remained stable and statistically significant ($b=0.23$, $SE=0.11$, $t=2.05$, $p=0.04$, $BCI [0.0004, 0.4590]$). This rules out these baseline perceptions as a confounding explanation for our findings.

relationship between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM ($b=0.27$, $SE=0.12$, $t=2.17$; $p=0.03$; $BCI= [0.0012, 0.5146]$). Because the bootstrap confidence interval does not include zero and the p-value is below 0.05, Hypothesis 2 is fully supported.

To explore the precise nature of this interaction, we applied the Johnson-Neyman (J-N) technique (Hayes, 2022; Bozkurt, 2026). As illustrated in Figure 6, the positive effect of perceived social media agility on e-WOM becomes progressively more pronounced as individual collectivism increases. Notably, when collectivism levels are below 3.47 ($W < 3.47$), representing 26.33% of the sample, the effect of brand agility on positive e-WOM is non-significant. In contrast, for participants at or above this threshold ($W \geq 3.47$), representing 73.67% of the sample, who were exposed to high brand agility reported significantly stronger intentions to engage in positive e-WOM. Crucially, the magnitude of this positive effect continues to expand as collectivism scores rise, peaking at the maximum value of 7.00 ($b=1.27$, $SE=0.37$, $t=3.44$, $p<0.01$) which is fully consistent with our theoretical framework.

*****INSERT FIGURE 6*****

Discussion of Study 3

Overall, Study 3 provides further empirical evidence supporting the positive relationship between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM, successfully replicating our main effects. Consistent with our previous investigations, participants exposed to agile brand behavior demonstrated a heightened willingness to engage in positive e-WOM. This successful replication across an independent experimental framework underscores the robustness and stability of the established main effect.

Beyond confirming this direct path, Study 3 offers compelling evidence validating our primary boundary condition, as the interaction between brand agility and individual-level collectivism emerged as statistically significant. Consequently, Hypothesis 3 is fully supported.

A deeper examination of these dynamics clarifies the underlying consumer mechanism, capturing the precise inflection point where cultural orientation activates this behavioral response.

The insights derived from the Johnson-Neyman technique map this relationship clearly. At lower ranges of the moderator, the positive impact of perceived social media agility on e-WOM remains dormant and non-significant. However, the moment an individual's collectivism score crosses the identified activation threshold, the positive effect triggers and becomes meaningful. Because the vast majority of our sample scored above this critical threshold, Hypothesis 3 is supported not merely as a statistical abstraction, but as a prevailing phenomenon across the broader consumer distribution.

Ultimately, these findings point to a key theoretical takeaway: the benefits of brand agility do not look the same for every consumer but instead grow dynamically alongside cultural values. As individual collectivism rises past the trigger point and moves toward the top of the scale, a person's willingness to spread positive e-WOM in response to agile branding becomes noticeably stronger. Because of this, Study 3 gives clear empirical proof that individual collectivism acts as a powerful catalyst that unlocks and amplifies the strategic benefits of perceived social media agility, fully supporting Hypothesis 3.

4. Theoretical Contribution

A key theoretical contribution of this study lies in clarifying the conceptual boundaries of perceived social media agility (PSMA), which has not yet been clearly delineated in the literature. For instance, when responsiveness refers to the timeliness of brand replies to consumer queries (Voorveld et al., 2018), PSMA encompasses broader adaptive capabilities that extend beyond reactive responses. Likewise, while brand involvement reflects the personal relevance of a brand to consumers (Zaichkowsky, 1985), PSMA emphasizes perceptions of a

brand's agility in navigating change. Finally, whereas communication tone highlights the stylistic qualities of brand interaction (Gretry et al., 2017), PSMA focuses on the flexibility with which such communication is adapted to dynamic social media contexts. By distinguishing PSMA from these related constructs, this study advances theoretical clarity and underscores its unique role in shaping consumer perceptions of brand adaptability. More importantly, it demonstrates that PSMA is not a universally interpreted capability signal, but a culturally contingent one whose marketplace consequences depend on how consumers make sense of agile brand behavior in different social environments.

Although social media agility is acknowledged as a critical factor in brand performance, most existing research is limited to single-market analyses or studies conducted within Western cultural settings (e.g., Bozkurt et al., 2024; Welch et al., 2024; Bozkurt et al., 2023; Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021; Chuang, 2020). There remains a notable gap in comparative research examining how perceptions of brand agility in social media settings influence consumer behavior across individualistic and collectivist cultures. The current study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how cultural context shapes the impact of perceived social media agility on consumers' likelihood to engage in positive e-WOM. By integrating cross-cultural analysis directly into the theoretical model, the study positions culture not merely as a contextual background variable but as a central interpretive lens through which agile brand behavior is understood, evaluated, and shared. In doing so, it addresses an important gap in PSMA research (Bozkurt, 2025a) by providing a systematic comparison across distinct cultural contexts.

Beyond cultural context, consumer-driven psychological factors also require greater attention. While much prior work has examined firm-driven determinants of agility, such as brand responsiveness and engagement strategies (Bozkurt, 2025a), the role of personality traits has been underexplored. Among these, self-presentation is particularly salient. Although it has often been examined in individualistic cultures where personal expression and distinctiveness

are emphasized (Wien & Olsen, 2014), we deliberately conceptualize self-presentation not as a culture-bound construct, but as a culturally shaped phenomenon. In individualistic contexts, it tends to reflect personal image enhancement, whereas in collectivist settings it may be motivated by preserving harmony, maintaining social image, or fulfilling communal expectations (Colmekcioglu et al., 2023). Framing self-presentation in this way allows the present study to highlight its distinct role in the agility–e-WOM relationship and to show how psychological traits interact with cultural orientations to shape consumer responses.

This research also makes several important contributions to literature at the intersection of social media marketing, e-WOM, DCT, self-presentation theory, and cross-cultural consumer behavior.

First, this study makes a novel contribution to the self-presentation literature by positioning self-presentation as a moderating psychological trait in the relationship between perceived brand agility and e-WOM. Prior work on self-presentation has largely examined it in the context of individual social media use (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Kim & Lee, 2011) but has seldom explored its role in shaping consumers' brand-related behaviors. By shifting the focus from individual expression to consumer–brand interactions, this study demonstrates how self-presentation motives influence advocacy behaviors in digital marketplaces. Specifically, it shows that individuals high in self-presentation motives are more likely to reward agile brands with positive e-WOM, particularly in individualistic cultural contexts where personal image management and identity signaling are more salient. This contribution highlights the psychological underpinnings of consumer advocacy and suggests that self-presentation is not only a personal behavior but also a key boundary condition of brand-related outcomes in social media environments. In doing so, the study extends the scope of self-presentation theory and bridges it with digital branding research, providing a foundation for future investigations into the psychological boundary conditions that amplify the impact of brand agility. By situating

these motives within a cross-cultural framework, the study highlights how psychological drivers of advocacy operate differently depending on cultural norms surrounding identity expression and social approval through self-presentation.

Second, this study builds on prior work by Bozkurt (2025a), who initially established a link between perceived social media agility and positive e-WOM. While that research provided foundational insights, it was conducted within a single cultural context. This study extends the existing literature by providing additional empirical evidence across culturally distinct markets (Türkiye and the UK) and by introducing self-presentation as a moderating factor. As such, the study integrates a psychological boundary condition into social media agility research (Chuang, 2020; Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021; Welch et al., 2024), illustrating that consumer motives significantly influence the extent to which social media agility drives e-WOM. Importantly, this boundary-condition perspective differs from the fairness-based mechanism and fear-of-evaluation boundary examined in Bozkurt (2025a), offering an identity-driven and culturally grounded account of when PSMA becomes more influential. This perspective reinforces the argument that the effectiveness of agile brand communication cannot be fully understood without considering the cultural environments in which consumer-brand interactions occur.

Third, while the findings from the individualistic cultural context (UK) are consistent with prior literature that highlights the salience of self-presentation in identity-driven environments (e.g., Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Kim & Lee, 2011), the greater contribution of this research lies in its novel insights from the collectivist context (Türkiye). The results reveal that collectivist consumers also reward agile brands with positive e-WOM, but their responses are shaped by culturally distinct motives such as maintaining group harmony, preserving social image, and reinforcing communal belonging rather than individual self-promotion. This finding challenges the assumption that self-presentation is primarily an individualistic construct and demonstrates that it manifests differently, but remains influential, even in collectivist settings.

By uncovering these divergent motivational pathways, the study strengthens the theoretical contribution to cross-cultural consumer behavior and highlights the need for culturally contingent interpretations of psychological traits.

Fourth, the study enhances the generalizability and cultural sensitivity of existing brand agility models by adopting a comparative design across two distinct cultural contexts. Much of the prior work has remained Western-centric (e.g., U.S., UK) and has not tested whether key constructs like agility function similarly across markets. This research empirically validates brand agility theory in both a collectivist (Türkiye) and individualist (UK) culture, reinforcing the importance of cultural adaptation in digital branding strategies. By providing empirical evidence that the perception and impact of social media agility vary significantly across cultural contexts, the study challenges assumptions of construct universality and highlights the need for culturally contingent theorization in digital marketing (Craig & Douglas, 2006). It supports growing calls in international marketing literature for more robust cross-cultural validation of consumer behavior models in digital environments (de Mooij, 2019). Moreover, the findings emphasize that social media agility, while beneficial in both contexts, must be operationalized differently, favoring personalized messaging in individualistic cultures and community-centered content in collectivist ones (Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2018). This contributes to a more nuanced understanding of brand agility as a culturally embedded phenomenon rather than a universally perceived capability.

Fifth, by demonstrating the interaction effects of self-presentation motives and culture on consumer behavior, the study underscores the critical importance of psychological and cultural alignment in determining the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies. Specifically, the findings reveal that individuals high in self-presentation tendencies are more likely to engage in positive e-WOM when brand agility aligns with culturally endorsed norms of expression. In individualistic cultures (e.g., the UK), where autonomy, self-expression, and

personal branding are culturally reinforced (Singelis et al., 1995), self-presenters perceive agile brands as tools for identity signaling and status affirmation, thus becoming more vocal advocates. In contrast, in collectivist contexts (e.g., Türkiye), where group cohesion and harmony take precedence over personal promotion (Hofstede, 2001), the effect of self-presentation on e-WOM is comparatively muted, as overt self-enhancement may be viewed as socially inappropriate.

This cultural contingency in the self-presentation-e-WOM link adds conceptual depth to both the self-presentation literature (Colmekcioglu et al., 2023; Dedeoglu et al., 2023) and the cross-cultural branding field (Rodrigues et al., 2024). It suggests that psychological traits like self-presentation cannot be understood or leveraged in isolation. Rather, they must be interpreted in relation to the broader cultural environment that shapes normative behavior and audience expectations. Strategically, this insight opens up new avenues for culturally informed psychographic segmentation. Brands can enhance the effectiveness of their social media campaigns by identifying consumer segments that are not only demographically distinct but also differentiated by underlying identity motives and cultural frames.

Sixth, this research advances the cross-cultural consumer behavior literature by providing a robust cross-level validation that bridges macro-environmental cultural context with micro-level psychological drivers. While traditional international marketing research frequently treats national culture as a static, macro-level background variable, this study explicitly operationalizes and tests collectivism at the individual psychographic level within an independent national marketplace (Study 3). By demonstrating a statistically significant interaction between perceived brand agility and individual-level collectivism, these findings offer empirical confirmation that the overarching cultural mechanisms identified cross-nationally are systematically mirrored within individual consumer psychology. Furthermore, by identifying a specific activation threshold via the Johnson-Neyman technique, this work

introduces a nuanced, threshold-based perspective to the deployment of cultural boundary conditions. This contribution demonstrates that micro-level variations in cultural orientation do not merely reflect aggregate societal norms but actively dictate individual behavioral responses to agile branding once a critical psychological baseline is achieved.

Seventh, this work contributes methodologically by integrating self-report data from two culturally distinct samples and applying moderated moderation analysis to unpack complex interaction effects. This approach provides a rigorous empirical foundation for the proposed theoretical model and offers a replicable framework for future research examining layered consumer influences in digital spaces.

Finally, this research also contributes to the DCT in several ways. First, the research advances outside-in operationalization of dynamic capabilities. Whereas much DCT evidence relies on internal audits or managerial self-reports, perceived social media agility is measured as a market-observable indicator of sensing-seizing-transforming. Showing that consumers reliably perceive agility, and that these perceptions predict marketplace outcomes, extends DCT toward external validation of capability deployment (Teece, 2007). Second, the research sharpens the micro-temporal granularity of DCT in fast-cycle settings. By articulating perceived social media agility in terms of sensing, adaptation, and learning at the cadence typical of social media (hours/days), it specifies how dynamic capabilities operate under short feedback loops, addressing a level of analysis often underspecified in prior work (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Third, the study links dynamic capability deployment to a behaviorally meaningful market outcome (i.e., positive e-WOM) and examines relevant boundary conditions (e.g., cultural context, self-presentation). This mechanism-focused approach is consistent with DCT's emphasis on value creation through alignment with environmental change and complements the idea that externally visible behavior can signal underlying adaptive capability, shaping audience expectations and response (Teece, 2007). Collectively, these contributions position

perceived social media agility as a theory-consistent instantiation of dynamic capabilities in digital communication environments and demonstrate its measurability and consequence for market behavior.

5. Managerial Implications

The findings from this research provide critical insights for brand and company managers, particularly those overseeing digital and social media strategies. Both prior (Bozkurt, 2025a) and current research indicate that perceived social media agility plays a pivotal role in driving positive electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Consumers tend to respond more favorably to brands that exhibit agility in their interactions, largely because of the perceived benefits they receive. As a result, companies should make agility a central component of their social media strategy. To achieve this, brands must ensure they are highly responsive to consumer needs and expectations, continuously monitor shifts in consumer preferences on social media, and adjust their engagement strategies accordingly. Additionally, staying attuned to competitor activities and responding strategically can enhance brand agility. A proactive approach to changes within the social media landscape is essential for maintaining relevance and fostering stronger connections with consumers (Welch et al., 2024). Real-time engagement, prompt responsiveness, and content that aligns with emerging trends and conversations enhance a brand's perceived agility, which in turn encourages consumers to engage in positive e-WOM, ultimately adding value to the brand. Prior research supports the notion that these elements contribute to stronger consumer-brand relationships and brand value (Kumar & Pansari, 2016; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Importantly, the present study shows that the effectiveness of these agile practices is not culturally neutral; rather, the way consumers interpret and respond to brand agility is shaped by the cultural context in which these interactions occur.

For managers, beyond the general impact of social media agility, this research highlights specific boundary conditions that can offer strategic advantages to companies. Most notably,

the findings indicate the moderating role of cultural orientation in shaping how perceived social media agility translates into consumer advocacy. One key insight is the influence of cultural orientation on positive e-WOM. The findings suggest that collectivist cultures, such as Türkiye, display a stronger inclination toward rewarding brands perceived to be highly agile compared to individualistic cultures like the UK. Consequently, managers targeting collectivist markets should prioritize agility by developing culturally relevant content, fostering community-driven interactions, and ensuring that their communication strategies resonate with values associated with collectivism, such as group cohesion and social harmony. Brands operating in individualistic markets, on the other hand, may need to place greater emphasis on personalization and direct consumer engagement rather than collective appeal. These results suggest that social media agility should not be implemented as a standardized global strategy but rather adapted to culturally specific expectations of communication and social endorsement.

Furthermore, the validation of our individual-level framework in Study 3 offers managers a powerful tool for intra-market psychographic segmentation. Rather than assuming a national marketplace is entirely uniform, managers can use data analytics to identify and target consumers based on their personal level of collectivism. Our findings reveal a clear behavioral trigger point for these consumers; once an individual's collectivism score crosses a critical threshold, their likelihood of rewarding agile brand behavior with positive e-WOM climbs dramatically. In practice, digital marketers do not need to wait for a cross-border expansion to deploy these insights. By tracking community-oriented behavioral signals on social media, such as a user's high engagement with group-based features, communal forums, or collective advocacy campaigns, brands can isolate high-collectivism consumer segments within any given market. Pouring agile marketing resources, real-time responses, and trend-jacking content directly into these micro-communities ensures that the brand hits the exact activation threshold necessary to unlock widespread, organic e-WOM.

Furthermore, the interaction between self-presentation tendencies and cultural background plays a crucial role in shaping the impact of social media agility on positive e-WOM. Individuals who actively curate their online personas and strive to project a favorable self-image are generally more inclined to engage in e-WOM, particularly when they perceive a brand as highly agile. However, this effect varies depending on cultural context. Managers should know that the results suggest that UK consumers with high self-presentation tendencies are particularly responsive to agile perceived brands, demonstrating a higher likelihood of engaging in social media WOM compared to Turkish consumers. This finding indicates that companies operating in individualistic markets should design their social media campaigns to align with self-expression and personal branding. Strategies such as influencer partnerships, aspirational messaging, and user-generated content initiatives can be particularly effective in appealing to this consumer segment.

Moreover, the findings reveal that self-presentation tendencies play a more prominent role in individualistic cultures than in collectivist ones. In the UK, individuals who place greater importance on self-presentation are more likely to engage in e-WOM when interacting with agile perceived brands. This suggests that brands targeting consumers in individualistic societies should incorporate messaging that emphasizes individuality, self-enhancement, and personal identity. Tailored content that resonates with consumers' aspirations and lifestyle choices can enhance engagement and encourage greater participation in social media discussions about the brand. In contrast, in collectivist environments where social approval and group alignment are more salient, agile brand responses may be interpreted as signals of responsiveness to community expectations rather than as opportunities for personal identity expression.

Given that self-presentation moderates the effect of social media agility on e-WOM in individualistic but not collectivist cultures, it is essential for brands to employ tailored

marketing strategies. In the UK, for example, leveraging data analytics to segment audiences based on self-presentation tendencies can help brands craft highly personalized content that aligns with consumers' desires for self-expression and social recognition. This level of personalization can significantly enhance consumer engagement and foster a stronger connection between the brand and its audience.

Some more actionable insights can be recommended. Firms could prioritize visible adaptation because the results indicate that higher perceived social media agility is associated with more positive e-WOM. In practice, managers may focus resources on actions audiences can see, such as swift updates to creative assets and FAQs, coordinated cross-channel messaging, and brief "what changed and why" summaries, so agility is evident rather than implied. However, the study suggests that the framing of such agile actions should also reflect the cultural values of the target audience.

Because the relationship between perceived social media agility and e-WOM is stronger in collectivist contexts, managers might frame updates as community-driven improvements ("based on community feedback, we...") and invite sharing within groups (teams, clubs, congregations). Co-announcements with trusted community figures and shareable, group-oriented assets can help convert perceived agility into broad advocacy without heavy personalization. Such approaches align with collectivist cultural norms that prioritize communal endorsement and shared identity.

In more individualist contexts, where self-presentation shapes the link between perceived social media agility and e-WOM, firms could segment outreach by impression-management motives. For audiences comfortable sharing publicly, firms can provide identity-expressive templates (polished story frames, short clips) and occasional recognition when input informs a visible change. For lower self-presentation segments, firms can offer private paths to advocate (e.g., one-tap copy/direct message links and concise recap posts) reducing social risk

while keeping recommendations easy. These strategies align with cultural expectations that value autonomy, individuality, and personal branding in digital interactions.

To manage this systematically, managers may pair simple instrumentation with light testing. They can track time-to-detect, time-to-pivot, and a cross-channel coherence check alongside positive e-WOM indicators (unsolicited favorable mentions, share/save rates, referral clicks). Firms can also add a short monthly perceived social media agility pulse (e.g., “spots issues early,” “adapts when conversations shift,” “improves based on feedback”) by segment, and run small side-by-side experiments: present two versions of the same update to comparable audiences, one framed around community benefit and one around personal utility, and compare which yields higher shares/saves. Likewise, firms can test two asset styles, public, identity-expressive templates versus private, low-profile share links, to confirm that visible agility is converted to advocacy in the segments where the effect is expected to be strongest. This type of culturally informed experimentation also allows firms to systematically adapt agile communication strategies across different markets.

Overall, for managers, this research underscores the importance of social media agility as a driver of positive e-WOM while highlighting the necessity of cultural adaptation in branding strategies. Rather than treating agility as a universally interpreted capability, managers should recognize that consumers’ responses to agile brand behavior are filtered through culturally shaped expectations regarding communication, identity expression, and social endorsement. Understanding how cultural values and self-presentation tendencies influence consumer behavior enables companies to develop more effective and targeted social media campaigns. By integrating these insights, brands can create compelling digital experiences that resonate with diverse consumer segments, ultimately driving greater interaction, advocacy, and brand loyalty.

6. Limitation and Future Research

While this study highlights the significance of social media agility in driving positive e-WOM, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the research focuses on Türkiye and the UK as representative collectivist and individualistic cultures. While these contexts provide valuable insights, future studies should examine a broader range of cultural settings to enhance generalizability. Investigating additional cultural dimensions, such as levels of technological adoption (Srite and Karahanna, 2006; Straub et al., 1997), could offer deeper insights.

Second, this study compares collectivist and individualistic cultures, but it remains unclear whether the findings hold when comparing individualistic societies with one another or collectivist societies with one another. Future research could test these hypotheses by examining two distinct individualistic or collectivist cultures to identify potential differences. For example, while both the UK and the USA are English-speaking individualistic societies, consumer behavior may still differ due to cultural nuances.

Third, this research focuses on self-presentation on social media as the sole personality-related moderator. Future studies should explore other social media-related personality traits, such as social comparison tendencies (Colmekcioglu et al., 2023), which may either amplify or weaken the observed relationships. Individuals who frequently compare their achievements with others on social media might respond differently to highly agile perceived brands, warranting further investigation.

Fourth, perceived social media agility in this study was categorized into only two levels: high and low. Future research could expand on this by incorporating an additional medium level to examine whether the effects vary across a broader spectrum of agility perceptions. Moreover, this study employed a between-subjects design, which, while allowing for random assignments, reduces statistical power by dividing the sample. Future research should consider a within-

subjects design, where participants are exposed to multiple conditions, to enhance statistical power and further validate the findings (Charness et al., 2012; Montoya, 2023). A further methodological consideration concerns the need for more nuanced operationalizations of PSMA. Future research could adopt multidimensional manipulations, such as independently varying response speed, tone, or problem-solving flexibility, and employ more naturalistic or longitudinal designs to better capture how consumers experience agility over time. Additionally, incorporating implicit or behavioral measures could help mitigate potential demand characteristics and provide a more robust assessment of the construct's effects.

Fifth, while Study 3 successfully validated our individual-level moderation framework, data collection within a relatively homogeneous national culture can naturally result in heavily skewed psychographic distributions. Even though we captured sufficient variance to identify a significant activation threshold for individual collectivism, future research should test this individual-level model within more culturally diverse or multicultural societies (such as urban diaspora communities). Doing so would ensure a wider, more balanced distribution of individual cultural traits and further test the generalizability of the threshold effects observed here.

Sixth, we acknowledge that our cross-national data collection involved different sampling sources, using Prolific in the UK and social media networks via Qualtrics in Türkiye. This mixed approach was adopted due to the lack of equally reliable participant recruitment platforms available in the Turkish marketplace. While this allowed us to reach highly engaged adult samples, it introduces potential variations in baseline respondent characteristics like age, education, or digital familiarity. To rigorously control for potential sampling bias, we took several careful steps: we restricted participation strictly to adults, used attention check filtering, and established full configural, metric, and scalar measurement invariance via multi-group SEM before combining the cross-national datasets. Furthermore, we conducted Study 3 within

a single market to directly re-test and validate our core individual-level interactions. Nevertheless, future research would benefit from using identical, uniform panel platforms across all target nations to completely rule out any minor variances coming from different sampling sources.

Use of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors utilized [ChatGPT and Gemini] to enhance the language and readability of this work during its preparation. All content generated with the assistance of this tool was carefully reviewed and revised by the authors, who accept full responsibility for the final content presented in this publication.

Acknowledgements: The first author gratefully acknowledges the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) for financial support through the 2219 International Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program (OUR REF: 53325897-115.02-555610).

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Appendices

Appendix A

<i>High Agile Scenario</i>	<i>Low-Agile Scenario</i>
Imagine that you have been following a brand on social media for a long time, allowing you to get to know it well. This brand adapts quickly to changes in social media, swiftly identifying and responding to customer needs and demands. It efficiently increases its resources—people, technology, and time—to address customer inquiries promptly. When the brand notices a shift toward platforms like TikTok from Instagram, it proactively creates an account and develops platform-specific content, using its expanded capacity to meet audience expectations.	You have been following a brand on social media for a long time, allowing you to get to know it well. The brand is slow to notice changes in social media and lacks the ability to quickly identify and respond to customer needs and demands. It also struggles to expand its resources—people, technology, and time—promptly. When the brand notices a shift toward platforms like TikTok from Instagram, it takes time to create content that aligns with audience expectations due to these limitations.

Study 3- New Manipulations	
<i>High-Agility Scenario</i>	<i>Low-Agility Scenario</i>
Imagine that you have been following a brand on social media for a long time, so you are familiar with how it communicates online. This brand maintains an active and consistent presence on social media. It adapts quickly to changes in the social media environment and updates its communication promptly in response to emerging customer needs. When customers share questions or feedback, the brand responds in a short time using a polite and helpful tone. For example, when the brand notices that users are beginning to shift their attention from Instagram to TikTok, it quickly opens a TikTok account and starts producing content tailored to that platform. As a result, the brand's social media activities keep pace with changes in audience expectations.	Imagine that you have been following a brand on social media for a long time, so you are familiar with how it communicates online. This brand maintains an active and consistent presence on social media. However, it adapts more slowly to changes in the social media environment and updates its communication only after some time when customer needs shift. When customers share questions or feedback, the brand responds in a polite and helpful tone; however, these responses and related updates occur with a delay. For example, when the brand notices that users are beginning to shift their attention from Instagram to TikTok, it opens a TikTok account and begins producing content tailored to that platform; however, it does so later and gradually adjusts its content over time. As a result, the brand's social media activities respond to changes in audience expectations more gradually.

Appendix B

Constructs	Items
positive e-WOM	• I would spread positive word-of-mouth about this brand on social media. • I would recommend this brand's products to my friends on social media. • If my friends were looking to make a purchase, I would suggest they try this brand on social media.
Self-Presentation on social media	• I try to make a good impression on others on social media. • I try to present myself in a favorable way on social media. • Social media help me present my best sides to others. • I post different contents on social media (statuses, links, photographs etc.) to attract the attention of others. • I try to present myself positively on social media accounts especially for those people who do not know me well. • Before I post anything on social media, I think about how others might perceive it.
Collectivism	• Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group. • Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties. • Group welfare is more important than individual rewards. • Group success is more important than individual success. • Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group. • Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.