

# Legitimacy judgments in an age of social media

Influence of emotional tone

Master Business Administration  
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Radboud University

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Ingrid Wouda

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Mirjam Goudsmit – First assessor

Stefan Breet – Second assessor

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# 1. Introduction

In recent decades, organizational legitimacy has become a central concern for businesses and academic researchers (e.g., Bitektine & Song, 2022; Illia et al., 2022; Suddaby et al., 2017), as it is regarded as a vital resource for business survival and success (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Organizational legitimacy facilitates access to essential resources; organizations with greater organizational legitimacy are able to achieve better results (Cruz-Suarez et al., 2014; Pollack et al., 2012). Organizational legitimacy is defined as “the perceived appropriateness of an organization to a social system in terms of rules, values, norms, and definitions” (Deephouse et al., 2017, p. 32) (After this: legitimacy). Individuals have a crucial part in the construction of legitimacy, as individuals observe, evaluate and judge (Bitektine, 2011; Ruef & Scott, 1998). Such a judgment is called an individual’s legitimacy judgment (After this: legitimacy judgment). Extant literature uses different conceptualizations for legitimacy judgments. Where Bitektine and Haack (2015) theorize that a legitimacy judgment has a micro level dimension (individual’s perceptions) and a macro level dimension (actions of collective actors, e.g., governments, media). Tost (2011) defines a legitimacy judgment as an individual's perception of the instrumental, moral, and relational dimension. Both articles suggest a multidimensional construct, however the construct is approached in a different manner. Comparatively, this difference arises because Tost (2011) focuses on the legitimacy judgment, and that Bitektine and Haack (2015) focus on the legitimacy concept as a whole. Bitektine and Haack (2015) approach the concept from an institutional field, where Tost (2011) combines the research from the institutional and sociopsychological fields. For this paper the conceptualization of Tost (2011) will be adopted.

The context in which individual’s form their judgment matters (Haack et al., 2014) as it can moderate the legitimacy judgment formation process (Tost, 2011). For instance, norms can differ across countries, thus individuals can render different judgments based on those norms (Castello et al., 2016; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Díez-de-Castro et al., 2018). Extant literature show elaborated models (Tost, 2011) and theories (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015) on the formation of legitimacy judgments. Legitimacy judgments are formed through different stages (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). Through this process, individuals “form” two key components which will lead them to their legitimacy judgment; validity cue and propriety belief. Validity cue refers to an individual’s perception that an entity is perceived as appropriate by others in a collective, independent of the individual’s own evaluation (Johnson et al., 2006; Suddaby et al., 2017). Propriety signifies

an individual's acceptance of the organization, its actions and practices as desirable and appropriate for its social context (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). Validity cues can come from authorization and peer endorsement (van den Broek et al., 2022). Recent literature shows that individuals are more prone to express their legitimacy judgments when the validity cue comes from peers (van den Broek et al., 2022).

Recent literature on legitimacy gives increasing attention to the shift in the media landscape (Castello et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019; Illia et al., 2022; Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017), which shifted from traditional media alone, to traditional media alongside of social media (Etter et al., 2016). Traditional media refers to traditional mass media such as broadcast media (e.g. TV, newspaper) and key characteristics of traditional media are professionalism in production and distribution, public accessibility and separation of sender and receiver (Etter et al., 2019). Social media refers to online platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (now known as X), that enable users to create and share content with other users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media is characterized with having great velocity, openness to emotions and enhancing the feeling of community (Wang, X. J. et al., 2017), therefore social media enables individuals to create significant networks that can increase the possibility for social disapproval for the object of judgment (Wang, X. J. et al., 2017). With social media, individual's can now bypass the gatekeeping function that traditional media has imposed on them (Etter et al., 2016) by expressing their opinions and emotions online (Etter et al., 2019; Illia et al., 2022; Wang, X. J. et al., 2017).

Emotions have been considered influential on judgments in the field of psychology, since they influence individual's thinking, attitudes, decision making and their actions (Angie et al., 2011; Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Kranzbühler et al., 2019; Roseman, 1996; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Extant legitimacy literature included emotions in a more general manner, e.g. as a heuristic (either positive or negative) (Haack et al., 2014) or as sentiment (positive, negative, neutral)(Etter et al., 2016). It was found that the greater the affective display (either positive or negative), the greater the influence on others (Haack et al., 2014). Furthermore, literature shows evidence that individuals use emotions as input to guide their behaviour when confronted with change (Huy et al., 2014). It was found that organizations can use specific strategies to mitigate the negative effects of social disapproval (Wang, X. J. et al., 2017). Extant literature also found that judgments of actions by organizations are more negatively judged on social media, compared to in traditional media (Etter et al., 2016). However, studies in the legitimacy field have yet to include discrete emotions, such as anger and sadness, in the research. Emotion can be expressed in many ways (e.g., images, verbal), however this

research will focus on textual displays of emotion by individuals towards an organization. These textual displays contain an emotional tone. Emotional tone is a psycholinguistic variable that describes the presence of positive and negative emotions in written text as the contrast between positive-emotion words and negative-emotion words (Cohn et al., 2004). Negative emotions or emotional tones, e.g. anger and sadness, are the most experienced emotions in organizations (Angie et al., 2011) and therefore this research will focus on the effects of an angry and sad emotional tone expressed through social media posts on legitimacy judgments.

It is important to know more about how emotional tone influences legitimacy judgments as emotions sway judgments of other individuals (Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Li et al., 2020; Monzani et al., 2021). As emotions are such a powerful influence on other people's judgments (Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Tiedens & Linton, 2001) it is important to gain a better understanding of such an influence so that organizations can strategically protect themselves from it or use in their communication strategies (Li et al., 2020). Furthermore, as peer endorsements cues lead more individuals to express their legitimacy judgments, the overall legitimacy of organizations can be challenged when that legitimacy judgment is negative (van den Broek et al., 2022). Additionally, as social media makes it easier and faster for individuals to express their feelings and judgments, the probability for public outcry is even higher. This paper theorizes that when emotional tone in social media posts is left unresearched, the effects of public negative outcry cannot be mitigated as there is no full understanding of its effects on legitimacy judgment. This could pose potential problems for organisation faced with public disapproval.

The scientific relevance of this paper will be that it extends past research (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011) by developing understanding and empirically testing the role of emotional tone on legitimacy judgment, and thus opening up the "black box" (Jacqueminet & Durand, 2020). Furthermore, it is relevant to know more about how emotional tone's influence on legitimacy judgment as legitimacy judgments are considered the "micro-motor" (Powell & Colyvas, 2088) that guide behaviour of others, which coalesce to create macro-level legitimacy and social reality (Tost, 2011). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of legitimacy judgments at the level of the individual can help scholars comprehend not only the dynamics of institutional change, but also the crucial role that individuals play in these change processes (Tost, 2011). Moreover, it is important to understand what impact emotions have on legitimacy judgments as emotions motivate consumers to express and share their experiences, as well as to report any actions that uphold or contradict their values (Etter

et al., 2019; Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017; Wang, T. et al., 2016), which in turn can influence legitimacy.

Research on emotional tone and legitimacy has practical value because it can inform managers on organizational strategies and practices that improve their legitimacy, and thus their success as legitimacy and organizational outcomes are linked to each other (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Research in this area can assist organizations in comprehending how their emotional tone in social media posts can affect their credibility. For instance, organizations can use emotional tone in their messaging to build trust and credibility with their audiences by understanding the emotion of the audience and act accordingly. Using this knowledge, organizations can develop strategies for managing their emotional tone and ensuring that it aligns with their values and objectives. For instance, an organization may need to modify its communication style or behaviour to better align with the emotional needs and expectations of its stakeholders, such as expressing concern and empathy during a crisis.

As legitimacy judgments are considered the “micro-motor” of intuitional change (Powell & Colyvas, 2088) and legitimacy, and the fact that emotional displays of other’s can influence other individuals’ judgment; it is interesting to find out what the impact of emotional tone on legitimacy judgment is. Therefore, this paper will ask the question: *How does the emotional tone in consumer’s social media posts about their experience with an organization influence business administration students’ legitimacy judgment in the Netherlands?*

In order to answer this question data was gathered through network sampling for a vignette experiment. The data was tested in a repeated measures ANOVA and checked for robustness using regression analysis. Furthermore, the sample was taken from the population of business students in the Netherlands. This paper has been organized in 5 chapters. Chapter one is the introduction in which a general idea of this research as well as its relevance was given. In chapter two the theoretical background and hypotheses development will be addressed. In chapter three the methods and research ethics can be found. In chapter four the results are reported. Chapter 5 contains the discussion and concluding remarks.

## **2.Theoretical Background**

In this chapter the theoretical background of the research question will be discussed. Furthermore, at the end of the chapter the hypotheses will be formed.

## *Legitimacy judgments*

Tost (2011) defines a legitimacy judgment as an individual's perception or attitude regarding a company's efforts to achieve desired goals or outcomes (instrumental dimension), its treatment of others with dignity and respect (relational dimension), and its adherence to normative standards (moral dimension) (Bachmann & Ingenhoff, 2016; Tost, 2011).

Individuals are "the internal and external audiences who observe organizations and make legitimacy assessments" (Ruef & Scott, 1998, p. 880). Hereafter, when referring to an individual, this paper is referring to an external individual. Through the expression and negotiation of judgment in public discourse, legitimacy is constructed (Castello et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2016). Tost (2011) based the definition on theory and research from institutional- and social psychology theory. As the goal of this paper is to examine the influence of emotional tone on legitimacy judgments, and the hypothesized effect is explained by theory based on psychology, the conceptualization of legitimacy judgments will follow Tost's (2011) definition of the concept.

Individual's can render different legitimacy judgments depending on the 'lense' the individual uses. Extant literature refers to these lenses as legitimacy types or legitimacy typologies (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse et al., 2017). Individual's determine propriety by comparing its perceived properties and behaviours to a set of social norms (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Dornbusch et al., 1975; Suchman, 1995; Tost, 2011). As there are many types of legitimacy, it is referred to as the "jungle" of legitimacy types (Díez-Martín et al., 2021, p. 1). This paper will focus on the relevant types with regards to this paper's conceptualization of legitimacy judgments. According to the instrumental dimension, people act based on how their interactions with social entities and authorities benefit them therefore, organizations are viewed as legitimate when they assist the individual in achieving their material interests (Tost, 2011). The instrumental dimension is in line with the type to which other refer to as pragmatic legitimacy (Díez-Martín et al., 2021). Previous research demonstrates that stakeholders grant pragmatic legitimacy when an organization serves their interests and meets their expectations (Díez-Martín et al., 2021; Suchman, 1995), this is therefore in line with the instrumental dimension. According to relational dimensions of legitimacy, legitimacy results from the extent to which an entity communicates to the individual that he or she is accorded respect, dignity, and status within the context of the group and through group membership (Tost, 2011). From a relational standpoint, an entity is considered legitimate when it affirms the social identities of individuals and enhances their sense of self-worth (Tost, 2011). A morally

legitimate entity is perceived to be consistent with the individual's social norms, values and ethical standards (Alexiou & Wiggins, 2018; Tost, 2011). Important to note it that as social norms, values and ethical standards can differ across different countries, organizations can be legitimate in one country and illegitimate in another country (Bitektine, 2011; Díez-Martín et al., 2021).

Important to note here is that with different types, individuals base their judgment on different indicators (e.g. culture, norms and values), which can differ per individual (Castello et al., 2016; Deephouse et al., 2017; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Díez-Martín et al., 2021) Meaning an organisation can be judged as legitimate in one country and, illegitimate in another due to difference in norms and values.

### **Antecedents and other influences**

#### *Validity and validity cue*

Validity is defined as “the extent to which there appears to be a general consensus within a collectivity that the entity is appropriate for its social context” (Tost, 2011, p. 689). There are different sources of validity; individuals, media, government, judicial system, authority and peer endorsement (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; van den Broek et al., 2022). As multiple individuals express and observe others expressing the same propriety judgment, they gain confidence in the validity of their own judgment, as it represents a consensus opinion shared by others (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Suddaby et al., 2017; Tost, 2011). Media, government, and judicial systems act a “judgment validation institutions” (Tost, 2011, p. 52). The institutions receive multiple, sometime conflicting, judgments of individuals, after which they process them and communicate back the most ‘appropriate’ judgment, which serves as an validity cue (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). Authorization refers to the validation by recognized, higher authorities, including traditional media, regulators, and the legal system (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). Peer endorsement refers to validation by similar others (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). Van den Broek et al. (2022) found that in under certain conditions individuals more prone to express their legitimacy judgments when the validity cue comes from peer endorsement. Validity cues can manipulate the legitimacy judgments by manipulating their validity cue (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Suddaby et al., 2017; van den Broek et al., 2022).

#### *Evaluative mode*

The evaluative mode refers to whether an individual is in active of passive mode (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). Extant literature refers to this as the dual process theory (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011; van den Broek et al., 2022). Often individuals make evaluations

based on cognitive heuristics (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Haack et al., 2014; Tost, 2011; van den Broek et al., 2022). In the evaluative mode, perceptions of an organization's observable properties and behaviours are used to form judgments regarding its overall legitimacy (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). In this mode, the individual is actively motivated to develop an assessment of the entity (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). In contrast, in the passive mode, individuals use validity cues as cognitive shortcuts to reach a legitimacy judgment or passively assume the legitimacy (Tost, 2011). In the passive mode, individuals observe authorizations or endorsements from others and base their own judgments on these evaluations (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). An important notion here is that Haack et al. (2014) associate intuiters as using the passive mode for their judgment formation, this is an important distinction to make for interpreting the results. Individuals are receptive to judgments of others because of cognitive economy and institutional change (Bitektine, 2011; Tost, 2011).

#### *Cognitive economy and institutional change*

Due to cognitive economy, which "suggest that people seek to process maximum information with the least cognitive effort" (Bitektine, 2011, p. 164), people use shortcuts and heuristics for the formation of a legitimacy judgment. Cognitive economy suggests that when the costs of searching for and processing information are high, it may be more convenient to "borrow" judgments from others than to form one's own (Bitektine, 2011). A significant portion of human social interaction consists of the exchange of information, e.g., about an organization. Such social interactions not only provide individuals with information and the perspectives of others, but also assist actors in validating and/or correcting their own judgments (Bitektine, 2011). As individuals discuss and negotiate the most appropriate judgment with regard to an organization and communicate it to others in their social network, they produce (Bitektine, 2011; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) common understandings of what the appropriate judgment is (Bitektine, 2011). This causes the social judgments they express to be uniform (Bitektine, 2011). As these common understandings spread and take on a rule-like status. They transform into institutionally prescribed judgments that members of a given social group or entire society adopt and apply to this organization, which is called institutional change (Bitektine, 2011).

#### ***Legitimacy Judgment formation process***

In order to understand the mechanisms underlying a legitimacy judgment, the process of legitimacy will be discussed. Extant literature presented models of the legitimacy judgment

process (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). Bitektine (2011) and Bitektine and Haack (2015) theorize a three-stage model, perception stage → judgment stage → action stage. Tost (2011) also theorizes a three-stage model; however, the formulation of the process is different from Bitektine (2011) and Bitektine and Haack (2015). Tost (2011) theorizes that a legitimacy judgment is formed by three stages; Formation stage → use stage → reassessment stage. The reassessment stage is not relevant for this paper. During the perception stage individuals receive two perceptual inputs, perceptions of the organization's properties and behaviours and perceptions of validity (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). The perception of properties and behaviours of the organization are based on the observable properties and behaviour, e.g., discursive behaviour, financial statements etc. Tost (2011) refers to perception stage as formation stage. During the judgment stage individuals form their propriety evaluation using the perceptual inputs. During the action stage the individual decide whether to suppress the legitimacy judgment or whether to take “observable discursive/symbolic and substantive action” (Bitektine & Haack, 2015, p. 54) The action stage is where the organization is no longer judged, but where the judgment is used to guide the individual's behaviour (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). Tost (2011) refers to action stage as use stage.

### ***Legitimacy and (social) media***

The context in which evaluators find themselves can influence their legitimacy judgment (Haack et al., 2014) and their legitimacy judgment process (Tost, 2011). Extant literature has described how institutional context (e.g., Suchman, 1995), social context (e.g., Suchman, 1995) and other external influences impact a legitimacy judgment. This paper will focus on one external factor that has changed drastically in the last decades, namely the media landscape. Traditional media dominated the media landscape for many years. The key characteristics of traditional media are professionalism in production and distribution, public accessibility and separation of sender and receiver (Etter et al., 2019). However, in more recent years social media took its prominent place in our world.

Previous literature describes how judgments are heavily influenced by the gatekeeping role of the traditional media (Etter et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019). The diffusion of judgments has been presented as a top-down process in which the media–citizen relationship was characterized by a one-to-many relationship (Etter et al., 2019), whereby very few media channels disseminate to a large audience judgments of organizations (Deephouse, 2016; Etter et al., 2019; Rindova et al., 2005). This is based the assumption of the traditional media's

gatekeeping role on the notion that news organizations have formal and informal access to confidential sources exclusively (Etter et al., 2019; Westphal & Deephouse, 2011) and enact the gatekeeper role through filtering information they deem noteworthy and distribute that to the broader audience (Brosius & Weimann, 2016). Rindova et al. (2006) described that in the absence of direct exposure to a company, its goods, or its services, consumers rely on the evaluative content of traditional media because they see journalists as authoritative sources and ascribe to their supremacy in judging organizations (Etter et al., 2019; Rindova et al., 2006; Rindova et al., 2005).

Social media offers individuals the opportunity to voice their opinions and experiences online (Castello et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019; Illia et al., 2022) and to create networks. As the power of information ownership changes with the arrival of social media (Castello et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019; Illia et al., 2022), traditional media does not remain a powerful entity as it was once described. Different dynamics shift within the media landscape, such as the shift from vertical to horizontal information flows (Etter et al., 2019), from a one-to-many dynamic to a many-to-many dynamic (Etter et al., 2019), from media with homogeneous reporting to heterogeneous available judgments sent and received by many different actors (i.e. strangers, experts, news outlets) (Etter et al., 2019). Where journalists were motivated by professional responsibilities and subjected to different forces resulting in homogeneous source of information available for consumers with regards to traditional media, social media enables consumers to consume information from multiple sources with different motives and varying constraints (Etter et al., 2019). Social media also provides a platform for traditionally marginalized individuals to express their concerns to organizations in a manner that is emotionally unrestrained and visible to others (Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017). Through the social media platform, individuals can also react to each other (Castello et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019; Illia et al., 2022; Schulz et al., 2018). Online expressions are not subjected to any of the constraints which are associated with journalism. This means that consumers can express their emotions openly about an event or organization also opening up the opportunity for institutional disruption (See for examples Etter et al. (2019); Illia et al. (2022)) (Lewis et al., 2014; Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017).

Strong emotions often initiate individuals to share their judgments (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016; Berger & Milkman, 2012; Etter et al., 2019; Pfeffer et al., 2013; Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017; Veil et al., 2011), their experiences, and to report any actions that contradict the individual's values (Etter et al., 2019; Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017; Wang, T. et al., 2016). Emotional judgments can be more influential on legitimacy judgments, even if they are

factually erroneous or incomplete, than analytical judgments that appeal to reason (Etter et al., 2019; Nabi, 2002, 2010, 2016). The influence that other people's emotional judgments have on individual's judgments can be explained by emotion contagion theory. Emotion contagion refers to a process in which individual's emotions becoming more similar to those of others when exposed to them (Goldenberg & Gross, 2020). According to emotion contagion literature this happens more often due to the considerable time individuals spent on social media (Goldenberg & Gross, 2020). The social appraisal mechanism of emotional contagion is in with institutionalization effects that are described in legitimacy literature. The social appraisal mechanism explains how individuals use the emotions of others to guide their own emotions, resulting in a similar emotional experience (Goldenberg & Gross, 2020). This effect is similar when considering the institutionalization effects of judgments on legitimacy judgments.

Extant legitimacy literature included emotion in a general manner. Haack et al. (2014) included affect in their paper as an individual's heuristic when making judgment regarding legitimacy regarding. Haack et al. (2014) proposed two things: The greater the affective response, either positive or negative, the greater the bottom-up vertical spill over i.e. influence on others (Haack et al., 2014). Strong negative stimuli produce a more powerful affective response compared to positive stimuli (Haack et al., 2014).

Huy et al. (2014) conducted a study on the role played by middle managers' judgments of their top managers in the context of planned radical organizational change. They found that change agents, who form frequent judgments about senior agents, use emotional reaction to guide their actions and responses (Huy et al., 2014). This finding highlights the role of change agents, as the judgments of change agents can lead to acceptance or resistance of the change (Huy et al., 2014).

Wang et al. (2017) included negative evaluations and social media in their research. They argue that social media, and its greater velocity, emotionality, and communality, increases the possibility of social disapproval (Wang, X. J. et al., 2017). They found that depending on the stage of social disapproval, different strategies could be employed in order to mitigate the effects.

Etter et al. (2016) used sentiment analysis in order to reach their findings. They found that individuals on social media judge the actions of e.g., organizations more negatively than traditional media (Etter et al., 2016). Moreover, they found that individuals, over time, judge more negatively, whereas accreditation bodies judge more positively (Etter et al., 2016). This indicates that traditional measures of legitimacy (e.g. amounts mentioned in news coverage,

number of awards or certificates received) do not encompass legitimacy judgments of different individuals (Etter et al., 2016; Ruef & Scott, 1998), therefore highlighting the importance to consider social media with regards to legitimacy judgments (Etter et al., 2016).

### ***Emotions and Emotional Tone***

Much of the research on legitimacy judgment processes focus on cognitive efforts to make sense of organizations (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). Regarding emotions, it has been largely silent (Deephouse et al., 2017). Meaning, while research has improved the understanding of how individuals use reason and logic to evaluate organizations, it is not yet clear how individuals use emotions to evaluate organizations (Deephouse et al., 2017). Emotions can be classified as discrete emotions. Discrete emotions are brief, intense phenomena that typically have cognitive content that is accessible to the individual experiencing the emotion (Angie et al., 2011; Clore et al., 1994). In text, discrete emotions can be conveyed to an emotional tone. Examples of discrete emotions are sadness and anger. These discrete emotions can be carried in a text, which ultimately will lead to a sad emotional tone or angry emotional tone.

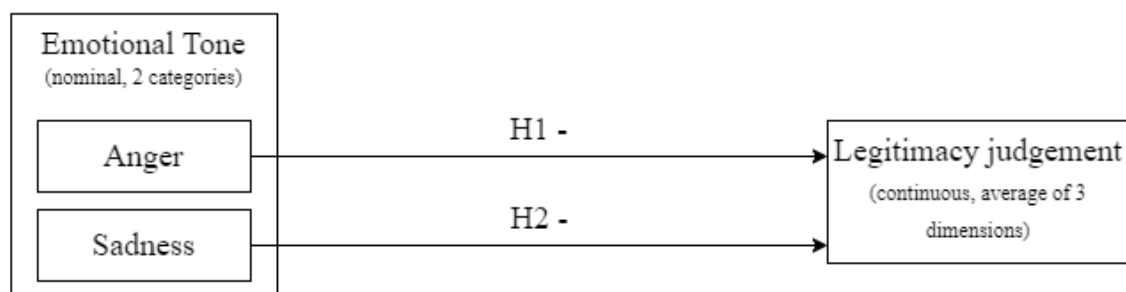
For several reason this paper will only consider anger and sadness. Firstly, anger has been described as the most experienced emotion in organizations (Angie et al., 2011). Secondly, negative emotions are most influential according to negativity bias (Li et al., 2020). Negativity bias theory refers to the notion that people tend to give negative information and experiences greater attention and weight than positive information and experiences (Li et al., 2020). This implies that negative experiences have a greater influence on our thoughts, emotions, and behaviour than positive ones. There are numerous causes for the existence of this negativity bias. Negative experiences are frequently more prominent and memorable than their positive counterparts (Li et al., 2020). This is due to the fact that negative events frequently necessitate greater focus and processing in order to deal with potential threats, whereas positive events may not be as consequential (Li et al., 2020). The pain of losing money, for instance, is greater than the pleasure of gaining the same amount. Consequently, negative experiences have a greater influence on our mood and behaviour (Li et al., 2020). Negativity bias can result in an inclination to focus on negative information, interpret events negatively, and recall negative experiences more vividly than positive ones (Li et al., 2020).

Anger and sadness use different mechanisms, and therefore have different effects on judgments (Angie et al., 2011). Appraisal theory describe the different mechanisms that underly the emotions. According to appraisal theory (Angie et al., 2011; Ellsworth & Scherer,

2003; Kranzbühler et al., 2019; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), each discrete emotion can be defined by a unique set of central dimensions that describe its core meaning (Kranzbühler et al., 2019; Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). This set is known as the emotion's appraisal pattern (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Appraisals can be defined as the meaning-making process that interprets the change in core affect in relation to the specifics of the event that triggered the emotional experience, and thus gives rise to distinct discrete emotions (Keltner & Horberg, 2015). Appraisals are based on three dimensions; certainty, control, and responsibility. Certainty refers to the degree to which an individual is certain regarding the outcomes of an event (Kranzbühler et al., 2019). Control denotes whether an entity had control over a situation or whether it was the result of external factors (Kranzbühler et al., 2019). Responsibility indicates whether an individual or another entity was held accountable for a situation or occurrence (Kranzbühler et al., 2019). Therefore, different discrete emotions elicit distinct physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses (Keltner & Horberg, 2015; Kranzbühler et al., 2019). Emotions can influence individuals in three ways; e.g. by altering their information processing strategies, by swaying their judgments toward the valence of the emotion or mood, and/or by providing informational cues to the correct decision (Feigenson & Park, 2006). The appraisal tendency framework (Kranzbühler et al., 2019; Lerner & Keltner, 2000) helps comprehension of when and how particular emotions influence subsequent judgment. Specifically, it contends that discrete emotions influence judgment "in a manner consistent with the emotion's underlying appraisal tendency" (Keltner & Horberg, 2015, p. 641).

### ***Hypotheses development***

*Figure 1: Conceptual Model*



### **Anger and legitimacy judgments**

Anger differs from sadness in two of the mechanisms that underly the emotions. Anger is an emotion more associated with certainty (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

This implies that when an individual is certain about negative consequences of an event, that individual tends to get angry (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). For instance, when government adjust the financial aid system for students, a potential effect of this is a negatively influence the credit scores of students in that country. Angry students, according to appraisal theory, become angry as they are certain of the negative effect on their credit score. Moreover, anger is more associated with human control rather than situational control (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). This also applies to previous example, as angry students hold the respective ministers accountable.

Extant literature on anger also indicates that anger has a high level of activation, which means that angry individuals is highly motivated to take some action against the individual responsible for the negative event (Lindebaum & Geddes, 2016). For instance, lashing out on social media against the organisation or in case of the example the political parties responsible for the change in financial study aid. As digital contagion theory (Goldenberg & Gross, 2020) and theory on cognitive economy (Bitektine, 2011; Tost, 2011) explain, people are receptive to each other emotions and judgments. Moreover, as sadness is associated with certainty instead of uncertainty (compared to sadness) it is expected that the effect of anger is higher than sadness. This also follows the finding by Angie et al. (2011) which state that compared to sadness, anger had larger effect sizes on judgment and decision making. Therefore, the first hypothesis is:

*H1: Anger in social media posts lead to a more negative legitimacy judgment compared to a neutral tone or sad emotional tone in social media posts*

### **Sadness and legitimacy judgments**

Sadness is a discrete emotion more associated with uncertainty (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). This means that when a negative event occurs, the individual is less certain about the consequences of that event (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Furthermore, sadness is associated with situational control rather than human control (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). This means that sad individuals mostly see situation as if they are not in control, but that the situation is rather controlled by itself, i.e. the individual is a victim of the situation (Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). For instance, building the previous example, the student does not exactly know what the consequences of the study loan are and the student did not vote for any of the responsible political parties, then the individual can become sad according to the appraisal theory.

Both anger and sadness are associated with responsibility of others (Smith &

Ellsworth, 1985), which makes it more logical that both emotions share the same type of effect. However, as the mechanisms underpinning sadness differ greatly from anger the effect size on judgments is expected to be smaller. This is also, again, in line with the findings of Angie et al. (2011). Based on the theory of digital emotional contagion (Goldenberg & Gross, 2020), cognitive economy (Bitektine, 2011; Tost, 2011) and considering the differences between anger and sadness, the second hypothesis is:

*H2: Sadness in social media posts lead to a more negative legitimacy judgment compared to neutral social media posts, but less negative compared to angry social media posts.*

### **3. Methods and data**

In this chapter I will elaborate on the research design, research procedure, measures of the variables, analysis technique, research ethics, descriptive statistics, and the manipulation check.

#### ***Research design***

To test the hypotheses an online, within-between subjects vignette experiment was conducted. The experiment presented the participants with a fictional, yet realistic, newspaper article and social media posts. A vignette experiment is suitable for answering the research question because it puts participants in a realistic scenario designed to elicit cognitive responses that may occur in everyday life (Sprinkle, 2003; van den Broek et al., 2022). The experimental design minimized respondents' exposure to irrelevant variables (Bitektine & Song, 2022; Sprinkle, 2003; van den Broek et al., 2022). As exposure to extraneous factors was minimized, the controlled environment permits the investigation of causal effects (Kerlinger, 2000; van den Broek et al., 2022). In this study, an adjustment in the independent variable (emotional tone) could reveal the effect on the dependent variable (legitimacy judgment). The study was conducted online for multiple reasons. It was a practical consideration as online experiments require less time (Dandurand et al., 2008). By conducting the experiment online, the likelihood that the participant was in a realistic environment where other social media posts are also consumed is increased, thereby contributing to the most realistic results possible.

#### ***Research procedure***

The data was collected through network sampling. The participants were approached through WhatsApp and LinkedIn. In total 259 business administration students or alumni were

approached that met the selection criteria and 107 have filled in the experiment. Using network sampling, (international) business administration students in the Netherlands were approached. The participants did not receive any incentives. The data collection was done between the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 and 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 through Qualtrics. The sample was drawn for the population of (international) business administration students within the Netherlands. The choice to draw from a specific population rather than the general population was made for several reasons. Firstly, a more homogeneous sample enables for reduced noise associated with other demographical variables (Hair et al., 2018). Secondly, the practical relevance of a convenience sample was considered. The fact that the researcher is part of the population constitutes that the researcher could more easily access the target population. The selection criteria were: (1) The participant should have lived in the Netherlands as the main country of residence. (2) The participant should have obtained, or is close to obtaining, a Bachelor or Master's degree in the field of (international) business administration

To see the full overview of all the survey question with options, please refer to appendix 2. The first part of the survey welcomed the participants to the survey. In the introduction to the survey the goal of the research and the time it would approximately take was mentioned, so that the participants could give informed consent (Roberts & Allen, 2015). Also it was made clear to the participant that participating was completely voluntary and that the survey would be completely anonymous (Roberts & Allen, 2015). For the survey to be completely anonymous no personal data was collected. To ensure that the participant agreed with the participation, the participant had to either indicate "I agree" or "I do not agree" (Roberts & Allen, 2015). Furthermore it was indicated that the data would be confidentially handled and that the participant could withdraw at any time (Roberts & Allen, 2015).

After the introduction the participant was randomly allocated by Qualtrics to one of the manipulations, anger or sad emotional tone, or the control group. The participant was asked to read the news article (See appendix 7) and was asked to what extent the participant agreed or disagreed with the statements. After the news article, the participant was asked to read the tweets and indicate again to what extent the participant agreed or disagreed after reading the tweets (See appendix 5). After the tweets all participants were asked to rate the social media posts in terms of emotional tone. After answering questions regarding the demographics (age, education, and gender) and control variables, the participants had completed the online experiment. Age and gender were measured using Qualtrics built-in questions. Education was measured on type of education (international business administration vs. business administration) and level of degree (master or bachelor). The data

on demographic information and control variables was collected at the end of the survey. This was to prevent poorer answers to question due to survey fatigue (Bourque & Fielder, 2003; Sinickas, 2007). On average the participants took 8.13 minutes to complete the survey.

### ***Instrument development***

For the experiment three sets of social media posts and a news article were created. The social media posts were created in the format of X, since extant literature (Etter et al., 2016; Illia et al., 2022) also used this platform for their social media medium. The news article was created based on news articles published by traditional media in the Netherlands (See appendix 3). However, the organisation mentioned in the news article that was used for the experiment was fictitious, so that the participant would not have any prior associations with the organisation (van den Broek et al., 2022). A news article was used to be used with regards to the control group for the experiment. As news articles are made under the quality demands of traditional media and journalism (Etter et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019), the article represents a neutral tone of voice. The news article (see appendix 6) was tested on tone of voice with the use of a short survey using Qualtrics with 8 participants. The participants of this pre-test for the article were presented with the article, and were asked to read it. After which they needed to answer one question: What tone of voice would you attribute to this piece of text? The participants had 5 answering options; neutral, sad, happy, angry, other. 6 out of the 8 participants answered this pre-test with neutral. The other 2 participants answered the tone of voice with happy. After the pre-test the participants who answered happy were invited for a short feedback session in which I did not indicate the intended tone of voice. In this feedback session it became apparent that the use of a logo for the company made the article carry a more promotional, i.e., happy tone. Based on this feedback the logo was replaced with a stock-free photo (See appendix 7). The same people were asked to rate the article again, and all 8 participants answered the question with neutral.

Next, three sets of tweets were created (See appendix 4 for pre-test tweets). These tweets were created based on real-life tweets that carried the emotional tone (anger or sadness) according to me. In order to validate the emotional tone in the tweets, inspiration was drawn from Etter et al. (2016). This article used sentiment analysis in order to reach their findings. Sentiment analysis is based on techniques of natural language processing, text analysis, and computational linguistics and measures the affective orientation of texts towards an object (Etter et al., 2016; Lee & Pang, 2008). However, sentiment does not cover discrete emotions. In natural language processing theory several tools exist in order to analyze text in the

different discrete emotions (e.g., NRClex, IBM Tone analyzer). This study will be using Text2emotion in order to validate and ensure that the emotional tone represents the discrete emotion as intended. Text2emotion is a python-based tool, and can process the data and yield 5 emotions (happy, angry, sad, surprise and fear) (Abu-Salih et al., 2023; Dhar & Bose, 2021) There are several reasons that Text2emotion was chosen over the other tools. Firstly, it is quite easy to understand. As the researcher has no prior experience in text analysis, this was quite pivotal. Secondly, the output scores are independent of each other, and therefore the texts can be rated on different emotions (Abu-Salih et al., 2023). Text2emotion does not support a neutral tone of voice, therefore the tweets with a neutral tone of voice were validated in the survey itself. Based on the output of python, tweets were adjusted to carry the intended tone. The output of Python showed a number between 0 and 1, the higher it rates, the higher the text is associated with the respective emotion. In appendix 5, the final tweets that were used for the manipulation can be found together with the output of Python.

### ***Variable measures***

The independent variable is emotional tone. This variable is a categorical independent variable carrying the two emotional tones (anger and sadness) and the neutral tone for the control group. The dependent variable is legitimacy judgment. As the conceptualization follows Tost (2011) the legitimacy judgment consists of evaluations on the three dimensions; instrumental, relational, and moral. In order to ensure validity regarding the measurement of legitimacy judgments, existing scales were used, following the example of van den Broek et al. (2022). In line with Tost's (2011) instrumental and moral dimension, Alexiou and Wiggins (2018) developed a scale to measure pragmatic and moral legitimacy (Alexiou & Wiggins, 2018). For the relational dimension of legitimacy judgments, van den Broek et al. (2022) was followed as no other suitable alternative was found. Van den Broek et al. (2022) measured the relational scale based on self-categorization and social identity theory (van den Broek et al., 2022). Two of the four items of van den Broek et al. (2022) were used, the other two were replaced by using the two concept Tost (2011) uses in her conceptualization; respect and dignity. Legitimacy judgment was measured with 13 items that were rated using a 7-point Likert scale, from the rating the mean was taken which then indicated the overall legitimacy judgment. The measures of all variables can be seen in appendix 8.

### ***Analysis technique and manipulation check***

Before testing the hypotheses, the data set was cleaned and prepped for analysis following Hair et al. (2018). Furthermore, a manipulation check was performed. The manipulation

check was question eight in the survey (See appendix 2). In total 107 participants participated in the study, two participants were excluded because they did not give consent for data gathering and participation. Out of the 105 participants, another eleven participants were excluded from analysis as they did not pass the manipulation check.

Data was analyzed in SPSS version 28. Both hypothesis were tested using a repeated measures ANOVA, which is used to test for statistically significant group differences when participants provided several measures (Hair et al., 2018), i.e. legitimacy judgment before and after treatment. Using a repeated measures ANOVA is sensible, as this procedure can correct for individual differences or baseline judgments. After testing the main effects, an OLS regression was performed as a robustness check, this also included the control variables.

### *Descriptive characteristics*

The sample had equal distribution of gender (47.9% male, 45.7% female, 3.2% non-binary, 3.2% prefer not to say). 60,6% of the participants were between 18-24 years old. 77.7% of the participants were master business administration students. All participants lived in the Netherlands as main residence for the last 5 years. 80.9 % of the participants were in passive mode, 19.1% were in active evaluative mode. See appendix 9 for full overview of the descriptive statistics of the sample and manipulations.

## **4.Results**

### *Descriptive statistics*

The descriptive statistics are provided in Table X. Legitimacy after is the dependent variable and is the average of 13 items measured using different developed scales (Alexiou & Wiggins, 2018; van den Broek et al., 2022). The dependent variable is univariately analyzed in order to establish normality. The skewness and kurtosis levels of the dependent variable are all within the threshold of |3|, therefore indicating that the distribution of the dependent variable is normal (Hair et al., 2018). There are several interesting findings in the descriptive statistics. The mean score for legitimacy after differs across the treatments when compared to legitimacy before treatment. The mean score of legitimacy after for anger is lower compared to the other two treatments, which is in line with hypothesis 1. The mean score for legitimacy after for sadness is higher than the legitimacy after score for anger, but lower than the mean score for legitimacy after for neutral. This is in line with hypothesis 2. Before moving on to the hypothesis testing, the correlation matrix is considered (See appendix 1). All variables that

will be included for further analysis were also included for bivariate inspection. The correlation between emotional tone and legitimacy judgment after show a strong negative correlation ( $r=-0.518$ ), which suggest the higher the level emotional tone, the lower the legitimacy judgment is. As emotional tone is a categorical variable, and correlation matrices consider input as metric variables the strong negative correlation shows that if an emotional tone were to move from neutral (1) to anger (2) or sadness (3), legitimacy judgment would go down. The correlation between bottom line business and legitimacy after show a moderate positive correlation ( $r=0.204$ ), which suggest as participants who favor business to consider the bottom line, tend to rate legitimacy judgment higher.

### ***Repeated measures ANOVA***

In order to test the hypothesis a repeated measures ANOVA was performed. Hypothesis one states anger in social media posts lead a more negative legitimacy judgment compared to a neutral tone or sad emotional tone. Hypothesis two states that sadness in social media posts lead to a more negative legitimacy judgment compared to a neutral tone, but less negatively compared to an angry emotional tone. The repeated measures ANOVA results (See appendix 10) shows a significant difference between judgment before and judgment after manipulation (Wilks' Lambda = 0.335,  $F(1,91)= 180,473$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.665$ ). The interaction term of emotional tone and manipulation shows a significant effect on legitimacy judgment (Wilks' Lambda = 0.469,  $F(2,91) = 51.564$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.531$ ). The pairwise comparisons of the main effects show that the legitimacy judgment of participants who experienced angry compared to neutral rate their legitimacy judgment 0.971 lower ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% C.I. = [-1.321;-0.622]). The pairwise comparisons of the main effect show that the legitimacy judgment of participants who experienced sadness compared to neutral rate legitimacy judgment 0.772 lower ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% C.I. = [-1.145;-0.339]). There is no statistically difference between the mean scores between sadness and anger ( $p = 0.516$ , 95% C.I. = [-0.154;0.552]).

When looking at the pairwise comparisons of the simple effects (See appendix 11), it can be seen that between the emotional tones there is no statistically significant difference on legitimacy judgments when looking at the legitimacy judgment before manipulation, which was expected as those judgments were all subjects to a neutral tone. When looking at the differences between the emotional tones on legitimacy judgments after manipulation it can be seen that all emotional tones show statistically significant differences. On average, after manipulation, the legitimacy judgments who experienced anger rate legitimacy judgments

2.137 lower compared to neutral ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% C.I. [-2.537;-1.738]). Participants who experienced anger compared to sadness rate their legitimacy judgment after manipulation on average 0.683 lower ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% C.I. [-1.086;-0.279]). On average, participants who experienced sadness rated their legitimacy judgments 1.454 lower compared to neutral ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% C.I. [-1.881; -1.028]). As the simple effects show statistically significant differences between anger and neutral, and between anger and sadness, the findings support hypothesis 1. The simple effects show significant difference between sadness and neutral. Furthermore, the significant mean difference between sadness and anger show that participants that are exposed to sadness rate legitimacy judgments 0.683 higher compared to anger, therefore the findings show support for hypothesis 2.

### ***Regression***

The regression is provided as a means for robustness. In order to perform a regression, dummy variable needed to be created for the independent variable and some of the control variables. For all categorical variables dummy variables were created for all their categories. K-1 dummies per categorical variable were included in the analysis (Hair et al., 2018). Based on hypothesis one the coefficient of anger should be negative, and lower than sadness. Based on hypothesis two the coefficient of sadness should be negative, but higher than anger. For the dependent measure legitimacy after manipulation was used.

There are three regression models (Appendix 12). The first model (1) regresses only the control variables on the dependent variable legitimacy judgment. The second model (2) includes the independent dummy variables anger and sadness (neutral reference category) and the controls. The third model (3) regresses only the independent dummy variables anger and sadness on legitimacy. Regarding heteroscedasticity the scatterplot of ZPRED and ZRESID was analyzed (Appendix 13). The data points tend to mostly be distributed around each other, therefore the data is homoscedastic (Hair et al., 2018). The variation inflation factor (VIF) was examined to determine whether there was a multicollinearity problem, a VIF above 5 is problematic (Hair et al., 2018). All VIF values were below 5, therefore multicollinearity is not a problem.

R-squared is very low for model 1, which indicates that the model explains very little of the variation in the dependent variable legitimacy judgment (Hair et al., 2018). R-squared of model 2 and 3 is relatively high, indicating that model 2 and 3 explain a large part of the variation in the dependent variable legitimacy judgment (Hair et al., 2018). The emotional tone dummies are significant in model 2 and 3, indicating strong evidence that emotional tone

(sadness or anger) has a negative effect on legitimacy judgment compared to neutral tone. This is in line with the hypothesis and the findings in the repeated measures ANOVA. Interestingly none of the control variables are significant in model 2. That means in this sample the difference between the categories of the categorical control variables do not significantly affect legitimacy judgment (Hair et al., 2018). The metrics control variables (social business and bottom line business) do not significantly contribute to explaining the variation in the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2018).

## **5. Discussion**

The consequences of social media on legitimacy judgments can be drastic for organizations confronted by public outrage, negative reputation, or social disapproval (Castello et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019; Illia et al., 2022). Individual influences of legitimacy are important to consider as these are influenced by validity cues (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Castello et al., 2016; Díez-de-Castro et al., 2018; Illia et al., 2022; Tost, 2011; van den Broek et al., 2022) and have an impact on public outrage. As extant literature described, media coverage in traditional media acts as a validity cue as it is regarded as having authority (van den Broek et al., 2022), however recent literature has highlighted the role of peer endorsement as validity cue. Peer endorsement can be expressed through social media posts. An important distinction here is that traditional media can be characterized by having a neutral tone, while through social media individuals can express their feelings and emotions freely. Extant legitimacy literature had not yet examined the effects of discrete emotions on legitimacy judgments. In this paper, I set out to discover the effects of a sad and angry emotional tone in social media posts on legitimacy judgments of (international) business administration students in the Netherlands by performing a vignette experiment. The results are in line with the hypothesis 1, that states that anger leads to more negative legitimacy judgment compared to a neutral tone and sad emotional tone. The results are also in line with hypothesis 2, that states that sadness leads to a lower legitimacy judgment compared to a neutral tone, but higher compared to an angry emotional tone. Specifically, the results suggest that when an individual reads an angry social media post and a news article about an organisation, the social media post will be of greater influence on the individual compared to the news article as the social media post contains the emotion and the news article does not. Additionally, the results suggest that when an individual reads a sad social media post and a news article, the legitimacy judgment will be more influenced by the social media post compared to the news

article. The results suggest that when an individual reads a news article and social media posts containing angry and sad emotional tones, the legitimacy judgment will be mostly influenced by the angry social media posts compared to the sad social media posts. These findings are in line with the expected effects based on appraisal theory and emotional contagion theory.

### ***Theoretical implications and contributions***

This paper has several contributions. First, the study contributes to the understanding of sources of validity and validity cues. As prior research identified authority and peer assessment as sources of validity (van den Broek et al., 2022), the results suggest that social media posts also can be considered as validity cues for students who are forming a legitimacy judgment. The results show significant differences between neutral tone and emotional tone concerning legitimacy judgments after seeing peer endorsed social media posts.

Secondly, by including discrete emotions in the social media posts the paper contributes by nuancing the negative sentiment or emotions effects on legitimacy judgments prior research had found. This adds another dimension to the understanding of negative sentiment effects on legitimacy judgments. For example, Haack et al. (2014) showed transnational governance schemes' (TGCs) legitimacy mainly depends on the affect based responses towards network affiliates. Haack et al. (2014) found that the greater the affective response, the greater the bottom-up vertical spill over. Suppose organization X participated in a class action lawsuit started by the United Nations against company A because company A withheld information about an oil leak that contaminated waters. According to Haack et al. (2014) the United Nations legitimacy is based on the affect base response to organization X. Where negative affective response leads to a more negative legitimacy judgment. According to my findings this effect would be more nuanced. When a student reads an angry social media post about organization X compared to a sad tweet about organization X, the student would rate the legitimacy of the United Nations lower after reading the angry social media post compared to the sad social media post. Furthermore, student who read about the collaboration in the news paper would rate the legitimacy of the United Nations higher compared to those students who discovered about the collaboration through a sad or angry social media post. Thirdly, the study displays a new technique to the field for validating emotion by including text2emotion as a measure of validation for the discrete emotions that were used for the manipulations.

Fourthly, the paper puts the concept of legitimacy in the context of modern-day communication. By recognizing the shifting dynamics in the media landscape and the

importance of social media (Etter et al., 2016; Etter et al., 2019; Illia et al., 2022), the study conceptualized legitimacy in the context of social media and therefore contributed to bridging the gap between traditional media and social media. Extant literature mainly reached finding in the era in which the traditional media was dominant (e.g., Bitektine (2011); Bitektine & Haack (2015)). With the increased use of social media (Goldenberg & Gross, 2020), the context in which legitimacy judgment have to be made shifted and therefore the findings of extant literature need to be investigated for relevance with the new media dynamics. This paper attempted to close the bridge between the findings based on traditional media era and the findings based on social media era.

### ***Limitation and future research***

There were several limitations with regards to the findings. Firstly, with the interpretation it is assumed that all 3 dimensions of the legitimacy judgment are of equal importance and should all be included. However, in certain context this is not necessary the case. Sometimes there is an overlap between the dimensions or some dimensions are prioritized (Tost, 2011). As this was beyond the scope of this research, future research could include this by pre-testing a specific case scenario with participants and ask them to indicate the importance per dimension.

Secondly, the social media posts were anonymous. The social media posts were anonymous the participant could not see whether the person would have any ties or connections with the person. This was done deliberately in order to control for this networked effect (Castello et al., 2016), however could adopt a social network perspective and for example research equivalence and strength of social ties would impact the effect of emotional tone in social media post on legitimacy judgments.

Lastly, I have made an assumption regarding the important of legitimacy judgments on the micro-level. I assumed that as extant literature indicates that legitimacy judgments on the micro-level affect legitimacy on the macro level (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Tost, 2011). My theorizing would be of more value if the cross-level effects was measured. For this multilevel research is needed to how emotional tone in social media posts influence legitimacy at the macro level.

Regarding the methodology it is important to note that my limited sample size and homogenous sample result in results that are not generalizable to the general population, e.g., the population of the Netherlands. In order to do so, future research should include a heterogeneous sample and control for the effects mentioned by previous literature such as age,

gender, norms and values and evaluative mode. Furthermore, the results of python show that the text do not carry one specific emotional tone, but sometime show overlap between sadness and fear, or even happy or surprise. This is because text2emotions is based on word association, therefore when a sentence contains a word that is associated with happy, the output would show this, even if the overall tone is anger. For this limitation of this method was controlled by including a manipulation check in the survey and asking the participants to indicate the tone.

For future research, I want to offer one more recommendation. In my paper I only focused on text as social media post. However social media is a platform that allows for so much more than text, e.g., photo and videos. I would be interesting to see whether photos and videos or even a combination have a different effect on legitimacy judgment than text. This could be researched in a 2x2 factorial experimental design for instance. Lefsrud et al. (2019) developed a process model which creates emotional appeals that could influence legitimacy judgments (Lefsrud et al., 2019).

In conclusion, this paper contributes to earlier studies of the effect of social media on legitimacy judgments. The results show that anger leads to a lower legitimacy judgment compared to sadness and neutral tones, and that sadness led to a lower legitimacy judgment compared to neutral, but higher compared to anger. Taken together the results of this paper provide a first insight on how discrete emotions influence legitimacy judgments of business administration students.

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# Appendix

*Appendix 1: Correlation table*

	Age	Gender	Education	Social Business	BottomLine Business	JudgmentBefore	JudgmentAfter	Emotional Tone	Evaluative mode
Age	1								
Gender	0.135	1							
Education	0.83	0.126	1						
Social Business	-0.018	0.194*	0.384*	1					
BottomLine Business	0.080	-0.025	-0.253*	-0.370*	1				
JudgmentBefore	0.165	-0.039	0.173*	-0.057	0.149	1			
JudgmentAfter	-0.036	-0.065	-0.125	-0.108	0.204*	0.060	1		
Emotional Tone	0.011	-0.068	0.048	0.133	-0.183*	-0.041	-0.518*	1	
Evaluative mode	0.091	-0.120	-0.252*	-0.110	0.106	-0.106	0.034	-0.028	1
*correlation is significant at 0.05 level									

## Appendix 2: Survey

Q1 Welcome to my survey! I am currently following a Strategic Management master's at Radboud University. For my study, I am researching the individual's legitimacy judgement. The survey will be held in English and will take approximately 5 - 10 minutes. Participation is completely voluntary. The data will be confidentially handled and the survey will be completely anonymous. You have the option to withdraw at anytime. It is also important to know that there is no right or wrong answer. If you have any comments or questions about the research, please send an e-mail to [xx]. Please indicate whether you agree with this. By agreeing you can proceed with the survey.

Thank you very much for participating in my research!

- I agree
  - I do not agree
- 

[News article]

Q2 Imagine that this is the only information available about G&PD Training Institute, and you do not want to search for additional information.

Now some statements about G&PD Training Institute follow. Please indicate below to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat degree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I believe that G&PD Training Institute creates value for its stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I believe that G&PD Training Institute's policies cater to the interests of their stakeholders

I believe that G&PD Training Institute's activities benefit their immediate stakeholders

I think G&PD Training Institute treats people with respect

I believe G&PD Training Institute treats people with dignity

I feel connected to group of clients of G&PD Training Institute

I would define myself as a potential member of client group of G&PD Training Institute

I think the general public would approve of G&PD Training Institute's policies and procedures.

I think most people would consider G&PD Training Institute's practices to be moral.

I think the way G&PD Training Institute operates promotes the common good.

I think G&PD Training Institute is concerned with meeting acceptable standards for ethical behaviour in their field.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

G&PD Training Institute’s policies seem appropriate.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

If more organizations adopted policies and procedures like G&PD Training Institute, the world would be a better place.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Some people talked about G&PD Training Institute on their social media. Please read the texts below, and indicate to what extent you agree with the statements.

[Tweets neutral]

Q3 Imagine that this is the only information available about G&PD Training Institute, and you do not want to search for additional information.

Now some statements about G&PD Training Institute follow. Please indicate below to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Strongly disagree (1)    Disagree (2)    Somewhat disagree (3)    Neither agree nor disagree (4)    Somewhat degree (5)    Agree (6)    Strongly agree (7)

I believe that G&PD Training Institute creates value for its stakeholders

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

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I think the way G&PD Training Institute operates promotes the common good.

I think G&PD Training Institute is concerned with meeting acceptable standards for ethical behaviour in their field.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

G&PD Training Institute's policies seem appropriate.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

If more organizations adopted policies and procedures like G&PD Training Institute, the world would be a better place.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anger

[News article]

Q4 Imagine that this is the only information available about G&PD Training Institute, and you do not want to search for additional information.

Now some statements about G&PD Training Institute follow. Please indicate below to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat degree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
-----------------------	--------------	-----------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------	-----------	--------------------

I believe that G&PD Training Institute creates value for its stakeholders

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

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I think the way G&PD Training Institute operates promotes the common good.

I think G&PD Training Institute is concerned with meeting acceptable standards for ethical behaviour in their field.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

G&PD Training Institute’s policies seem appropriate.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

If more organizations adopted policies and procedures like G&PD Training Institute, the world would be a better place.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Some people talked about G&PD Training Institute on their social media. Please read the texts below, and indicate to what extent you agree with the statements.

[angry tweets]

Q5 Imagine that this is the only information available about company G&PD, and you do not want to search for additional information.

Now some statements about G&PD training institute follow. Please indicate below to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Strongly Disagree (1)    Disagree (2)    Somewhat disagree (3)    Neither agree nor disagree (4)    Somewhat degree (5)    Agree (6)    Strongly agree (7)

I believe that G&PD Training Institute creates value for its stakeholders

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

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I think the way G&PD Training Institute operates promotes the common good.

I think G&PD Training Institute is concerned with meeting acceptable standards for ethical behaviour in their field.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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G&PD Training Institute’s policies seem appropriate.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

If more organizations adopted policies and procedures like G&PD Training Institute, the world would be a better place.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Sadness

[news article]

Q6 Imagine that this is the only information available about G&PD Training Institute, and you do not want to search for additional information.

Now some statements about G&PD Training Institute follow. Please indicate below to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat degree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
-----------------------	--------------	-----------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------	-----------	--------------------

I believe that G&PD Training Institute creates value for its stakeholders

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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G&PD Training Institute's policies seem appropriate.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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If more organizations adopted policies and procedures like G&PD Training Institute, the world would be a better place.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Some people talked about G&PD Training Institute on their social media. Please read the texts below, and indicate to what extent you agree with the statements.

[Tweets sad]

Q7 Imagine that this is the only information available about G&PD Training Institute, and you do not want to search for additional information.

Now some statements about G&PD Training Institute follow. Please indicate below to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat degree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
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I believe that G&PD Training Institute creates value for its stakeholders

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I think G&PD Training Institute is concerned with meeting acceptable standards for ethical behaviour in their field.

G&PD Training Institute's policies seem appropriate.

If more organizations adopted policies and procedures like G&PD Training Institute, the world would be a better place.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Q8 How would you rate the social media posts you just read in terms of emotional tone?

- Neutral (1)
  - Angry (2)
  - Sad (3)
  - Happy (4)
  - Fearful (5)
- 

Q9 Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below.

Strongly disagree (1)    Disagree (2)    Somewhat disagree (3)    Neither agree nor disagree (4)    Somewhat degree (5)    Agree (6)    Strongly agree (7)

I am easily influenced by the media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am easily influenced by other individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that organizations should adhere to societal norms and values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that organizations should only consider the bottom line when it comes to their businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 With what gender do you identify?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary/third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q11 What is your age?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18-24 (2)
- 25-34 (3)
- 35-44 (4)
- 45-54 (5)
- 55-64 (6)
- 65-74 (7)
- 75-84 (8)
- 85 or older (9)

Q12 What is your highest achieved education?

- Bachelor Business Administration (1)
- Bachelor International Business Administration (2)
- Master Business Administration (3)
- Master International Business Administration (4)

Q13 Please indicate your country of main residence based on the last 5 years.

- The Netherlands (1)
- Belgium (2)
- Germany (3)
- Luxembourg (4)
- United Kingdom (5)

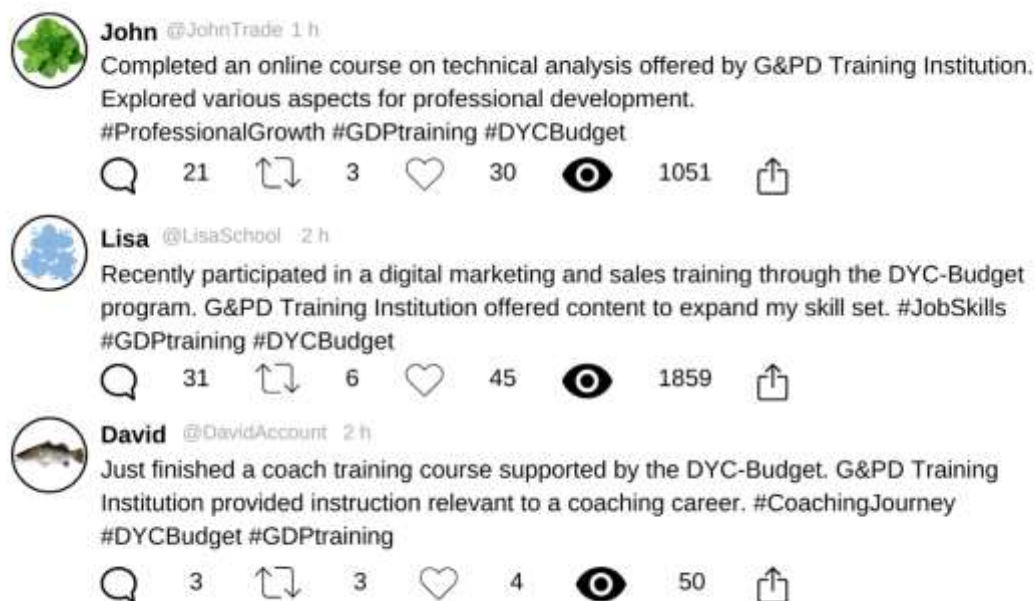
- Sweden (6)
- Denmark (7)
- Norway (8)
- Finland (9)
- Other... (10)

### Appendix 3: Links to real-life news articles

- <https://nos.nl/artikel/2442208-opleiders-profiteren-van-stap-subsidie-en-verhogen-kosten-cursussen>
- <https://nos.nl/artikel/2458908-miljoenen-uit-stap-budget-komen-terecht-bij-kleine-groep-aanbieders>
- <https://nos.nl/artikel/2287407-studiepot-van-1000-tot-2000-euro-voor-bijbscholing-aftrekpost-verdwijnt>
- <https://nos.nl/video/2415882-stap-budget-vanaf-1-maart-beschikbaar>
- <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/leven-lang-ontwikkelen/leven-lang-ontwikkelen-financiele-regelingen/stap-budget>
- <https://www.trouw.nl/binnenland/miljoenen-subsidie-naar-opleidingen-tot-bloesemtherapeut-stiefgezincoach-en-dronepiloot~b6b348d3/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>
- <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/economie/artikel/5357702/miss-bitcoin-2-miljoen-stap-budget-madelon-vos>
- <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/economie/artikel/5357702/miss-bitcoin-2-miljoen-stap-budget-madelon-vos>
- [https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/stap-budgetten-miljoenen-subsidie-naar-kwakzalverij?utm\\_campaign=Nikki-Brands&utm\\_source=article&utm\\_medium=link&share=KQgSjyLY5rFCw32qUVMKYfpGzwyIi78w5%2F7HEa%2BvXWqNLo%2B%2B48doz0DiwNk%2FfxE%3D](https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/stap-budgetten-miljoenen-subsidie-naar-kwakzalverij?utm_campaign=Nikki-Brands&utm_source=article&utm_medium=link&share=KQgSjyLY5rFCw32qUVMKYfpGzwyIi78w5%2F7HEa%2BvXWqNLo%2B%2B48doz0DiwNk%2FfxE%3D)

### Appendix 4: Original tweets pre-test

Neutral



Anger

- John** @JohnTrade 1 h  
G&PD Training Institution scammed us with their overpriced course on technical analysis! They took advantage of the DYC-Budget and left us with empty promises. I'm infuriated by their greed and deceit. #RippedOff #AngryConsumers  
21 3 30 1051
- Lisa** @LisaSchool 2 h  
Can't believe G&PD Training Institution charged €1850 for a course that didn't deliver what it promised. They exploited the DYC-Budget, and now I'm left feeling cheated and angry. It's a disgrace! #DeceptivePractices #UnfairTreatment  
31 6 45 1859
- David** @DavidAccount 2 h  
G&PD Training Institution has been profiting off the government's funding scheme, but their course was a complete failure. It's enraging to see them make millions while we're left with wasted time and money. Time to expose their scam! #Furious #CorruptionExposed  
3 3 4 50

Python score	Happy	Anger	Surprise	Sad	Fear
tweet 1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.6
tweet 2	0.14	0.29	0.14	0.29	0.14
tweet 3	0.0	0.17	0.0	0.33	0.5

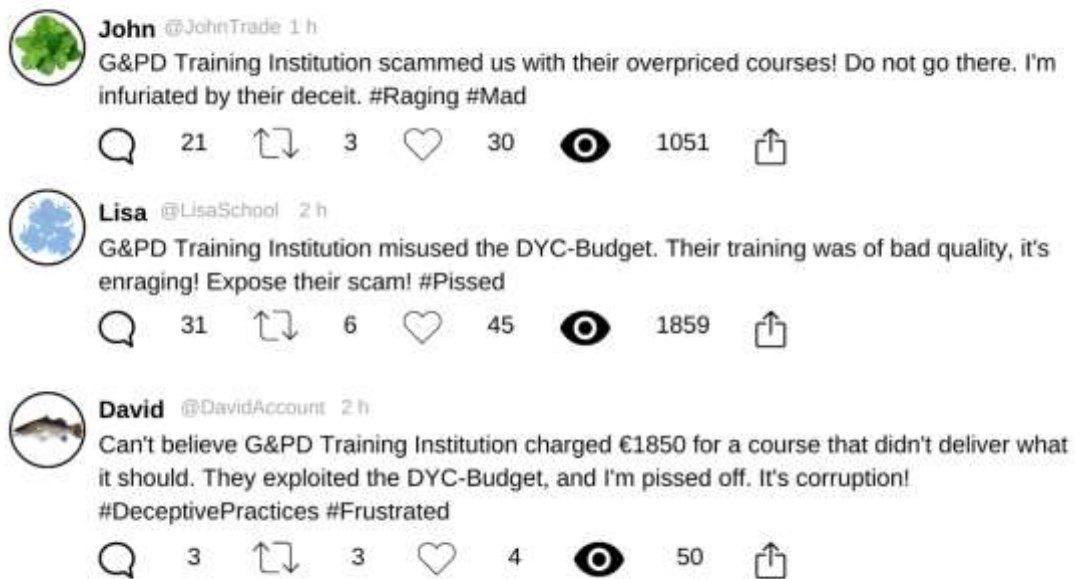
## Sad

- John** @JohnTrade 1 h  
Just discovered that the course I took with G&PD Training Institution didn't help my career at all. I feel so let down and defeated. All that effort and money invested, and it was a waste. #Disappointed #CareerSetback  
21 3 30 1051
- Lisa** @LisaSchool 2 h  
I thought the DYC-Budget would be my chance to enhance my career, but the course from G&PD Training Institution didn't make any difference. I feel so lost and hopeless now. What a missed opportunity. #Regretful #CareerStagnation  
31 6 45 1859
- David** @DavidAccount 2 h  
The course on technical analysis from G&PD Training Institution was my shot at a better future. But it didn't live up to my expectations. I'm heartbroken and unsure about my career prospects now. #DashedHopes #CareerDissatisfaction  
3 3 4 50

Python score	Happy	Anger	Surprise	Sad	Fear
tweet 1	0.0	0.0	0.33	0.33	0.33
tweet 2	0.12	0.0	0.0	0.62	0.25
tweet 3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.8

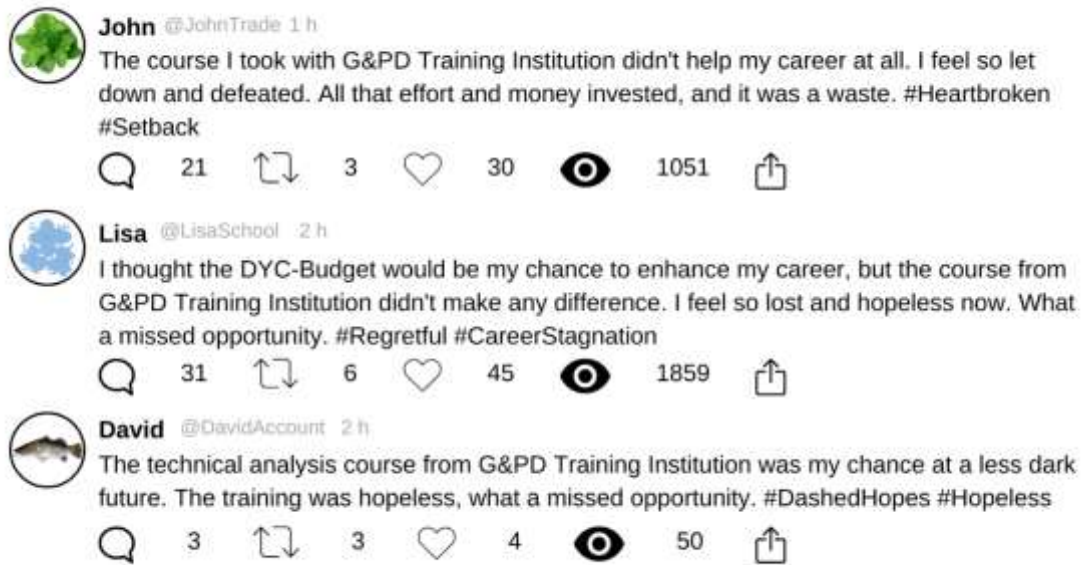
## Appendix 5: Tweets after post-test

### Anger



Python score	Happy	Anger	Surprise	Sad	Fear
tweet 1	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5
tweet 2	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5
tweet 3	0.17	0.5	0.17	0.0	0.17

## Sadness



Python score	Happy	Anger	Surprise	Sad	Fear
tweet 1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5
tweet 2	0.12	0.0	0.0	0.62	0.25
tweet 3	0.12	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.38

## Appendix 6: News article pre-test



News Daily - Friday 6th of June 2023, 18:50



### G&PD Training Institute books record turnover with the help of the Government's DYC-Budget

In 2020, the Government introduced the DYC-Budget. The develop your career budget is meant to aid people in developing their careers with courses and training. The people can apply to it and, when granted, can use the budget of €2000,- to participate in a wide array of courses and training. Each year 200.000 people can participate in four different rounds. The Ministry of Education and social affairs will directly pay the institution that offers the training to prevent abuse.

Most further training took place in digital marketing and sales, personal effectiveness and training to become a coach. Another popular education was an online investing course taught by G&PD Training Institute. G&PD offers courses in "technical analysis". These courses are aimed at making predictions about the future of the market based on previous trends and share prices. The company taught 2500 in the last year. The course costs €1850,-. With 2500 students, the company earned a gross sales of €4.625.000 the previous year, which was paid for by the Government. This was their highest turnover yet since the company started in early 2010.

The new round of the DYC-budget was planned for the 1st of september 2023, however this will be postponed until further notice. The ministry wants to have extra time in order to introduce additional conditions for the future rounds of the DYC-Budget.

G&PD Training Institute has been offering a wide array of courses since 2010. The company has been very stable, both in behaviour and financially.

#### Read more like this

New DYC-budget; what is it?

Is the new DYC-budget effective?

Record high of new online courses available

## Appendix 7: News article post-test



News Daily - Friday 6th of June 2023, 18:50



### G&PD Training Institute books record turnover with the help of the Government's DYC-Budget

In 2020, the Government introduced the DYC-Budget. The develop your career budget is meant to aid people in developing their careers with courses and training. The people can apply to it and, when granted, can use the budget of €2000,- to participate in a wide array of courses and training. Each year 200.000 people can participate in four different rounds. The Ministry of Education and social affairs will directly pay the institution that offers the training to prevent abuse.

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#### Read more like this

New DYC-budget; what is it?

Is the new DYC-budget effective?

Record high of new online courses available

**Appendix 8: Operationalization table variables**

Concept and conceptualization	Dimensions	Operationalization
<b>Main variables</b>		
<p>Individual legitimacy judgment</p> <p>Tost (2011) defines an organizational legitimacy judgement as an individual's perception or attitude regarding a company's efforts to achieve desired goals or outcomes (instrumental dimension), its treatment of others with dignity and respect (relational dimension), and its adherence to normative standards (moral dimension) (Bachmann &amp; Ingenhoff, 2016; Tost, 2011)</p>	<p>Tost (2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instrumental</li> <li>- Relational</li> <li>- Moral</li> </ul>	<p>Average of the three dimensions. The dimensions are measured on 7-point Likert scale (1 = “illegitimate” and 7 = “legitimate”)</p>
<p>Instrumental dimension</p> <p>According to the instrumental dimension, people act based on how their interactions with social entities and authorities benefit them therefore, organizations are viewed as legitimate when they assist the individual in achieving their material interests (Tost, 2011).</p>	<p>Tost (2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responds to needs of stakeholders</li> <li>- Benefits stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>Alexiou &amp; Wiggins (2018):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Value for stakeholders</li> <li>- Interest for stakeholders</li> <li>- Benefits for stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”)</p> <p>I believe that G&amp;PD Training Institute creates value for its stakeholders.</p> <p>I believe that G&amp;PD Training Institute’s policies cater to the interests of their stakeholders.</p>

		I believe that G&PD Training Institute's activities benefit their immediate stakeholders.
<p><b>Relational dimension</b></p> <p>According to relational dimensions of legitimacy, legitimacy results from the extent to which an entity communicates to the individual that he or she is accorded respect, dignity, and status within the context of the group and through group membership (Tost, 2011)</p>	<p>Tost (2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respect</li> <li>- Dignity</li> <li>- Group membership</li> </ul> <p>Van den Berg et al. (2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social identity theory</li> <li>- Self-categorization theory</li> </ul>	<p>7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree")</p> <p>I think G&amp;PD Training Institute treats people with respect.</p> <p>I believe G&amp;PD Training Institute treats people with dignity.</p> <p>I feel connected to group of clients of G&amp;PD Training Institute.</p> <p>I would define myself as a potential member of client group of G&amp;PD Training Institute.</p>
<p><b>Moral Dimension</b></p> <p>A morally legitimate entity is perceived to be consistent with the evaluator's moral and ethical standards (Tost, 2011).</p>	<p>Tost (2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ethical standards</li> <li>- Morals</li> <li>- Norms and values</li> </ul> <p>Alexiou &amp; Wiggins (2018):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public approval</li> <li>- Morals</li> <li>- Common good</li> <li>- Standards and ethics</li> <li>- Policies appropriate</li> <li>- Better world</li> </ul>	<p>7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree")</p> <p>I think the general public would approve of G&amp;PD Training Institute's policies and procedures.</p>

		<p>Categorical variable with 3 levels based on dimensions.</p> <p>I think most people would consider G&amp;PD Training Institute’s practices to be moral.</p> <p>I think the way G&amp;PD Training Institute operates promotes the common good.</p> <p>I think G&amp;PD Training Institute is concerned with meeting acceptable standards for ethical behaviour in their field.</p> <p>G&amp;PD Training Institute’s policies seem appropriate.</p> <p>If more organizations adopted policies and procedures like G&amp;PD Training Institute, the world would be a better place.</p>
<p>Emotional tone</p> <p>Emotional tone is a psycholinguistic variable that describes the presence of positive and negative emotions in written text as the contrast between positive-emotion words and negative-emotion words (Cohn et al., 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sadness</li> <li>- Anger</li> </ul> <p>Control group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neutral</li> </ul> <p>For manipulation check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Happy</li> <li>- Fearful</li> </ul>	<p>Categorical variable, with 5 levels.</p> <p>Manipulation instruments were validated using Text2Emotion and a manipulation check in the survey.</p>

<b>Control variables</b>		
Evaluative mode	- Time (van den Broek et al., 2022)	Categorical variable with 2 levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passive (600 seconds or lower)</li> <li>- Active (601 seconds or higher)</li> </ul>
Norms and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Bottom line(Crane &amp; Matten, 2016; Shaw, 2017)</li> <li>o In line with norms values society (Crane &amp; Matten, 2016; Shaw, 2017)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Main country of residence</li> </ul>	<p>Business ethics</p> <p>7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”)</p> <p>I believe that organizations should adhere to societal norms and values</p> <p>I believe that organizations should only consider the bottom line when it comes to their businesses</p> <p>Main country of residence</p> <p>Categorical variable with 10 levels</p>
Age  Standard input Qualtrics		<p>Categorical variable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Under 18</li> <li>- 18-24</li> <li>- 25-34</li> <li>- 45-54</li> <li>- 55-64</li> <li>- 65-74</li> <li>- 75-84</li> </ul>

		- 85 or older
Gender Standard input Qualtrics		Categorical variable - Male - Female - Non-binary/ third-gender - Prefer not to say
Education	- Bachelor Business Administration - Bachelor International Business Administration - Master Business Administration - Master International Business Administration	Categorical variable

**Appendix 9: Descriptives total sample and conditions**

Total sample	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Age	94	2,40	0,515	2	4
Gender	94	1,62	0,705	1	4
Education	94	2,73	0,778	1	4
Main Residence	94	1	0	1	1
Social Business	94	6.36	0.866	3	7
BottomLine Business	94	2.40	1.469	1	7
Judgment Before	94	3.928	0.813	1.69	6.31
Judgment after	94	2.543	1.113	1	5.54
Emotional Tone	94	1.99	0.783	1	3
Evaluative mode	94	1.19	0.396	1	2

Neutral	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Age	29	2.41	0.501	2	3
Gender	29	1.72	0.797	1	4
Education	29	2.66	0.897	1	4
Main Residence	29	1	0	1	1
Social Business	29	6.28	0.797	4	7

BottomLine Business	29	2.83	1.627	1	7
Judgment Before	29	3.878	0.472	3.08	5.15
Judgment after	29	3.817	0.810	1.54	5.54
Emotional Tone	29	1	0	1	1
Evaluative mode	29	1.21	0.412	1	2

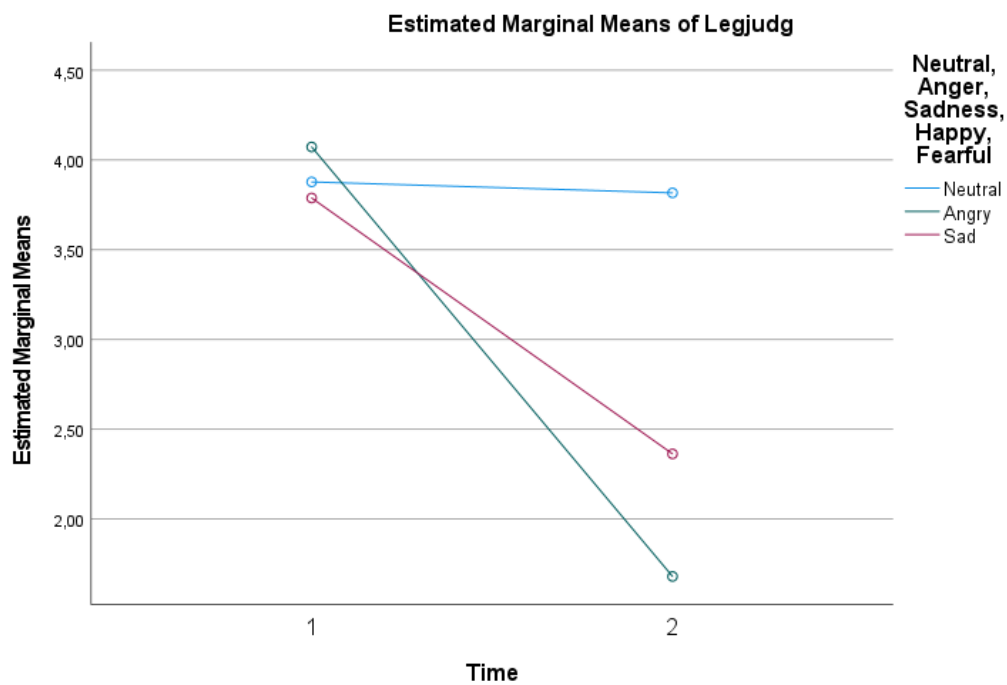
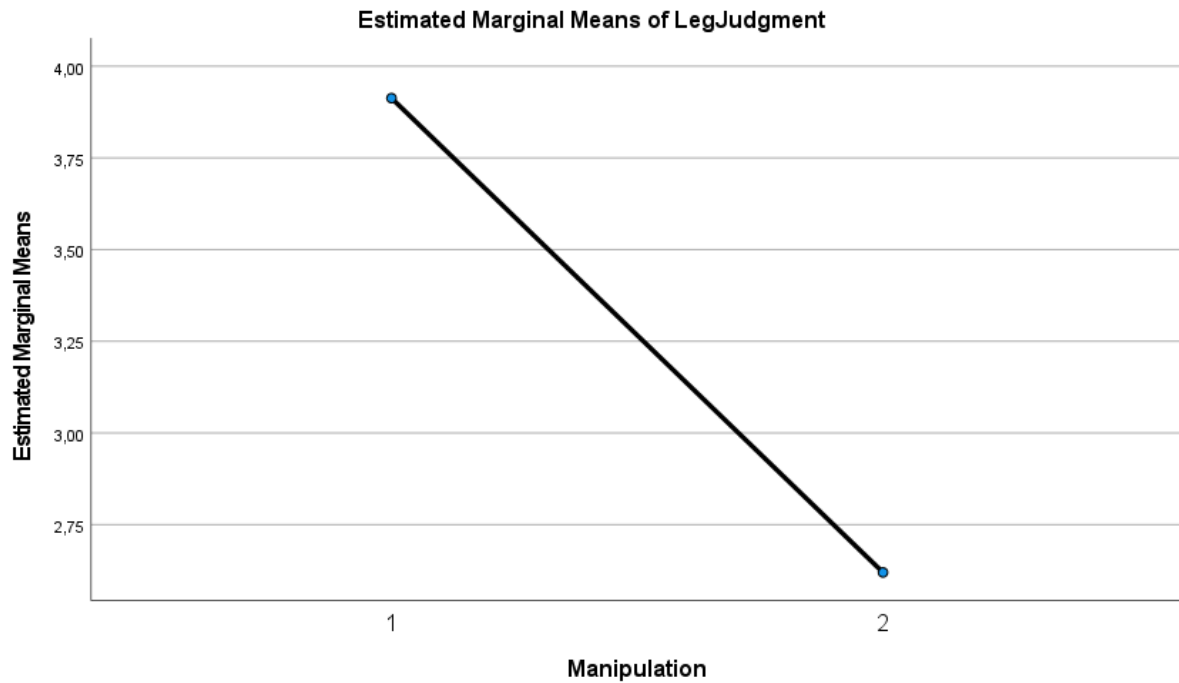
Anger	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Age	37	2.38	0.492	2	3
Gender	37	1.57	0.689	1	4
Education	37	2.78	0.750	1	4
Main Residence	37	1	0	1	1
Social Business	37	6.27	0.902	4	7
BottomLine Business	37	2.27	1.521	1	7
Judgment Before	37	4.073	1.015	1.69	6.31
Judgment after	37	1.680	0.664	1	4
Emotional Tone	37	2	0	2	2
Evaluative mode	37	1.19	0.97	1	2

Sadness	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Age	28	2.43	0.573	2	4
Gender	28	1.57	0.634	1	3
Education	28	2.75	0.701	1	4
Main Residence	28	1	0	1	1
Social Business	28	6.57	0.879	3	7
BottomLine Business	28	2.14	1.145	1	6
Judgment Before	28	3.789	0.789	1.77	5.62
Judgment after	28	2.36	0.447	1.38	3.15
Emotional Tone	28	3	0	3	3
Evaluative mode	28	1.18	0.390	1	2

**Appendix 10: Repeated measures Anova Results main effects**

Main effect		F = 180.473 Sig. < 0.001	Interaction effect			F = 51.564 Sig. < 0.001
Emotional Tone(I)	Emotional Tone(J)	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-value	95% C.I.	
Neutral	Anger	0.971	0.143	< 0.001	[0.622;1.321]	
	Sadness	0.772	0.153	< 0.001	[0.399;1.145]	
Anger	Neutral	-0.971	0.143	< 0.001	[-1.321;-0.662]	
	Sadness	-0.199	0.145	0.516	[-0.552;0.154]	
Sadness	Neutral	-0.772	0.153	< 0.001	[-1.145;-0.399]	
	Anger	.199	0.145	0.516	[-0.154;0.522]	

Note: a. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level; b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni



**Appendix 11: Repeated measures ANOVA – simple effects**

Manipulation	Emotional Tone (I)	Emotional Tone (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% C.I.
Judgment before	Neutral	Angry	-0.197	0.202	1.000	[-0.686;0.297]
		Sad	0.090	0.215	1.000	[-0.436;0.615]
	Angry	Neutral	0.195	0.202	1.000	[-0.297;0.686]
		Sad	0.284	0.204	0.498	[-0.212;0.781]
	Sad	Neutral	-0.090	0.215	1.000	[-0.615;0.436]
		Angry	-0.284	0.204	0.498	[-0.781;0.212]
Judgment after	Neutral	Angry	2.137	0.164	<0.001	[1.738;2.537]
		Sad	1.454	0.175	<0.001	[1.028;1.881]
	Angry	Neutral	-2.137	0.164	<0.001	[-2.537;-1.738]
		Sad	-0.683	0.165	<0.001	[-1.086;-0.279]
	Sad	Neutral	-1.454	0.175	<0.001	[-1.881;-1.028]
		Angry	0.683	0.165	<0.001	[0.279;1.086]

**Appendix 12: Regression results**

Legitimacy Judgment After	Models		
	1	2	3
Constant	1.798 (0.120)	4.138 (<0.001)	3.817 (<0.001)
Dummy Anger		-2.130 (<0.001)	-2.137 (<0.001)
Dummy Sadness		-1.420 (<0.001)	-1.454 (<0.001)
Dummy Age 25-34	-0.232 (0.398)	-0.187 (0.250)	
Dummy Age 35-44	1.178 (0.471)	0.708 (0.463)	
Dummy gender female	0.027 (0.916)	-0.169(0.267)	
Dummy gender nonbinary	-0.726 (0.303)	-0.344 (0.411)	
Dummy gender prefnotsay	0.002 (0.998)	-0.577 (0.175)	
Dummy education BBA	0.365 (0.337)	0.125 (0.579)	

Dummy education BIBA	-0.729 (0.529)	-0.358 (0.606)	
Dummy education MIBA	0.633 (0.281)	0.322 (0.354)	
Dummy evaluative mode active	-0.003 (0.993)	-0.00006 (1)	
BottomLine Business	0.191 (0.039)	0.054(0.332)	
Social business	0.047 (0.771)	-0.50 (0.601)	
Observations (N)	94	94	94
F-statistic	0.763 (0.675)	13.880 (<0.001)	86.656 (<0.001)
R-squared	0.093	0.693	0.656
Adj. R-squared	-0.029	0.643	0.648
Control	Controls only	Included	Excluded

**Appendix 13: scatterplot ZPRED and ZRESID**

