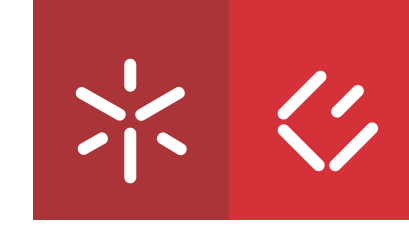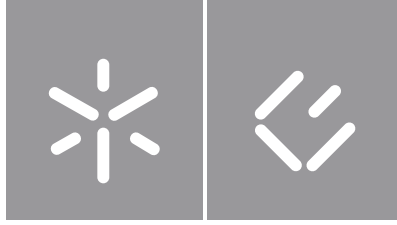Cláudia Sofia Gomes da Costa

Cancel Culture: What does it mean for a brand to be cancelled?

July 2022

University of Minho
School of Economics and Management

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Cancel Culture: What does it mean for a brand to be cancelled?

Masters Dissertation
Masters in Marketing and Strategy

Work conducted under the supervision of
Professor António Joaquim Araújo de Azevedo

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To my parents, for allowing this to happen and setting me up for a life filled with possibilities.

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STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

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RESUMO

Título: Cancel Culture: O que significa uma marca ser cancelada?

À medida que o mundo se tornava mais interligado, abriu-se uma porta para os consumidores chegarem às marcas de forma diferente e exigirem responsabilidade. Neste sentido, e impulsionada pela Geração Z e pelos Millennials e a sua crença em mudar o mundo, *cancel culture* surgiu como a prática de expressar desaprovação e exercer pressão social, retirando apoio ou boicotando uma marca ou organização. Por isso, esta dissertação é motivada pela preocupação com o potencial prejudicial das emoções anti-marca e consequências negativas, incluindo a vingança dos consumidores (Hegner et al., 2017), sabotagem da marca (Grégoire et al., 2009), boicote à marca (Balabanis, 2013; Copeland, 2014; He et al., 2021) ou perda de capital de marca (Nam et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018) e pretende compreender o impacto da *cancel culture* na intenção de compra e se existe possibilidade de perdão.

Para isso, foi implementada uma metodologia mista, constituída por um estudo de netnografia e uma distribuição de questionário online. Em primeiro lugar, tendo em conta os últimos quatro anos (2018-2021), a API pushshift foi utilizada no subreddit r/Askreddit para recuperar todas as *threads* resultantes da combinação de palavras-chave: "cancel (culture)" e uma palavra-chave relacionada com "marca", "negócio" ou "empresa" Por fim, foi distribuído um inquérito online onde se explorou um cenário de incompatibilidade ideológica e, posteriormente, um pedido de desculpas da marca.

Os resultados mostram que os antecedentes da *cancel culture* são incompatibilidades ideológicas tais como a religião, o racismo, os direitos dos animais, LGBTQIA+, as questões ambientais, entre outras. Estes levam à existência de ódio pela marca, o que leva a uma menor intenção de recomendar a marca, a evitar da marca, boicote à marca, à retaliação da marca e à intenção de cancelar a marca, que por sua vez leva a uma diminuição da intenção de compra. No entanto, existem estratégias de mitigação de marketing que as marcas podem adotar, e ter um plano preventivo pré-crise é a primeira. Depois, podem criar uma estratégia de comunicação de crises durante uma tempestade online e, mais tarde, decidir sobre um acompanhamento ou *rebranding*. A única estratégia de comunicação de crise testada foi um pedido de desculpas, que leva a um aumento da intenção de compra, ao perdão da marca e uma diminuição da intenção de cancelar a marca. As contribuições teóricas e práticas deste estudo são extremamente relevantes, uma vez que *cancel culture* é um tema atual com pouca informação, e esta é a primeira dissertação com um modelo conceptual para ilustrar o percurso de cancel culture, para além de desenvolver uma escala para o cancelamento.

Palavras-chave: cancel culture, evitar a marca, incompatibilidade ideológica, ódio pela marca

ABSTRACT

Title: Cancel Culture: What does it mean for a brand to be cancelled?

As the world became more interconnected, a door opened for consumers to reach brands differently and demand accountability. In this sense and powered by Generation Z and Millennials and their belief in changing the world, *cancel culture* emerged as the practice of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure by withdrawing support or boycotting a brand or organization. Therefore, this research is motivated by the concern about the harmful potential of anti-brand emotions and negative consequences, including consumer revenge (Hegner et al., 2017), brand sabotage (Grégoire et al., 2009), brand boycott (Balabanis, 2013; Copeland, 2014; He et al., 2021) or loss of brand equity (Nam et al., 2020; T. Zhang et al., 2018) and aims to understand the impact of cancel culture on purchase intention and if there is possibility for forgiveness.

To achieve that, a mixed methodology was implemented, consisting of a netnography study, and an online survey distribution. Firstly, considering the last four years (2018-2021), the Pushshift API was used in the r/Askreddit subreddit to retrieve all the discussion questions (threads) resulting from the combination of keywords: "cancel (culture)" and a keyword related to "brand", "business" or "company. Lastly, an online survey was distributed where a scenario of ideological incompatibility and, later, an apology by the brand were explored.

Results show that cancel culture antecedents are ideological incompatibilities in areas such as religion, racism, animal rights, LGBTQIA+, and environmental issues, among others. These trigger brand hate, which then leads to a lower intention to recommend the brand, to brand avoidance, brand boycott, brand retaliation and the intention to cancel the brand, which intern leads to a decrease in purchase intention. However, there are marketing mitigation strategies that brands can adopt, and having a pre-crisis preventive plan is the first of them. Then, they can create a crisis communication strategy during an online firestorm and, later, decide on a follow-up or rebranding. The only tested crisis communication strategy was an apology and that leads to an increase in purchase intention, brand forgiveness and a decrease in the intention to cancel the brand.

The theoretical and practical contributions of this study are extremely relevant, as cancel culture is a current topic with little information, and this is the first thesis with a conceptual model to illustrate the cancel culture journey, alongside a brand cancellation scale.

Keywords: brand forgiveness, brand hate, cancel culture, ideological incompatibilities

INDEX

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NeWOM – Negative Electronic Word-of-Mouth

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

eWOM – Electronic Word-of-Mouth

NWOM – Negative Word-of-Mouth

UGC – User Generated Content

RO – Research Objective

SO – Specific Objective

Q – Question

M – Mean

SD – Standard Deviation

PI – Purchase Intention

WOM – Word-of-Mouth

BF – Brand Forgiveness

BH – Brand Hate

BC – Brand Cancellation

BA – Brand Avoidance

BR – Brand Retaliation

BL – Brand Love

MSA – Measure of Sampling Adequacy

PR – Public Relations

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Chapter 1. Introduction

For decades, activism practices served political, social and environmental purposes only, but while brands and companies avoided deliberately taking a stand on activistic matters, organizations are now frequent targets of social activists aiming to change the world by enforcing change on organizational policies and practices (Briscoe & Gupta, 2016).

However, in the current socio-political framework, the scenario is different. There has been an increased interest in brand activism, as more marketing leaders believe it is appropriate for their brand to take a stance on politically-charged issues now more than it was two years ago (Moorman, 2020). For example, Budweiser, Airbnb, Google, Coca-Cola, and Microsoft, joined activists to express their opinions on socio-political issues in advertising campaigns (Clemenson, 2017; Hong & Li, 2021). Brand activism and consumer movements are the new platforms for participatory culture and consumerism citizenship (Kozinets & Jenkins, 2021). This new interconnected digital era and society's eagerness for change, by whatever means necessary, made room for 'cancel culture' to arise.

Cancel culture evolved from the notion of brand boycott (Fazel, 2015; McGriff, 2012; Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021; Wei & Bunjun, 2020; Yuksel et al., 2020) and the anti-branding consumer movements (Dessart et al., 2020), that captured the attention of researchers in several studies in related topics. Cancel culture emerged as the practice or tendency to participate in a mass cancellation to express disapproval and exert social pressure, in which the act of cancelling is the withdrawal of support to someone (individual or organization) (Clark, 2020; Duque et al., 2020; Ng, 2020) and it is fuelled by Generation Z and Millennials and their need to change the world for the better.

Therefore, this research is motivated by the concern about the harmful consequences that arise from an unapproached cancel culture strike. It is mandatory to understand what emotions are at the basis of such forms of activism, what triggers them, and what form of crisis communication strategies consumers believe is the best to apply. Consequently, the research problem this dissertation aims to answer is: "**To what extent can cancel culture impact a brand's image? Can it cancel the brand?**".

More specifically, it is intended to 1) understand the reasons that drive people to cancel a brand; 2) evaluate the consequences of an attempt to cancel; and 3) identify and test the factors that influence the possibility of forgiveness. These objectives will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

To answer the research problem, a mixed method of data collection is conducted. Due to the scarcity of information on cancel culture, preliminary qualitative research is necessary to achieve the first two objectives of this research and provide a theoretical framework that will guide this research into the third objective. That first discovery is made through netnography on the Reddit platform (subreddit r/AskReddit). In the latest part of the research, an online survey is applied to test the ideas that the netnography analysis provided and accomplish the third research objective.

This dissertation is organized into chapters, which are then divided into topics. The first chapter is the present one, where the theme is introduced, and its relevance justified. The second chapter represents the theoretical framework of the subject. In this chapter, the concept of cancel culture is explained through relevant literature and related topics. This literature review sets the foundation for chapter three. The third chapter details the methodology followed in this research. This chapter is divided into a detailed presentation of the research problem and objectives, the research paradigm used to guide the investigation and, lastly, the research design. In the section of the research design, each phase and its data collection and analysis procedures are presented.

Chapter four entails the data analysis. It is divided into two major parts, the analysis of the netnography data, and the data gathered through the survey. In the first part, a content analysis of relevant Reddit comments is made, and in the second part, the sample is characterized, the constructs are analyzed and the scales testes for their internal reliability. Lastly, the conceptual model is tested, using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test and correlation analysis.

Lastly, chapter five discussed the major conclusions of the study and final considerations, which entails the contributions of this research to the field, its limitations, and some suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This investigation has as its primary goal to understand what cancel culture truly is, and what are its implications for organizations, and this chapter comes as a primary response to that need. Initially, the concept of cancel culture will be introduced. Next, the difference between brand activism and woke washing is discussed. After that, the antecedents, and consequences of cancel culture are introduced and, finally, some crisis communication strategies are discussed. At the end of the current chapter will be presented the conceptual model of cancel culture in an organizational context and its hypothesis.

2.1.   Cancel Culture: an overview

Literature has approached brand negativity (Dessart et al., 2020), or negative brand relationships, using terms such as brand avoidance (Grégoire et al., 2009; Hegner et al., 2017; Japutra et al., 2018), rejection of brand hegemony (Cromie & Ewing, 2008), brand betrayal (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Reimann et al., 2018), brand aversion (Park et al., 2013), brand dislike (Dalli et al., 2006; Demirbag-Kaplan et al., 2015), brand disgust (Alba & Lutz, 2013), brand embarrassment (Sarkar et al., 2020), brand hate (Curina et al., 2020; Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2019; Grégoire et al., 2009; Hegner et al., 2017; Kucuk, 2018; Zarantonello et al., 2016, 2018; C. Zhang & Laroche, 2020) or brand boycott (Balabanis, 2013). However, a new type of negative brand relationship has evolved, cancel culture.

Cancel culture, a new version of call-out culture (Duque et al., 2020), began with celebrities and politicians and has increased the spectrum of its attention to any individual or organization. The Merriam-Webster (2021) dictionary defines cancel culture as "the practice or tendency of engaging in mass cancelling as a way of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure", where 'cancelling' is the withdrawal of support to someone (individual or organization) in public, especially on social media, that has said or done something morally wrong (Ng, 2020).

This mass cancellation usually happens on Twitter and Instagram, using the hashtag #CancelX, #Xthepartyisover, or #boycottX, where 'X' stands for the name of the targeted individual or organization (Lobo, 2020; Meulenberg, 2021). Then, a discussion fired up by the online firestorm characteristic of cancel culture happens – the sudden appearance of a great amount of negative electronic word-of-mouth (NeWOM) and complaint behaviour against a person or organization on social media (Johnen et al., 2018). Likewise, cancel culture is also associated with what is called the *'infosphere'*, *'blogosphere'* or *'Twittersphere'*, since individuals come together in a virtual space to initiate public debates and social

change (Iosifidis, 2011b) and eventually create anti-brand communities to share their negative feelings towards brands and plan retaliation actions (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Zarantonello et al., 2016).

As can be seen in Table 1, a study by Porter Novelli (2021) concluded that the primary reason Americans would cancel a company was to get it to change its ways (38%), mostly on political, environmental, or social causes. However, only 14% of the respondents stated that the reason for the cancellation was for the company to "go away completely". The possibility for forgiveness happens if the company publicly apologise or explains the reason behind a certain action/statement; creates programs and policies internally to address the necessary change; fires the person responsible for the offensive statement; changes its branding or external representation; or donates to an associated non-profit organization (Yates & Carolina, 2021). Currently, there are three strands on the matter, the one that considers cancel culture an asset to society, as it forces companies to recognize their wrong behaviour; the one that considers it efficient but overused; and the third one, that considers it evil for the community as it may serve as a weapon for unethical, illegitimate, or perverse purposes (Yates & Carolina, 2021).

Table 1: Primary Reasons why Americans would cancel a company

%	Primary reasons Americans would cancel a company
38%	A company to change its ways.
27%	A company to change policies/stances surrounding political involvement.
26%	A company to fire the individual(s) responsible for an offensive statement.
22%	A company to disassociate itself from a celebrity or spokesperson who said or did something offensive.
19%	A company to take a financial or reputational hit.
18%	A company to change branding and/or external representation.
15%	A company to share feelings/disapproval on social networks.
14%	A company to "go away" completely.
2%	Other.

Source: Yates & Carolina (2021)

2.2. Generation Z and Millennials

Although there is no consensus on where one generation ends and the other begins, Table 2 presents one possible answer. Nevertheless, even though generations are not sharply divided, their characteristic features are adequate for the whole age group in general (Bencsik et al., 2016).

Table 2: Timeline of generations

Generations	Range of birth
Silent generation	1925 - 1946
Baby boom generation	1946 - 1960
Generation X	1960 - 1980
Millennials	1980 - 1995
Generation Z	1995 - 2010
Alfa generation	2010 - present

Source: (Bencsik et al., 2016)

To better comprehend cancel culture, it is important to understand the youngest generations, their habits, and values, and how that influences the decision to cancel or boycott a brand. Millennials grew up in a world particularly damaged, as they were between 6 and 23 when 9/11 happened and grew up in the face of the 2008's economic crisis. This is the second most racially and ethnically diverse adult generation, only topped by the Generation Z (Dimock, 2019). Millennials are a generation that, although having spent some of their younger years without full access to technology, are now fully accommodated to social media and the new technologies, as most of them grew up with them on their developing years. Millennials are, therefore, very aware of the problems going on in the world and believe that the priorities need to change.

Although Generation Z shares some characteristics with Millennials, they are a significantly different generational cohort. Generation Z has been profoundly shaped by the advancement of technology, issues of violence, a volatile economy, and social justice movements. While these issues also have affected those in other generations, the historical context of these individuals is much deeper than those in Generation Z, who may have never known anything different. Generation Z believes that they have the power to change the world, and that is where cancel culture comes along. Social justice, such as the legalization of same-sex marriage and the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as policy debates on immigration, religious freedom, transgender rights, and women's rights, have fuelled the fire for many Generation Z individuals to strive for equal human rights (Seemiller & Grace, 2017).

2.3.   Brand activism or woke washing?

The increase in outcries for social justice especially by Millennials and Gen Z consumers (e.g., the Me Too and Black Lives Matter movement) is pushing brands towards taking on a participative role, through brand activism (Amed et al., 2019; Ferenius & Kotras, 2021; Mirzaei et al., 2022), as they buy from brands aligned with their values and avoid those that are not (Amed et al., 2019; Mirzaei et al., 2022). Nevertheless, any company taking on brand activism is at risk of lacking authenticity and being labelled as woke washing, as consumers tend to question the true motivation behind brands going woke, which can lead to boycotts, backlash and brand value write-offs (Menon & Kiesler, 2020; Mirzaei et al., 2022), which are some of the consequences of cancel culture. So, a cancel culture strike may emerge from an unauthentic brand activist campaign, as it raises awareness of an ideological incompatibility between the woke consumer and the brand (Gomez-Mejia, 2020).

Brand activism can be described as the act of publicly taking a stand (through statements or actions) on divisive social and/or political matters made by or on behalf of a company using its corporate or individual brand name (Mirzaei et al., 2022; Moorman, 2020; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). Although brand activism emerged from the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR), the two concepts are set apart by the nature of their actions. While CSR initiatives are usually well accepted by consumers, brand activist strategies tend to focus on controversial topics (Mirzaei et al., 2022; Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020; Schleier, 2021). For example, Budweiser, Airbnb, Google, Coca-Cola, and Microsoft, joined activists to express their opinions on socio-political issues in advertising campaigns (Clemenson, 2017; Hong & Li, 2021); Delta Airlines cut the promotional benefits for the National Rifle Association (a gun rights advocacy group based in the United States of America) members; and PayPal cancelled its plans to open a new operations centre after the state of North Carolina decided to restrict the use of public restrooms based on biological sex (Mirzaei et al., 2022).

2.4.   The reasons behind cancel culture

According to the conceptual model developed by Hegner, Fetscherin and van Delzen (2017), brand hate is motivated by a negative experience (dissatisfaction with the product or service's performance), a symbolic incongruity between the consumer's self-image and the brand's image, or an ideological incompatibility (refers to organizational behaviours that are considered legally, socially, or morally wrong by consumers) and results in behaviours such as negative word-of-mouth (NWOM), brand avoidance or brand retaliation.

Particularly, what seems to motivate episodes of cancel culture are ideological incompatibilities related to environmental issues, such as greenwashing (Nguyen, 2020), religion (Dekhil et al., 2017; Mirza et al., 2020; Muhamad et al., 2019), racism (Bouvier, 2020; He et al., 2021; Wei & Bunjun, 2020), animal rights (Yuksel et al., 2020), socio-political issues such as same-sex marriage, immigration, gun control, labour abuses and healthcare reform (Hong & Li, 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Yuksel et al., 2020), country-of-origin, political animosity and ethnocentrism (Abdelwahab et al., 2020; Ali, 2021; Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021).

Furthermore, literature has also acknowledged the influence of several moderating factors on cancel culture. These factors can be related to the cancel activists/agents; the brand under attack; and, lastly, the cancel culture process. The factors related to the cancel activists/agents include: a) the credibility of the information source (author of the tweet) and message (Nguyen, 2020; Shin & Yoon, 2018); b) the affiliation with an anti-brand community is strengthened by social approval-seeking (Dessart et al., 2020); c) the small-agent rationalization, which relates to one's acceptance of inequity in the world as well as perceptions of their powerlessness (Yuksel et al., 2020); d) according to Jost, Langer, and Singh (2017), consumer's political affiliation influences the boycott participation, as liberals in the United States and leftists in 15 European countries were more likely to report having bought a product or refrained from buying a product for political reasons than conservatives and rightists; e) consumer (online) communication activities are correlated with the influence of (online) information on boycotts and buycotts (Kelm & Dohle, 2018). Additionally, the moderators related to brands under attack can mean that: a) brands with strong competitive positioning and market presence may be more prone to be the objects of negative brand-related behaviours (Dessart et al., 2020); b) worldwide brands are perceived as more credible, thus reducing the consumer's willingness to engage in boycotts (Fazel, 2015). Finally, there are factors related to the cancel culture process, as it is the case of the expected overall participation and perceived boycott issue importance, as well as its perceived effectiveness, and the impact the self-enhancement on consumers' intentions to participate in a boycott (Ginder & Kwon, 2020; Shin & Yoon, 2018).

2.5.   The consequences of cancel culture

Nowadays, individuals come together in a virtual space to initiate public debates and social change in what is called an *infosphere*, *blogosphere*, or *Twittersphere* (Iosifidis, 2011a) and cancel culture also happens in this virtual space. It then gains power through an online firestorm, the sudden appearance of a great amount of NeWOM and complaint behaviour against a person or organization on social media (Johnen et al., 2018).

Unlike traditional word of mouth, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is defined as any type of statement, (whether positive or negative), about a product or company that is made available to a vastness of people through the internet (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014; Dolan et al., 2019) and has an impact on brand trustworthiness, attitude towards the brand and purchase intention (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018). Frequently associated with the concept of negative eWOM is the co-destruction of value (Nam et al., 2020). Co-destruction of value is understood as a decline in the well-being of an organization and/or individual, which may result in actions such as temporary boycotts, and retaliation, among others (Johnen et al., 2018; T. Zhang et al., 2018).

This process of co-destruction of value is highly sensed in a cancel culture strike-through user-generated content (UGC) and anti-brand communities. UGC is described as different ways of content, created and made public by end-users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). UGC can start with simple discussions about products and services, stepping to consumers creating opinions and reviews in the form of text and video, and end with consumers involved in the promotion or elimination of brands through self-produced advertising videos (Berthon et al., 2008). The propensity to create this content depends on a combination of social, economic, and technological drivers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, if woke consumers come together at anti-brand communities and share that UGC, they end up taking on activist roles and may even plan and take action against those same brands (Zarantonello et al., 2016).

According to a study by Edelman (2018), 64% of consumers around the globe will buy or boycott a brand solely because of its stance on a social or political issue. This behaviour is characteristic of political consumerism, which refers to a deliberate decision to punish (boycott) or reward (buycott) a company by selectively choosing products or brands for social, political, or ethical reasons (Clark, 2020; Copeland, 2014; Copeland & Boulianne, 2020; Hong & Li, 2021; Klein et al., 2004; Wei & Bunjun, 2020).

Yuksel, Thai and Lee (2020, p. 341) defined a boycott as a "conditional act of anti-consumption where consumers depart from a relationship with an organization or a transgressive brand that they disapprove of, due to some form of misconduct". In a brand avoidance situation, the consumer chooses to stay away or reject a brand. This concept differs from brand hate and boycott because it is an individual decision, while the latter tends to be at the social/group level and based on an act of commercial and punitive discontent (Friedman, 1985; Odoom et al., 2019; Yuksel, 2013; Yuksel & Mryteza, 2009).

2.6. Crisis communication strategies

The cancel culture movement has forced corporations to rethink their crisis communication strategies in the event their brand come under attack (Mueller, 2021). As the brand's reputation suffers after a PR crisis, such as the ones created by cancel culture, image repair is mandatory. Image repair refers to effective action and/or strategy designed to repair the organization's damaged image or reputation (Diulio & Arendt, 2018). Supporting image repair are two widely adopted theories, the Image Repair Theory and Coombs' Reputation Repair Strategies. As Coombs (1995) strategies share similarities with Benoit's but include key differences, which will be the done exploited in this research (Diulio & Arendt, 2018).

After determining its level of responsibility, the organization will be able to use the available public relations and communication tools. Initially, Coombs' Reputation Repair Strategies included: (a) nonexistence, (b) distance, (c) ingratiation, (d) mortification, (e) suffering, (f) diminishment, and (g) rebuilding (Coombs, 1995). However, the updated framework divides the strategies into two major groups: a) denial (attack the accuser, denial, scapegoat) b) diminishment (excuse, justification); c) rebuilding (compensation, and apology) and; d) bolstering (reminder, ingratiation, and victimage) (Coombs, 2007). The denying, diminishing, and rebuilding strategies are primary crisis response strategies, whereas the bolstering crisis response strategies are secondary. An explanation and summary of these strategies can be seen below, in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Coombs (2007)' Crisis Response Strategies, part 1

Deny crisis response strategies
Attack the accuser: The crisis manager confronts the person or group claiming something is wrong with the organization.
Denial: The crisis manager asserts that there is no crisis.
Scapegoat: The crisis manager blames some person or group outside of the organization for the crisis.
Diminish crisis response strategies
Excuse: The crisis manager minimizes organizational responsibility by denying intent to do harm and/or claiming inability to control the events that triggered the crisis.
Justification: The crisis manager minimizes the perceived damage caused by the crisis.

Source: (Coombs, 2007)

Rebuild crisis response strategies
Compensation: The crisis manager offers money or other gifts to victims.
Apology: The crisis manager indicates the organization takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks stakeholders for forgiveness.
Bolstering crisis response strategies
Reminder: Tell stakeholders about the past good works of the organization.
Ingratiation: The crisis manager praises stakeholders and/or reminds them of past good works by the organization.
Victimage: Crisis managers remind stakeholders that the organization is also a victim of the crisis.

Source: (Coombs, 2007)

Therefore, during an online firestorm characteristic of cancel culture, firms must implement a crisis communication plan to repair possible damage, reduce the negative impact and safeguard their reputation (Coombs, 2007). The possibility to reverse the cancellation arises if the company makes a public apology or explains the reason for a certain action/statement; creates internal programs and policies to address the necessary change; fires the responsible person for an offensive statement; change branding or external representation or donate to an associated non-profit organization (Yates & Carolina, 2021), which aligns with the principals of the most prominent generations in this phenomenon. As Generation Z and Millennials expect brands to be truly woke and transparent, in the face of a crisis it is anticipated that rebuild strategies will have a better outcome.

McGriff (2012) outlined several recommendations for brand boycott mitigation that may be adapted to the cancel culture crisis. When the brand boycott information is extremely toxic, the firm can leverage its ad expenditures to cajole online media companies to remove websites that are deleterious to the brand. According to Wei & Bunjun (2020), after the cancellation crisis, firms adopted some marketing-related actions to cope with the claims and advice of consumers, which resulted in specific changes in product development, promotions, public relations, social marketing, and corporate social responsibility campaigns. Moreover, McGriff (2012) suggested that, if the online boycott has achieved a considerable drop in sales, the firm can eliminate the brand from their portfolio or reposition the brand. The rebranding solution was the one adopted by brands such as Victoria's Secret, Hasbro (Monopoly and Mr Potato Head), and Aunt Jemima.

2.7.   Summary

With all this information in mind, this investigation primarily aims to explain what is cancel culture, its nature, antecedents, and consequences. Figure 1 summarizes the findings from the literature review and acts as a framework for the construction of the conceptual model.
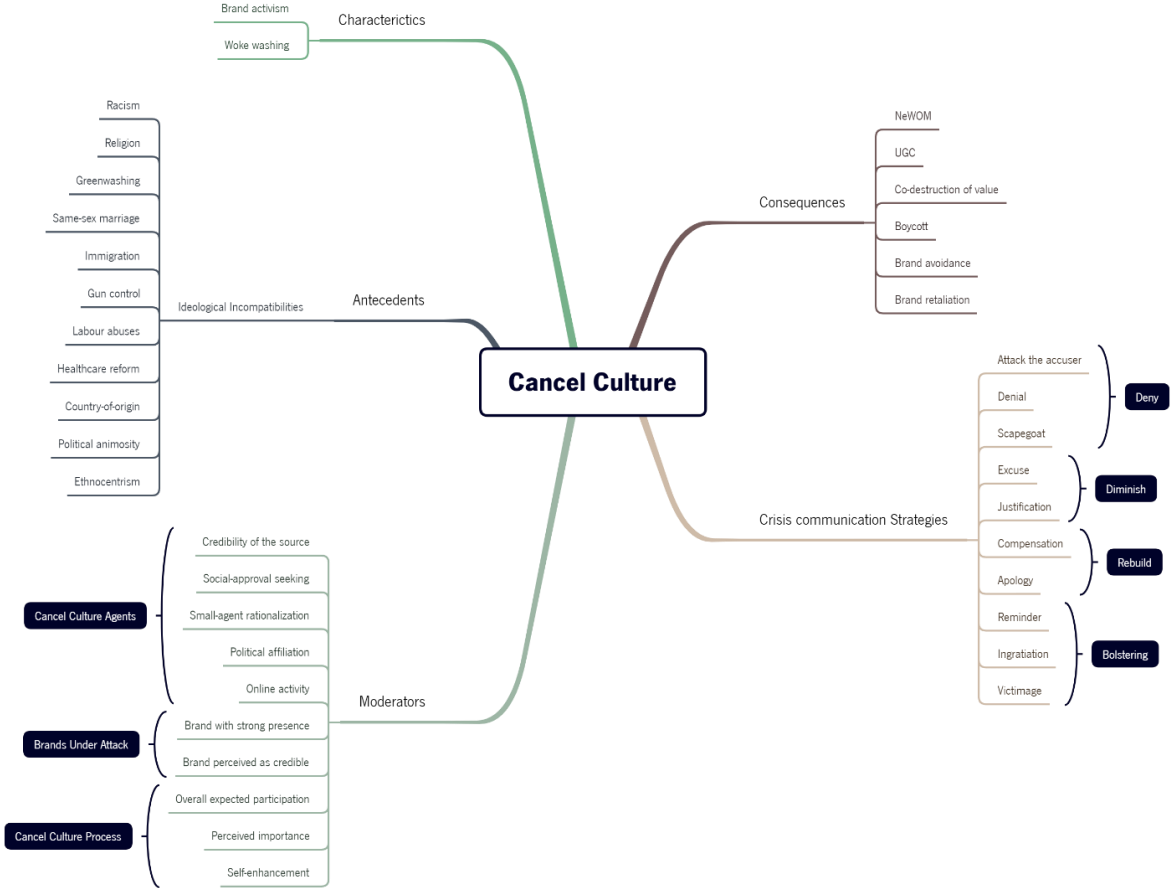
Figure 1: Cancel Culture Framework

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology, including the research problem and objectives, the research paradigm, and the research design. Then, the two methods used to enlighten this research problem, netnography and an online survey, will be detailed. Lastly, the research ethics will be discussed.

3.1.   Research Problem and Objectives

The present research aims to explain cancel culture and its impact on a brand's reputation and the consumer-brand relationship. To do so, several dimensions of the brand-client relationship were studied, such as brand image, brand love, brand hate, brand avoidance, brand retaliation, the intention to recommend the brand, the purchase intention and two new dimensions: brand cancellation (sometimes measured as the intention to cancel the brand) and brand forgiveness (the intention to forgive the brand).

It is imperative, and necessary, to understand the consequences of a cancel culture strike for brands as its popularity is increasing and the literature on the topic is scarce. According to a study from Edelman Earned Brand (2018), 64% of the world's consumers will buy or boycott a brand just for their stance on a social or political issue. Moreover, 4 out of 10 Portuguese young adults value a company's actions on equality, diversity and inclusion when sending a Curriculum Vitae for a job application, especially Millennials (Merck, 2022). Generation Z and Millennials have their values well defined and want to stand by companies whose values align with them. If a company of their liking does something that goes against those values, an ideological incompatibility is triggered, and a cancel culture strike may happen.

Hence, the research problem this dissertation aims to answer is: **"To what extent can cancel culture impact purchase intention? Is there possibility ?"**. Following the suggestion of Malhotra et al. (2012), the research problem described above has been fragmented to create more specific components of it, the research objectives (RO). For each objective, some more specific objectives (SO) were developed to facilitate the development of the research approach and subsequent data collection.

This dissertation has as its first aim to characterize cancel culture agents. For this to be achieved, the following specific objectives need to be met:

SO1: Understand which generations are more prone to participate in cancel culture.

SO2: Understand in which online platforms do these consumers gather.

SO3: Test if these consumers looking for social approval seeking.

Next, it is intended to understand the antecedents of cancel culture. To do so, the research must address the following specific objectives:

SO4: Understand what drives a cancel culture strike.

SO5: Test if the perceived importance of the problem influences the decision to cancel.

SO6: Test the role that a consumer's initial brand love towards the brand plays on intention to cancel?

SO7: Test what the role the source's credibility plays in the effectiveness of the cancellation attempt?

SO8: Understand what does it mean for a brand with a high brand image to be a target of cancel culture?

Next, to the third objective, it is intended to identify and measure the consequences of cancel culture. It is therefore crucial that the following SO are accomplished:

SO9: Comprehend the differences between cancel culture differs and a boycott.

SO10: Comprehend the differences between cancel culture differs and brand retaliation.

SO11: Test if brand avoidance is a consequence of cancel culture.

SO12: Test if a decrease in WOM is a consequence of cancel culture.

The last objective is to evaluate if forgiveness is possible after a cancel culture strike, and in what terms. In this sense, one specific objective arises:

SO13: Test if an apology by the brand could lead consumers to take a step back on the cancellation?

3.2. Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

Taking into consideration these findings and the netnography analysis (will be discussed further on Chapter 4), the conceptual model presented on Figure 2 was created. In this model, some constructs were adapted to better answer the research problem, some variables took a pre-determined value, and a new concept was created: brand cancellation. This model allows for the creation of research hypothesis, which will confirm or deny the outcomes from literature review and data analysis from the netnography phase.
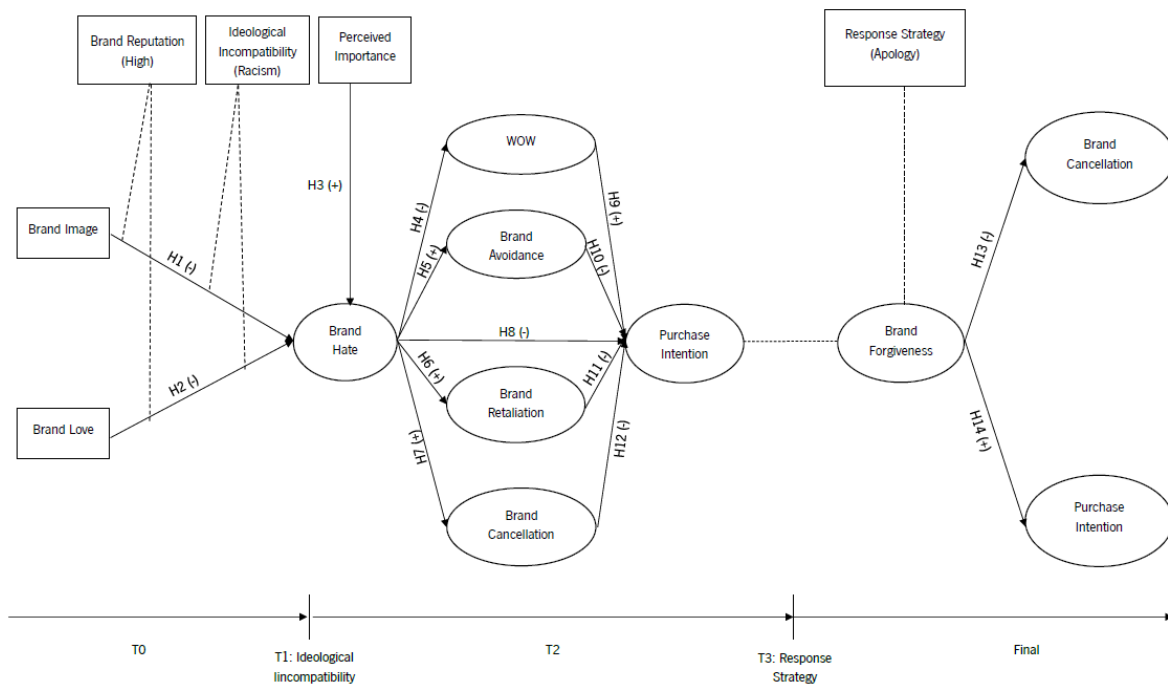
Figure 2: Conceptual Model

From the conceptual model presented above, the following hypothesis emerge:

H1: Brand image, when under the influence of an ideological incompatibility (racism) and relating to a brand with a high reputation, is positively correlated with brand hate.

H2: Brand love, when under the influence of an ideological incompatibility (racism) and relating to a brand with high a reputation, is positively correlated with brand hate.

H3: The perceived importance of the trigger event is positively correlated with brand hate resulting from the crisis.

H4: The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the intention to recommend the brand (WOM).

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H5: The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is positively correlated with brand avoidance.

H6: The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is positively correlated with brand retaliation.

H7: The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is positively correlated with brand cancellation.

H8: The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with purchase intention

H9: The intention to recommend the brand (WOM) is positively correlated with the purchase intention.

H10: The brand avoidance that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the purchase intention.

H11: The brand retaliation that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the purchase intention.

H12: The brand cancellation that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the purchase intention.

H13: When under the influence of an apology from the brand, brand forgiveness is negatively correlated with brand cancellation.

H14: When under the influence of an apology from the brand, brand forgiveness is positively correlated with purchase intention.

3.3. Research Paradigm

The combination of qualitative and quantitative studies in social science is not recent. However, it comes at a price, the conflict in setting a paradigm. For some scholars, a mixed method research should entail its own paradigm; for others, it is possible to mix paradigms, if paradigms are seen as worldviews based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions rather than a set of exemplars shared by a community (Ghiara, 2020). Therefore, this research will combine two paradigms: interpretivism and postpositivism.

In the first study, the netnography approach, an interpretive paradigm is in place, as the main goal at the time is to comprehend and interpret the cancel culture phenomenon, and as the literature is scarce, that can only be done with relative proximity with the ones actively in it, or who know what cancel

culture is about (participants from study one). After a theory is already in mind from having conducted study one, a postpositivist paradigm is embraced and the second half of the research can begin. This paradigm differs from positivism in refuting the absolute truth, as reality must be always comprehended in its context and by accepting that, although there is only one truth, it can only be measured imperfectly (Ponterotto, 2005; Wahyuni, 2017). Moreover, the paradigm aligns with the problem at hand since it reflects a need to examine the causes that drive cancel culture and intents to reduce research ideas into a small set of suggestions to test, such as the variables constituting research questions and consequent hypothesis (Creswell, 1994).

3.4. Research Design

A research design is a framework created to answer the proposed research problem. Each research design specifies the necessary procedures for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve marketing research problems (Dulock, 1993; Malhotra et al., 2012).

Since the research problem aims to measure cancel culture's impact on a brand's reputation, but the phenomenon has not yet been heavily researched, this research design will start as exploratory and once there is a clearer idea of the constructs and relationships to be studied, it will be conclusive. Therefore, the research will be divided into two studies: a first using a netnography technique, and a quantitative one, an online survey. In this preliminary study, the objective is to explore the phenomenon of cancel culture and characterize it, as well as to identify the main variables to be measured in the following studies and provide bases for interpreting primary data with more insight (Malhotra et al., 2012; McDaniel & Roger, 2015). To do so, content analysis will be performed through the Pushshift API. More specifically, questions containing the phrase "cancel companies" (as well as related expressions) will be collected in the r/AskReddit subreddit, and the respective discussion and comments will be analyzed.

The quantitative study will be conducted through an online survey to prove the hypotheses formulated above. This questionnaire will be distributed on the same subreddit used to collect information in study 1 (r/AskReddit) and some subreddits, including one related to cancel culture (r/CancelCulture), and on the researcher's social networks. In this latter study, the sample will have no restrictions, even though Millennials and Generation Z will be the focus. The advantages of this method are its low costs; the desired number of respondents is quickly reached, the quality and response rate are higher (there is the possibility of making the questionnaire more appealing to the segment in question); the interviewer's error is removed and reduces the variability in the results through multiple-choice questions (Malhotra

et al., 2012; McDaniel & Roger, 2015). This online survey will be built through the Qualtrics platform due to its superiority over other software on the market, especially regarding the chaining of questions.

3.4.1. Phase 1 – Netnography

Firstly, considering the last four years (2018-2021, since 2022 has not ended yet), the Pushshift API is used in the r/AskReddit subreddit (Baumgartner et al., 2020; Unkel & Kümpel, 2020) to retrieve all the discussions containing keywords related with cancel culture and organizations (e.g., "cancel company"). The relatedwords.org website is used to make sure that all keywords are combined. Moreover, the API is queried to order the results by score (high to low) to facilitate the primary analysis. So, for a process as the one above and the search term "cancel culture", the query goes as follows:

https://api.pushshift.io/reddit/search/submission?q=cancel%20culture%22&subreddit=askreddit&after
=1514764800&size=100&sort=desc&sort_type=score

Secondly, discussions without any comments or that are too focused on the cancelling of individual people are removed from the analysis (see Appendix 1 for an extensive list with all retrieved discussions). Table 5 presents the number of threads and comments obtained for each keyword combination using the query above, changing only the term "cancel culture" to the keywords in question.

Table 5: Combination of keywords used in the queries and the number of comments retrieved.

Keywords	Threads	Comments
Cancel companies	22	244
Cancel culture boycott	5	175
Cancel culture company	3	273
Cancel organization	3	26
Business cancel culture	2	29
Cancel brands	1	14
Total	**36**	**761**

Lastly, a content analysis of the retrieved comments is conducted. Initially, the goal was to code the comments with relevant meaning according to the following criteria: a) The characteristics of cancel culture; b) The main causes of the phenomenon; c) The intervening/moderating factors that moderate the cause-effect relationships (product categories, brands involved, countries, etc.); d)

Context/Situational Factors; e) Consequences of the phenomenon (financial losses, reputational loss, loss of market share, boycott, negative word-of-mouth, retaliation); f) Cancel culture mitigation strategies analyzed according to the stage of the cancel culture crises (pre-crisis, during the firestorm and follow-up). However, since there was not enough content in the comments to fulfil the set criteria, the codes were redefined to meet the following: a) The characteristics of cancel culture; b) Reasons to cancel a brand; c) Reasons not to cancel a brand; d) References to a brand involved in cancel culture; e) Advice given on how companies should handle a cancelation; f) Relationship between cancel culture and boycott.

A summary of all methodological steps made during this phase can be seen in Figure 3.

Pushshift API in the r/AskReddit subreddit

Selection of keywords combination: "keyword1 keyword2" (e.g., "cancel companies")

Selection of time period: 2018-2021

Sorted by scored (high to low)

https://api.pushshift.io/reddit/search/submission?q=cancel%20culture%22&subreddit=askreddit&after=1514764800&size=100&sort=desc&sort_type=score

Discussion's retrievment and selection

Selection and content analysis of comments

Figure 3: Methodological Steps of Phase 1 – Netnography

3.4.2. Phase 2 – Survey

The survey design was based on five major steps: 1) survey design; 2) survey pre-test; 3) procedures of survey monitoring; 4) data retrieving and treatment; and 5) data analysis.

3.4.2.1.   Survey's Structure

Initially, the goal was to explore several scenarios, as Table 6 shows. To do so, two options were considered: a survey with four different blocks, in which each scenario would be explored in a different block or make four different surveys. However, option one would make the survey extremely long, which would reduce even further the dropout rate, and option two would make it hard to gather responses for the surveys being distributed later, as the researcher's network would already be saturated, and prolong the time for analysis. Therefore, it was decided to only present the most important scenario, and with the most damaging consequences, the square in grey.

Table 6: Different Survey Scenarios, by importance (1- most important, 4- least important)

	Perceived Importance: **High**	Perceived Importance: **Low**
Low: Reputation + Incongruence + Call-out agent factors	2	4
High: Reputation + Incongruence + Call-out agent factors	1	3

To accurately present scenario one to the respondents, some variables besides the reputation and the factors relating the call-out agent were forced to take a certain value. That happened at two different times, the scenario and the brand's response. In the scenario, those variables were: a) the brand's high reputation (applying the scenario to the respondent's preferred brand), b) the type of ideological incompatibility (racism), c) the context of the crisis (internal), d) the high credibility of the call-out agent (as he is an employee of the brand), e) the type of mediatic press (Twitter), f) high overall expected participation, and g) the fact that it was not fake news. In the brand's crisis response, the variable dictated externally was the type of response, an apology followed by concrete action.

The distributed survey is divided into three main blocks, not including the introduction (see Appendix 2 for the full survey). The first block of the survey may be seen as aiming to recreate a cancel culture

journey. Therefore, initially, it questioned a brand that respondents particularly liked and, from then, placed scales to evaluate their brand love and brand image levels, as well as a global item question to evaluate their purchase and recommendation (WOM) intention. This allows for a T_0 situation to be painted, where consumers are, supposedly, happy with their brand. Then, a scenario where their preferred brand was racist is present, to explore the ideological incompatibility as a reason to cancel brands. Racism was the chosen topic, from the several discussed in the literature, since seven out of ten Americans said they'd be "willing to cancel a brand if it said or did something offensive about racial justice." (Yates & Carolina, 2021, p. 11). The scenario starts a T_2 in the respondents' journey, and went as follows:

> "Suppose the brand mentioned in the first issue is an **advocate for human rights and gender equality** and devotes much of its communication on social media to publicize it. However, recently, a company employee shared on their social networks (Twitter) that the company's human resources department had received an application for the position of director of the inclusion and diversity program of a highly qualified black man, but that another (white) person had been chosen with fewer qualifications for the vacancy in question. The employee assured that the **selection criteria were not met during the recruitment process**. The news quickly spread, and consumers revolted on a large scale against the brand, and it was proven that **this was a true case and was not a rumour**. This discontent was made through comments and online publications."

After the scenario is set, the level of importance attributed by the respondent to the scenario was evaluated, as well as its brand love level and intention to repurchase and recommend, now after the crisis. Then, new scales are placed, to evaluate respondents' brand hate, brand avoidance, and brand retaliation levels towards the brand. Each scale is followed with a global mono-item scale, so that further on the survey it may only be used a single-item scale, to make the survey shorter. For example, to measure the level of brand hate, the original scale was presented, and then the question "On a scale from 0 to 10, identify your hate for the brand, given the scenario presented above (with 0 being a feeling of neutrality and 10 being an intense hate)" followed. Then, it is introduced a brand cancellation scale, to better characterize cancel culture agents and, after that, a global mono-item scale to measure respondents' intention to cancel their preferred brand after the crisis presented in the scenario. This global mono-item question goes from 1 – "definitely would not cancel" to a 10 – "definitely would cancel", as is the case with the other global mono-item scales concerning actions (brand avoidance intention, brand retaliation intention, intention to recommend, intention to purchase/repurchase).

After the crisis is presented and the changes in the respondent's feelings are evaluated, it is now time to present the brand's response, which sets the final stage of their journey in a cancel culture strike. The brand's response was presented as follows:

> The brand, after verifying that the situation was taking high proportions, decided to act. The brand's first action was to **issue a public statement apologizing** for what happened. Then it offered the vacancy to the initial candidate and made him an **ambassador of the company's "inclusion and diversity" program**. **The candidate accepted the offer**.

With the crisis communication strategy presented, the major constructs from T_2 are reevaluated, as it is the intention to repurchase, their feelings towards the brand (the latest item of the brand love scale), brand avoidance intention, brand retaliation intention, intention to recommend the brand, intention to cancel the brand, and a new one is presented, the intention to forgive the brand. Next, respondents are questioned about what they believe should have been the brand's response once it heard about the problem (a) do not comment; b) apologize without admitting guilt or c) accept it made a mistake), and asked if, in the face of consumer discontent, the brand should either: a) correct the action that leads them to this problem or b) rebrand itself. The last question of this block asks respondents to attribute a degree of (from 1 – "not at all important" to 7 - "very important") to each of the following items: racism, religion, animal rights, environmental issues, sociopolitical issues (LGBTQIA+ rights, gender equality, etc.), and nationalism).

The first block is the most important, as it allows for the hypothesis to be tested, and for the change in respondent's emotions and will to be evaluated as the scenario is presented and, then again, when the brand responds to the crisis. However, the second block has significance too. This middle block is devoted to questions specific to cancel culture, questioning respondents if they have ever boycotted and cancelling a brand (and if so, asking to name the brand), evaluating the level of social approval seeking from any respondent answering "yes" to having cancelled a brand, and the reason behind the cancellation (racial justice, women's rights, COVID-19 protocols, immigration, climatic/environmental changes, LGBTQIA+, religion, politics, supporting war conflicts, and others, with a text box for explanation). Next, respondents are asked if they have ever been confronted with a situation where the brand deserved to be cancelled, but didn't go through with it, and invited to explain the reason why they did not cancel the brand. Lastly, a cancel culture scale was presented to evaluate respondents' thoughts on the fundamentals of cancel culture.

In the last block of the survey are placed sociodemographic questions, such as age, gender, level of schooling, occupation, time spent online, and political affiliation. A summary of the survey can be found in Table 7.

Survey Brief	Time
Brand Image	T0
Brand Love (includes attitude towards the brand)*	
Purchase Intention	
Intention to Recommend (WOM) global monoitem	
(Crisis presentation)	T1
Validation check	T2
Brand Love (includes attitude towards the brand)* + Brand Love Global (monoitem)	
Brand Hate + Brand Hate global mono-item	
Purchase Intention	
Brand Avoidance + Brand Avoidance global monoitem	
Intention to Recommend (WOM) global monoitem	
Brand Retaliation+ Brand Retaliation global monoitem	
Brand Cancellation + Brand Cancellation global monoitem	
(Apology)	T3
Purchase Intention	Final
Attitude towards the brand	
Brand Avoidance global monoitem	
Intention to Recommend (WOM) global monoitem	
Brand Retaliation global monoitem	
Brand Cancellation global monoitem	
Brand Forgiveness monoitem	
(Cancel culture questions)	
Social Approval	
Cancel Culture	
(Sociodemographic questions)	

* The last item of the brand love scale will be used to measure the attitude towards the brand.

The conceptual model (Figure 2) reflects the relationship among several constructs that emerged from the literature review, and the introduction of a new one: brand cancellation. There was a need for the development of a new concept, as the literature failed to operationalize the cancel culture phenomenon.

For the constructs with scales already tested in literature, one difficulty remained, choose one scale among the several existing. To do so, several articles on the topic were read and the indicated scales were evaluated to see which best suited the conceptual model. The selected scales can be found on Table 8 and the criteria were: most frequently used in the literature and good Cronbach's alpha.

Table 8: Scales used in the survey

Construct	Author	Items
Brand Love	Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia (2017)	6
Brand Image	Martínez, Montaner and Pina (2009)	8
Brand Hate	Hegner, Fetscherin and Delzen (2017)	6
Brand Avoidance	Hegner, Fetscherin and Delzen (2017)	5
Brand Retaliation	Hegner, Fetscherin and Delzen (2017)	5
Cancel Culture	Mueller (2021)	10
Social Approval	Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2020)	6
Brand Cancellation	Author's Elaboration	14

The purchase intention and brand forgiveness (intention to forgive the brand) and intention to recommend were measured on a single-item scale, from 1 to 10. As an example, the purchase intention had 10 categories, with 1 meaning "definitely will not buy again" and 10 "definitely will buy again".

Besides selecting the scales, which were all in English, the translation to Portuguese was still necessary, as the survey had those two options of language (see Appendix 3 for the scales in Portuguese).

Brand love was the first scale introduced in the survey. It was necessary to evaluate the respondent's love levels towards their preferred brand to evaluate if they have indeed high brand love levels for the brand of their choosing and, therefore, to validate the consequent scenario and responses. Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia (2017) takes on take previous work (Batra et al., 2012) further and developed a practical scale to measure brand love taking into consideration the survey length, which was something

that this research always looked at carefully. This work provides a scale that can use in this whole, with 23 items, or with 13 or 6. Due to length restraints, the 6 items were chosen, and the adapted scale can be seen in Table 9. The adaptation was made to reference the brand of their preference (that indication was in the question formulation) and not the specific brand mentioned in the original scale. All the items were measured using a 7-point "not at all" to "very much" with "moderately" as the middle point unless the last item, which was a 7-point negative-positive, as indicated in the original scale.

Table 9: Scale used for brand love (adapted)

Author	Original Scale	Scale Adaptation
Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia (2017)	To what extent do you feel that wearing of American Eagle Outfitters says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?	To what extent do you feel that using that brand's products or services says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?
	Using the products: To what extent do you feel yourself desiring to wear American Eagle clothing?	To what extent do you feel you desire to have that brand's products or services?
	Please express the extent to which you feel emotionally connected to American Eagle Outfitters?	To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to the brand?
	Please express the extent to which you believe that you will be wearing American Eagle Outfitters for a long time	To what extent do you believe that you will be using that brand's products or services for a long time?
	Suppose American Eagle Outfitters were to go out of existence, to what extent would you feel anxiety	Suppose that the brand were to go out of existence. To what extent do you feel anxiety?
	On the following scale, please express your overall feelings and evaluations towards American Eagle Outfitters. [7-point negative-positive]	Please, express your overall feelings and evaluations towards the referred brand [7-point negative-positive].

The evaluation of brand image levels followed the same line of thought as brand love, to evaluate the initial relationship between the respondents and the referred brand. Plumeyer, Kottemann, Böger and Decker (2019) present a systematic review on the measurements of brand image and state Martínez,

Montaner and Pina (2009)'s scale as the most frequently used to measure that construct. Therefore, that was the chosen scale. Moreover, it is based on previous research and considers three dimensions to attempt to assess tangible and intangible attributes and benefits of the brand, as well as its overall attitudes: functional and effective image and reputation, respectively (Plumeyer et al., 2019). The used scale is found on Table 10 and did not need adaption, as their phrasing was neutral and adjusted perfectly to the question formulation of the survey.

Table 10: Scale used for brand image

Author	Original Scale
Martínez, Montaner and Pina (2009)	The products have a high quality.
	The products have better characteristics than competitors'.
	The products of the competitors are usually cheaper.
	The brand is nice.
	The brand has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors' brands.
	It's a brand that doesn't disappoint its customers.
	It's one of the best brands in the sector.
	The brand is very consolidated in the market.

Stepping to negative emotions, the Hegner, Fetscherin and van Delzen (2017) model for the conceptualization of brand hate was used. Therefore, Hegner, Fetscherin and van Delzen (2017) proposed scales that were used to measure both brand hate and its outcomes: brand avoidance and brand retaliation and can be seen in Table 11. These scales needed residual adaptation, as they included "X" to mention the brand and that was the only change made.

Author: Hegner, Fetscherin and van Delzen (2017)

Brand Hate	Original Scale	Scale Adaptation
	I am disgusted by brand X	I am disgusted by the brand.
	I do not tolerate brand X and its company	I do not tolerate the brand and its company.
	The world would be a better place without brand X	The world would be a better place without the brand.
	I am totally angry about brand X	I am totally angry about the brand.
	Brand X is awful	The brand is awful.
	I hate brand X	I hate the brand.
Brand Avoidance	**Original Scale**	**Scale Adaptation**
	I do not purchase products of brand X anymore	I do not purchase products of the brand anymore.
	I reject services/products of brand X	I reject services/products of the brand.
	I refrain from buying X's products or using its services	I refrain from buying that brand's products or using its services.
	I avoid buying the brand's products/using its services	I avoid buying the brands products/using its services.
	I do not use products or services of brand X	I do not use products or services of the brand.
Brand Retaliation	**Original Scale**	
	I have deliberately bent or broken the policies of the brand.	
	I have showed signs of impatience and frustration to someone from brand X.	
	I complained to brand X to give a hard time to the representatives of the company.	
	I complained to brand X to be unpleasant with the representatives of the company.	
	I complained to the brand to make someone from the organization pay.	

After measuring the alternative emotions that surface when researching cancel culture, there was still lacking the measurement of cancel culture itself. Mueller (2021) proposed the only scale found to the date of this research on cancel culture and, although its statistical results were not ideal, it was still

included, as it was the only scale already performed on cancel culture. Cancel culture is here measured on a 7-point Likert scale and focus more on psychological predictors in cancel culture behaviour, as Table 12.

Table 12: Alternative scale to measure cancel culture

Author	Original Scale
Mueller (2021)	It's best to keep your beliefs private because others might find them offensive.
	If someone is attacked for saying something inappropriate they should apologize immediately.
	I don't judge a person without knowing more about their character.
	It's necessary for our society to respect open debate from diverse perspectives.
	If someone is trying to grow and learn from their mistakes I won't hold their past against them.
	For society to function, we must conform to a social consensus of moral behavior.
	It's acceptable to dig into a person's past when they hold social status in society.
	What is viewed as controversial and not acceptable usually shifts over time.
	If an action is immoral, illegal or unethical, people should be held accountable.
	Critical thinking is an essential component of expressing free speech.

Still on psycho and sociological predictors, and aiming to answer one of the specific objectives, the survey included a question to measure if the intention to cancel was motivated by the need/want of socio approval. To do so, it was used Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2020)'s social approval dimension of the anti-brand community participation scale, as it fitted the topic of this research. The items of said scale can be found in the next page, on Table 13.

Author	Original Scale
Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2020)	I would not buy this brand because I am sure that they will not approve.
	I am not loyal to this brand because they are not either.
	I often discuss this brand in a negative manner with them.
	I achieve a sense of belonging by avoiding the same brand as them.
	All of my online network avoids this brand.
	I avoid this brand because I want to be associated with certain groups of people who do not like it.

Although all these variables would give a good impression of the sample's emotions forward the brand as they were presented with the scenario and, further on, with the apology, there was still missing a construct to measure the sample's intention to cancel a brand, as the scale that measure cancel culture did not reach the statistical requirements and measures the psychological predictors more than the intention to cancel the brand. Therefore, a new scale was created, which can be found in Table 14 and Table 15. These items evolved from the literature review and the data analysis of the qualitative phase and were measured through a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7" strongly agree". Besides this question, there was a single-item question measuring the intention to cancel the brand from 1 to 1, being 1 "definitely would not cancel" and 10 "definitely would cancel".

Table 14: Scale developed for brand cancellation, part 1

Author	Original Scale
Author's Elaboration	I cancel a brand so it changes its bad practices.
	I cancel a brand so it disappears completely.
	I cancel a brand so it suffers a financial loss.
	If an action is immoral, illegal or unethical, brands should be cancelled.
	I hate the brands I cancel them
	There are no differences between boycotting a brand and cancelling a brand.
	Cancelling a brand is an acceptable way to make it pay for its mistakes.

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Author	Original Scale
Author's Elaboration	It is acceptable not to cancel a brand for misconduct if it entails major changes in my lifestyle.
	When I cancel a brand, I don't go back on my decision.
	When I cancel a brand, I try to influence my group of friends to do the same.
	I am more likely to cancel a brand if the bad practice report comes from someone with credibility.
	I cancel a brand that's been acting wrong, even if I like the brand.
	I'm more likely to cancel a brand if I think more people will do the same.
	I don't cancel a brand if I don't think anyone else will do it too.

Ideally, the dimensions of the scale should have been defined at the same time as the items of the scale, so that the further factor analysis could confirm (or deny) them. However, some steps were skipped from the proposed by Malhotra, Birks and Wills (2012), and the definition of dimensions was only done after the exploratory factor analysis, which is detailed in Chapter 4. As proposed, the items came from literature review and qualitative research, a pool of items was generated and then data was collected from a sample (which is not large nor statistically representative of the population). The scale was then statistically analysed and, although a purified scale was achieved, it was not tested on a different sample due to time restrictions.

3.4.2.3.   *Population and Sampling*

The cohorts Generation Z, people born between 1996 and 2010, and Millennials, people born between 1980 and 1995, are the main focus of this research (Bencsik et al., 2016). This focus is justified as Gen Z and Millennials were the ones who developed cancel culture as a boycott movement (Barata, 2020). Nonetheless, as the two generations are fundamentally different, there are reasons to believe that their approach to cancel culture varies accordingly, and that will be tackled further on chapter four.

Gen Zs, in average, allocate 2 hours and 55 minutes a day to surfing social media, and 61% of internet users in this age group have an Instagram account (Todorov, 2022). Likewise, U.S. Millennials were reported to spend 3 hours and 30 minutes accessing apps or the internet via smartphone per day

(Johnson, 2021). Therefore, the decision to distribute the survey online was done immediately.

The survey was distributed through the researcher's social media accounts, the University of Minho institutional email, and the r/Sample and r/CancelCulture subreddits. Hence, it was applied a non-probability sampling technique. More specifically, it was conduced a convenience sampling, which fits the criteria for this research by allowing quick and easy access to a larger number of respondents, with no monetary cost. The post announcing the survey encouraged the participants to share it with their network. So, a snowball effect may be present. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that this sample is not representative of any definable population, as it was not gathered probabilistically (Malhotra et al., 2012).

The survey was designed in the Qualtrics platform due to its superiority over other software on the market, especially regarding question threading. Before turning the survey public, a pre-test was made, with the intent of improving the survey by identifying and eliminating potential problems (Malhotra et al., 2012; McDaniel & Roger, 2015). This pre-test gathered five answers and led to the clarification of some questions phrasing, and the substitution of multi-item scales for a global item question in several variables, to reduce the total time of response. Although the survey's response time was above ideal, respondents referred that the scenarios presented kept the survey appealing.

3.4.2.4. Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedures for the quantitative part of this research were done with access to IBM SPSS Statistics 27, due to its user-friendly interface and advanced statistical procedures. After debugging the sample due to a few incomplete and inaccurate responses, 178 responses were left. The first thing to be done was the frequencies for all variables to make sure that no error occurred. During this process it came to light those five respondents chose not to answer the political affiliation question. This should have not been possible, as all questions were mandatory, but a human mistake happened during the time when the survey was active and was right away corrected, hence only five counts were missing.

Afterwards, the data was assessed for its normality, through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The findings indicate that the sample does not follow a normal distribution, as it will be discussed further on Chapter 4. Next, all constructs were tested for its internal consistency, being the Cronbach's alpha the chosen measure to do so. Furthermore, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on brand cancellation since it that scale was never tested before.

In the next phase of the data analysis, two major procedures were done: a test for differences and correlations. First, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was performed to measure the change in respondents' answers when presenting the scenario and then, after introducing the crisis communication strategy of the company. The main goal with this analysis was to see the shift in the sample's emotions and intentions as they went through what aimed to replicate a cancel culture journey. As a second analysis, and to test the proposed hypothesis, three matrices of correlations were done, reflecting the three distinct phases in the survey.

3.4.3. Research's Ethics

When contacting with participants and the wider public, some precautions need to be taken to ensure that the participant's rights are respected and the research is conducted with quality (Malhotra et al., 2012). Hence, this investigation followed the eight principles incorporated in ESOMAR code of conduct[1]. Those principles were applied in the data retrieving and analysis. Specifically, the survey had an introductory section where its purpose was explained, and the institution under which it was conducted identified. Moreover, this section granted confidentiality and anonymity to all respondents, in all phases of the investigation, which was taken very seriously as the data was validated and analyzed collectively, not individually. A way to contact the researcher was also provided, and the clarification of doubts encouraged. Furthermore, the collected data will only be used for academic purposes only and it was analyzed using techniques that best suited the sample's characteristics.

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[1] https://esomar.org/uploads/attachments/ckqtawvjq00uukdtrhst5sk9u-iccesomar-international-code-english.pdf

Chapter 4. Data Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of all data gathered throughout the research. The first part of the chapter presents the content analysis made for the netnography phase. Then, the data collected from the survey application is analyzed and presented.

4.1. Phase 1: Netnography

After selecting all relevant threads for analyses, it was time to assess the discussion happening in each one. Some comments were excluded from the analyses, as they were not relevant, or were clearly not answering seriously. The process was to register all responses, then read them and look for references to the codes pre-defined: a) comments that characterize cancel culture; b) comments that mention a reason to cancel a brand; c) comments that mention a reason not to cancel a brand; d) comments referencing a brand involved in cancel culture; e) comments that give advice on how companies should handle a cancelation; f) comments that refer to the relationship between cancel culture and boycott (a list of all relevant comments, sorted by codes, can be found in Appendix 3). Although NVivo is good tool for qualitative data analysis, this process was made manually through an excel sheet as there was relatively few data and the codification was simple-

During the content analysis of the Reddit comments, some quotes were selected that illustrate consumers' opinions about both benevolent and harmful characteristics of cancel culture as a way for society to get accountability, to facilitate the freedom of expression or even as a brand's "buzz" marketing tactic. Those comments can be found below, following their upvote count and the question number:

> "It's really just society holding others accountable for their actions. The only controversy is that those being cancelled think they shouldn't have to take accountability because they've gone so long without having to." (4 upvotes; Q4)

>> Response to the comment above: "A single person not buying something because of their own values or opinion is free market, the right to choose...You telling me not to buy something because of YOUR values or opinion is cancel culture!!" (1 upvote; Q4)

"That may sound like a conspiracy theory, I'm beginning to think that the big corporations are the ones behind cancel culture and 'wokenism' to advertise their products and so. No one complained about Mr potato head, probably the company wanted to make fuss so people pay their attention to them and their new products. Same with Dr. Seuss books, it's a trend apparently" (3 upvotes; Q2)

"I'm not sure about the origin, but cancel culture is absolutely a phenomenon and a harmful one. It's mob rule" (0 upvotes; Q8)

Regarding the reasons to cancel a brand, some users mentioned the connections that cancel culture makes from events that happened in the past to the position that people have now. This means that nothing goes by unnoticed in the internet world, and something that a brand said years ago may resurface and be the cause of an attack if it is no longer align with their current values. In other words, consumers may see this as woke washing. Besides, the online firestorm is triggered by uncontrollable and random reasons sometimes based on unchecked perceptions or political affiliations stereotypes:

"Domino's thanked Kayleigh McEnany's comment about them being better than NYC pizza. The controversy is now she's the National Press Secretary for the Trump administration. But this criticism is dumb because she wasn't even in politics 8 years ago." (10 upvotes; Q8)

"Cancel culture doesn't apply to just one side of the political spectrum. There can be conservatives and liberals who are a part of it, but it's generally the extreme side of them that are a part of a it." (1 upvote; Q2)

The content analysis also revealed some arguments to not cancel a brand based on cost-benefits and negative spillovers. Users commented that ""Cancelling" them will require a major change in lifestyle." (8 upvotes; Q1). Furthermore, although acknowledging the benefits of the cancellation in the long-run, one reddit user mentioned that "Meanwhile it would have good long-term effects, it'll only bring problems to middle- or lower-class families. Problem of every citizen has to be taken into account." (1 upvote; Q1), as these companies usually have many employees and cancelling them would result in a financial loss and, eventually, personal reduction. This is an interesting view because the reddit user sees the benefit of cancelling that brand for the society, but has its opinion divided when considering the individual interests of everyone.

When talking about cancel culture, the concept of boycott almost always follows, which is why learning the difference between them is one of the research objectives. Some Reddit users made some comments about what they believe to be the differences between cancel culture and boycott:

> "A boycott is a conscious push to temporarily stop buying products in the hope that a loss of income will force a decision. Cancel Culture is a crusade to remove/censor anything a group doesn't like regardless of decisions made." (2 upvotes; Q9)

> "Boycott is usually used more often in products, however cancel culture is not just limited to people. The major difference is boycott has always been a thing, and is used to make an actual constructive statement, unlike cancel culture that is usually just spewed upon by woke twitter, not to mention how devastating cancel culture is to an individual, how it deprives people of a second chance." (2 upvotes; Q10)

> "Cancel culture is more mob mentality where as a boycott is usually more organized. Also cancel culture usually targets people whereas boycotting targets companies, organizations, or corporations" (1 upvote; Q7)

For these users, boycott is more organized and reserved for companies, while cancel culture targets individuals and is crueler. These Reddit users stood against cancel culture and in favor of boycotts. However, as previous literature stated, cancel culture aims to exert social pressure in an attempt for an organization to change its practices (Yates & Carolina, 2021). Therefore, it may be that, as those Reddit users view cancel culture as targeting individuals without giving them a chance of redemption, they believe it is less justifiable than boycotts, as boycotts target a company with wrongdoings.

When giving advice on how companies should handle a cancellation, comments mentioned the need for redemption, and had contradictory opinions on how right it is for an employee (of whatever ranking) to publicly express an opinion in the name of a company. Specifically, the comments were:

> "Most good people I know are good because they learned to be good from their mistakes. If we don't let people recover from mistakes we will soon find ourselves without good people" (5 upvotes; Q2)

> "I don't think it is wise for a business owner, manager, or employee to express an opinion for a company." (1 upvote; Q4)

"A business responding to public dissatisfaction of an employee is in their interest. Why should a business nor protect itself? If you're harmed by public outcry you need to go to court and sue for damages if it causes your employer to fire you but they're just in firing you if it seems it's what people wanna see. You're right to sue if you were slandered." (1 upvote; Q11)

The data from this analysis was triangulated with the literature review to create the conceptual model, that is, to better understand the relationship between each variable. Only afterwards the second phase was initiated.

4.2. Phase 2: Survey

To accurately measure all data and test the research hypothesis, several analyses were made. First, the descriptive analysis for all variables was done, to better characterize the sample. Afterwards, the normality of the sample and the internal consistency of the scales were examined, through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Cronbach's alpha, respectively. Only one scale was not included in the analysis due to its low internal consistency. In a second phase, a paired samples t-test and Wilcoxon signed ranks test were conducted to measure the difference in the sample's emotions and intentions through the survey, as new information was given, and the Spearman's correlation coefficient to properly examine the relationship between the variables of the conceptual model and test the proposed hypothesis.

4.2.1. Database Debugging

The survey application gathered a total of 384 responses. However, only 178 fitted the defined criteria. The other deleted responses met one, or more, of the following criteria: the answer was incomplete (the respondent did not answer the sociodemographic questions); the response showed little variance (e.g., ticking only the middle point on Likert scales or, in other cases, the extremes); the pattern of responses was incoherent (e.g., ticking a seven-point on a brand image and repurchase intention scale followed by a seven-point on a brand retaliation scale). More specifically, three responses showed little variance and a pattern of response incoherent, and the remaining 175 were incomplete responses.

After this step, some open-ended questions were coded accordingly, as some respondents did not answer properly (e.g., when asked their level of schooling, a participant selected the option "other" and in the text box said, "two associates degrees", which means that the participant owns an associate degree, but did not select that option).

Likewise, the level of schooling required additional data preparation, as the version for Portuguese respondents had different options than the English version, due to the discrepancies in the schooling system. To solve this, a uniformized scale was created, where the two schooling systems were combined so that the scale reflects all levels, English or Portuguese. After that, each schooling level response was converted to the corresponding value on the uniformized scale taking into consideration the respondent's language. This process was achieved with the help of a software engineer and can be seen in detail in Appendix 5.

4.2.2. Sample Characterization

With a clean database, the path is now set to characterize the sample on its sociodemographic characteristics (see Appendix 6 for more detailed data).

All respondents, when entering the survey, had the liberty to choose if they wanted to answer the survey in Portuguese or English, as the survey was distributed through some international channels. As seen in Graph 1, 83,71% of the respondents answered the survey in Portuguese, while the remaining 16,29% answered in English.
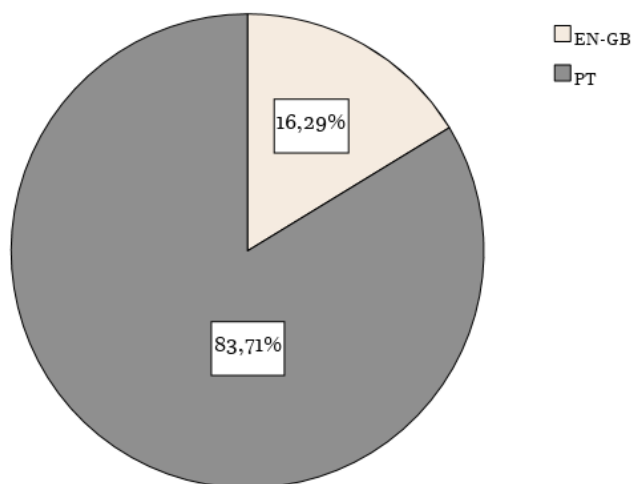
Graph 1: Language Chosen by the Respondent to answer the survey, by percentage

When it comes to respondents' age, Graph 2 shows that the most frequent age among the sample is 22 years old. This could be explained by the prevalence of a younger age group in the channels through which the survey was distributed, and the researcher's network. However, this variable has a mean of, approximately, 26 years and a standard deviation of 9,23.
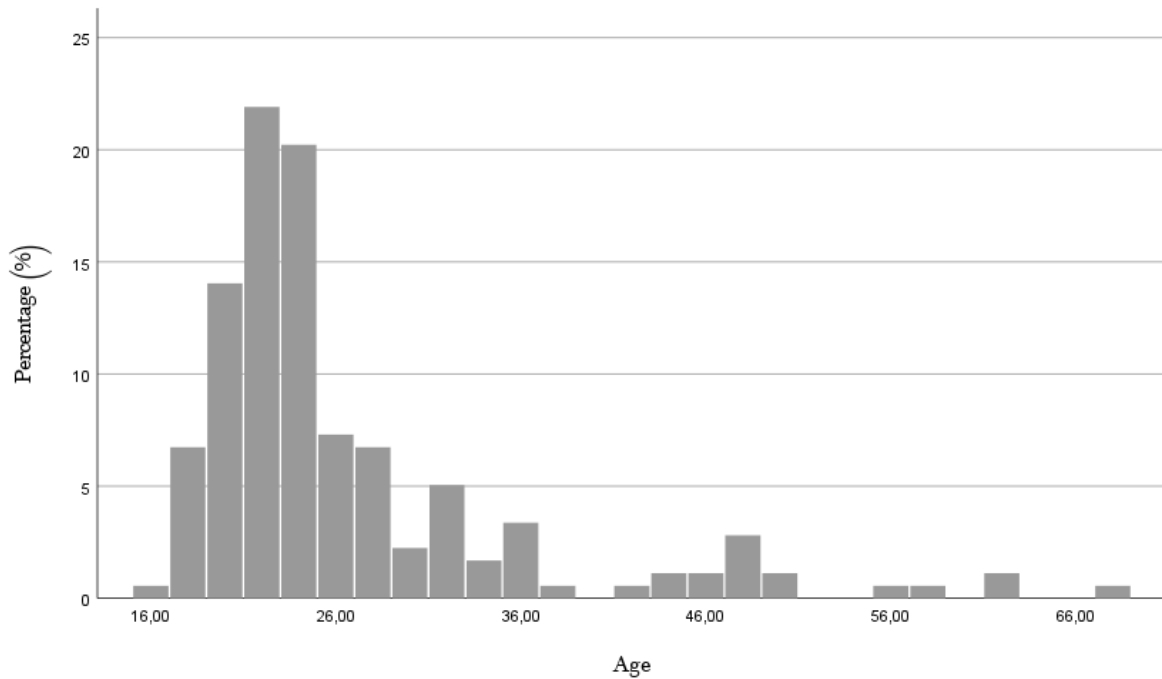
Graph 2: Respondent's Age, by percentage

As the most relevant age groups for this research are the Millennials and Generation Z, the variable "age" was divided into groups, to better understand the sample's distribution throughout the different generations. As Graph 3 shows, most of the sample is represented by generation Z (70, 79%), followed by 19,66% Millennials and 7,87% respondents from generation X.
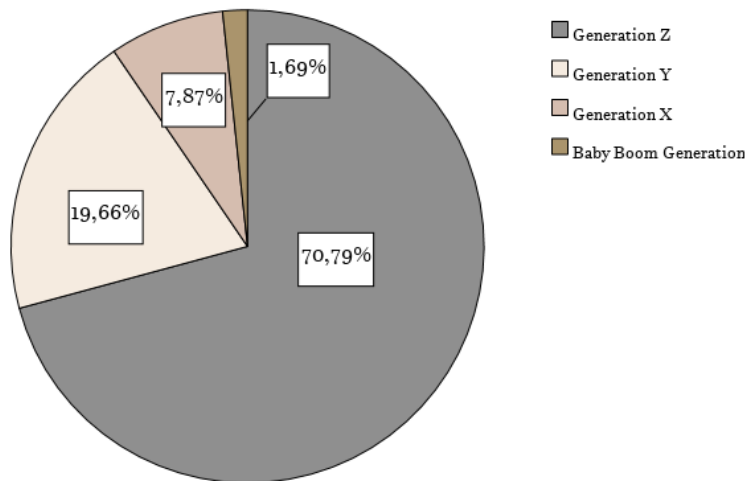
Graph 3: Respondent's Generation, by percentage

As it can be seen in Graph 4, the female gender is prevailing, representing 61,24% of the sample. The remaining 38,76% are divided between the male gender (35,39%) and the respondents who identify as something else, neither male nor female (3,37%).
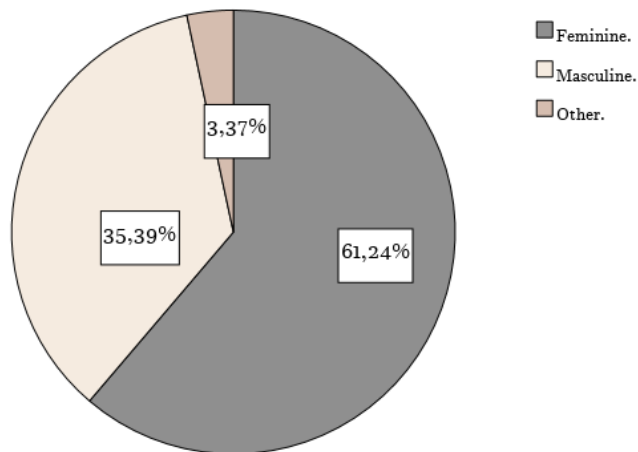
Graph 4: Respondent's Sex, by percentage

Regarding the level of schooling, most of the sample owns an academic degree (60,6%) – 34,8% have a bachelor's degree and 25,8% have a masters. As Graph 5 presents, there is still a significant portion of the sample with a high school diploma (23,6%). As the survey was distributed through the UMinho institutional email, this could indicate that a portion of those respondents is pursuing higher education.
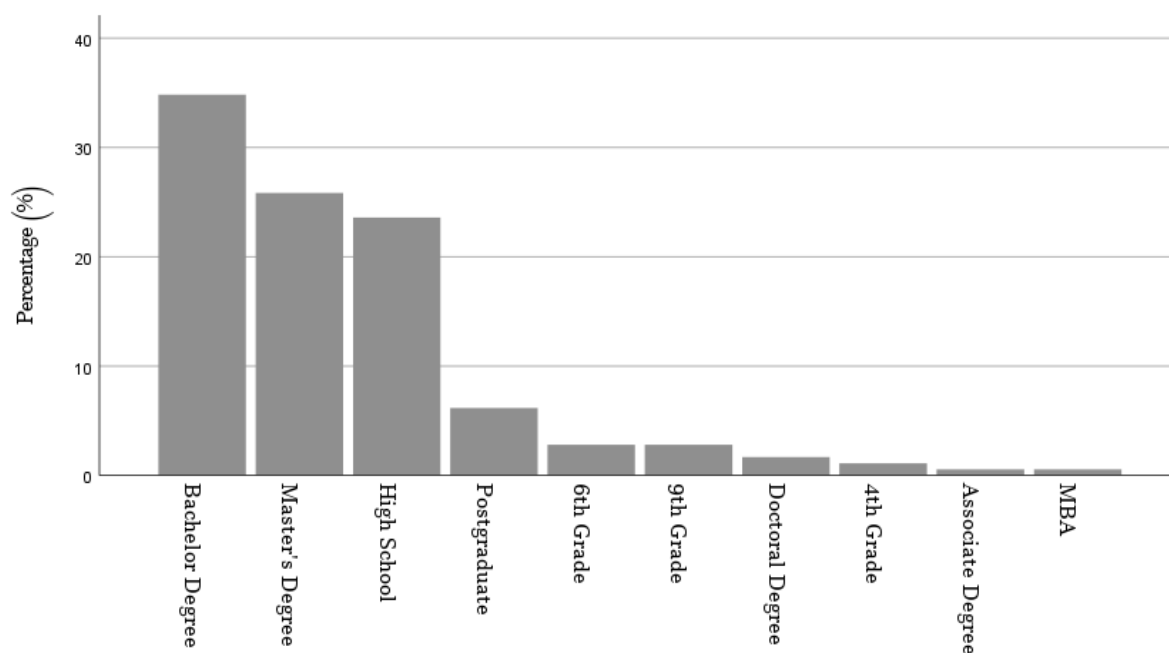
Graph 5: Respondent's Level of Schooling, by percentage

Graph 6 shows the respondent's occupation and the prevalence of most of the students, representing 52,8% of the sample. It is still worth to be noticeable that 21,9% are specialists in the intellectual and scientific professions (e.g.: computer specialists, architects, engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers, jurists, writers, artists, public administration technicians, etc.).
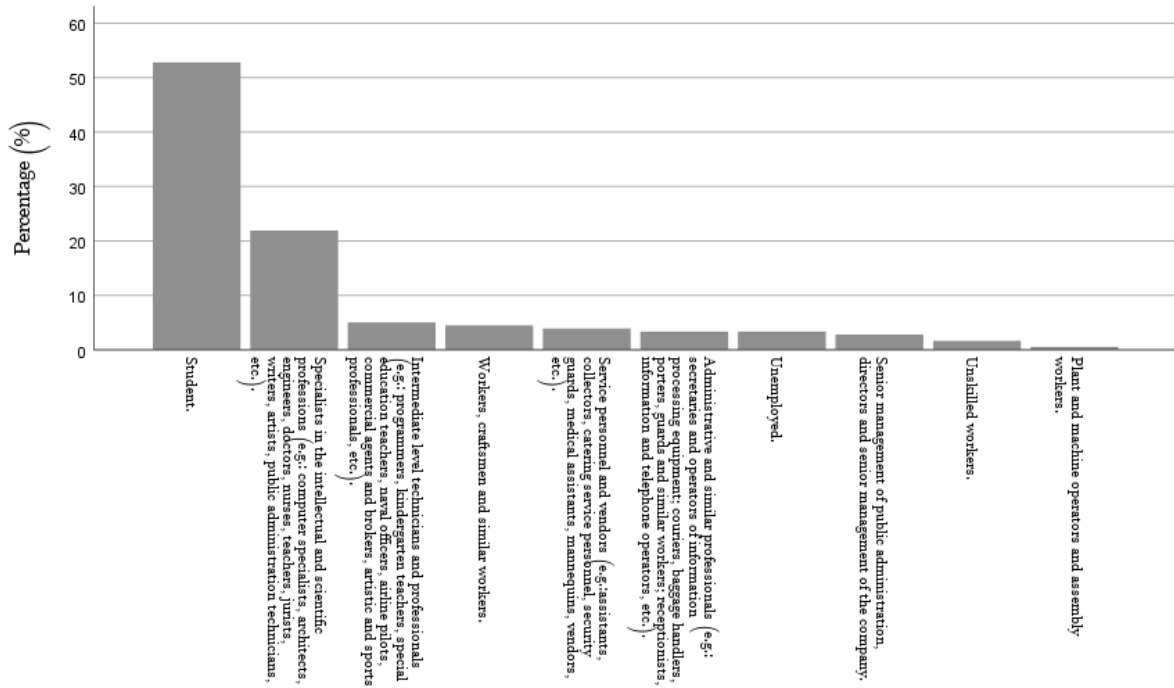
Graph 6: Respondent's Occupation, by percentage

When asked how much time they spent online, and as Graph 7 shows, 21,3% of the respondents answered between three and four hours; and another 21,3% between four and five hours online. Curiously, there was a very similar percentage of respondents that stated to spend six plus hours online (20,8%) and between two and three hours (20,8%).
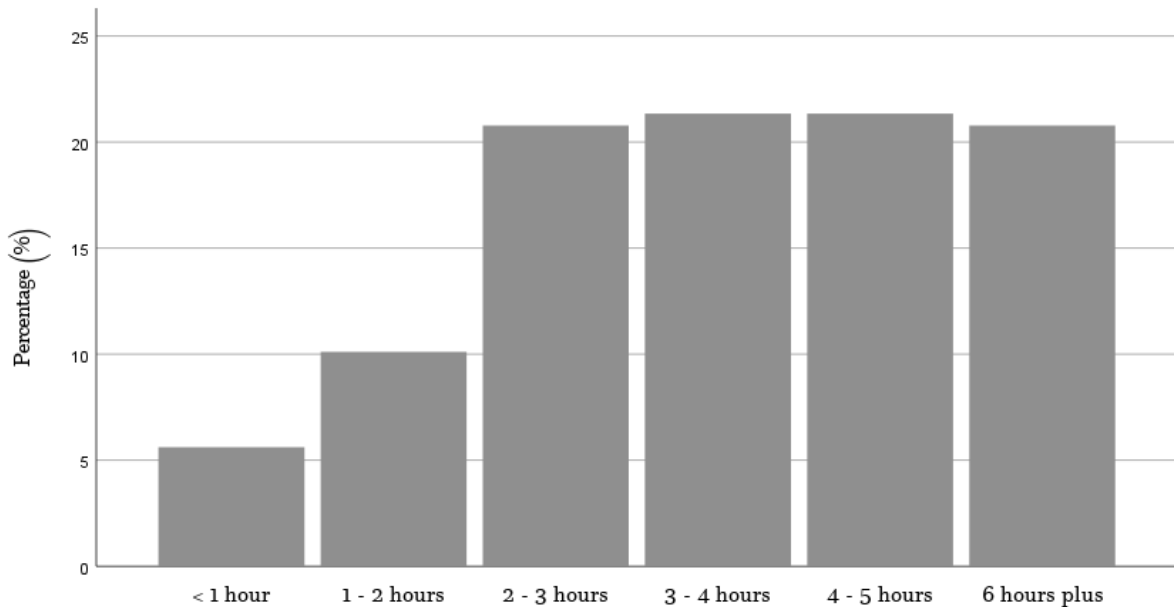
Graph 7: Respondent's Time Spent Online, by percentage

Lastly, when asked to pin on the map their political affiliation, Figure 4 came up. As expected, there were very dispersed selections throughout the map. However, there is a clear concentration of answers in the middle and the lower right corner – in the Portuguese political party logo *PSD* (in English, *PSD* stands for Democrat Social Party) and in the Liberal Party.
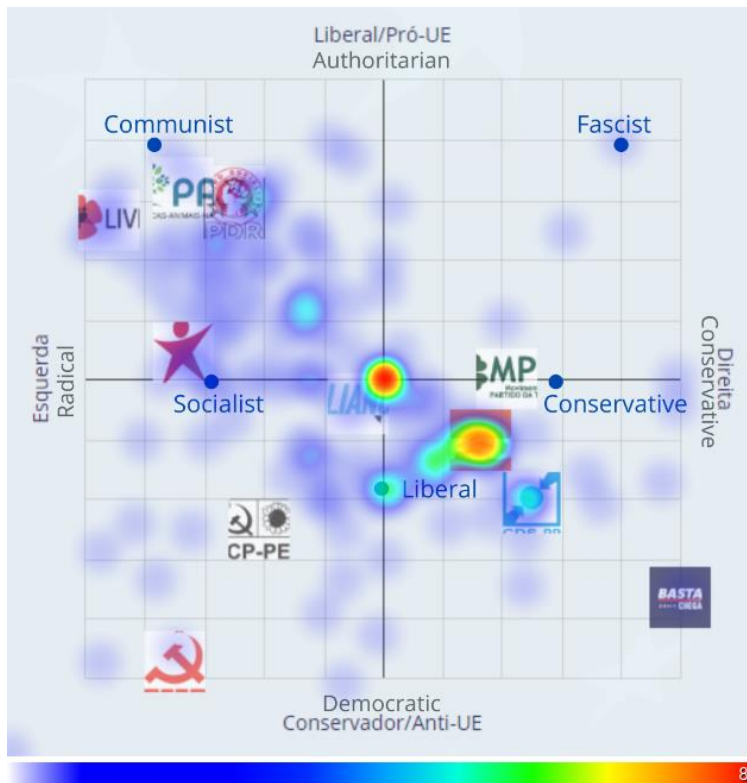
Figure 4: Respondent's Political Affiliation

4.2.3. Construct Analysis

4.2.3.1.   Internal Consistency and Normality Analysis

Before analysing the data retrieved from the study, it is necessary to make sure that have good quality. To do so, Cronbach's alpha will be employed. This method allows for the internal consistency of the scales to be tested, resulting in a number from 0 to 1, in which the more approximate to 1, the more correlated the items of the scale are amongst themselves. Several authors are proposing different levels of Cronbach alpha levels, however, a cutting point of 0.7 seems to be widely accepted (Pestana & Gageiro, 1998). Therefore, that is what was used in this research. Having Table 16 as a guideline, it was possible to analyse each construct's internal consistency.

Table 16: Levels for Internal Consistency (Cronbach's Alpha)

Internal Consistency	Cronbach's Alpha
Excellent	$\alpha \geq 0.9$
Good	$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$
Acceptable	$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$
Questionable	$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$
Poor	$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$
Unacceptable	$0.5 > \alpha$

Source: (Pestana & Gageiro, 1998)

Analysing Table 17, it is notable that brand hate and brand avoidance after the scenario's (T2) internal consistency are excellent, and brand retaliation after the scenario, the initial brand image and overall social approval are good. The initial brand image's internal consistency was 0.833, but one item was deleted to increase Cronbach's alpha to 0.869, as the difference was slightly significant.

Likewise, the internal consistency of the initial brand love and the brand love after the scenario is acceptable, and only the "cancel culture" construct cannot be considered. This was to be expected, as the authors that created the scale did not have a satisfactory result either (Mueller, 2021), and the results will not be included in this research. However, the conclusions taken from the social approval question should be with caution, as the sample is reduced since the question was only displayed to the respondents who had already cancelled a brand (n=23).

Table 17: Cronbach's Alpha of the scales used in the survey

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	n
Brand Image T0	7	0.869	178
Brand Love T0	6	0.755	178
Brand Love T2	6	0.722	178
Brand Hate T2	6	0.937	178
Brand Avoidance T2	5	0.968	178
Brand Retaliation T2	5	0.864	178
Social Approval	6	0.807	23
Cancel Culture	10	0.586	178

This analysis does not present the brand cancellation construct, as it was created by the researcher and different tests needed to be applied. Furthermore, constructs that were measured on a single-item question are also not accountable. These are items such as the purchase intention (PI), WOM (intention to recommend the brand), both before and after the scenario, and brand forgiveness (BF), brand hate (BH), brand avoidance (BA), brand retaliation (BR) and brand cancellation (BC) after the apology.

Regarding the new concept of brand cancellation, exploratory factor analysis was performed using principal component analysis and varimax rotation. The minimum factor loading was 0,5 and the communalities of the scale were also assessed to ensure that no item has an extraction below 0,5. Moreover, Bartlett's test was performed to verify the statistical significance of the correlations between the items and, as it can be seen in Table 18, the results were significant (X^2 = 1172,467; p = 0,000). Furthermore, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test was executed to evaluate if the data are suitable for the factor analysis. The results approve as such, with a Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) of 0,857 (the data are suitable if above 0,80).

Table 18: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Brand Cancellation (preliminary analysis)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		,857
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1172,467
	Df	91
	Sig.	,000

The analysis performed yielded four factors for the scale which accounted for a cumulative variation in data of 68,827%, as shown by Table 19. However, three items failed to load on any dimension significantly: "There are no differences between boycotting a brand and cancelling a brand", "Cancelling a brand is an acceptable way to make it pay for its mistakes" and "It is acceptable not to cancel a brand for misconduct if it entails major changes in my lifestyle". Hence, these three items were removed one by one, and the analysis is repeated.

Table 19: Total Variance Explained Results (preliminary analysis)

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Rotation sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5,701	40,718	40,718	3,444	24,600	24,600
2	1,482	10,583	51,301	3,014	21,528	46,129
3	1,324	9,456	60,757	1,919	13,705	59,833
4	1,130	8,070	68,827	1,259	8,993	68,827
5	0,860	6,141	74,967			
6	0,697	4,978	79,945			
7	0,585	4,178	84,123			
8	0,491	3,505	87,628			
9	0,391	2,794	90,422			
10	0,335	2,396	92,817			
11	0,307	2,194	95,011			
12	0,276	1,969	96,981			
13	0,224	1,601	98,582			
14	0,199	1,418	100,000			

The new and final analysis had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA of 0,853 and Bartlett's test proved the statistical significance of the correlation among the items of the scale (X^2 = 1020,709; p = 0,00), as seen in Table 20. Furthermore, no communality was below 0,5, as required.

Table 20: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Brand Cancellation (final analysis)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		,853
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1020,709
	Df	55
	Sig.	,000

The components explain a total of 71,274% of the variance among the items in the study, and their distribution can be found in Table 21. After the distribution was analysed, the components were named after their grouping. The first dimension is the intention to cancel to punish the bran, the second one is the eagerness to cancel and the last one is the social approval seeking.

Table 21: Brand Cancellation items distribution

Item	Component		
	1	2	3
Intention to cancel to punish the brand			
I cancel a brand so it changes its bad practices.	0,750		
I cancel a brand so it disappears completely.	0,846		
If an action is immoral, illegal, or unethical, brands should be cancelled.	0,728		
I cancel a brand so it suffers a financial loss.	0,883		
I hate the brands I cancel.	0,587		
Eagerness to cancel			
When I cancel a brand, I don't go back on my decision.		0,707	
When I cancel a brand, I try to influence my group of friends to do the same.		0,684	
I am more likely to cancel a brand if the bad practice report comes from someone with credibility.		0,802	
I cancel a brand that's been acting wrong, even if I like the brand.		0,742	
Social approval seeking			
I'm more likely to cancel a brand if I think more people will do the same.			0,825
I don't cancel a brand if I don't think anyone else will do it too.			0,919

Besides testing the internal consistency of the constructs, it is crucial to examine the normality of the sample, so that the proper statistic tests can be employed. To do so, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed. This test has the Null Hypothesis: H0: "The variable's distribution is approximately normal". Therefore, the normality of the ample is proven if $p > 0,05$. As Table 22 shows, there are only two variables with $p > 0,05$, which are initial brand love and the intention to cancel the brand after the scenario. Therefore, as only two results have statistical significance, the null hypothesis is refuted, which means that the sample does not follow a normal distribution. Consequently, non-parametric tests are the best suited to evaluate the variables in question and will be performed in the next sections.

Table 22: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Statistics

Variables	Statistic	Significance
Brand Love T0	0,056	0,200[d]
Brand Image T0	0,094	0,001
Perceived Importance	0,309	0,000
Brand Hate T2	0,109	0,000
Brand Avoidance T2	0,135	0,000
Brand Retaliation T2	0,130	0,000
Brand Cancellation T2	0,058	0,200[d]
WOM T2	0,144	0,000
Purchase Intention T2	0,125	0,000
Brand Forgiveness (final)	0,120	0,000
Brand Cancellation (final)	0,262	0,000
Purchase Intention (final)	0,155	0,000

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

4.2.3.2.   Respondent-Brand Relationship Description (T0)

Every customer has a different relationship with their preferred brand, with certain levels of brand image, brand love, WOM and purchase intention associated. This relationship and the emotions that come with it may vary with time and with the influence of external factors, which is one of the factors under study in this research. Therefore, it is important to describe the initial relationship of the sample with their preferred brands, so that it is possible to understand the impact of the changes occurring after the presented scenario and apology.

First, when asked to name a brand that they particularly liked, the answers were, as expected, very distinct (see Appendix 7 for the extensive list). However, Apple, Adidas and Nike were the three brands most cited (with 13, 12 and 12 responses, respectively).

The initial brand image levels of the sample (referring to their preferred brand, individually), were measured in the degree of agreement, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 7 means "strongly agree". When analyzing those brand image levels, as can be seen in Table 23, three statements stand out: "the brand is nice" (M=6.29, SD=1.065), "the brand is very consolidated in the market" (M=6.14, SD=1.248), and "the products have high quality" (M=6.08, SD=1.225), corresponding to an item for each category of brand image: affective image, reputation and functional image. The majority (56.7%) of

answers to "the brand is nice" are placed on point 7, with 93,8% being laid on positive points (from 5 to 7, strongly agree). Accordingly, the statement "the brand is very consolidated in the market" has 56.2% of answers positioned on point 7, with 87.7% of all answers in positive points. The quality of the brand's products, although it has 39.3% of answers in positive points, the percentages per point are more dispersed, with 48.3% for "strongly agree", and 27% and 18% for levels 6 and 5, respectively. These results were as expected, as consumers tend to have high levels of brand image for brands of their preference.

Table 23: Initial Brand Image Results (n=178)

α = 0.869	Relative Frequency							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
The products have a high quality.	2.2%	0.6%	0.6%	3.4%	18%	27%	48.3%	6.08	1.225
The products have better characteristics than competitors'.	1.7%	0.6%	1.1%	9.6%	22.5%	31.5%	33.1%	5.78	1.228
The products of the competitors are usually cheaper.	10.1%	12.4%	7.3%	20.8%	17.4%	13.5%	18.5%	4.38	1.934
The brand is nice.	1.1%	———	1.1%	3.9%	10.7%	26.4%	56.7%	6.29	1.065
The brand has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors' brands.	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	12.9%	15.7%	18%	46.6%	5.78	1.493
It's a brand that doesn't disappoint its customers.	1.7%	1.1%	1.1%	11.8%	21.9%	30.9%	31.5%	5.70	1.275
It's one of the best brands in the sector.	1.7%	0.6%	1.1%	11.2%	14.6%	26.4%	44.4%	5.93	1.287
The brand is very consolidated in the market.	1.1%	———	3.4%	7.9%	10.7%	20.8%	56.2%	6.14	1.248

Categories: from 1 – "Strongly Disagree" to 7 – "Strongly Agree"

When analyzing initial brand love levels, the scenario differs, as answers are not so frequently on positive ends, as can be seen in Table 24 and Table 25. An interesting fact is that 35.4% of respondents strongly disagree that using their preferred brand's products or services says something true and deep about themselves (M=3.04, SD=1.885). Likewise, 47.8% placed their answer on negative points (from 1 to 3) to the item "to what extent do you feel emotionally connected to the brand?" (M=3.46, SD=1.887). Correspondingly, 33.1% of respondents strongly disagree that they would feel anxiety if their preferred brand were to go out of existence (M=2.77, SD=1.810), with another 23.6% of the sample answering on point 2. Nevertheless, 44.4% of respondents strongly believe that they will be using that brand's products or services for a long time (M=5.84, SD=1.419), with 82.6% of the answers being placed on positive points. Likewise, when asked to place their overall feelings and evaluations towards the referred brand (M=6.16, SD=1.067), on a 7-point negative-positive scale, 92.2% place their answers on positive points, with the higher point (7) accounting for 50.6% of the answers.

Although, at first sight, these results may seem contradictory, they are understandable. The items with a high percentage of answers on low points refer to strong and clear emotions and/or feelings, which may make customers take a step back and underestimate their feelings for the brand.

Table 24: Initial Brand Love Results (n=178), part 1

α = 0.755	Relative Frequency							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
To what extent do you feel that using that brand's products or services says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?	35.4%	9%	10.1%	23.6%	10.7%	6.2%	5.1%	3.04	1.885
To what extent do you feel you desire to have that brand's products or services?	3.9%	6.7%	6.2%	30.9%	19.7%	14.0%	18.5%	4.72	1.616
To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to the brand?	21.9%	15.2%	10.7%	23.0%	12.9%	9.0%	7.3%	3.46	1.887

α = 0.755	Relative Frequency							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
To what extent do you believe that you will be using that brand's products or services for a long time?	2.2%	1.1%	2.8%	11.2%	14.0%	24.2%	44.4%	5.84	1.419
Suppose that the brand were to go out of existence. To what extent do you feel anxiety?	33.1%	23.6%	9.0%	17.4%	6.7%	4.5%	5.6%	2.77	1.810
Please, express your overall feelings and evaluations towards the referred brand [7-point negative-positive].	0.6%	——	1.1%	6.2%	16.3%	25.3%	50.6%	6.16	1.067

Categories: from 1 – "Not at All" to 7 – "Very Much", with 4 – "Moderately" as middle-point

The initial intention to purchase, and recommend, the sample was measured through a single-item question, with ten points, where 1 was "definitely will not buy again" and 10 "definitely will buy again". Similarly, the intention to recommend went from "definitely would not recommend" to "definitely would recommend".

The initial purchase intention (M=9.15, SD=1.915) has a clear predominance of answers shown in higher levels (95%). Table 26 also shows that 70.8% of those percentual points are placed at point 10. These results are coherent with all the results above, and expected, as customers are more willing to invest resources in brands they enjoy (Bagozzi et al., 2017).

Table 26: Initial Purchase Intention Results (n=178)

	Relative Frequency										M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
PI	2.8%	1.1%	–	1.1%	–	1.1%	3.4%	9.6%	10.1%	70.8%	9.15	1.915

Categories: from 1 – "Definitely Will Not Buy Again" to 10 – "Definitely Will Buy Again"

When asked about their intentions to recommend the brand (M=8.81, SD=1.898), most of the sample chose positively, with 83.9% on the three higher points, and 56.2% of those responses in "definitely would recommend". Likewise, the lower five points only gathered 5% of all responses, as Table 27 shows.

Table 27: Initial Intention to Recommend the Brand Results (n=178)

	Relative Frequency										M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
WOM	2.2%	0.6%	1.1%	–	1.1%	2.8%	8.4%	16.9%	10.7%	56.2%	8.81	1.898

Categories: from 1 – "Definitely Would Not Recommend" to 10 – "Definitely Would Recommend"

4.2.3.3. Cancel Culture perceptions, knowledge, and participation

Analyzing the sample's intentions to cancel the brand after the scenario was introduced (M=4.30, SD=3.307), also measured in a global mono-item question, from 1: "definitely would not cancel" to 10: "definitely would cancel", it is possible to conclude that the respondents are not very prone to cancel, as 67.5% of the answers are on negative points, with 30% of that being in the "definitely would not cancel", as shown in Table 28.

Table 28: Intention to Cancel the Brand after the scenario presentation (n=178)

	Relative Frequency										M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
BC	30.3%	7.9%	10.7%	9.6%	9.0%	11.2%	5.6%	5.1%	2.2%	8.4%	4.30	3.307

Categories: from 1 – "Definitely Would Not Cancel" to 10 – "Definitely Would Cancel"

However, it is still important to analyze the brand cancellation factor completely. This question was asked trough a 7-point Likert scale and the results can be seen in Table 29. Most of the items has the majority of answers placed on negative items, which is coincident with the previous analysis. However, it is worth noticing that one item stands out, the one mentioning the call-out agent's credibility: "I am more likely to cancel a brand if the bad practice report comes from someone with credibility" (M=4.51, SD=1.989). On the negative side, the item "I cancel a brand so it disappears completely" also stands out (M=2.07, SD=1.541), which is coherent with the findings from Yates & Carolina (2021)'s case study.

α = 0.871	Relative Frequency							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
I cancel a brand so it changes its bad practices.	30.3%	10.1%	10.7%	17.4%	15.7%	6.2%	9.6%	3.35	2.026
I cancel a brand so it disappears completely.	55.1%	16.9%	9.0%	11.2%	3.4%	1.7%	2.8%	2.07	1.541
I cancel a brand so it suffers a financial loss.	39.9%	12.9%	11.2%	11.2%	11.8%	2.8%	10.1%	2.91	2.048
If an action is immoral, illegal or unethical, brands should be cancelled.	24.2%	9.6%	11.2%	23.0%	11.8%	7.9%	12.4%	3.62	2.023
I hate the brands I cancel.	43.8%	7.3%	12.4%	18.5%	6.2%	5.6%	6.2%	2.78	1.930
There are no differences between boycotting a brand and cancelling a brand.	42.7%	16.3%	9.0%	18.0%	4.5%	3.4%	6.2%	2.60	1.839
Cancelling a brand is an acceptable way to make it pay for its mistakes.	28.7%	15.2%	10.7%	19.7%	8.4%	6.7%	10.7%	3.27	2.024
It is acceptable not to cancel a brand for misconduct if it entails major changes in my lifestyle.	27.5%	12.4%	10.7%	20.8%	9.6%	7.9%	11.2%	3.41	2.043
When I cancel a brand, I don't go back on my decision.	28.7%	8.4%	11.2%	25.8%	7.9%	7.9%	10.1%	3.40	1.998
When I cancel a brand, I try to influence my group of friends to do the same.	34.8%	7.9%	15.2%	19.7%	14.6%	3.9%	3.9%	2.99	1.804

Categories: from 1 – "Strongly Disagree" to 7 – "Strongly Agree"

Table 30: Brand Cancellation Results after the scenario presentation (n=178), part 2

| α = 0.871	Relative Frequency							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
I am more likely to cancel a brand if the bad practice report comes from someone with credibility.	14.6%	5.6%	5.6%	18.0%	20.2%	16.9%	19.1%	4.51	1.989
I cancel a brand that's been acting wrong, even if I like the brand.	19.7%	6.7%	10.7%	23.0%	19.7%	9.6%	10.7%	3.88	1.921
I'm more likely to cancel a brand if I think more people will do the same.	42.1%	13.5%	6.7%	16.9%	14.0%	3.4%	3.4%	2.71	1.824
I don't cancel a brand if I don't think anyone else will do it too.	46.1%	16.9%	11.2%	17.4%	3.9%	2.8%	1.7%	2.31	1.552

Categories: from 1 – "Strongly Disagree" to 7 – "Strongly Agree"

Moreover, it also interesting to understand if the intention to cancel varies between Millennials and Generation Z. To test so, a Mann-Whitney test was conducted as it is a non-parametric test that compares the means of two groups from the same sample and verifies if those groups have the same mean in certain variable. This test has as the Null Hypothesis: "There are no differences statistically significant between the two groups". As Table 31 shows, the results were not significant ($p > 0,005$) and, therefore, the null hypothesis must be accepted, that there is no difference statistically significant between the intention to cancel of Gen Z and Millennials'.

Table 31: Mann-Whitney Test Statistics for the role of age groups in intention to cancel

	Age Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney's U	Sig (2 tails)
BC Global T2	Generation Z	126	79.84	10059.50	2058.500	0,542
	Millennials	35	85.19	2981.50		

After the apology introduction, respondents were asked to give their opinion on what should have been the brand's action once they heard about the problem. Respondents could choose from three options: a) do not comment; b) apologize, without admitting guilt, and c) accept they made a mistake. As Graph 8 shows, most of the sample (89.33%) believe the brand should have accepted it made a mistake, which was the action taken in the scenario presented by the researchers. Only 8.43% think that the brand should have apologized without admitting guilt and 2.25% consider they should have not commented.
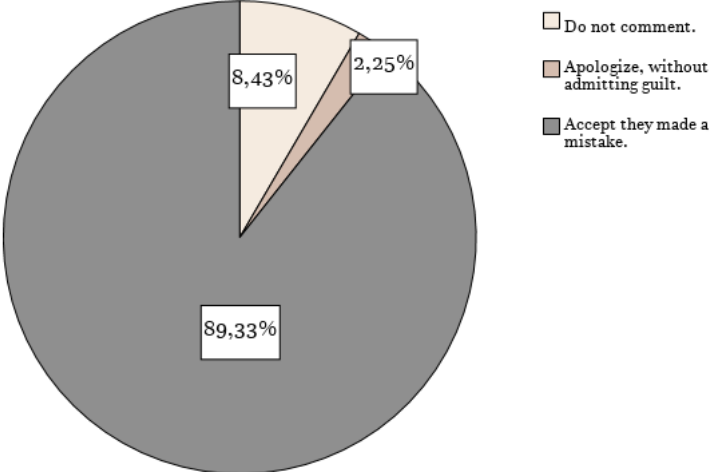
Graph 8: Brand's beliefs of what should be the brand's response in the short term

Likewise, when questioned about what should have been the attitude taken by the brand, in the face of consumer discontent, the answer was almost unanimous, with 96.63% answering that the brand should have corrected the action that led them to this problem, as Graph 9 Shows. This question only gave the brand two options: to a) correct the action that led them to this problem, and b) rebrand itself. However, only six respondents believe the brand should rebrand itself.
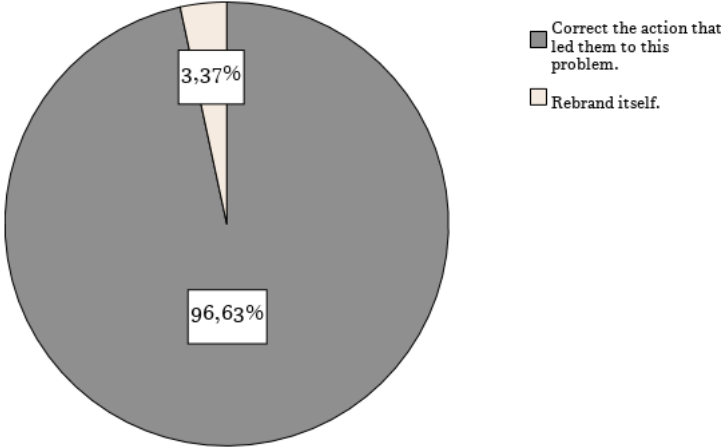
Graph 9: Brand's beliefs of what should be the brand's response in the long term

An important variable to measure is the importance given to each type of ideological incompatibility. This allows for two things mainly: prove or refute the researcher's choice for racism as the type of ideological incompatibility in the scenario, and to see what matters are more and less important to the sample. This was evaluated through the degree of importance, from 1: "not at all important" to 7: "very important".

As Table 32 shows, racism (M=6.49, SD=1.245) is the item with the higher percentage (78.1%) on the "very important" point, and 91.5% of responses were placed on positive items. Next comes environmental concerns (M=6.44, SD=1.149), with very similar results. Only 2.8% of the sample placed their answer on negative points, and 71.9% think environmental issues are very important. The two next important topics are animals' rights (M=6.24, SD=1.342) and socio-political issues, such as LGBTQIA+ rights and gender equality, among others. Consequently, the items with the most answers on negative points are nationalism (M=4.44, 2.034) and religion (M=4.76, SD=2.160). Nationalism counts with 25.8% of the answers placed on negative points and 25.8% on the neutral point. Religion, although also with a considerable number of answers in negative points (27%), has its answers more distributed, which means that there are also some interesting data on the positive side. In fact, 32.6% of respondents believe that religion is very important, which is more than the 27% that answered negatively.

This analysis shows that the decision to make the crisis scenario about racism is justified, as 91.5% of the answers relating racism were placed as having a certain degree of importance (from five to seven, very important).

*Table 32: Importance attributed by the sample to different types of Ideological Incompatibilities (n=178)*

α =0.784	Relative Frequency							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Racism	2.8%	—	1.1%	4.5%	2.2%	11.2%	78.1%	6.49	1.245
Religion	15.2%	3.9%	7.9%	15.2%	10.7%	14.6%	32.6%	4.76	2.160
Animal Rights	2.8%	—	2.2%	5.6%	7.9%	17.4%	64.0%	6.24	1.342
Environmental Concerns	1.7%	—	1.7%	3.4%	7.9%	13.5%	71.9%	6.44	1.149
Sociopolitical Concerns	4.5%	2.2%	1.7%	3.9%	8.4%	14.6%	64.6%	6.12	1.588
Nationalism	14.0%	7.9%	3.9%	25.8%	14.0%	10.7%	23.6%	4.44	2.034

Participants were then asked about their habits of boycotting, on a "yes" or "no" question. As can be seen in Graph 10, 83.71% of the sample has never boycotted a brand, with only 16.29% (29 respondents) answering that they have boycotted a brand at some point. Participants who answered "yes" to this question were asked to name which brand they boycotted on a box below. The most mentioned brands were Nike, Amazon, Chick-fil-A, Hobby Lobby, Jeffree Star Cosmetics, and Nestlé (see Appendix 8 for the extensive list). These results are coherent with the ones achieved through the netnography study.
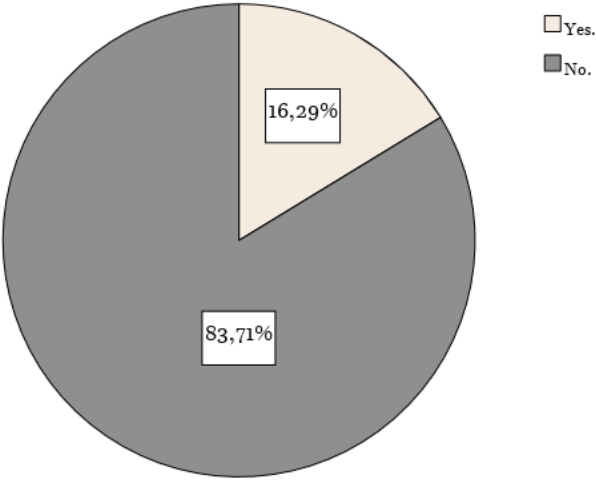
Graph 10: Sample's participation in boycotts

Like in the boycott analysis, respondents were asked if they have ever cancelled a brand and, if so, to name which brand they cancelled. As the Graph 11 shows, answers do not vary that much from the ones relating to participation in boycotts. Only 12.92% of the sample has ever cancelled a brand, with Nestlé, Amazon, Facebook, Shein, and Dolce&Gabanna amongst the most mentioned brands (see Appendix 9 for the extensive list). Although in this question the names of the most stated brand differ from the ones most listed in the boycott question, only six out of the nineteen brands listed as targets of cancellation at some time are not in the list of targets of boycotts. In line with these results is the answer of one of the respondents that, when asked to name the brand that he/she/they cancelled, answered: "Cancelled isn't a coherent concept separate from boycotting".
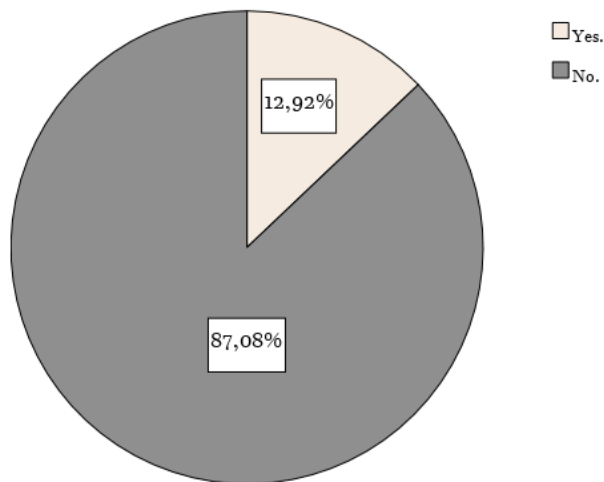
Graph 11: Sample's participation in cancellations

Moreover, the sample was also asked to answer what was the reason behind the cancellation. It is worth remembering that this question was only displayed if the respondents had answered "yes" to the question "have you ever cancelled a brand?" and, therefore, the number of answers for this question is reduced (n=23). Most of the respondents did not select one of the options given but chose to answer in text. This question was of multiple choice and had as options: a) racial justice, b) women's rights, c) COVID-19 protocols, d) immigration, e) climatic/environmental changes, f) LGBTQ+, g) religion, h) politics, i) supporting war conflicts, j) other, with text entry. 17.4% of the respondents selected racial justice as the reason behind the cancellation, 13% politics, 8.7% LGBTQ+ matters and 60.9% "other". For the answers in text, some of the issues mentioned more than once were human rights (labour exploitation included), politics, data protection, among others (see Appendix 10 for the list with the full comments).

For literature, one of the motivations for participating in cancel culture may be the need for social approval. The social approval level of the sample was measured in the degree of agreement, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 7 means "strongly agree". This question was only presented to the respondents who have already cancelled a brand (n=23), that is, answered "yes" to the question analyzed above. As Table 33 shows, most of the answers for all items are on negative points, which means that the sample does not believe that they cancel a brand for social approval. The only time where that does not happen is with the statement "I often discuss this brand in a negative manner with members of society", which has 52.1% of answers on positive points. This can be understood if the item is seen as a version of NWOM and not as an item of social approval. In that case, it is expected that NWOM follows a cancellation, as it will be analyzed further in this chapter.

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Table 33: Social Approval Results (n=23)

α = 0.807	Relative Frequency							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
I would not buy this brand because I am sure that society will not approve.	56.5%	17.4%	—	13.0%	8.7%	—	4.3%	2.17	1.749
I am not loyal to this brand because society is not either.	56.5%	17.4%	8.7%	4.3%	13%	—	—	2.00	1.446
I often discuss this brand in a negative manner with members of society.	17.4%	17.4%	—	13.0%	13.0%	17.4%	21.7%	4.26	2.281
I achieve a sense of belonging by avoiding the same brand as the rest of the society.	60.9%	8.7%	8.7%	8.7%	4.3%	8.7%	—	2.13	1.714
All of my online network avoids this brand.	30.4%	21.7%	13.0%	13.0%	4.3%	13.0%	4.3%	2.96	1.942
I avoid this brand because I want to be associated with certain groups of people.	52.2%	21.7%	4.3%	8.7%	13.0%	—	—	2.09	1.474

The intention to forgive (M=6.97, SD=2.476) was measured through a single-item question, with ten points, where 1 was "definitely would not forgive" and 10 "definitely would forgive". It has clear predominance of answers is shown in higher levels (71%), although very dispersedly distributed. Table 34 also shows that 21.7% of those percentual points are placed at point 10.

Table 34: Brand Forgiveness Results

	Relative Frequency										M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
BF	4.5%	0.6%	4.5%	4.5%	14.0%	12.9%	14.0%	12.4%	10.7%	21.7%	6.97	2.476

4.2.4. Conceptual Model Analysis

4.2.4.1. *The t-test and Wilcoxon Signed Ratings Test*

Before testing the correlation between the constructs and, therefore, accept or refute the proposed hypothesis, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted with measures obtained at three different times: initially (To), after the scenario is introduced (T2) and after the apology by the company (Final). This was done to test if there are statistically significant differences in the respondent's feelings as they went through the survey, which aimed to reproduce the cancel culture journey.

As Graph 12 shows, all initial measures took a fall after the scenario introduction, which means that the scenario negatively affected the initial brand love (M_{t0} = 25.9831, M_{t2} = 19.3258), purchase intention (M_{t0} = 9.15, M_{t2} = 5.74) and WOM (M_{t0} = 8.81, M_{t2} = 4.94). Likewise, after the apology, the measures improved. The purchase intention (M_{t2} = 5.74, M_{final} = 7.37) and WOM (M_{t2} = 4.94, M_{final} = 6.60) slightly increased, although not to initial levels. Brand cancellation (M_{t2} = 4.30, M_{final} = 2.79), brand avoidance (M_{t2} = 6.72, M_{final} = 4.21), and brand retaliation (M_{t2} = 3.61, M_{final} = 2.87) decreased after the apology of the brand, which means that the crisis communication strategy applied reduces the cancel culture consequences. These results are presented in detail in Table 35.
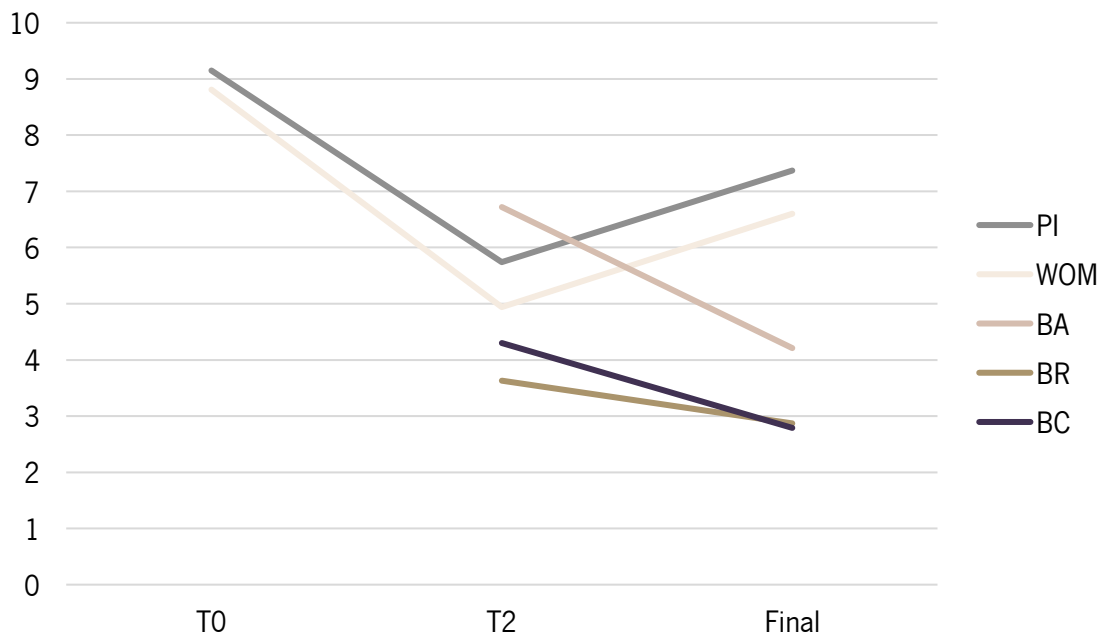
Graph 12: Evolution of purchase intention, WOM, Brand Avoidance (BA), Brand Retaliation (BR) and Brand Cancellation (BC)

	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3	Pair 4	Pair 5	Pair 6	Pair 7	Pair 8
	Brand Love T0 – Brand Love t2	PI T0 – PI T2	PI T2 – PI Final	WOM T0 - WOM T2	WOM T2 – WOM Final	BA Global T2 – BA Global Final	BR Global T2 – BR Global Final	BC Global T2 – BC Global Final
M	6.657	3.416	-1.629	3.871	-1.657	2.511	0.764	1.506
SD	7.244	3.265	2.936	3.453	3.053	4.604	2.527	2.803
Means' SD	0.543	0.245	0.220	0.259	0.229	0.345	0.189	0.210
t	12.261	13.956	-7.404	14.957	-7.242	7.277	4.034	7.167
df	177	177	177	177	177	177	177	177
Sig (2 tails)	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000

To further confirm these results, a Wilcoxon signed rating test was performed since it is more suitable for samples which do not follow a normal distribution and compares the average of two dependent samples, unlike the Mann-Whitney U-test, which tests two independent samples.

As Table 36 in the next page shows, 143 participants had lower levels of brand love after the scenario presentation than they did at the beginning of the survey, with only 26 people presenting higher levels of brand love after the crisis and 9 presenting the same. Likewise, the purchase intention decreased after the crisis introduction for 134 participants, increased for 9, and for 35 it did not change. Moreover, the WOM after the crisis decreased for 142 of the participants, having stayed the same for 10 of them and increased for 26, when compared to the initial WOM, that is, the intention to recommend the brand.

As expected, the same does not happen after the crisis communication strategy (apology) is introduced. The intention to purchase after the apology increased for 101 participants, did not change for 54 and decreased for 23, when compared to the intention to purchase after the crisis presentation. Similarly, the final WOM increases for 110 of the respondents, stays the same for 43 and decreases for 25, when compared to the WOM after the crisis. This effect is also noticeable in brand avoidance and brand cancellation. The intention to avoid the brand after the apology decreased for 111 respondents, increased for only 19 and stayed the same for 48. The intention to cancel the brand follows a similar pattern, having decreased for 102 participants, increased for just 16 and not changed for 60 of them. However, the consequences of the apology are not so clear when it comes to brand retaliation. The

intention to retaliate against the brand decreased for 73 participants but stayed the same for 71 of the 178 people that constitute the sample, which means that for 71 respondents, the action taken by the brand was not enough to make them, at least, not want to retaliate at those higher levels.

Table 36: The Wilcoxon Signed Ratings Test – Ranks (n=178)

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Brand Love T2 – Brand Love T0	Negative Ranks	143[a]	93,90	13427,00
	Positive Ranks	26[b]	36,08	938,00
	Ties	9[c]		
Purchase Intention T2 – Purchase Intention T0	Negative Ranks	134[d]	73,98	9913,50
	Positive Ranks	9[e]	42,50	382,50
	Ties	35[f]		
Purchase Intention (final) – Purchase Intention T2	Negative Ranks	23[g]	48,85	1123,50
	Positive Ranks	101[h]	65,61	6626,50
	Ties	54[i]		
WOM T2 – WOM T0	Negative Ranks	142[j]	94,70	13447,50
	Positive Ranks	26[k]	28,79	748,50
	Ties	10[l]		
WOM (Final) - WOM T2	Negative Ranks	25[m]	54,86	1371,50
	Positive Ranks	110[n]	70,99	7808,50
	Ties	43[o]		
Brand Avoidance Global (Final) – Brand Avoidance Global T2	Negative Ranks	111[p]	66,41	7371,50
	Positive Ranks	19[q]	60,18	1143,50
	Ties	48[r]		
Brand Retaliation Global (Final) – Brand Retaliation Global T2	Negative Ranks	73[s]	57,96	4231,00
	Positive Ranks	34[t]	45,50	1547,00
	Ties	71[u]		
Brand Cancellation Global (Final) – Brand Cancellation Global T2	Negative Ranks	102[v]	61,95	6319,00
	Positive Ranks	16[w]	43,88	702,00
	Ties	60[x]		

a. BrandLoveT2 < BrandLoveT0; b. BrandLoveT2 > BrandLoveT0; c. BrandLoveT2 = BrandLoveT0; d. Purchase Intention T2 < Purchase Intention T0; e. Purchase Intention T2 > Purchase Intention T0; f. Purchase Intention T2 = Purchase Intention T0; g. Purchase Intention (Final) < Purchase Intention T2; h. Purchase Intention (Final) > Purchase Intention T2; i. Purchase Intention (Final) = Purchase Intention T2; j. WOM T2 < WOM T0; k. WOM T2 > WOM T0; l. WOM T2 = WOM T0; m. WOM (Final) < WOM T2; n. WOM (Final) > WOM T2; o. WOM (Final) = WOM T2; p. Brand Avoidance Global (Final) < Brand Avoidance global T2; q. Brand Avoidance Global (Final) > Brand Avoidance Global T2; r. Brand Avoidance Global Final = Brand Avoidance Global T2; s. Brand Retaliation Global Final < Brand Retaliation Global T2; t. Brand Retaliation Global Final > Brand Retaliation Global T2; u. Brand Retaliation Global Final = Brand Retaliation Global T2; v. Brand Cancellation Global (Final) < Brand Cancellation Global T2; w. Brand Cancellation Global (Final) > Brand Cancellation Global T2; x. Brand Cancellation Global (Final) = Brand Cancellation Global T2

After analysing the ranks table, it is mandatory to verify if the observed differences between all measurements are significant. As Table 37 demonstrates, all conclusions taken above are significant (p =,000). In summary, it is possible to assert that: a) brand love levels reduced after the crisis introduction (Z = -9.810, p = 0,000), b) the purchase intention reduced after the crisis introduction (Z = -9.620, p = 0,000), c) the intention to recommend the brand (WOM) reduced after the crisis introduction (Z = -10.077, p = 0,000), d) the purchase intention after the brand's apology increased (Z = -6.895, p = 0,000, based on negative ranks), e) the final WOM increased after the brand's apology (Z = -7.101, p = 0,000, based on negative ranks), f) the brand avoidance levels reduced after the brand's apology (Z = -7.251, p = 0,000), and g) the brand cancellation levels decreased after the brand's apology (Z = -4.217, p = 0,000).

Table 37: Statistics from the Wilcoxon Signed Rating Test

	BL T2 – BL T0	PI T2 – PI T0	PI (final) – PI T2	WOM T2 – WOM T0	WOM (Final) - WOM T2	BA Global (Final) – BA Global T2	BR Global (Final) – BR Global T2	BC Global (Final) – BC Global T2
Z	-9.810[b]	-9.620[b]	-6.895[c]	-10.077[b]	-7.101[c]	-7.251[b]	-4.217[b]	-7.586[b]
Sig (2 tails)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000

a. The Wilcoxon Signed Ratings Test.
b. Based on positive ranks.
c. Based on negative ranks.

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As the sample does not follow a normal distribution, Spearman's Correlation Coefficient (a non-parametric test) was used to test the conceptual model's hypothesis. This test analyses one or more variables to measure the strength and direction of their association. The Spearman Coefficient varies from -1 to 1, where a result equal to 1 represents a positive perfect correlation. Likewise, when the result is positive, it means that when one variable increases, so do the other one. In the same line of thought, when the result is negative when one variable decreases, the other varies in the increases, and vice-versa, it means that the two variables have an inverse relationship. This test has as the null hypothesis the fact that there is no relationship between the variables. The aim, is, therefore, to refute the null hypothesis. To be able to do so, the results must be significant, which happens when $p < 0.05$.

The first relationships to be tested are at T_0, before and after the introduction of the scenario, to understand the associations between their prior feelings towards their preferred brand and the ones arising after the scenario is introduced. As it can be seen through Table 38, the initial brand image is not correlated with the perceived importance of the crisis ($p = 0,923$) nor the brand hate ($p = 0.263$). The same happens with the initial brand love. The initial brand image is, however, and as expected, positively correlated with the initial brand love ($r = 0,441$). Likewise, the perceived importance of the crisis presented to the respondents is positively correlated with the brand hate that follows the scenario presentation ($r = 0,269$).

Table 38: Matrix of Correlation for T0 with the effect of the scenario introduction

		Correlations			
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Spearman's	(1) Brand Image T$_0$	1,000	**,441****	,007	-,084
Rho	*Significance (2 ends)*		,000	,923	,263
	(2) Brand Love T$_0$		1,000	,079	,097
	Significance (2 ends)			,296	,196
	(3) Perceived Importance			1,000	**,269****
	Significance (2 ends)				,000
	(4) Brand Hate T$_2$				1,000
	Significance (2 ends)				
**. The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (2 ends).					

When analyzing the consequences of the crisis, Table 39 shows the clear correlation between all variables. Brand hate is positively correlated with brand avoidance ($r = 0.835$), brand retaliation ($r = 0,372$) and brand cancellation ($r = 0,536$) and negatively correlated with the intention to recommend ($r = -0,629$) and the purchase intention ($r = -0,701$), as expected. Likewise, the WOM (intention to recommend) is positively correlated to purchase intention ($r = 0,715$). On the other hand, brand avoidance ($r = -0,806$), brand retaliation ($r = -0,272$) and brand cancellation ($r = -0,386$) are negatively correlated with purchase intention.

Table 39: Matrix of Correlation after the scenario

		Correlations					
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Spearman's Rho	(1) Brand Hate T2	1,000	-,629**	,835**	,372**	,536**	-,701**
	Significance (2 ends)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	(2) WOM T2		1,000	-,707**	-,324**	-,463**	,715**
	Significance (2 ends)			,000	,000	,000	,000
	(3) Brand Avoidance T2			1,000	,372**	,505**	-,806**
	Significance (2 ends)				000	,000	,000
	(4) Brand Retaliation T2				1,000	,393	-,272**
	Significance (2 ends)					,000	,000
	(5) Brand Cancellation T2					1,000	-,386**
	Significance (2 ends)						,000
	(6) Purchase Intention T2						1,000
	Significance (2 ends)						
**. The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (2 ends).							

After the brand's apology is public, it is time to evaluate the consequences of the crisis and crisis communication strategy on the relationship of some constructs. Table 40 shows that, as expected, brand forgiveness is positively correlated with the final purchase intention (r = 0,694) and negatively correlated with the final brand cancellation measured at the last moment (r = -0,524). Likewise, the final brand cancellation is negatively correlated with the final purchase intention (r = -0,460).

Table 40: Matrix of Correlation after the apology

		Correlations		
		(1)	(2)	(3)
Spearman's Rho	(1) Brand Forgiveness (Final)	1,000	,694	-,524**
	Significance (2 ends)		,000	,000
	(2) Purchase Intention (Final)		1,000	-,460**
	Significance (2 ends)			,000
	(3) Brand Cancellation (Final)			,1000
	Significance (2 ends)			
	**. The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (2 ends).			

4.2.4.3.   Hypothesis Validation Summary

Analyzing all correlations above, as Table 41, Table 42 and Table 43 summarize, it is possible conclude that two of the proposed hypotheses were not supported, hypothesis one and two, relating to the correlation between the brand image and brand hate, and brand love and brand hate.

Table 41: Hypothesis Validation Results, T0

Hypothesis		**Result**	**Spearman's Rho**
1	Brand image, when under the influence of an ideological incompatibility (racism) and relating to a brand with a high reputation, is positively correlated with brand hate.	Not Supported	Not Applicable
2	Brand love, when under the influence of an ideological incompatibility (racism) and relating to a brand with a high reputation, is positively correlated with brand hate.	Not Supported	Not Applicable
3	The perceived importance of the trigger event is positively correlated with brand hate resulting from the crisis.	Supported	0,269

Hypothesis		Result	Spearman's Rho
4	The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the intention to recommend the brand (WOM).	Supported	-0,629
5	The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is positively correlated with brand avoidance.	Supported	0,835
6	The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is positively correlated with brand retaliation.	Supported	0,372
7	The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is positively correlated with brand cancellation.	Supported	0,536
8	The brand hate that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with purchase intention.	Supported	-0,701
9	The intention to recommend the brand (WOM) is positively correlated with the purchase intention.	Supported	0,715
10	The brand avoidance that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the purchase intention.	Supported	-0,806
11	The brand retaliation that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the purchase intention.	Supported	-0,272
12	The brand cancellation that emerges after the crisis is negatively correlated with the purchase intention.	Supported	-0,386

Table 43: Hypothesis Validation Results, Final

Hypothesis		Result	Spearman's Rho
13	When under the influence of an apology from the brand, brand forgiveness is negatively correlated with brand cancellation.	Supported	-0,524
14	When under the influence of an apology from the brand, brand forgiveness is positively correlated with purchase intention.	Supported	0,694

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As the hypotheses that both brand love and brand image were negatively correlated with brand hate, when under the influence of an ideological incompatibility (racism) related to a brand with high reputation, were not supported, the conceptual model had to reflect those changes. Therefore, the model in Figure 5 emerges, with brand hate happening when triggered by an ideological incompatibility such as racism and in relation to a brand with high reputation. All other relationships remain unaltered.
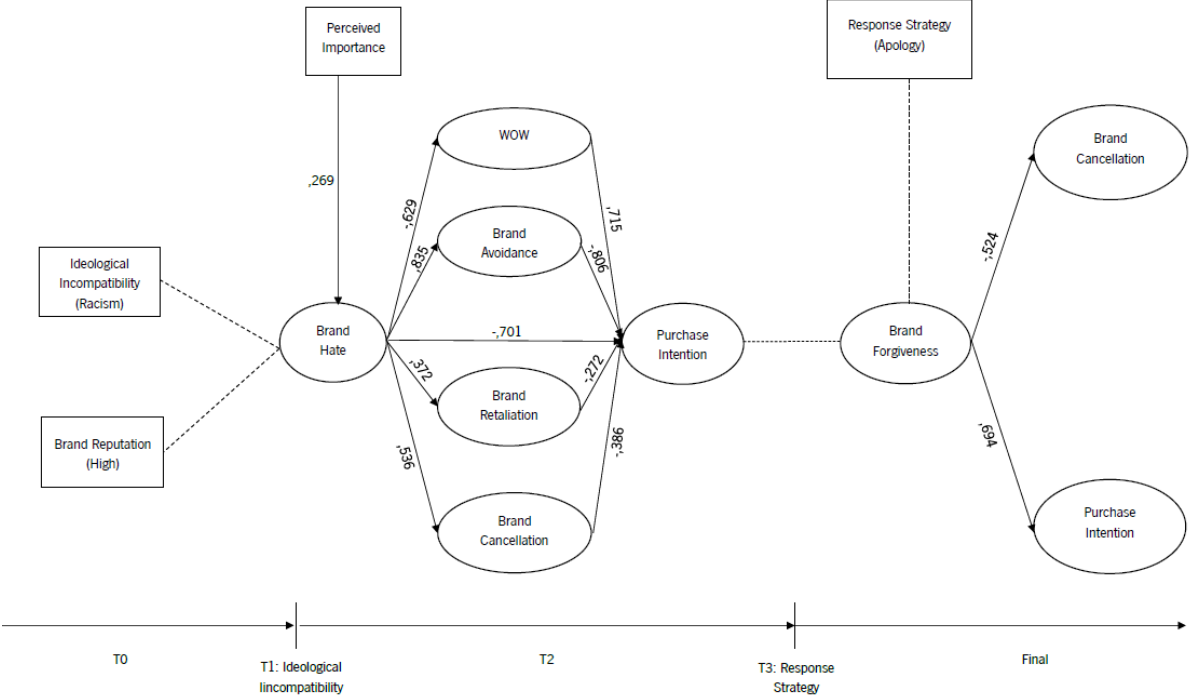
Figure 5: Adjusted Conceptual Model, with correlation statistics

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This chapter presents the major conclusions from this research, the theoretical and practical implications of such results, its limitations and suggestions for future research.

5.1. Results Discussion

This dissertation focused on a very popular and recent topic, cancel culture, and to answer its proposed research problem: "**To what extent can cancel culture impact purchase intention? Is there a possibility for forgiveness?**", a mixed methodology was conducted, where the qualitative study (netnography) served as the basis for the design of the quantitative study (online survey).

However, the very definition of cancel culture is somewhat unclear, as it does not clearly distinguish it from a boycott, and that is something brought up by Reddit users in the netnography analysis. In this research, cancel culture is defined as the withdrawal of support to an organization on social media for doing something morally wrong, aiming to exert social pressure. Cancel culture strikes usually happen on Twitter (Lobo, 2020; Meulenberg, 2021), where individuals come together to share their negative feelings towards brands and plan retaliation actions (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Zarantonello et al., 2016). From previous literature findings, these strikes are motivated by ideological incompatibilities such as environmental issues, religion, racism, animal rights, socio-political issues, country of origin, political animosity and ethnocentrism (Abdelwahab et al., 2020; Ali, 2021; Bouvier, 2020; Dekhil et al., 2017; He et al., 2021; Hong & Li, 2021; Mirza et al., 2020; Muhamad et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2020; Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Wei & Bunjun, 2020; Yuksel et al., 2020). Likewise, the results originated from the survey show that, when asked to attribute degrees of importance to several types of ideological incompatibilities, racism (M = 6.49, SD = 1.245) was the item with the higher percentage (78.1%) on the "very important" point and environmental issues (M = 6.44, SD = 1.149) with very similar results (71.9%).

Literature also proposed social approval seeking as one motivation for participating in cancel culture. However, the results from this study do not allow to support that, as all responses to that question were placed on negative points, except for the item "I often discuss this brand in a negative manner with members of society", which can be seen as NWOM. However, these results cannot be interpreted with certainty, as this question was only presented to the respondents who have already cancelled a brand, and therefore, has an initially reduced sample (n=23).

Already established is the main goal of cancel culture, that against many beliefs, is not to make the company go away completely. Most Americans cancel a brand, so it changes its bad practices and/or policies/stances surrounding political involvement or to get the company to fire someone responsible for an offensive statement (Yates & Carolina, 2021). These findings were confirmed in the second phase of this study, where 55.1% of the respondents strongly disagree with the item "I cancel a brand so it disappears completely". Moreover, the results of this study cannot prove that there is a difference in intention to cancel according to age groups, although initially one of the specific objectives was to understand which generations would be more prone to cancel, more specifically, Gen Zs or Millennials.

Early literature on cancel culture named NeWOM and complaint behaviour against the brand on social media as consequences of a cancel culture strike (Johnen et al., 2018). However, as more thesis started to come out on the subject, and later, a few articles, it was possible to conclude that the consequences go beyond that. A cancel culture strike, from the literature review performed in this research, has NeWOM, UGC, co-destruction of value, boycott, brand avoidance and brand retaliation as consequences. In this study, cancel culture is seen as a journey where there is an initial brand love and brand image that when in the presence of an ideological incompatibility of the racism type relating to a brand with high reputation (it is a brand liked by the respondents) seen as having high perceived importance, leads to brand hate. This brand hate then generates lower levels of WOM than the ones initially proposed, brand avoidance, brand retaliation and brand cancellation. Therefore, the consequences explored in this study are the rise of brand hate, the decrease in WOM and the creation of feeling such as brand avoidance, brand retaliation and brand cancellation. All these negative anti-brand emotions lead to a decrease in initial purchase intention.

Analysing this study's results, respondents had high levels of initial brand love and brand image towards their preferred brand, although those values were dispersed among the categories. Furthermore, the initial purchase (M = 9.15, SD = 1.915) and recommendation (M = 8.81, SD = 1.898) intention took high percentages on the positive ends. However, and as expected, these feelings changed as the scenario was introduced and the ideological incompatibility took place. The scenario acting as the trigger event of a cancel culture strike affected the initial brand love (M_{t0} = 25.9831, M_{t2} = 19.3258), purchase intention (M_{t0} = 9.15, M_{t2} = 5.74) and WOM (M_{t0} = 8.81, M_{t2} = 4.94).

After the scenario is introduced all those negative feelings arise, what this study proposes is that an apology by the company can generate brand forgiveness which, in turn, leads to an increase in purchase intent and a decrease in the intention to cancel. Results showed that, after the apology, the

purchase intention (M_{t2} = 5.74, M_{final} = 7.37) and WOM (M_{t2} = 4.94, M_{final} = 6.60) slightly increased, although not to initial levels. In the same way, brand cancellation (M_{t2} = 4.30, M_{final} = 2.79), brand avoidance (M_{t2} = 6.72, M_{final} = 4.21), and brand retaliation (M_{t2} = 3.61, M_{final} = 2.87) decreased, which means that the crisis communication strategy applied reduces the cancel culture consequences.

Therefore, the initial expectations were confirmed: the initial positive feelings consumers have towards a brand may take a downfall when under the presence of an ideological incompatibility and even open space for damaging feelings to arise. However, an apology has the power to mitigate some of that.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Although some thesis and web posts are starting to emerge on cancel culture, research papers are scarce, and this dissertation gathers all relevant information on cancel culture and connects it to negative-brand emotions that may trigger a cancel culture event. Therefore, it adds ground-breaking theoretical knowledge to the social sciences community, as brand cancellation is introduced as another anti-brand movement or negative brand relationship. Besides, it introduces a scale to measure brand cancellation.

Brands have been advised not to take on a public political stance for several PR reasons, as it may upset some customers. However, that mindset is proven to do more harm than good. According to a study by Edelman (2018), 64% of consumers around the globe will buy or boycott a brand solely because of its stance on a social or political issue. Consumers from Generation Z and Millennials are pushing brands to take on a more participative role through brand activism, as they buy from brands aligned with their values and avoid the ones who don't (Amed et al., 2019; Mirzaei et al., 2022). Any company taking on brand activism risks being labelled as woke washing if customers start to question their true motivations, which can lead to boycotts, backlash and brand value write-offs (Menon & Kiesler, 2020; Mirzaei et al., 2022).

Moreover, brands are advised to control social influence because when a brand falls out of favour, the most influencing consumers might have a wider impact over consumers that are less strong-minded (Dessart et al., 2020). Before the firestorm, brands with a high risk of occurrence of product non-conformities and ideological incompatibilities must survey the social media networks and respond defensively (McGriff, 2012). The results from the quantitative study suggest that, when facing a cancellation, brands should acknowledge the problem and apologize, as 89.33% of the sample believes that the brand should have accepted it made a mistake, and only 8.43% think it should apologize

without admitting guilt and 2.25% that it should not comment.

However, they will not be completely satisfied if the brand's apology does not come along with a set of actions to correct the problem. Results showed that 96.63% of respondents believe that, in the face of consumer discontent, the brand should have corrected the action that led them to this problem. Therefore, during an online firestorm characteristic of cancel culture, firms must implement a crisis communication plan to repair possible damage, reduce the negative impact and safeguard their reputation, without diminishing the call-out.

The results from Yates & Carolina's (2021) case study show that the possibility for forgiveness arises if the company makes a public apology or explains the reason for a certain action/statement; creates internal programs and policies to address the necessary change; fires the responsible person for an offensive statement; change branding or external representation or donate to an associated non-profit organization, which aligns with the principals of the most prominent generations in this phenomenon. This study proved that an apology followed by concrete actions to correct the problem leads to the possibility of brand forgiveness (M = 6.97, SD = 2.476) and an increase in purchase intention (Mt2 = 5.74, Mfinal = 7.37), which means that an updated version of Coombs (2007)'s rebuild strategy may reduce the damage of a cancel culture strike**.**

5.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As in any investigation, this research also had its limitations. First, the chosen methodology may present fragilities, as the interpretation of data gathered from Reddit must be made with caution, and that is the reason why it was not mentioned in this chapter. Besides, the survey is based on the respondent's self-perceptions and is not an effective measure of their actions, which may lead to a gap between intention and behaviour. Although this survey resembled an experiment, it would be interesting to re-do it with a real cancel culture case that was known to all respondents and in a more controlled environment.

Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the initial goal was to perform four different scenarios to exhaust all variables and then compare the difference in the respondent's answers as the variables changed. However, that did not happen due to time restrictions and the choice to keep the survey length to a minimum. Still, that would be an interesting follow-up to this investigation, to do the remaining scenarios and see how the results differ. It is suggested that the degrees of importance are followed, as presented in Table 6.

Another limitation was the sample not being representative of the population. Although efforts were made to keep the methods of the survey distribution varied to attract different people (and achieving to do so), the total number of responses was below excellent for representativity. That may be due to the length of the survey, which took approximately ten minutes to answer, which is too long for an age where people do not have time for anything. Therefore, a suggestion for future research would be to simplify the survey to make it smaller. That could be achieved by eliminating the cancel culture scale and some of the questions related to cancel culture perceptions, if those questions were to be explored in a focus group, for example.

It would be interesting to pay a little more focus to the differences in the intention to cancel between the generations, and where differences come from, as these generations are today's and tomorrow's consumers. That could be easily achieved through an online focus group, as this generations are very active online and would enjoy the conversation about a topic so popular nowadays, especially if there were participants with contradictory opinions. Likewise, the role of political affiliation would also be a curious variable to test on the intention to cancel and forgive.

This research provided a scale to measure brand cancellation. However, not all steps were followed, and it still needed additional validation in a statistically significant sample. Therefore, joining all suggestions above, it would be exciting for future research to test if the scale provided is appropriate to measure the intention to cancel.

Lastly, although the correlation among the constructs present in the model was tested, it is advised for the next studies to perform a linear regression analysis with bootstrapping, as conclusions may differ, and it would be relevant to know exactly how every relationship happens.

Chapter 6. References

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Chapter 7. Appendices

Appendix 1. Selection of retrieved threads

Table 44: List of Threads Retrieved from Reddit

Q	URL	No. of Comments
1	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hus5ag/serious_china_is_succeeding_where_hitler_failed/	167
2	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/fxk596/cancel_culture_the_act_of_cancelling_public/	15
3	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lxixzy/how_can_conservatives_now_cry_about_cancel/	228
4	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/mjzm00/which_company_should_cancel_culture_actually_go/	36
5	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/jivfvf/cancel_culture_participants_who_was_the_hardest/	9
6	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/kls0rs/redditors_who_whine_and_cry_about_cancel_culture/	34
7	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/ie2prj/how_is_a_boycott_different_from_cancel_culture/	2
8	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hownq4/with_cancel_culture_in_full_force_whats_the/	109
9	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/idik50/serious_what_if_anything_is_the_difference/	6
10	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lj8a8v/whats_the_difference_between_a_boycott_and_cancel/	24
11	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/mrsx0v/people_who_are_against_cancel_culture_should_an/	28
12	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hd6wg1/now_that_cancel_culture_is_on_the_rise_for/	14
13	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hknn11/whats_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	784
14	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hri6lh/how_is_cancel_culture_and_banning_art_books/	509
15	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hldkde/what_is_your_completely_honest_opinion_about/	217
16	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/h164x7/a_childrens_cartoon_called_paw_patrol_is_being/	67

17	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/o2su6p/what_are_your_thoughts_about_cancel_culture/	380
18	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/c158od/serious_what_is_your_honest_opinion_of_the/	30
19	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hia6e4/what_is_cancel_culture/	134
20	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/h0d1qz/what_if_we_cancelled_cancel_culture/	29
21	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/mk6w8c/whats_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	297
22	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/ho4pz4/which_victims_of_cancel_culture_actually_deserved/	68
23	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lsg97d/serious_as_mr_potato_head_and_mrs_potato_head/	67
24	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/kfxbbx/what_do_you_think_of_cancel_culture/	66
25	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lse6e8/what_are_your_thoughts_on_cancel_culture/	130
26	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/cw48ve/whatre_your_thoughts_on_dave_chappelle_talking/	8
27	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/h97rpt/what_is_the_goal_of_cancel_culture_when_you/	19
28	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/h9jg49/what_do_you_think_about_cancel_culture/	49
29	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hlcl9d/what_can_be_done_to_stop_the_toxic_spread_of/	36
30	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/jumkfs/whats_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	48
31	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lwqug2/what_is_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	47
32	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/dan8tu/why_does_cancel_culture_even_exist_what_do_people/	19
33	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/huef42/why_do_you_or_dont_you_feed_into_cancel_culture/	28
34	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hxdmot/those_who_are_against_cancel_culture_but_believe/	25
35	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/cxmr9i/do_you_think_this_new_cancel_culture_is_getting/	17
36	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/kfc6ec/how_fair_do_you_think_cancel_culture_is/	77
37	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/cr317a/is_cancel_culture_a_positive_force_in_todays/	12
38	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/h77vbl/with_cops_and_live_pd_pulled_	16

	gone_with_the_wind/	
39	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hi20wh/people_are_reddit_do_you_believe_in_cancel/	13
40	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hkw264/cancel_culture_treatment_wrongfully_delivered/	6
41	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hu4493/what_are_your_thoughts_on_the_cancel_culture/	32
42	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/o0vfye/what_are_your_opinions_on_cancel_culture/	28
43	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/h7rur2/what_do_you_think_of_cancel_culture/	30
44	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/haz4u5/people_who_have_participated_in_cancel_culture/	5
45	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lqwa60/is_cancel_culture_ok_or_not_and_why/	64
46	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lqsreh/people_who_are_against_cancel_culture_what_do_you/	87
47	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/mkaryq/what_is_your_stance_on_cancel_culture/	40
48	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/d85hn4/what_are_your_opinions_on_the_cancel_culture/	23
49	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hr9p70/has_america_moved_past_the_point_for_critical/	41
50	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/l1nppo/do_you_agree_with_cancel_culture_why_or_why_not/	36
51	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/d3vc0x/why_people_are_into_this_fucking_stupid_shitty/	28
52	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/gzpxtd/how_do_you_think_that_cancel_culture_might_affect/	6
53	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hh8otr/what_is_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	20
54	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hgxq1m/what_are_some_things_that_are_acceptable_today/	71
55	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hkvpih/how_can_we_stop_cancel_culture/	18
56	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/o2jany/should_cancel_culture_be_cancelled_why_or_why_not/	87
57	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hmbyy1/what_are_your_thoughts_on_cancel_culture/	20
58	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/ho7oq8/what_are_your_thoughts_on_cancel_culture/	26
59	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hvnfli/with_cancel_culture_a_thing_ho	34

	w_would_you_handle/	
60	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/c4epru/reddit_how_do_you_feel_about_cancel_culture/	5
61	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/cb4nwo/what_do_you_think_of_cancel_culture/	10
62	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hu195a/how_does_one_overcome_the_fear_of_cancel_culture/	34
63	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/htrg6t/what_are_your_thoughts_cancel_culture_on_twitter/	23
64	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/bclmjj/what_is_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	12
65	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/h7q0jr/is_cancel_culture_getting_out_of_hand_why_or_why/	9
66	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hxegtl/what_are_the_actual_good_ideas_that_are_being/	6
67	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lxh05u/what_are_your_opinions_on_cancel_culture/	96
68	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/boj42s/what_is_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	17
69	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/cp2w1l/what_are_your_thoughts_on_cancel_culture/	11
70	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/gjugc7/what_is_your_guys_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	45
71	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/gotual/what_has_cancel_culture_impacted_positively_on/	8
72	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/haab33/whowhat_was_a_victim_of_cancel_culture_that_didnt/	9
73	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hgbvo7/how_would_one_consider_and_possibly_describe/	10
74	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hge5al/people_of_reddit_what_are_youre_thoughts_about/	24
75	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hhqifm/is_cancel_culture_the_most_effective_way_to/	17
76	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/ishuty/what_person_show_etc_do_you_refuse_to_join_cancel/	15
77	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lxookj/who_is_doing_the_canceling_in_cancel_culture/	14
78	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lxreao/for_people_who_support_a_free_market_but_are/	21
79	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/mf7mgo/what_do_you_think_of_cancel_culture_and_its/	74
80	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/o2w0n4/whats_your_opinion_on_how_	50

	to_stop_cancel_culture/	
81	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/o2ss11/what_is_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	115
82	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hgca4y/what_is_your_take_on_cancel_culture/	10
83	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hgvvk1/what_do_you_think_about_cancel_culture/	10
84	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hgyjvq/when_is_todays_cancel_culture_gonna_cancel_the/	5
85	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hh1eop/in_the_world_of_cancel_culture_how_do_you_decide/	4
86	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hv92rw/what_are_your_thoughts_on_cancel_culture/	40
87	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/kejxjy/whats_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	79
88	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lar0d5/what_do_you_think_about_cancel_culture/	51
89	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/m4ey50/who_or_what_are_you_surprised_hasnt_been_affected/	17
90	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/lxxfuv/what_are_peoples_thoughts_on_cancel_culture/	55
91	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/dexfws/whats_your_opinion_on_cancel_culture/	11
92	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/djs18b/what_is_the_best_solution_to_cancel_culture/	17
93	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/dpytst/what_has_todays_cancel_culture_successfully/	6
94	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hie4du/why_do_you_think_people_feel_the_need_to_take/	54
95	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hmphs2/serious_what_is_your_honest_opinion_on_cancel/	31
96	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hlasb0/what_are_your_thoughts_on_cancel_culture_do_you/	22
97	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/hreue4/why_has_cancel_culture_become_a_thing/	75
98	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/htufw5/what_is_the_definition_of_cancel_culture_how_do/	22
99	https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/htpf0c/what_were_sometimes_when_cancel_culture_went_too/	30
	Total number of comments	**5730**

Appendix 2. Survey

[Introductory Note] My name is Cláudia Gomes da Costa, and I am a 2nd-year student of the Master's degree in Marketing and Strategy at the University of Minho. To complete my dissertation, I come to ask for your collaboration in completing this questionnaire.

This survey aims to discover the impact of the culture of cancellation (the act of withdrawing support for a brand) on the reputation of brands.

Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. At no time will personal information be requested that allows for your identity to be known. The results obtained through this questionnaire will be used for academic purposes only.

Please, make sure that you have answered all questions so that your participation is valid. Thank you, in advance, for your collaboration!

If you have any questions, please contact: pg43922@alunos.uminho.pt

Q1. **Please, name a brand that you particularly like**. _____

Q2. **Please answer according to your degree of agreement with the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
The products have a high quality.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The products have better characteristics than competitors'.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The products of the competitors are usually cheaper.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The brand is nice.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The brand has a personality that distinguish itself from competitors' brands.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It's a brand that doesn't disappoint its customers.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
It's one of the best brands in the sector.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The brand is very consolidated in the market.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Q3. **For each question, please, select the option that most applies.**

	Not at all			Moderately			Very Much
To what extent do you feel that using that brand's products or services says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel you desire to have that brand's products or services?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to the brand?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you believe that you will be using that brand's products or services for a long time?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Suppose that the brand were to go out of existence. To what extent do you feel anxiety?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4. **Please, place your overall feelings and evaluations regarding the identified brand on a scale from negative to positive.**

	Negative						Positive
Please, express your overall feelings and evaluations towards the referred brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q5. **Please, identify your intention to continue to buy products/services from that brand.**

	Definitely Will Not Buy Again								Definitely Will Buy Again
Repurchase Intention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q6. **Please, identify your intention to recommend the brand.**

	Definitely Will not Recommend									Definitely Would Recommend
Intention to Recommend the Brand	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

(SCENARIO)

Q7. Suppose the brand mentioned in the first issue is an **advocate for human rights and gender equality** and devotes much of its communication on social media to publicize it.

However, recently, a company employee shared on their social networks (Twitter) that the company's human resources department had received an application for the position of director of the inclusion and diversity program of a highly qualified black man, but that another (white) person had been chosen with fewer qualifications for the vacancy in question. The employee assured that the **selection criteria were not met during the recruitment process**.

The news quickly spread, and consumers revolted on a large scale against the brand, and it was proven that **this was a true case and was not a rumour**. This discontent was made through comments and online publications.

Q8. **Please, answer according to your degree of agreement with the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I consider the case described above serious.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I consider the case described above important.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q9. **For each question, please, select the option that most applies, taking into consideration the scenario presented above.**

	Not at all			Moderately			Very Much
To what extent do you feel that using that brand's products or services says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel you desire to have that brand's products or services?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to the brand?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you believe that you will be using that brand's products or services for a long time?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Suppose that brand were to go out of existence. To what extent do you feel anxiety?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q10. **Please, place your overall feelings and evaluations regarding the identified brand on a scale from negative to positive, taking into consideration the scenario presented above.**

	Negative						Positive
Please, express your overall feelings and evaluations towards the referred brand, given the scenario presented above.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q11. **On a scale from 0 to 10, identify your love for the brand, given the scenario presented above** (with 0 being a feeling of neutrality and 10 being an intense love).

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand Love Level	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q12. **Given the scenario presented above, please, respond according to your degree of agreement to the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
I am disgusted by the brand.	○	○	○	○	○
I do not tolerate the brand and its company.	○	○	○	○	○
The world would be a better place without the brand.	○	○	○	○	○
I am totally angry about the brand.	○	○	○	○	○
The brand is awful.	○	○	○	○	○
I hate the brand.	○	○	○	○	○

Q13. **On a scale from 0 to 10, identify your hate for the brand, given the presented scenario** (0 stands for a feeling of neutrality and 10 corresponds to an intense hate).

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand Hate Level	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q14. **Please, identify your intention to repurchase products/services from that brand, given the presented scenario.**

	Definitely Will Not Buy Again									Definitely Will Buy Again
Intention to Repurchase	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q15. **Please, respond according to your degree of agreement to the following statements, given the presented scenario.**

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
I do not purchase products of the brand anymore	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I reject services/products of the brand.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I refrain from buying that brand's products or using its services.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I avoid buying the brands products/using its services.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I do not use products or services of the brand.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q16. **Taking into consideration the scenario presented above, please, indicate your intention to avoid the brand.**

	Definitely Would Not Avoid									Definitely Would Avoid
Brand Avoidance Intention	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q17. **Taking into consideration the scenario presented above, please, indicate your intention to recommend the brand.**

	Definitely Would not Recommend									Definitely Would Recommend
Intention to Recommend the Brand	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q18. **Taking into account the scenario presented above, answer according to your degree of agreement to the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
I deliberately bend or brake the policies of the brand.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I show signs of impatience and frustration to someone from the brand.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I complain to the brand to give a hard time to the representatives of the company.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I complain to the brand to be unpleasant with the representatives of the company.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I complain to the brand to make someone from the organization pay.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q19. **Given the presented scenario, identify your intention to retaliate against the brand.**

	Definitely Would not Retaliate									Definitely Would Retaliate
Brand Retaliation Intention	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q20. **Taking into consideration the presented scenario, answer according to your degree of agreement to the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I cancel a brand so it changes its bad practices.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I cancel a brand so it disappears completely.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I cancel a brand so it suffers a financial loss.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
If an action is immoral, illegal or unethical, brands should be cancelled.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I hate the brands I cancel.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
There are no differences between boycotting a brand and cancelling a brand.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Cancelling a brand is an acceptable way to make it pay for its mistakes.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It is acceptable not to cancel a brand for misconduct if it entails major changes in my lifestyle.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
When I cancel a brand, I don't go back on my decision.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
When I cancel a brand, I try to influence my group of friends to do the same.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am more likely to cancel a brand if the bad practice report comes from someone with credibility.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I cancel a brand that's been acting wrong, even if I like the brand.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I'm more likely to cancel a brand if I think more people will do the same.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I don't cancel a brand if I don't think anyone else will do it too.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q21. **Taking into consideration the given scenario, identify your intention to cancel the brand.**

	Definitely Would not Cancel									Definitely Would Cancel
Intention to Cancel the Brand	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

(CRISIS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY – APOLOGY)

Q22. The brand, after verifying that the situation was taking high proportions, decided to act. The brand's first action was to **issue a public statement apologizing** for what happened and, then, offered the vacancy to the initial candidate and made him **ambassador of the company's "inclusion and diversity" program**. **The candidate accepted the offer**.

Q23. **Taking into consideration the scenario previously presented and the brand's crisis response, please, identify your intention to repurchase the brand's products or services.**

	Definitely Would not Buy Again									Definitely Would Buy Again
Intention to Repurchase	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q24. **Taking into consideration the scenario previously presented and the brand's crisis response, please, place your overall feelings and evaluations regarding the identified brand on a scale from negative to positive.**

	Negative						Positive
Please, express your overall feelings and evaluations towards the referred brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q25. **Taking into consideration the scenario previously presented and the brand's crisis response, please, identify your intention to avoid the brand.**

	Definitely Would not Avoid									Definitely Would Avoid
Brand Avoidance Intention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q26. **Taking into consideration the scenario previously presented and the brand's crisis response, please, identify your intention to recommend the brand.**

	Definitely Would not Recommend									Definitely Would Recommend
Intention to Recommend the brand	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q27. **Taking into consideration the scenario previously presented and the brand's crisis response, please, identify your intention to retaliate against the brand.**

	Definitely Would not Retaliate									Definitely Would Retaliate
Brand Retaliation Intention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q28. **Taking into consideration the scenario previously presented and the brand's crisis response, please, identify your intention to cancel the brand.**

	Definitely Would not Cancel									Definitely Would Cancel
Intention to Cancel the Brand	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q29. **Taking into consideration the scenario previously presented and the brand's crisis response, please, identify your intention to forgive the brand in the future.**

	Definitely Would not Forgive									Definitely Would Forgive
Brand Forgiveness Intention	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q30. The brand apologized and corrected its action. **In your opinion, what should have been the brand's action once it heard about the problem?**

◯ Do not comment.

◯ Apologize, without admitting guilt.

◯ Accept it made a mistake.

Q31. **In the face of consumer discontent, what do you think should have been the attitude taken by the brand?**

◯ Correct the action that lead them to this problem.

◯ Rebrand itself.

Q32. **Please, attribute a degree of importance to each one of the following items.**

	Not at all Important						Very Important
Racism	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Religion	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Animal Rights	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Environmental Issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Socio-political issues (ex.: LGTQIA+' rights, gender equality, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Nationalism	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q33. **Have you ever boycotted a brand?** (if yes, please, insert the brand's name on the box below).

○   Yes. _____

○   No.

Q34. **Have you ever cancelled a brand?** (if yes, please, insert the brand's name on the box below).

○   Yes. _____

○   No.

(display Q35 if Q34 = "yes")

Q35. **Please, answer according to your degree of agreement with the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I would not buy this brand because I am sure that society will not approve.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am not loyal to this brand because society is not either.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often discuss this brand in a negative manner with members of society.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I achieve a sense of belonging by avoiding the same brand as the rest of the society.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
All of my online network avoids this brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I avoid this brand because I want to be associated with certain groups of people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q36. **Which of the following items was the reason of the cancellation?**

○   Racial justice.

○   Women's rights.

○   COVID-19 protocols.

○   Immigration.

○   Climatic/environmental changes.

○   LGBTQ+.

○   Religion.

○   Politics.

○   Supporting war conflicts.

○   Other. _____

Q37. **Have you ever been confronted with a situation where the brand deserved to be cancelled, but you didn't go through with it**? (if yes, please, insert the reason why you did not cancel the brand).

○   Yes. _____

○   No.

Q38. **Please, answer according to your degree of agreement with the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
It's best to keep your beliefs private because others might find them offensive.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If someone is attacked for saying something inappropriate they should apologize immediately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I don't judge a person without knowing more about their character.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It's necessary for our society to respect open debate from diverse perspectives.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If someone is trying to grow and learn from their mistakes I won't hold their past against them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For society to function, we must conform to a social consensus of moral behavior.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It's acceptable to dig into a person's past when they hold social status in society.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
What is viewed as controversial and not acceptable usually shifts over time.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If an action is immoral, illegal or unethical, people should be held accountable.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Critical thinking is an essential component of expressing free speech.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

[Clarification] This section of the survey will serve to have a general perception of the sociodemographic variables of the participants, the data will not be analyzed individually.

Q39. **Age**

_____

Q40. **Gender**

◯   Female

◯   Male.

◯   Other.

Q41. **Level of Schooling**

◯   Elementary School.

◯   Middle School.

◯   High School.

◯   Associate's Degree.

◯   Bachelor's Degree.

◯   Postgraduate Studies.

◯   MBA.

◯   Master's Degree.

◯   Doctoral Degree.

◯   Other. _____

Q42. **Please select the option that best suits your profession**.

◯   Senior management of public administration, directors and senior management of the company.

◯   Specialists in the intellectual and scientific professions (e.g., computer specialists, architects, engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers, jurists, writers, artists, public administration technicians, etc.).

◯   Intermediate-level technicians and professionals (e.g.: programmers, kindergarten teachers, special education teachers, naval officers, airline pilots, commercial agents and brokers, artistic and sports professionals, etc.).

◯   Administrative and similar professionals (e.g., secretaries and operators of information processing equipment; couriers, baggage handlers, porters, guards and similar workers; receptionists, information and telephone operators, etc.).

○   Service personnel and vendors (e.g., assistants, collectors, catering service personnel, security guards, medical assistants, mannequins, vendors, etc.).

○   Farmers and skilled workers in agriculture and fisheries.

○   Workers, craftsmen and similar workers.

○   Plant and machine operators and assembly workers.

○   Unskilled workers.

○   Unemployed.

○   Student.

○   Retired.

Q43**. How much time do you spend on the internet, on average, per day?** (the limits are not included in the range, i.e., if you spend 2 hours a day, you should select the range "between 2 to 3 hours").

○   < 1 hour

○   Between 1 to 2 hours

○   Between 2 to 3 hours

○   Between 3 to 4 hours

○   Between 4 to 5 hours

○   More than 6 hours

Q44. **Please, identify your political affiliation.**
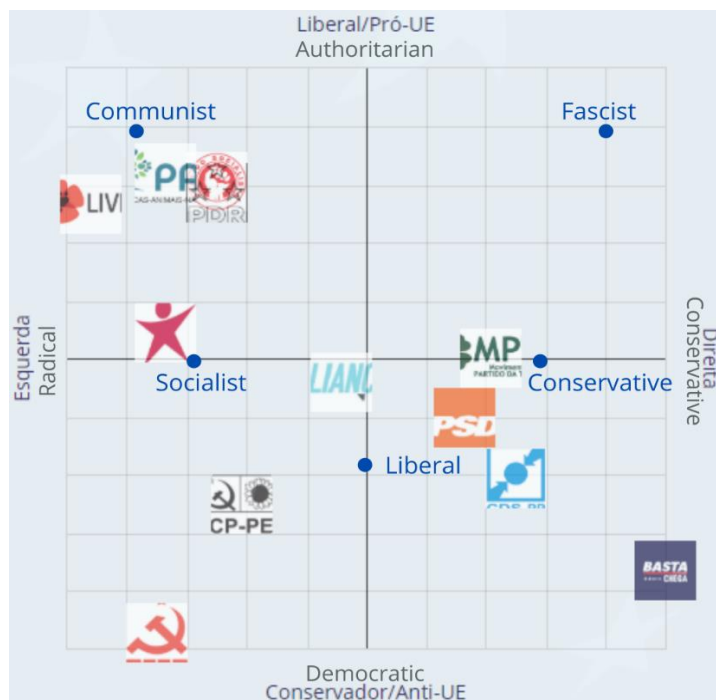
Appendix 3. Translation of Scales to Portuguese

Table 45: Scale used to measure brand love translated to Portuguese

Brand Love		
Author	Original Scale	Scale in Portuguese
Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia (2017)	To what extent do you feel that wearing of American Eagle Outfitters says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?	Até que ponto sente que usar os produtos/serviços dessa marca diz algo "verdadeiro" e "profundo" sobre quem você é enquando pessoa?
	Using the products: To what extent do you feel yourself desiring to wear American Eagle clothing?	Até que ponto se sente a desejar os produtos/serviços dessa marca?
	Please express the extent to which you feel emotionally connected to American Eagle Outfitters?	Até que ponto se sente emocionalmente conectado com a marca?
	Please express the extent to which you believe that you will be wearing American Eagle Outfitters for a long time	Até que ponto acredita que irá usar os produtos/serviços dessa marca por muito tempo?
	Suppose American Eagle Outfitters were to go out of existence, to what extent would you feel anxiety	Suponha que essa marca deixaria de existir. Até que ponto sentiria ansiedade?
	On the following scale, please express your overall feelings and evaluations towards American Eagle Outfitters. [7-point negative-positive]	Por favor, expresse os seus sentimentos e avaliações gerais em relação à marca indicada.

Brand Image		
Author	Original Scale	Scale in Portuguese
Martínez, Montaner and Pina (2009)	The products have a high quality.	Os produtos têm uma elevada qualidade.
	The products have better characteristics than competitors'.	Os produtos têm melhores características do que os da concorrência.
	The products of the competitors are usually cheaper.	Os produtos da concorrência são normalmente mais baratos.
	The brand is nice.	A marca é boa.
	The brand has a personality that distinguishes it from competitors' brands.	A marca tem uma personalidade que a distingue das marcas dos concorrentes.
	It's a brand that doesn't disappoint its customers.	É uma marca que não desilude os seus clientes.
	It's one of the best brands in the sector.	É uma das melhores marcas no setor.
	The brand is very consolidated in the market.	A marca é muito consolidada no mercado.

Author: Hegner, Fetscherin and van Delzen (2017)		
Brand Hate	**Original Scale**	**Scale in Portuguese**
	I am disgusted by brand X	Sinto-me repulsado pela marca.
	I do not tolerate brand X and its company	Eu não tolero a marca e a sua empresa.
	The world would be a better place without brand X	O mundo seria um lugar melhor sem a marca.
	I am totally angry about brand X	A marca deixa-me zangado.
	Brand X is awful	A marca é horrível.
	I hate brand X	Eu odeio a marca.
Brand Avoidance	**Original Scale**	**Scale Adaptation**
	I do not purchase products of brand X anymore	Não volto a comprar produtos da marca
	I reject services/products of brand X	Rejeito serviços/produtos da marca
	I refrain from buying X's products or using its services	Asbtenho-me de comprar os produtos da marca ou usar os seus serviços.
	I avoid buying the brand's products/using its services	Asbtenho-me de comprar os produtos da marca ou usar os seus serviços.
	I do not use products or services of brand X	Não uso os produtos ou serviços da marca
Brand Retaliation (Hegner et al., 2017)	**Original Scale**	
	I have deliberately bent or broken the policies of the brand.	Quebro ou contorno políticas da marca deliberadamente.
	I have showed signs of impatience and frustration to someone from brand X.	Mostro a minha impaciência e frustração a algum representante da marca.
	I complained to brand X to give a hard time to the representatives of the	Queixo-me à empresa para causar problemas aos representantes da

	company.	empresa.
	I complained to brand X to be unpleasant with the representatives of the company.	Queixo-me à empresa para ser desagradável com os representantes da empresa.
	I complained to the brand to make someone from the organization pay.	Queixo-me à empresa para que alguém da marca pague pelo sucedido.

Table 48: Scale used to measure brand cancellation translated to Portuguese

Brand Cancellation		
Author	Original Scale	Scale in Portuguese
Author's Elaboration	I cancel a brand so it changes its bad practices.	Eu cancelo a marca para que ela mude as suas más práticas.
	I cancel a brand so it disappears completely.	Eu cancelo a marca para que ela desapareça por completo.
	I cancel a brand so it suffers a financial loss.	Eu cancelo a marca para que ela sofra uma perda financeira.
	If an action is immoral, illegal or unethical, brands should be cancelled.	Se uma ação for imoral, ilegal ou antiética, as marcas devem ser canceladas.
	I hate the brands I cancel them	Eu odeio as marcas que cancelo.
	There are no differences between boycotting a brand and cancelling a brand.	Não existem diferenças entre boicotar uma marca e cancelar uma marca.
	Cancelling a brand is an acceptable way to make it pay for its mistakes.	Cancelar uma marca é uma forma aceitável de fazer com que a mesma pague pelos seus erros.
	It is acceptable not to cancel a brand for misconduct if it entails major	É aceitável não cancelar uma marca por má conduta se isso implicar grandes

	changes in my lifestyle.	mudanças no meu estilo de vida.
	When I cancel a brand, I don't go back on my decision.	Quando cancelo uma marca, não volto atrás na minha decisão.
	When I cancel a brand, I try to influence my group of friends to do the same.	Quando cancelo uma marca, tento influenciar o meu grupo de amigos a fazer o mesmo.
	I am more likely to cancel a brand if the bad practice report comes from someone with credibility.	Eu sou mais propenso a cancelar uma marca se a denúncia de má prática vier de alguém com credibilidade.
	I cancel a brand that's been acting wrong, even if I like the brand.	Eu cancelo uma marca que tenha agido de forma errada, mesmo que goste dela.
	I'm more likely to cancel a brand if I think more people will do the same.	Eu sou mais propenso a cancelar uma marca se achar que mais pessoas o farão.
	I don't cancel a brand if I don't think anyone else will do it too.	Eu não cancelo uma marca se achar que mais ninguém o fará.

Appendix 4. List of Relevant Reddit Comments, by Code

Table 49: Relevant Reddit Comments, List by Code

Code	Comment	Q
CARACT	"I'm not sure, but it seems like cancel culture has worked when people try to boycott companies for other things related to the new woke she. How effective? I imagine it could be very effective if a lot of people got on board with it."	1
	What people call "cancel culture" is just a feature of all human societies	3
	That may sound like a conspiracy theory, I'm beginning to think that the big corporations are the ones behind cancel culture and 'wokenism' to advertise their products and so No one complained about Mr potato head, probably the company wanted to make fuss so people pay their attention to them and their new products. Same with Dr. Seuss books, it's a trend apparently	3
	Cancel culture doesn't apply to just one side of the political spectrum. Their can be conservatives and liberals who are a part of it, but its generally the extreme side of them that are a part of a it.	3
	It's really just society holding others accountable for their actions. The only controversy is that those being cancelled think they shouldn't have to take accountability because they've gone so long without having to.	4
	I think it's a stupid name for a natural part of a free society.	11
RES_CAN	Domino's thanked Kayleigh McEnany's comment about them being better than NYC pizza. The controversy is now she's the National Press Secretary for the Trump administration. But this criticism is dumb because she wasn't even in politics 8 years ago.	8
RES_NOT_CAN	"Cancelling" them will require a major change in lifestyle.	1
	Because that would mean canceling all of the companies that profit from Chinese slave labor such as Nike, Adidas, Apple, BMW, Victoria Secret, Amazon, Calvin Klein, Nintendo, Microsoft, Walmart and about sixty other really popular and "woke" companies.	1
	Cause we would lose money short term.	1
	So as long as I can get my thousand dollar Nikes and my Apple watch I dont give a shit about slavery. I read somewhere that the English liked American cotton so that must justify slavery in the US. *[sarcastic tone; interpretation made by the author]*	1
REF	[...] Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head will still be Mr. and Mrs. Potato head. They're not changing them. They're not getting rid of them.	3

	That may sound like a conspiracy theory, I'm beginning to think that the big corporations are the ones behind cancel culture and 'wokenism' to advertise their products and so No one complained about Mr potato head, probably the company wanted to make fuss so people pay their attention to them and their new products. Same with Dr. Seuss books, it's a trend apparently	3
	Republicans will say the liberals are canceling Aunt Jemima, Mr Potato Head, Uncle Ben's etc etc for being racist/sexist.	3
	Is Nestle canceled? I know it's hated but is it really canceled? And for anyone who doesn't know why, it's because they utilize child labor in their company	4
	Nestle for sure	4
	Planned parenthood for attempting genocide on the black population	4
	Victoria Secret for saying they'll never have plus size models or non binary models in their show.	4
	PETA - people either whorship it or mostly ignore it (as far as I've seen).	4
	Nestle. Slave labor, unchecked corruption.	12
	Also Monsanto	12
	Apple for the same reasons.	12
	Lucky charms it is very offensive to Irish people.	12
	Quaker Oats	12
ADVICE	I don't think it is wise for a business owner, manager, or employee to express an opinion for a company.	4
	A business responding to public dissatisfaction of an employee is in their interest. Why should a business nor protect itself? If you're harmed by public outcry you need to go to court and sue for damages if it causes your employer to fire you but they're just in firing you if it seems it's what people wanna see. You're right to sue if you were slandere	11
CAN_BOYC	Cancel culture and boycotting are two different things. [...]Are they always practiced separately? No.	6
	Cancel culture is more mob mentality where as a boycott is usually more organized. Also cancel culture usually targets people whereas boycotting targets companies, organizations, or corporations	7
	A boycott is a conscious push to temporarily stop buying products in the hope that a loss of income will force a decision. Cancel Culture is a crusade to remove/censor anything a group doesn't like regardless of decisions made.	9
	I respect boycott. Thats '' i dont approve of your company so I dont support/ buy your stuff'' Cancel culture is '' I dont agree with you so I bully others into crushing your business into nothing and shaming you and anyone who likes	10

	your stuff ".	
	Well now more than ever, it's the same thing.	10
	Boycott is usually used more often in products, however cancel culture is not just limited to people. The major difference is boycott has always been a thing, and is used to make an actual constructive statement, unlike cancel culture that is usually just spewed upon by woke twitter, not to mention how devastating cancel culture is to an individual, how it deprives people of a second chance.	10
	"Pretty sure cancel refers to products these days too. I'd say these terms are interchangeable. ""Cancel"" has just become a bigger buzzword."	10

Code Description:

CARACT: Comments that characterize cancel culture.

RES_CAN: Comments that mention a reason to cancel a brand.

RES_NOT_CAN: Comments that mention a reason not to cancel a brand.

REF: Comments referencing a brand involved in cancel culture.

ADVICE: Comments that give advice on how companies should handle a cancelation.

CAN_BOY: Comments that refer to the relationship between cancel culture and boycott.

Appendix 5. Debugging of the Level of Schooling Results

```kotlin
import com.github.doyaaaaaken.kotlincsv.dsl.csvReader
import com.github.doyaaaaaken.kotlincsv.dsl.csvWriter

private const val DELIMITER = ';'
private const val ENG = "ENG"
private const val PT = "PT"
private const val LANGUAGE_INDEX = 0
private const val SCHOLARSHIP_INDEX = 104

fun main() {
    val answers = readAnswersFile()
    convertScholarship(answers)
}

private fun readAnswersFile(): MutableList<List<String>> {
    lateinit var answers: MutableList<List<String>>

    csvReader {
        delimiter = DELIMITER
    }.open("/Users/user/Documents/answers.csv") {
        answers = readAllAsSequence().toMutableList()
    }

    return answers
}

private      fun      writeUpdatedAnswers(editedAnswers:
MutableList<List<String>>) {
    csvWriter {
        delimiter = DELIMITER
    }.writeAll(editedAnswers,
"/Users/user/Documents/answers_edited.csv")
}

private           fun           convertScholarship(answers:
MutableList<List<String>>) {

    val editedRows = mutableListOf<List<String>>()

    answers.forEach { ans ->
        val row = ans.toMutableList()

        val language = row[LANGUAGE_INDEX]
        val scholarship = row[SCHOLARSHIP_INDEX]

        if (language == PT) {
            row[SCHOLARSHIP_INDEX]                          =
ScholarshipPT.fromAnswer(scholarship).toUniformizedScholarship()
        } else if (language.contains(ENG, true)) {
            row[SCHOLARSHIP_INDEX]                          =
ScholarshipENG.fromAnswer(scholarship).toUniformizedScholarship()
        }
        editedRows.add(row)
```

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```kotlin
private enum class ScholarshipPT(val correspondingLevel: String)
{
    PRIMEIRO_CICLO("1"),
    SEGUNDO_CICLO("3"),
    TERCEIRO_CICLO("4"),
    SECUNDARIO("5"),
    LICENCIATURA("7"),
    POS_GRADUACAO("8"),
    MBA("9"),
    MESTRADO("10"),
    DOUTORAMENTO("11"),
    OUTRO("12");

    companion object {
        fun fromAnswer(value: String) = values().first { value ==
it.ordinal.toString() }
    }

    fun toUniformizedScholarship(): String =
this.correspondingLevel
}

private enum class ScholarshipENG(val correspondingLevel: String)
{
    ELEMENTARY("2"),
    MIDDLE("4"),
    HIGH("5"),
    ASSOCIATE_DEGREE("6"),
    BACHELOR_DEGREE("7"),
    POSTGRADUATE("8"),
    MBA("9"),
    MASTERS("10"),
    DOCTORAL("11"),
    OTHER("12");

    companion object {
        fun fromAnswer(value: String) = values().first { value ==
it.ordinal.toString() }
    }

    fun toUniformizedScholarship(): String =
this.correspondingLevel
}
    }

    writeUpdatedAnswers(editedRows)

}
```

Appendix 6. Sample's Sociodemographic Characteristics (detailed data)

Table 50: Respondent's Sociodemographic Characteristics (detailed data)

Variable	Category	N (total)	N	Percentage
Gender	Female		109	61,2%
	Male	178	63	35,4%
	Other		6	3,4%
Age (M = 26,30; SD = 9,23)	Veteran Generation		——	——
	Baby Boom Generation		3	1,7%
	Generation X		14	7,9%
	Generation Y	178	35	19,7%
	Generation Z		126	70,8%
	Alfa Generation		——	——
Level of Schooling	4th Grade		2	1,1%
	6th Grade		5	2,8%
	9th Grade		5	2,8%
	High School		42	23,6%
	Associate Degree		1	0,6%
	Bachelor's degree	178	62	34,8%
	Postgraduate		11	6,2%
	MBA		1	0,6%
	Master's Degree		46	25,8%
	Doctoral Degree		3	1,7%
Occupation	Senior management of public administration, directors and senior management of the company.		5	2,8%
	Specialists in the intellectual and scientific professions (e.g.: computer specialists, architects, engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers, jurists, writers, artists, public administration technicians, etc.).	178	39	21,9%

	Intermediate level technicians and professionals (e.g.: programmers, kindergarten teachers, special education teachers, naval officers, airline pilots, commercial agents and brokers, artistic and sports professionals, etc.).		9	5,1%	
	Administrative and similar professionals (e.g.: secretaries and operators of information processing equipment; couriers, baggage handlers, porters, guards, and similar workers; receptionists, information and telephone operators, etc.).		6	3,4%	
	Service personnel and vendors (e.g.: assistants, collectors, catering service personnel, security guards, medical assistants, mannequins, vendors, etc.).		7	3,9%	
	Workers, craftsmen, and similar workers.		8	4,5%	
	Plant and machine operators and assembly workers.		1	0,6%	
	Unskilled workers		3	1,7%	
	Unemployed		6	3,4%	
	Student		94	52,8%	
Time Spent Online	< 1 hour		10	5,6%	
	1 – 2 hours		18	10,1%	
	2 – 3 hours	178	37	20,8%	
	3 – 4 hours		38	21,3%	
	4 – 5 hours		38	21,3%	
	6 plus hours		37	20,8%	

Appendix 7. List of Brands that Survey Respondents Particularly Like

Table 51: Brands that Survey Respondents Particularly Like

Brand	Percentage	Frequency
Apple	7,3%	13
Adidas	6,7%	12
Nike	6,7%	12
Zara	4,5%	8
Vans	3,4%	6
Levi's	2,8%	5
Lefties	2,2%	4
Mercadona	2,2%	4
Samsung	2,2%	4
H&M	1,7%	3
New Balance	1,7%	3
Pull&Bear	1,7%	2
Asus	1,1%	2
Coca-Cola	1,1%	2
Converse	1,1%	2
Garnier	1,1%	2
Magic The Gathering	1,1%	2
New Balance	1,1%	2
Nintendo	1,1%	2
Old Spice	1,1%	2
Prozis	1,1%	2
Puma	1,1%	2
Reebok	1,1%	2
Sony	1,1%	2
Springfield	1,1%	2
Airbnb	0,6%	1
Alpro	0,6%	1

Amparo		0,6%	1
Arena	120	0,6%	1
Audi		0,6%	1
Avon		0,6%	1
Axe		0,6%	1
Bburago		0,6%	1
Benefit		0,6%	1
Bershka		0,6%	1
Brooks Athletic Shoes		0,6%	1
Burberry		0,6%	1
Calvin Klein		0,6%	1
Cavalinho		0,6%	1
Cerave		0,6%	1
Colgate		0,6%	1
Continente		0,6%	1
Control		0,6%	1
Corsair		0,6%	1
Delta Q		0,6%	1
Disney		0,6%	1
Drope		0,6%	1
Element		0,6%	1
Elf		0,6%	1
Ericeira		0,6%	1
Essence		0,6%	1
Ford		0,6%	1
Guess		0,6%	1
Head and Shoulders		0,6%	1
Inocos		0,6%	1
Joe		0,6%	1
Kiko Milano		0,6%	1

Kinder	0,6%	1
Lacoste	121 0,6%	1
Lamborghini	0,6%	1
LEGO	0,6%	1
Lenovo	0,6%	1
Mango	0,6%	1
Marshall	0,6%	1
McDonald's	0,6%	1
Merrell	0,6%	1
Microsoft	0,6%	1
Milanesa	0,6%	1
Monoprice	0,6%	1
Muji	0,6%	1
My Label	0,6%	1
My prefered men's clothing brand	0,6%	1
Natura	0,6%	1
Neutrogena	0,6%	1
Nikon	0,6%	1
Nivea	0,6%	1
Paco Rabanne	0,6%	1
Panache Lingerie	0,6%	1
Parfois	0,6%	1
PlayStation	0,6%	1
Pretty Litter	0,6%	1
Ralph Lauren	0,6%	1
Revolution	0,6%	1
Robinsons	0,6%	1
Sagres	0,6%	1
Salsa	0,6%	1
Shopify	0,6%	1
Shure	0,6%	1

SteelSeries		0,6%	1
Stradivarius	122	0,6%	1
Stussy		0,6%	1
Target		0,6%	1
The Body Shop		0,6%	1
Tiffosi		0,6%	1
Tous		0,6%	1
Toyota		0,6%	1
Tricirculo		0,6%	1
Triumph		0,6%	1
Vionic		0,6%	1
Wüsthof		0,6%	1
Total		**100%**	**178**

Appendix 8. List of brands boycotted by the sample

Table 52: Brands boycotted by the sample

Brand	Frequency
Nike	3
Amazon	2
Chick-fil-A	2
Hobby Lobby	2
Jeffree Star Cosmetics	2
Nestlé	2
A tobacco brand	1
Barilla	1
Canopy Growth	1
Coffee capsules	1
Coca-Cola	1
Every feminist brand that hates white men	1
Facebook	1
Fox News	1
L'Óreal	1
Levi's	1
Magic The Gathering	1
Frito Lay	1
Netflix	1
Shein	1
OMV	1
Papa John's Pizza	1
Chinese Products	1
Local gun store	1
Sony	1
Talk Talk	1
Zara	1

Appendix 9. List of brands cancelled by the sample

Table 53: Brands cancelled by the sample

Brand	Frequency
Nestlé	3
Amazon	2
Facebook	2
Shein	2
Dolce&Gabanna	2
A tobacco brand	1
Barilla	1
Every feminist brand that hates white men	1
Pharmacy	1
L'Óreal	1
Levi's	1
Nike	1
Magic the Gathering	1
Most chocolate brands	1
Talk Talk	1
Papa John's Pizza	1
TokioTreat	1
Netflix	1
Too faced	1

Appendix 10. Reasons why the sample has cancelled brands

Table 54: Reasons why the sample cancelled brands

Again, cancellation is a nonsense phrase, but I boycott because of mostly religious reasons. That is to say, if a company has practices/policies based on religious reasoning I will not patronize them
Breach of data privacy (with my own personal data)
Desloyal competition and human rights
Data protection, labour exploration, ...
Human rights
Exploitation of the commons (water)
Exploitation of workers, in the case of Netflix transphobia
Poor quality/price ratio
human rights violations in the chocolate industry
Influential people supporting harmful products to the health but claim to not support them via media
Men's rights
Privacy and data protection policy
Politics, religion, women's rights, these companies violate all this
They got "woke", with leftist shit I despise. On all of the above reasons, I get angry over what I believe is the opposite of what would bother you. I hate communism, muslims, homosexuals, and everything else from the left.

*some comments were translated from portuguese to english, though its contente was always preserved.