 <https://doi.org/10.56238/alookdevelopv1-172>

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ABSTRACT

The abrupt advancement of technologies will allow users to be closer to the brands they consume, making them feel free to boycott, through the culture of cancellation, any one that goes against the majority's thoughts. Therefore, this work aimed to analyze the cancellation culture, in order to understand how it affects companies in their

performance. Therefore, it was necessary to understand the impacts caused by social media, on companies, and consumer behavior, so that, finally, it can understand how brands are affected by virtual cancellation. A qualitative research was then carried out, and through the content raised in the theoretical framework, it was possible to guide the case study of the companies WePink, Natura and Flow Podcast. Given this, it appears that every company is subject to the culture of cancellation, however, the greatest damage is caused to brand reputations, for the most part, the boycott has the opposite effect than expected. In any case, this culture is harmful in all its aspects, and brands need to be aware of their positions and crisis management for any setback.

Keywords: Cancel culture, Brand, Consumer, Boycott.

1 INTRODUCTION

The fact that the power of the purchase decision is centered in the hand of the consumer, allows him to charge the brands he consumes according to his own values and beliefs, taking into account far beyond price and quality when deciding which company to consume.

Over time, with the evolution of consumer behavior, customers have increasingly come to have the influence of the emotional side, in addition to the rational side, at the time they decide what to consume. According to Choairy (2009), consumers are always looking for a brand that they can fully trust and that gives them all the attention they deserve.

Solomon (2016) claims that, customers are always looking for companies that they identify. Thus, companies are increasingly charged not only for the products and services they offer, but for their positions on events in the world. Thus, when there is a clash between the expectations that the consumer had in front of reality, which the brand actually provides, in relation to its performance positions, ideologies, sociocultural and even political, it results in what can be considered, even, as a revolt.

In reflection of world events, in recent years a phenomenon known as cancel culture has become popular and gained strength, which consists of boycotts of personalities or brands as a result of attitudes disapproved by the vast majority. Many judge this phenomenon as a way to sabotage brands

that do not meet society's expectations of the whole, in order to demand a positioning and awareness of the canceled personalities.

This culture has already affected several brands, such as WePink and Natura, which have a cosmetics line, and the Flow Podcast, a live program on the digital platforms Youtube, Twitch and Facebook. These brands, and their respective boycotts, will be studied in depth in this study.

Thus, when cancel culture hits companies, resulting in their boycott, affecting their reputation and possibly their profits, they need to learn to re-establish themselves within the market in a chaotic scenario where their reputation is completely shaken.

Therefore, initially, it was necessary to conduct a study on consumer behavior and its influences, in order to understand how the purchase decision can be affected, so that in fact the central objective of this research can be studied, with the purpose of understanding the cancel culture and its effects on organizations.

1.1 PROBLEMATIZATION

How are consumers influenced, and how do those influences affect their purchasing decisions when those customers come across brands affected by cancel culture? How are these companies hit when they suffer retaliation for virtual lynching and what crisis management should be adopted when this phenomenon hits a brand?

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The proposed objectives aim to guide the research for the solution of the problem.

1.2.1 General objective

Demonstrate how cancel culture can affect a brand when it is boycotted.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

1. Observe how social media relates to organizations;
2. Study consumer behavior in the purchase decision process;
3. Assess how cancel culture affects companies;
4. Analyze the crisis management that can be developed when a brand is hit by this culture.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION

In the court of opinion Anyone can be canceled when associated with practices rebuked and frowned upon by society. In order to rebuke retrograde actions of brands, this cancellation can be done

through: campaigns, through hashtags that encourage the boycott of the brand, the loss of followers on social networks and even the total breaking of the bond with the company by failing to consume its products. According to a survey conducted by MindMiners, a digital market research platform, 45% of respondents have already stopped consuming a certain brand because they did not agree with its practices and positioning.

In order to bring attention to the theme, this paper aims to understand how cancel culture can affect companies, through the analysis of consumer behavior. Thus, seeking to understand how boycotted companies dealt with such retaliation, and what are the best ways to be traced in order to deal with this culture.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

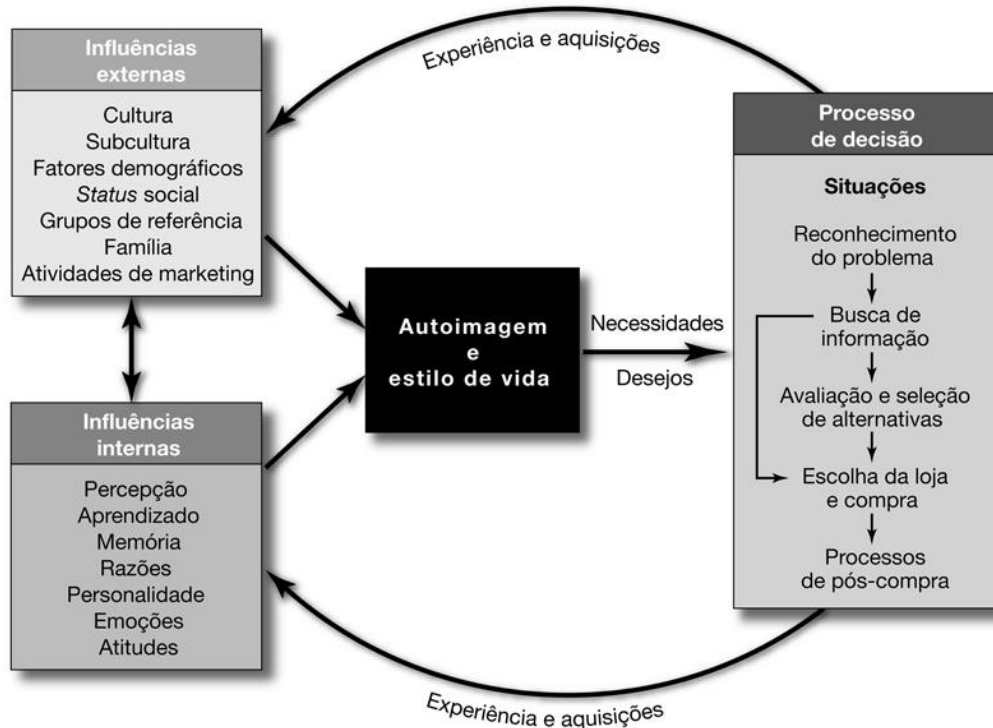
2.1 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

In order to provide a basis for the research, it was necessary to delve into the influences on consumers' purchase decisions in order to understand how their behavior works.

Understanding how consumer behavior works is not a simple process, because the purchase decision making takes place in several stages. Solomon (2016) defines consumer behavior as processes that occur when an individual seeks to satisfy their own needs and desires through a purchase, use or disposal of a product, goods or services. Thus, consumer behavior is given by the set of activities that an individual goes through even when he decides to discard what was acquired.

Consumer behavior is not motivated only by a single reason, given that the purchase decision is made by several factors (SILVA ET AL., 2021). For Hawkins (2018), consumer behavior is shaped, in general, from the context in which the individual is inserted and can be influenced by several factors, such as demographic factors, lifestyle, cultural values and etc. Figure 1 shows the internal and external factors that influence consumers. All of these topics will be delved into in this study.

Figure 1 – Cycle of consumer behavior



Source: Hawkins (2018, p.3).

When choosing what to consume, individuals usually seek an identification with the brand in order to find a little of themselves and their personalities in that product or service (SOLOMON, 2016). Thus, it can be said that consumer behavior is also shaped through how the consumer sees himself and the world.

2.1.1 Influences on consumer behaviour

Every purchase decision comes from a problem that the individual seeks to answer. It is difficult to define what influences consumer behavior in a standardized explanation, given that all individuals face various problems. In fact, the purchase decision process has a repertoire of strategies. Decision-making can be habitual, cognitive or emotional (SOLOMON, 2016). Thus, trying to decipher consumer behavior is not so simple, and it is necessary to analyze a whole set of factors.

In this way, it is analyzed that the decision-making of a consumer are variable and take place according to the context in which he is inserted. Figure 2 exemplifies these three decision-making addressed by the author.

Figure 2 - The Three Recipients of Purchasing Decision Making.



Source: Solomon (2016, p.38).

To continue his study Solomon (op. Cit.) emphasizes the importance of understanding the consumer's involvement with the object (product, service or brand). Involvement is characterized by the level of importance in which the object has for the consumer in the purchase decision process. From the same point of view, Hawkins (2018) describes involvement as the motivation or interest in the object, which can be temporary or lasting.

2.1.1.1 Culture and external factors

Culture, studied by several authors, is what shapes society and each individual in particular. For Metcalf (2015) culture is the socialization of the individual within the community, in which he is inserted, being shaped from the beliefs, formal education, teachings of his family and the exchange of experiences with the members of his community. Thus, the individual, from the context in which he grows, inherits characteristics through his social life, adapts to society by observing and learning from those around him.

According to Hawkins (2018, p.36) "Culture works mainly by setting somewhat loose limits to individual behavior and influencing the functioning of institutions such as the family and the mass media [...]". For the author, although there are rules and norms within a society, in order to impose limits on who participates in it, there is no guarantee that everyone will act according to what has been imputed to them.

For Solomon (2016), culture is the identity of a society, and it is shaped through traditions, customs, norms, rituals, etc. shared among community members. For the author it is not possible for a company to understand its target audience without taking into account its culture, because it is the cultural context that shapes an individual, influencing all their choices even in consumption.

The values of a society are formed through a set of characteristics that define habits and principles, governing the lives of the individuals who compose it. As well as analyzes Hawkins (2018), who defines values as variables that change according to each culture thus impacting consumption.

Solomon (2016) observes that when consuming a product or service the individual has beliefs about what he is consuming, he believes that that purchase will help him achieve a certain goal. In this way, it is necessary to attribute value to the product or service, thus valuing the expectations placed on what is being consumed.

Therefore, in addition to adding value to what is being offered, it is important to understand that just as cultures differ from each other, their values are also distinguished. Thus, Hawkins (2018) notes that it may become necessary to adapt a product or service to cultural variations and demographic factors. In this perspective, Solomon (2016) highlights that if brands do not understand the differences of each culture, a product that was successful in one place, can become unsuccessful in another.

A classic example of adapting to a country's cultural context is the *fast food* chain McDonalds, an American franchise that has had to adapt all of its U.S. standards to expand globally. The network seeks to adapt itself to each region, always seeking to adapt its menu to the local context of operation. An article published by G1 in 2012 announced the opening of a franchise of the chain in India, and the famous Big Mac is made of chicken, instead of beef, as a sign of respect to the Indian culture that does not consume beef because, for them, the cow is a sacred animal.

Thus, when a brand seeks to adapt to the context in which its consumers live, in addition to there being more possibility of success of the products and services they offer, they show their customers that their singularities are not only important but are also respected.

Subcultures are present in all societies and are groups that are distinguished from other individuals in society, but without detaching themselves from it. Hawkins (2018) reports on consumer subcultures, where members are committed to that specific product, brand, or consumer activity. That is, consumers establish such a strong bond with a particular product/service that they end up extending to groups or subcultures about it. Although Solomon (2016), portrays in his work the subcultures of gender, ethnic, religious and etc. that are also strong influences on consumer behavior.

According to Hawkins (2018) analyzes, demographic factors are both the cause and the result of cultural values. These demographic factors are given by the number of individuals in society, the distribution of income, age, occupation and some other characteristics that describe a population. This is a crucial factor in the purchase decision of each consumer, as it is through the uniqueness of each individual that their consumer experiences will be shaped.

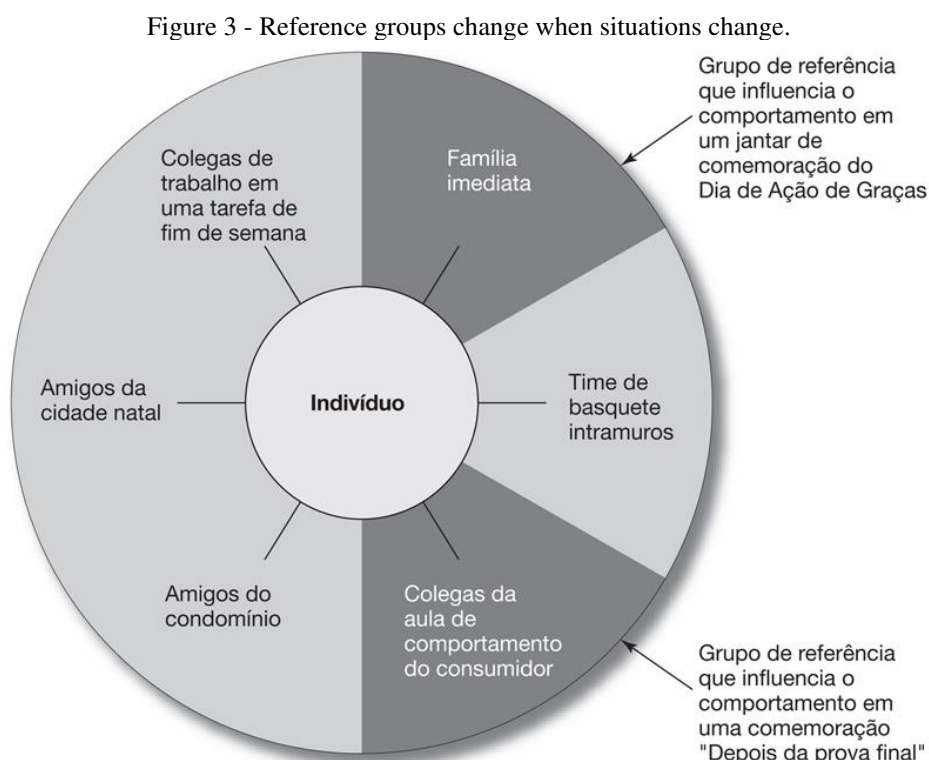
Although demographics are simple information, they become indispensable. It is this data that will allow a better targeting of the product / service to your target audience. The demographic data demonstrate its importance, because through them it is possible to study the population, being able to predict the market scenarios. Through age, for example, companies can better target their products and services to a rapidly growing target audience, such as the elderly (KOTLER, 2021).

Solomon (2016) highlights another factor that influences an individual's purchase decision, their economic conditions. In every society individuals are "separated" by their wealth, by who they have or do not have, even if how much people own is relative. Thus, individuals have their positions defined within society, a phenomenon defined as social class. But the author points out that to measure it is necessary not only to know how much is spent, but how it is spent.

Kotler (2021) highlights in his work that, although individuals are divided by their social classes, those in the same class do not always have the same lifestyle. For, even if a person has a high economic comfort, it does not mean that he likes to squander luxuries, being able to lead a very simple and minimalist life.

An individual's social interactions also affect their behavior as a consumer. All individuals are part of groups, where they try to conform to the standards of that circle (SOLOMON, 2016). In this logic, Hawkins (2018) highlights the reference groups, these groups are used by individuals as a way to conduct, not only their behaviors, but also their feelings, thoughts, and help them form their opinions.

These groups will guide consumers at the time of making a purchase decision, as individuals find information from an acquaintance more reliable than from a brand advertisement (Hawkins, 2018). As in Figure 3:



Source: Hawkins (2018, p. 86).

Finally, marketing strategies are clearly a strong point when it comes to convincing the consumer. For Kotler (2021, p.19) marketing "is responsible for identifying, evaluating and selecting market opportunities and establishing strategies to achieve excellence." In this way, marketing aims to add value to the product / service in order to satisfy the needs of the customer, through a repertoire of activities through market opportunities.

However, Kotler (2021) states that the market is being shaped day by day by the growing force of globalization and technology. In this way, marketing has evolved along with the advancement of the modern world. Currently, digital marketing, defined by Casas (2021) as the marketing activities practiced in the online environment, has become the link between consumer and brand. Just as the father of marketing predicted when he stated that "in the next decade, marketing will be reorganized from A to Z" (KOTLER, p.221, 2021).

Some examples such as word-of-mouth marketing, communication defined by Hawkins (2018) as the exchange of experiences between individuals about a product/service or brand. This communication evolved, within the internet, and formed viral marketing. This type of marketing makes it possible for messages to be transmitted much faster within social media.

However, Tanio (2021) states that it is necessary to be aware of the disadvantages that this type of marketing can cause, since in the same way that the information that is well received is shared, those that are seen in a negative way will also be propagated, but with the intention of boycotting the brand.

Relationship marketing has also had much more visibility these days. This is because, as Saccol (2022) points out that the look at the consumer is no longer just generalist, so relationship marketing aims to build more real and lasting relationships between the company and its customers. As defined by Thomé (2022) as relationship marketing, being the set of activities to create customer loyalty, a company. For the author, this type of marketing even generates word-of-mouth marketing, making your loyal customers become advocates for your brand.

Kotler (2021) also highlights advertising as a powerful tool for reaching customers. For the author: "If the advertisements are also creative, the advertising campaign can create an image and even a degree of preference or even an acceptance by the brand." (KOTLER, p.117, 2021). Thus, companies can use this tool to be remembered by their customers, in order to take advantage of opportunities to promote themselves.

Another marketing strategy, within the digital medium, is influencer marketing. Souza (2018) defines this tool as a way for companies to reach their target audience through digital influencers, with the aim of creating a link between the brand and the consumers who follow the content of that

influencer. Currently, this is one of the most used tools by brands that aim to leverage their sales, given that more and more social networks are present in the lives of consumers.

2.1.1.2 Internal influences

As we have seen before, individuals are shaped from the environment in which they live. It is his ideals, conceptions, beliefs, and other factors that will directly affect the way he sees himself and the world around him. In this way, consumers are mainly motivated by their personal and internal factors.

For Hawkins (2018) the decision of purchase and consumption go through 4 stages, namely: exposure, attention, interpretation and memory, and they constitute perception. The author explains that the set of activities when stimuli are captured, transformed into information and stored, give name to the processing of information. This factor is a process where marketing stimuli capture the consumer's attention.

Exposure is the moment when the consumer is exposed to information about the product/service. That's when the individual decides whether or not it's relevant for him, only then to attribute, or not, meaning to the stimulus that has just been captured. This is when finally that information will be stored in the consumer's memory, either in the short term for a quick decision, or in the long term, when the customer keeps the meaning of the stimulus. (HAWKINS, 2018).

Solomon (2016), reports sensory marketing as a major influence on a consumer's purchase decision process. This is due to the fact that the client is directly affected by their senses, causing the sensations to generate a memorable experience for the individual. The human senses allow companies a way to get closer to their consumers and even to innovate within the market, thus passing in front of their competitors.

As well as color and movement, which can generate feelings of enthusiasm and excitement to the consumer, there are several other visual attractions that hold the attention of consumers in relation to ads and advertisements. As well as the insulation, the position, the format, and among others (HAWKINS, 2018). These attractions are intended to awaken something good within consumers, so that from these feelings consumers feel motivated to consume that company.

However, Solomon (2016) attributes that the personality of a consumer is who defines how he will react to marketing stimuli. For, each individual is unique, having their personalities shaped from their own sets of characteristics. And it is this set that defines how he will behave as a consumer.

Consumers look for products that provide them with a sense of identification (HAWKINS, 2018). The personality of the brand is how people see it and attribute traits to it as if it were an individual (SOLOMON, 2016). From the same point of view, for Hawkins (2016, p.228), brand

personality is "a set of human characteristics that become associated with a brand." Therefore, it is essential to manage and communicate the personality of the company in order to generate more proximity to the consumer. Consumers need to feel connected to the product/service in some way.

In the same way, emotions, which are closely linked to the needs, motivations and personality of the consumer, are a component of feelings that can be positive or negative. The personality of the consumer is who dictates the intensity of their emotions. Emotions are most often uncontrollable, and they have a major impact on consumer behavior (HAWKINS, 2018). These emotions dictate not only the behavior of the consumer in question, but also that of the people around them, who will be bombarded with information in both a positive and negative experience.

For Choairy (2009), by generating a good feeling in a consumer, the brand has more chances of retaining this customer. When positively impacted, consumers tend to return to consuming from the brand. In the same way when these consumers go through a negative experience, causing them to break their ties with the brand, and start to convey to those around them how unpleasant the experience was.

Thus, it can be noted that the emotions of a consumer influence the behavior of other consumers, making the individuals themselves a factor of influence in the purchase decision of other potential consumers, reinforcing the traditional word-of-mouth communication, as we have seen previously.

2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL IN ORGANIZATIONS

After understanding how consumers are impacted, through external and internal influences, finally it can be understood how brands have come to use technology to their advantage and how it can result in adverse effects than expected, causing consumers to break with brands, based on their ideals and other influences, after encountering companies sabotaged by cancel culture.

At the end of the twentieth century, Kotler (2021) already predicted the adaptations that companies would suffer with technological advancement. This advance took hold and became unbeatable. Thus information has spread more and more easily within the internet.

According to a report released by the website Data Reportal, produced by We Are Social and MeltWater, at the beginning of the year 2023 Brazil had 181.8 million users on the internet, while on social media more than 152 million people, about 70.6% to the equivalent of the total population, being 7.1 million more users than in the year 2022. This data reflects the urgency of companies to worry about social media, on the internet, as one of the main tools to communicate and get closer to their consumers.

For Casas (2021), the internet has enabled companies a new way of doing marketing, thus creating a great communication channel between consumer and brand. It also summarized business

operations in just one click, making it easier not only for the company, but also for the consumer. In this way, this channel has become a two-way street, just as consumers have access to what they want to consume much easier, companies have the possibility to reach their target audience at a fast speed.

The web provided users with a large flow of communication, in this way, messages began to be propagated in a fleeting way, and for the most part, they reach consumers in different ways. This communication network made it possible for consumers to exchange their experiences, thus influencing other potential buyers. Also allowing companies to deal with the criticism they receive on the internet, thus maintaining their reputation within the market (CASAS, 2021).

In the midst of technological advancement have also emerged digital influencers, who have become one of the highest-paid professions within the digital environment. Koelle (2019) defines digital influencers as "people who **express themselves through social networks**, generating content and, through it, impact individuals and communities." Already for Solis (2012) the digital influencer has the power to cause effect, changing the behavior of the masses, through online environment. For the author, the *digital influencers* have become a basic marketing tool for businesses.

Thus, Schinaider and Barbosa (2019) portray these influencers as a source that consumers seek as a reference before consuming from any brand. In this way, influencers have become a marketing strategy, through influencer marketing, generating an even greater bond between consumer and brand.

According to a survey conducted by the QualiBest institute, 69% of people connected to the web, follow some influencer because they like the subjects he addresses. While 56% of respondents follow some influencer because they want to know their opinions, what products and services they recommend. 50% like to watch tutorials to build things or other activities. And finally, 43% like to follow their day to day and their experiences.

This information reverberates how much consumers give importance to influencers, this is because they pass greater credibility, for being real people, generating a sense of identification and increasing consumer confidence.

In this way, it is understood the importance of the internet and social media to enable companies a more agile and direct communication with their consumers. However, it is necessary to be aware of the contrary effects that this tool can generate. Because of the same fact that it allows companies to disseminate their content much faster, the way in which these messages are transmitted needs to be constantly monitored. As well as Tanio (2021) portrays that, in the same way that information is well received by the consumer, it can also be poorly received and propagated.

2.3 THE CANCEL CULTURE

It is already known that social media has become a great marketing tool for companies, increasing sales and providing consumers with greater proximity to the brands they consume. However, Silva et al. (2021) also portray the negative effects that have emerged along with the benefits of digital marketing, among them, this study proposes to delve into virtual cancellation.

The advancement of technology has shaped the relationships between individuals in society, where even in the digital environment the members seek to build and hold on to a personality that will or will not be accepted by others in the online world. However, any poorly received message transforms what was reception into judgment (GONÇALVES and DUARTE, 2020). Given such circumstances, this is where cancel culture comes in.

Virtual cancellation, present in the social relations of the contemporary world, is defined by Silva and Honda (2020) as, literally, canceling or eliminating any person or brand that has had attitudes in which the internet court does not deem correct.

In this way, a message transmitted or received in the wrong way can lead to pre-judgments, often without any foundations, which are coated and disseminated in the form of an attack, in order to boycott the person or brand in question. For Chiari et al (2020) this conduct reflects the ego, of those who practice it, in finding themselves free from errors and failures, placing themselves in the right to punish someone, thus eliminating them from social-digital life.

This phenomenon has become so frequent on the internet that it has been termed as cancel culture, however, it is not such an uncommon and recent practice in society. Muniz (2021) recalls the time of the Inquisition, when people were burned in the public square for attitudes that the rest of society condemned.

But while there's no indication of the exact moment when cancel culture originated, this move comes amid a good idea, when Hollywood celebrities adopted the hashtag "*Me Too*" — me too, in Portuguese — to denounce their harassers. Despite going viral in 2017, the *Me Too movement* has existed since 2006 and was founded by Tanara Burke in order to raise awareness of the magnitude of sexual harassment.

This movement has taken hold and expanded beyond *#MeToo*. As Camillis and Dorneles (2022) portray, this practice became a tool that gave voice to minorities in the face of social injustices and crimes suffered, making people protected by their economic privileges could be charged for acts that in fact threatened social welfare.

An example was the protest at the Carrefour supermarket, after the beating suffered by João Alberto Silveira, a black man who was beaten to death, in one of the supermarket chains. This tragic

event started a movement, within the internet, in order to boycott the company, however the protest went beyond the web.

Figure 4 - Carrefour boycott after death of black man:



Source: Poder360, 2020

However, this practice stopped being well-intentioned some time ago. Currently, any conduct that deviates from the standards judged correct, by the internet court, is already a reason for individuals or legal entities to be canceled without any defense option. Thus, this culture makes it impossible for the judgment to be carried out in a fair manner, given that:

First, because you stop discussing ideas and start discussing people or companies. Second, because few prefer to listen, understand, and form an opinion before attacking. Third, because other people or companies involved in similar situations, for example, do not suffer sanctions in the same intensity as those "canceled". Fourth, because, in the virtual world, the line between constructive criticism and offensive attack is very thin. (SILVA and HONDA, n.p., 2020).

Thus, the culture that was born with a good purpose, that of awareness, became only a way for people to show the hatred they have within themselves, through attack and offenses, masquerading as a false justice. As Camillis and Dorneles (2022) observe, the tool that was once used as a way to denounce serious threats, has come to be used only as an instrument of lynching anyone who goes against the ideals and opinions of the majority.

Chiari et al. (2020) portray this culture as a throwback to the absolutist period, given that canceled personalities have no right of defense and face serious consequences for not being in accordance with the imposed ideologies. In this way, it is understood that even with all the progress that the internet allows, there are still conducts within it totally controversial with the modern world.

2.3.1 Impact of cancel culture on organizations

In companies such a culture can be even more harmful, given that, in addition to tarnishing the reputation of the brand, profits can also be implicated.

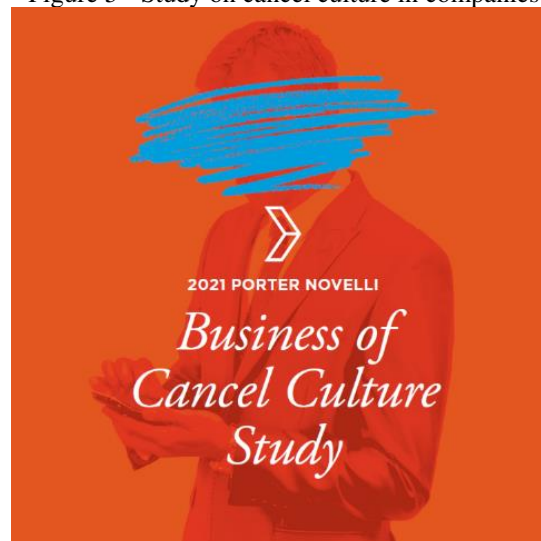
A survey conducted in the United States, by Porter Novelli, in 2021, sought to understand why brands are canceled and where people want to go with it. The poll found that 72 percent of Americans feel, more than ever, encouraged to give their opinions.

Thus, 34% of respondents see cancellation as a good conduct, which makes companies reflect on their positions, while 30% consider this culture as something good, but widely used lately, as opposed to the 20% of Americans who consider this boycott bad for society, company and individuals (PORTER NOVELLI, 2021).

Therefore, even companies that have loyal consumers are not exempt from this culture, 66% of Americans responded that even being totally loyal to a company, and loving its products, they would not fail to cancel it if it had a wrong conduct, however, 84% of Americans would be willing to forgive a brand after its cancellation. (PORTER NOVELLI, 2021).

As for why an American would cancel a brand, 70 percent would cancel for racial reasons, 69 percent would cancel for women's rights, 68 percent for breaking COVID-19 protocols, 61 percent for immigration-related issues, 57 percent for religion and 54 percent for political reasons. (PORTER NOVELLI, 2021).

Figure 5 - Study on cancel culture in companies



Source: Porter Novelli, 2021.

Therefore, it is necessary that brands are aware of the events in the world, in order to add value to themselves, due to the constant demand by consumers. As well as Silva et al. (2021) who emphasize

the importance of brands being attentive to social, racial, gender and environmental issues, aiming to become increasingly humanized.

Among the types of cancellations that a company suffers, Guarezi (2020) highlights, initially, the cancellation due to the performance of some product / service, where consumers end up being disappointed with the performance or functionality of those that were offered.

In sequence, the cancellation due to factors external to the brand, is highlighted by Guarezi (2020). This motivation occurs when the target audience disagrees with some positioning or attitude of any of the brand's influencers. From the same perspective, Silva et al. (2021) highlight the importance of companies paying attention when establishing partnerships with digital influencers, always seeking to engage with personalities who have the same values as the brand, precisely in order to avoid such conflicts, in possible personal positions of influencers.

The cancellation as a result of the breach of expectations that the consumer had about the company, is highlighted in third place. It can occur when consumers expect a positioning or action from the brand, but are surprised by the opposite. (GUAREZI, 2020).

Thus Guarezi (op. Cit.) highlights the cancellation that occurs when people who have religious values and feel attacked by companies that do not have a stance that goes according to their moral and traditional principles. Often, these people or families have great taboos regarding, for example, advertisements that represent LGBTQIA+ communities. However, this type of cancellation can be considered "good", since it allows the brand to voice minorities, expand its values and consequently receive positive reviews.

Finally, the fifth and The last type of cancellation, reported by Guarezi (2020), is when the brand adopts false positions, simply to enter the viral of the moment. This motivation can give the brand an image that it only cares about being engaged in a subject that is booming on the networks.

In view of this motivation, Silva (2021) brings the reflection on how the positions regarding the events in the world have become superficial, only to conform to the positioning of the whole, for fear of losing reach. In this way, when a brand seeks to position itself next to what is "morally correct", imposed by the majority, even if it goes against its values and ideals, increasingly this company tends to be manipulable by the overwhelming thinking of the majority, thus fleeing from its own personality and being guided by the fear of not taking a stand.

Given this, the cancel culture promotes, in addition to the moral damages to those who have been canceled, a society increasingly adept to the herd effect, because their positions are nothing more than a false need to belong to that movement that is going viral on social media. Thus, Silva (2021) defines this as a "false sense of belonging, after all, it is nothing more than a sharing in which the individual needs to put the anti-racism/fascism/homophobia sign (SILVA, p.104, 2021). In this way,

it is perceived that individuals are increasingly guided by the tendencies of opinions and not by their own ideologies.

2.3.2 Crisis management in times of virtual cancellation

As a result of cancel culture, companies need to establish crisis management in order to prevent or deal with virtual lynching. For Nascimento (2007) the reputation of companies is linked to the meaning that their consumers attribute to it. Thus, in her work, the author highlights the importance of crisis management within the company, because these when poorly managed can tarnish the reputation of a brand.

For those at the center of a crisis, taking initiative and acting at the right time can be definitive before public opinion. Knowing what to transmit and how to do it is fundamental, because any problem that involves the image of a company interests the media, which will make, whenever possible, a broad coverage of the facts. Whether for good or for evil (NASCIMENTO, 2007, p.21).

Thus, a crisis can be defined as "an event that affects or has the potential to affect an entire organization" (MITROFF, 2001, p. 34-35 apud FORNI, 2019, p.6). Forni (2019) reinforces that, it is impossible to be in the market and not have problems. However, not all the problems that the company deals with can be termed as a crisis. Because, still according to the author, crises are characterized by serious and atypical problems within a company.

Thus, it is necessary, initially, to create a good crisis management plan, in order to draw a strategic plan so that when the cancel culture hits At the door the leaders already know how to act. Well, as Nascimento (2007) analyzes, managers who establish a plan to deal with crises are more likely to get out of it. The crisis plan needs to be constantly evaluated in order to evaluate its effectiveness according to the needs of the company.

Thus, Silva et al. (2021) portray the importance of brands seeking, increasingly, responsible attitudes and positions, aiming to maintain an assertive message, adding value to consumers. For, according to Bello (2021) a clear communication, in times of virtual lynching, becomes essential for a company, because any phrase out of context can lead to several problems for its reputation and consequently its profits. In this way, it is also necessary that companies avoid engaging in debates that have delicate topics and that may have their pronouncements misinterpreted by Internet users.

It is also necessary to be aware of the partnerships signed, as well as has already been portrayed in this study, Silva et al. (2021) reinforces the importance of always allying with personalities who have the same values as the brand.

An article released by the institute QualiBest lists some tips in order to manage a crisis generated by the cancel culture, namely:

- Prevention against possible crises;
- Creation of a committee prepared for this possible event;
- Definition of a spokesperson for moments of crisis, someone well trained;
- Quick action when impacted by virtual lynching, but never attacking, only taking a stand;
- Understand how customers see the brand and what they expect from it;
- Transparency;
- Constant monitoring of social media, always evaluating consumer feedback;
- Keep working always aligned with your values;
- Learn from mistakes, always analyzing how the company can deal with failures.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The methodology is what describes the path taken to carry out the work. Lakatos (2021) reports that everything carried out within the research must be described in a thorough manner. From the same point of view, Cativo (2010) conceptualizes the methodology as:

(...) the thorough, detailed, rigorous and exact explanation of every action developed in the method (path) of the research work. It is the explanation of the type of research, the instrument used (questionnaire, interview, etc.), the expected time, the team of researchers and the division of labor, the forms of tabulation and treatment of the data, in short, of everything that was used in the research work. (CATIVO, 2010, p.2)

Thus, the approaches adopted for the construction of this work were through qualitative research, which is defined by Gil (2021) as one that deals with non-numerical data, seeking to identify their relationships and concepts, structuring them through a descriptive scheme. For Flick (2008), qualitative research is "of particular relevance to the study of social relations due to the pluralization of life spheres" (FLICK, 2008, p.20). Thus, qualitative research will allow the study of relationships, phenomena and facts, enabling greater understanding about cancel culture.

This study presents as theoretical basis and methodology the bibliographical research, for Sousa et al. (2021), the bibliographical research is based through the collection and analysis of what has already been published about the theory, aiming to direct the work and enabling the deepening of the proposed theme. Lakatos (2021) defines bibliographic research as being a specific type of scientific production, being based on texts, books, newspapers and all valid material that can attribute good content to research.

To this end, information was collected through books, available on the My Library platform, made available by UNIR. Through articles and papers, searched through Google Scholar. Reports and journalistic articles were also analyzed. The materials taken from websites, such as surveys, also

enabled the collection of data that could support the questions about cancel culture and its impact on organizations.

Then, the case study method was used, allowing a greater depth on the subject. Gil (2008) defines the case study as the broad and detailed study about the researched phenomenon. Thus, Yin (2015) defines the emergence of the case study from the will to understand social events in all their complexity.

Thus, through the material collected on the internet, some brands that suffered from the cancel culture in the periods from 2020 to 2023 were selected, aiming to achieve the main objective of this work, which is to understand how brands can be canceled and how consumers behave through it.

The social networks Instagram, Twitter and Facebook also made it possible to collect data for the case studies of the companies WePink, Natura and Flow Podcast, thus allowing the analysis of the pronouncements of brands and Internet users.

4 DATA AND RESULTS

The Data analysis seeks to treat and transform the data obtained, in order to greater understanding and the discovery of more useful information, so that they can guide the research. In this chapter it will be possible to understand, in practice, how brands can be canceled, how they deal and how the boycott affects the performance of companies in the market.

4.1 WE PINK CASE

Digital influencer Virginia Fonseca, in partnership with entrepreneur Samara Pink, founded the cosmetics brand WePink. Virginia had already suffered retaliation, on the internet, for other behaviors that did not please the netizens, however, this study will focus only on the cancellation of its brand.

In this case, the cancellation for product performance will be deepened, highlighted by Guarezi (2020) as one of the types of cancellation that a brand can suffer.

It all starts after the base is laid WePink Beauty, which had a positioning of a luxury product, initially cost R \$ 199.00 and promised several benefits such as being water resistant, having actives that help in skin aging, among other benefits claimed by the brand.

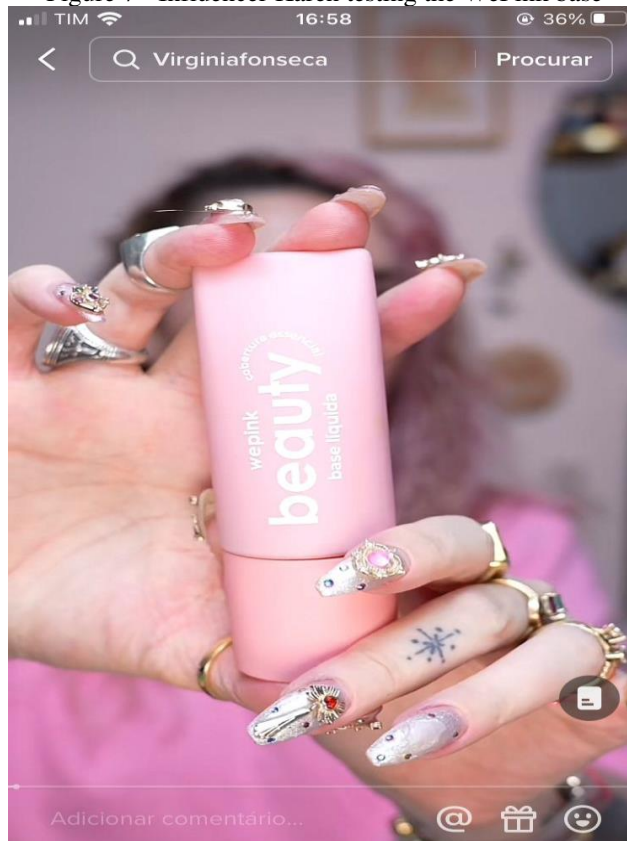
Figure 6 - Users complain about the price of WePink's base



Source: https://twitter.com/kaiohenrique_e/status/1632120554621640704?s=46&t=kjRM_H9T1PaB1MfBye2kZw, 2023.

The price of the base did not please the netizens, who did not hold back when gushing criticism, generating great uproar on the internet. Thus, hundreds of content creators bought the base in order to test the quality of the product, to then know if it was worth the cost-benefit.

Figure 7 - Influencer Karen testing the WePink base



Source: <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZM2dPTSGE/>, 2023.

However, it was digital influencer Karen Bachini's video that triggered a wave of cancellation about the product. In her review of the base, Karen demonstrates several negative points, points that went against everything that the product promised to deliver.

A look at development

The Influence of Social Media on Organizations: How brands are impacted when associated with cancel culture on the internet

Right at the beginning of the video Karen describes flaws about the packaging of the product, which presented itself in the market as being luxury. In the course of the review the influencer begins to point out points contrary to what had been promised by WePink, such as the foundation that claimed to be moisturizing, behaved on Karen's skin in a way that dried it.

The outrage, not just from influencer Karen Bachini, but also other consumers, was about value that the product cost and what it delivered. When launched in the market, the premium base of WePink, promised to deliver a quality never seen before in the Brazilian market, however, this is not what Internet users and consumers realized.

It is also possible to analyze, through the video, which has gone viral on the networks, the influence of content creator Karen Bachini, who proved to be very strong, by promoting such a buzz on the internet. Reinforcing influencer marketing, addressed and reported by Souza (2018) as a determinant in consumer behavior.

Figure 8 - Netizen criticizes the WePink base



Source: https://twitter.com/maynefoda/status/1633989485951156224?s=46&t=kjRM_H9T1PaB1MfBye2kZw, 2023.

Thus, several others Consumers began to criticize the base, mainly for its price and the quality that the product did not deliver. Realizing what Solomon (2016) described, consumers place expectations and beliefs about a product, believing that by consuming it they can achieve a certain goal.

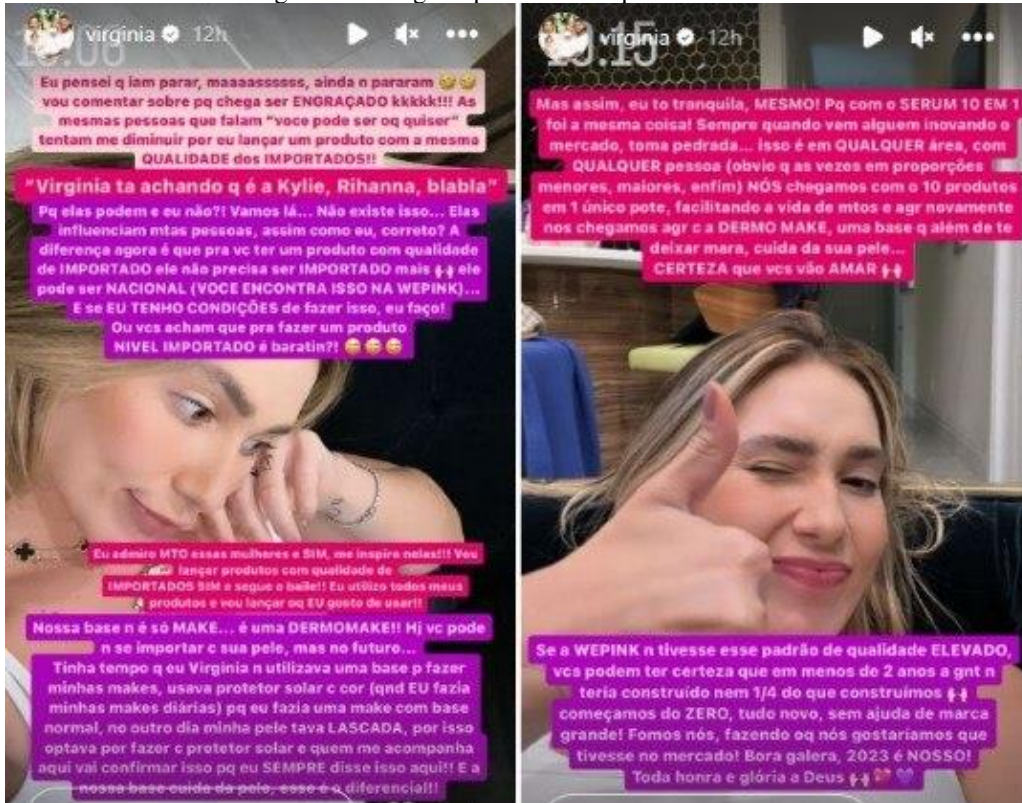
When faced with the base that cost R \$ 199.00 consumers created a great expectation about the product, many even before its launch were already disappointed by the value, because the vast majority of the audience of the influencer Virginia could not afford it.

Figure 9 - Virginia is pronounced



Source: IstoÉ, 2023.

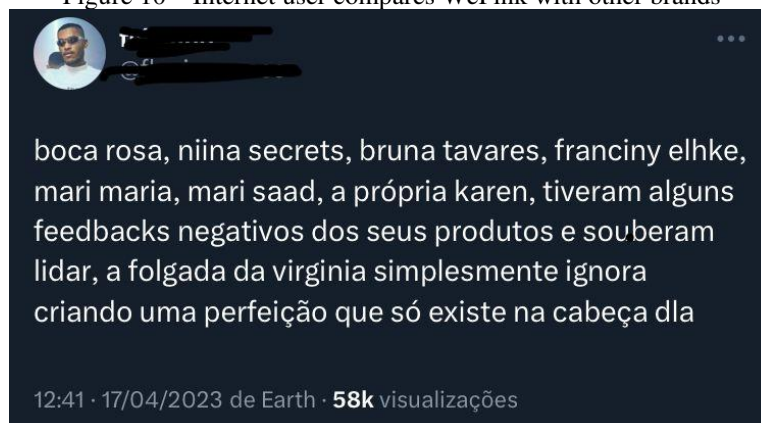
Figure 10 - Virginia posts another pronouncement



Source: R7, 2023.

In several posts on her Instagram Virginia defended herself from the criticism she was receiving. In Different stories, the influencer points out the same things, claiming that the product launched was yes of great quality. In another story the owner of the brand reposted the video of another influencer who had tested and approved the base, claiming that consumers were afraid to assume that they liked the product for fear of taking *Hate*. The influencer also pointed out that she had already gone through this in the launch of other products, because people do not accept to see innovations in the market without "apredejar".

Figure 10 – Internet user compares WePink with other brands

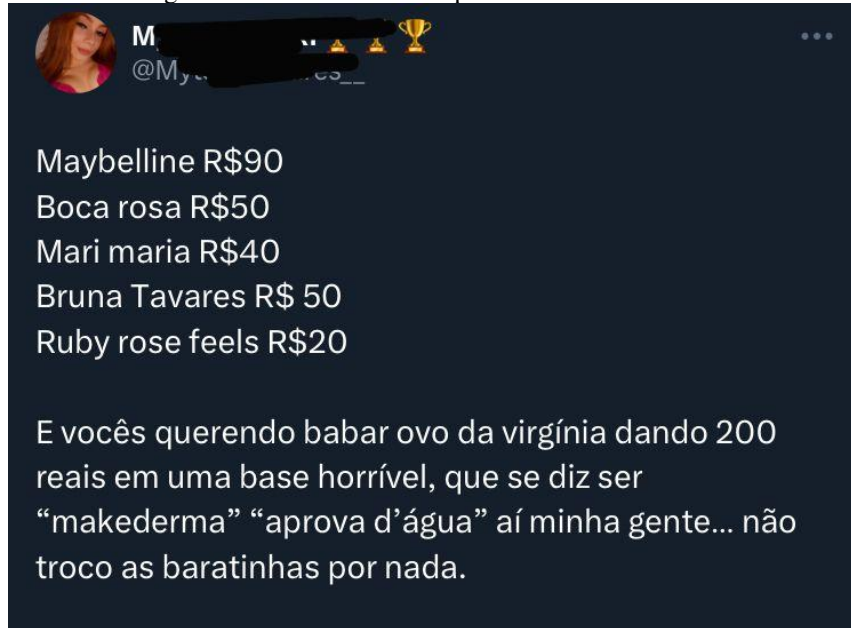


Source: <https://twitter.com/flavianonasc/status/1648003788605628421>, 2023.

A look at development

The Influence of Social Media on Organizations: How brands are impacted when associated with cancel culture on the internet

Figure 11 - Internet user compares base to other brands



Source: https://twitter.com/MylenaTavares___/status/1634240732629221379?s=20, 2023.

The positioning of the influencer and responsible for the brand, did not please the users, who promptly linked Virginia's behavior to that of other entrepreneurs in the makeup business. In figure 11 an Internet user compares other brands, which had negative feedbacks, with the Virginia brand, claiming that they knew how to portray themselves with their consumers and handled the feedback very well. The netizen also points out that only Virginia considers the perfect base. In Figure 12 another consumer reinforces the comparison with other products that have higher cost-benefit.

However, the cancellation of the brand WePink did not affect its profits, quite the contrary, in an article published by Quem Magazine, the controversy generated by the base only leveraged the brand's sales. After the negative repercussion of the base, the influencer and owner of the brand, opened a *Live Shopping* – In Portuguese: live sales – and managed to profit R \$ 22 million in just 13 hours after the opening of the *Live*.

Figure 12 - WePink billing



Source: Who, 2023.

On her own Instagram, Virginia released a screenshot with the brand's billing after the *Live*. Showing herself totally enthusiastic, Virginia wrote on her social network "13 hours of live, 194,000 sales and 22 million billed!!! Day 16/04/2023 surely another day that will be marked in the history of WePink!! 22 MILLION IN 13 HOURS!!" (FONSECA, 2023).

Although brand profits were not directly affected, the brand's reputation was greatly corrupted after such controversy.

4.2 NATURA CASE

In 2020, cosmetics company Natura was heavily criticized, following a Father's Day campaign with: Thammy Miranda. In this case, it will be possible to analyze how a brand can be canceled when it goes against traditional or religious values, cited by Guarezi (2020) as cancellation by *status quo*.

Figure 13 - Thammy's Instagram post in partnership with Natura



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CC9cSZHJ31a/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=34fb56b8-8fed-482b-a845-93c18312ae2b, 2020.

On his Instagram, Thammy partnered with Natura on Father's Day action. In the video, Thammy publishes several moments with his son and in the caption writes a short text, ending it with the phrase: "Being a father is it! Being present is the best gift" (MIRANDA, 2020).

Figure 14 - Internet user revolts after natura campaign



Source: <https://twitter.com/castellarinando/status/1288923049123864576?s=20>, 2020.

A look at development

The Influence of Social Media on Organizations: How brands are impacted when associated with cancel culture on the internet

However, the advertising campaign received many negative comments, several consumers demonstrated their anger and discontent with the campaign. As in figure 14, that an Internet user undertakes not to buy anything more from nature, after the action of Father's Day with Thammy.

Figure 15 - Pastor Silas Malafaia tries to promote boycott of Natura



Source: <https://m.facebook.com/SilasMalafaia/photos/a.249636771717230/3689141187766754/?type=3&p=60>, 2020.

Figure 15 is an image that was drawn up by Pastor Silas Malafaia, where he tried to promote boycott the cosmetics line, based on its religious values. Several netizens and consumers supported the pastor's position, giving greater support to the survey conducted by Porter Novelli, where 57% of respondents responded that they would cancel a brand for religious reasons. Although the research was conducted in the United States, it is possible to see great similarities regarding Brazilian consumers.

Figure 16 - User distills biased lines



Vc nunca será pai pois é mulher porque o que Deus faz ninguém desfaz

Source: Comments on the publication

<https://www.facebook.com/21539158238/posts/pfbid02uLs7NLRPiQ92fhhgHNbiKWra1Kh59NQndrpdGEk6UuqUQKE78gBGTGb1NyU3kKBI/?mibextid=cr9u03>, 2020.

Figure 17 - Netizen disapproves campaign



[Redacted name]

Nunca vai ser homem, e muito menos pai 😡, quer homenagear os Pais coloca um homem de origem humildade que representa todos os pais, e com as vendas dos protudos da uma porcentagem para ele, tenho certeza que vai ser muito bem vindo , ainda mais numa crise que estamos passando.

Source: Comments from publication

<https://www.facebook.com/21539158238/posts/pfbid02uLs7NLRPiQ92fhbgHNbiKWra1Kh59NQdndrpdGEk6UuqUQKE78gBGTGb1NyU3kKBI/?mibextid=cr9u03>, 2020.

In figures 16 and 17, two users disapprove of the campaign, claiming that Thammy will never represent a "real father." The discontent of consumers stems from a revolt generated by intolerance and prejudice. Thammy Miranda, who is transsexual, is just one of several people who face various attacks, ranging from the virtual environment to the real lynching, as already witnessed at various times in the history of the trans community, who are assaulted for no plausible reason, just for being who they are.

Although retrograde and repugnant, such conduct underscores what has already been said by the author Hawkins (2018) who claims that consumers seek to consume from brands in which they identify, seeking to find their personal values in those of the brand. This practice reveals and confirms the thinking of Camillis and Dorneles (2022) who claim that virtual cancellation is no longer well-intentioned, currently serving only as a source of gratuitous hatred.

Natura in carrying out such a campaign clearly had the genuine intention of embracing diversity. However, when receiving such retaliation, it was possible to realize that most of its consumers have traditional, non-negotiable values, having several taboos regarding gender diversity, reinforcing Guarezi (2020) when analyzing that people seek to consume from brands in which they have the same values aligned with their own.

Figure 18 - Internet user stresses the importance of respect



Thammy De Alencar

A verdade é que o ser humano é hipócrita, gosta de ser melhor q o outro, não respeita o próximo, não entendi o pq de tanto desconforto em ele ser o pai q a natura escolheu, estamos precisando é ter mais respeito e amor ao próximo, e cada um cuidar da sua vida

Source: Comments on the publication,

<https://www.facebook.com/21539158238/posts/pfbid02uLs7NLRPiQ92fhbgHNbiKWra1Kh59NQndrpdGEk6UuqUQK E78gBGTGb1NyU3kKBI/?mibextid=cr9u03>, 2020.

Figure 19 – User shows satisfaction with the campaign



Thammy De Alencar

Parabéns a natura fiquei feliz c a escolha pai não é ter um órgão masculino pai e estar presente cuidar amar e proteger mas muitos ignorantes não estão preparados pra essa conversa q acham q fazer um filho e deixar jogado e nem lembrar q o filho existe e ser pai

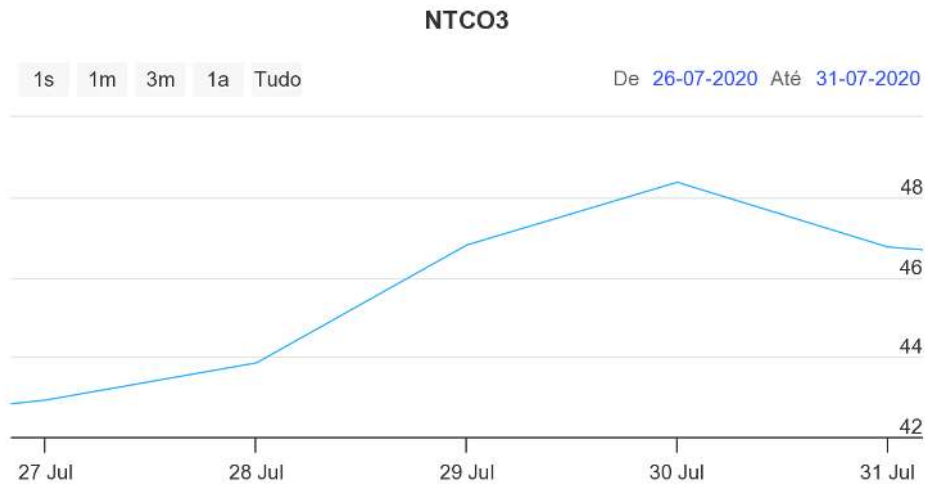
Source: Comments from publication

<https://www.facebook.com/21539158238/posts/pfbid02uLs7NLRPiQ92fhbgHNbiKWra1Kh59NQndrpdGEk6UuqUQK E78gBGTGb1NyU3kKBI/?mibextid=cr9u03>, 2020.

However, the discussion became polarized on the internet, while many were dissatisfied with the campaign, others were happy. As in figure 17, where the user portrays the importance of knowing how to respect and love others, and in figure 18 in which the Internet user demonstrates satisfaction with the choice of Thammy for the campaign.

As well as the WePink, the buzz generated by the controversy had the opposite effect to that expected with the boycott of Natura. The article published by the news portal UOL, and verified by the newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo, revealed the increase of shares by 10%, rising to R \$ 48.67, after two days of the launch of the campaign, which reflected positively not only on sales, but also on the company's investments.

Figure 20 - Natura shares chart



Source: <https://www.infomoney.com.br/cotacoes/b3/acao/natura-ntco3/grafico/>, 2023.

Figure 20 shows the growth of Natura's shares in the days following the controversy. Through the InfoMoney platform, which specializes in the Brazilian investment market, it was possible to research the quotations of Natura's shares in the periods related to the virtual lynching.

Such a boycott, which was incited by Pastor Silas Malafaia, had its beginning on July 28, 2020, the days following this demonstration of the firing in the brand's actions. On July 30, the brand's shares had their peak, exceeding the value of R \$ 48.00, as you can analyze in the chart, in figure 20.

Thus, sustaining Guarezi (2020) by stating that the Impacts caused instantly by a virtual boycott can be overcome in a long-term narrative that promotes a society more open to diversity.

4.3 FLOW CASE

Bruno Aiub, better known as Monark, is a YouTuber and digital influencer. At the time of the cancellation, Monark was one of the members of the Flow podcast, but everything changed after his controversial lines about Nazism. On Flow, then-host Monark declared that "Nazi parties should be recognized by law."

Figure 21 - Influencer Levi posts Monark's lines on Twitter



Source: <https://twitter.com/LeviKaique/status/1491001133263114241>, 2022.

In figure 21, digital influencer Levi Kaique portrays Monark's lines via a Twitter post. Such conduct, on the part of the hitherto host of Flow, was vehemently criticized by netizens. However, this was not the only time that the host of the podcast said controversial things, at other times, on his Twitter, or even on the podcast, Monark had already demonstrated opinions very frowned upon by the public.

Figure 22 - User charges brands that sponsor Monark



Source: <https://twitter.com/lisclaudiaf/status/1491037244131786757?s=20>, 2022

The attitude was enough for users, and consumers of the podcast, to start canceling Monark, charging the sponsors for positioning. As in Figure 22 where a user associates to the brands, linked to the program, the apology to Nazism.

This case reflects the cancellation by factors external to the brand, as analyzed by the author Guarezi (2020) who notes that such a boycott is caused by factors beyond the control of the company.

Or Flow Podcast, which was a program conceived and founded by the duo Igor Rodrigues Coelho (Igor 3k) and Bruno Monteiro Aiub (Monark), directed and produced by Gianluca Santana (Gianzão), was the target of criticism on social networks, even though the company is the responsibility of two other people, who are unaware of Monark's position. However, by inciting an apology for Nazism, in the Flow program, Bruno Aiub channeled part of the lynching he suffered to the brand, which had its sponsorships cut.

Figure 23 - Puma announces breakup with Flow



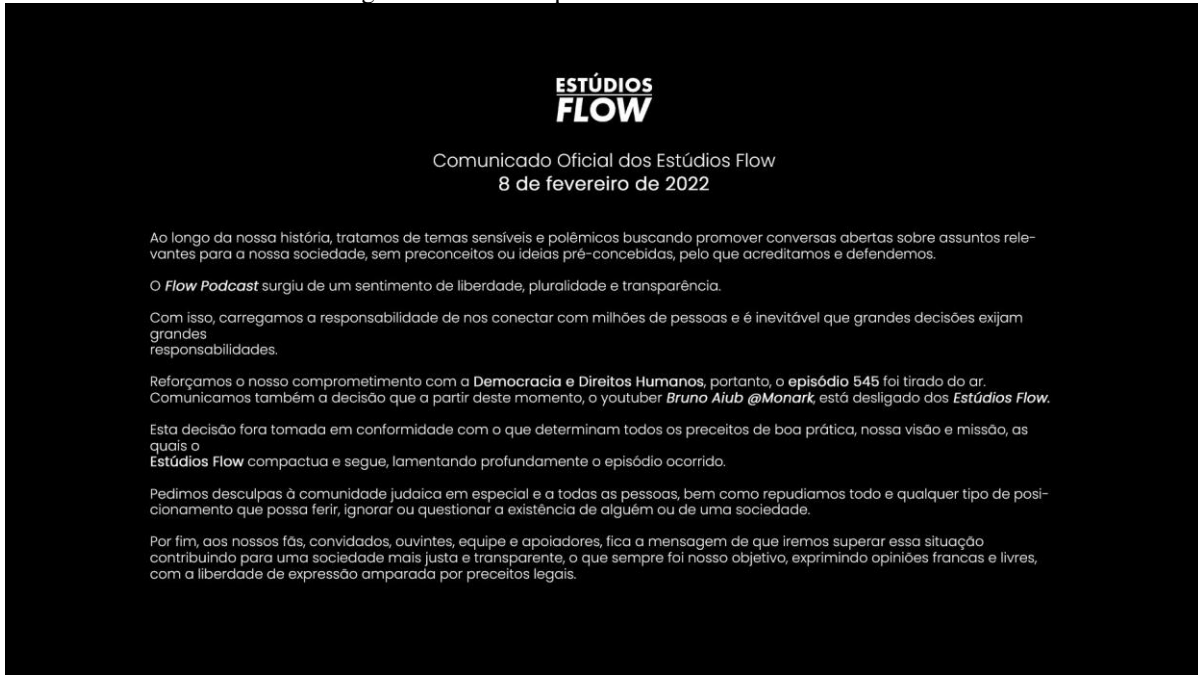
Source: Power360, 2022.

An article written by editor Ighor Nóbrega, of the newspaper Poder360, disclosed the sponsorships lost by the Flow program. Among them, Puma was the first to speak out against the conduct carried out during the Flow program. On its Twitter, the brand claimed to disagree and repudiate, the statements and ideas, expressed during the program in question, which triggered the boycott of the company Flow, and also clarified that they were not sponsors of the brand, but that they only made a punctual and isolated action.

Puma was just one of several brands that disassociated themselves from the program. Brands such as BIS, iFood, Habib's, Amazon and among other various brands linked to Flow, have pronounced their break with the podcast company.

The loss of sponsorships were not the only consequences generated by Monark's speeches. Interviews that were already scheduled, with personalities such as former football player Zico, were also canceled. According to the article broadcast by the newspaper Poder360, Junior Coimbra, Zico's son, disclosed on his Twitter that his father would no longer participate in the interview, claiming that "my father would participate this afternoon in the Flow Sports Club, but he canceled as soon as he watched the video. It didn't take much..." (COIMBRA, 2022).

Figure 24 - Official pronouncement Flow Studios



Source: <https://twitter.com/flowpdc/status/1491132460054511617>, 2022.

After the repercussion of the case, the program Flow deleted the episode in question and parted ways with Monark, who in addition to being a host, owned 50% of the company. Figure 24 shows the pronouncement of the Flow Studios, which reinforced the commitment to Democracy and Human Rights, thus announced the dismissal of Monark, and apologized to the Jewish community.

Meanwhile such an attitude was not enough to stop the damage to the Flow company. Several sponsors terminated the contract with the program, in view of the constant collection by its consumers. Although the lines came from only one of the show's hosts and he was fired shortly after the episode, the brands did not want to be associated with Flow.

In an interview to GQ magazine, Igor 3K claimed to have had a loss of R \$ 8 million in contracts signed. "In addition, we lost another R\$ 8 million in agreements that were underway and were canceled. Our revenue was zero and we had a payroll with 90 people" (COELHO, 2022). Although the lines came from only one of the show's hosts and he was fired shortly after the episode, the sponsors did not want to be associated with the Flow brand, causing it to have its reputation tarnished.

Thus, the boycott was not only harmful to the author of the speeches, Monark, but also to his partner and founder of Flow Podcast, Igor 3K, who continued as host and owner of the show, and suffered the consequences of having his company canceled by factors that were not under his control.

However, in the interview to GQ, Igor claimed that after some time of lynching triggered by Monark's speeches, and also suffered by the podcast Flow, the program was already able to demonstrate its restructuring. "A couple of months ago, we stopped doing damage. We had a target for this second half of a revenue of **R\$ 6 million**, and we did." (COELHO, 2022). Such a breakthrough by the company

after the boycott, supports the 84% of respondents by Porter Novelli, who claimed that they would forgive a brand after its cancellation.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

For further clarification about the final considerations, we return to the objectives in which this study proposed to understand. How does cancel culture affect a company's performance in the marketplace?

Consumers are increasingly likely and willing to cancel brands they deem right. The use of social networks, increasingly abrupt, enables such judgment in an instant and viral way. Thus, every organization is subject to cancellation, but what guides how much it can affect companies are the crisis management about the boycott.

Consumers are willing to cancel for any reason in which its feel aggrieved or at odds. The cancellation can start from legitimate causes, however, as much as the intention is to raise awareness, none of the participants of the internet court, has the legal right to remove any individual or legal entity from the social-digital environment.

Despite how damaging cancel culture is, It was possible to analyze that consumers are not willing to really stop consuming from a brand, as a consequence of such a phenomenon, and the small portion that proposes to this does not significantly compromise the company's profits.

The cancellation proved to be much more of a herd effect, often providing companies with the reverse effect, as in the WePink and Natura cases. However, as seen in the Flow case, it is possible to perceive that consumers and Internet users have the power to pressure the partitioners, causing them to break their ties with the canceled brands.

In any case, brand reputations are affected somehow, even if in the short term. Thus, the cancellation can not fail to be a concern for management professionals, because in most cases in which companies profited from the cancellation, obtaining the reverse effect of the boycott, it was for a good crisis management, therefore, this becomes essential for the proper functioning of the company

In short, companies need to be aware of the events that surround them, so as to be prepared for any setbacks. It is necessary to be attentive to racial, gender, diverse, environmental and social issues in order to obtain, increasingly, a close relationship with consumers.

Thus, this study aimed to understand how brands are impacted by the so-called cancel culture, so it was found that All businesses are subject to virtual lynching. Such a boycott has the potential to hurt a company's profits if the crisis is not well mastered, and the brand's reputation will also be fully shaken in this scenario.

However, this study was limited to understanding the impact caused in companies with great visibility not only in the digital environment, but also in the market. But how are small and medium-sized businesses shaken by cancel culture? Does the boycott have the same impact on SMEs as it did on the companies this study set out to analyse?

Therefore, this study opens doors to other research that can contribute even more to the scientific environment. It is indicated that further studies can be carried out in applied ways with consumers and brands, in order to understand the impact generated by the cancel culture in small and medium-sized companies, in order to compare the consequences suffered in a large company.

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