

Beyond Crisis Type: The Role of Consumer-Brand Relationships in Determining Responses to Negative Brand Information.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of brands on consumer purchasing decisions has been extensively documented in marketing literature over the past decades (Keller, 2013; Aaker, 2014). According to a comprehensive meta-analysis by Lovett et al. (2022), brand equity accounts for approximately 20-25% of consumer purchase decisions across various product categories. This significant impact has only intensified in the digital era, where consumers are continuously exposed to brand communications through multiple touchpoints (Mosley et al., 2024). However, the same digital connectivity that enhances brand-consumer relationships also amplifies the potential damage from negative information, creating new challenges for brand equity management. Recent research has demonstrated that the relationship between consumers and brands plays a critical role in how negative information is processed and responded to (Mosley et al., 2024). The historical interactions between consumers and brands create varying levels of attachment and expectations, which significantly moderate reactions when brands face crises. As Mosley, Schweidel, and Zhang (2024) found in their analysis of 77 brand crises across 39 brands, consumers' prior online interactions with brands substantially affect the language they employ in their responses to crisis situations. The increasing proximity between customers and brands, along with the growing influence that corporate decisions have on consumer purchasing behavior, indicates that it is increasingly essential to study the factors that can affect brand image and customer reactions to a crisis, to minimize its impact.

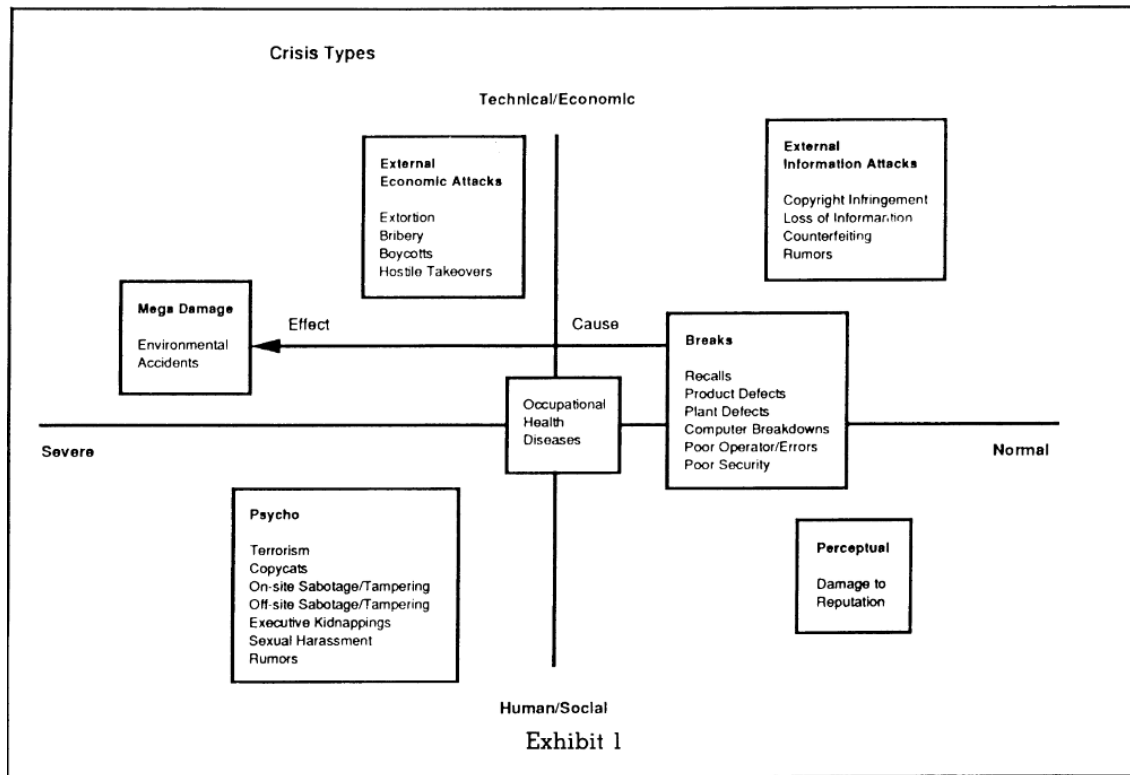
This study aims to understand how negative information affects resonant brand status, according to Kotler and Keller's model, as well as to understand whether a company that builds its brand through the rational side has its status more easily shaken than one that builds through the emotional side, and vice versa. Additionally, we examine how different sources of negative information may influence consumer perceptions, building on Grappi et al.'s (2024) findings that the source of crisis exposure (e.g., NGOs versus traditional media) can significantly impact the effectiveness of corporate responses. Furthermore, this research addresses the gap identified by Turan (2022) regarding how brand integration in co-branding relationships affects crisis response effectiveness. While our primary focus is on individual brands, we consider the implications for brands that operate within strategic alliances and how crisis spillover effects might be managed in such contexts.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To create significant brand equity, it is necessary to achieve brand resonance by progressing through sequential stages that describe the brand-consumer relationship, moving toward both rational and functional aspects, as the brand resonance pyramid (KOTLER and KELLER, 2012). The brand resonance model provides a valuable framework for understanding how consumers form deep connections with brands. However, recent research suggests that this model should be expanded to consider how these connections are tested during crises. Attribution theory offers a complementary perspective that helps explain how consumers assign responsibility during brand crises (Turan, 2022). According to this theory, consumers make judgments about the cause of negative events, considering factors such as locus (internal or external to the brand), stability (whether the cause is temporary or permanent), and controllability (whether the brand could have prevented the crisis). Kuchmaner et al. (2024) further extend our understanding by demonstrating that brands perceived as co-owners of their brand communities benefit from protections derived from ingroup favoritism and expectations of group reciprocity. Their research shows that when brands actively engage with their

communities, consumers are more likely to advocate for the brand after a transgression, with brand forgiveness serving as a mediating mechanism.

To maintain a resonant brand, it is essential that brands know how to manage crises to navigate challenging situations. Pearson and Mitroff (1993) developed a framework that helps identify different types of crises, as illustrated in Figure 2 below:



[Figure 2 – Types of crisis (PEARSON AND MITROFF, 1993)]

While Pearson and Mitroff's framework remains valuable for categorizing crises, recent research by Antonetti et al. (2024) suggests that crisis mitigation strategies must consider a broader network of institutional actors involved in brand crisis situations. Their work highlights how the source of crisis exposure (e.g., NGOs, traditional media, or social media) can significantly impact consumer perceptions and the effectiveness of corporate responses. Additionally, de Villartay et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of considering internal stakeholders, particularly employees, in crisis management strategies. Their research demonstrates that highly identified employees experience the most severe trust decline following a crisis, even when crises are externally attributed. However, these same employees also show the greatest trust restoration when companies deploy mitigation strategies, highlighting the complex dynamics of organizational identification during crises.

3. METHODOLOGY

To understand how brands are affected by negative information, a qualitative research approach was employed, divided into two parts: the first part included demographic questions and preferences, while the second part presented news scenarios, questioning their effect on purchase intentions. In the first part, advertising pieces were created that emulated both sides of Kotler and Keller's (2012) pyramid model. In the second part, news scenarios were developed based on crisis types, divided into technical/economic and human/social categories, in order to

relate to the judgment/performance and feeling/imagery axes. While this methodology provides valuable insights into consumer reactions to brand crises, it is important to acknowledge its limitations in light of recent methodological advances in the field. As Mosley et al. (2024) demonstrate, analyzing social media data can provide rich insights into how consumers naturally express their reactions to brand crises. Their analysis of consumer posts on brands' Facebook pages revealed that the language consumers employ in their posts is significantly moderated by their prior online interactions with the brand and the nature of the brand crisis. For future research, we recommend a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative surveys with social media data analysis, as this would provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer reactions to brand crises. Such an approach would allow researchers to triangulate findings and capture both self-reported attitudes and actual behavioral responses in naturalistic settings (Antonetti et al., 2024). Additionally, following Grappi et al.'s (2024) research on the impact of NGOs on company apology effectiveness, future studies should consider manipulating the source of crisis information (e.g., NGOs, traditional media, social media) to examine how this variable moderates consumer responses. Similarly, incorporating measures of political orientation could provide insights into how individual differences moderate perceptions of corporate hypocrisy during moral transgressions.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Initially, two concepts were defined for analysis, based on survey responses, as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

Strongly - emotional	6 responses to emotional advertising
Moderately - emotional	5 responses to emotional advertising
Lightly - emotional	4 responses to emotional advertising
Neutral	3 answers for each type
Slightly - functional	4 responses to functional advertising
Moderately - functional	5 responses to functional advertising
Strongly - functional	6 responses to functional advertising

[Figure 3 – Respondent profile]

I would stop buying immediately	5 points
I would buy, but only under special conditions (availability, lower price, promotion)	4 points
I would avoid buying	3 points
It would decrease the purchase intention, but I would end up buying because of the attributes I like	2 points
The news does not change my purchases from this company	1 point

[Figure 4 – Combativeness]

Combativeness is the average points per response. To calculate combativeness, a value was assigned to each response that most strongly counters each presented news item. With this, the average general combativeness was 3.76. This approach to measuring consumer responses aligns with recent research by Mosley et al. (2024), who found that consumers express varying

degrees of anger and language familiarity depending on their relationship with the brand and the type of crisis. Our combativeness metric captures similar dimensions of consumer response intensity, though future research could benefit from incorporating more nuanced linguistic analysis as suggested by their work.

4.1 Comparisons and Analyses

The following topics present the analyses conducted based on survey participants' responses.

4.2 Profile by Respondent Characteristics

The distribution of responses by profile is arranged in Table 3. The last column of the table presents the distribution combining both functional and emotional profiles together.

[Table 3 - Distribution of profiles]

Profile	Quantity	% of Share	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	11	6,4%	48,0%
Moderately - functional	18	10,4%	
Slightly - functional	54	31,2%	
Neutral	41	23,7%	23,7%
Lightly - emotional	31	17,9%	28,3%
Moderately - emotional	16	9,2%	
Strongly - emotional	2	1,2%	

The number of respondents and the percentage distribution of each profile by gender is presented below:

[Table 4 - Distribution of profiles by gender]

Profile	Female	Male	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	5,5% (6)	7,8% (5)	42,2% (46)
Moderately - functional	8,3% (9)	14,1% (9)	
Slightly - functional	28,4% (31)	35,9% (23)	
Neutral	28,4% (31)	15,6% (10)	28,4% (31)
Lightly - emotional	17,4% (19)	18,8% (12)	29,4% (32)
Moderately - emotional	11,0% (12)	6,3% (4)	
Strongly - emotional	0,9% (1)	1,6% (1)	

The male audience has a higher concentration of people with a functional profile compared to the female audience, with the difference being 5.8% in moderately-functional and 7.5% in slightly-functional. However, this difference is not reflected in a higher percentage of functional profiles overall, but rather in the neutral profile, where the female audience exceeds the male audience by 12.8%. These gender differences in brand perception align with findings from recent studies on consumer-brand relationships. As suggested by research on brand activism in the era of permacrisis (Antonetti et al., 2024), demographic factors such as gender can significantly influence how consumers perceive and respond to brand communications, particularly during challenging situations. In the aggregate, the male functional profile remains 15.6% higher, and this difference is distributed between neutral and emotional profiles, with

the former being much more representative at 12.8% compared to 2.8% for the emotional profile. To compare by income range and age, the comparison becomes more difficult when looking at all ranges, as some ranges had far fewer responses than others, and there are ranges with fewer than 25 responses, which could create certain biases. To address this, a cutoff point was chosen to make a simpler comparison, with the aim of dividing the responses into two equal parts. For the age range, 35 years was chosen as the cutoff; the number of respondents under 35 years is 84 responses, while those over 35 years is 89 responses. The distribution of profiles with this cutoff point is presented in Table 5:

[Table 5 - Distribution of profiles by age range]

Profile	Under 35 years old	Over 35 years old
Strongly - functional	9,5% (8)	3,4% (3)
Moderately - functional	11,9% (10)	9,0% (8)
Slightly - functional	26,2% (22)	36,0% (32)
Neutral	27,4% (23)	20,2% (18)
Lightly - emotional	15,5% (13)	20,2% (18)
Moderately - emotional	9,5% (8)	9,0% (8)
Strongly - emotional	0,0% (0)	2,2% (2)

When responses are aggregated into Functional, Neutral, and Emotional, the distribution by age range is presented below:

[Table 6 - Aggregated distribution of profiles by age range]

Profile	Under 35 years old	Over 35 years old
Functional	47,6% (40)	48,3% (43)
Neutral	27,4% (23)	20,2% (18)
Emotional	25,0% (21)	31,5% (28)

There is a noticeable difference in the neutral profile, being 7.2% lower for people over 35 years old. This difference was distributed partly to customers with a functional profile (0.7%) and more significantly to customers with an emotional profile (6.5%). These age-related differences in brand perception are consistent with research by Grappi et al. (2024), who found that individual characteristics such as age can moderate perceptions of corporate hypocrisy following moral transgressions. Their work suggests that older consumers may have different expectations and evaluation criteria for brands, which could explain the higher proportion of emotional profiles in this age group. Finally, the division of the audience by income was set at above and below 10,000 reais monthly, with 77 responses and 96 responses, respectively. This resulted in Tables 7 and 8 below:

[Table 7 - Aggregated distribution of profiles by income range]

Profile	Less than 10,000 reais per month	More than 10,000 reais per month
Strongly - functional	7,3% (7)	5,2% (4)
Moderately - functional	9,4% (9)	11,7% (9)
Slightly - functional	34,4% (33)	27,3% (21)

Neutral	26,0% (25)	20,8% (16)
Lightly - emotional	14,6% (14)	22,1% (17)
Moderately - emotional	7,3% (7)	11,7% (9)
Strongly - emotional	1,0% (1)	1,3% (1)

[Table 8 - Aggregated distribution of profiles by income range]

Profile	Less than 10,000 reais per month	More than 10,000 reais per month
Functional	51,0% (49)	44,2% (34)
Neutral	26,1% (25)	20,8% (16)
Emotional	22,9% (22)	35,0% (27)

In summary, for different income ranges, there is a decrease in the proportion of customers with functional profiles and neutral profiles, by 6.8% and 5.3% respectively; this difference shifts to the proportion of emotional customers. With all this, it is concluded that there is a difference in proportion by characteristic. This difference in proportion allows us to understand which characteristics are more likely to respond more to functional-side pieces and which to emotional-side pieces. The results demonstrate that the female audience, the audience over 35 years old, and the audience with income greater than 10,000 reais monthly are more prone to the emotional side. The distribution of profiles by preferred purchase channel did not present relevant data for this study. However, future research could explore this dimension further, particularly in light of Turan's (2022) findings on how perceived brand integration in different channels affects crisis response effectiveness.

4.3 Combativeness by Respondent Characteristics

As presented in the methodology; to calculate combativeness, a value was assigned to each response that most strongly counters each of the news items presented to respondents. With this, the average general combativeness was 3.76. Combativeness by gender averaged 3.84 for the female audience and 3.64 for the male audience, as shown in Table 9 below:

[Table 9 - Combativeness by gender]

Gender	Combativeness	Difference from the mean
Female	3,84	0,07
Male	3,64	-0,12

For age range, the distribution of combativeness is shown in Table 10:

[Table 10 - Combativeness by Age range]

Age range	Combativeness	Difference from the mean
Up to 15 years	4,00	0,24
15 - 18 years	4,03	0,27
19 - 25 years	3,68	-0,08

26 - 35 years	3,78	0,02
36 - 45 years	3,84	0,08
46 - 60 years	3,73	-0,03
Over 60 years old	3,85	0,08

Furthermore, for income range, combativeness was distributed as shown in Table 11:

[Table 11 - Combativeness by income range]

Income Range	Combativeness	Difference from the mean
Up to 1,500 reais per month	4,20	0,44
From 1,500 to 3,500 reais per month	3,98	0,22
From 3,500 to 5,000 reais per month	3,83	0,07
From 5,000 to 7,500 reais per month	3,75	-0,01
From 7,500 to 10,000 reais per month	3,68	-0,09
From 10,000 to 20,000 reais per month	3,66	-0,10
Above 20,000 reais per month	3,78	0,01

Finally, combativeness by purchase channel:

[Table 12 - Aggregated distribution of profiles by preferred purchase channel]

Purchase channel	Combativeness	Difference from the mean
Internet	3,71	-0,06
Store	3,79	0,02
Dealer/consultant	3,67	-0,10
No clear preference	3,72	-0,05

The averages are very close to the total average, but some characteristics stand out due to the difference in average combativeness. Using a minimum difference of 0.20, the responses from people with a maximum monthly income of 1,500 reais, followed by people aged 15 to 18 years, then people under 15 years, and finally people with a monthly income of 1,500 to 3,500 reais show differences of 0.44, 0.27, 0.24, and 0.22, respectively. These differences indicate that these groups have a greater tendency to respond more negatively to news and reduce their purchases. A possible reason for these cases is that they end up being more selective about their brands compared to other groups, due to having less purchasing power in the case of income (as the purchase represents a more significant portion of total income) and in the case of age, due to still being dependent on parents. These findings align with recent research on social media crisis management (Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 2025), which suggests that consumers with limited resources may be more sensitive to brand crises due to the higher relative cost of making purchasing mistakes. For these consumers, negative

information about a brand represents a greater risk, potentially explaining their higher combativeness scores.

The analysis by favorite purchase channel and by gender did not show significant differences in combativeness. Thus, it is interpreted that brands targeting low-income people and/or underage audiences need to pay even more attention to their news and work harder to engage their audience, compared to brands with other target audiences. As these were two audiences with few responses (six for people under 18 years and 26 for income below 3,500 reais monthly), more in-depth studies will be necessary for further conclusions about the functional and emotional duality.

4.4 Profile vs. Combativeness

Comparing the profiles traced and combativeness, we obtain the data in Table 15:

[Table 15 - Combativeness by profile]

Profile	Combativeness	Difference from the mean
Strongly - functional	3,59	-0,17
Moderately - functional	3,64	-0,13
Slightly - functional	3,76	-0,01
Neutral	3,84	0,08
Lightly - emotional	3,93	0,17
Moderately - emotional	3,78	0,02
Strongly - emotional	3,92	0,15

The most relevant differences are -0.17 and -0.13 for two profiles on the functional side, and 0.15 and 0.17 for two profiles on the emotional side, represented by strongly-functional, slightly-functional, strongly-emotional, and slightly-emotional profiles, respectively. As the differences on the functional side are negative and the differences on the emotional side are positive, this demonstrates that people with a stronger functional side tend not to change their purchase intentions compared to people with an emotional side. This finding is particularly significant when considered alongside Mosley et al.'s (2024) research on how consumer-brand relationships moderate language on social media during crises. Their work found that consumers who have previously interacted with a brand express more anger in the wake of values-related crises, while those who have not engaged with the brand previously express more anger after performance-related crises. This suggests that the functional/emotional duality we observed may interact with the type of crisis and the consumer's prior relationship with the brand. With this, companies with more emotional customers tend to lose more from bad news than companies with more functional customers. Additionally, companies tend to lose more emotional customers than functional customers through this process, requiring more attention to this audience and greater focus on advertising pieces more oriented toward the functional side for companies that are more dependent on their entire current market. These insights are valuable for brand managers developing crisis response strategies. As Kuchmaner et al. (2024) suggest, brands that actively engage with their communities may benefit from greater forgiveness after transgressions. For brands with predominantly emotional customer bases, investing in community building could serve as a protective buffer against the negative effects of crises.

4.5 Analysis of Profile and Combativeness by Question

The six headlines created during the research, their main themes, and the respective average combativeness per question are presented in Table 16:

[Table 16 - Themes of headlines created for the research]

Manchete	Themes	Type	Average combativeness
Company loses half of its value due to complications with raw materials. The problem is not an ethical issue, but it has significantly disturb operations.	Market Value	Functional	2,24
Products are being withdrawn from the market due to conviction for plagiarizing another brand.	Plagiarism	Functional	3,15
Scientists discover: product does not contain the main component described.	Component	Functional	4,50
ANVISA seizes products because they contained components not indicated on the label, causing allergic problems in consumers.	Allergies	Neutral	4,81
Salespeople's scheme uncovered: employees filled premium perfume bottles with conventional perfume.	Premium Perfume	Emotional	4,70
A prominent director has been convicted of sexually harassing employees.	Sexual Harassment	Emotional	3,20

The question about allergies resulted in higher combativeness, meaning that the theme was considered more critical for changing purchase intention. Next was the question about Premium Perfume, followed by Component. Following these, the themes of Sexual Harassment and Plagiarism were those that caused the most negative effect on purchasing. Thus, the question with the greatest impact was the one considered neutral, followed by an emotional question and a functional one, followed again by an emotional and a functional one, showing that the research indicates there is no emotional/functional side that is more indicative of market loss. For the question about Market Value, the combativeness by profile was as follows (Table 17):

[Table 17 - Combativeness for the question about Market Value]

Market Value	Combativeness	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	2,64	2,35
Moderately - functional	2,44	
Slightly - functional	2,26	
Neutral	2,02	2,02
Lightly - emotional	2,23	2,22
Moderately - emotional	2,31	

Strongly - emotional	1,50	
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The strongly-functional and moderately-functional profiles had the highest combativeness, which represents that this headline ends up affecting functional customers more, as also demonstrated by the difference in the aggregated profile, with a difference of 0.13. For the question about plagiarism, the combativeness is indicated in Table 18:

[Table 18 - Combativeness for the question about Plagiarism]

Plagiarism	Combativeness	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	3,55	2,96
Moderately - functional	3,17	
Slightly - functional	2,78	
Neutral	3,17	3,17
Lightly - emotional	3,52	3,45
Moderately - emotional	3,25	
Strongly - emotional	4,00	

Except for the strongly-functional profile, the emotional profiles had higher combativeness, even though it was a judgmental/economic style question. The difference between the aggregated profiles is 0.49, higher for the emotional side. To conclude the judgmental questions, with the Component headline, the combativeness values are presented in Table 19:

[Table 19 - Combativeness for the question about Component]

Component	Combativeness	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	3,55	4,40
Moderately - functional	4,72	
Slightly - functional	4,46	
Neutral	4,56	4,56
Lightly - emotional	4,65	4,61
Moderately - emotional	4,50	
Strongly - emotional	5,00	

With the exception of the moderately-functional profile, all emotional profiles also had higher combativeness. The difference this time was smaller, at only 0.21, with the aggregated emotional profile also being higher. Concluding the economic side headlines, the Market Value question was the only one that ended up affecting customers who fell into the functional classification more. The combativeness values for the neutral headline about Allergies are presented in Table 20:

[Table 20 - Combativeness for the question about Allergies]

Allergies	Combativeness	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	4,36	4,70

Moderately - functional	4,67	
Slightly - functional	4,78	
Neutral	4,95	4,95
Lightly - emotional	4,94	4,88
Moderately - emotional	4,75	
Strongly - emotional	5,00	

This question is seen as neutral because it affects both the judgmental and emotional sides. The difference between the aggregated profiles was 0.18, again for the emotional side; however, the neutral profile stands out as the profile with the highest combativeness. This information, combined with the average combativeness of all respondents being the highest, demonstrates that this headline is truly seen as negative and impactful. These findings on health-related crises align with recent research on corporate social responsibility and crisis management. As suggested by studies on DEI rollbacks and brand management (Science Direct, 2025), issues that directly affect consumer well-being tend to generate stronger negative reactions regardless of consumer profile, explaining why the allergy-related headline had the highest overall combativeness. Moving to the emotional headlines, Table 21 presents the combativeness for the question about Premium Perfume:

[Table 21 - Combativeness for the question about Premium Perfume]

Premium Perfume	Combativeness	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	4,55	4,66
Moderately - functional	4,83	
Slightly - functional	4,63	
Neutral	4,78	4,78
Lightly - emotional	4,81	4,69
Moderately - emotional	4,44	
Strongly - emotional	5,00	

The responses to this question demonstrated a profile more similar to the allergy question; although it is a question on the emotional side, the neutral profile was more combative, but with the aggregated emotional profile being higher by 0.03, the smallest difference among all questions. This question is also the headline that ranked second in average combativeness across all responses. Finally, the combativeness for the question about Sexual Harassment is represented in Table 22:

[Table 22 - Combativeness for the question about Sexual Harassment]

Sexual Harassment	Combativeness	Aggregation
Strongly - functional	2,91	2,88
Moderately - functional	2,72	
Slightly - functional	2,93	
Neutral	3,56	3,56
Lightly - emotional	3,45	3,43
Moderately - emotional	3,44	
Strongly - emotional	3,00	

Like the Premium Perfume question, this question aimed to affect the emotional side of respondents more. This is the only headline where all profiles on one side had higher combativeness than all on the other side, where the emotional side had a difference of 0.55, the largest difference between the aggregated sides. This theme proved to be much more relevant for those who perceive brands using emotions more. This finding on sexual harassment aligns with Grappi et al.'s (2024) research on moral transgressions, which found that values-related crises tend to generate stronger negative reactions, particularly among consumers with certain individual characteristics. Their work suggests that moral transgressions can be particularly damaging to brand equity when they contradict consumers' core values and beliefs. In summary, it can be seen that customers on the emotional side collectively end up being more combative and responding more strongly to news. Starting from the premise that companies that work more with the emotional side will attract more emotional customers and companies on the other side will attract functional customers, we can conclude that the theme of the news is more determinant than the way it is perceived by people. However, working more with the emotional side of advertising can have more disastrous consequences if something negative happens to the company. The data also indicate that customers with a neutral profile reacted more negatively than emotional customers to headlines that were not focused on the functional side. This unexpected finding suggests that neutral consumers may actually be more vulnerable to certain types of negative information, a phenomenon that warrants further investigation in future research.

5. CONCLUSION

The research provided insights into how news can affect the relationship between a brand and the consumer, as well as which types of news are more influential and which consumer profiles are most affected by them. The study demonstrated that the nature of the crisis—whether human, social, economic, or financial—is not the most relevant factor; affecting brand resonance through the judgmental or emotional side was not what most altered respondents' preferences. Instead, our findings align with recent research by Mosley et al. (2024), which suggests that the consumer's prior relationship with the brand and individual characteristics play a more significant role in determining responses to brand crises. Specifically, we found that consumers with emotional profiles tend to respond more negatively to crisis information compared to those with functional profiles, suggesting that brands that build their equity primarily through emotional connections may be more vulnerable during crises. The study also demonstrated that some profiles can be more affected by negative information, such as people under 18 years of age and those with a monthly income below R\$1,500. This finding has important implications for brands targeting these demographic segments, suggesting they need to develop more robust crisis management strategies and potentially incorporate more functional elements in their communications to build resilience against negative information.

Another significant finding is that companies with more emotional customers may have greater difficulties with a stronger crisis compared to companies with more judgmental customers. This insight extends Kuchmaner et al.'s (2024) research on brand communities by suggesting that brands might benefit from developing community engagement strategies that foster forgiveness and advocacy during crises, particularly for brands with predominantly emotional customer bases. Our research contributes to the growing body of literature on brand crisis management by providing a nuanced understanding of how different consumer segments respond to various types of negative information. While previous research has focused primarily on crisis types and response strategies (Antonetti et al., 2024), our study highlights

the importance of considering consumer profiles and brand-building approaches when developing crisis management plans.

5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this research extends the brand resonance model by examining how the pathways to resonance (rational vs. emotional) affect brand vulnerability during crises. It also contributes to attribution theory by demonstrating how consumer characteristics influence attributions of responsibility and subsequent behavioral intentions following negative brand information. From a practical standpoint, our findings suggest that brand managers should consider their customer profile composition when developing crisis response strategies. Brands with predominantly emotional customer bases should invest in building strong brand communities, as suggested by Kuchmaner et al. (2024), and consider incorporating more functional elements in their crisis communications to mitigate negative responses. Additionally, brands targeting younger consumers and those with lower income levels should develop particularly robust crisis management plans, as these segments showed higher sensitivity to negative information. This might include more transparent communication practices, proactive issue management, and stronger emphasis on product quality and safety.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights, it has several limitations that open opportunities for future research. First, our methodology relied solely on qualitative surveys, which may not capture the full complexity of consumer responses to brand crises. Future studies could adopt a mixed-methods approach, incorporating social media analysis as suggested by Mosley et al. (2024) to examine how consumers naturally express their reactions in real-world settings. Second, our research did not consider the role of institutional actors in crisis perception. Following Grappi et al.'s (2024) findings on how NGOs affect company apology effectiveness, future research could examine how different sources of negative information (e.g., NGOs, traditional media, social media) moderate consumer responses to brand crises. Third, our study did not explore how brands in co-branding relationships are affected by crises. Building on Turan's (2022) research, future studies could investigate how perceived brand integration affects crisis spillover effects and the effectiveness of different response strategies in co-branding contexts. Fourth, we did not consider the perspective of employees as internal stakeholders. As de Villartay et al. (2023) demonstrate, employees' trust in the organization is significantly affected by crises, particularly for highly identified employees. Future research could adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to examine how crises affect both external and internal brand equity.

Finally, our study provided only a cross-sectional view of consumer responses to brand crises. Future research could adopt a longitudinal approach to examine how these responses evolve over time and how brands can effectively manage the recovery process. In conclusion, this research opens opportunities for new studies where the consumer profile of a company is studied in more depth, particularly in relation to crisis vulnerability and response effectiveness. By understanding the complex interplay between brand-building approaches, consumer characteristics, and crisis types, brands can develop more effective strategies to protect and restore their equity during challenging situations.

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