

**THE IMPACT OF ONLINE NEGATIVE WORD-OF-MOUTH  
ON CONSUMERS IN THE SPORTS SHOES INDUSTRY**

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-Lombada-



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## **Abstract**

Nowadays social media platforms represent a great part of every person's day to day. It is essential for every brand to follow this trend and to have a presence on these platforms in order to be closer to the customers. Facebook is one of the most famous and used social media platforms, and it can be a very important communication tool between the brand and the consumers. However, in some cases this communication tool can have a negative effect on the brands once consumers are increasingly using these platforms to make complaints about brands.

The objective of this study is to analyse the effects of these complaints made by the consumers on Facebook brand pages on other customers who are exposed to this type of content.

The study is focused on the sports shoes industry, and the effects are measured according to four constructs, brand attitude, perceived brand quality, negative word-of-mouth intentions, and re-patronage intentions. It is also included a moderator factor, so the effects are also studied according to the type of brand, namely economic or prestige brand.

A questionnaire was applied to 421 individuals, with a Facebook account, and revealed that negative word-of-mouth intentions and re-patronage intentions were significantly influenced by the exposure to negative word-of-mouth. Also, revealed that the results are not different when a customer is exposed to NWOM regarding an economic brand or regarding a prestige brand.

**Keywords:** Word-of-mouth; Negative word-of-mouth; Electronic word-of-mouth; Social media

### **JEL Classification System:**

M30 - Marketing and Advertising: General

M31 – Marketing and Advertising: Marketing



## **Resumo**

Hoje em dia as redes sociais representam uma grande parte do dia-a-dia de cada pessoa e é importante que todas as marcas sigam esta tendência e estejam presentes nestas plataformas, com o objetivo de estarem mais perto dos consumidores. O Facebook é uma das redes sociais mais famosas e mais usadas e pode ser uma excelente forma de comunicação entre as empresas e os seus consumidores. No entanto, em alguns casos, esta comunicação pode ter um efeito negativo nas marcas uma vez que é cada vez mais comum os consumidores usarem estas plataformas para fazer reclamações sobre as marcas.

O objectivo deste estudo é analisar os efeitos destas reclamações feitas pelos consumidores nas páginas de Facebook das marcas, noutros consumidores que são expostos a este conteúdo.

Este estudo é focado na indústria do calçado desportivo e os efeitos são estudados de acordo com quatro variáveis, a *brand attitude*, a perceção da qualidade da marca, as intenções de passa-a-palavra negativo e as intenções de voltar a comprar a marca. Inclui também um factor moderador e os efeitos são também analisados de acordo com o tipo de marca, isto é, se é uma marca económica ou de prestígio.

Foi distribuído um questionário por 421 indivíduos, com conta de Facebook, e revelou que as intenções de passa-a-palavra negativo e as intenções de voltar a comprar foram influenciadas pela exposição ao passa-a-palavra negativo. Também revelou que os resultados não são diferentes quando um consumidor é exposto ao NWOM em relação a uma marca económica ou a uma marca de prestígio..

**Palavras-chave:** Passa-palavra; Passa-palavra negativo; Passa-palavra eletrónico;  
Redes sociais

### **JEL Classification System:**

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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Research problem and objectives</b> .....	1
<b>2. Literature Review</b> .....	5
2.1. Customer Satisfaction.....	5
2.2. Service Quality .....	7
2.3. Customer Dissatisfaction.....	8
2.4. Word-of-Mouth Communication.....	9
2.5. Negative word-of-mouth .....	10
2.6. Electronic word-of-mouth .....	11
2.6.1. Why consumers share experiences online?.....	12
<b>3. Research framework/Proposed Model</b> .....	15
3.1. Brand attitude .....	16
3.2. Perceived brand quality .....	17
3.3. Negative word-of-mouth intentions.....	17
3.4. Re-patronage intentions.....	18
3.5. Brand type .....	19
<b>4. Methodology</b> .....	21
4.1. Research design .....	21
4.1. Investigation method .....	21
4.2. Sample design.....	22
4.3. Data collection procedure.....	22
4.3.1. Phase 1: Qualitative data collection .....	22
4.3.2. Phase 2: Quantitative data collection .....	25
4.4. Pre-test.....	28
4.5. Quantitative data collection distribution.....	28
4.6. Data analysis procedures .....	29

<b>5. Results</b> .....	31
5.1. Phase 1: Analysis of posts collected.....	31
5.2. Phase 2: Analysis of results obtained in the online questionnaire.....	36
5.3. Sample characterisation.....	37
5.3.1. Group exposed to Negative posts.....	41
5.3.2. Group exposed to Neutral posts.....	42
5.3.3. Prestige Brands group.....	42
5.3.4. Economic Brands group.....	43
5.4. Validation of the sample.....	44
5.5. Validation of measures.....	50
5.6. Hypothesis testing.....	52
5.6.1. Hypothesis validation summary.....	57
<b>6. Conclusions</b> .....	59
6.1. Main conclusions.....	59
6.2. Implications for marketing and management.....	61
6.3. Limitations and Clues for Future Research.....	62
<b>7. References</b> .....	63
<b>Appendix</b> .....	71
Appendix A1 - Questionnaire in Portuguese.....	71
Appendix A2 - Questionnaire in English.....	83
Appendix B - Classification of the brands by the respondents of the questionnaire.....	94
Appendix C – Hypotheses Testing - T-test.....	96

## List of Figures

Figure 1- Research Model .....	20
Figure 2- Questionnaire Flow .....	26
Figure 3 - Distribution of the sample by valence of the posts (in %).....	32
Figure 4 - Distribution of the posts sample by gender (in %) .....	33
Figure 5 - Distribution of the sample by gender (in %) .....	37
Figure 6 - Distribution of the sample by ages (in %) .....	38
Figure 7 - Distribution of the sample by level of education (in %).....	38
Figure 8 - Distribution of the sample of sports practice in the last 12 months (in %)....	39
Figure 9 - Distribution of the sample of the frequency of sports practice in the last 12 months (in %) .....	39
Figure 10 - Distribution of the sample for the last brand bought (in %) .....	41
Figure 11 - Distribution of the sample by choice of prestige brands (in %) .....	42
Figure 12 - Distribution of the sample by choice of economic brands (in%) .....	43

## List of Tables

Table 1 - Customers posts evaluation criteria .....	24
Table 2 - Table of items.....	27
Table 3 - Number of Facebook followers on 14/08/2018 .....	32
Table 4 - Characterization of the fictional posts.....	35
Table 5 - Characterization of the final sample per groups .....	36
Table 6 - Comparison between groups - Practice of sports and last purchase .....	45
Table 7 - Comparison between groups - Brands rake .....	46
Table 8 - Comparison between groups - Purchase Action .....	47
Table 9 - Comparison between groups - Facebook usage .....	48
Table 10 - Comparison between groups - Demographic characteristics .....	49
Table 11 - Exploratory factor analysis .....	50
Table 12 - Independent sample t-test results .....	53
Table 13 - Independent sample t-test prestige brands vs negative or neutral group .....	55
Table 14 - Independent sample t-test economic brands vs negative or neutral group....	56
Table 15 – Hypothesis Resume .....	57

## **Glossary**

WOM – Word-of-Mouth

NWOM – Negative Word-of-Mouth

eWOM – Electronic Word-of-Mouth

SNS – Social Network Site

## 1. Research problem and objectives

The evolution of the internet had a significant impact on consumer behaviour and purchase decisions. It transformed the way we search for information, how we interact with each other, and the way we shop (King *et al.*, 2014).

The consumer's habits followed this evolution. Nowadays, the consumers are increasingly informed, always demanding for more and searching online before making a purchase.

The internet is so developed that allows consumers to easily share their experiences and opinions with a variety of other consumers, to engage in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004).

The electronic word-of-mouth allows consumers to socially interact with one another, exchange product-related information, and make informed purchase decisions via computer-mediated conversations (Blazevic *et al.*, 2013).

The opinions shared online are starting to be very trustable and, consumers search for this information and opinions before making a purchase.

This can be very helpful to consumers in order to make the best purchases, but on the other side can be very dangerous to the brands and companies.

What is said online about a brand is accessible to a huge number of customers that will see that reviews and assimilate the information there, which can be good or bad.

The negative word-of-mouth can cause strong effects on consumer behaviour and create huge problems for brands. In the case of negative word-of-mouth, may impede the purchase behaviour of its receivers, and this can make the brands lose clients and consequently decrease the revenues of the firms (Liu, 2006).

The huge availability of negative WOM, combined with the trust that consumers put into these disclosures when engaging in online buying behaviour, shows the need to study even more this concept.

This study is focused on the shoes sports industry since is an industry that has been growing in the last years regarding the also growth of the sports practice in Portugal.

Nowadays, the Portuguese population is more concern with well-being and being healthy, so sports are part of the daily routine of a massive part of the population.

According to the *Inquérito Nacional de Saúde com Exame Físico* (INSEF) in 2018, more than one-third of the Portuguese population practice regular physical activity, more specifically 2,3 million Portuguese's (34,2%) practice sports at least once per week. This regular activity is mostly done by males (39,7%) and with ages between 25 and 34 years old (47,1%) , and in second place by ages between 35 to 44 years old.

The Portuguese population also spends more money on sports goods, 85% of the respondents to a study from *Cetelem* spend in average 146 euros a year in essential goods for the practice of physical exercise, which includes clothing and footwear. In the same study, 53% of the respondents spend up to 100€ in clothing and footwear, 32% spend up to 249 €, and only 3% spend more than 250€.

The Portuguese retail market of sports goods is composed for national and international companies, and for small, medium and large dimension.

The main companies that composed the retail market of sports goods in Portugal are the *multi-specialists*, *Decathlon* and *Sportzone*, the *multi-brands*, *FootLocker*, *Athletics Foot*, *El Corte Inglés*, etc. And the *mono-brands* like *Nike*, *Adidas*, *Puma*, *Reebok*, *New Balance*, etc.

Sports retailers generated total sales of 377 M€ in 2013, from apparel and footwear (excluding equipment and accessories).

So, regarding the exposed problem and presented industry, this dissertation will try to answer the following question: **What is the impact of online negative word-of-mouth on the consumers in the shoes sports industry?**



To answer this question, it is important to analyse the effect that negative word-of-mouth has on the consumer purchasing decision.

For that reason, the main objectives are:

- Understand how the negative reviews can change measures related to the consumer purchase decision process;
- Evaluate whether these negative reviews have a different impact according to the brand type (economic brand or prestige brand).



## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an essential factor in consumer behaviour. It is a pleasant experience derived from a purchasing and consumption that has been defined by several authors.

Richard L. Oliver (2014, p.8) defines satisfaction as *“the consumer’s fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product/service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under-or over fulfillment”*.

According to Kotler & Keller (2006, p.144) satisfaction is *“a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment which resulted from comparing a product’s perceived performance or outcome against his/her expectations”*.

The evaluation of the product performances results in a level of consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction that is determined by the feelings that a consumer feels about a product after buying it (Solomon and Stuart, 2000).

Also according to this authors, customer satisfaction is determined by way of a product or service meets or exceeds customer expectations because the consumers compare the products or services with an ideal performance that results from a *“mixture of information from marketing communication, information source such as friends and family, and their own experience with the product category.”* (Solomon & Stuart, 2000:143).

A lot of studies shows that there is a direct connection between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Bowen and Shoemaker, 2003), but it is not only here that is determinant. According to (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000), client satisfaction is determinant not only in consumer loyalty but also in repurchase and positive word-of-mouth.

If the customers are satisfied with the product or service, there is a better chance for them to return and purchase it again.

Repeated satisfied purchases lead to continuous behaviour and to a long-term relationship that can be lead to brand loyalty and recommendations (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000).

However, that is not certain that a satisfied customer will be a loyal one. Customers can be satisfied with a brand without being loyal to her because they would turn to other service providers if they believe that they can offer them better service quality or better products.

There is a theory developed by Richard L. Oliver in 1977 and 1980 called the *expectation disconfirmation theory* that seeks to explain the relationship between expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation of beliefs and satisfaction.

Expectations are the characteristics or attributes that a customer associate to a product or service, the perceived performance is the perception of the performance of the product or service, the disconfirmation of beliefs is the evaluation or judgments the customer makes about the product or service and satisfaction is the positive final result about the product or service.

This theory proposed that customer satisfaction level is a result of the difference between what the customer expected and the perceived performance (Tabaku and Kushi, 2013).

According to (Parasuraman, *et al.*, 1991), there is two levels of customer service expectations, the desired and the adequate. When it comes to the desired level is the type of service the customer wants and desires to receive, and the adequate level is the level of service the client accepts without being too satisfied with that

The *expectation disconfirmation theory* also states three different customer satisfaction levels:

- Negative disconfirmation, that happens when the product or service it is worse than what the customer expected;
- Positive disconfirmation, when the product or service is better than what expected;
- Simple disconfirmation, when the product or service matches the customer expectations

## 2.2. Service Quality

Service quality has been the purpose of a lot of studies, and several authors came with ideas and definitions.

Lewis and Booms (1983) defined service quality as “*a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality service means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis.*”

According to Parasuraman, *et al* (1988), service quality is measured by the comparison of what a consumer should expect and is satisfaction.

It is also important to refer that most of the authors that had studied this theme differentiate the concepts of service quality and satisfaction.

Parasuraman, *et al* (1988) refers that service quality leads to satisfaction, Bolton & Drew (1991) point that service quality results from the comparison of expectations with the performance but is a total distinct concept of satisfaction.

All of these authors agree that perceived service quality is a form of attitude, a long-term evaluation while satisfaction is a transaction-specific measure (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991; Parasuraman, *et al.*, 1988).

Service quality is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction and satisfaction has a stronger effect on purchase intentions than service quality (Cronin Jr and Taylor, 1992).

Service quality investigators came with some points:

- Service quality is more difficult for the consumer to evaluate than goods quality;
- Service quality perceptions result from a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance;
- Quality evaluations made on the outcome of a service and evaluations of the service delivery process.

Nowadays consumers are always demanding for higher quality in services and in products and, it is crucial for companies and brands to understand the importance of this aspect in order to give to consumers what they want and make them satisfied.

According to Grönroos, 1982 “*When a service provider knows how the service will be evaluated by the consumer, we will be able to suggest how to influence these evaluations in the desired direction*”

There are three aspects that should be acknowledged to understand service quality: intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability.

Unlike goods, services are intangible. It is impossible to count or measure them, and it makes the evaluation of service quality harder;

Heterogeneity refers to different performances that a service can have according to the producer or to the customer, i.e. the same service can be evaluated in different ways by different customers;

And the last aspect, inseparability refers to the impossibility of separate the production and consumption.

A consumer that purchases goods take into account a lot of characteristics when evaluating quality like the packaging, the colour, durability, colour, etc. Otherwise, to evaluate service quality depends on the facilities, equipment, and personnel.

### **2.3. Customer Dissatisfaction**

Dissatisfaction results from “*contemplating what falls short of one’s wishes or expectations and is usually only temporary*” (Random House Dictionary).

Customer dissatisfaction can occur when a service or a product does not match the customer expectations or when the experience gives negative emotions to the customer.

Some negative emotions can have different impacts on the dissatisfaction level. According to Inman, *et al.* ; Taylor, (1997) dissatisfaction and regret are part of disappointment when it comes to services.

Disappointment is felt when a service does not match with the expected and regret is felt when the customer thinks that if they had chosen another service provider, they would be more satisfied.

There are four behavioural responses to dissatisfaction: WOM communication, complaining, switching or inertia (Richins, 1987; Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1996; Oliver, 1997; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004).

Dissatisfied customers have better chances to switch companies than satisfied customers, and switching occurs when a customer decides to end the agreement with the service provider (Solnick & Hemenway, 1992; Rust & Zahorik, 1993; Loveman, 1998). Complaining happens when customers communicate their dissatisfaction to other or to the company. Inertia is when customers do not do anything about it. WOM communication refers to customers sharing their dissatisfaction with family or friends with the goal to warn them not to use it.

There is an unquestionable connection between dissatisfaction and word-of-mouth. According to (Richins, 1983a) dissatisfaction leads to word-of-mouth, as dissatisfied customers engage in twice as much word-of-mouth than satisfied customers.

## **2.4. Word-of-Mouth Communication**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as “*informal communication between private parties concerning evaluations of goods and services*” (Anderson, 1998).

Involve opinions and comments about service quality or product performance passed from persons that already had a personal experience, to other persons, and can be positive, negative or a mixture of both (Charlett *et al.*, 1995).

Researches evidence that word-of-mouth has a strong influence on consumer’s decision making. WOM also constitutes a major input to the deliberations of potential consumers regarding the purchase of new products.

In the context of consumer behaviour, the topic of WOM has been target of a lot of research over the years. Times have been changing, and nowadays WOM counts with a lot of different definitions and approaches.

WOM does not necessarily need to be, nowadays, oral, face-to-face or ephemeral. In some circumstances, it is not even required to be product or service related, but organisational focused (Kimmel and Kitchen, 2014).

## **2.5. Negative word-of-mouth**

After a consumer makes a purchase of a product or a service, a balance of this purchase will be made, according to the pre-purchase expectations. In the end, the consumer can be satisfied or dissatisfied.

If the product or service is according to consumer expectations it will lead to a positive experience and positive attitudes toward the brand that can, sometimes, lead to brand loyalty.

However, if the product or service is not according to consumer expectations, it will lead to a negative experience and dissatisfaction with the purchase.

So, negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) can be defined as an informal way of sharing bad testimonials and complaints, discouraging the consumption of a particular product or service (Verhagen *et al.*, 2013).

It is known that consumers spread more their opinion and experience when they are dissatisfied compared to when they are satisfied.

According to (Kotler, 1994), customers dissatisfied with a product or a service tell their bad experience to eleven acquaintances, while satisfied customers usually tell their good experience to only three persons.

Also, according to a study by the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, 90 per cent of dissatisfied consumers will not do business with a company again, and each of these unsatisfied consumers are very likely to share their negative experience with at least nine other people and 13 per cent of these customers will go on tell more than 30 people.

The Internet is a huge platform for consumers sharing consumption experiences and has access to others experience (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004).



Consumers use the internet to sharing positive experiences and opinions about the products and services, but nowadays more and more consumers use online reviews to spread negative experiences and opinions.

Woong Yun & Park (2011) suggests that persons are more honest in sharing their negative experiences online because they can post anonymous and this prevents them from facing any social consequences.

According to Bougie et al. (2003) and Y. L. Lee & Song (2010), negative word-of-mouth is individual negative experiences and opinions about goods, services, and organisations that have been formed during and after the consumption process.

This type of WOM can have powerful effects on the organisations that some companies are forced to use web care teams to service the dissatisfied consumers, as a way to reduce the chance that negative reviews spread through (Van Noort and Willemsen, 2012).

## **2.6. Electronic word-of-mouth**

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is defined by Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004:39) and cited by King, *et al.*, (2014) as “*any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet*”.

The advance of the Internet enables consumers to easily share their opinions and experiences about products, services, and brands in the form of online reviews.

Nowadays recommendations become electronic mediated, amplified by the network and considered true, even when they come from strangers. Therefore, eWOM becomes an important information source, especially for young people (Teixeira, 2010).

Online consumer reviews (OCRs) are the electronic version of WOM that should provide information that helps other consumers to understand and evaluate products or services. This type of eWOM is becoming increasingly popular among consumers.

Reviews from other consumers that already tried that specific product, service or brand, are seen as a source of information, and research shows that consumer decision-making process is heavily influenced by it (Goldenberg *et al.*, 2001).

According to a study from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) (2015), 80% of consumers look at online reviews before making major purchases. Also, Lee and Koo (2012), point out that consumers trust more in other consumers than they believe in the organisations, and probably will use the information provided by that consumers to evaluate the products or services before they make a purchase decision.

The online consumer reviews are now a vast, useful and efficient way of spreading products information instead of marketing strategies made by brands and companies (Lu *et al.*, 2014).

Electronic word-of-mouth put forward the traditional WOM in different ways: (1) the line of communication is expanded to one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many. (2) This increase rapidly the audience of eWOM because is accessible to everybody and the sharing can be between strangers (3), while the traditional WOM is only between family and friends. The online communication can also be dispersed in different channels and can be collected and preserved unlike traditional word-of-mouth (5) (Ring *et al.*, 2016).

### **2.6.1. Why consumers share experiences online?**

Consumers share their experiences with other persons for a lot of reasons (Verhagen *et al.*, 2013)

- (1) To draw attention to their dissatisfaction in order to get a solution or as a mechanism to let out negative feelings;
- (2) To prevent others from having similar bad experiences;
- (3) As a way to encourage the company to improve its practices.

All of these reasons are seen online. In the case of (2), is observed in situations where consumers participate in online communities develop relationships with others through sharing and discuss interest in products or services. If a consumer has received help and good advices, this can motivate him to provide also advice to others (Brown *et al.*, 2007).

Solomon (2008) also indicates reasons for consumers talk about products and their personal consumption experience:

- The consumer has a high level of involvement with a type of product or activity enjoying, therefore, talking about it;
- The consumer is knowledgeable about a product, using conversation as a way to show it to others;
- The consumer has a genuine concern for others, wanting to inform them about a product.



### **3. Research framework/Proposed Model**

This research study aims to clarify the impact that the exposure to negative word-of-mouth on social media has on the consumers that read it.

This analysis will be focused on Facebook since it is the social media platform most known and used in Portugal and the one that the Portuguese population prefers. According to the study “*Os Portugueses e as Redes Sociais*” by Markttest Consulting (2017), 96% of the social media users have a Facebook account, 76% says that it is the social media platform more used and 58% says that Facebook is the platform they prefer. Facebook is also the most used social networking sites (SNSs) platform for brands. (Langaro, *et al.*, 2015).

Four different constructs – *brand attitude*, *perceived brand quality*, *negative word-of-mouth intentions*, and *re-patronage intentions*, will be defined and analysed the impact that the exposure to negative word-of-mouth has on these four constructs.

This analysis will also be focused on the sports shoes industry and will take into account the brand type, if it is an economic brand or a prestige brand.

The proposed model is illustrated in Figure 1.

### 3.1. Brand attitude

Consumers form opinions and images about brands and one of the most valuable assets of a company is the brand name associated with their products and services.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defined a brand as “*a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition*”.

Keller defined brand image in 1993 as “*the set of associations attached to the brand in the mind of the consumer, reflecting the way that brands are perceived*” and in 2009 as “*the consumer perceptions of and preferences for a brand, as reflected by the various types of brand associations held in consumer’s memory.*”

The set of associations that Keller mentions are organised in three different groups. Attributes that are the characteristics that define the brand name and involve product and non-product related associations (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1991). Benefits that are composed of the value delivered by the brand attributes in consumers perception and finally, for attitudes (Langaro, *et al.*, 2015).

Brand attitude is “*the evaluative dimension of brand image, which results from consumer’s beliefs and feelings towards the brand’s attributes and benefits*” (Keller 2003a).

Brand attitude contains affective and cognitive elements and the strength of brand attitude can be defined as the “*positivity or negativity of an attitude weighted by the confidence or certainty with which it is held*” (Petty, Briñol and DeMarree, 2007).

This brand attitude strength can predict some important aspects as brand consideration, intention to purchase, purchase behaviour, and brand choice (Petty, Haugtvedt and Smith, 1995; Priester *et al.*, 2004; Fazio and Petty, 2008; Whan Park *et al.*, 2010).

According to (Langaro, *et al.*, 2015) brand attitude is continually being shaped in consumer’s minds as they experience and gather different brand elements. So it is normal that the exposure to negative reviews has an impact on the evaluation of the brands.

**H1: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on brand attitude;**

### **3.2. Perceived brand quality**

Perceive brand quality was defined by Zeithaml (1988) as “*the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority*”.

According to Kayaman and Arasli (2007) and Taylor (2001), this element is one of the most important factors that influence the consumer’s preferences in most industries.

There are several types of research that confirmed an “unquestionable” positive relationship between perceived brand quality and other factors as repurchase intentions, willingness to recommend, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and repetition of purchase behaviour (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Tabaku and Kushi, 2013).

As mentioned before service quality and satisfaction are often used together, so also perceived service quality is related to satisfaction and loyalty.

It is expected that an exposure to a brand negative word-of-mouth influences negatively the perceived brand quality.

**H2: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on perceived brand quality;**

### **3.3. Negative word-of-mouth intentions**

As mentioned before word-of-mouth communication can be defined as “*an informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization, or a service*” (Anderson, 1998; Buttle, 1996).

In practice, this is an informal communication, and it consists in the act of share a positive or negative experience about a product or service with family or friends in the form of recommending or warning (Richins, 1983, 1987).

As mentioned in the literature this form of communication is becoming more and more relevant on social media.

This study intends to analyse if the exposure to negative word-of-mouth on social media can lead to more and more negative word-of-mouth, and for that reason the following hypothesis is suggested.

**H3: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a positive impact on consumer's negative word-of-mouth intentions;**

### **3.4. Re-patronage intentions**

All the aspects mentioned before have an impact on the customer's intentions to repurchase.

Boulding *et al.*, (1993) and, Soderlund and Ohman (2003) defined intentions as “*subjective judgments about how a customer will react in the future and usually serves as dependent variables in many service research and satisfaction models*”.

According to Spreng, *et al.*, (1995) customer satisfaction and service quality provide the key to achieving repeat patronage.

Some studies point a dependency relationship between negative word-of-mouth behaviour and complainants' re-patronage intentions.

Also, according to the studies, there is a major determinant of complainants' re-patronage intentions and negative word-of-mouth that is the perceived justice (Spreng, Harrell and Mackoy, 1995).

In a competitive market and with customers always demanding for more, it is crucial for brands to maintain their customer, that's why is important to study the consumer intentions to repurchase a specific product or service.

It is expected that after the exposure to negative word-of-mouth the intention to purchase a product from the same brand will be less frequent.

**H4: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on re-patronage intentions;**



### **3.5. Brand type**

As mentioned before, this analysis is also focused on the sport shoes industry and has in account the brand type.

The brand type can be defined according to if it is a prestige brand or an economic brand. Prestige brands are brands that have prices considered expensive regarding the standards and whose consumption is a signal of status. Economic brands are brands with a price inside the standards and are generally affordable for almost every person. These definitions may have a different understanding and can variate depending on the socioeconomic conditions of the consumers. However, customers sometimes use the price for judging and make a decision between brands because some of them associate price as better quality (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999).

So regarding these aspects, it is expected that negative word-of-mouth will be more tolerated when it comes to low economic brands.

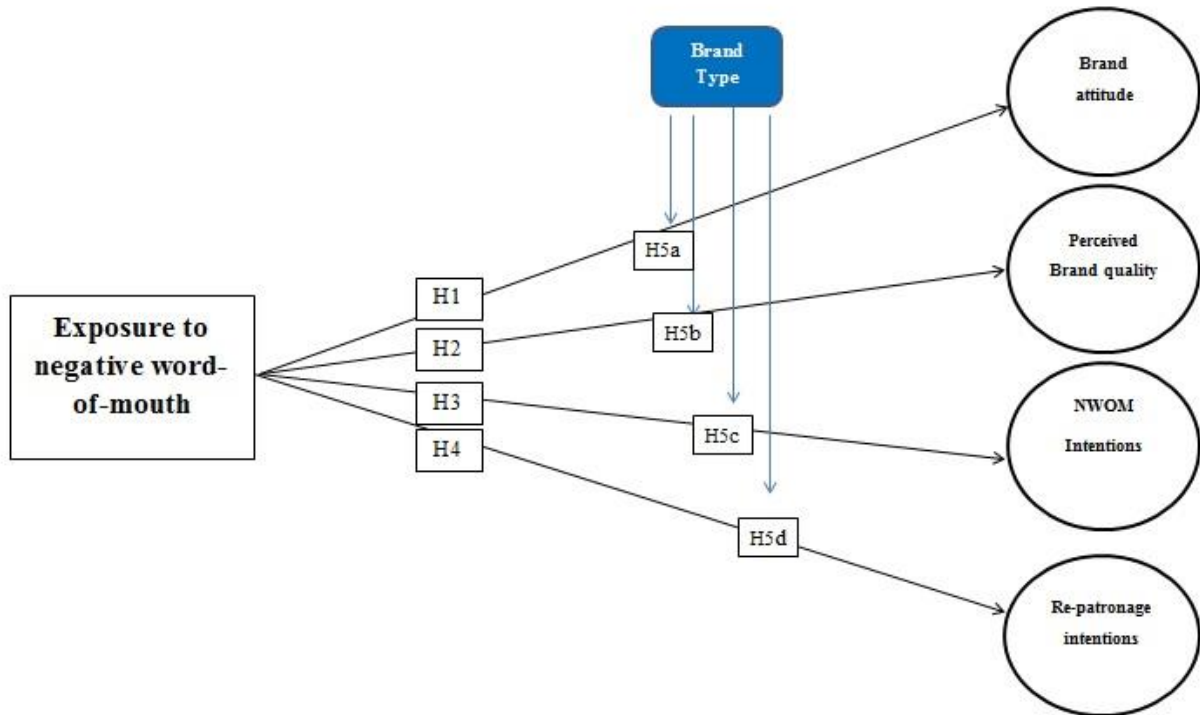
**H5a: The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on brand attitude will differ between prestige brands and economic brands;**

**H5b: The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on perceived brand quality will differ between prestige brands and economic brands;**

**H5c: The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on negative word-of-mouth intentions will differ between prestige brands and economic brands;**

**H5d: The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on re-patronage intentions will differ between economic brands and prestige brands.**

Figure 1- Research Model



Source: developed by the author (2018)

## **4. Methodology**

In this chapter of the master dissertation called methodology, a lot of important aspects will be explained, as the research objective, the adopted research strategy, the tools used to collect and analyse data, and the variables.

### **4.1. Research design**

The research objective of this dissertation is to analyse the impact that the exposure to negative word-of-mouth has on the shoes sports customers according to the brand type, economic or prestige brand.

To achieve a better analyse there will be measured four constructs, *brand attitude*, *perceived brand quality*, *negative word-of-mouth intentions*, and *re-patronage intentions*.

So the main objective is to expose the negative word-of-mouth to people and see how much this aspect impacts on the decisions according to the four constructs.

This research will be done by means of an experience between groups, with two big groups being tested.

### **4.1. Investigation method**

The investigation method used in this master dissertation was a quantitative approach through an online questionnaire.

Questionnaires consist in a formalised set of questions with the aim of extract specific information from respondents as they respond to a group of questions regarding their behaviour, intentions, attitudes, awareness, motivations, demographic and lifestyle characteristics (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006).

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, the survey method it is an efficient way of collecting responses since each person will answer to the same set of questions.

The survey method also has a lot of advantages since the questionnaire is simple to administer and the data obtained are reliable because the responses are limited to the alternatives stated (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006).

## **4.2. Sample design**

To the “*collection of elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are to be made*”, we call the target population (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006).

The sample considered in this study is “ shoes sports users, without any demographic or age limitation, and that are Facebook users”.

The sample size was assumed valid if 100 or more responses were collected (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

## **4.3. Data collection procedure**

### **4.3.1. Phase 1: Qualitative data collection**

In order to do a better analysis and to respond to the hypothesis, it was done a two-phase data collection.

This phase consists of a collection of visitor posts made on some of the Facebook brand pages more known in Portugal, in order to understand and characterise the online behaviour of the sports shops customers.

After doing this collection, it was possible to understand the most common post on the Facebook pages and to recreate it on fictional posts that are used in the second phase of data collection. The collection included posts with three types of valence: positive, neutral and negative but the creation of the fictional posts was only made regarding the negative and neutral posts.

This analysis consists of categorised the reviews base on the complaint management framework proposed by Kelley, *et al.*,(1993) and complement by Cambra-Fierro, Melero and Sese (2015).

These reviews were analysed according to six big groups of characteristics: post characteristics, types of loss, types of failure, complainer data, post outputs, and strategy response, as it shown on Table 1.

Firstly, in the group of “*post characteristics*” was analysed the type of valence, if the posts were considered negative, neutral or positive, and then, was check the number of characters, the volume of negative adjectives and the date of each review.

Secondly, it was analysed the group “*type of loss*”, if it is an economic or non-economic loss. An economic loss means that monetary issues were involved in the customer complaint and non-economic loss when the loss felt by the customer did not involve monetary issues.

Thirdly, the group “*types of failures*” was subgrouped into three other groups “*service/product failure*”, “*customer initiated failure*” and “*company failure*”.

The “*service/product failure group*” can also be divided into seven small groups. *Policy failure* that refers to the store policy and was perceived by the customer as being unfair or wrong, *slow/unavailable service* which relates to problems with the service caused for example by stores understaffed, employees on-the-job training programs or employees that took too long to provide the service. *System pricing failure* that occurs mostly when the item pricing was not in agreement with the scanner at the register, *packaging errors* due to packages labelled incorrectly, the wrong item was included in the package, sizes were mismatched. *Out of stock* that occurs when a customer went to the store to purchase a product, and the product was not available, *product defect* when a product was a defect, clothing and shoes did not last as long as expected, wrong sizes, products that simply do not work, etc. *Alterations and repairs*, includes incidents during the repair of a product, *bad information*, normally wrong information are given to customers.

The “*company failure*” can be divided into two small groups, *mischarged* that refers to situations where incorrect charges occurred based on an employee pricing error, incorrect change, etc. *Employee attention failures* that refer to situations where the employee was overbearing or moody, ignore the customers or refuse to help the customer.

Fourthly, the group “*complainer data*” analysed the gender of the complainer, if it is a male or a female.

Fifthly, the group “*post outputs*” that analysed the number of likes, number of comments and number of shares.

And finally, the group “*strategy response*” that analyzed the timeliness that refers to the speed with which company responds to the complaints, the compensation that involves

price discounts, refunds, repairs and replacements, and the communication that means the apologies, explanations and problems solution that a company gives to the customers that made the complaint.

Post Characteristics	Valence	Negative
		Neutral
		Positive
	Extension	
	Volume of negative adjectives	
Date		
Type of loss	Economic	
	Non-economic	
Types of failure	Service/Product Failure	Policy Failure
		Slow/unavailable service
		System pricing
		Packaging Errors
		Out of Stock
		Product/Service defect
		Alterations and repairs
	Bad information	
	Customer initiated failure	-
	Company failure	Mischarged
Employee attention Failures		
Complainer Data	Gender	
Post Outputs	Number of likes	
	Number of comments	
	Number of shares	
Strategy Response	Timeliness	
	Compensation	
	Communication	

Table 1 - Customers posts evaluation criteria

Source: Adapted from Kelley, *et al.* (1993) & Cambra-Fierro, *et al.* (2015)

### 4.3.2. Phase 2: Quantitative data collection

As mentioned before, the second collection of data is an online questionnaire.

The target of this study is shoes sports customers that are also Facebook users.

The first two questions made were about the practice of sports, if the respondents practice sports and the frequency of the practice. The next question was to see if the respondent had buy shoes for practice sports, the brand that they buy the last time and if they are satisfied or not with the product they bought.

Then was made some questions about the factors that the respondents have in account when they buy shoes for sports and the perception that they have about the brands (economic or prestige).

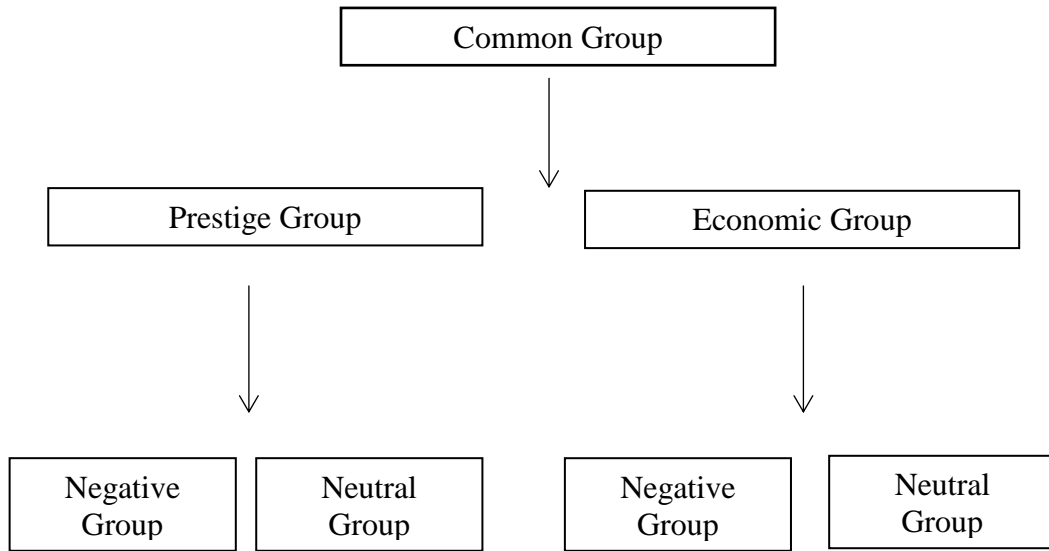
Then was made some questions about the Facebook usage – if they have a Facebook account or not, the frequency of usage, if they follow brands on this platform and if they have used this social network to complain about something on a Facebook brand page.

After that, the respondents have been aleatory sent to two different questions, one for the prestige brands group and the other to the economic brands group. In the question of the prestige brands group were presented four brands *Adidas*, *Asics*, *New Balance*, and *Nike* and the respondents have to choose one of them, and, the same occurred on the economic brands group where were presented the brands *Kalenji-Decathlon*, *Quechua-Decathlon*, *Berg-Sport Zone* and *Doone-Sport Zone*. After this question followed a group of questions only about the brand they have chosen in the last question, so if for example a person chooses the brand *Adidas*, the following questions were all about that brand.

The respondents were exposed to fictional Facebook posts supposedly made on the page the brand they choose. Here, they also have been aleatory sent to two different groups of questions. One group was exposed to four neutral posts and the other group to four negative posts, according to the illustration of the posts made in the primary collection of data. The respondents also have to evaluate each of the posts as Negative, Neutral or Positive and which action they would make if the situation really happens: like, comment, share or any of them.

So, the flow of the questionnaire was:

**Figure 2- Questionnaire Flow**



Source: developed by the author

It was also created questions to measure the four constructs presented before: brand attitude, perceived brand quality, re-patronage intentions, and negative word-of-mouth intentions.

The construct brand attitude was measured using five items adapted by Spears and Singh (2004) to measure general brand evaluations on a bipolar scale (e.g. Unappealing/Appealing; Good/Bad; Unpleasant/Pleasant; Unfavourable/Favourable; Hard to like/ Easy to like) ranging from 1 to 7.

Perceived brand quality was measured by using the original 3 item scale proposed by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) with a 7-point Likert scale from totally disagree to totally agree.

The re-patronage intention was adapted from the scale of Blodgett, Hill and Tax (1997) and Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) reflecting the intention to repurchase, in the future, a determined product from the brand the respondents choose. It was also used a 7-point Likert scale in this construct with the score 1-Totally Disagree to 7-Totally Agree.

The construct of negative word-of-mouth intentions was adapted from the scale of Blodgett, Hill and Tax (1997) and also measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 1-Totally Disagree to 7- Totally Agree.



All scales were measured with a 7 point Likert scale where the number 4 represents the neutral score towards the sentences that are showed and all the numbers below that number (1, 2 and 3) represents disagreement with the sentence, and the numbers above 4 (5,6 and 7) represents agreement with the sentence.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Item</b>
Spears and Singh (2004)	Brand attitude	BA1: Unappealing/appealing BA2: Bad/good BA3: Unpleasant/pleasant BA4: Unfavorable/favourable BA5: Unlikable/likeable
Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015)	Perceived brand quality	PBQ1: Most of the products of this brand are of great quality PBQ2: The likelihood that this brand is reliable is very high PBQ3: Products of this brand are worth their price
Blodgett, Hill and Tax (1997)	Negative word- of-mouth intentions	NWI1: How likely would you be to warn your friends and relatives not to shop at this retail store? NWI2: If this had happened to me I would complain to my friends and relatives about this store NWI3: If this had happened to me I would make sure to tell my friend and relatives not to shop at this store.
Blodgett, Hill and Tax(1997); Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015)	Re-patronage intentions	RPI1: What is the likelihood that you would shop at this retail store in the future? RPI2: If this situation had happened to me I would never shop at this store again* RPI3: If this had happened to me I would still shop at this store in the future RPI4: If it were possible to do so without problems, I would choose another company* RPI5: I intend to remain the company's customer

\*reversed coded items

Table 2 - Table of items

Source: developed by the author

#### **4.4. Pre-test**

A pre-test of the questionnaire was made before the final release and applied to 15 people with the concern of include different ages, different backgrounds and areas of study.

The pre-test is important to see if the questions are understood by all the respondents and if the flow of the questionnaire is fine and the aleatory in the different groups is working.

The pre-test also contributed to the correction and adjustment of some questions and scales, as well as to do other minor corrections in the online functioning of the survey.

After this step, the final questionnaire was distributed online by means of a link with data being collected in July 2018.

#### **4.5. Quantitative data collection distribution**

The data used to build the quantitative research and to choose the variables was reunited in an exploratory research and present in the literature review. This research was made on scientific journals and magazines, books and previous studies or thesis about the same subject.

The questionnaire was elaborated through the online software *Qualtrics* (appendix A1) and online distributed, between 17 of July and 10 of August 2018, to reach a bigger amount of respondents and Facebook users.

A web-based questionnaire was considered the best option to use regarding the object of the study since they are usually more convenient to answer and allow a quicker and easier data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the fact that the questionnaire was available online facilitated its dissemination, contributing to collect a larger number of responses.

The link to the questionnaire was shared on Facebook, LinkedIn, sent through personal messages on Facebook messenger and also requested to some respondents to share the questionnaire with their contacts.

The questionnaire was anonymous, and at the beginning of the survey, it was ensured the confidentiality and the academic purpose of the study. Also, the e-mail of the researcher was provided in case of the respondents wants to be clarified about some aspects.

#### **4.6. Data analysis procedures**

The collected data was analysed in the software *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS) in version 24.

The online platform where the questionnaire was made saved all the answers automatically and was possible to download all the data directly to SPSS. The answers were checked regarding the consistency, and there was no need for an inserting step for the majority of the variables.

The analysis made to test the research hypotheses included:

- Demographic and descriptive statistics in general;
- Validate the constructs of reliability: Cronbach alpha;
- Validate the constructs for unidimensionality: Principal component analysis;
- Validate that the groups are comparable since it is an experiment between groups: using t-test ;
- Test the hypothesis: using t-test.

The value of the level of significance used as decision criteria on hypothesis testing was 0,05.

The next chapter presents in detail the referred statistical analysis and the results obtained.



## 5. Results

This chapter presents the results of the study, as well as the data analysis that was performed to validate the research hypotheses.

The firsts results presented correspond to the analysis of the post-collection taken from the Facebook pages of the brands (Phase 1) and the second results presented correspond to the analysis of the questionnaires (Phase 2).

### 5.1. Phase 1: Analysis of posts collected

As mentioned before the first phase of the methodology was made by making a data collection of reviews on the Facebook pages of six sports shoe brands and analyse the most common subjects and types of posts made.

Although the posts collected have three different dimensions, positive, neutral and negative, it is important to mention that the analysis is focused only on the negative and neutral reviews.

The six brands choose for doing this collection was *Adidas*, *Asics*, *Decathlon*, *New Balance*, *Nike*, and *Sport Zone* for being some of the brands more known and purchased in Portugal.

In Table 3 it is possible to understand the dimension of the Facebook followers of each brand. As it possible to see brands like *Adidas* and *Nike* have more than 30 million followers while *Decathlon* and *Sport Zone* only have more than half a million.

This huge discrepancy is justified for the fact that it was analyzed the official Facebook pages for *Adidas*, *Asics*, *New Balance*, and *Nike* since they are international brand, while in the case of *Decathlon* and *Sport Zone* it was analyzed the Portuguese pages since the first one although it is an international brand does not have an international page but one for each country where they are present; and *Sport Zone* is a Portuguese brand, without an international page.

The collection of posts was made only for Facebook posts done from January 2018 to June 2018.

Brand	Number of followers on Facebook
Adidas	34.688.754
ASICS	3.601.709
Decathlon	444.669
New Balance	7.624.765
Nike	31.508.851
Sport Zone	478.096

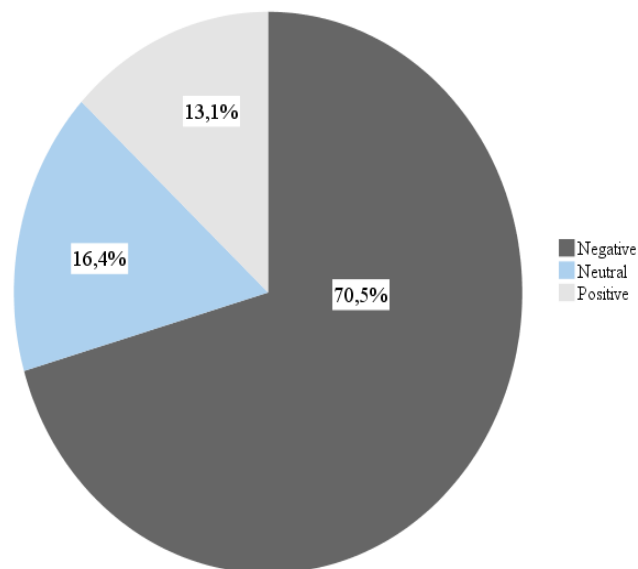
Table 3 - Number of Facebook followers on 14/08/2018

Source: Developed by the author

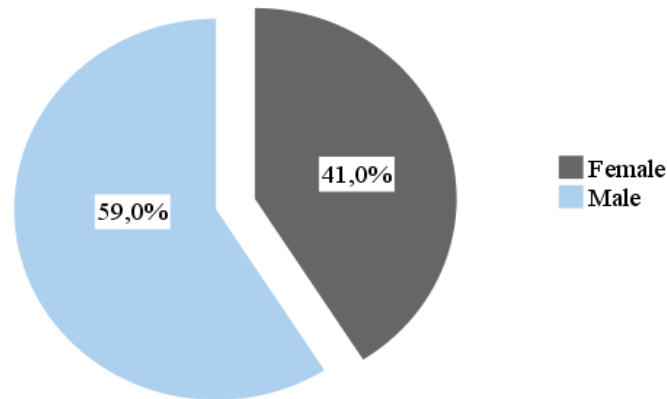
The sample collected was of 61 posts, were 70,5% of the posts were considered *Negative*, 16,4% were considered *Neutral* and 13,1% *Positive*.

The majority of the posts were made by males (59%), while woman did it 41% of the times.

**Figure 3 - Distribution of the sample by valence of the posts (in %)**



**Figure 4 - Distribution of the posts sample by gender (in %)**



Regarding the *type of loss* from the 43 negative posts (complaints), 74,4% represents a non-economic loss while 25,6% represents an economic loss for the customer.

Also from these complaints, 58, 1% is related to *product defects*, 11, 6% with *policy failures*, 7% with *slow service* and *system pricing* each, and the remaining percentage with other types of failures.

The neutral posts are mostly questions made to the brands, about the stock of products and dates of releases of new models of shoes, so they do not represent any type of losses or type of failures.

Regarding the strategy responses from the part of the company, it is very evident that most of them do not pay any attention to the comments of the clients even if they are complaints. From the 61 posts collected 65,5% does not have an answer for the part of the company and only 14,8% received a comment for the brand, while 1,6% received a private message.

From the 43 complaints, 83,7% did not get any response from the brand, while 16,3% received a comment.

The variable *Timeliness* that indicates the speed with which brand responds to complaints was also studied. From the 61 posts, only 9 had an answer for the party for the company, 6 of them corresponded to negative reviews and the other 3 about neutral reviews. 77,8% of the responses were made on the same day, while 11% in the following day and 11,1% in the following two days.

Also, it is important to notice that these responses were only made by two of the six brands in analysing.

This shows a huge disregard for the companies to respond to the client's reviews.

The variable *Compensation* that represents ways of the brands compensate the customers for the failures, and that includes refunds, price discounts or repairs, showed up no relevant for this analysis since none of the brands has mentioned any type of compensation on any of the answers that given to the clients on Facebook.

This factor may be frequently among the companies that choose not to do this type of compensations online and prefers to do it for phone calls or e-mails to the clients.

After the analysis done in this first data collection was possible to recreate eight fictional posts, four negative and four neutral. These fictional posts were recreated based on the most common types of reviews (negative and neutral) done on these pages and used in the second part of data collection.

The fictional posts that were recreated are presented in the next table and they were included in the questionnaire. The respondents were randomised exposed to the posts, so some of the respondents were exposed to the four negative posts and the rest to the four neutral posts.



<b>Fictional Posts Characterization</b>	
<b>Valence</b>	<b>Posts</b>
<b>Negative</b>	“I bought some sneakers for about a month, I used it 4 times and the soles are already taking off. How can this happen in a supposedly good pair of sneakers?! It is unacceptable!”
<b>Negative</b>	“I am extremely disappointed with your customer service! I want to change a pair of shoes because it has a defect and I have already sent 3 emails and I am so far without any response!”
<b>Negative</b>	“I will never buy your shoes again! Shoes that you say has an amazing quality and after 2 weeks are all broken? Ridiculous!”
<b>Negative</b>	“I bought some of your sneakers online and it came with a defect, I returned it and I still have not received my money back! I thought you are a serious brand but I feel cheated!”
<b>Neutral</b>	“What is the expected date of the launch of the new model of your sneakers? Thank you.”
<b>Neutral</b>	“Where can I get information about the material used in your shoes?”
<b>Neutral</b>	“Good afternoon. Do you manufacture size 38 of this shoes model?”
<b>Neutral</b>	“How can I contact you to exchange a product purchased online?”

Table 4 - Characterization of the fictional posts

Source: developed by the author

## 5.2. Phase 2: Analysis of results obtained in the online questionnaire

The online questionnaire had a total of 555 responses, however, some of the answers have to be removed for being unfinished or not within the target.

124 responses corresponded to unfinished answers, so they were removed from the sample. Also, 10 of the respondents answered negatively to the question “*Do you have a Facebook profile page?*”, so they were forced to end the questionnaire and also these answers were removed from the sample.

The final sample is constituted by **421** valid responses (n=421).

The characterisation of the final sample is showed in Table 5, where is possible to see how many respondents answered the questionnaire in each group, so for example 115 of the respondents answered to the prestige brands groups and were exposed to the negative posts.

<b>Sample</b>	<b>Prestige Brands Group</b>	<b>Economic Brands Group</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Negative Group</b>	115	102	217
<b>Neutral Group</b>	93	111	204
<b>Total</b>	208	213	<b>421</b>

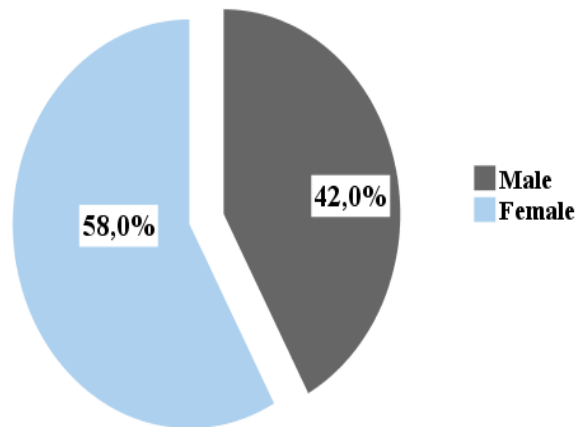
Table 5 - Characterization of the final sample per groups

Source: developed by the author

### 5.3. Sample characterisation

Regarding the demographic characteristics of the sample, 58% are females, and 42% are males.

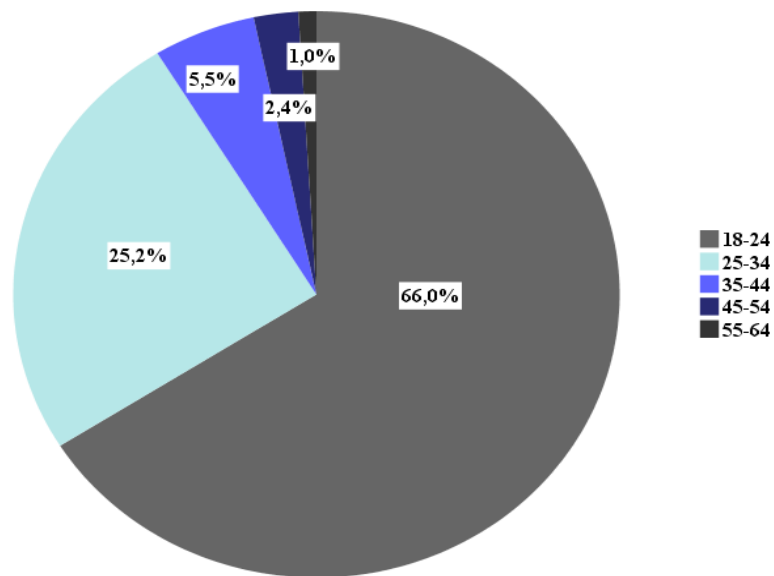
**Figure 5 - Distribution of the sample by gender (in %)**



Concerning the interval of ages, it is possible to see that most of the respondents are young and belonging to the group between 18 to 24 years old (66%), followed by the interval between 25 to 34 years old.

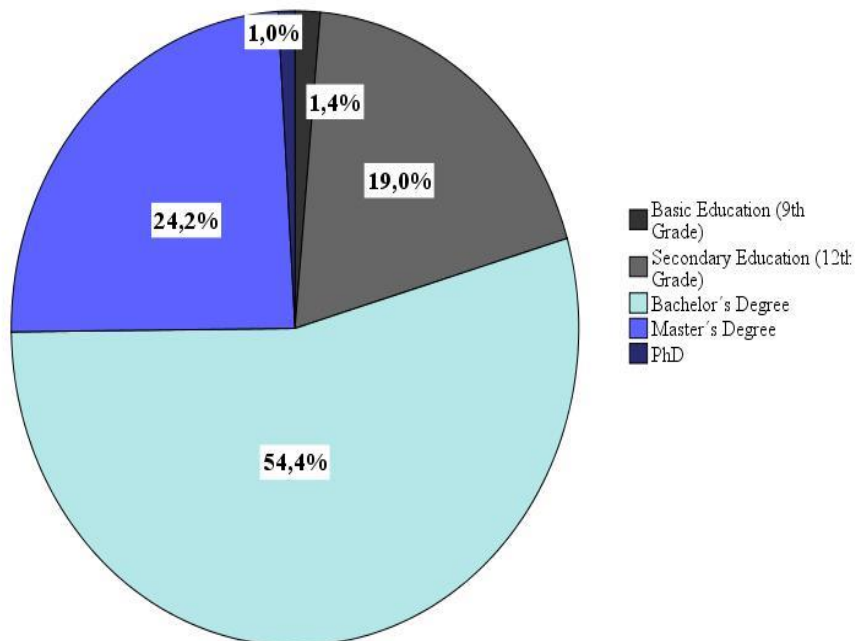
Only 1% of the respondents has ages between 55 to 64 years, and although in the questionnaire was an option for more than 65 years old, none of the respondents has that age.

**Figure 6 - Distribution of the sample by ages (in %)**



Regarding the level of education of the sample, 54,4% has a Bachelor's degree, 24,2% a Master's degree, 19% Secondary education, 1,4% the Basic education and only 1% have a PhD.

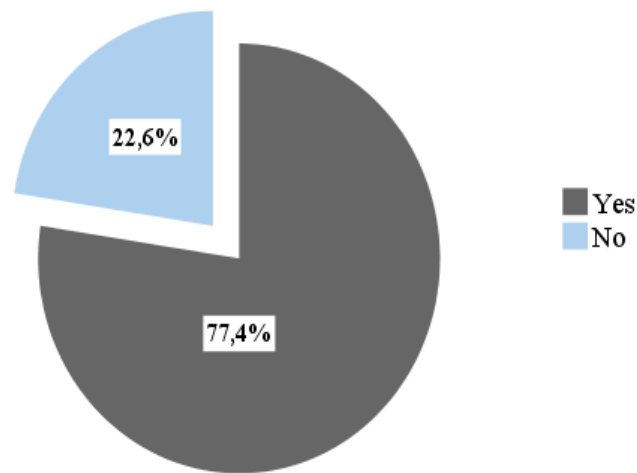
**Figure 7 - Distribution of the sample by level of education (in %)**



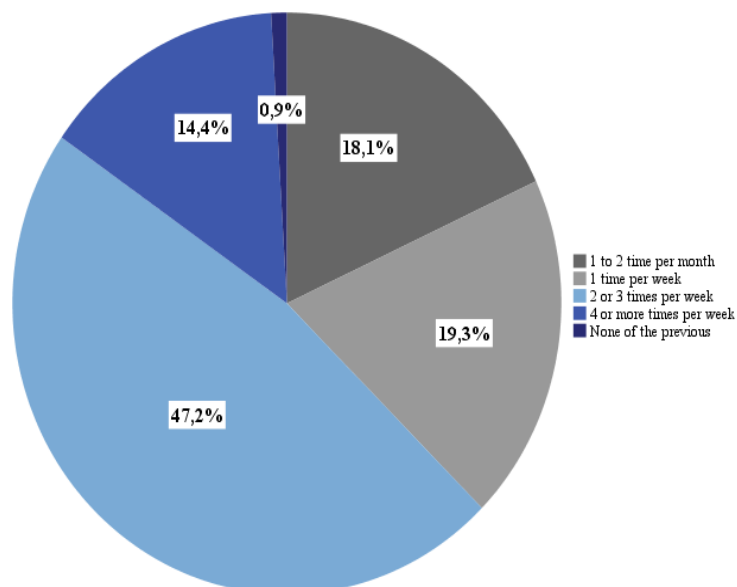
77,4% of the sample (n=421) have practised sports in the last 12 months, while 22,6% not.

The majority of the respondents that have practice sports in the last 12 months do it frequently, with 47,2% to do it two or three times per week and 19,3% to do it one time per week.

**Figure 8 - Distribution of the sample of sports practice in the last 12 months (in %)**



**Figure 9 - Distribution of the sample of the frequency of sports practice in the last 12 months (in %)**



In the questionnaire, was made a question “*What was the last brand of sports shoes that you bought?*” and from the 421 respondents, 23 did not responded to this answer or have written respondents with no sense or just said that they not remembered, since it was an open question.

From the 398 persons that have answered to this question and how it is possible to see on Figure 10, the brand that has registered the dominant frequency was *Nike* with 39,2% of the responses, followed by *Adidas* with 20,4%.

The brand *Asics* was responded by 6,5% of the respondents, *New Balance* for 1,5%, and *Puma* and *Reebok* by 2%, each.

It is also possible to see that some of the respondents identified the stores where they bought the shoes and not necessarily the brands for maybe do not know the exact brand, however as it possible to see the percentage is high, so it is important to mention that 6,5% answered *Decathlon* and 0,8% answered *Sport Zone*.

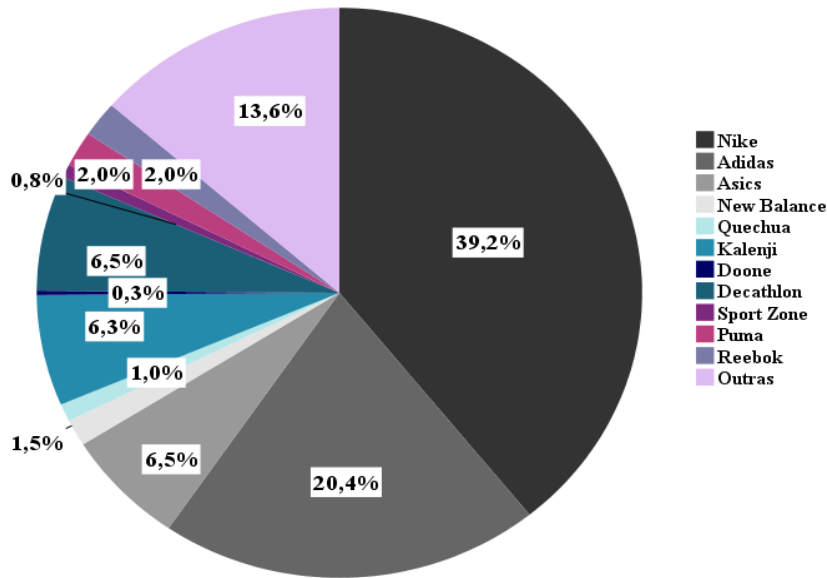
The brands that belong to *Decathlon* and that were presented later in the questionnaire also registered some answers with *Kalenji* being respondent by 6,3% and *Quechua* by 1% of the respondents.

In the case of the brands that belong to *Sport Zone* and that was also present later in the questionnaire, only one of them (*Doone*) was answered in this question so only have 0,2% of the answers.

This shows that it is not easy for clients to understand the own brands that belong to the retail stores *Decathlon* and *Sport Zone*, and that a huge amount of the persons understand this two stores as shoe sports brands.

The remaining percentage 13,6% represents other answers that were not appropriate for this study mostly for representing shoes that are not for sports or for fashion brands that sell shoes like *Primark*, *Timberland*, etc...

**Figure 10 - Distribution of the sample for the last brand bought (in %)**



As mentioned before, the questionnaire was designed to randomly create two groups of respondents according to the type of posts exposure. So it was created the “*negative group*” for respondents that were exposed to the fictional negative Facebook posts, and the “*neutral group*” for the respondents that were exposed to neutral Facebook posts

The target will also be analysed according to these two groups, in the next chapter.

### **5.3.1. Group exposed to Negative posts**

The “*negative group*” was exposed to negative Facebook posts and it was composed by 217 individuals (n=217) from the target sample.

10, 58% of these individuals are female and 42% are male.

### 5.3.2. Group exposed to Neutral posts

The “*neutral group*” was exposed to neutral Facebook posts and it is composed by **204** individuals (n=204) from the target sample.

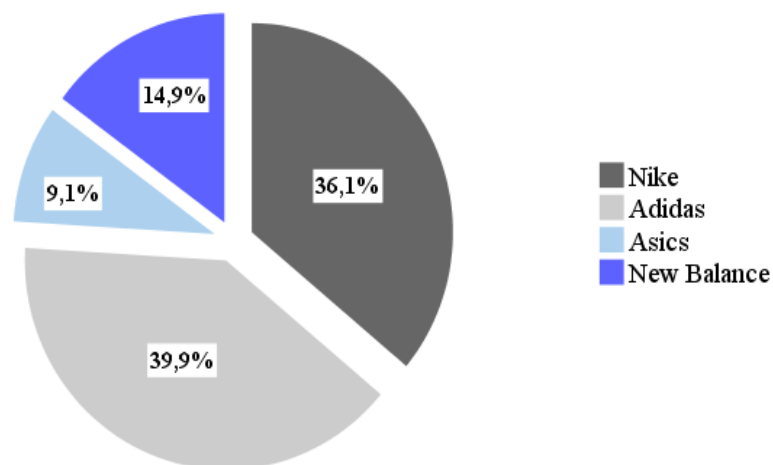
The distribution of the gender in this subgroup that it is constituted by 58% of males and 42% of females.

### 5.3.3. Prestige Brands group

In the questionnaire, the respondents were also randomised to other two different groups, the prestige brands, and the economic brands and forced to choose one of the four brands presented in each group.

For the 421 final respondents, **208** were randomised to the Prestige Brands group, and as it is possible to see on figure 18, *Adidas* was the brand more chosen by the respondents (39,9%), and the brand with the lowest percentage of choice was *Asics*.

**Figure 11 - Distribution of the sample by choice of prestige brands (in %)**



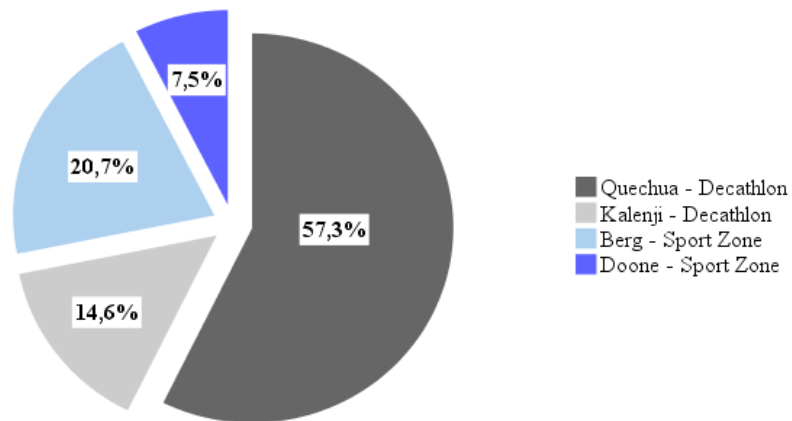


### 5.3.4. Economic Brands group

For the total of respondents, **213** were randomised to the Economic Brand group, where it were presented 4 brands and the respondents have to choose only one of that brands.

For the presented brands, 57,3% of the respondents have chosen the brand *Quechua* by *Decathlon*, followed by *Berg* from *Sport Zone* (20,7%), *Kalenji* by *Decathlon* (14,6%) and in the last place *Doone* from *Sport Zone* with 7,5% of the responses.

**Figure 12 - Distribution of the sample by choice of economic brand (in %)**



## 5.4. Validation of the sample

As the respondents were randomised to different big groups and then to other two sub-groups it is essential to ensure the comparison of responses between the two groups. In order to ensure this, it was made a t-test for all the framework and demographic questions. It is important to mention that the N on this analysis changed regarding the flow of the questionnaire.

Regarding the question “*Do you practice sports?*” the means are similar in the two groups (1,22 and 1,23) and the Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,822 >  $\alpha=0,05$ , which means that there is no significant difference between the two groups, so the negative and neutral groups are comparable since there is no difference between them and they are similar.

The means are also similar also in the question “*How often do you practice sports?*” with values of 2,60 for the negative group a 2,62 for the neutral group. The Sig. (2-tailed) of this question is 0,852 >  $\alpha$ , so there is no significant difference between the groups.

“*Have you ever bought sport shoes?*” have similar means too (1,05 and 1,06) and the Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,427 which is bigger than the  $\alpha$ .

Regarding the “*evaluation of the satisfaction with the last purchase of sport shoes*” the means are also very similar and the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0,936 >  $\alpha$ .

Question				T-test		
		n	$\mu$	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
“ <i>Do you practice sports?</i> ”	Negative Group	217	1,22	-,225	,822	-,009
	Neutral Group	204	1,23			
“ <i>How often do you practice sports?</i> ”	Negative Group	169	2,60	-,187	,852	-,020
	Neutral Group	157	2,62			
“ <i>Have you ever bought sport shoes?</i> ”	Negative Group	217	1,05	-,795	,427	-,018
	Neutral Group	204	1,06			

"Evaluate the satisfaction with your last purchase of sport shoes"	Negative Group	207	5,70	,080	,936	,010
	Neutral Group	191	5,69			

Table 6 - Comparison between groups - Practice of sports and last purchase

Source: developed by the author

On the questionnaire, the respondents have to rate some brands by type of brand (economic or prestige) and also that question was used to prove the resemblance of the groups.

The brands *Nike* and *Adidas* were ranked on equal way, with a mean of 1,94 on the negative groups of each, and 1,97 on the neutral groups. The Sig. (2-tailed) was also equal in both with a value of 0,218 which is bigger than  $0,05 = \alpha$ .

*Asics* have the same mean in both groups, 1,75 and the Sig. (2-tailed) =  $0,887 > \alpha$ .

The brand *New Balance* was the only with a small difference since it has a mean of 1,85 on the negative group and a mean of 1,83 on the neutral group, which results on a Sig.(2-tailed) of 0,500.

The brands *Quechua*, *Kalenji*, *Berg* and *Doone* have exactly the same means in the correspondent negative and neutral groups. The Sig.(2-tailed) for *Quechua* and *Kalenji* is the same (0,994) , for *Berg* it is 0,965 and for *Doone* it is 0,668, all of them bigger than the  $\alpha = 0,05$ .

Question				T-test		
		n	$\mu$	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
"Rate Nike according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,94	-1,233	,218	-,026
	Neutral Group	204	1,97			
"Rate Adidas according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,94	-1,233	,218	-,026
	Neutral Group	204	1,97			
"Rate Asics according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,75	,143	,887	,006
	Neutral Group	204	1,75			

"Rake New Balance according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,85	,674	,500	,024
	Neutral Group	204	1,83			
"Rake Quechua according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,07	,008	,994	,000
	Neutral Group	204	1,07			
"Rake Kalenju according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,07	,008	,994	,000
	Neutral Group	204	1,07			
"Rake Berg according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,10	-,044	,965	-,001
	Neutral Group	204	1,10			
"Rake Doone according to your opinion"	Negative Group	217	1,02	-,430	,668	-,006
	Neutral Group	204	1,02			

Table 7 - Comparison between groups - Brands rake

Source: developed by the author

It was also asked the respondents to answer some questions about the action of buying sports shoes and once again the responses were very similar between the two groups.

The statement "*When I buy sport shoes I always take into account the brand*" have a mean of 4,61 on the negative group and a mean of 4,68 on the neutral group, and the Sig. (2-tailed) is  $0,723 > 0,05$ . "*I always buy prestige brands*" register a mean of 4,24 on the negative group a 4,09 on the neutral group, with a Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,429.

The affirmation "*Usually I buy prestigious brands because they last longer*" have a mean of 4,68 on the negative group and 4,60 on the neutral group, and the Sig.(2-tailed) is also bigger than  $\alpha$ .

The means of the sentence "*Usually I buy economic brands because I do not want to invest a lot of money*" are 3,41 for the negative group, and 3,66 for the neutral group, with a Sig.(2-tailed) = 0,153 which is one of the lowest value of the Sig. (2-tailed).

"*I buy economic brands because they have good quality*" have the lowest value on Sig. (2-tailed) =  $0,014 < \alpha$  which proves that there are some differences between the groups when it comes to this statement.

"*I always buy prestige brands*" have a mean of 3,60 on the negative group and 3,75 on the neutral group, and a Sig. (2-tailed) of 0,439.

And the sentence “*I do not buy economic brands*” have means of 3,21 and 3,08, with a Sig .(2-tailed) = 0,497 >  $\alpha$ .

Question				T-test		
		n	$\mu$	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
“ <i>When I buy sport shoes I always take into account the brand</i> ”	Negative Group	217	4,61	-,354	,723	-,064
	Neutral Group	204	4,68			
“ <i>I always buy prestige brands</i> ”	Negative Group	217	4,24	,792	,429	,146
	Neutral Group	204	4,09			
“ <i>Usually I buy prestigious brands because they last longer</i> ”	Negative Group	217	4,68	,677	,644	,084
	Neutral Group	204	4,60			
“ <i>Usually I buy economic brands because I do not want to invest a lot of money</i> ”	Negative Group	217	3,41	-1,431	,153	-,242
	Neutral Group	204	3,66			
“ <i>I buy economic brands because they have good quality.</i> ”	Negative Group	217	3,51	-2,470	,014	-,356
	Neutral Group	204	3,87			
“ <i>I always buy prestige brands</i> ”	Negative Group	217	3,60	-,775	,439	-,146
	Neutral Group	204	3,75			
“ <i>I do not buy economic brands</i> ”	Negative Group	217	3,21	,680	,497	,124
	Neutral Group	204	3,08			

Table 8 - Comparison between groups - Purchase Action

Source: Developed by the author

The questionnaire also has a section about Facebook usage and once again there is no significant difference between the answers of the respondents of both groups.

The means of “*How often do you use Facebook?*” are 1,39 and 1,41, and the Sig.(2-tailed) = 0,852 >  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

“Do you follow some brands through Facebook?” have a mean of 1,36 on the negative group and 1,41 on the neutral group. The Sig. (2-tailed) is 0,318.

Regarding the question “Have you ever used the Facebook page of a brand to make a complaint?” has the same mean in each group (1,94) and a Sig.(2-tailed) of 0,871.

Question				T-test		
		n	μ	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
“How often do you use Facebook?”	Negative Group	217	1,39	-,187	,852	-0,15
	Neutral Group	204	1,41			
“Do you follow some brands through Facebook?”	Negative Group	217	1,36	-,999	,318	-,047
	Neutral Group	204	1,41			
“Have you ever used the Facebook page of a brand to make a complaint?”	Negative Group	217	1,94	,162	,871	,004
	Neutral Group	204	1,94			

Table 9 - Comparison between groups - Facebook usage

Source: developed by the author

The demographic questions were also included in this analysis and as it possible to verify on the next table the groups are also similar on this aspects.

The variable age has a mean of 1,42 on the negative group and 1,52 on the neutral group. The Sig. ( 2-tailed)=0,170 which is a lower value than  $\alpha$ .

The gender has the same mean in the two groups (1,58) and the Sig. (2-tailed)=0,963.

“Level of Education” have means of 3,04 and 3,05, and a Sig. (2-tailed) of 0,864, while “Professional Situation”has a mean of 2,65 and 2,59, on the negative and neutral groups, respectively. The Sig. (2-tailed) =0,425.

Question				T-test		
		n	$\mu$	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
<i>Age</i>	Negative Group	217	1,42	-1,375	,170	-,105
	Neutral Group	204	1,52			
<i>Gender</i>	Negative Group	217	1,58	,046	,963	,002
	Neutral Group	204	1,58			
<i>Level of Education</i>	Negative Group	217	3,04	-,172	,864	-,012
	Neutral Group	204	3,05			
<i>Professional Situation</i>	Negative Group	217	2,65	,798	,425	,066
	Neutral Group	204	2,59			

Table 10 - Comparison between groups - Demographic characteristics

Source: developed by the author

Having in account all these values it can be concluded that both groups, negative and neutral, are very similar and can be compared, since the means are very similar in every variable and the Sig. (2-tailed) is always bigger than  $\alpha$ , with the exception of one case.

### 5.5. Validation of measures

This section presents the evaluation of the consistency and reliability of the chosen scales, items and the questionnaire.

A Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation was made to validate the constructs in case of dimensionality and coherence. This type of analysis is used for summarization and data reduction (Malhotra, 2006).

Previously to performed this test there are some requirements that need to be checked in order to do the Principal Component Analysis, that are the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) test to measure the sample adequacy, and the Bartlett’s test of Sphericity in order to measure if the variables were correlated or not. According to Marôco (2014), it is possible to continue with the Principal Component Analysis if the KMO test has a value between 0.5 and 1, and the Bartlett’s test of Sphericity must have a value lower than 0.1. The results of this test reveal that KMO value is equal to 0.819 that proves a good adequacy of the sample, while the Bartlett’s test is equal to 0.000 which proves that the variables are significantly correlated.

Constructs		1	2	3	4	Cronbach’s alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha if item deleted
Brand Attitude	BA1	<b>,905</b>	-,021	-,060	,084	0,960	,955
	BA2	<b>,898</b>	,029	-,054	,131		,954
	BA3	<b>,941</b>	,020	-,046	,075		,943
	BA4	<b>,907</b>	-,001	-,054	,093		,951
	BA5	<b>,926</b>	-,019	-,032	,109		,948
Perceived brand quality	PBQ1	,460	,061	,064	<b>,711</b>	0,678	,407
	PBQ2	,487	,002	,045	<b>,705</b>		,371
	PBQ3	-,052	,023	-,003	<b>,698</b>		<b>,863</b>
Negative Word-of-Mouth intention	NWI1	-,055	,036	<b>,870</b>	,058	0,891	<b>,903</b>
	NWI2	-,078	-,063	<b>,917</b>	-,010		,820
	NWI3	-,087	-,043	<b>,923</b>	,015		,807
Re-patronage Intention	RPI1	,090	<b>,743</b>	-,003	-,166	0,790	,759
	RPI2*	-,073	<b>,657</b>	-,005	,191		,775
	RPI3	,104	<b>,804</b>	-,029	-,052		,727
	RPI4*	-,140	<b>,653</b>	-,055	,130		,768
	RPI5	,043	<b>,828</b>	,020	-,019		,719
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0,819 Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2=4635,725$ . Df=120. Sig.=0,000							

Table 11 - Exploratory factor analysis

Source: developed by the author



The PCA was made to the 16 items that composed the four constructs (brand attitude, perceived brand quality, negative word-of-mouth intentions and re-patronage intentions). The analysis results on a four-factor solution that explains 72,222% of the total variance and that is considered an adequate value (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006).

All items reach values above 0,500 (Marôco, 2014) so all the items were taking into account.

The Cronbach's Alphas test was made to check the reliability of the variables and all of them scored more than 0,600 that is considered as a satisfactory value (Hair *et al.*, 2006; Marôco, 2014).

All these values are explained in Table 11, with the Brand Attitude construct being composed by BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4, and BA5, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0,960. The construct Perceived Brand Quality is composed by PBQ1, PCBQ2, and PBQ3, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0,678. Negative Word-of-mouth Intentions is composed by NWI1, NWI2, and NWI3 with a Cronbach's alpha of 0,891. The re-patronage intention is composed by RPI1, RPI2, RPI3, RPI4 and RPI5 with a Cronbach's alpha of 0,790.

It was also considered the Cronbach's alpha if each item was deleted, and there are two items ( PBQ3 and NW1) that if deleted results in a higher Cronbach value. However, due to the importance of the items, there were not deleted.

## 5.6. Hypothesis testing

In this part of the chapter, we tested the entire research hypothesis presented before. To test the hypothesis presented in this dissertation it was made a t-test and the results of the test are presented in table 12.

The first hypothesis that was presented is “*H1: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on brand attitude*”, and the t-test result accepted the null hypothesis since  $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0,943 > \alpha$ , so **H1 is rejected** since there is no significant statistical difference between the mean of brand attitude in the two different groups, negative and neutral.

“*H2: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on perceived brand quality*” it is also **rejected**, since  $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0,802 > \alpha$  so the null hypothesis of the teste was accepted and there is no significant difference between the two groups.

Regarding the hypothesis “*H3: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a positive impact on consumer’s negative word-of-mouth intentions*” it is **validated**.

This item reflected a significant difference between the means of which group since  $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0,00 < \alpha$ , so the null hypothesis was rejected. The group of respondents that were exposed to negative posts reflected higher intentions of negative word-of-mouth that the group that was exposed to neutral posts ( Mean difference = 1,458).

“*H4: Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on re-patronage intentions*” is **validated** since  $\text{Sig. (2-tailed)} = 0,00 > \alpha$  and proves that there is a significant difference between the means of the negative and neutral groups.

<b>Construct</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.(2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean difference</b>	
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	Negative group	217	-,071	,943	-,011	No significant difference
	Neutral group	204				
<b>Perceived Brand quality</b>	Negative group	217	-,250	,802	-,026	No significant difference
	Neutral group	204				
<b>Negative word-of-mouth intentions</b>	Negative group	217	9,212	,000	1,458	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Neutral group	204				
<b>Re-patronage Intention</b>	Negative group	217	-9,505	,000	-1,037	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Neutral group	204				

Table 12 - Independent sample t-test results

Source: developed by the author

Regarding the last four hypothesis, that includes the moderator effect brand type, a new independent sample t-test analysis was made for each of the constructs.

As mentioned in Table 5, the sample was divided between two other groups prestige brand (n=208) and economic brand (n=213), and it will be analysed the difference between this two groups and the four constructs presented before, *brand attitude*, *perceived brand quality*, *negative word-of-mouth intentions*, and *re-patronage intentions*.

It was used the Levene test (Sig. > 0,05) to measure the equality of variances and it the construct negative word-of-mouth intentions did not assume the equality of variances between the two groups.

**H5a:** “*The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on brand attitude will differ between prestige brands and economic brands*” was **rejected** since Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,634 on prestige brands and Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,647 on economic brands, which are values bigger than  $\alpha$ . Regarding **H5b:** “*The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on perceived brand quality will differ between prestige brands and economic brands*” it is also **rejected**, with a Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,878 on prestige brands and a Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,608 on economic brands, so there is not registered a difference.

The hypothesis **H5c:** “*The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on NWOM intentions will differ between prestige brands and economic brands*” is **rejected** since in the prestige brand the Sig. (2-tailed)= 0,000 and in the economic brands, the Sig- (2-tailed) is also equal to 0,000. So this proves that the negative word-of-mouth intentions will be different according to the exposure to the negative or neutral group, but it is not different according to the brand type, prestige or economic.

Also, **H5d:** “*The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on re-patronage intentions will differ between economic brands and prestige brands*” is **rejected** because Sig. (2-tailed) = 0,000 <  $\alpha$  on both groups, so there is a significant difference between the neutral and negative groups on both constructs but the behaviour it is the same between prestige and economic groups.

This four hypothesis could only be proved and accepted if for example, the negative word-of-mouth intentions registered a significant difference between the negative and neutral groups on the group that answers to the prestige brands group and in the respondents of the economic brands group there is no significant difference between the negative and neutral groups.

<b>Prestige Brands (n=208)</b>						
<b>Construct</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.(2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean difference</b>	
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	Negative group	115	-,477	,634	-,098	No significant difference
	Neutral group	93				
<b>Perceived Brand quality</b>	Negative group	115	-,154	,878	-,023	No significant difference
	Neutral group	93				
<b>Negative word-of-mouth intentions</b>	Negative group	115	6,615	,000	1,440	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Neutral group	93				
<b>Re-patronage Intention</b>	Negative group	115	-6,803	,000	-,984	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Neutral group	93				

Table 13 - Independent sample t-test prestige brands vs negative or neutral group

Source: developed by the author

<b>Economic Brands (n=213)</b>						
<b>Construct</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.(2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean difference</b>	
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	Negative group	102	-,458	,647	-,091	No significant difference
	Neutral group	111				
<b>Perceived Brand quality</b>	Negative group	102	-,514	,608	-,074	No significant difference
	Neutral group	111				
<b>Negative word-of-mouth intentions</b>	Negative group	102	6,529	,000	1,505	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Neutral group	111				
<b>Re-patronage Intention</b>	Negative group	102	-7,109	,000	-,141	<b>Significant difference</b>
	Neutral group	111				

Table 14 - Independent sample t-test economic brands vs negative or neutral group

Source: developed by the author

### 5.6.1. Hypothesis validation summary

In resume of the chapter data analysis, the following table lists the hypothesis and their situation in terms of validation or rejection in accordance with the investigation results presented before.

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b>H1:</b> Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on brand attitude;	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H2:</b> Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on perceived brand quality;	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H3:</b> Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a positive impact on consumers NWOM intentions;	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H4:</b> Exposure to negative word-of-mouth has a negative impact on re-patronage intentions;	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H5a:</b> The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on brand attitude will differ between prestige brands than and economic brands;	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H5b:</b> The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on perceived brand quality will differ between prestige brands and economic brands;	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H5c:</b> The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on NWOM intentions will differ between prestige brands and economic brands;	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H5d:</b> The effects of exposure to negative word-of-mouth on re-patronage intentions will differ between economic brands and prestige brands.	<b>Rejected</b>

Table 15 – Hypothesis Resume

Source: developed by the author





## 6. Conclusions

This final chapter presents the main results and conclusions of this dissertation.

It also presents the implications for marketing and management and the research limitations.

Finally, some clues for future research are also discussed and presented.

### 6.1. Main conclusions

As mentioned before, this research focuses on measure the impact of the exposure to electronic negative word-of-mouth on consumers regarding *brand attitude*, *perceived brand quality*, *negative word-of-mouth intentions*, and *re-patronage intentions*, and with focus on the sports shoes industry.

Some conclusions can be taken from the demographics and characterisation of the population. The respondents of the questionnaire have a strong presence on Facebook with 73,9% of the sample using this social media platform several times per day and, 18,5% once per day. Also, 61,8% of the sample follow at least one brand on Facebook. These aspects prove the strong presence of the social media platforms on the population lives, even if 93,8% of the sample never did a complaint on Facebook.

Regarding the research hypothesis analysis, the first conclusion that can be taken is that the exposure to negative word-of-mouth does not have a negative impact on brand attitude and in perceived brand quality (rejection of H1 and H2). So, a customer exposed to negative word-of-mouth does not change their beliefs and feelings toward the brand and its quality. This result can be explained by the resistance that some customers make to negative word-of-mouth when having in account brands they love or have more empathy (Kimmel and Kitchen, 2014), since all the questions were analysed regarding the chosen brand from the four presented and the respondents have tendency to choose the brand they prefer.

On the other hand, the exposure to negative word-of-mouth leads the customers to share these complaints with their relatives and friends (validation of H3). This proves that customers spread this negative word-of-mouth with the intention to recommend or warn the family and friends (Richins, 1983b, 1987). This aspect was mentioned in the

literature review and proves here that negative word-of-mouth can generate more negative word-of-mouth and this can be very dangerous to brands and organisations.

Also, this exposure has a negative impact on the customer's intentions to re-purchase the brands (validation of H4). This means that a consumer exposed to complaints will think twice after purchase or re-purchase that product or brand.

The respondents of the questionnaire were randomised to two different groups, and 208 of the final sample answered to questions about prestige brands, while 213 individuals answered to questions about economic brands. This moderator factor, brand type, was used to prove that there are differences between the two groups, negative and neutral, regarding the four constructs that were studied. It was expected that a customer exposed to negative word-of-mouth regarding an economic brand has differences on the four constructs regarding a customer exposed to negative word-of-mouth about a prestige brand.

As mentioned on the hypothesis it was made a test to check the differences between each of the four constructs in each group, regarding the brand type. After doing this test and contrary to what expected, it is possible to conclude that the impact of the exposure to the negative word-of-mouth on the four constructs is not different between the prestige brand group and the economic brand group (rejection of H5a, H5b, H5c and H5d). So the impact on brand attitude, perceived brand quality, negative word-of-mouth intentions and re-patronage intentions is similar on both groups, proving thus that the behaviour of the consumers is equal and it does not matter the type of brand.

In conclusion, when a customer of a certain brand is exposed to negative word-of-mouth has the negative word-of-mouth and re-patronage intentions affected but it does not change the attitude and quality perception of the brand. So, after the exposure, the customer will probably spread the negative opinion with his family and friends and probably not repurchase that brand, but the attitude and quality perception of the brand does not change.

On the other side, this constructs does not change when we talk about an economic or a prestige brands, so the impact is not different since an exposure to negative word-of-mouth has the same impact in the four constructs even if it is an economic or a prestige brand.

## **6.2. Implications for marketing and management**

There are some implications for marketing and management that companies should have into account.

First of all, brands have to understand the importance of the consumer's opinions and the changes that happened in the way consumers spread their opinions.

Nowadays consumers are more informed and always looking for recommendations and information before making a purchase. The changes on the internet are also an aspect to take into account since nowadays is the main search method.

Even this research did not reveal a significant impact in all the constructs regarding the exposition to negative word-of-mouth, the online complaints are serious and should be taken into account by the brands and organisations.

As shown on the main conclusions the exposure to these complaints have an impact on negative word-of-mouth intentions, and nowadays an unsatisfied customer can spread their negative experience not only with their relatives and friends but also on the Internet. The consumers that read these complaints are also affected by them, and this is conducive to generate more negative word-of-mouth.

The negative word-of-mouth also has an impact on re-patronage intentions showing that a consumer that reads these complaints will think twice before re-purchase the product again.

So, in conclusion, is very important that brands and organisations have a presence on social media platforms, listen to the customers' opinion and find efficient methods for dealing with the complaints and reduce the negative word-of-mouth.

### **6.3. Limitations and Clues for Future Research**

The current research had some limitations that should be considered and can be identified as clues for future researches.

First, this study was all focused on the sport shoes industry which can be a limitation, since there are other industries that can complement this research. So one clue for future research and that can be interesting is executing this study in other industries and areas, like for example on accommodation industry, restaurant industry, airlines, etc.

Another limitation regarding the chosen industry is the fact that the sample was only exposed to 8 brands and there are a lot of other brands in this industry. So another clue for future research is elaborating the study using other brands of the same industry and using another moderator factor that can show significant differences. An example can be developing the study with only Portuguese brands or with only International brands.

The questionnaire was only available in the Portuguese language which reduces the sample to only Portuguese persons. This is also a limitation since the results cannot be global applied.

Second, the chosen methodology thought a questionnaire can be a limitation because even though it was made an analysis on SPSS, some questions could be not interpreted in the right way and allow some random responses.

The study only mentioned the Facebook platform, but another clue for future research can be elaborating these analyses regarding other social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube or Twitter.

The valence of the posts presented also represents a limitation to the study since the content of the posts is classified in a subjective way and not all the respondents can understand in the same way.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A1 - Questionnaire in Portuguese

Bem-vindo/a!

Este questionário destina-se à realização de um estudo para uma tese do Mestrado de Marketing da ISCTE Business School.

Preciso da sua ajuda para o conseguir terminar e não deve demorar mais do que 5 minutos.

Todas as respostas são anónimas e não serão usadas noutros fins.

Se tiver alguma dúvida relativamente ao questionário ou ao estudo, pode enviar-me um e-mail para afvmb@iscte-iul.pt.

Obrigada!

Andreia Filipa Barnabé

1. Praticou desporto nos últimos 12 meses?
  - Sim
  - Não
  
2. Com que frequência?
  - 1 ou 2 vezes por mês
  - 1 vez por semana
  - 2 ou 3 vezes por semana
  - 4 ou mais vezes por semana
  - Nenhuma das anteriores
  
3. Alguma vez comprou calçado para a prática de desporto?
  - Sim
  - Não

Passar para: Q4 se Q3 = Sim; Q6 se Q3= Não

4. Qual foi a marca de calçado que comprou da última vez?

5. Avalie o grau de satisfação com a sua última compra de calçado para a prática de desporto.

- Completamente insatisfeito
- Muito insatisfeito
- Insatisfeito
- Nem satisfeito nem insatisfeito
- Satisfeito
- Muito Satisfeito
- Completamente satisfeito

6. Classifique as seguintes marcas de acordo com a sua opinião.

	Marca Económica	Marca de Prestígio
<i>Nike</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Adidas</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Asics</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>New Balance</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Quechua – Decathlon</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Kalenji – Decathlon</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Berg – Sport Zone</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Doone – Sport Zone</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Tendo em conta o ato de compra de calçado para a prática de desporto, em que medida concorda com as seguintes afirmações.

	Discordo completamente	2	3	Não concordo nem discordo	5	6	Concordo completamente
<i>Quando compro calçado desportivo tenho sempre em conta a marca</i>							
<i>Opto sempre por comprar marcas de prestígio</i>							
<i>Costumo comprar marcas de prestígio porque duram mais tempo</i>							
<i>Opto por marcas mais económicas pois não quero investir muito dinheiro</i>							
<i>Opto por marcas mais económicas porque são de boa qualidade</i>							
<i>Compro sempre marcas de prestígio</i>							
<i>Não compro marcas mais económicas</i>							

8. Possui um perfil de Facebook?

- Sim
- Não

Passar para: Final do questionário se Q8=Não

9. Com que frequência utiliza o Facebook?

- Várias vezes ao dia
- Uma vez por dia
- Duas a três vezes por semana
- Uma vez por semana
- Menos do que uma vez por semana

10. Segue algumas marcas através do Facebook?

- Sim
- Não

11. Alguma vez utilizou a página de Facebook de alguma marca para fazer uma reclamação?

- Sim
- Não

12. Escolha uma das seguintes marcas:

- Nike
- Adidas
- Asics
- New Balance

**Prestige Group**

13. Escolha uma das seguintes marcas:

- Quechua – Decathlon
- Kalenji – Decathlon
- Berg – Sport Zone
- Doone – Sport Zone

**Economic Group**




Imagine que está a ver a página de Facebook da marca que acabou de seleccionar. Observe atentamente as seguintes publicações feitas nessa página, por outros clientes.

### Grupo 1 – Negative Group



Beatriz Silva

Comprei uns ténis vossos há cerca de um mês, usei-os 4 vezes e as solas já estão a descolar. Como é que é possível isto acontecer num calçado supostamente tão bom?! É inadmissível!

 Gosto

 Comentar

14. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negativa
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa
- Positiva
- Muito positiva

15. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções



Helder António

1 h

Estou extremamente desiludido com o vosso serviço ao cliente! Quero trocar um calçado pois tem defeito e já enviei 3 e-mails e estou até agora sem nenhuma resposta!

 Gosto

 Comentar

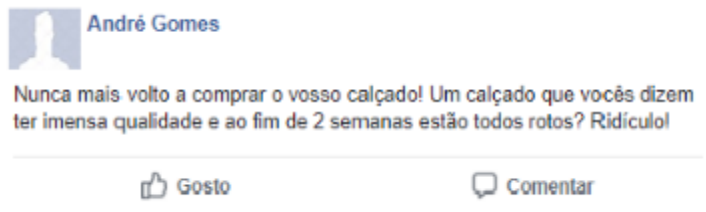
16. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negativa
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa

- Positiva
- Muito positiva

17. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções



18. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negativa
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa
- Positiva
- Muito positiva

19. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções



**António Fernandes Costa**

12 min

Comprei uns ténis vossos online e vinham com defeito, devolvi-os e ainda não recebi o meu dinheiro de volta! Pensava que eram uma marca séria mas sinto-me enganado!

20. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negative
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa
- Positiva
- Muito Positiva

21. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções

## Grupo 2 – Neutral Group



**Francisco Santos**

2 h

Qual a data prevista para o lançamento do novo modelo dos vossos ténis? Obrigado

 Gosto

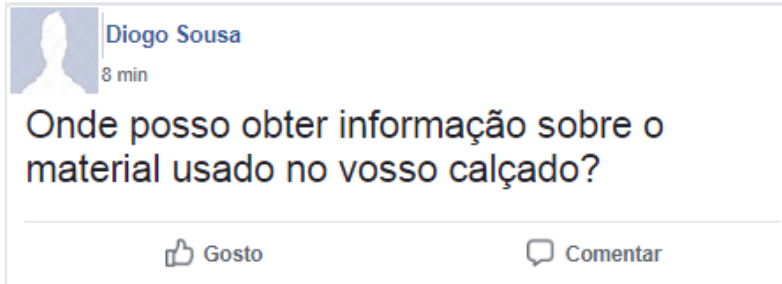
 Comentar

22. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negativa
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa
- Positiva
- Muito positiva

23. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções



24. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negativa
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa
- Positiva
- Muito positiva


25. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções



João Pereira

Boa Tarde. Fabricam o tamanho 38 deste modelo de calçado?

 Gosto

 Comentar

26. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negativa
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa
- Positiva
- Muito positiva

27. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções



Patricia Costa

2 h

Como posso contactar-vos para efectuar uma troca de um produto comprado online?

 Gosto

 Comentar

28. Considera esta publicação:

- Muito negativa
- Negativa
- Nem positiva nem negativa
- Positiva
- Muito positiva

29. Indique o que faria em relação a esta publicação:

- Colocava gosto
- Comentava
- Partilhava
- Nenhuma das opções

30. Indique, numa escala de 1 a 7, o seu grau de concordância com as seguintes afirmações (considere as publicações que leu e a marca que seleccionou anteriormente).

	Discordo completamente	2	3	Não concordo nem discordo	5	6	Concordo completamente
<i>Se esta situação acontecesse comigo eu iria reclamar da marca aos meus amigos e familiares</i>							
<i>Se esta situação acontecesse comigo eu ia garantir que dizia aos meus amigos para não adquirirem produtos desta marca</i>							
<i>É provável que eu alerte os meus amigos e familiares para não adquirirem produtos desta marca</i>							

31. Indique, numa escala de 1 a 7, o seu grau de concordância com as seguintes afirmações (considere as publicações que leu e a marca que seleccionou anteriormente).

	Discordo completamente	2	3	Não concordo nem discordo	5	6	Concordo completamente
<i>Eu estou disposto a adquirir produtos desta marca no futuro</i>							
<i>Se uma destas situações tivesse acontecido comigo eu não voltaria a adquirir produtos desta marca</i>							
<i>Se uma destas situações tivesse acontecido comigo eu voltaria a adquirir produtos desta marca</i>							
<i>Eu escolheria outra marca, se fosse possível de o fazer facilmente</i>							
<i>Eu tenciono continuar a comprar produtos desta marca</i>							

32. Segundo os critérios abaixo, avalie a percepção que tem da marca. (considere a marca que seleccionou anteriormente).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<i>Não apelativa</i>								<i>Apelativa</i>
<i>Má</i>								<i>Boa</i>
<i>Desagradável</i>								<i>Agradável</i>
<i>Desfavorável</i>								<i>Favorável</i>
<i>Difícil de gostar</i>								<i>Fácil de gostar</i>

33. Avalie numa escala de 1 a 7 o seu grau de concordância com as seguintes afirmações: (considere a marca que seleccionou anteriormente).

	Discordo completamente	2	3	Não concordo nem discordo	5	6	Concordo completamente
<i>A maioria dos produtos da marca é de grande qualidade</i>							
<i>A probabilidade desta marca ser de confiança é muito alta</i>							
<i>Os produtos desta marca têm um preço adequado</i>							

34. Idade:

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- +65

35. Género:

- Masculino
- Feminino

36. Habilitações Académicas (considere o grau mais alto concluído):

- Ensino Básico (até ao 9º ano)
- Ensino Secundário
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento

37. Situação Atual:

- Desempregado
- Trabalhador



- Estudante
- Trabalhador estudante
- Reformado

## Appendix A2 - Questionnaire in English

Welcome!

The following questionnaire is part of a study of a dissertation for the Master in Marketing at ISCTE Business School.

I need your help to finish it and it should not take more than 5 minutes.

All the responses are anonymous and will not be used for any other purposes.

If you have any question regarding the questionnaire or the study, you can send me an email to [afvmb@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:afvmb@iscte-iul.pt).

Thank you!

Andreia Filipa Barnabé

38. Have you practiced sports in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No

39. How often?

- 1 or 2 times per month
- 1 time per week
- 2 or 3 times per week
- 4 or more times per week
- None of the above

40. Have you ever bought shoes for sports?

- Yes
- No

Skip to: Q4 if Q3 = Yes; Q6 if Q3= No

41. What was the brand of sport shoes you bought last time?

42. Evaluate the level of satisfaction with your last purchase of sport shoes.

- Completely unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Neither satisfied neither unsatisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Completely satisfied

43. Rate the following brands according to your opinion.

	Economic Brand	Prestige Brand
<i>Nike</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Adidas</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Asics</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>New Balance</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Quechua – Decathlon</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Kalenji – Decathlon</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Berg – Sport Zone</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Doone – Sport Zone</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. Taking into account the act of buying sport shoes, to what extent do you agree with the following statements.

	Completely disagree	2	3	Neither agree neither disagree	5	6	Completely agree
<i>“When I buy sport shoes I always take into account the brand”</i>							
<i>“I always buy prestige brands”</i>							
<i>“Usually I buy prestigious brands because they last longer”</i>							
<i>“Usually I buy economic brands because I do not want to invest a lot of money”</i>							
<i>“I buy economic brands because they have good quality.”</i>							
<i>“I always buy prestige brands”</i>							
<i>“I do not buy economic brands”</i>							

45. Do you have a Facebook profile?

- Yes
- No

Skip to: End of the questionnaire if Q8=No

46. How frequently do you use Facebook?

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- Two or three times a week
- Once a week

- Less than once a week

47. Do you follow any brand on Facebook?

- Yes
- No

48. Have you ever used a Facebook brand page to make a complaint?

- Yes
- No

49. Choose one of the following brands:

- Nike
- Adidas
- Asics
- New Balance

**Prestige Group**

50. Choose one of the following brands:

- Quechua – Decathlon
- Kalenji – Decathlon
- Berg – Sport Zone
- Doone – Sport Zone

**Economic Group**

Imagine that you are viewing the Facebook page of the brand that you have just selected.

Observe with attention the following posts made on this page by other customers.

### Grupo 1 – Negative Group



Beatriz Silva

Comprei uns ténis vossos há cerca de um mês, usei-os 4 vezes e as solas já estão a descolar. Como é que é possível isto acontecer num calçado supostamente tão bom?! É inadmissível!

Gosto

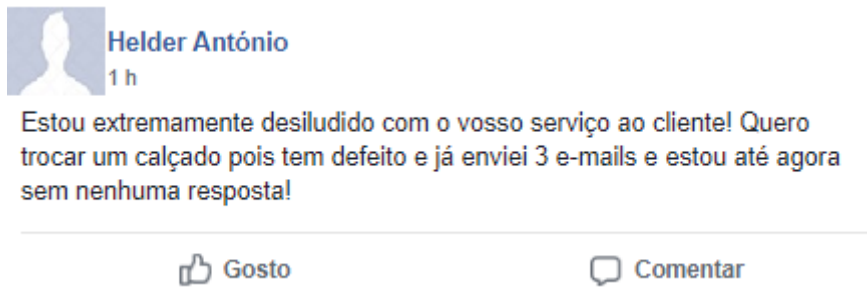
Comentar

51. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive

52. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options

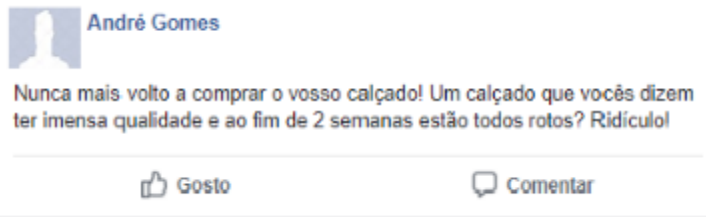


53. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive

54. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options

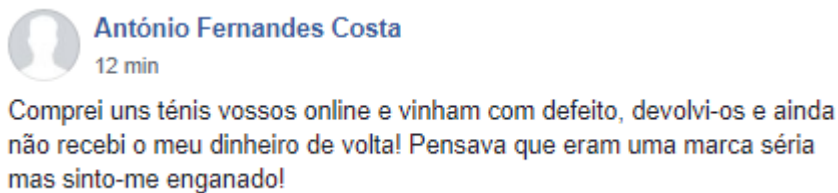


55. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive

56. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options



57. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive

58. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options

## Grupo 2 – Neutral Group



Qual a data prevista para o lançamento do novo modelo dos vossos ténis? Obrigado

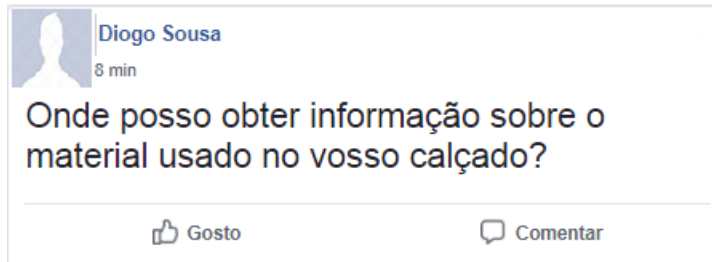


59. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive

60. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options

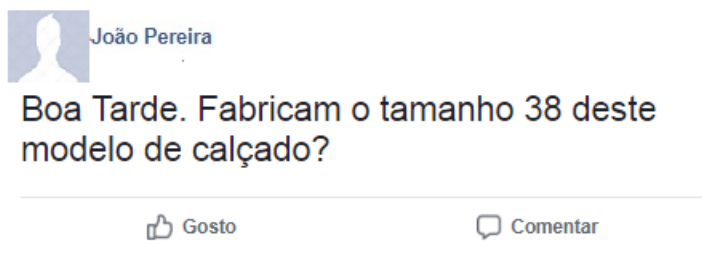


61. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive

62. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options



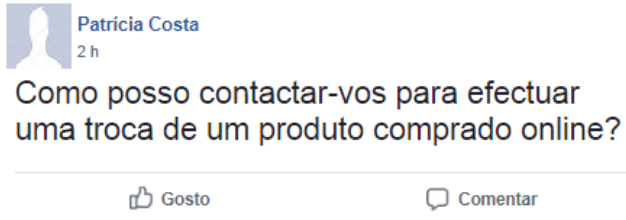
63. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive



64. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options



65. Do you consider this post as:

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neither positive neither negative
- Positive

66. Indicate what you would do in relation to this post:

- A like
- Comment
- Share
- None of the options

67. Indicate, on a scale of 1 to 7, your level of agreement with the following statements: (consider the posts you have read and the brand you have selected earlier).

	Completely disagree	2	3	Neither agree neither disagree	5	6	Completely agree
<i>If this had happened to me I would complain to my friends and family about this brand</i>							
<i>If this had happened to me I would make sure to tell my</i>							

<i>friends and family not to shop this brand</i>							
<i>How likely would you be to warn your friends and family not to shop this brand?</i>							

68. Indicate, on a scale of 1 to 7, your level of agreement with the following statements: (consider the posts you have read and the brand you have selected earlier).

	Completely disagree	2	3	Neither agree neither disagree	5	6	Completely agree
<i>What is the likelihood that you would shop this brand in the future?</i>							
<i>If this situation had happened to me I would never shop this brand again.</i>							
<i>If this had happened to me I would still shop this brand in the future</i>							
<i>If it were possible to do so without problem, I would choose another brand</i>							
<i>I intend to remain the brand's customer</i>							

69. According to the criteria below, evaluate your perception of the brand. (consider the brand you selected earlier)..

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Unappealing								Appealing
Bad								Good
Unpleasant								Pleasant
Unfavourable								Favourable
Unlikable								Likable

70. Evaluate on a scale of 1 to 7 you level of agreement with the following statements (consider the brandy you selected earlier).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely disagree			Neither agree neither disagree			Completely agree
<i>Most of the products of this brand are of great quality</i>							
<i>The likelihood that this brand is reliable is very high</i>							
<i>Products of this brand are worth their price</i>							

71. Age:

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- +65

72. Gender:

- Male
- Female

73. Academic qualifications (consider the highest degree completed):

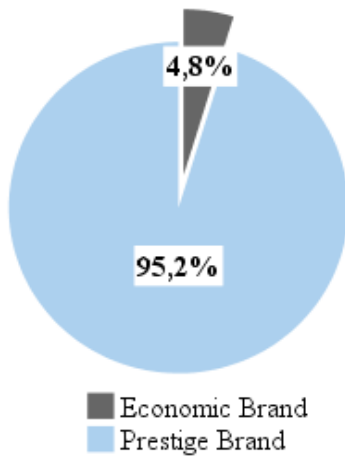
- Basic Education (9<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Secondary Education (12th grade)
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD

74. Current situation:

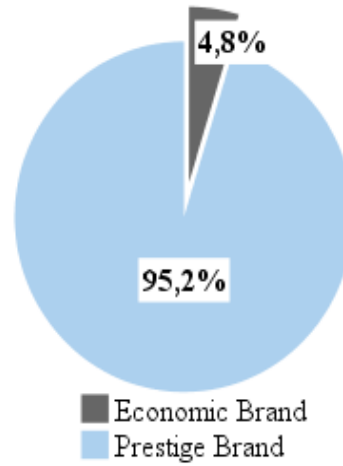
- Unemployed
- Worker
- Student
- Student-worker
- Retired

### Annex 3 - Classification of the brands by the respondents of the questionnaire

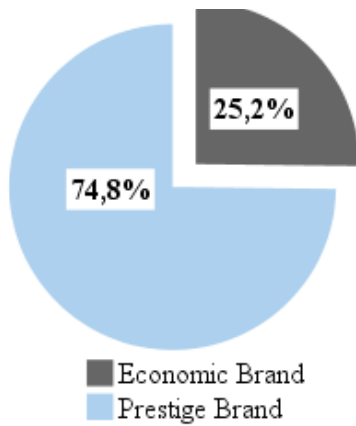
**Nike**



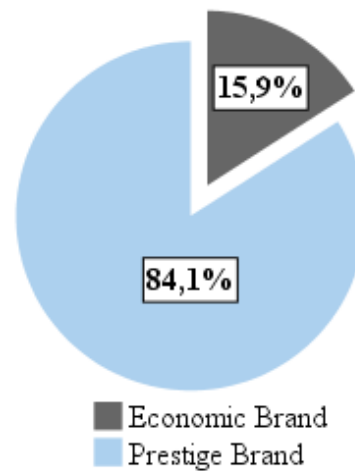
**Adidas**



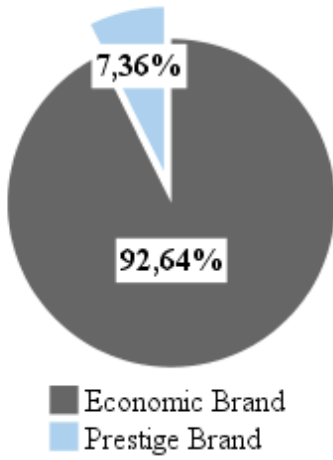
**Asics**



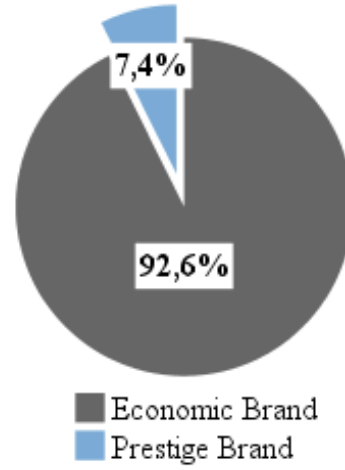
**New Balance**



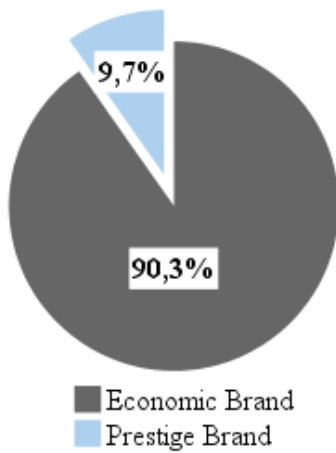
### Quechua



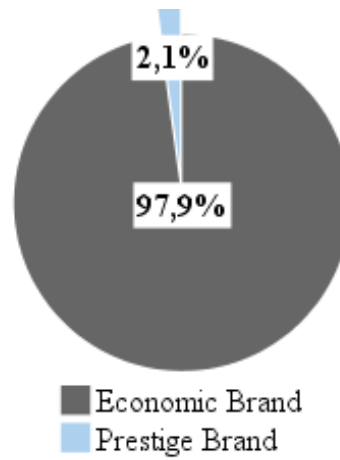
### Kalenji



### Berg



### Doone



## Appendix C- Hypotheses testing - T-test

### H1

#### Test Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand Attitude	Negative Group	217	5,28	1,557	,106
	Neutral Group	204	5,29	1,567	,110

#### Independent sample t-test

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Brand Attitude	Equal variances assumed	,097	,755	-,071	419	,943	-,011	,152	-,310	,289
	Equal variances not assumed			-,071	417,030	,943	-,011	,152	-,310	,289

**H2**

**Test Statistics**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceived Brand Quality	Negative Group	217	5,00	1,139	,077
	Neutral Group	204	5,03	1,010	,071

**Independent sample t-test**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Perceived Brand Quality	Equal variances assumed	,3516	,061	-,250	419	,802	-,026	,105	-,233	,180
	Equal variances not assumed			-,251	417,555	,802	-,026	,105	-,232	,180

**H3**

**Test Statistics**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
NWOM intentions	Negative Group	217	5,18	1,485	,101
	Neutral Group	204	3,72	1,757	,123

**Independent sample t-test**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
NWOM intentions	Equal variances assumed	5,650	,018	9,212	419	,000	1,458	,158	1,147	1,769
	Equal variances not assumed			9,165	398,385	,000	1,458	,159	1,145	1,770



**H4**

**Test Statistics**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Re-patronage intentions	Negative Group	217	3,49	1,245	,084
	Neutral Group	204	4,53	,968	,068

**Independent sample t-test**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Re-patronage intentions	Equal variances assumed	19,042	,000	-9,505	419	,000	-1,037	,109	-1,252	-,823
	Equal variances not assumed				404,932	,000	-1,037	,108	-1,250	-,824

**H5a**

**Test Statistics – Prestige Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand Attitude	Negative Group	115	5,81	1,505	,140
	Neutral Group	93	5,91	1,445	,150

**Independent sample t-test – Prestige Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
Brand Attitude		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Brand Attitude	Equal variances assumed	1,601	,207	-,477	206	,634	-,098	,206	-,505	,308
	Equal variances not assumed			-,479	199,986	,632	-,098	,205	-,503	,306

**Test Statistics – Economic Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand Attitude	Negative Group	102	4,68	1,396	,138
	Neutral Group	111	4,77	1,482	,141

**Independent sample t-test – Economic Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
Brand Attitude		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Brand Attitude	Equal variances assumed	,084	,772	-,458	211	,647	-,091	,198	-,480	,299
	Equal variances not assumed			-,459	210,865	,646	-,091	,97	-,479	,298

**H5b**

**Test Statistics – Prestige Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceived Brand Quality	Negative Group	115	5,16	1,092	,102
	Neutral Group	93	5,18	1,086	,113

**Independent sample t-test – Prestige Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Perceived Brand Quality	Equal variances assumed	,020	,888	-,154	206	,878	-,023	,152	-,323	,276
	Equal variances not assumed			-,154	197,389	,878	-,023	,152	-,323	,276

**Test Statistics – Economic Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceived Brand Quality	Negative Group	102	4,83	1,171	,116
	Neutral Group	111	4,90	,926	,088

**Independent sample t-test – Economic Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Perceived Brand Quality	Equal variances assumed	5,535	,020	-,514	211	,608	-,074	,144	-,358	,210
	Equal variances not assumed			-,509	192,140	,611	-,074	,146	-,361	,213

**H5c**

**Test Statistics – Prestige Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
NWOM intentions	Negative Group	115	5,06	1,445	,135
	Neutral Group	93	3,62	1,693	,176

**Independent sample t-test – Prestige Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
NWOM intentions	Equal variances assumed	2,670	,104	6,615	206	,000	1,440	,218	1,011	1,869
	Equal variances not assumed			6,505	181,505	,000	1,440	,221	1,003	1,877

**Test Statistics – Economic Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
NWOM intentions	Negative Group	102	5,31	1,525	,151
	Neutral Group	111	3,80	1,812	,172

**Independent sample t-test – Economic Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
NWOM intentions	Equal variances assumed	2,837	,094	6,529	211	,000	1,505	,231	1,051	1,960
	Equal variances not assumed			6,577	209,430	,000	1,505	,229	1,054	1,957

**H5d**

**Test Statistics – Prestige Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Re-patronage Intentions	Negative Group	115	3,70	1,132	,106
	Neutral Group	93	4,68	,907	,094

**Independent sample t-test – Prestige Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Re-patronage Intentions	Equal variances assumed	4,818	,029	-6,803	206	,000	-,984	,145	-1,270	-,699
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,963	205,987	,000	-,984	,141	-1,263	-,706

**Test Statistics – Economic Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Re-patronage Intentions	Negative Group	102	3,26	1,329	,132
	Neutral Group	111	4,40	1,002	,095



**Independent sample t-test – Economic Group**

		Levene test for equal variances		T-test for equal means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Re-patronage Intentions	Equal variances assumed	12,637	,000	-7,109	211	,000	-1,141	,160	-1,457	-,824
	Equal variances not assumed			-7,026	187,195	,000	-1,141	,162	-1,461	-,821