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Negative electronic word-of-mouth (NWOM): how to avoid and respond to negative online feedback

Frederico José Almeida de Colaço Valarinho

Master in Marketing

Prof. Doutora Susana Marques
Professora Associada
Departamento de Marketing, Operações e Gestão Geral
ISCTE Business School

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Resumo

A seguinte tese tem dois principais objetivos: baseado num processo de investigação extensivo de literatura relevante, este estudo compreende um conjunto de variáveis relativas tanto aos antecedentes/determinantes de word-of-mouth negativo, como às diferentes estratégias de resposta a estas mensagens. Para além disso, a metodologia desta dissertação confronta os seus participantes com diferentes abordagens de resposta, com o objetivo de demonstrar quais as melhores práticas neste tipo de situações.

Ademais, os dados primários da metodologia – um questionário online – abordam diretamente a significância das variáveis identificadas na literatura para os antecedentes e para os diferentes tipos de resposta a mensagens de word-of-mouth negativo.

As conclusões aferidas são de valor considerável para gestores de comunicação por salientarem alguns dos sentimentos que levam os clientes a escrever comentários negativos e as melhores abordagens de resposta. Efetivamente, as principais ilações do estudo revelam que a grande maioria dos conceitos referidos na literatura se confirmam nesta metodologia e revelam práticas eficazes de responder a mensagens de word-of-mouth negativo.

Keywords: Word-of-Mouth Negativo; Feedback Online; Antecedentes; Estratégias de Resposta a Feedback; Comunicação Marca-Consumidor

JEL: M31, M39

Abstract

The following thesis has two main goals: taking into account extensive research of valuable literature, whose study comprises a series of variables related to both the antecedents/determinants of negative word-of-mouth, and the different strategies that are used when responding to these messages. In addition, its methodology confronts the participants with different combinations of such responding approaches, which aims to showcase whether there is a clear best practice for these situations.

Moreover, the primary data collected within the methodology – an online questionnaire – directly addressed the significance of the variables identified in the literature for the antecedents and the negative word-of-mouth response strategies.

The conclusions reached are of important value for communication managers by highlighting some of the feelings that lead customers to write negative online comments and the best approaches to answer them. In fact, the major findings of the study reveal that most of the concepts showcased in the literature are confirmed in this methodology and reveal some of the best practices in responding to negative word-of-mouth.

Keywords: Negative Word-of-Mouth; Online Feedback; Antecedents; Feedback Response Strategies; Brand-to-Consumer Communication

JEL: M31, M39

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1. Introduction

It is a common practice, especially for the younger generation, to check forums, social media and review platforms before making a purchase decision. The desire to make the best purchase decision, or at least to minimize its risk, leads customers to scour the internet for information that either confirmed their bias or dissuaded their choice. It would be safe to say that most people have gone on Amazon to buy a product and scrolled down to check reviews, or that most people looking for a restaurant have gone on TripAdvisor, searched for a 4+ rated establishment, but still looked at the bad reviews to avoid negative experiences, such as underwhelming dishes or uncomfortable sitting places.

Because of this enhanced importance of consumer-generated online messages (WOM), and the perceived extra emphasis given to negative communications, it is absolutely crucial that brands find ways to stop consumers from writing the negative ones (NWOM), by managing customer expectations, improving product and service quality, and creating loyalty-promoting strategies. However, it is impossible to please everyone, thus it is essential that communication managers know exactly which type of responses to use, whether to respond or not and when to respond.

In a more optimistic approach, it would be ideal for brands to recover the trust of consumers so that their marketing communications regain their effectiveness. Still, it seems that the customer profile is not trending back in that direction, so brands need to foster WOM and generate positive operational developments to keep up with the market needs, that are often evidenced in the NWOM messages.

This work highlights the importance, impact, and consequences of negative word-of-mouth and focuses on ways to mitigate the negative outcomes it may create. The literature review introduces and explains concepts such as word-of-mouth and its impact, the dichotomies between electronic WOM and traditional WOM, and between negative and positive word-of-mouth, the antecedents of WOM and the determinants of NWOM, ending with a quick rundown of literature regarding how to respond to NWOM messages.

1.1. Dissertation Structure

Structurally, this dissertation is split into 4 main elements – the literature review, the methodology, the data analysis, and the conclusions.

The literature review introduces all the concepts that were used to establish the hypothesis and run the testing. This part gives a historical overview of the concepts and their evolution over time, and highlights concepts such as electronic word-of-mouth, the determinants of word-of-mouth, the best response approaches to negative comments and others. The methodology subsequently explains the process used to garner and filter primary data, which also includes a brief characterization of the sample. The data analysis followed, by testing the data previously attained and giving significant conclusions to the results achieved. In the end, a series of structured and valuable conclusions are presented.

1.2. Dissertation Objectives

The fundamental aim of this study was to create value for communication managers by shedding light on the perceptions of customers regarding the determinants/motivators of NWOM and what they think are the best ways to respond to them. Thus, although the methodology is customer-based, the results compiled served as a base to generate a managerial blueprint in how to deal and approach NWOM from a manager's standpoint.

In addition, the research also intended to contribute to the literature by applying the gathered concepts to a new sample and adding new concepts and questions that can be studied in the future.

For each of the sets of questions, there was an objective. Firstly, it was intended to explore what are the factual determinants of NWOM messages according to the participants of the methodology. Then explore the perceptions of good NWOM response strategies and highlight the most important variables. Finally, there was the intention to explore what are the effects of different approach combinations in customer's perceptions – specially without disclosing the meaning of the studied concepts *a priori* to the participants, ridding them of bias towards accepting/rejecting certain variables because of how a question might be written.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Early Word-of-Mouth Definitions and Organic Messages

The concept of word-of-mouth also referred to as WOM, word-of-mouth communications, word-of-mouth marketing or interpersonal customer communication, has been the subject of study across the literature for the last 60 years. Despite having been researched for so long, its definition is highly fragmented, not only because it is recognized as a mysterious force (Arndt, 1967), but also due to the technological developments, making WOM a dynamic evolving notion.

Going so far as the 1950s, it is possible to find WOM as the action where there is an exchange of marketing information between consumers (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). A few decades later, WOM was still seen as an exchange in information between individuals, but this marketing information was specified into comments, thoughts and/or ideas (Bone, 1992).

In the initial stages of word-of-mouth, questions started arising on the differences between these interpersonal communications and one-to-one advertising. Therefore, some authors started describing WOM as an exchange where neither the sender nor the receiver of the message had any commercial participation or gain in promoting the product (Arndt, 1967). Bone (1992) emphasized that neither of the individuals included in the communication were a marketing source.

In addition, with the increasing complexity of marketing communications, it seems as though the most widely accepted definition of WOM matches the definition of organic word-of-mouth, that is, a form of informal communication that is different from corporate and commercial communication since it translates into a voluntary exchange with the market (Lendrevie et al., 2010), thus it is believed that what differentiates the concept from other marketing actions is the “perceived independence of the source of the message” (Litvin et al., 2008, p.459) from any marketing intention. Thus, anytime the term WOM is referred to in this work, the idea of spontaneity and intrinsic motivation is implied (You et al., 2015, p.37).

2.2. Antecedents of Word-of-Mouth

Early investigations about the antecedents of WOM usually focused primarily on customer satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with previous purchase experiences. However, even then the literature seemed not to be particularly uniform and was often equivocal. Brown et al. (2005) speculated that this was due to the fact that prior research might have ignored the fact that the characteristics of consumers, such as the level of commitment to the brand, may mediate the level of satisfaction of the consumer. But satisfaction can only be measured in a post-purchase scenario and is usually related with other variables such as consumer loyalty and retention. In pre-purchase, however, Arndt (1967) realized that people that were already pre-disposed to make a purchase were more likely to be affected by the favourableness of WOM communications.

Despite some heterogeneity, de Matos and Rossi (2008) created a conceptual framework on the antecedents of WOM, highlighting the main focus points that managers need to take into consideration when anticipating and managing consumer PWOM and NWOM. They were all proved to positively influence WOM activity and are the following by level of correlation (highest to lowest):

- **Commitment:** commitment is defined across the literature as the desire to maintain a valuable relationship (Moorman et al., 1992). Going deeper into the concept, some research has proved that Affective Commitment, that is, the motivation to help an organization achieve its goal through active engagement (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992), is positively related with WOM activity.
- **Perceived Value:** as the name indicates, perceived value is the evaluated “trade-off between benefits or gets (...) and costs or gives (...)” (de Matos & Rossi, 2008, p.582).
- **Perceived Service Quality:** here, multiple authors find common ground on the relevance of the concept (Brown et al., 2005; de Matos & Rossi, 2008; de Ruyter & Bloemer, 1999; L., 2001), realizing that perceived service quality affects the positivity of a person's WOM communication. Brown et al. (2005) goes so far as to claim that when consumers negatively perceive a certain service's quality, they are more likely to write WOM messages to more people and more frequently to prevent others from also having a negative experience.
- **Trust:** this concept is a relevant predictor of WOM and refers to the amount of confidence a customer has with a certain brand, as it impacts the perceived risk of purchase. It is such an important determinant, that Filieri et al. (2015) went further to study the antecedents of trust.

- **Satisfaction:** referred to as customer satisfaction or even consumer attitude (Tsai et al., 2016), it goes back to the initial idea that individuals evaluate an experience based on their expectations from their own or others' previous experiences (Oliver, 1980), occasionally leading to feelings of over-expectation and disappointment. As proved here, it is not the only viable antecedent of WOM nor is it the highest correlated to WOM activity.

- **Loyalty:** loyalty is a significant antecedent of WOM since customers often use WOM communication to establish/maintain a relationship with a brand.

Adding to these concepts, Brown et al. (2005) had also indicated that organizational identification, or the level to which an individual relates with a brand, is positively related with WOM activity. This happens because consumers feel that making comments/reviews about a certain brand is a means to express their self-identity and develop their concept of the self (Arnett & Hunt, 2003).

In addition, although there has been little research on the antecedents of online word-of-mouth, Sun et al. (2006), in what were the earlier days of the Internet, identified the familiarity and experience with online content massively affect online WOM activity, however, in 2021, these concerns are not nearly as important as they used to be. Nonetheless, the authors also proved that both innovativeness and the strength of online social connections were important drivers to transmit and seek ideas, respectively.

2.3. Evolution of WOM and Electronic Word-of-Mouth

The 90's were a particularly important decade for technology developments and innovations that completely changed people's day-to-day life with hyper-convenient tools. From the first SMS sent, the foundation of Amazon, to the implementation of the World Wide Web and the creation of Google, these were the steppingstones for what is now known as Electronic Word-of-Mouth. Whilst Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) both agree on the fact that it is a type of communication made via the internet, they focus on different characteristics of the concept. On one hand, the former states the diffusion potential of eWOM through platforms such as online discussion forums, online consumer reviews, blogs, social networking sites and online brand/shopping sites (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). On the other hand, the latter focus more on the possibility of the communication being positive or negative, its object (product or company) and the vast reach of an Internet message. It was after the turn of the century that the concepts of WOM and eWOM started closely approximating and have reached a state where many of the articles that mention WOM are, in fact, mentioning eWOM.

2.4. Impact of WOM/eWOM

The effectiveness of traditional mediums has been significantly hindered by the rise of WOM, and the power to attract and retain customers has shifted from marketers to consumers (Ahrens et al., 2013).

It is well evidenced that both traditional WOM and electronic WOM play a key role in purchase decisions (Dubois et al., 2016; Gilly et al., 1998). Similar to its traditional counterpart, eWOM is also a key information source with significant impact on consumer behaviour (Rosario et al., 2016). Previous investigations have studied and confirmed the impact of WOM and eWOM in consumer decision-making (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008), on product sales and customer acquisition (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006) and on customers' attitudes, perceptions and judgements about a brand (Herr et al., 1991; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Lee et al., 2009).

Essentially, WOM is so important and full of potential because more credibility is attributed to both the sender and the content of the message by the receiver (Dichter, 1966; Martin & Lueg, 2013; Sweeney & Swait, 2008) when compared to traditional advertising. Likewise, research shows that internet users are more trustworthy towards online reviews, a type of eWOM, by complete strangers than towards traditional media (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). As the years have gone by, consumers seem to be more and more suspicious of advertising communications and ultimately distrustful of institutions and their business practices in general (Darke & Ritchie, 2007). Thus, they look elsewhere for information about products or services and, rationally or not, ascribe more credibility to the opinion of a peer, as they are considered a more trustworthy source of information (Feick & Price, 1987). The credibility gains even more strength if the WOM/eWOM communication is made through someone familiar to the message receptor, such as a family member, a friend, or simply an acquaintance (Baker et al., 2016; Day, 1971).

2.5. Differences in eWOM and Traditional WOM

Nevertheless, eWOM and traditional WOM also have their differences, mainly because whilst the latter usually occurs between two people or a small group of individuals, the former may include multiple senders and receivers, even though the strength of the relationship between sender and receiver might be weaker (Baker et al., 2016; Duan et al., 2011; Steffes & Burgee, 2009). Also, research shows that eWOM is presented in a less biased way to the receiver because different opinions are shown together on the same web page (Lee et al., 2009; Senecal & Nantel, 2004). In addition, apart from the enormous scalability and speed of diffusion potential, through multi-way exchanges of information (Hung & Li, 2007), eWOM is much easier to measure than traditional word-of-mouth (Lee et al., 2009). Researchers now have the ability to take a large number of online eWOM messages and investigate their sentimental tendencies, message styles and positions. (Cheung & Thadani, 2012)

2.6. Negative vs Positive Word-of-Mouth

Using the previous definitions as a starting point, it is possible to infer that negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) can be described as an exchange of information between two or more consumers with a negative connotation. It happens when a customer takes actions such as publicly saying negative things about a brand, recommending avoiding certain products or brands and discouraging the purchase of such items (Hickman & Ward, 2013).

As seen on other word-of-mouth related topics, the literature can include conflicting information. For the impact of negative word-of-mouth vs positive word-of-mouth the same occurrence happens and evidence is mixed (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). East et al. (2008) studied and concluded that both positive WOM (PWOM) and negative WOM (NWOM) effectively influence purchase decisions in inverse tendencies. Apart from that, there is not a lot of evidence comparing the influence of PWOM and NWOM on consumer behaviour, however, Herr et al. (1991) concluded that individuals paid more attention to negative information when compared to positive information, and therefore, were more willing to engage in NWOM communications (Lam et al., 2009). It seems that marketers believe NWOM to be more influential than PWOM (Assael, 2004), and Cui et al. (2012) went so far as to confirm the negativity bias and the fact that “bad news travel faster”. Breazeale (2009) focused on the frequency of the messages, claiming that dissatisfied individuals share their opinions and feelings more frequently than satisfied ones.

Even though research from Park and Lee (2009) and Sweeney and Swait (2008) report opposing results regarding which one has the greater effect on purchase intentions, the great majority of studies supports that NWOM messages have a negative impact on consumers' purchase intentions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). In addition, other empirical studies found out that NWOM can not only impact purchase intentions and decrease sales (Basuroy et al., 2003) but also affect attitudes and perceptions towards a brand or product (Wyatt & Badger, 1984), as well as reduce firms' stock values (Luo et al., 2009).

Simpler approaches defended that, however complex the dichotomy could become, positive word-of-mouth was based on satisfaction and negative word-of-mouth was based on dissatisfaction (Goldenberg et al., 2007; Richins, 1983). Authors have found that negative word-of-mouth can be a reaction to a negative experience with a brand (Hickman & Ward, 2013) or a reaction to being exposed to negative brand information (Verhagen et al., 2013). Sundaram et al. (1998) believed the motives behind PWOM communication were different from their negative counterpart, stating that using consumer-opinion platforms to vent negative feelings of a bad consumption experience served to mitigate the frustrations and anxiety associated with the process. Dichter (1966), on the other hand, explained that the reason why a customer might engage in PWOM is that the positive experience creates a desire to share the delight with other peers. Moreover, using the literature prior to 1998, Sundaram et al. (1998) collected and consolidated into 8 brackets the motives behind WOM messages, dividing between NWOM and PWOM communications. Concisely, individuals undertake in PWOM communications because they want to do something without expecting anything in return (Altruism), they are excited to own/use a product (Product Involvement), they want to project themselves as intelligent to their peers (Self-enhancement) and/or they wish to help the company (Helping the company). On the contrary, individuals take part in NWOM communications to prevent their peers from negative experiences (Altruism), to ease frustration and anxiety (Anxiety reduction), to retaliate (Vengeance) and/or to obtain advice (Advice seeking).

2.7. Determinants of Negative Word-of-Mouth

More important than defining the overall antecedents of word-of-mouth, for this investigation it is crucial to figure out which are the main determinants that are more likely to generate negative word-of-mouth messages. This is especially useful for managers to understand what might originate NWOM communications towards their brand.

Initial beliefs focused on the idea that the writers of negative online messages post them because they are unsatisfied with the product/service quality. Whilst that maintains a certain level of veracity, there are a multitude of different motives behind NWOM. One less talked about pertains to customer expectations that were influenced by prior online WOM (Nam et al., 2020). If an individual finds a certain eWOM group of messages to be inaccurate or even deceiving, they are more likely to be disappointed with the company and consequently write a negative review.

Analysing NWOM messages, such as online customer reviews, is not only important to understand what drives and motivates those individuals who write the feedback, but it is also categorically meaningful to anticipate the sender's intended conduct. Verhagen et al. (2013) highlights the predictive component of analysing negative feedback, since the messages are indicative of the sender's feelings about the brand, ultimately making them more susceptible to switch to another company.

There has been some research made on the topic, but Balaji's et al. (2016) conceptual framework for the determinants of NWOM seems to be the most compelling:

2.7.1. Contextual Determinants

- Feelings of injustice: refer to a situation where the service or process of a brand is seen as unacceptable, unfair, or unequal by the customers, and it is believed that the bigger the severity of the problem, the more time and effort a customer will spend writing the NWOM message.
- Firm attribution: as the name implies, it is the attribution of blame/responsibility for a failed service situation, however, it was confirmed that as the blame on the brand grows, public NWOM communications are less likely to happen, since customers usually complain directly to the company. This was hypothesized in previous literature (Boo & Kim, 2013), where it was found that complainants often preferred emailing the companies directly when their dissatisfaction was higher, perhaps because they felt it was a more efficient way to get a response.
- Firm image: strongly related to brand reputation, the authors claim that the better the firm image is, the less likely it is to receive NWOM messages.

2.7.2. Individual Determinants

- Face concern: also regarded as the perception of the self, self-image, esteem and worth.

It was concluded that the stronger the face concern of the individual, the more likely they were to write NWOM communications.

- Emotion regulation: ability an individual as in swaying felt emotions and how to express them.

2.7.3. Social Networking Determinants

- Social Networking Sites (SNS) use intensity: it is believed that the higher the intensity of SNS use, as in, the more the exposure and time spent on these platforms, the higher number of NWOM communications.

- Tie strength: going hand in hand with the social influence previously studied by Tsai et al. (2016), wherein the bigger the social basis of an individual and the stronger the ties between them and their network, the more likely they have to indulge in negative word-of-mouth communications.

Complementing this framework, as Sundaram et al. (1998) pointed out, there is a sense of altruism in writing negative reviews, mainly to warn other consumers and prevent them from also having a negative experience. This is also referred to as social concern, and the higher the social concern the higher the probability that the customer will write a complain (Gonçalves et al., 2018). Ghazi (2017) showcased the idea that venting negative feelings through writing NWOM messages helps reduce anxiety and generates feelings of retaliation also resulting in higher likelihood that customers will write those messages. Also, senders can attain advice or social benefits from posting their opinions.

In addition, the intention to write negative eWOM messages was proven to be influenced by the sender's prior experience, that is, if the dissatisfied customer had written a negative message before, they were more likely to do it again. This possibly happens due to a sense of familiarity with the action of giving feedback, which can be related to self-confidence, another driver of negative eWOM intentions. Also, those who had higher language abilities were also more likely to share their negative experience with others (Boo & Kim, 2013).

There are multiple drivers of negative online messages that are specific to each market. While some Hospitality & Tourism establishments are often criticized by the tangible components of their service, like the furnishing, there seems to be a rather important driver common to most markets: value for money. Financial issues appear in negative reviews more often than in positive ones (Berezina et al., 2016), and keeping things within customer expectations is essential to guarantee consumer satisfaction and avoid NWOM messages. One other important issue companies often overlook is that some components that make customers satisfied can also make them dissatisfied if not provided for them, and that is a significant sign that brands must also look at their positive reviews and their competitors' to keep customer expectations within a reasonable range. One thing this highlights is that not all consumers are alike, and therefore marketing managers should take this knowledge into account to define adequate strategies (Gonçalves et al., 2018).

2.8. Responding to Word-of-Mouth

As evidenced previously, the emergence of the Internet - sometimes referred to as Web 2.0 - has allowed individuals to voice concerns in public forums (social media, blogs, etc) with reduced physical and psychological costs (van Noort & Willemsen, 2012), mainly because the complainants can send a message through a simple click and are "protected" from human face-to-face interaction. Nevertheless, the negative impact of complaints in brand perceptions and image has been proven and is the main reason as to why these companies should monitor the platforms where potentially dissatisfied customers are expressing their troubles (van Noort & Willemsen, 2012).

Nowadays, brand rebuttals to negative feedback appear to be a logical step in the flow of consumer conversations, as companies feel the need to avoid being passive observers through managing online messaging interactions between consumers (Gu & Ye, 2014; Li et al., 2018).

For that matter, brands who were used to dealing with NWOM messages in a much smaller scale (traditional WOM), are facing the need to address hundreds - if not thousands - of negative electronic complaints and reviews (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018). Those which opt not to respond, also known as no-action strategies, meaning that they avoid addressing the comments by remaining silent, or by making often meaningless, "heat-of-the-moment", rebuttals (Chang et al., 2015), face the sight of losing valuable future business (Chan & Guillet, 2011; Sparks & Bradley, 2017). Other investigated consequences of an unresponsive strategy are less favourable brand evaluations, significant loss of brand trust and increased client concern (Sparks et al., 2016; van Noort & Willemsen, 2012).

Searching online forums for negative feedback and engaging, especially through conversations, with complainants or concerned/confused individuals is known in the literature as webcare (Ghosh, 2017; Hong & Lee, 2007; L., 2001; van Noort & Willemsen, 2012). The effectiveness of webcare interventions is not only dependent on the nature of these measures and the used discourse, but also on consumer-related factors:

- **Satisfaction Levels:** Firstly, effective brand rebuttals have been proven to be influenced by the individuals' satisfaction levels. Gu and Ye (2014) revealed that managing complaints from low-satisfaction customers is effective in improving customer satisfaction. Although these authors also found out that these responses might not be so effective in other levels of customer satisfaction, the importance of addressing the concern of these highly dissatisfied customers should be the corner stone of an online customer management strategy, prompting a shift in resource allocation so that brands can acknowledge and answer these concerns of low-satisfaction consumers, especially because they don't represent a majority of complainants.
- **Customer Experience/Perceptions of Failure:** Secondly, an investigation by Li et al. (2018) found that the effectiveness of online management responses can be influenced by a customer's experience, or their perceptions of failure. In some situations, when an individual thinks that a product/service does not perform its functions or the promised benefits, they are confronted with a product failure. When they believe the negative points of their experience (with the product or the process) are acceptable, they are confronted with an ordinary negative feature. Whilst the authors found significant positive impact in both situations, it is clear that responding to customers who had a product failure is a priority to mitigate future customer dissatisfaction.

Another rather important finding is that brands need to make sure that they address the complainants equitably, because those who see others' complaints answered but not their own are more likely to write more negative reviews in the future (Gu & Ye, 2014). This public nature of online reviews has, therefore, brought a whole new level of complexity to online communication management approaches.

Additionally, there are the brand/discourse related variables that affect the effectiveness of the response:

- **Webcare strength:** When managers do opt to use a webcare approach to respond to NWOM messages, most often they try to give suitable and plausible explanations for the failure behind the complaint. The perceived quality/strength of these explanations, or webcare strength, was proven by Ghosh (2017) to have a significant impact on consumer trust and forgiveness. When the rebuttals are filled with convincing arguments – strong webcare – they are more likely to produce higher customer forgiveness when compared to a weaker rebuttal with superficial reasoning – weak webcare. Whilst stronger webcare seems more honest and spontaneous, consequently leading to less counterarguments, weaker webcare has the opposite effect. It can, therefore, result in the increase of negative sentiments from the complainants, decreasing the likelihood of brand forgiveness.

- **Brand Strength and Sender of Response:** Ullrich and Brunner (2015) conducted a study to measure the impact of brand strength and sender of the response on the effectiveness of NWOM message rebuttals. On one hand, they found out that brand strength positively influences the effectiveness of rebuttals. On the other hand, they were confronted with the fact that customer rebuttals (not brand-promoted or originated) were a more effective response to negative online messages than brand rebuttals. Whilst this is out of companies' hands when it comes to webcare management, they are encouraged to promote brand love and brand loyalty in order to generate brand ambassadors willing to engage and defend the brands on public forums.

- **Voice of Response:** Arguably one of the most commonly talked factors in webcare management literature is the tone of voice used in brand rebuttals. It was verified that using a conversational human tone of voice not only resulted in more favourable reactions from consumers (Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011), but it also positively influenced brand evaluations. In line with this notion, employee behaviour had a positive impact on customers' assessments of the rebuttals because covering the interpersonal aspect of webcare management through attentive and credible discourse is a fair representation of proper employee behavior (Davidow, 2000; Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011).

- **Promptness of Response:** The other concept mentioned as frequently as the tone of voice in online communication management literature is the promptness of response. Also referred to as timeliness, it both measures the ability organizations have in handling complaints in an efficient manner and the time taken between receiving the complaint and posting a rebuttal (Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011; Ghosh, 2017). The authors found that immediate responses positively affect customers' perceptions, mainly due to the fact that they generated feelings of empathy and, especially, fairness towards the brand.

- **Complaint Compensation:** Gelbrich and Roschk (2011) also considers complaint compensation as a significant influencer of consumers' assessments of a NWOM response. Nevertheless, compensation can be divided into two parts. Firstly, it can refer to tangible compensations in the form of refunds or discounts that cover the price of the product or additional costs caused by the failure. Secondly, it also considers the risk of social loss due to service failure. The adequate compensation response is intangible in the form of an apology. Despite this conceptual separation, complaint compensation was showed to positively influence the assessment of customers, entailing perceptions of fairness towards the outcome of the complaint.

Taking much of the previous research highlighted in this investigation, some authors (Lee & Song, 2010; Marcus & Goodman, 1991; van Noort & Willemsen, 2012) conceptualized types of responses to study their effectiveness. The most widely accepted concepts of NWOM rebuttals are accomodative and defensive strategies. Whilst the former is related with the acceptance of the existence of the problems and actions to compensate the failure, such as tangible and intangible compensation, the latter is related with the insistence that there is no problem, where the rebutting brand strips of any responsibility, even sometimes shifting the blame somewhere else (Y. Lee & Song, 2010).

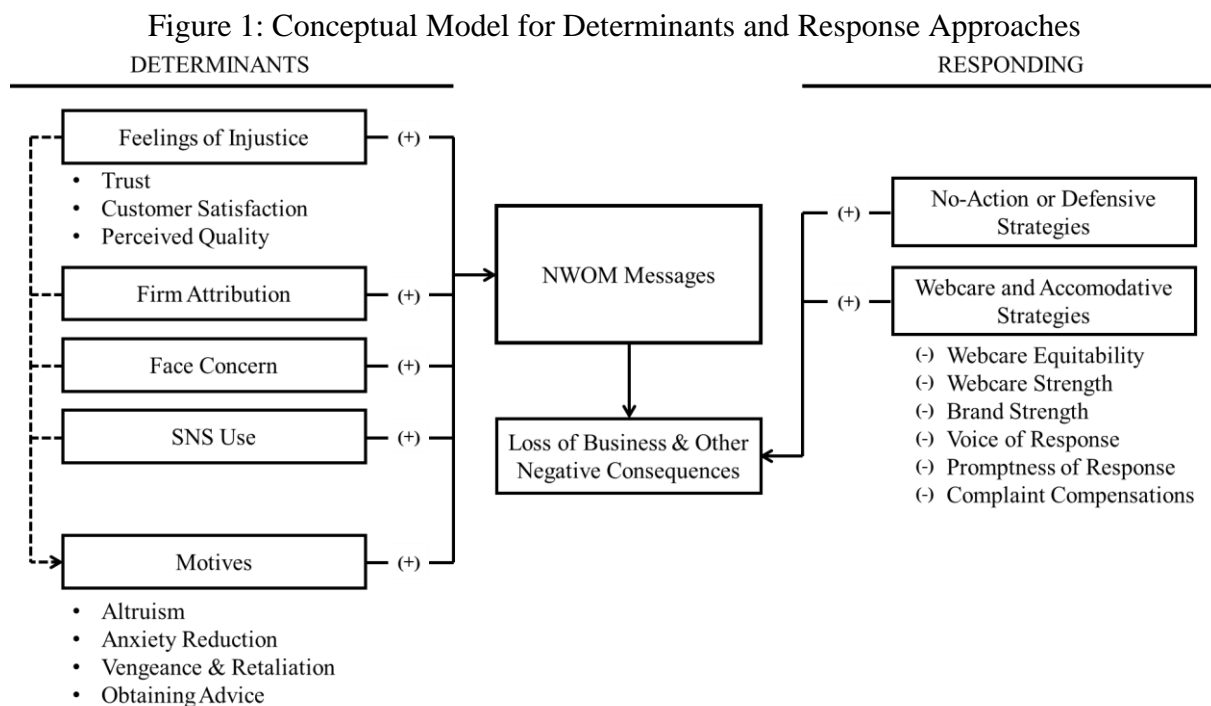
Both approaches have very different outcomes to customers' perceptions. On one side, accomodative strategies provide good reasoning to the complainants, generating feelings of empathy and restoring brand image. On the other, defensive strategies results in feelings of anger and generates feelings of distrust (Chang et al., 2015). Thus, it was confirmed that accomodative answers were more effective in restoring brand evaluations than defensive answers (Ghosh, 2017).

Another dichotomy of responses was hypothesized by van Noort and Willemsen (2012), a proactive strategy, where the brand responds to NWOM messages unsolicited, and a reactive strategy when the brand responds when it is asked to. Whilst their level of effectiveness is different depending on the origin of the online platform (consumer-generated or brand-generated forums), they both positively influence brand evaluation, with no significant difference in effect.

3. Conceptual Model and Research Hypothesis

Since the methodology is divided into two distinct parts – the antecedents/responses to NWOM messages and the hypothetical scenarios – the developed hypothesis also followed the same logic.

For the first set of hypotheses, the following conceptual model was proposed to test the variables identified in the literature and previously elaborated:



From this, the subsequent hypotheses were created:

H1: Feelings of injustice increase the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

H2: Loss of trust in the brand increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

H3: Product/Service dissatisfaction increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

H4: The bigger difference between perceived quality and real quality increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

H5: Higher firm attribution increase the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.
H6: Higher face concern increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.
H7: Higher SNS use intensity increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

H8: Altruism is a significant motivator for writing NWOM messages.
H9: Anxiety reduction is a significant motivator for writing NWOM messages.
H10: Vengeance and retaliation are significant motivators for writing NWOM messages.
H11: Obtaining advice is a significant motivator for writing NWOM messages.

H12: No-action strategies can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.
H13: Defensive strategies can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.
H14: Not equitably responding to NWOM messages can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.
H15: Not giving plausible/strong arguments can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.
H16: The lesser the brand strength, the higher likelihood that a NWOM message can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.
H17: Using a corporate tone-of-voice, as opposed to a human voice, increases the likelihood that a NWOM message can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.
H18: The bigger the time period between the original message and its response, the higher likelihood that a NWOM message can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.
H19: Not monetarily compensating the client can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

As for the scenario, for each of the questionnaire's variables, the different response strategies were tested according to these hypotheses:

H20: Different NWOM response strategies generate different levels of satisfaction.
H21: Different NWOM response strategies generate different problem-resolution perceptions.
H22: Different NWOM response strategies generate different brand accountability perceptions.
H23: Different NWOM response strategies generate different fairness perceptions.
H24: Different NWOM response strategies generate different complaint compensation perceptions.

4. Methodology

Backed by valuable data and statistical analysis, the studies previously referenced compile some information around multiple sub-topics that justified parts of the thesis. Although this secondary data is valuable, since it comes from notable journals, articles and authors such as Balaji et al. (2016), Cheung and Thadani (2012), and Sundaram et al. (1998), the objective of this thesis called for an empirical study with primary data.

A quantitative approach was chosen in the form of a survey questionnaire. This type of research was selected having in consideration the objectives of this dissertation. In order to showcase a generalised opinion of the NWOM variables identified in the literature, a quantitative approach is better suited because it deals with large samples, reduces bias of qualitative interpretation, and communicates through concrete statistics that are easy to understand and generate insights from. In addition, taking into consideration the current global circumstances, a quantitative method is easier to apply by using a non-face-to-face approach through an online survey software, which also helps the compilation, filtering and extraction of the primary data. It was first published for a small number of acquaintances for testing and proof-reading, and after some minimal changes, it was published at the beginning of October 2021 across multiple platforms, such as Whatsapp groups, Twitter and LinkedIn.

4.1. Questionnaire Design

The survey was created with the intention to measure the importance given to concepts found in the literature by users who had come across NWOM messages online, regardless of whether they had ever written one themselves. This was not only to test those concepts to this new sample, but also to be able to put together a small blueprint of how customers believe are their reasons for writing a NWOM message and the most effective ways to respond to them.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 main components (excluding the sociodemographic questions) and always used a 5-point Likert scale measuring the level of agreement with the statements made (except for group A4, where the 5-point scale measured the likelihood of an action). Whilst the first and last part were measuring the levels of agreement towards the antecedents and the types of response to NWOM respectively, the ‘middle’ sector comprised a series of fictitious scenarios where respondents had to classify their levels of agreement with the statements presented. These scenarios were created in order to bolster the analysis, since they did not influence or bias the reasoning of the participation because they were presented with different types of NWOM responses and not with the concepts themselves.

4.2. Data Treatment

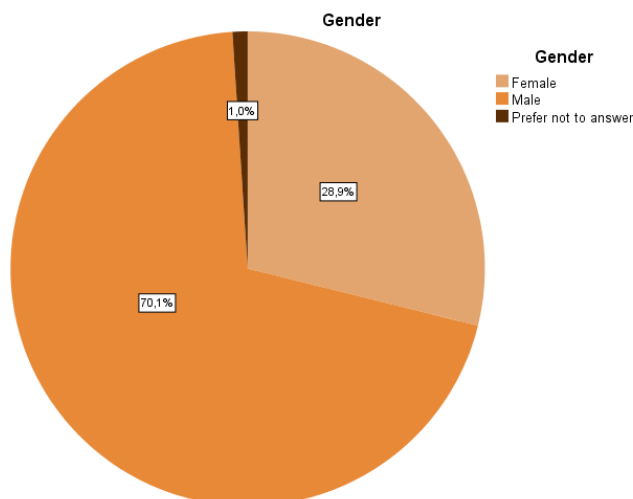
After extracting the data from Google Forms, it was imported to SPSS 27 to be organized and quantitatively analysed. The different variables were coded accordingly, mostly into ordinal variables – due to the nature of the analysis and the predominance of the 5-point Likert Scale, except for the Gender, Professional Condition, Highest Academic Degree and District of Residence questions.

4.3. Sampling and Descriptive Statistics

The sampling approach used for this research was a non-probability convenience method, due to the time and financial barriers it faced. This sampling strategy, as the name implies, is convenient to the researcher because it reaches a sample that is connected with him, personally or through platforms such as social media. Any of the individuals who came across the questionnaire and were willing to participate were chosen based on subjective methods, which despite being more opportune, can result in a sample that does not entirely represent a population (Given, 2008; Lavrakas, 2008).

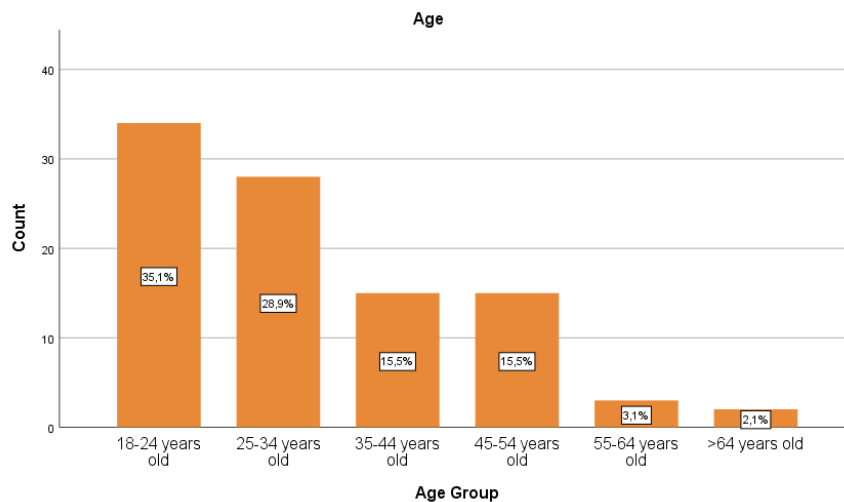
The questionnaire faced no restrictions for participants. The target was global, therefore anyone could participate regardless of any sociodemographic characteristic. From the 97 compiled answers, there was a clear pattern concerning the gender of the participants. 70,1% of respondents were male, whereas only 28,9% were female participants, 1 participant preferred not to disclose it. These results were fairly expected since the social network of the researcher was mainly geared towards a male audience.

Figure 2 – Gender Distribution



Unsurprisingly, when looking into the different age group descriptive statistics, there is a predominance of young adults that participated in the study. The most represented group were individuals between 18 and 24 years of age (35,1%), closely followed by the succeeding age group of people between 25 and 34 (28,9%). Both the 35 to 44 years old and the 45 to 54 years old age groups registered the same number of participants (15), whereas the two least represent groups were the oldest (55-64 years old and >64 years old).

Figure 3 – Age Group Distribution



Since the survey was dispersed in Portuguese, the district of residence was asked to better characterize the sample, as opposed to the country of residence. As seen on the table below, the vast majority of individuals (76,3%) were living in and around Lisbon/Setúbal at the time of the participation. 6 participants completed the survey while residing abroad, whilst only 5 people were living in Porto.

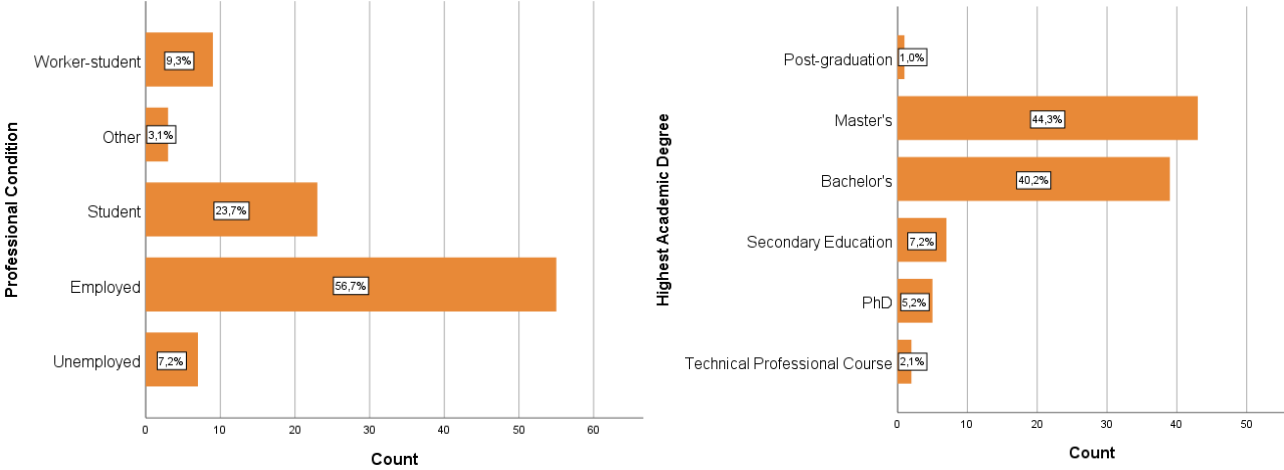
Table 1 – District of Residence Distribution

	N	%
Lisbon	65	67,0
Setúbal	9	9,3
Outside Portugal	6	6,2
Porto	5	5,2
Others	12	12,3
Total	97	100,0

Lastly, looking at the professional status of the participants, 56,7% of individuals are employed, 23,7% are students and 9,3% are student-workers. There were no retired participants and only 7,2% of them were unemployed at the time of participation.

In terms of the distribution of academic degrees, most of the individuals had a bachelor’s degree (40,2%) or a master’s degree (44,3%).

Figure 4 – Professional Condition Distribution Figure 5 – Higher Academic Degree



Logically, the first two questions in the questionnaire aim to give an initial picture of the sample concerning previous NWOM messaging behaviours. More objectively, whilst it is very clear most people (90,7%) use NWOM messages to rationalize their decision-making processes, not everyone has written one themselves. In fact, 40,2% of participants claim they have never written a NWOM message, as opposed to the 52,6% that have done it.

Table 2 – Have you ever written an NWOM message?

	N	%
Yes	51	52,6
No	39	40,2
DK/DR	7	7,2
Total	97	100,0

Table 3 - Have you ever searched for NWOM messages to help your decision-making process?

	N	%
Yes	88	90,7
No	8	8,2
DK/DR	1	1,0
Total	97	100,0

5. Data Analysis and Results

Since most of the sets of questions addressed the variables in the literature directly and did not require the creation of constructs, the characterization of the sample through the means for each question corresponds to the hypotheses tests themselves (T-student tests to compare the obtained mean values with the scale's median point – 3). For the scenario, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the participants' answers regarding the different types of NWOM response strategies. The assumption of normality for the distribution of values was accepted for the samples bigger than 30. The Mauchly's test was used to accept the sphericity assumption and, therefore, allowed for the testing to be conducted. For both approaches (the t-student tests and the ANOVA), the significance level used to reject the null hypotheses was $(\alpha) \leq .05$ ($\text{sig} \leq .05$). In the T-student tests, the only hypotheses that are validated are the ones that not only have a $\text{sig} \leq .05$ but also the mean level is higher than 3 – that is, the participants of the study *significantly agree* with the questions' statements, and therefore the hypotheses can be confirmed. Otherwise, if the mean level is lower than 3, then the participants of the study *significantly disagree* with the statements and the hypotheses are not confirmed.

5.1. Antecedents of NWOM

H1: Feelings of injustice increase the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

The mean of the responses to the question "The more feelings of injustice I have, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message" was 4.57, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 22.340$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed – the participants significantly agree that feelings of injustice increase the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

Table 4 – Feelings of Injustice – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Feelings of Injustice	4,57	,691	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H2: Loss of trust in the brand increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

The mean of the responses to the question "The more trust I lose on the brand, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message" was 3.84, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 8.341$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed – the participants significantly agree that trust loss increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

Table 5 – Trust Loss – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Trust loss	3,84	,94	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H3: Product/Service dissatisfaction increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

The mean of the responses to the question "The less satisfied I am with a product/service, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message" was 4.54, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 20.531$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that dissatisfaction increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

Table 6 – Dissatisfaction – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Product/Service dissatisfaction	4,54	,73	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H4: The bigger difference between perceived quality and real quality increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

The mean of the responses to the question "The bigger the difference between the perceived quality and the real quality of a product, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message" was 3.57, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 4.627$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that the differences in perceived quality increase the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

Table 7 – Perceived Quality – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Perceived Quality	3,57	1,20	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H5: Higher firm attribution increase the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

The mean of the responses to the question "The more blame/responsibility I attribute to the brand, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message" was 4.11, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 11.096$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that higher firm attribution increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message. This confirmed hypothesis is contrary to some literature which concluded that the higher responsibility/blame attributed to a brand, the less likely an individual would write a NWOM message.

Table 8 – Firm Attribution – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Firm Attribution	4,11	,98	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H6: Higher face concern increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

The mean of the responses to the question "The higher my face concern, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message" was 3.48, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 3.867$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that higher face concern increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

Table 9 – Face Concern – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Face Concern	3,48	1,23	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H7: Higher SNS use intensity increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

The mean of the responses to the question "The more I use social networking sites, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message" was 2.30 which is significantly lower than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = -5.972$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is not confirmed - the participants significantly disagree that higher SNS use increases the likelihood of writing a NWOM message.

Table 10 – SNS Use Intensity – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
SNS Use	2,30	1,15	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

5.2. **Motives of NWOM**

H8: Altruism is a significant motivator for writing NWOM messages.

The mean of the responses to the question "To avoid that other people have the same negative experience as I did" was 4.29, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 15.316$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that altruism is a motivator for writing NWOM messages.

Table 11 – Altruism – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Altruism	4,29	,82	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H9: Anxiety reduction is a significant motivator for writing NWOM messages.

The mean of the responses to the question "To reduce the levels of anxiety the negative experience caused me" was 2.57, which is significantly lower than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = -3.305$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is not confirmed - the participants significantly disagree that anxiety reduction is a motivator for writing NWOM messages.

Table 12 – Anxiety Reduction – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Anxiety Reduction	2,57	1,29	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H10: Vengeance and retaliation are significant motivators for writing NWOM messages.

The mean of the responses to the question "To be vengeful/retaliate against the brand" was 2.16, which is significantly lower than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = -6.730$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is not confirmed - the participants significantly disagree that retaliation is a motivator for writing NWOM messages.

Table 13 – Retaliation – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Retaliation	2,16	1,22	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H11: Obtaining advice is a significant motivator for writing NWOM messages.

The mean of the responses to the question "To obtain advice from other customers or the brand" was 3.35, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 2.521$, $p < .013$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that obtaining advice is a motivator for writing NWOM messages.

Table 14 – Obtaining Advice – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Obtaining Advice	3,35	1,37	.013*

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree * $p \leq .05$

5.3. Response Approaches for NWOM messages

H12: No-action strategies can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "Not responding to these messages may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 4.31, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 12.716$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed – the participants significantly agree that no-action strategies can result in negative consequences.

Table 15 – No-action Strategies – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
No-action Strategies	4,31	1,01	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H13: Defensive strategies can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "Not taking responsibility and giving meaningless justifications may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 4.37, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 14.382$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that defensive strategies can result in negative consequences.

Table 16 – Defensive Strategies – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Defensive Strategies	4,37	,93	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H14: Not equitably responding to NWOM messages can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "Not responding to every comment equitably may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 3.75, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 20.531$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that not equitably responding to NWOM messages can result in negative consequences.

Table 17 – Webcare Equitability – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Webcare Equitability	3,75	1,18	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H15: Not giving plausible/strong arguments can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "Not substantiating the arguments may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 4.11, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 10.548$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that not giving plausible arguments can result in negative consequences.

Table 18 – Webcare Strength – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Webcare Strength	4,11	1,04	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H16: The lesser the brand strength, the higher likelihood that a NWOM message can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "The weaker the brand's strength, the more likely to have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 3.82, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 6.927$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that brands with less strength are more likely to have negative consequences from NWOM messages.

Table 19 – Brand Strength – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Brand Strength	3,82	1,17	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H17: Using a corporate tone-of-voice, as opposed to a human voice, increases the likelihood that a NWOM message can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "The more corporative (as opposed to human) the brand's tone of voice, the more likely to have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 3.85, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 7.754$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that using a corporate tone-of-voice, as opposed to a human voice, increases the likelihood that a NWOM message has negative consequences.

Table 20 – Tone of Voice – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Tone of Voice	3,85	1,07	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H18: The bigger the time period between the original message and its response, the higher likelihood that a NWOM message can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "The bigger the delay between comment and answer, the more likely to have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 4.20, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 13.669$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree not responding promptly can result in negative consequences.

Table 21 – Promptness of Response – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	SIg.
Promptness of Response	4,20	,86	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

H19: Not monetarily compensating the client can result in loss of business and other negative consequences.

The mean of the responses to the question "Not compensating the client monetarily or morally may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)" was 3.43, which is significantly higher than the mean point of the rating scale (3), $t(96) = 3.639$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed - the participants significantly agree that not compensating complaints can result in negative consequences.

Table 22 – Complaint Compensation – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Complaint Compensation	3,43	1,17	.001***

Notes: 1 - Completely disagree 5 - Completely agree *** $p \leq .001$

5.4. Different response scenarios

H20: Different NWOM response strategies generate different levels of satisfaction.

The difference in satisfaction levels with the different NWOM response approaches by companies is statistically significant, $F_{ARM} (4, 384) = 504.531, p < .001$. The approaches that generated higher levels of satisfaction were *Strong webcare + Human Tone of Voice + No Compensation* and *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation*. The difference in satisfaction levels between these two approaches is not statistically significant ($p = 1.000$), however the difference between these two approaches and the others is statistically significant ($p < .001$).

The *No-Action Strategy* generates significantly higher levels of dissatisfaction than all other strategies ($p < .001$).

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 23 – Satisfaction Levels – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
No-action Strategy	1,43	,82	.001***
Defensive Strategy	1,74	,95	
Strong Webcare + Corporate Tone of Voice + No Compensation	4,17	,72	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice+ No Compensation	4,52	,59	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation	4,58	,67	

*** $p \leq .001$

H21: Different NWOM response strategies generate different problem-resolution perceptions.

The difference in problem-resolution perceptions with the different NWOM response approaches by companies is statistically significant, $F_{ARM} (4, 384) = 143.619, p < .001$. The approaches that generated higher levels of problem-resolution perceptions were *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + No Compensation* and *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation*. The difference in problem-resolution perception levels between *No-action Strategies* and *Defensive Strategies* is not statistically significant ($p = .389$), All other differences are statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 24 – Problem-resolution perception Levels – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
No-action Strategy	1,47	,83	,001***
Defensive Strategy	1,72	,96	
Strong Webcare + Corporate Tone of Voice + No Compensation	2,75	1,06	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice+ No Compensation	3,43	1,11	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation	3,70	1,10	

*** $p \leq .001$

H22: Different NWOM response strategies generate different brand accountability perceptions.

The difference in brand accountability perceptions with the different NWOM response approaches by companies is statistically significant, $F_{ARM}(4, 384) = 601.636, p < .001$. The approaches that generated higher levels of brand accountability perceptions were *Strong Webcare + Corporate Tone of Voice + No Compensation*, *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + No Compensation* and *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation*, where the differences between perceptions levels between them is not significant ($p > .05$). The difference in brand accountability perception levels between *No-action Strategies* and *Defensive Strategies* is not statistically significant ($p = 1.000$). Nevertheless, the differences between the strategies which use strong webcare and the one which don't, are statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 25 – Brand accountability perception Levels – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
No-action Strategy	1,43	,84	,001***
Defensive Strategy	1,34	,74	
Strong Webcare + Corporate Tone of Voice + No Compensation	4,44	,75	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice+ No Compensation	4,49	,72	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation	4,61	,67	

*** $p \leq .001$

H23: Different NWOM response strategies generate different fairness perceptions.

The difference in fairness perceptions with the different NWOM response approaches by companies is statistically significant, $F_{ARM}(4, 384) = 414.496, p < .001$. The approaches that generated higher levels of fairness perceptions were *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + No Compensation* and *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation*, where

the differences between perceptions levels between them is not significant ($p > .05$). All the approaches generate statistically significant differences in fairness perception levels between them ($p < .001$).

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 26 – Fairness perception Levels – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
No-action Strategy	1,32	,60	,001***
Defensive Strategy	1,63	,96	
Strong Webcare + Corporate Tone of Voice + No Compensation	3,99	,93	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice+ No Compensation	4,27	,82	
Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation	4,55	,77	

*** $p \leq .001$

H24: Different NWOM response strategies generate different complaint compensation perceptions.

The difference in complaint compensation perceptions with the different NWOM response approaches by companies is statistically significant, $F_{ARM}(4, 384) = 305.301$, $p < .001$. The approach that generated higher levels of complaint compensation perceptions was *Strong Webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation*. All the approaches generate statistically significant differences in complaint compensation perception levels between them ($p < .001$), except for the differences between the no-action and the defensive strategies ($p = 1.000$).

Thus, the stated hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 27 – Complaint compensation perception Levels – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
No-action Strategy	1,41	,78	,001***
Defensive Strategy	1,34	,70	
Strong webcare + Corporate Tone of Voice + No Compensation	2,29	,90	
Strong webcare + Human Tone of Voice+ No Compensation	2,81	1,21	
Strong webcare + Human Tone of Voice + With Compensation	4,66	,67	

*** $p \leq .001$

5.5. Summarized Results

Table 28 – Summarized hypotheses results

Hypothesis	Confirmed?
H1	Yes
H2	Yes
H3	Yes
H4	Yes
H5	Yes
H6	Yes
H7	No
H8	Yes
H9	No
H10	No
H11	Yes
H12	Yes
H13	Yes
H14	Yes
H15	Yes
H16	Yes
H17	Yes
H18	Yes
H19	Yes
H20	Yes
H21	Yes
H22	Yes
H23	Yes
H24	Yes

6. Conclusions and Limitations

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

Effectively, the aim of this study was to use the literature as a base to create a communication blueprint on how to respond to negative word-of-mouth. Such conclusions are to be presented under the managerial implications, but this thesis showcases some differences to the literature that provide insight into a potential client's perception of NWOM messages.

In general, the participants agreed with most of the claims studied in previous research. In fact, out of the 19 hypothesis/questions that directly addressed variables studied in the literature, only 3 were not confirmed.

Out of those that were confirmed, in the antecedents of negative word-of-mouth, it is important to highlight the importance of the Feelings of Injustice (m=4,57) and the Product/Service Dissatisfaction (m=4,54), as these are the most likely to generate NWOM messages. Effectively, the framework developed by Balaji et al. (2016) highlighted the impact of Feelings of Injustice as a determinant of negative word-of-mouth messages, revealing it as an antecedent subsequent of the context it entailed. This is one of the most apparent commonalities between the two studies and over-emphasizes the importance of mitigating these feelings to avoid receiving NWOM messages. To the literature's hypotheses that were not confirmed, there are clear indicators as to why they were not validated. For the SNS use as a determinant of NWOM, the participants didn't feel like there is a correlation between the variables, but this is one of the cases where studying the amount people spend on social media and the number of NWOM messages they have written would have been a better study. The participants also felt like vengeance or reducing anxiety were not motivators for NWOM, but that can be explained with two arguments: firstly, because they were not willing to accept these sentiments as a result of brand interactions. Secondly, because these feelings can often be subconscious.

On the other hand, when it comes to the different response approaches, it is clear and confirmed that the no-action strategies and defensive strategies are the ones most likely to generate negative consequences for the brand – most notably, the loss of business. This confirms previous literature by Chang et al. (2015) and Sparks and Bradley (2017) which proved that ignoring messages or making heated/unjust rebuttals could result in the loss of business.

Nevertheless, whilst Ghosh (2017) revealed that quick rebuttals are valuable strategies, it seems the present study revealed an increased importance of the promptness of response (m=4,2) for these types of messages, to mitigate the negative impact it might have for the brand.

The true contribution of this research is the introduction of a set of hypothetical scenarios that not only included different combinations of response approaches but also introduced a new set of variables that intended to study the effectiveness of these rebuttals. By proposing research on the levels of satisfaction, problem-resolution, brand accountability, fairness and complaint compensation, which are based on Gelbrich & Roschk (2011), a new depth of study can be conducted, in which the best practices are very clear, but it also shows that depending on the intention of the brand (to solve a problem, to compensate, to apologise) other approaches are also viable. For instance, it is evident that employing a strong webcare strategy through well justified arguments is the best practice for any NWOM message context but using complaint compensation actions might not be necessary for certain if the brand's purpose doesn't contemplate compensating the client (for example, if the situation is not serious enough to warrant it).

6.2. Managerial Implications

6.2.1. Antecedents of Negative Word-of-Mouth

Table 29 – Hypothesis Results – Antecedents and Motivators

Antecedents	Confirmed?	Mean
Feelings of Injustice	Yes	4.57
Trust Loss	Yes	3.84
Dissatisfaction	Yes	4.54
Perceived Quality	Yes	3.57
Firm Attribution	Yes	4.11
Face Concern	Yes	3.48
SNS Use Intensity	No	2.30
Motives		
Altruism	Yes	4.29
Anxiety Reduction	No	2.57
Vengeance	No	2.16
Obtaining Advice	Yes	3.35

The first series of variables, which regard the antecedents of word-of mouth, showcased some differences to the literature. The most notable difference is related to the level of responsibility/blame attributed to the brand (Firm attribution). The literature stated that in situations where the amount of blame for a certain occurrence was higher, individuals were less likely to write NWOM messages as they would rather take care of the situation in a direct manner (in person, through mobile or email). This research showed that when confronted with a certain level of blame attributed to a brand, participants were very likely to write NWOM messages. Managers, then, need to mitigate the amount of extremely negative occurrences so that their company is not attributed with any blame, therefore minimizing the number of NWOM messages on public settings.

When it comes to the variables confirmed by the testing, the ones which registered higher mean levels were the Feelings of Injustice and Dissatisfaction. Both these concepts are related, as higher levels of dissatisfaction result in feelings of unfairness and injustice. When there is the ability to discover the origin of the dissatisfaction (e.g. a certain feature with a product, or a poor customer service experience), then managers need to act on these insights. NWOM messages are, in fact, harmful for brands and their reputations, but they normally give actual feedback about the brand. Being able to both properly respond to the message but also use it as a mean for progress is of the utmost importance for brands that now live in a highly customer-centric environment.

The present research was not able to confirm that clients write negative feedback messages to reduce their anxiety or to be vengeful towards the brand. Nevertheless, and keeping in mind that the methodology was customer-focused and asked questions directly to the participants, it is significant for managers to understand the main motivator behind NWOM. In this case, it can be concluded that the participants felt that most NWOM messages are written to prevent others from having such negative experiences. These feelings of community, even though they originate from a negative situation, could be a useful tool to establish a better reputation and creating brand defenders in the future.

As for obtaining advice, the same principle applies. People obviously write NWOM messages to see their situations resolved, either from the brand or from people who have had similar experiences. Being able to properly advise these individuals and creating positive conversations out of negative circumstances will help the brand mitigate the effect of the original messages.

6.2.2. Negative consequences to different response approaches

Table 30 – Hypothesis Results – Response Approaches

Response Approach	Confirmed?	Mean
No-Action Strategy	Yes	4.31
Defensive Strategy	Yes	4.37
No Equitability	Yes	3.75
Weak Webcare Strength	Yes	4.11
Weak Brand Strength	Yes	3.82
Corporate Tone-of-Voice	Yes	3.85
No Promptness of Response	Yes	4.20
No Complaint Compensation	Yes	3.43

A major takeaway from these results from a managerial perspective is that rarely should No-action of Defensive strategies be used. Perhaps some incredibly offensive negative comment can be left unanswered, especially if engaging in discourse with the user will only lead to further negative comments, but for the most part, giving meaningless justifications, shifting the blame to the customer or simply ignoring them will only bring negative consequences to the brand as was confirmed in the hypotheses testing and can be concluded from the mean values of the No-action strategies (m=4.31) and the defensive strategies (m=4.37).

Table 31 – Scenario Mean Values – Descriptive Statistics

Response Approach	Satisfaction	Problem-resolution	Brand Accountability	Fairness	Complaint Compensation
No-action Strategy	1.43	1.47	1.43	1.32	1.41
Defensive Strategy	1.74	1.72	1.34	1.63	1.34
Strong Webcare + Corporate + NoComp	4.18	2.75	4.44	3.99	2.29
Strong Webcare + Human + NoComp	4.53	3.43	4.49	4.27	2.81
Strong Webcare + Human + WithComp	4.59	3.70	4.61	4.55	4.66

Looking over the scenario results, combining strong webcare methods with a human tone of voice and a monetary compensation has higher mean values for each of the 5 variables studied. Nevertheless, the satisfaction levels between this one and the same approach without monetary compensation are fairly similar, which means that even though compensating a complaint has better results, not doing so but employing strong webcare and a human tone of voice is also an effective way of responding to NWOM messages. On the other hand, using a

corporate voice seems to impact the perceptions of problem resolution and fairness the most. And despite also generating positive results, from this research, and as long as it follows the brand's identity, it seems better to use a human voice.

6.2.3. **Communication Blueprint for NWOM Messages**

- Use negative messages to your advantage, as they give good insight into what might need improvement in various parts of the brand – such as the product, the service, the customer support, distribution, and other problems.
- Manage customers expectations of your product/service and don't overpromote it, to avoid differences between perceived value and real value.
- Accept that most NWOM messages are not written to slander or vilify the brand.
- Avoid giving meaningless justifications and never shift the blame to the consumer. Keep in mind that a brand's reputation is also built in these interactions, which means there is no point in being defensive or even aggressive towards the users.
- Employing an integral no-action strategy can have significant negative consequences to the brand. Leaving the customer unattended can make them feel ignored or neglected and the loss of business might occur.
- Try to respond in an equitable manner. For instance, it is not coherent to answer a comment that was made two days ago while there are older comments being left unanswered.
- Use justified honest arguments in your response. They will trigger forgiveness and will be perceived as more spontaneous and truthful. The stronger the arguments, the less likely there will be negative consequences towards the brand – it is undoubtedly one of the critical approaches to NWOM messages responses, especially because using weak argumentation can be seen as disingenuous and is proved to result in problems such as the loss of business.
- The stronger your brand is, the less likely NWOM messages are to result in negative consequences. Thus, adopting brand reputation strengthening actions will, in the long run, help to mitigate the effects of NWOM messages.
- Use a human tone-of-voice in your responses, as opposed to a corporate tone-of-voice. Even though in the scenario part of the methodology, the differences – which were significant – were not overwhelming between these two approaches, it is clear that a human voice is more effective when answering NWOM messages.

- Many of the problems reported in the form of these messages are immediate, which demonstrates the importance of the speed of response that the hypotheses tests prove. Being prompt conveys an idea of empathy and concern towards the clients.
- Apologising is seen as a morally compensating action and is often effective in reducing the negative consequences of NWOM messages. This goes hand-in-hand with taking responsibility for the occurrence, which helps the customers to be more forgiving and understanding.
- Monetarily compensating a client is not always viable, but it is certainly a way to reduce the negative consequences of NWOM messages.

6.3. **Limitations and Future Research**

Even though the study was conducted with the utmost rigor and intention to cover a rather important aspect of brand-to-consumer communication, without a strictly controlled environment when the participants are filling out the questionnaire, the results are bound to have some sort of bias. This problem as well as the small sample size of 97 individuals with similar profiles may not be an accurate representation of the global views on NWOM messages. In addition, the fact that the definition of NWOM is so relative from person-to-person can also become a limitation of the study.

Another limitation is that all the variables in the literature were presented without any dummy question between them, making it difficult to tell if the participants ever felt biased towards accepting all the variables presented as valuable and not necessarily according to their opinions.

Using some of the limitations identified, future research should be conducted with a wider and more diverse sample. Moreover, including more scenarios with more types of NWOM message responses – including using real-life scenarios – could be a valuable method for analysis.

Another rather significant part of NWOM messages that might become object of studies in the future is how different demographics perceive different responses to negative word-of-mouth. Should there be a blueprint for responding differently to younger generations vs older generations? And across genders? In the same logic, social networking sites, as well as review aggregators, have different types of optimizing interactions. So, studying how different approaches of response work across different SNS is a meaningful topic that can be analysed in the future.

Finally, this investigation studied the perception of real and potential NWOM message writers but knowing the perception of communication managers not only about effective responses but also motivators for NWOM messages might shed light on the way some brands are approaching these negative comments.

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8. Appendix

Appendix A - Questionnaire

This questionnaire, which takes around 7 minutes to complete, is being conducted for a Masters dissertation in Marketing at ISCTE Business School, and its objective is to understand the underlying motives behind negative online messages (reviews or negative comments to brands) and what are the most effective responses that brands can use. Any person can participate, regardless of whether they have written this type of message, and your opinion is important. The extracted data is entirely confidential and will be used exclusively for academic purposes – so please try to be as honest as possible so that the results are totally genuine.

If you have any doubt whilst filling out this form, contact me through this email:

I appreciate your help!

NWOM (Negative Word-of-Mouth) – the term NWOM will come up multiple times during this questionnaire and it refers to, in this case, any negative message (comment, idea, thought) written by an individual regardless of any marketing intention, in an online platform where other public users have access to the message. That is, a review left on Zomato is one example of a NWOM message.

A1. Answer the following questions:

	Yes	No	Don't know/Don't remember
Have you ever written a NWOM message?			
Have you ever searched for NWOM messages to help your decision-making process?			

A2. What would make you write a NWOM message? (open question)

A3. Classify the following statements regarding your level of agreement (1 – Completely disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 – Completely Agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
The more feelings of injustice I have, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message.					
The more trust I lose on the brand, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message.					

The less satisfied I am with a product/service, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message.					
The bigger the difference between my perceived quality and the real quality of a product, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message.					
The more blame/responsibility I attribute to the brand, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message.					
The higher my face concern, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message.					
The more use I give to social networking sites, the more likely I am of writing a NWOM message.					

A4. Evaluate the likelihood each of the following reasons would cause you to write a NWOM message (1 – Very unlikely, 2 – Unlikely, 3 – Indifferent, 4 – Likely, 5 – Very likely)

	1	2	3	4	5
To avoid that other people have the same negative experience as I did.					
To reduce the levels of anxiety the negative experience caused me.					
To be vengeful/retaliate against the brand.					
To obtain advice from other customers or the brand.					

B. Scenario

In this section, you will be confronted with a fictitious scenario that showcases different types of response to the same online negative comment. Imagine you are the writer of the comment and classify your level of satisfaction with the brand’s response.

Connect is a telecom company that recently entered the market. Despite promising big innovation and a more customer-centric approach, they are having technical difficulties with their service, having received multiple complaining messages on social media. The communication team had to react in an attempt to retain these customers.

The following picture represents the NWOM message left by a fictitious customer towards Connect:



Type a comment...



João Silva

I changed to Connect more than a week ago and the problems are piling up. The internet service is extremely unstable and compromising my professional life. Was on the phone with customer service for more than 2 hours, but no one gave me a plausible explanation for the problem. I don't recommend anyone changing to this brand.



Like • Comment • 16h

B1. The comment was left unanswered, and 2 weeks have gone by. (No other type of brand interaction was made, like a phone call). Classify the statements according to your level of agreement (1 – Completely disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 – Completely Agree).

	1	2	3	4	5
I was satisfied with the brand's approach.					
The brand solved the problem.					
The brand took responsibility.					
I strengthened my trust on the brand.					
The brand was accessible and fair.					
The brand compensated the client.					

B2. The brand issued the following response. Classify the statements according to your level of agreement (1 – Completely disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 – Completely Agree).



João Silva

I changed to Connect less than a week ago (...) [See more](#)



Like • Comment • 16h



Connect Telecomunicações

Unlike what you said, Connect installed the internet service without any problem. The stability issues are cause by your house and are easily fixed if you buy our signal repeaters. Then, you still called our support line in an incredibly rude manner without any intention of solving the situation.

Like • Comment • 1h

	1	2	3	4	5
I was satisfied with the brand's approach.					
The brand solved the problem.					
The brand took responsibility.					
The brand was accessible and fair.					
The brand compensated the client.					

B3. The brand issued the following response. Classify the statements according to your level of agreement (1 – Completely disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 – Completely Agree).



João Silva

I changed to Connect less than a week ago (...) [See more](#)

Like • Comment • 16h



Connect Telecomunicações

Connect appreciates the time taken in bringing this problem to our attention. The internet service problems are related to a technical issue in our servers and that is being assessed and corrected by our technical staff. The problems you had with our customer service don't reflect our brand's values. Connect apologizes for the inconvenience and hopes to have the situation solved in the upcoming moments.

Like • Comment • 1h

	1	2	3	4	5
I was satisfied with the brand's approach.					
The brand solved the problem.					
The brand took responsibility.					
The brand was accessible and fair.					
The brand compensated the client.					

B4. The brand issued the following response. Classify the statements according to your level of agreement (1 – Completely disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 – Completely Agree).



João Silva

I changed to Connect less than a week ago (...) [See more](#)



Like • Comment • 16h



Connect Telecomunicações

Hi, João.

We are really sorry to hear about your negative experience. We are working on some technical issues on our servisse, but we're working to have them solved as soon as possible. We take these issues very seriously, so we would like to contact you to figure out the situation and avoid them happening in the future. We'll talk to our customer support tem reporting your interaction, to guarantee that our staff are always cordial in their interactions.

Best, Maria.

Like • Comment • 1h

	1	2	3	4	5
I was satisfied with the brand's approach.					
The brand solved the problem.					
The brand took responsibility.					
The brand was accessible and fair.					
The brand compensated the client.					

B5. The brand issued the following response. Classify the statements according to your level of agreement (1 – Completely disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 – Completely Agree).



João Silva

I changed to Connect less than a week ago (...) [See more](#)



Like • Comment • 16h



Connect Telecomunicações

Hi, João.

In Connect's name, we apologize for the negative experience you had. We are working tirelessly to solve some of the technical issues you are reporting. We would like to contact you to figure out what happened when you phoned the customer support. We want to guarantee your full satisfaction, so we will pay the entirety of your next installment, as per company policy.

Best, Maria.

Like • Comment • 1h

	1	2	3	4	5
I was satisfied with the brand's approach.					
The brand solved the problem.					

The brand took responsibility.					
The brand was accessible and fair.					
The brand compensated the client.					

C1. Classify the following statements according to your level of agreement regarding different strategies of responding to NWOM. 1 – Completely disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 – Completely Agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
Not responding to these messages may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					
Not taking responsibility and giving meaningless justifications may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					
Not responding to every comment equitably may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					
Not substantiating the arguments may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					
The weaker the brand's strength, the more likely to have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					
The more corporative (as opposed to human) the brand's tone of voice, the more likely to have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					
The bigger the delay between comment and answer, the more likely to have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					
Not compensating the client monetarily or morally may have negative consequences (loss of business or trust, bad reputation, etc)					

Sociodemographic Indicators:

Age Group:

- <18 years old
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old

- >64 years old

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

Latest Academic Degree (finished or in progress):

- None
- 1st Cycle
- 2nd Cycle
- 3rd Cycle
- Secondary Education
- Higher Technical Professional Course
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD Degree
- Other.

Professional Condition:

- Student
- Student-worker
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Other

District of residence:

Drop-down list: Aveiro, Beja, Braga, Bragança, Castelo Branco, Coimbra, Évora, Faro, Guarda, Leiria, Lisboa, Portalegre, Porto, Santarém, Setúbal, Viana do Castelo, Vila Real, Viseu, RA da Madeira, RA dos Açores, Outside Portugal.

Appendix B – Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics - Frequencies

<i>Age Group</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24 years old	34	35,1	35,1	35,1
	25-34 years old	28	28,9	28,9	63,9
	35-44 years old	15	15,5	15,5	79,4
	45-54 years old	15	15,5	15,5	94,8
	55-64 years old	3	3,1	3,1	97,9
	>64 years old	2	2,1	2,1	100,0
	Total	97	100,0	100,0	

<i>Gender</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	28	28,9	28,9	28,9
	Male	68	70,1	70,1	99,0
	Prefer not to answer	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	97	100,0	100,0	

<i>Highest Academic Degree</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Professional Course	2	2,1	2,1	2,1
	PhD	5	5,2	5,2	7,2
	Secondary Education	7	7,2	7,2	14,4
	Bachelor's	39	40,2	40,2	54,6
	Master's	43	44,3	44,3	99,0
	Post-Graduation	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	97	100,0	100,0	

<i>Professional Condition</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unemployed	7	7,2	7,2	7,2
	Employed	55	56,7	56,7	63,9
	Student	23	23,7	23,7	87,6
	Other	3	3,1	3,1	90,7
	Student-worker	9	9,3	9,3	100,0
	Total	97	100,0	100,0	

<i>District of Residence</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Aveiro	3	3,1	3,1	3,1
	Braga	3	3,1	3,1	6,2
	Coimbra	1	1,0	1,0	7,2
	Faro	1	1,0	1,0	8,2
	Fora de Portugal	6	6,2	6,2	14,4
	Guarda	1	1,0	1,0	15,5
	Lisboa	65	67,0	67,0	82,5
	Porto	5	5,2	5,2	87,6
	Região Autónoma da Madeira	2	2,1	2,1	89,7
	Setúbal	9	9,3	9,3	99,0
	Viseu	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	97	100,0	100,0	

<i>Statistics</i>				
		Has written a NWOM message?	Has used NWOM for decision making?	Motives for writing NWOM (OQ)
N	Valid	97	97	97
	Missing	0	0	0

<i>Has written a NWOM message?</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	51	52,6	52,6	52,6
	No	39	40,2	40,2	92,8
	DK/DR	7	7,2	7,2	100,0
	Total	97	100,0	100,0	

<i>Has used NWOM for decision making?</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	88	90,7	90,7	90,7
	No	8	8,2	8,2	99,0
	DK/DR	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	97	100,0	100,0	

Hypothesis Tests – T-Student

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Feelings of Injustice	97	4,57	,691	,070

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Feelings of Injustice	22,340	96	,000	1,567	1,43	1,71

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Trust Loss	97	3,84	,976	,099

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Trust Loss	8,431	96	,000	,835	,64	1,03

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Product/Service Dissatisfaction	97	4,54	,737	,075

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Product/Service Dissatisfaction	20,531	96	,000	1,536	1,39	1,68

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceived Quality	97	3,57	1,207	,123

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Perceived Quality	4,627	96	,000	,567	,32	,81

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Firm Attribution	97	4,11	,988	,100

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Firm Attribution	11,096	96	,000	1,113	,91	1,31

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Face Concern	97	3,48	1,234	,125

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Face Concern	3,867	96	,000	,485	,24	,73

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SNS Use	97	2,30	1,156	,117

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SNS Use	-5,972	96	,000	-,701	-,93	-,47

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Altruism	97	4,29	,829	,084
Anxiety Reduction	97	2,57	1,290	,131
Retaliation	97	2,16	1,222	,124
Obtaining Advice	97	3,35	1,370	,139

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Altruism	15,316	96	,000	1,289	1,12	1,46
Anxiety Reduction	-3,305	96	,001	-,433	-,69	-,17
Retaliation	-6,730	96	,000	-,835	-1,08	-,59
Obtaining Advice	2,521	96	,013	,351	,07	,63

<i>One-Sample Statistics</i>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
No-action Strategies	97	4,31	1,014	,103
Defensive Strategies	97	4,37	,939	,095
Webcare Equitability	97	3,75	1,182	,120
Webcare Strength	97	4,11	1,040	,106
Brand Strength	97	3,82	1,173	,119
Tone of Voice	97	3,85	1,074	,109
Promptness of Response	97	4,20	,862	,087
Complaint Compensation	97	3,43	1,172	,119

<i>One-Sample Test</i>						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
No-action Strategies	12,716	96	,000	1,309	1,10	1,51
Defensive Strategies	14,382	96	,000	1,371	1,18	1,56
Webcare Equitability	6,272	96	,000	,753	,51	,99
Webcare Strength	10,548	96	,000	1,113	,90	1,32
Brand Strength	6,927	96	,000	,825	,59	1,06
Tone of Voice	7,754	96	,000	,845	,63	1,06
Promptness of Response	13,669	96	,000	1,196	1,02	1,37
Complaint Compensation	3,639	96	,000	,433	,20	,67

Hypothesis Tests – ANOVA Repeated Measures

Satisfaction

<i>Within-Subjects Factors</i>	
Measure: MEASURE_1	
factor1	Dependent Variable
1	B1.1
2	B2.1
3	B3.1
4	B4.1
5	B5.1

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Satisfaction: S1 No-action Strategy	1,43	,828	97
Satisfaction: S2 Defensive Strategy	1,74	,950	97
Satisfaction: StrongWC + Corp + NoComp Strategy	4,18	,722	97
Satisfaction: StrongWC + Human + NoComp Strategy	4,53	,597	97
Satisfaction: StrongWC + Human + Comp Strategy	4,59	,673	97

<i>Multivariate Tests^a</i>						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
factor1	Pillai's Trace	,926	289,664 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Wilks' Lambda	,074	289,664 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Hotelling's Trace	12,459	289,664 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Roy's Largest Root	12,459	289,664 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1						
b. Exact statistic						

<i>Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a</i>							
Measure: MEASURE_1							
Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
					Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
factor1	,535	59,065	9	,000	,777	,806	,250
Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.							
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1							
b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.							

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Effects</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	954,342	4	238,586	513,381	,000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	954,342	3,108	307,108	513,381	,000
	Huynh-Feldt	954,342	3,223	296,067	513,381	,000
	Lower-bound	954,342	1,000	954,342	513,381	,000

Error(factor1)	Sphericity Assumed	178,458	384	,465		
	Greenhouse-Geisser	178,458	298,322	,598		
	Huynh-Feldt	178,458	309,446	,577		
	Lower-bound	178,458	96,000	1,859		

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source	factor1	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Linear	801,984	1	801,984	1138,634	,000
	Quadratic	46,024	1	46,024	122,810	,000
	Cubic	56,449	1	56,449	139,129	,000
	Order 4	49,886	1	49,886	133,346	,000
Error(factor1)	Linear	67,616	96	,704		
	Quadratic	35,976	96	,375		
	Cubic	38,951	96	,406		
	Order 4	35,914	96	,374		

<i>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</i>					
Measure: MEASURE_1					
Transformed Variable: Average					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	5258,575	1	5258,575	4967,523	,000
Error	101,625	96	1,059		

<i>Estimates</i>				
Measure: MEASURE_1				
factor1	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1,433	,084	1,266	1,600
2	1,742	,096	1,551	1,934
3	4,175	,073	4,030	4,321
4	4,526	,061	4,406	4,646
5	4,588	,068	4,452	4,723

<i>Pairwise Comparisons</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-,309*	,107	,048	-,617	-,002
	3	-2,742*	,104	,000	-3,041	-2,444
	4	-3,093*	,103	,000	-3,388	-2,798
	5	-3,155*	,106	,000	-3,459	-2,850
2	1	,309*	,107	,048	,002	,617
	3	-2,433*	,111	,000	-2,751	-2,115
	4	-2,784*	,108	,000	-3,094	-2,473
	5	-2,845*	,114	,000	-3,172	-2,518
3	1	2,742*	,104	,000	2,444	3,041
	2	2,433*	,111	,000	2,115	2,751
	4	-,351*	,070	,000	-,553	-,148
	5	-,412*	,077	,000	-,634	-,191
4	1	3,093*	,103	,000	2,798	3,388
	2	2,784*	,108	,000	2,473	3,094
	3	,351*	,070	,000	,148	,553
	5	-,062	,064	1,000	-,245	,121
5	1	3,155*	,106	,000	2,850	3,459
	2	2,845*	,114	,000	2,518	3,172
	3	,412*	,077	,000	,191	,634
	4	,062	,064	1,000	-,121	,245
Based on estimated marginal means						
*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.						
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.						

<i>Multivariate Tests</i>					
	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Pillai's trace	,926	289,664 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Wilks' lambda	,074	289,664 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Hotelling's trace	12,459	289,664 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Roy's largest root	12,459	289,664 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Each F tests the multivariate effect of factor1. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.					
a. Exact statistic					

Problem-resolution

<i>Within-Subjects Factors</i>	
Measure: MEASURE_1	
factor1	Dependent Variable
1	B1.2
2	B2.2
3	B3.2
4	B4.2
5	B5.2

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Problem resolution: S1 No-action Strategy	1,47	,830	97
Problem resolution: S2 Defensive Strategy	1,72	,965	97
Problem resolution: StrongWC + Corp + NoComp Strategy	2,75	1,061	97
Problem resolution: StrongWC + Human + NoComp Strategy	3,43	1,117	97
Problem resolution: StrongWC + Human + Comp Strategy	3,70	1,101	97

<i>Multivariate Tests^a</i>						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
factor1	Pillai's Trace	,777	81,193 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Wilks' Lambda	,223	81,193 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Hotelling's Trace	3,492	81,193 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Roy's Largest Root	3,492	81,193 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1						
b. Exact statistic						

<i>Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a</i>							
Measure: MEASURE_1							
Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
					Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
factor1	,454	74,614	9	,000	,764	,792	,250
Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.							
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1							
b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.							

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Effects</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	384,792	4	96,198	143,619	,000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	384,792	3,056	125,929	143,619	,000
	Huynh-Feldt	384,792	3,167	121,483	143,619	,000
	Lower-bound	384,792	1,000	384,792	143,619	,000
Error(factor1)	Sphericity Assumed	257,208	384	,670		
	Greenhouse-Geisser	257,208	293,340	,877		
	Huynh-Feldt	257,208	304,074	,846		
	Lower-bound	257,208	96,000	2,679		

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source	factor1	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Linear	368,664	1	368,664	328,504	,000
	Quadratic	,663	1	,663	1,561	,215
	Cubic	13,872	1	13,872	22,297	,000
	Order 4	1,593	1	1,593	3,122	,080
Error(factor1)	Linear	107,736	96	1,122		
	Quadratic	40,766	96	,425		
	Cubic	59,728	96	,622		
	Order 4	48,978	96	,510		

<i>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</i>					
Measure: MEASURE_1					
Transformed Variable: Average					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	3320,332	1	3320,332	1313,530	,000
Error	242,668	96	2,528		

<i>Estimates</i>				
Measure: MEASURE_1				
factor1	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1,474	,084	1,307	1,642
2	1,722	,098	1,527	1,916
3	2,753	,108	2,539	2,966
4	3,433	,113	3,208	3,658
5	3,701	,112	3,479	3,923

<i>Pairwise Comparisons</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-,247	,118	,389	-,587	,092
	3	-1,278*	,112	,000	-1,601	-,956
	4	-1,959*	,124	,000	-2,316	-1,602
	5	-2,227*	,132	,000	-2,607	-1,847
2	1	,247	,118	,389	-,092	,587
	3	-1,031*	,129	,000	-1,402	-,660
	4	-1,711*	,136	,000	-2,102	-1,321
	5	-1,979*	,129	,000	-2,351	-1,608
3	1	1,278*	,112	,000	,956	1,601
	2	1,031*	,129	,000	,660	1,402
	4	-,680*	,098	,000	-,961	-,399
	5	-,948*	,112	,000	-1,270	-,627
4	1	1,959*	,124	,000	1,602	2,316
	2	1,711*	,136	,000	1,321	2,102
	3	,680*	,098	,000	,399	,961
	5	-,268*	,068	,002	-,463	-,073
5	1	2,227*	,132	,000	1,847	2,607
	2	1,979*	,129	,000	1,608	2,351
	3	,948*	,112	,000	,627	1,270
	4	,268*	,068	,002	,073	,463
Based on estimated marginal means						
*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.						
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.						

<i>Multivariate Tests</i>					
	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Pillai's trace	,777	81,193 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Wilks' lambda	,223	81,193 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Hotelling's trace	3,492	81,193 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Roy's largest root	3,492	81,193 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Each F tests the multivariate effect of factor1. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.					
a. Exact statistic					

Brand Accountability

<i>Within-Subjects Factors</i>	
Measure: MEASURE_1	
factor1	Dependent Variable
1	B1.3
2	B2.3
3	B3.3
4	B4.3
5	B5.3

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Taking responsibility: S1 No-action Strategy	1,43	,840	97
Taking responsibility: S2 Defensive Strategy	1,34	,748	97
Taking responsibility: StrongWC + Corp + NoComp Strategy	4,44	,750	97
Taking responsibility: StrongWC + Human + NoComp Strategy	4,49	,723	97
Taking responsibility: StrongWC + Human + Comp Strategy	4,61	,670	97

<i>Multivariate Tests^a</i>						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
factor1	Pillai's Trace	,924	283,078 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Wilks' Lambda	,076	283,078 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Hotelling's Trace	12,175	283,078 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Roy's Largest Root	12,175	283,078 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1						
b. Exact statistic						

<i>Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a</i>							
Measure: MEASURE_1							
Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
					Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
factor1	,476	70,183	9	,000	,705	,729	,250
Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.							
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1							
b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.							

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Effects</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	1141,332	4	285,333	601,136	,000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	1141,332	2,821	404,604	601,136	,000
	Huynh-Feldt	1141,332	2,915	391,529	601,136	,000
	Lower-bound	1141,332	1,000	1141,332	601,136	,000
Error(factor1)	Sphericity Assumed	182,268	384	,475		
	Greenhouse-Geisser	182,268	270,802	,673		
	Huynh-Feldt	182,268	279,846	,651		
	Lower-bound	182,268	96,000	1,899		

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source	factor1	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Linear	876,375	1	876,375	1051,325	,000
	Quadratic	48,259	1	48,259	129,625	,000
	Cubic	95,274	1	95,274	266,457	,000
	Order 4	121,423	1	121,423	362,269	,000
Error(factor1)	Linear	80,025	96	,834		
	Quadratic	35,741	96	,372		
	Cubic	34,326	96	,358		
	Order 4	32,177	96	,335		

<i>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</i>					
Measure: MEASURE_1					
Transformed Variable: Average					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	5166,781	1	5166,781	5726,383	,000
Error	86,619	96	,902		

<i>Estimates</i>				
Measure: MEASURE_1				
factor1	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1,433	,085	1,264	1,602
2	1,340	,076	1,189	1,491
3	4,443	,076	4,292	4,594
4	4,495	,073	4,349	4,641
5	4,608	,068	4,473	4,743

<i>Pairwise Comparisons</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	,093	,094	1,000	-,177	,363
	3	-3,010*	,115	,000	-3,341	-2,680
	4	-3,062*	,110	,000	-3,379	-2,744
	5	-3,175*	,114	,000	-3,504	-2,846
2	1	-,093	,094	1,000	-,363	,177
	3	-3,103*	,109	,000	-3,417	-2,789
	4	-3,155*	,107	,000	-3,462	-2,847

	5	-3,268*	,110	,000	-3,585	-2,951
3	1	3,010*	,115	,000	2,680	3,341
	2	3,103*	,109	,000	2,789	3,417
	4	-,052	,069	1,000	-,251	,148
	5	-,165	,076	,318	-,382	,053
4	1	3,062*	,110	,000	2,744	3,379
	2	3,155*	,107	,000	2,847	3,462
	3	,052	,069	1,000	-,148	,251
	5	-,113	,067	,936	-,306	,079
5	1	3,175*	,114	,000	2,846	3,504
	2	3,268*	,110	,000	2,951	3,585
	3	,165	,076	,318	-,053	,382
	4	,113	,067	,936	-,079	,306

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

<i>Multivariate Tests</i>					
	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Pillai's trace	,924	283,078 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Wilks' lambda	,076	283,078 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Hotelling's trace	12,175	283,078 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Roy's largest root	12,175	283,078 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000

Each F tests the multivariate effect of factor1. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Exact statistic

Fairness

<i>Within-Subjects Factors</i>	
Measure: MEASURE_1	
factor1	Dependent Variable
1	B1.4
2	B2.4
3	B3.4
4	B4.4
5	B5.4

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Fairness: S1 No-action Strategy	1,32	,605	97
Fairness: S2 Defensive Strategy	1,63	,961	97
Fairness: StrongWC + Corp + NoComp Strategy	3,99	,930	97
Fairness: StrongWC + Human + NoComp Strategy	4,27	,823	97
Fairness: StrongWC + Human + Comp Strategy	4,55	,778	97

<i>Multivariate Tests^a</i>						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
factor1	Pillai's Trace	,925	287,592 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Wilks' Lambda	,075	287,592 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Hotelling's Trace	12,370	287,592 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Roy's Largest Root	12,370	287,592 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1						
b. Exact statistic						

<i>Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a</i>							
Measure: MEASURE_1							
Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
					Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
factor1	,663	38,732	9	,000	,810	,842	,250
Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.							
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1							
b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.							

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Effects</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	928,219	4	232,055	414,496	,000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	928,219	3,240	286,453	414,496	,000
	Huynh-Feldt	928,219	3,367	275,685	414,496	,000
	Lower-bound	928,219	1,000	928,219	414,496	,000

Error(factor1)	Sphericity Assumed	214,981	384	,560		
	Greenhouse-Geisser	214,981	311,077	,691		
	Huynh-Feldt	214,981	323,227	,665		
	Lower-bound	214,981	96,000	2,239		

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source	factor1	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Linear	801,984	1	801,984	1152,267	,000
	Quadratic	31,859	1	31,859	63,909	,000
	Cubic	40,826	1	40,826	74,124	,000
	Order 4	53,551	1	53,551	108,377	,000
Error(factor1)	Linear	66,816	96	,696		
	Quadratic	47,856	96	,498		
	Cubic	52,874	96	,551		
	Order 4	47,435	96	,494		

<i>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</i>					
Measure: MEASURE_1					
Transformed Variable: Average					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	4813,988	1	4813,988	4025,200	,000
Error	114,812	96	1,196		

<i>Estimates</i>				
Measure: MEASURE_1				
factor1	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1,320	,061	1,198	1,441
2	1,629	,098	1,435	1,823
3	3,990	,094	3,802	4,177
4	4,268	,084	4,102	4,434
5	4,546	,079	4,390	4,703

<i>Pairwise Comparisons</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-,309*	,098	,021	-,590	-,029
	3	-2,670*	,114	,000	-2,998	-2,342
	4	-2,948*	,101	,000	-3,238	-2,659
	5	-3,227*	,103	,000	-3,523	-2,931
2	1	,309*	,098	,021	,029	,590
	3	-2,361*	,130	,000	-2,736	-1,986
	4	-2,639*	,123	,000	-2,992	-2,286
	5	-2,918*	,120	,000	-3,261	-2,574
3	1	2,670*	,114	,000	2,342	2,998
	2	2,361*	,130	,000	1,986	2,736
	4	-,278*	,085	,015	-,523	-,034
	5	-,557*	,103	,000	-,851	-,262
4	1	2,948*	,101	,000	2,659	3,238
	2	2,639*	,123	,000	2,286	2,992
	3	,278*	,085	,015	,034	,523
	5	-,278*	,089	,023	-,534	-,023
5	1	3,227*	,103	,000	2,931	3,523
	2	2,918*	,120	,000	2,574	3,261
	3	,557*	,103	,000	,262	,851
	4	,278*	,089	,023	,023	,534

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

<i>Multivariate Tests</i>					
	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Pillai's trace	,925	287,592 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Wilks' lambda	,075	287,592 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Hotelling's trace	12,370	287,592 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Roy's largest root	12,370	287,592 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000

Each F tests the multivariate effect of factor1. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Exact statistic

Complaint Compensation

<i>Within-Subjects Factors</i>	
Measure: MEASURE_1	
factor1	Dependent Variable
1	B1.5
2	B2.5
3	B3.5
4	B4.5
5	B5.5

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Complaint compensation: S1 No-action Strategy	1,41	,787	97
Complaint compensation: S2 Defensive Strategy	1,34	,705	97
Complaint compensation: StrongWC + Corp + NoComp Strategy	2,29	,901	97
Complaint compensation: StrongWC + Human + NoComp Strategy	2,81	1,219	97
Complaint compensation: StrongWC + Human + Comp Strategy	4,66	,675	97

<i>Multivariate Tests^a</i>						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
factor1	Pillai's Trace	,937	345,299 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Wilks' Lambda	,063	345,299 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Hotelling's Trace	14,852	345,299 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
	Roy's Largest Root	14,852	345,299 ^b	4,000	93,000	,000
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1						
b. Exact statistic						

<i>Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a</i>							
Measure: MEASURE_1							
Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
					Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
factor1	,643	41,673	9	,000	,811	,843	,250
Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.							
a. Design: Intercept Within Subjects Design: factor1							
b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.							

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Effects</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	711,616	4	177,904	305,001	,000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	711,616	3,245	219,278	305,001	,000
	Huynh-Feldt	711,616	3,372	211,022	305,001	,000
	Lower-bound	711,616	1,000	711,616	305,001	,000
Error(factor1)	Sphericity Assumed	223,984	384	,583		
	Greenhouse-Geisser	223,984	311,546	,719		
	Huynh-Feldt	223,984	323,735	,692		
	Lower-bound	223,984	96,000	2,333		

<i>Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source	factor1	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Linear	616,009	1	616,009	1046,843	,000
	Quadratic	80,678	1	80,678	121,084	,000
	Cubic	,867	1	,867	1,162	,284
	Order 4	14,062	1	14,062	42,325	,000
Error(factor1)	Linear	56,491	96	,588		
	Quadratic	63,965	96	,666		
	Cubic	71,633	96	,746		
	Order 4	31,895	96	,332		

<i>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</i>					
Measure: MEASURE_1					
Transformed Variable: Average					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	3038,755	1	3038,755	1975,819	,000
Error	147,645	96	1,538		

<i>Estimates</i>				
Measure: MEASURE_1				
factor1	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	1,412	,080	1,254	1,571
2	1,340	,072	1,198	1,482
3	2,289	,091	2,107	2,470
4	2,814	,124	2,569	3,060
5	4,660	,069	4,524	4,796

<i>Pairwise Comparisons</i>						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	,072	,091	1,000	-,188	,333
	3	-,876*	,102	,000	-1,169	-,584
	4	-1,402*	,127	,000	-1,766	-1,038
	5	-3,247*	,111	,000	-3,565	-2,929
2	1	-,072	,091	1,000	-,333	,188
	3	-,948*	,093	,000	-1,216	-,681
	4	-1,474*	,124	,000	-1,829	-1,119
	5	-3,320*	,092	,000	-3,584	-3,055
3	1	,876*	,102	,000	,584	1,169
	2	,948*	,093	,000	,681	1,216
	4	-,526*	,097	,000	-,805	-,246
	5	-2,371*	,116	,000	-2,704	-2,039
4	1	1,402*	,127	,000	1,038	1,766
	2	1,474*	,124	,000	1,119	1,829
	3	,526*	,097	,000	,246	,805
	5	-1,845*	,135	,000	-2,232	-1,459
5	1	3,247*	,111	,000	2,929	3,565
	2	3,320*	,092	,000	3,055	3,584
	3	2,371*	,116	,000	2,039	2,704
	4	1,845*	,135	,000	1,459	2,232
Based on estimated marginal means						
*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.						
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.						

<i>Multivariate Tests</i>					
	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Pillai's trace	,937	345,299 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Wilks' lambda	,063	345,299 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Hotelling's trace	14,852	345,299 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Roy's largest root	14,852	345,299 ^a	4,000	93,000	,000
Each F tests the multivariate effect of factor1. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.					
a. Exact statistic					