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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AS AN ANTECEDENT OF BRAND LOVE:
A CASE STUDY ON THE BRAND DCK BOARDSHORTS

Dissertation submitted to Universidade
Católica Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in
Communication, Marketing and Advertising

By

Andreia Pedro Pereira

Faculdade de Ciências Humanas

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Resumo

Country Of Origin foi reconhecido como um atributo significativo para os consumidores avaliarem uma marca e, em última instância, influenciar e determinar o seu comportamento para com a mesma. O resultado final, junto com outros fatores adjacentes, seria a criação e o desenvolvimento de uma relação de amor com a marca, onde os consumidores acabariam por se tornar fiéis e comprometidos com a marca, assim como por interagir com a mesma. Estes dois temas foram abordados e estudados através de um estudo de caso sobre a marca portuguesa de calções de banho masculinos DCK. Por um lado, a presente dissertação procurou estudar o conceito de Brand Love de maneira a poder compreender as suas principais características e resultados, bem como avaliar como a marca é vista pelos consumidores. Por outro lado, procurou ainda estudar o conceito de Country Of Origin como um possível antecedente do Brand Love, ou seja, determinar se este fator tem alguma influência ou impacto nas intenções de compra dos consumidores. De modo a responder à questão de partida, “De que maneira o fator País de Origem influencia a percepção de Brand Love entre os consumidores?”, o estudo de caso à marca DCK abrangeu uma entrevista ao responsável pelo marketing e comunicação da marca, assim como um questionário online destinado aos consumidores da mesma. Os resultados do estudo realizado na presente dissertação mostram que, embora a marca não considere o país de origem um fator importante na estratégia de comunicação, os consumidores da DCK demonstraram que na verdade o valorizam considerando-o ainda um dos fatores mais influentes na hora de adquirir produtos desta.

Key words: Brand Love; Country Of Origin

Abstract

Country Of Origin has been recognized as a significant cue for consumers to evaluate and assess a brand, and ultimately influence and affect their behavioral intentions towards it. The ultimate and ideal outcome of this, together with other adjacent factors, would result on the creation and development of a love relationship with the brand, where the consumers end up becoming loyal, engaged and committed to it. These two topics were addressed and studied through a case study on the Portuguese male boardshorts brand DCK. On one hand, the present dissertation sought to study this concept of Brand Love in order to understand its main attributes and outcomes, as well as assess how consumers perceive this brand. On the other hand, this dissertation also sought to study the concept of Country Of Origin as a possible antecedent of Brand Love, i.e., determine if this factor had any influence or impact upon the consumers' purchase intentions. In line with this, once established whether or not DCK could fit the loved brand category, as well as whether or not the Country Of Origin contributed to it, this dissertation further analyzed the communication and marketing strategies of DCK. In order to answer the the research question, "How does the factor Country Of Origin influence the perception of Brand Love among consumers?", the case study on the brand DCK encompassed an interview with the responsible for the marketing and communication of the brand, as well as an online survey aimed at the consumers of such brand. The results of the study show that, even though the brand does not consider the country of origin an important asset in its communication strategy, the consumers of DCK do in fact value it, considering it as one of the most influential factors when it comes to purchase products from it.

Key words: Brand Love; Country Of Origin

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Introduction

The present Master's dissertation will focus on this relation between "brand love" and the "country of origin" factor, where it will be further studied how the latter could eventually be an antecedent of the first, resorting to a study case of the brand DCK and its communication strategies. Hence, this dissertation seeks to answer the research question "How does the factor Country Of Origin influence the perception of Brand Love among consumers?".

Studies regarding the concepts of "brand love" and "country of origin" have often been put into practice separately. However, there is not much research on the possible connection of these two terms, as it can be quite complex to establish. In fact, many brands, no matter their dimension or field, do resort to mechanisms that allow them to establish a relationship with the consumer, on one hand, and on the other, to enhance the visibility of the country of origin of certain products, through solid and well-defined separated communication strategies.

When studying brand love, there are evidences that the consumer's emotional bond with a brand does in fact influence on the brand's future success (Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho 2018). This emotional connection is one of the most important and powerful factors to predict and determine the brands' profitability throughout time, as well as its performance and total shareholder return. A brand cannot focus only on products/services, but it must reach out to the consumer on a personal and emotional level, which will most probably lead to loyalty and devoted attachment towards the brand for extended periods of time. The focus of this dissertation is to further comprehend whether or not the country of origin of a brand has any influence or impact when developing this emotional bond that consumer develop towards a brand.

The brand selected to carry out this dissertation and assess the topics exposed, was DCK, boardshorts. This brand is characterized by being on of the top of mind brands within its segment, in Portugal, which facilitates when it comes to gather responses and perceptions on this brand. DCK was created in 2009 as a Men's Swimwear Company that is now present in Portugal, Spain, Dubai, Tanzania and Mozambique. After a trip do Bali, the founders of the brand brought some men's swimsuits to their home country, Portugal, where it had an enormous success due to its different designs, quality and accessible prices. Later on, the production started to take place in Portugal. Today, DCK is a brand of reference when it comes to men's swimwear in Portugal. In line with this, this

dissertation will include a chapter on the story of the brand, as well as a subchapter where it will be explained the brand's overall communication strategies and activities. This brand is not only distinguished due to its products, as they are original and different, but also due to its communication campaigns, actions and its overall presence. In line with this, the selected brand is suitable for the present study as it is a Portuguese and "made in Portugal" brand, which enables the study the influence of the Country Of Origin effect, as well as a successful and known brand locally, that checks out the requirements of a possible "loved brand".

The first chapter of this dissertation will focus on further study and understand the core concepts of communication within organizations, more specifically, corporate and strategic communication, as well as the link between these two concepts. Related to these, the first chapter will also take into consideration the corporate identity, as well as its mission, vision and values, as part of the overall communication strategy of an organization. This first chapter will also encompass the corporate image and corporate reputation, as a result and outcome of the several communication actions regarding the concepts approached above, defining and differentiating these in order to fully understand how a company is perceived by its several audiences.

The second chapter is dedicated to the concept of Brand Love as well as all of the related aspects, such as branding, brand image and brand reputation and overall brand identity. Furthermore, throughout this chapter it will also be highlighted the different dimensions of Brand Love that the customer experiences when in a relationship with the brand: passion, intimacy and commitment. As an outcome of the Brand Love experienced, the customer will develop a feeling of loyalty and commitment towards the brand, as well as a bigger resistance to negative information regarding the brand and a stronger and more positive word of mouth with other consumers, leading to a more consistent brand engagement. The ultimate goal is to develop and enhance the brand's equity and value, through Brand Love, which will also be assessed in this second chapter.

Finally, in the last chapter of this first part the concept of Country Of Origin will be analyzed and studied. Consumers are regularly exposed to products from various countries that have similar features, so they evaluate and prefer certain brands, often based on its COO. This is why this has become an important cue for managerial and marketing professionals to take into consideration. Therefore, an entire chapter will be dedicated to the topic of Country Of Origin and how and why the image and reputation of a country influence the consumers' purchasing behaviors or overall perception of brands of certain countries. Later on the same chapter, the communications strategies developed to enhance and promote the country of origin of certain brands are also addressed and analyzed. This will further encompass how communication and marketing professionals take advantage of the country of origin, or purposively decide to omit it.

The second part of this dissertation, will start by presenting the brand used in the case study, as well as the methodology. In order to assess the two variables mentioned above, the present study seeks to develop a case study on the Portuguese boardshorts brand DCK, where there will be taken into consideration how consumers perceive this brand, in order to explain how and why this brand fits the "brand love" category, and on the other hand, to understand the brand's communication strategies, taken into account the mentioned concepts, i.e., how the brand manages to establish a relationship with the consumers, as well as how the brand promotes and communicates its country of origin, Portugal.

The following chapter of this second part seeks to systematize the methodology applied in this study, as well as clarify the relationship of the methodological model with the questions exposed and the research hypotheses, while at the same time raising possible limitations to this study. This chapter will further encompass the analysis of the data collected, which will be intersected with the literature review, in order to sum up and explain the results, and reach a conclusion.

Chapter 1. The role of Communication within organizations

Communication is the essence of an organization ¹(Katz & Kahn, 1978). In fact, speaking about an organization is speaking about communication. Communication is what keeps the organization going, and its success relies on the organization's efforts to properly communicate with its stakeholders (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Communication within organizations is perceived as the process through which organizations create and establish collective and coordinated structures with meaning, through certain actions and practices aimed at achieving and fulfilling the organization's objectives and goals (Ruão, 2016). Given the wide market offering among organizations that leads to competitive pressure, knowing how to properly communicate serves as a competitive advantage for organizations (Estrela, 2015).

The process of communication consists of a set of relationships between its various elements (Ruão, 2016) in order to guarantee the flow of information (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007), within certain circumstances or situations, with a specific intention or purpose, using specific channels in order to expose a message from the sender to the receiver (Ruão, 2016).

Therefore, in order to have an effective result, the communication must be carefully articulated through a global management strategy (Scheinsohn, 2010).

¹ Here, the term "organization" is used to "designate all types of human groups established for the purpose of achieving an objective, whether they are public, private, for-profit, non-profit, associative, social, and others" (Ruão, 2008, p 25).

1.1. Corporate Communication

Throughout the years, the interest in corporate communication has increased among business communication researchers (Anderson, & Argenti, 2005) as well as the company's ability to achieve its strategy (or goals), resulting thus on the recognition of corporate communication as one of the most important strategic tools (Dolphin & Fan, 2000), playing a crucial role in the overall planning and business management of the organization (Dolphin & Fan, 2000).

Within an organization, corporate communication can operate as part of managerial functions, when its strategies and activities are well defined. The evolution of this new function started to gather a wide range of specialized fields and disciplines, such as internal communication², issues and crisis management³, media relations⁴, investor relations⁵ and public affairs⁶ (Cornelissen, 2004).

For the purpose of this research, the most suitable definition of corporate communication that will be considered is that of Joep Cornelissen (2004), who presents this concept as part of a management function that provides the necessary means of communication aimed at creating and maintaining a positive and favorable reputation with the organization's stakeholders, upon which the organization depends.

² For the purpose of this study, one of the definitions to be considered is Kreps' (1990), who delineates internal communication as a pattern of shared messages among members of an organization, meeting the needs of human interaction, tasks development and goals coordination (as cited Ruão, 2008). The present study will also complement the previous definition with the one provided by Bovee and Thill, (2000) and Vercic et al. (2012), who establish internal communication as the exchange of information and ideas among employees or members of an organization to build trusting and open relationships and to create understanding (as cited in Jacobs, Yu & Chavez, 2015).

³ Within the crisis context, where "crises" are defined as "events, observable in time and space, in which societies or their larger subunits (e.g., communities, regions) incur physical damages and losses and/or disruption of their routine functioning" (Kreps, 1984: p. 312), communication is responsible for establishing a shared meaning among all parties involved, in order to successfully address the crisis (Fischer, Posegga & Fischbach, 2016), through any available channel.

⁴ A positive media exposure is often crucial for organizations, as it allows the organization to get its message and information across to its stakeholders or audiences (Khodarahmi, 2009). Communicating with the media and develop media relations, will allow an organization to improve its overall image and reputation with the publics (Khodarahmi, 2009).

⁵ Investor relations consist on the "continuous, planned, deliberate, sustained marketing activities that identify, establish, maintain and enhance both long and short term relationships between a company and not only its prospective and present investors, but also other financial analysts and stakeholders" (Dolphin, 2004, p. 26), combining thus disciplines of finances and communication.

⁶ "The corporate public affairs (...) is one means by which an organization can reveal itself to and interact with the public" (Griffin & Dunn, 2004, p. 196)

Corporate communication acknowledges the organization as a whole, and is responsible for how it is presented, both external and internally. This suggests that an organization is constructed by and composed of its various elements (stakeholders⁷, managers, employees) and their interaction and communication with each other (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011).

Regarding this interaction between the organization and its stakeholders, corporate communication is responsible for determining the image and reputation⁸ of the organization, managing the corporate identity⁹, conceive and establish communication plans as well as assess the results and outcomes¹⁰ of all these activities (Cornelissen, 2004).

This is in line with the definition of corporate communication as a set of activities related to the management of all internal and external communication with the ultimate goal to create favorable relations with the stakeholders (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). These activities put into practice by the organization allow for the spread of information with the common goal of keeping the organization operating (Illia & Balmer, 2012).

From a more simplistic perspective, a possible definition of corporate communication is the creation and exchange of messages within a system of interdependent relationships aimed at managing environmental uncertainty (Mazzei, 2014).

According to Melewar (2008), corporate communication consists of the different channels an organization uses to communicate to its stakeholders or consistencies, in a managerial and organizational perspective.

Regarding corporate communications goals, Illia & Balmer (2012) point out its three most important objectives: establishing and developing beneficial inter-organizational relationships with stakeholder, (van Riel, 1995; Cornelissen, 2011) ; following the social trends and design corporate policies to innovate and adapt the organization to eventual changes in society (Bernays, 1923) and finally, formulate a unique and consistent communication strategy to support all marketing activities (Schultz et al., 1993; Caywood, 1997; Kitchen and de Pelsmacker, 2004).

⁷ The concept of *stakeholder* is consistently present within the organizational context, as it can be defined as any group or interested part that can affect and influence, or be affected and influenced by the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives (Freeman & Mcvea, 2001).

⁸ Concepts that will be further analyzed in chapter 1.5.

⁹ Concept that will be further analyzed in chapter 1.4.

¹⁰ A result or effect of an action, situation (Cambridge Dictionary).

Considering the purposes of the present study, it is relevant to mention and complement the previous goals with the responsibilities of corporate communication as stated by van Riel & Fombrun (2007). In line with this, corporate communication is responsible for boosting the profile of the company behind the brand, managing the corporate identity and brand features, delegating functions according to the different departments of communication and finally, overseeing and conducting both internal and external support behind the corporate objectives (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

1.2. Strategic Communication: concepts and definitions

In order to be effective, communication must be carefully articulated through a global management adopting a logical strategy, a guideline or plan of consciously set-out actions to achieve the organizational goals (Scheinsohn, 2010). The ultimate intention of strategic communication is, thus, to communicate purposefully to advance the organization's mission as well as to enhance its strategic positioning (Holtzhausen & Zerfass 2015).

Firstly, a definition of the word "strategy" is required. In a communication context, a strategy is created to align the actions and objectives of an organization (Angelopulo and Barker 2013; Kitchen and Burgmann 2010, in Barker, 2013). In an organization, a communication strategy defines how the organization's objectives and goals will be achieved (Barker, 2013).

Each organization will implement its communication strategy depending on and considering its corporate name, necessities and goals, target and overall environment where it operates (Quintero, Sukier, Capella & Molina, 2019). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the term "strategy" will be defined as the "use of a guideline or plan with consciously set-out actions to achieve organizational goals and to manage environmental change" (Morden 2007, 184; Swart 2010, in Barker, 2013, p. 105).

Ruão (2016) states that, this "strategic dimension of communication" in organizations has raised interest among professionals and researchers, becoming an "emerging area of study in the communication and management social sciences" (Thomas & Stephens, 2015, p. 3).

It is within this context that the term "Strategic Communication" has become more popular within the communications field in the second decade of the twenty-first century (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015) leading, as a consequence, to the creation of a new

discipline (Ruão, 2016). Today, strategic communication has an important role within organizations, as important when it comes to the strategic management issues (Falkheimer, 2014), as well as when it comes to the organization's sustainability, since it will allow the creation, development and establishment of the organization throughout time (Quintero, Sukier, Capella & Molina, 2019).

Different definitions are provided by different authors. In *The Routledge Handbook of Strategic Communication* (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015), strategic communication is described as a deliberate and intentional process aimed at achieving the organization's goals and mission.

Hallahan et al. (2007) definition of the concept of strategic communication is continuously present in various studies regarding this topic, as they define it as the purposeful use of communication by an organization in order to fulfil its mission and achieve its goals, focusing then on the intention of the message. As Ruão (2016) states, strategic communication builds the overall communication "guideline" of the organization, in order to guide the organization towards its mission in a purposeful way (van Ruler, 2018).

Overall, strategic communication focuses mainly on how an organization wishes to communicate with its stakeholders, both internally and externally (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič & Sriramesh, 2007), following a strategic communication process according to the organization's goals and objectives (van Ruler, 2018). In fact, Falkheimer (2014) points out that communication strategies increase the organization's effectiveness, trust and legitimacy, thus increasing its efficiency. In line with these authors, strategic communication means purposeful and intentional activities developed by managers, employees and all the communication professionals that will thus shape the way the organization is perceived (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič & Sriramesh, 2007).

These activities that are put into practice can include everything from advertising, to business communication, marketing or public relations. Therefore, strategic communication encompasses all of these activities, managing and aligning them with the organization's mission and objectives (O'Connor & Shumate, 2018, citing Hallahan et al., 2007).

Consequently, strategic communication is responsible for creating a unifying framework that combines and incorporates all of these activities (Heide, von Platen, Simonsson & Falkheimer, 2018). When these activities are well structured and are successfully developed in consonance with the organization's goals, this will promote the creation of a positive reputation among its stakeholders, which is the ultimate goal of strategic communication (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015).

When explaining strategic communication, Scheinsohn (2010), states that it proposes the articulation of the various tactical communications activities, such as advertising, sponsoring or public relations within an organization. Thus, according to this author, strategic communication is the global strategy where all tactical communications are linked and coherent with each other (Scheinsohn, 2010).

Regarding the concordance and alignment between all these communication fields, Ruão (2016) further states that these intentional and oriented strategic communication activities require the “identification of key actors, the definition of strategic objectives, (...) planning, the controlled implementation and the (...) evaluation of communication” (p. 44). In this strategic process, the importance of communication in linking and aligning the organization's objectives with its mission is well represented (Steyn, 2003).

The definition that better suits the conceptual paradigm of this study, is Argenti, Howell and Beck's (2005), who define strategic communication as “communication aligned with the company's overall strategy, to enhance its strategic positioning” (Argenti, Howell & Beck, 2005, p 4). The organization's mission combines both management/business and communication. Therefore, strategic communication aligns these two perspectives and develops a strategy that will thus fulfil the organization's objectives (Thomas & Stephens, 2015). According to Argenti, Howell and Beck (2005), in their article, these authors set out a table connecting each of the communication functions within an organization with its goals, constituencies and channels, and they explain that “each communication function fulfils specific objectives, is targeted at specific constituencies that are critical to meeting those objectives and is delivered through the channels most appropriate to (...) those constituencies” (Argenti, Howell & Beck, 2005, p. 65).

COMMUNICATIONS FUNCTIONS	OBJECTIVES	CONSTITUENCIES		CHANNELS
		PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
Media relations	Public relations, crisis management	All constituencies	Media	Press releases, interviews
Employee communications	Internal consensus building	Employees	Customers, families	Town hall meetings, memos, newsletters
Financial communications	Transparency, meeting financial expectations	Investors	Analysts, media	Conference calls, CEO/CFO
Community relations	Image building	Communities	NGOs, media	Events, speeches, philanthropy
Government relations	Regulatory compliance, meeting social expectations	Regulators	Media, customers	Lobbying efforts, one-on-one meetings
Marketing communications	Driving sales, building image	Customers	All key constituencies	Advertising, promotions

Fig 1: Communication functions, objectives, constituencies and channels. Argenti, Howell & Beck, 2005. *The Strategic Communication Imperative*. MIT Sloan Management Review, vol.46, No 3.

According to table 1, media relations are responsible for public relations and crisis management; employee communication is in charge of building internal consensus; financial communications is focused on meeting financial expectations; community relations is responsible for image building; the objectives of government relations is meeting social expectations, following regulatory compliance; and finally, the marketing communications' objectives are driving sales and building the organization's image. As the authors state, "executives have to think (...) about an organization's objectives for each specific communication, determining which constituencies are critical to meeting that objective" (Argenti, Howell & Beck, 2005, p. 87).

Achieving a complete and successful strategic impact requires communications to be customized to each constituency through a specific channel, which is "another integral part of the strategic communication process" (Argenti, Howell and Beck, 2005, p. 87). According to the table these authors presented, the primary constituencies for each of the communications functions are, respectively: "all constituencies; employees; investors; communities; regulators; customers", which use specific channels, respectively: "press releases and interviews; town hall meetings, memos and newsletters; conference calls, CEO/CFO; events, speeches and philanthropy; lobbying efforts and one-on-one meetings; advertising and promotions" (Argenti, Howell and Beck, 2005, p.87).

To sum up these ideas, it is correct to state that when communication gathers all the fields and activities mentioned previously, in order to accomplish the organization's goals and objectives, then it is considered strategic (van Ruler, 2018). This perspective further suggests a holistic approach towards strategic communication, gathering and integrating these different fields and disciplines in order to be able to understand the role that strategic communication has when it comes to fulfil the overall mission and objectives of the organization (Heide, von Platen, Simonsson & Falkheimer, 2018).

When aligning communication with strategy, Argenti, Howell and Beck (2005) explain that communication within a corporate must be aligned and responsive with all its constituents and stakeholders, which is why, according to these authors, the senior manager of a company is responsible for determining which parts and aspects of its overall strategy, the company wishes to communicate and to whom. Cornelissen (2004) further states that communication professionals need to be aligned and in syntony with the senior managers of the corporation, in order to provide a more broad and critical perspective upon all communications

In order to accomplish this, companies must have their goals and objectives well defined and stipulated. Strategic communication not only responds to goals and objectives, but it 'runs' in parallel with the organization's business. Thus, the communication strategies must be aligned and work alongside with the organization's corporate and marketing strategies (Cornelissen, 2004). As van Ruler (2018) mentions, the organization's goals and objectives are the organization's priority, and strategic communication is a tool to help the organization fulfil these, considering strategic communication an important instrument when it comes to successfully meet the organization's goals and objectives.

When conceiving a communication strategy, it is crucial for the communication practitioners to entirely know and understand the overall strategic management and corporate strategy in order to efficiently integrate an appropriate communication strategy, thus connecting and linking the overall corporate strategy with the communication strategy to achieve the organization's goals and objectives (Cornelissen, 2004).

Overall, and considering all of the above, strategic communication consists of a set of activities articulating the different fields of communication, using a strategic plan. The purpose of these activities encompasses the achievement of the organization's mission, vision and objectives (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015).

1.2.1. Links between Corporate Communication and Strategic Communication

Even though not all corporate communication is necessarily strategic (Van Ruler, 2018), i.e., not all communication flows within an organization are automatically oriented towards the attainment of the organization's mission and objectives, there is a connection between corporate communication and strategic communication. As defined previously, only communication designed to fulfill the organization's mission is considered "strategic" (Van Ruler, 2018).

To support this, according to Dolphin & Fan (2000) state, "corporate communications is the strategic management process by which an organization communicates with its various audiences to the mutual benefits of both and to its improved competitive advantage" (p.100). As a matter of fact, Anderson & Argenti (2005) consider corporate communication as the department in charge of creating a strategy and building the organization's reputation. These authors further explain that corporate communication is responsible for implementing the organization's strategies aimed at the creation of the organization's identity and direction.

The link between corporate communication and communication strategy, as well as corporate communication and corporate strategy is very present throughout Anderson and Argenti's (2005) research. When collecting and gathering data from various authors, such as Yamauchi (2001) and Burke's (1998), Anderson and Argenti (2005) highlight the importance of corporate communication for the organization's strategy and thus to the management of its reputation.

The term "strategic communication" encompasses all disciplines oriented towards the achievement of the organization's goals and mission to address the different stakeholders, such as management, marketing, public relations or technical communication (Zerfass, Verčič, Nothhaft & Werder, 2018).

Cornelissen (2004) also addresses this connection by suggesting that corporate communications, when aligned with the organization's objectives and performance can be an effective asset. This author presents a table of the key concepts of corporate communication, some of which will be taken into consideration and thoroughly analyzed and explained throughout the chapters.

Concept	Definition	Concept	Definition
Mission	Overriding purpose in line with the values or expectations of stakeholders	Stakeholder	Any group or individual that can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives
Vision/strategic intent	The long-term aims and aspirations of the company for itself.	Public	People who mobilize themselves against the organization on the basis of some common issue or concern to them
Corporate objectives and goals	(Precise) statement of aims or purpose	Market	A defined group for whom a product is or may be in demand (and for whom an organization creates and maintains products and service offerings)
Strategies	The ways or means in which the corporate objectives are to be achieved and put into effect	Issues	An unsettled matter (which is ready for a decision) or a point of conflict between an organization and one or more publics
Corporate identity	The profile and values communicated by an organization	Communications	The internal and external communications techniques and media that are used towards internal and external groups
Corporate image	The immediate set of meanings inferred by an individual in confrontation/response to one or more signals from or about a particular organization at a single point in time	Integration	The act of coordinating all communications so that the corporate identity is effectively and consistently communicated to internal and external groups
Corporate reputation	An individual's collective representation of past images of an organization (induced through either communication or past experiences) established over time		

Fig. 2. Key concepts of corporate communication Cornelissen (2004)

The first key concept highlighted in this table is the company's mission, which is defined as the "overriding purpose in line with the values or expectations of stakeholders"; followed by the "vision/strategic intent", which is "the long-term aims and aspirations of the company for itself". The third term the authors takes into consideration is the "Corporate objectives and goals", defined as the "(Precise) statement of aims or purpose" and the "strategies", "The ways or means in which the corporate objectives are to be achieved and put into effect" (Cornelissen, (2004).

There are other three topics addressed in this table: corporate identity, corporate image and corporate reputation. Corporate identity encompasses, according to this author, the bales and profile the organization communicates; corporate image is here considered to be the set of meanings and perceptions interpreted by an individual as a response to an organization at a single point in time; and finally, corporate reputation is the collective representation of these past images of an organization, perceived either through its communication or past experiences (Cornelissen, (2004).

To sum up, organizations that have a strategic and integrated approach throughout their corporate communications are more likely to be more successful and competitive (Argenti, Howell & Beck, 2005). A well-defined communication strategy will allow the

organization to develop a solid corporate identity shaped according to its mission, values and vision, culminating in a positive image and reputation.

1.4. Corporate Identity; Mission, Values and Vision

Today's business context is quite unique, due to technological innovations, market dynamics and new consumer values and behaviors. Consumers are constantly being overwhelmed with the amount of choices available today (Silveira, Lages & Simões, 2013). This has shifted organizations' attention to issues regarding identity: who they are, what they do, how they do it and what they aspire to be. Therefore, an effective corporate identity management provides uniqueness to organization, differentiating it from competitors, thus resulting in a strong competitive advantage (Cornelissen; Haslam; Balmer, 2007). Moreover, when corporate identity is solid and concise, it offers a reliable point of reference for consumers (Silveira, Lages & Simões, 2013).

Corporate identity integrates the organization's vision, mission and values built by the strategies implemented throughout its actions and operations (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). Many authors, such as Downey (1986) relate corporate identity with "corporate culture" as the outcome and result of corporate identity, suggesting that corporate identity answers the questions "why" and corporate culture is the "what" (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

For present purposes, the organization's vision is related to its future and strategy. The organization's vision establishes a strategic direction, providing a guide for how the company will reach its future objectives (Mirvis, Googins & Kinnicutt, 2010) and long-term aims and aspirations (Cornelissen, 2004).

The organization's mission consists of its purpose and goals, the reason it exists (Mirvis, Googins & Kinnicutt, 2010), which is why it is perceived by many as the most important factor of corporate identity (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). The organization's mission represents the purpose of the organization aligned with its vision and values (Cornelissen, 2004). Furthermore, the organization's mission also integrates a statement of its beliefs that build its culture and identity, highlighting its management style and strategy and specifies how the organization wishes to be perceived by its stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2004).

And finally, the organization's values are considered to be the motivational force behind the organization (Mirvis, Googins & Kinnicutt, 2010), which determines how the it acts. These values include the organization's language, rituals and ideologies that guide its corporate culture and form its corporate identity (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

A strong corporate identity is essential to create a distinct image for an organization (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006). For many organizations, their ultimate goal is to establish a unique and distinct identity, establishing its own place in the market, attracting investment and motivating its employees (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). Therefore, managing and developing a corporate identity is an important part of the organization's strategy as a means to generate a competitive advantage (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

Corporate identity brings together the organization's strategy, philosophy, culture, and organizational design (Gray & Balmer, 1998), including as well all verbal, graphic, and symbolic representations used by a company in its managed, corporate-level communication with various constituents (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000). Corporate identity integrates, therefore, all the aspects that provide the stakeholders or consumers a certain perception and idea of the organization. All of these channels that contribute to the development of the corporate identity must be strategically coordinated in order to project consistency between the various components of the organizations, through corporate communication, and represent the organization (Borgerson, Schroeder, Magnusson & Magnusson, 2019).

There are several other factors that contribute to the creation and development of a positive corporate identity, such as good quality products or services, a positive feedback from the employees and work environment and being socially and environmentally responsible (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

On a corporate level, communication professionals and managers can work together when developing a strategy aligned with the organization's identity, mission, vision and values (Cornelissen, 2004).

Many scholars have recognized the links between corporate communication and corporate identity, since this has become a concept that involves a wide range of different functions regarding several different fields, including business strategy, philosophy of key executives, corporate culture, behavior and corporate design (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

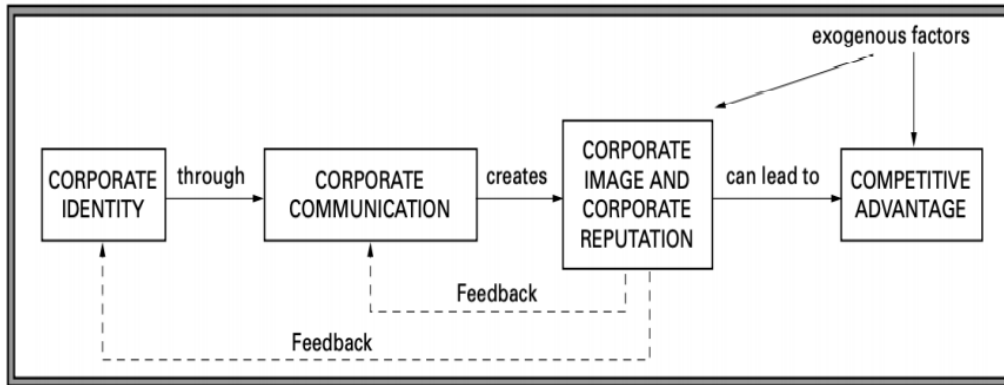


Fig 3: Organization's strategy of corporate identity Yildiz, B, (2018)

To sum up these ideas, the key to having a successful corporate communication strategy is to be aware of corporate identity (Cornelissen, 2004). Corporate identity is a multidisciplinary field that gathers various components of an organization, including corporate communication and business management, and encompasses what the organization is, what it stands for (values), what it seeks to achieve (vision) and what its purpose is (mission) (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006). Everything an organization does and is, from its architecture, employees and design to its values, mission and vision, affirms, supports and builds its identity (Borgerson, Schroeder, Magnusson & Magnusson, 2019). Since the organization's identity is built upon and aligned with its overall corporate strategy, which will thus generate and influence the corporate image and reputation (through corporate communication), it is correct to assume that the organization's overall strategy, its actions, what it does and what it does not do, will determine the organization's corporate identity (Yildiz, 2018).

A coherent and consistent corporate identity contributes to a more successful communication, both internally and externally towards the organization's different stakeholders (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006). A well-defined corporate identity can also attract and retain employees, generating a sense of direction, motivation and purpose among them (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006). Corporate identity influences the way an organization presents itself to its stakeholders (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006).

From the consumers' and customers' perspectives, corporate identity can generate confidence and a sense of commitment among them (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006).

The consolidation of all of an organization's signs and attributes, and thus, its corporate identity and how these are presented, contributes to the creation and development of the corporate image (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar 2006) and reputation. Within an organization, all of its communication actions and campaigns, employee environment and the products or services that it offers, which are expressions of the corporate identity, generate an image within stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2004) resulting on the construction of a reputation for the organization.

As this idea suggests, corporate image is therefore built based on the perceptions of corporate identity, through all communication tools and actions (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006); and corporate reputation is the collective representation that the external stakeholders have of the corporate image of an organization established over time (Cornelissen, 2004). In line with this, corporate identity constitutes how the organization aims to be perceived by its stakeholders as a corporate image and thus reputation (Cornelissen, 2004).

1.5. (Corporate) Image and Reputation

An organization is perceived externally according to two elements: the corporate image and the corporate reputation. These two concepts are crucial for organizations to remain competitive as well as to fulfil its goals and objectives (Heath, 2010, in Boyd et al., 2010).

When relating these two topics, Balmer (2001) compares them, stating that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, image is a relatively short-term perception, whereas reputation is a more enduring and long-lasting one. Reputation develops from the effects that corporate image has on stakeholders over time (Jorge, 2010).

As mentioned and explained in section 1.4., corporate identity represents what the organization is, its values, mission and vision. In line with this, the concept of image is the result of the mental representation that external stakeholders and audiences have of an organization, what they think about the organization (Gray & and Balmer, 1998) and thus how the corporate identity is perceived externally.

In fact, the corporate image emerges from the feedback and perception that the stakeholders in a specific market have regarding the credibility and consistency of the identity actions that the organization puts into practice (Cretu & Brodie, 2007, in Amini, Darani, Afshani & Amini, 2012).

Corporate image derives from the consumers' response to all that the organization is and represents, generating certain impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations and feelings towards it, resulting in the sum of all of the elements and attributes of an organization that stakeholders perceive (Weiwei, 2007).

In line with this, Bromley (2001) defined image as the overall external and collective perception that underlies the organization's corporate communication efforts to present itself to external stakeholders (in Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty, 2005). Following this definition, corporate image is hence an impression conceived or instigated by a set of cues that result from the overall communication actions between the organization and its audiences (Ruão, 2006).

Moreover, Anderson & Argenti (2005) explain the concept of corporate image as the combination and aggregation of two perspectives, functional and emotional, that influence the purchasing/consumption experience (Weiwei, 2007). The functional approach that the authors address as one of the components that influence the corporate image of an organization upon consumers, is associated with its tangible and measurable attributes, whereas the emotional is related to the feelings and attitudes generated towards an organization, through individual experiences (Weiwei, 2007).

Within the organizational context, there are factors that can be controlled or managed by the organization, such as its communication actions and programmes (for instance, advertising and public relations) as well as the products or services that the organization offers (Ruão, 2006). However, there are also several other factors that are out of reach from the organization. These include consumers, suppliers, media or opinion leaders (Ruão, 2006).

Considering all of the above, and concluding that corporate image is not totally controlled by the organization - since it depends on stakeholders' perceptions - corporate communication's objective is to develop a purposeful and calculated corporate image perception of the organization's identity in the minds of its stakeholders, allowing the organization to achieve name and identity recognition (Gray & Balmer, 1998). Aligning the corporate image with the corporate identity requires a strategy in order to provide a strong competitive advantage for the organization (Pinto, 2017). A positive and

successful corporate image depends on the consolidation and alignment of the communication strategy, which must be rigorous and consistent (Ruão, 2006). Corporate communications, along with strategic communication, are responsible for transmitting and projecting the organization's identity (Ruão, 2006).

Understanding the concept of corporate reputation has also become a major concern for companies, since it is recognized as a value that is difficult to achieve and yet easy to lose (Dortok, 2006). To support this statement, Warren Buffett famously said that a reputation takes 20 years to build but five minutes to be ruined (Lange et al., 2011).

Corporate reputation has been one of the most researched topics within communications studies, (Gotsi, & Wilson, 2001), since it represents a growing factor when it comes to achieving differentiation (Balmer and Greyser, 2003) as well as creating, maintaining and providing a corporate competitive advantage (Gardberg, & Fombrun, 2002). It is proven that a favorable reputation is a key factor of high productivity and success (Gray & Balmer, 1998).

Furthermore, when relating these issues with the ones discussed previously, it is correct to summarize it as: an organization can develop a competitive advantage by familiarizing its stakeholders with the corporate identity and culture of the organization through a communication strategy in order to strengthen long-term relationships with its stakeholders, who will thus build and determine the organization's reputation. (Forman & Argenti, 2005). In fact, within an organization, it is necessary to link and relate the corporate strategy with the corporate reputation management (Forman & Argenti, 2005). Ultimately, organizations that build a solid communication strategy through different communication channels, in order to manage a purposeful and intended reputation will thus create strong relationships with its stakeholders (Forman & Argenti, 2005).

According to Saxton (1998), corporate communications (and strategic communication) are responsible for influencing the constituencies' perceptions of the brand or organization, meaning its reputation (Forman, & Argenti, 2005). The company's reputation is managed and influenced by the effectiveness of specific communication strategies, which is why corporate communications has a crucial role in shaping a company's reputation (Yildiz, 2018).

Corporate reputation is rooted within the organization's historical behavior (Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011) and it influences how an organization gains the support of people (Dortok, 2006) as well as strengthens the relationships with its stakeholders (Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011), as a result of consistent performance, reinforced by effective communication (Gray, & Balmer, 1998).

Despite the fact that in the early years, Gotsi and Wilson (2001) noted that several authors addressed this concept from an analogous perspective, describing corporate reputation as synonymous with corporate image, for the purpose of this study, these two topics will be approached according to a differentiated perspective, where corporate reputation is distinguished from corporate image (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001).

Lange et. al (2011) gathered different definitions from several authors, such as Shamsie's (2003: 199) definition of organizational reputation "as the level of awareness that the firm has been able to develop for itself"; as well as Bromley's (2000: 241) definition of reputation "as the way key external stakeholder groups or other interested parties actually conceptualize the organization." (as cited in Lange, Lee & Dai, 2011). This last definition follows Saxton's (1998) description of reputation as the reflexion that stakeholders develop over time, expressed through their thoughts and words (as cited in Forman & Argenti, 2005).

Lange et al. (2011) collected Fischer and Reuber's (2007: 57) definition of reputation as "an assessment of a particular attribute or characteristic: An organization has a reputation for something, such as having high quality products or being an aggressive price predator".

Fombrun's (1996) definition of corporate reputation has been one of the most accepted definitions within the business and business-related fields (Wartick, 2002). He defines corporate reputation as a perceptual representation of an organization's past actions and future prospects (Wartick, 2002), that describes the company's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders (as cited in Gardberg & Fombrun, 2002).

Overall, for the purpose of this study, corporate reputation will be considered as "familiarity with the organization, beliefs about what to expect from the organization in the future, and impressions about the organization's favorability" (Lange, Lee & Dai, 2011, p. 178). Moreover, reputation is built upon the stakeholders' opinions, perceptions and interpretations of the organization's actions, also taking into consideration its reliability, trustworthiness, responsibility and competence (Esenyel, 2020).

The reputation of an organization emerges from how stakeholders respond to their perceptions of the corporate image, referring to value judgements, formed over a long period of time, depending on the consistency and reliability of the organization (Bennett and Rentschler, 2003, in Weiwei, 2007). The way stakeholders interpret and evaluate how the organization communicates its identity, which results then in the corporate image, is what builds the reputation (Jorge, 2010).

Corporate identity and reputation are thus two very closely related concepts that build the foundation for the development of organizational strategies (Gray & Balmer, 1998, in Florentinus & Marcelliab, 2019). When corporate identity is well communicated, interpreted and perceived, then it is likely for the organization to generate a positive and solid reputation, which then leads to competitiveness (Florentinus & Marcelliab, 2019).

A well-coordinated image-building communication strategy can create a positive and strong image (including the establishment of name and logo and the management of advertising campaigns and public relations), whereas a favorable reputation depends on a consistent and solid strategic performance throughout many years (Gray & Balmer, 1998). However, when corporate communication is strategically coordinated, it can indeed reinforce and promote a positive reputation for the organization (Gray & Balmer, 1998).

Consequently, corporate communication is responsible for managing the link between the corporate image and reputation (Gray, E. & Balmer, J., 1998). According to this, exposing and transmitting information will influence and affect the way stakeholders perceive the organization, influencing its reputation, and this can therefore be a tool for the organization to safeguard its corporate identity (Hooghiemstra, 2000, in Baraibar-Diez & Sotorrío, 2018).

The organization's reputation is related to both the perception of the corporate identity (on an internal level), as well as the perception of the corporate image (on an external level) (Yildiz, 2018). Thus, managing corporate reputation efficiently is extremely important for organizations, since a favorable reputation could lead to positive financial values, as well as enhance consumers' purchase intentions and loyalty (Yildiz, 2018).

An organization can announce and promote its identity externally through effective and appropriate communication (Baraibar-Diez & Sotorrío, 2018). In this sense, reputation would be the outcome of the strategic communication of the organization's identity (Jorge, 2010). As a consequence, stakeholders will create and develop a certain perception (image) of the organization, influencing a certain attitude towards it (Jorge, 2010). These attitudes and judgements, over time, will lead to the construction of its reputation.

Combining the previous concepts defined in the literature review, Weiwei (2007) merges and relates them, stating that within an organization, corporate communications works towards the transmission of the correct and appropriate messages that the organization seeks to project, in order to promote its identity, through the various communication and media channels, to its stakeholders, who will then create a mental perception of the organization (image), influencing its reputation on a long-term basis.

On the one hand, according to Fombrun and van Riel (1997), image is therefore one of the core concepts of reputation (in Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty, 2005). On the other hand, according to Gotsi and Wilson (2001), corporate reputation has a positive effect on corporate image, since it influences the perception consumers have of the product's or service's quality, influencing their purchase intentions, as well as costumers' and employees' loyalty, resulting, ultimately, in a decrease in the organization's financial values (Yildiz, 2018).

Chapter 2. Branding

By brand, in this dissertation, there will be considered the definition provided by Aaker (1991) as a differential name and/or symbol that seeks to identify the goods or services of a specific seller or group of sellers and distinguish it from competitors (as cited in Forman & Argenti, 2005). A brand is thus a reference of functional and symbolic information about products, services and experiences for stakeholders (Oh, et al., 2020), that can be represented by a trademark, such as a name or logo, that creates value and influence (Todor, 2014). A brand is more than just the logo, name or label attached to a product or services, it is a reference that is imprinted in the consumers' minds¹¹, creating in them a specific meaning and feeling (Wijaya, 2013).

Organizations develop brands as a strategy to differentiate themselves among competitors (Kapferer, 1997, Keller, 1998), as well as a way to attract and retain customers and audiences by promoting value, image or prestige (Rooney, 1995). Altogether, a brand represents the collective of perceptions and feelings that consumers have towards a product/service identified by a brand name, encompassing its identity, quality and performance, familiarity, trust, emotions and values that the brand stands for and overall image (Batra et al., 2012), working both as a guarantee of authenticity and trustworthy performance (Batey, 2015). These perceptions that the consumers have regarding a brand tend to build and develop emotions towards those brands, establishing relationships with them (Veloutsou, 2009). Moreover, nowadays, the success of organizations and companies often depends and is attributed to the power of its brand (Oh. et al., 2020), which is why building a brand and branding are so important (Davis et al., 2008).

The brand is associated with how an organization positions itself or its products, since products tend to be aligned with the brand's personality, resulting in a stronger relationship with the consumers, providing thus more value to the organization (Forman & Argenti, 2005). In line with this, branding is therefore the process of creation and implementation of the brand's aspects in the minds of the consumers (Verma, 2021)

¹¹ This invokes the concept of "brand positioning", which is defined as the "act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the target market" (in Marketing Management, Kotler & Keller, 2009). This consists on the differentiating position that a brand adopts within its competitive context, in order to ensure that its target public differentiates the brand from the others. The positioning seeks to define who the brand intends to influence, as well as the reasons why the target audience should trust the brand's message. (in «The Brand Glossary» Interbrand, 2006). Thus, positioning is one of the most important aspects when managing a brand.

aligned with the overall brand communication strategy (Wijaya, 2013), seeking to establish an emotional bond (Verma, 2021).

Branding has therefore, become a powerful means of distinction (Pappu, et al. 2005) as well as a means of identifying products and services, in order to build consumers awareness towards the brand (Kay, 2004). To achieve this, it is also important to take into consideration the brand's position within the market – brand positioning. Brand position refers to the place that a certain brand occupies in the market, being also a reference for professionals to assess the market structure as well as the competitors spectrum (Herrmann & Huber, 2000). Hence, differentiation is a key aspect when managing the brand's positioning (Janiszewska & Insch, 2012). As so, professionals must know and understand the stakeholders and audiences, and their needs (Clifton & Simmons, 2003), in order to establish a position that is credible, significant to the target group and differentiated from its competitors, increasing thus competitiveness (Janiszewska & Insch, 2012). Alongside with this, it is also important to define which position they wish the brand takes in the market, and then develop the expression of that position by developing its overall identity (Clifton & Simmons, 2003).

Brand position will measure the consumers' perceptions and preferences within the overall market for the given brand in comparison to its competitors (Herrmann & Huber, 2000), in order to set the direction of marketing and business strategies, assessing what the brand should or should not do (Keller & Lehmann, 2004). The foundation for many brand's strategies is the definition of the position the brand seeks to take within the market, which allows the brand to set the guidelines for its overall activities (Janiszewska & Insch, 2012). Through the right communication channels and strategies, such as advertising or through events, the brand is able to imprint itself in the audiences' minds and, over time, adopt the desirable position within the market (Janiszewska & Insch, 2012). A successful brand strategy will combine the right selection of activities and align them with the aspired position, seeking also to imprint within the target's minds the brand's identity (Janiszewska & Insch, 2012).

Argenti and Druckemiller (2004) argue that careful management of a corporate brand can enhance reputation by guiding and stimulating a company's actions (Forman & Argenti, 2005). Similarly, corporate brand management and corporate communications are as well linked and represent crucial functions when building and maintaining reputations with important stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent (Melewar, 2008). Overall, branding focuses on how to position the brand in the market

and derives, at least in part, from an alignment between strategy and communication (Forman & Argenti, 2005). Establishing a strong and positive connection between the brand and the consumers requires effective communication strategies encompassing promotion and overall presence of the brand, which leads to higher order emotions like loyalty and trust, as well as an active and positive word of mouth, engagement and willingness to invest resources in that brand (Joshi & Garg, 2020).

This is the ultimate outcome of Brand Love (Joshi & Garg, 2020), which will be further explained and explored in the following chapter.

2.1. Brand image, Brand reputation, Brand identity

Similar to corporate image that was previously defined in this dissertation, brand image consists in a set of associations that bring meaning to the consumers (Aaker, 1991), and the thoughts and feelings (Roy and Banerjee, 2007) when experiencing a brand, being also related to the uniqueness and distinguishedness of a particular product or service (Severi & Ling, 2013). On a more simple perspective, brand image is the overall perception that the consumer has regarding the brand (Mabkhot, Shaari & Salleh, 2017). Brand image plays an important role in the building and development process of a brand as it contains the results of how the consumers interpret and perceive the brand, which will thus determine their attitude towards it, and ultimately their purchase intentions (Wijaya, 2013). Therefore, a product with a stronger and consistent brand image will be perceived by the consumers as a product with superior value (Richardson et al. 1994, in Severi & Ling, 2013).

The reputation of a brand refers to how stakeholders and audiences evaluate the brand over time (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009) and represents the overall result of all the past and present marketing and business activities performed by that brand (Akdeniz et al, 2013). A positive brand reputation results in a more positive perception on the quality of the products or services, by the consumers, in comparison with others of the same category (Akdeniz et al, 2013), culminating thus on more attracted customers (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Moreover, brand reputation is one of the most important indicators of perceived quality of the products or services when associated with a brand name, since consumers base their expectations and trust the brand relying on their previous experiences with the brand (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

Finally, brand identity represents the overall brand's uniqueness (Gray & Balmer, 1998), which seeks to resonate with the stakeholders and audiences, in order to differentiate the brand from its competitors (Ghodeswar, 2008). Brand identity is often expressed and represented through the corporate design, the advertising campaigns, packaging, and so on (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008). In line with this, creating a solid brand identity must be the manager's starting point and reference for all actions and decisions as well as the basis of the overall brand and corporate strategy (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008). Consumers are constantly being confronted with a wide offer of brands, so managers must establish branding strategies aligned with the brand's identity, focusing on what makes it unique (Silveira, Lages & Simões, 2013). This is tightly related to the position of the brand in the market as well as in the consumers' minds.

In fact, the development of a "love" relationship between the consumer and a brand, often depends on the brand positioning strategy (Fuchs, 2008, as stated in Shahid, 2019), which consists in emphasizing the singular and distinctive aspects and characteristics that differentiates the brand from its competitors and are appealing to the consumer (Kapferer, 2004). In line with this, a brand that follows a solid brand-positioning strategy focused on build a "relationship" with the consumer (and thus, generate brand love), is more likely to emotionally influence the consumer, and hence have a bigger impact on the consumer (Roberts, 2006).

When branding strategies are effective and focused on promoting the brand's identity, the brand will represent a particular and stable reference for consumers (Silveira, Lages & Simões, 2013), which is why many companies focus on their brand identities (Gylling & Lindberg-Repo, 2006). Aligned with what was mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, brands that seek to have a positive position within the market must develop strategies aiming at emphasizing the distinctive characteristics of its identity in order to differentiate it from its competitors and have a stronger competitive advantage (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008). Professionals must then develop an effective brand identity strategy, which encompasses the overall coordinated efforts in developing, evaluating and maintaining the brand's identity, as well as communicate it to all the stakeholders (Madhavaram et al., 2005). When well executed, the brand identity strategy will provide guidelines and help in the development and implementation of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy – which encompasses all the brand activities- , contributing ultimately to the brand equity (Madhavaram et al., 2005).

2.2. Brand Love

Throughout this chapter, I will be analyzing the concept of Brand Love, as well as its different dimensions, according to several authors.

A consistent understanding between what consumers need and how companies perceive can be achieved through emotional branding (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012). This emotional side of branding posits that emotions play an important and significant role in the success of the brand, as attitudinal aspects and consumer's behavior is dependent on the emotions that the consumer has towards a brand (Joshi & Garg, 2020). The consumer-brand relationships have become an important asset for many companies that seek to build and develop lasting and profitable bonds with consumers (Pang, Keh & Peng, 2009), since it has been proven to have a strong impact on marketing outcomes (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2016).

For both marketers and communication professionals, it is important to consider and study the consumers' attachment towards the brand, as it is a useful variable when it comes to design and build a proper strategy (Belaida & Behib, 2011), in order to preserve, protect or build up this strong and loyal relationship between the consumers and the brand, which can then lead to Brand Love. Thus, it is very important for companies to establish, create and develop a positive emotional brand attachment with consumers (Malär et al., 2011).

When studying Brand love, there are evidences that the consumer's emotional bond with a brand does in fact influence on the brand's future success (Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho 2018). When consumers are emotionally attached to a brand, they tend to have greater purchase and usage of the brand, influencing thus their choices and preferences (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012).

2.2.1. Definition and background of Brand Love

“Brand Love represents the highest level of relationship between consumers and brand” (Zilaie, et al., 2016, p. 164). According to researchers regarding Brand Love, consumers who grow and flourish a “love relationship” towards a brand, tend to be more committed and involved in the brand’s activities, philosophy, communities... (Albert and Valette-Florence, 2010, Sarkar, 2011, Whang et al., 2004). In line with this, Brand Love can then be defined as the emotional attachment and feelings (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), positive emotions and favorable attitudes (Mody & Hanks, 2020) that a consumer has towards a brand. A “loved brand” is focused on developing an emotional bond upon the consumer (Roberts, 2004), standing out among competitors in the market (Rosenblum & Berg, 2017).

The concept of Brand Love is related to the attitudes and behaviors from customers’ experiences towards the brand and its aspects, defined as “brand experiences” - such as advertisements that can work as stimuli for the consumers (Brakus et al., 2009, as cited in Sarkar, Ponnam & Kinnera Murthy, 2012). In fact, effective communications are not only focused on the informative aspect of the product or service, but it also seeks to trigger the correct emotions upon the consumer (Clifton & Simmons, 2003). Advertising strategies focus on creating this emotional branding, resulting on positive financial outcomes (Rossiter and Bellman, 2012) and serving also as a stimuli for short term behavior, as it has been proven to influence the consumers’ purchase intentions (Clifton & Simmons, 2003).

Brand Love is attracting increasing interest among consumer psychology researchers (Sarkar, Ponnam & Kinnera Murthy, 2012) as a new marketing tool that assesses the consumers’ emotional attachment towards brands (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2016) as well as to better assess successful relationships between the consumer and the brand (Zarantonello, et al., 2016).

Brand Love has therefore become an important variable for successful consumer-brand relationships (Zilaie, Kordnaeij, & Ahmadi, 2016). As Fetscherin and Boulanger (2014) point out in their article, it is crucial for the brand’s success to build, develop and maintain a strong relationship between the consumers and the brand. In fact, when consumers “love” a brand, they tend to be more loyal and committed to it (Zilaie, Kordnaeij, & Ahmadi, 2016). Overall, Brand Love can be considered as an effective marketing tool that facilitates and influences repeat purchase behaviors, as well as

positive word of mouth, leading ultimately to increase in sales and profits for business entities (). Therefore, it is crucial that the company's brand managers create and develop strategies (Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho, 2018) in order to gain the costumers trust, turning them into loyal consumers.

Thus, the bigger the emotional bond - the brand love - and the loyalty towards the brand, the more valuable the brand will be, contributing to a stronger competitive position, financial performance and marketing success (Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho, 2018). In fact, Brand Love is also considered as “the main mechanism in developing customers' behavioral loyalty” (Huang, 2017, p.1), as it prevents costumers from switching to competitors' brands (Nguyen & Feng, 2020), which, according to evidences, “has strong positive effects on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium” (Bauer, Heinrich & Albrecht, 2009, p.252). Moreover, brand love is also a construct that influences retention of existing consumers, on one hand, and on the other hand, it also promotes the acquisition of new costumers (often through word of mouth), generating higher sales and future cash flows (Nguyen & Feng, 2020). According to several studies, brand love has a significant impact upon brand performance (Sta, Abassi & Elfidha, 2018, Nguyen & Feng, 2020). This further assumes that, when confronted with a wide range of products, the loved brand will make the choice of the consumer more emotional and thus easier (Sta, Abassi & Elfidha, 2018). In conclusion, the bigger the love felt towards a brand, the stronger the loyalty of the consumer as well as the willingness to pay a higher price for the brand, which will ultimately reflect upon the increasing of the volume of sales (Sta, Abassi & Elfidha, 2018). Even though this relationship is often difficult to develop (Nguyen & Feng, 2020), once it is established, brand love will make the consumer feel affectionate about the brand, strongly identified with it and attached to, resulting in their willingness to choose and purchase the brand (Nguyen & Feng, 2020).

It is also worth mentioning that Brand Love has a stronger and more significant impact on hedonic products/brands as these are more likely to be purchased based on emotions, rather than in cognitive and functional aspects (Nguyen & Feng, 2020). In these cases, Brand Love becomes the main driver of purchase intention (Nguyen & Feng, 2020).

In order to achieve the “Love Brand” category, the brand managers must understand that the purchase intentions are often influenced by emotional processes which depend thus on what sensations and emotions can be triggered upon the consumer (Pranay, 2021, and Roberts, 2004). Therefore, it is extremely important for the brand

strategy to take into consideration that a “loved brand” leads to positive behaviors, as well as increased purchase intentions (Langner, et al., 2015). Creating and developing these circumstances, i.e. developing a feeling of Love upon the costumers, requires a study regarding the consumers´ attitudes, behaviors and emotions (Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho, 2018).

2.2.2. Dimensions of Brand Love

One of the most relevant theories when studying Brand Love is Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love.

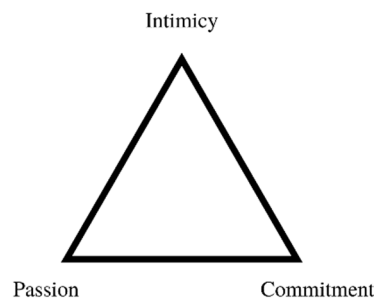


Fig. 4 Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love (I)

According to this theory, love is perceived as the interaction between three components: intimacy, passion and commitment (Sternberg, 1986, 1997). The first element, intimacy, represents “feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness” (Sternberg, 1997, p. 315); passion is related to the physical attraction (Sternberg, 1986), working as a motivational factor, and finally, commitment is defined as the cognitive acknowledgment which determines whether it will be a short term or long term relationship (Sternberg, 1986, 1997), i.e. the intention and decision to keep a relationship.

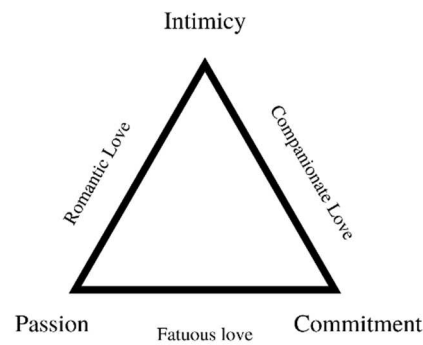


Fig. 5 Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (II)

In line with this theory, the interaction between these three components creates several types of love (Sternberg, 1986, p.124).

Hence, there is romantic love, which results from the combination between intimacy and passion, establishing a long lasting relationship characterized by high complicity and physical attraction (Sternberg, 1986), companionate love, that derives from the combination of intimacy and commitment, constituting a long lasting relationship defined by stability and high emotional intensity (Sternberg, 1986) and finally, fatuous love, resulting from experiencing high levels of passion and commitment (Sternberg, 1986).

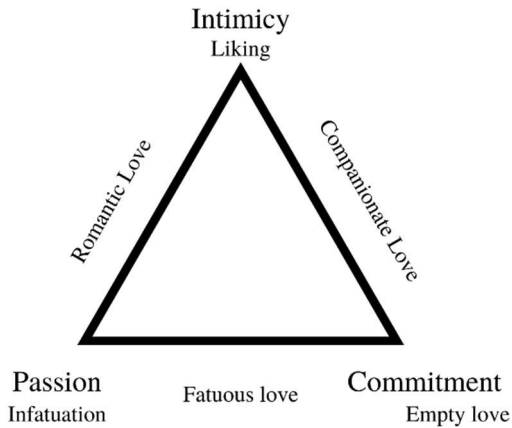


Fig. 6 Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (III)

Moreover, the author further distinguishes three more categories: the first feeling is “liking” (Sternberg, 1986) and it results only from the intimacy component of love, lacking thus, the passion and commitment elements – here the relationship is based merely on feelings of closeness, without any intense passion nor any need for establishing a commitment; the second is the “infatuated love” (Sternberg, 1986) category, which derives only from a passionate arousal in the absence of intimacy and commitment – this type of relationship can arise instantaneously and dissipate as easily; and finally, the “empty love” (Sternberg, 1986) type that emanates simply from experiencing the commitment, discarding thus passion and intimacy – this kind of relationship can often lead to stagnation and ultimately die, since there is no emotional involvement.

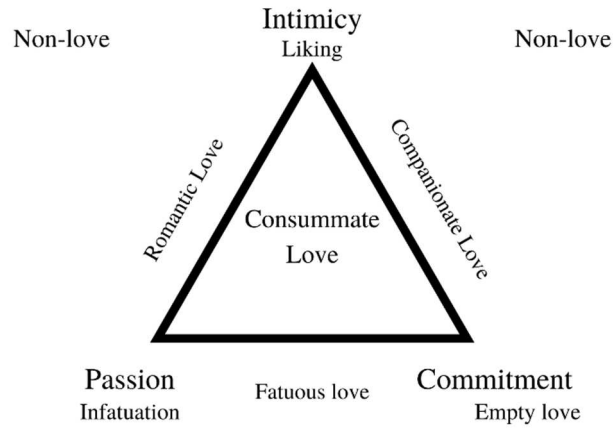


Fig. 7 Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (IV)

Finally, this theory further conceptualizes two more categories, regarding the absence and presence of all of the components here exposed.

This theory considers “non-love” (Sternberg, 1986) as the absence of all three components of love, which, according to the author, represents most of the personal relationships that are merely casual interactions, and “consummate love” (Sternberg, 1986) as the combination of the three components and the ultimate goal for every relationship.

On the other hand, Batra et al. (2012) denied the assumption that Brand Love can be associated and related to interpersonal love, and developed the “Brand Love Prototype”, which consists in a list of characteristics and attributes that consumers associate with the brand they love, assessing variables as “high quality, linkages to strongly held values, beliefs that the brand provided intrinsic (...) rewards, use of the loved brand to express (...) self-identity, positive affect, a sense of rightness and a feeling of passion, an emotional bond, investments of time and money, frequent thought and use, and length of use” (Batra et al., 2012, pp. 4, 5).

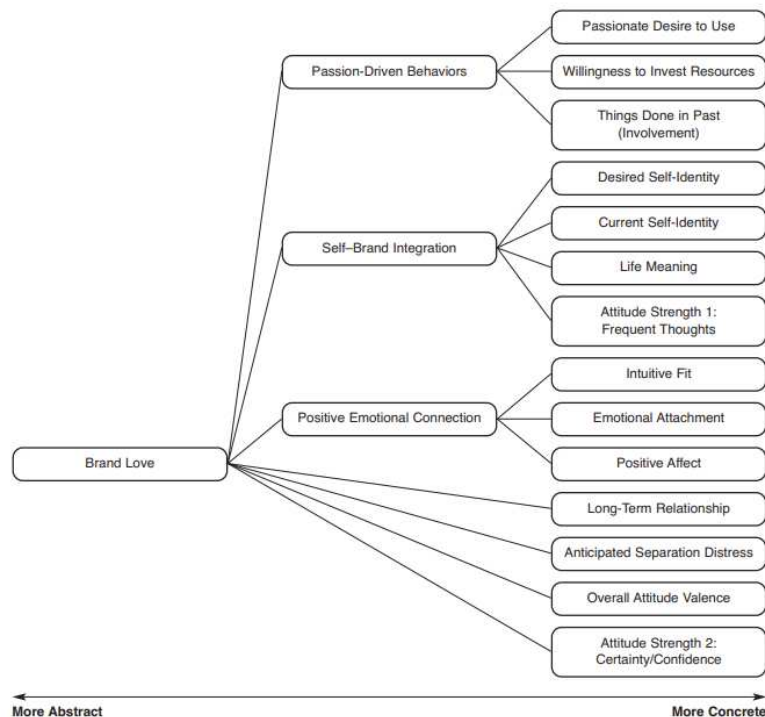


Fig. 8. Elements of Brand Love. Batra et al. (2012)

Therefore, according to these authors, the conceptualization of Brand Love, includes several dimensions. As shown in figure 4, “passion driven behaviors” are one of the dimensions that build of Brand Love. These “passion driven behaviors” are characterized by the passionate desire to use, which, according to the authors, is defined by the craving, desiring or longing to use a certain brand and the feeling of wanting and deserving that brand; the willingness to invest resources, which the authors define as the time spent making it fit the consumer’s needs as well as his/hers willingness to spend a lot of money, time and energy to buy that brand/product specifically; and, finally, involvement with the brand, which the authors characterize as the consumer’s past experience and interaction with the brand.

The second aspect of Brand Love these authors mention is “self brand integration”. Within the “self brand integration”, the authors include the “desired self identity” as a variable that assess to what extent a brand helps the consumer to present himself/herself to others as the person he/she wishes to be so that he/she can look like what he/she wants to. One the other hand, apart from the “desired self identity” aspect, the authors also mention the “current self identity”: when a brand says something about the consumer so that others create a certain sense of what he/she is just by using it, being an important part of self, when it is important for the consumer to be one of the people using his brand, and, ultimately, when the brand identity matches the self identity. Third, “life meaning” is another sub aspect that encompass the “self brand integration” dimension. This occurs when the consumer feels that the brand makes his/hers life meaningful and purposeful. Finally, “frequent thoughts” also integrate the “self identity” aspect.

The third aspect that characterizes Brand Love is the “positive emotional connection” consumers develop with the brand. This suggests an intuitive fit with the brand, which occurs when the consumer feels psychologically comfortable when using the brand and when the brand fits what the consumer has been looking for, meeting thus his/hers needs; an emotional attachment and bond with the brand; and finally, a positive affect that makes the consumer feel content, relaxed and pleased with the brand.

Lastly, the last four aspects represented in figure 4 as components of brand love are long term relationship with the brand, anticipated separation distress and anxiety, overall attitude valence and finally certainty and confidence towards the brand.

Roberts (2004) proposes a model (fig 5) that seeks to help brands position themselves in the market, considering two axes, love and respect.

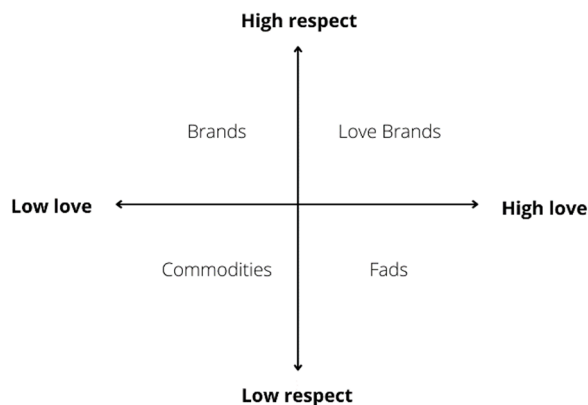


Fig. 9. Brand Positioning model presented by Roberts (2004)

The intersections of these two axes originates four categories of brands. commodities (which refer to those products that consumers need, but do not wish for) – low love and low respect, fads (which depend on the tendencies but to not last in time) – high love and low respect, brands (where the majority of the brands are positioned, without being too different from each other) – low love and high respect, and finally, the “lovemarks” or love brands that can achieve high love and high respect among the consumers (Roberts, 2004). Still in line with this author, loved brands present three main attributes that trigger emotions upon the consumer: mystery, though which the brand is capable of inspiring the consumer; sensuality, which sparks the senses and sensations upon the consumer when experiencing the brand, and finally, intimacy, which consists on the capacity of keeping and maintaining an intimate relationship between the brand and the consumer, based on commitment and loyalty (Roberts, 2004).

Many studies have associated interpersonal love and love in consumer-brand contexts (Ahuvia, 2005), where brand love has emerged as a consumer-brand construct (Albert & Merunka, 2013) demonstrating that consumers can indeed experience feelings of love towards a brand (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012). According to researches, there emotional feelings that people establish towards other people are similar to those that consumers hold towards brands (Albert & Valette-Florence, 2010; Shimp & Madden, 1988; Whang et al., 2004.) In this relationship between an inanimate brand and a person (Batra et al., 2012), feelings and emotions are enhancers of acceptance by the audience (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012).

2.2.3 Outcomes and implications of Brand Love

According to research, Brand Love results in a beneficial brand loyalty, positive word of mouth and willingness to pay a premium price for a brand (Bairrada, et al., 2018). In fact, when consumers are happy and satisfied with a brand, they tend to have more positive attitudes towards it, as well as loyalty and commitment (Drennan et al., 2015). Moreover, these consequences also encompass other outcomes upon the brand, such as an active engagement, impulse buying and purchasing intention, and finally, a resistance to negative behaviors by the brand as well as negative information about the brand (Zarantonello, et al., 2016). As a consequence of what was explained previously in this dissertation, when consumers love a brand, they contribute for the preservation of the brand, even when it requires them to pay a higher price (Bairrada, et al., 2018).

Furthermore, consumers who love a brand are more willing to spread a positive word of mouth as well as refuse purchasing other competitor brands (Bairrada, et al., 2018). Altogether, when this is attained, the consumer-brand bond becomes stronger and lasts longer, contributing thus to the brand's overall success (Bairrada, et al., 2018).

2.2.3.1. Brand Loyalty and Brand Commitment

Research distinguishes between two aspects that Brand Loyalty encompasses: behavioral loyalty, which is related to the repeated and systematic purchases of the brand, and attitudinal loyalty, associated with the consumers' degree of commitment and attitude towards the brand, encompassing, thus, the emotional component (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Increasing customer loyalty is one of the main strategic goals of many organizations (Zhang et al., 2014), since loyal customers are more confident when purchasing a certain brand, and provide also bigger brand exposure (Drennan et al., 2015). This allows managers to assess, on one hand, how often repeated purchases are made (Singh & Pattanayak, 2014), and on the other hand, how consumers relate to the brand and thus their commitment to it (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

In line with this, true brand loyalty suggests, at its greatest extent, a consumer's commitment to the brand, through constant and repeated purchases and positive attitude towards the brand over time (Singh & Pattanayak, 2014, Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), establishing thus a desire to maintain a relationship with that brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013). As exposed previously in this chapter, consumers who establish a strong emotional bond with a brand, i.e. who "love" a brand, tend to be more loyal as well as committed to the brand, being also, more resistant to negative information regarding the brand, as well as less sensitive to the service/product prices, being thus more profitable for business (Reichheld et al., 2000) . Together with Brand Loyalty, Brand Commitment is also another outcome of Brand Love (Albert and Valette-Florence, 2010).

2.2.3.2. Resistance to negative information

In line with previous statement in this chapter, Brand Love is very important for business' success in organizations, resulting also in the consumers' willingness to pay more for the brand (Thomson et al., 2005) and finally a substantial resistance to negative information (Turgut & Gultekin, 2015). According to literature regarding this concept, resistance to negative information is defined as the degree to which consumers are not influenced by negative information regarding a brand, not affecting, thus, their evaluations and opinions about that brand (Eisingerich et al., 2011). Consequently, when consumers love a brand, or when they are emotionally engaged with a brand, their opinions and evaluations are not influenced by any negative information (Bauer et al., 2009), which is why in this chapter, this is considered an outcome of Brand Love. A strong and consistent consumer-brand relationship may be the one of the most important foundations for creating a resistance to negative news upon the consumers (Eisingerich et al., 2011).

2.2.3.3. Word of mouth (WOM)

The success of organizations depends, mainly, on building and developing bonds with its stakeholders, hence its customers (Allsop et al., 2007). Satisfied consumers may lead to loyal and committed consumers, who can then become brand advocates providing exposure and reassurance to possible new consumers through word of mouth communication (Drennan et al., 2015). When a customer decides to purchase a product or service following someone's advice, then it occurred through a "word of mouth" marketing effect (Maisam & Mahsa, 2016). According to literature, word of mouth consists, on its broadest sense, on spreading information about brands' and companies' products or services (Maisam & Mahsa, 2016, Ismail & Spinelli, 2012), from consumer to consumer (Ismail & Spinelli, 2012). Researches show three major purposes that lead the consumers to spread information about a brand: social, which is related to the desire to send signals to other people regarding someone's identity, uniqueness or social status; emotional, referring to the need of sharing positive or negative emotions towards a brand, and finally, a functional driver that motivates consumers to share information about a brand (Lovett, Peres & Shachar, 2013).

A positive word of mouth includes sharing pleasant emotions when experiencing a brand, recommending it to others (Anderson, 1998), playing thus an important role when it comes to forming and influencing consumer opinions (Allsop et al., 2007) and attracting new customers who tend to evaluate the brand more positively (Drennan et al., 2015). In line with this, a positive word of mouth communication about a certain brand is more likely to occur when consumers are satisfied and trust the brand (Yasin & Shamim, 2013), spreading thus positive information about the brand (Drennan et al., 2015). Hence, Word of Mouth has been proven to have an important impact on awareness, expectations, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors (Buttle, 1998) towards a brand, affecting consequently the company's productivity and profitability (Yasin & Shamim, 2013). This line of thought is consistent with the idea that "emotionally attached" consumers, who are in love with a brand, may have the tendency to spread positive information about the brand and more often, and become the most profitable customers (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Even though this is such an informal technique, Word Of Mouth is one of the most influential and effective channels of communication amongst consumers as it is considered more credible and trustworthy since it comes from a familiar source passing through "people like me" (Allsop et al., 2007). Furthermore, 20 to 50 percent of all purchase decisions (Bughin et al., 2010) are often influenced by the overall feedback provided by someone that consumers trust and believe in (Jurvetson, 2008), rather than by the entity's advertisements that companies often invest in (Bughin et al., 2010). In fact, consumers have become more skeptical towards the advertising and marketing campaigns, and tend to base their purchase decisions and preferences according to other peoples recommendations, opinions and feedback (Bughin et al., 2010).

2.2.3.4. Brand Engagement

As mentioned previously, consumers form and establish relationships with brands, which reflects upon their purchase intentions (Verma, 2021).

Brand engagement is defined as the customer's behavioral manifestations upon a brand, that go beyond purchase, and resulting from motivational drivers (van Doorn et al., 2010). Consequently, the consumer develops a more positive and fulfilling attitude towards the brand, which is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (Dwivedi, 2015). A consumer who is willing to spend time, energy or money in a brand, aside from

the consumption or purchasing experience itself, is actively engaged with that brand (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010).

Consumers are constantly confronted and interact with thousands of different brands, but they only develop deep connections with a small number of brands (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). In line with this, many companies and organizations have been more interested in understanding how to best engage with customers, in order to establish thus more positive and favourable customer experience (Marbach, Lages & Nunanm, 2016). This is why brand engagement is considered a tactical imperative for improving brand performance, providing a stronger competitive advantage and enriching profitability (Sarkar, 2014).

In line with this, and combining with what was previously stated, when consumers love a brand, they are more likely to engage with that brand (Islam & Rahman, 2016), so professionals aspire to develop this emotional bond with the consumer – Brand Love – generating a stronger engagement and establishing long term relationships with them (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Furthermore, when consumers love a brand and are actively engaged with it, they share their experiences with the brand and are more likely to influence other consumers, through Word Of Mouth, as well as acquire repurchase intentions and long term brand loyalty (Brodie et al., 2013).

In fact, researches sustain that these positive consumption experiences lead to brand love as an emotional outcome, which hence results in a positive customer engagement (Junaid, et al., 2019). Brand experience has to do with the consumers' responses to brand related stimuli, such as its identity or design (Brakus et al., 2009). Depending on how consumers perceive these stimuli, this may prompt emotions upon consumers, influencing their love towards the brand leading them to become more loyal to it, willing to invest resources on it, spread positive Word Of Mouth as well as develop a greater engagement and attachment towards the brand (Batra et al., 2012, Madeline & Sihombing, 2019).

2.3. Brand Equity

In line with what has been stated throughout these chapters, the main outcomes of Brand Love addressed in the previous chapter – Brand Loyalty, Brand Commitment, Word Of Mouth – will stimulate the consumers’ approach to brands, having thus impact on Brand Equity, hence purchase intentions and behaviors (Chen & Lin, 2019).

Brand Equity is defined as a set of brand assets and liabilities associated to a brand that add value provided by a product or services to a company or its customers (Aaker, 1991), and is often considered the most important intangible aspect of a brand (Clifton & Simmons, 2003).

The concept of Brand Equity encompasses the whole perception of a brand, including the quality of the product/service, the company’s financial performance, customer loyalty and satisfaction (Saidarka, 2019).

According to Simon and Sullivan (1990), Brand Equity is defined in terms of the “incremental discounted future cash flows that would result from a product having its brand name in comparison with the proceeds that would accrue if the same product did not have that brand name” (Keller, 1993, p.1). This definition brings light to the financial strand of Brand Equity. Additionally, as a complement to this perspective, it is also important to take into consideration the consumer’s perspective – consumer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993). According to Keller (1993), consumer-based brand equity consists on the differential effect of brand knowledge, brand image and brand awareness as the consumer’s response to the brand, i.e. the consumer’s perceptions, behaviors and attitudes associated with the brand. Still in line with this author, customer-based brand equity is positive when consumers react positively to the product/service of the brand, in contrast to other fictitiously named or unnamed brands. This suggests that, if consumers see and perceive a brand as unique, their response to that brand should differ from other brands of the same product or service of the same category (Keller, 1993). These responses depend, thus, on the consumers’ evaluations regarding the brand, which is why brand awareness and brand image, as explained in the previous chapter, is so important, since they tend to increase the probability of brand choice, increase brand loyalty and result in repeated purchasing behavior (Keller, 1993). Conceptualizing Brand Equity is beneficial for companies because it allows managers to specifically assess how the overall marketing plan and strategies improves the brand value (Keller, 1993) because the

perceptions that customers have on the brand value will influence its performance as well as increase the company's gains (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995, in Ebrahim, 2020).

Brand Equity can be understood as an intangible asset related to a brand, that is built according to the consumers/customers' perceptions (Saidarka, 2019). Therefore, marketers seek to understand the consumers' behavior and attitude as the first step to creating a developing the strategic actions and decisions (Keller, 1993). Christodoulides e Chernatony (2010) defined consumer-based brand equity regarding the consumers perceptions, attitudes, knowledge and behaviors that will allow for the brand do increase its volume and have greater margins than it would have without the brand name/recognition.

Therefore, for many companies, one of the most vital assets for business is Brand Equity (Barrio-Garcia & PradosPena, 2019; Khanna et al., 2019; Surucu et al., 2019), since it can influence and strengthen the consumers' purchase decisions based on the information they perceive from the brand, as well as brand loyalty, determining, in addition, a competitive advantage among the same market of similar product/service (Saidarka, 2019). Moreover, Word Of Mouth is also an important aspect to take into account when addressing brand equity: when consumers love a brand tend to spread positive brand recommendations increasing thus the brand's perceived quality and value (Cho & Hwang, 2020). Consequently, this perception of the brand value by the consumers will affect the brand's performance and improve the firm's financial outcomes (Ebrahim, 2020). In other words, brands who present a higher equity, simplify purchase choices for consumers, influencing brand preference and increasing purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren, et al., 1995).

Chapter 3 Country Of Origin Effect

The present dissertation, as explained previously, seeks to contemplate the concept of Brand Love, more precisely, how consumers perceive Brand Love, and the communication strategies that are put into practice by a “loved brand”. This study will focus on another concept, the Country Of Origin, as a possible antecedent of Brand Love. In other words, this dissertation aims to analyze whether the Country Of Origin of a certain brand will influence the choice of the consumer, affect the consumer’s purchasing decision, and ultimately be a contributor or determinant for the development of a “love relationship” between the consumer and the brand. The goal is to determine if the fact that a brand is from a specific country, in this case, a Portuguese brand, made in Portugal, will have an emotional impact upon the consumer, and, as exposed throughout the second chapter, increase loyalty towards the brand, on one hand, and improve its overall performance.

3.1. Definition and background of Country Of Origin effect

The concept of Country Of Origin indicates where the product is made or assembled, and is often identified with the expression “made in” (Ahmed et al., 2004). Roth and Romeo (1992) addressed this topic through a different approach, they defined this as country image and further explained it as the overall consumers’ perceptions upon a product or service from a specific country, based on how they perceive that country (Saydan, 2013). In line with this approach, Country Of Origin is thus perceived as the comprising of subjective perceptions consumers have towards products from a certain country (Saydan, 2013), which further suggests the importance of the buyers’ evaluations of a product, and how these are influenced by the country of origin of such product (Li et al., 1994). When physical or objective qualities of a product are difficult to assess, the country of origin works as an extrinsic cue for the consumer to evaluate the product (Han, 1989; Holbrook et al., 1986).

This further shines a light on how research has defined the concept of Country Of Origin Image, as a part of a stereotyping or classifying process that clarifies and facilitates the judgments and perceptions towards a brand, when there is lack of information regarding other aspects or characteristics of that brand (Pecotich & Ward, 2007), when

the actual quality cues are difficult to detect or interpret, or even when consumers lack familiarity with the brand and/or the country of manufacture (Pecotich & Ward, 2007).

Apart from the brand itself and price, the country and/or geographical location that the product or service comes from or is made in are also factors that influence the overall consumers' evaluation of the brand (Baldauf, Cravens, Diamantopoulos, & Roth, 2009, as cited in Zilaie et al., 2016). The Country Of Origin effect represents any influence, positive or negative, that the country of manufacture have upon the consumer's preferences or subsequent behavior (Elliott & Cameron, 1994: 50, in Dursun et al., 2019). These subsequent behaviors are the focus point of the present dissertation, as it seeks to assess whether these behaviors result in the development of loyalty towards the brand, consumer engagement and, ultimately, brand love. This effect works as an information cue available for customers to evaluate a certain product or service based on the country of origin (Bilkey & Nes, 1982).

Country reputation is an important variable when it comes to assess the international consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards a country's products or brands (Kang & Yang, 2010). How consumers perceive brands and products will influence how they perceive the overall image of the country of origin of such brands and products, having thus the potential to contribute to its national reputation (White, 2012). The concepts of national image and reputation are also relevant since they reflect the country's standing and position within the international context, forming a collective judgment based on impressions encompassing thus the political and economic aspects, as well as governmental and cultural (White, 2012, Wang, 2006). In line with this, the country of origin reflects how national reputation affects the consumers' perceptions of brands and products (White, 2012). In this sense, country reputation refers to the "perceptions of a country, shared by domestic and international publics, on the basis of personal experience and information received" (Kang & Yang, 2010, p. 53). This concept encompasses the consumers' personal experiences, as well as the information they collect through public knowledge and the perception they have on a country's general attributes (Li et al., 2017). Based on these interactions, an impression of the country is formed (Li et. al, 2021) building thus its reputation. There are several factors that are considered critical contributors to a country's reputation (Li et al., 2021): the capacity of organizations to offer high quality products and services, the development and use of leading technologies, or reliable and trustworthy workforces and overall management (Li et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is crucial for organizations or brands to know and understand how consumers perceive such country in order to increase competitive advantage (Moradi & Zarei, 2011) and develop the Country Of Origin as a potential competitive differential within their respective markets (Dinnie, 2003).

A company that is present within multiple international markets should be able to identify the national characteristics and features that could be beneficial for its success and improve its brand image (Koubaa, 2008). Alongside with country reputation, country image is also an influential variable when assessing a product's quality and ultimately influences the consumers' attitudes as well as purchase decisions (Dursun et al., 2019). Country image can also be defined as the picture, the reputation, the stereotype (Nagashima, 1970) that build the overall perceptions that consumers have towards the quality of a product or service made in a particular country (Han and Terstra, 1988; Parameswaran and Yaprak, 1987, as cited in Saydan, 2013). In this sense, the importance, relevance and strength of the Country Of Origin effect depend on the country reputation and country image (Dursun et al., 2019). Hence, it can be concluded that a strong image and reputation alongside with a positive familiarity with a brand's Country Of Origin can have a positive and benefic impact upon the brand's success (Kucharska, Flisikowski, & Confente, 2018).

3.2. Country Of Origin and Corporate Organizations

Country Of Origin (COO) has become an important variable when it comes to assessing brand evaluations and perceptions (Listiana, 2015), as well as the consumers' purchasing behaviors and intentions (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999). Brand evaluation is firmly related to the notion of Country Of Origin, as it provides the consumers significant information about a product or even the brand as a whole (Huang, Wang & Cheng, 2020). Brand evaluations refers to the consumers' emotional response to a brand, which can be excitement, trust, desire (Sirianni et al., 2013), which can often be influenced by the country of origin of certain brand or product, as consumers will develop beliefs and perceptions of a brand based on its country of origin (Hien et al., 2020). Consequently, if a brand's country of origin is well-evaluated and perceived, "the image of the brand will be better and the customers will evaluate the brand higher, and eventually create a stronger purchase intention" (Hien et al., 2020, p 1210). Understanding how consumers perceive the Country Of Origin of a product and according to that, how they evaluate the

product, and ultimately how this influences their purchase intentions, are interesting factors when developing effective strategies for brands to improve their sells (Ahmed et al., 2004), becoming thus a competitive advantage (Adina et al., 2015). Therefore, this has been used as an important cue for brands in meeting today's competitive and global environment needs and be successful (Saydan, 2013). Consumers are likely to perceive more superior or inferior product quality depending on their favorable or unfavorable associations regarding the Country Of Origin of such product (Maheswaran, 1994, Aichner, 2014, Chen et al., 2020), thus the information that the consumer has regarding the country of origin will be taken into consideration to affect their perception about the product (Johanson, 1994, Aichner, 2014, Chen et al., 2020). Thus, when consumers develop a positive attitude and beliefs towards a country, evaluations of that country's products and brands will also be positive (White, 2012). The Country Of Origin may, then, be either an asset when it is positively perceived by the consumers, or a liability, when negatively (Lampert & Jaffe, 1998).

When confronted with information regarding the country of origin of a product or service, the consumer has in mind an image of such country, based on its political environment or overall cultural aspects (Baughn & Yaprak, 1993, p. 91), and often develop judgements towards the brand or product without directly or personally experience these aspects (Kunczik, 1997). This suggests the formation of certain stereotypes towards countries and/or its products or services, influencing ultimately the consumers' purchase decisions (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Yaprak, 1987; Hooley, Shipley & Krieger, 1988; Schooler, 1965). Moreover, Pérez-Nebra and Torres (2010) further state that the perception the consumer has towards a brand consists on the mental representation he/she creates based on both affective and cognitive aspects that are inherent to the consumer's attitude towards a certain brand from a certain country (in Silva et al., 2015).

The data consumers gather from the information regarding the product's country of origin are part of the mental process of decision making which provides the consumer a brief idea about the product (Suh & Smith, 2008). Therefore, consumers tend to hold these stereotyped images regarding countries, which are used as cues when judging products or services from different countries (Suh & Smith, 2008). The country of origin of a product or brand links it to an associative chain of culturally shared national stereotypes (Chattalas, Kramer, & Takada, 2008). As the country of origin influences the consumers' purchase decision, country specific stereotypes are important to taken into

consideration (Aichner, 2014). According to research, the most considerable benefit of a brand's or product's country of origin is that it carries out a signal and a cue of its quality and thus, directly affect the likelihood of purchase (Koschate-Fischer et al, 2012). According to studies, the country of origin image often moderates how the brand personality is perceived, and its relation with the consumers' purchase intention (Wang & Yang, 2008). As an illustration, for example, watches made in China could benefit from mentioning that they are made in Tianjin or Guangzhou instead of in China in order to avoid the negative COO effects and stereotypes associated with China (Aichner, 2014)

In the absence of other information about the product, the consumers tend to rely on Country Of Origin cues to evaluate the product (Maheswaran, 1994), as mentioned previously. However, there are some factors that mitigate the influence of the Country Of Origin of a product. Among these moderator factors, authors highlight the brand name as an influential aspect that can decrease the relevance of the country of origin of a product (Feng, Wang & Mu, 2020), stating that when a brand has a solid and positive reputation and popularity, or a positive image and a high social prestige , this will weaken the influence of the country of origin (Han & Terpstra 1988; Kim & Pysarchik 2000, Lotz & Hu 2001). Moreover, the price of the product can also be considered a relevant factor when evaluating the product, discarding the importance of its country of origin, as price discounts can often mitigate this effect (Chao & Rajendran, 1993 in Feng, Wang & Mu, 2020). Knowledge and familiarity with the product or product category are other moderators that tend to decrease the relevance of the country of origin effect as an informational cue (Maheswaran, 1994). Thus, when consumers do not have enough knowledge or insight regarding the actual quality of the product, the country of origin becomes a useful clue for them to evaluate products; whereas, on the other hand, consumers that do have substantial product-related knowledge or are familiar with it, and therefore are able to evaluate the product for its overall quality, then the relevance of the country of origin will decrease (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Maheswaran 1994; Zhao, Wang, and Fan 2015, in Feng, Wang & Mu, 2020). In line with this, when the consumer has a positive expectation regarding a certain brand, it is more likely that he/she display a tendency to positively evaluate and perceive that brand or product (Borges; Pérez-Nebra. Torres, 2006, in Silva et al., 2015).

3.3. Country Of Origin communication strategies

Throughout decades there has been a significant growth of globalization of markets promoting thus international commerce as well as a more opened and globalized business environment where nations seek to develop and commercialize their “national brands” aiming at having a favorable place in the consumers’ minds (Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012, Chandra, Fealey & Rau, 2006). This suggests that a country that is perceived with a positive image is more capable of competing in the global market (Chandra, Fealey & Rau, 2006), which can thus lead to a generalized positive evaluation and attitude towards brands associated with that country (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999).

In line with this, the importance of the country image as a variable has grown to the point where it is present throughout the brands’ marketing and communication strategies and activities (Verlegh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg, 2005). These strategies can be put into practice by either highlighting the Country Of Origin of the product or service (Aichner, 2014) when the country image is positively perceived by the consumers making this a competitive advantage (Paterlini, Giraldi, & Amui, 2012), or by purposely not mention it (Aichner, 2014) when the country image is weak or negative, and focus on the product’s characteristics and benefits (Essoussi & Merunka, 2007) – however, in the majority of countries, it is required for companies to reveal the products’ or services’ country of origin, which has enabled professionals to understand the attitudes of consumers regarding this (Kotler & Gertner, 2004, in Paterlini, Giraldi, & Amui, 2012). In the first scenario, companies seek to communicate the Country Of Origin of the product or service and thus increase awareness on their Country Of Origin upon their consumers (Aichner, 2014), as well as provide an easier introduction of the product or service in the market and a better acceptance from the consumers (Agarwal & Sikri, 1996). On the other hand, brands such as Jaguar often avoids sharing or communication its country of origin, since British cars do not have a favorable image, according to consumers’ stereotypes (Kaynak et al, 2000, Aichner, 2014). Companies will only benefit from the country of origin if consumers are aware of it (Aichner, 2014). Therefore, in order to achieve this awareness of the country of origin, companies seek to communicate it through using various strategies (Aichner, 2014) as discussed in the following.

Due to the flourishing expansion of new products available in the market, communication professionals often seek to add value to their products through Country Of Origin cues, either through advertising strategies or even packaging techniques, in

order to differentiate them from competitors (Baker & Ballington, 2002). There are several and different strategies aimed at increasing awareness towards a brand's country of origin among consumers (Hornikx et al., 2020). Once analyzed the country image, marketing and communication professionals should be able to develop strategies in order to emphasize it and thus benefit from it (Essoussi & Merunka, 2007). When the country image is positive, companies seek to communicate and promote the Country Of Origin of a product or service (Aichner, 2014) adopting different strategies, often using the "made in" label, or directly refer to the country in the name of the brand (for example, British Airways), or even indirectly but clearly suggest the name of the country in the name of the brand (brands such as Ferrari or Renault) or even through packaging design (the kangaroo on the Australian beer label present in the packaging) (Ayrosa, 2000, in Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012). Hornikx et al. (2020) resort to previous literature to further suggest other frequently used strategies that companies or brands may adopt throughout their communication activities, such as resorting to or referring to a famous person, country flag, landscapes or cultural symbols that represent and suggest the country of origin.

Overall, given the fact that country image has in fact an impact upon the consumers' purchasing behaviors (Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012), as it acts as a reference for product quality (Koschate-Fischer et al, 2012) as well as a variable in the consumer's overall evaluation of the brand (Verlegh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg, 2005) when it is used as a cue to judge the brand and minimize the purchase risk (Listiana, 2015), companies seek to develop well established and coherent strategies to make the country image an important marketing tool (Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012).

3.4. Country Of Origin and Branding

In line with what was mentioned above, internationalization has forced companies to redefine their branding strategies aligning the brand's attributes with the COO perceptions in the consumers' minds (Guercini & Ranfagni, 2013), since consumers are becoming more and more aware of the country of origin of products they seek to purchase (Listiana, 2015).

The characteristics of the country image that are projected onto a brand, identifying and associating a specific brand to a specific country (Han, 1989), will affect the consumers' attitudes towards the brand (Johansson et al., 1985). This is what Jaworski and Foshier (2003) have addressed as National Branding, which represents the "essence and core values (brand identity) of the Country Of Origin (...) affecting everything from positioning, differentiation and brand identity to purchase decision" (p. 101). In line with this, it is important for brands to understand how their country of origin is perceived by the consumers and overall publics around the world in order to assess how this will be reflected in their brand image (Kang & Yang, 2010).

The Country Of Origin does indeed affect how consumers evaluate products or services, having in consideration the overall economic, social and cultural aspects of the country (Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012). Furthermore, Country Of Origin is also a useful tool when it comes to assess the emotional component that affects the consumers' purchase decisions (Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012). A positive country image evokes upon the consumer certain values, beliefs and feelings about the product (Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012), reinsuring the consumer about the quality of the product, ultimately influencing the consumer's decision (Septianto et al., 2020).

Within these emotions, it is relevant for this dissertation to mention that the consumer loyalty towards a brand is affected by its Country Of Origin (Aichner, 2014). In fact, the Country Of Origin can act as a moderating variable and influence the perception of quality of the product as well as brand loyalty and brand preference perceived by the consumers (Moradi and Zarei, 2011). Moreover, as addressed in the previous chapter, brand loyalty ultimately increases brand equity. Therefore, consequently, as country image has an impact upon brand loyalty (Saydan, 20013), it will also affect and have a direct impact on the overall brand equity (Saydan, 2013).

Related to this, it is also important to mention what authors addressed as “ethnocentrism”, as the consumers’ tendency to value and prefer national products over imported products (Baker & Michie, 1995; Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009, in Paterlini, Giraldi & Amui, 2012), depending on the product category. Shim and Sharma (1987) further defined consumer ethnocentrism as the impulse to have a favorable attitude towards products originated from their own culture and/or home country, in comparison to foreign-made products. As concluded by Han (1998), consumer ethnocentrism does have an impact upon the cognitive evaluations of products affecting also the consumers’ purchase intentions (Baker & Ballington, 2002).

Consumers often tend to prefer to buy domestic products even if they are more expensive (Han and Terpstra, 1988), as well as to highly value domestic goods because of familiarity with the product or country (Pecotich & Ward, 2007). On a more extreme approach, consumer ethnocentrism can arise from the assumption that it is inappropriate or even immoral to purchase foreign products (Suh & Smith, 2008). According to research, the perceived advantages of purchasing domestic products, among others, include the improvement of home country employment as well as its economy and the national pride (Baker & Ballington, 2002). In fact, research has shown that the significance of the Country Of Origin and its potential in promoting domestic products is growing alongside with the increasing globalization (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993, as cited in Baker & Ballington, 2002).

Chapter 4 - Methodology

Throughout this chapter, the research objectives will be presented, as well as the research question that was as the foundation for the present dissertation, followed by the methodology used during the study and, subsequently, an empirical analysis of the interview and survey carried out for this investigation.

Once presented the literature review regarding the topics of this dissertation, the following steps were to determine the details of the design of the methodology, as well as the instruments for data collection and analysis, and then relate these with the previous research carried out on brand love and country of origin.

4.1. Relevance of the research

The present dissertation sought to provide guidelines for other brands to apply similar communication strategies in order to achieve the Brand Love category, taking advantage of the Country Of Origin factor. With these guidelines, other brands will be able to adapt their future communication strategies to further improve their relationship with their consumers and ultimately improve their engagement, income, equity and overall success. This dissertation focused on identifying the most important characteristics and variables of this construct as a potential and future reference for brand managers to achieve, in order to help clarify what are the communication strategies to develop and shape “brand love” taking advantage of the Country Of Origin factor

4.2. Research question

In line with the goals presented above regarding the topics addressed in this research, and in order to achieve them, a research question was formulated. This research question was formulated considering the criteria regarding clarity, executability and relevance and seeking to represent in a clear way the focus points of this study, as well as its ultimate purpose. The research question which this study seeks to answer is as it follows: “How does the factor Country Of Origin influence the perception of Brand Love among consumers?”.

4.3. Research objectives

The present research was be divided into three main goals:

- Learn about the brand's communication strategies
- Understand how this brand fits the "brand love" category among consumers
- Understand whether or not the Country Of Origin is a relevant factor and if it influences the consumers' choice.
- Understand the strategic communication behind a loved brand and the role of Country Of Origin in it

This has thus, contributed to better understand the concepts of Brand Love as well as Country Of Origin, along with assessing the importance of both concepts within a brand's communication strategy, determining, therefore, if the use of such strategy is considered a source of competitive advantage for brands.

When studying the communication strategy of the brand, the goal was to understand how communication professionals perceive these two concepts on the communication strategies, as well as to further analyze the necessary conditions for the implementation of these strategies and how they are put into practice. In line with this, the intention was also to understand the extent to which strategic communication management is applied to stimulate the perception of Brand Love upon consumers. Following this, when studying the Country Of Origin effect, the goal is to study this as a possible factor to increase the value of a brand (brand equity) as well as a possible antecedent of Brand Love.

Therefore, as an overall goal, this research seeks to understand the way in which the brand's strategic communication may influence, feed and develop the perception of Brand Love, and whether or not the Country Of Origin is a present variable in this.

4.4. Data Collection Techniques

For the present study, in order to answer the research question, a case study of a specific brand was conducted. As explained previously, this research sought to study and understand how consumers perceive Brand Love (towards a specific brand), assessing whether the Country Of Origin is a valid and relevant factor for them; as well as study the brand's communication strategies behind this. In order to carry out this case study, two methods were applied: on one hand, an exploratory interview with the responsible for the brand and brand's communications strategies, and on the other, online surveys aimed at the consumers of the brand.

Case study

The case study consists in an empirical investigation that resorts to various sources of information and strong support from the literature review (Yin, 2015). Through this method, it is possible to obtain an in-depth analysis of a specific sample in order to achieve specific objectives, using several techniques, allowing thus to obtain a broad and more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon in its totality (Greenwood & Nunes, 1965). According to Dooley (2002) researchers resort to case studies to explain or find solutions for certain situations as well as to analyze or describe certain objects or phenomena. The case study encompasses both exploratory and descriptive approaches, as it explores little-known problems seeking to draw hypotheses or define propositions for future researches and investigations, as well as it describes in depth a certain phenomena within a specific context (Yin, 2015). When resorting to this method, the researcher is able to analyze in detail the data through the contextual analysis of a number of events or circumstances as well as the relationship between them (Zainal, 2007). Overall, a case study research consists on a detailed and intensive analysis of a particular event, situation, organization or social group, within its real life context (Schooch, 2020). This method is quite useful as it allows the researcher to collect different kinds of data, through interviews, documents, observations or surveys, guaranteeing an in depth insight, as well as a comprehensive understanding, of the phenomena (Schooch, 2020).

In line with this, a case study on the boardshorts brand DCK was suited for this case study since it checks the requirements of being a Portuguese brand and a popular one among the intended targets. Furthermore, DCK is a quite approachable and accessible brand to get in touch with, which was also helpful when developing this investigation. The research methodology was divided into two parts in order to have a better and broader perspective and understanding, by assessing the perspectives of both consumers and the brand's communication department. Therefore, these two parts were studied through a case study, resorting to both semi constructed interview, on one hand, and an online survey on the other hand.

Semi structured interview

Data were collected via qualitative interview with the responsible for the communication and marketing of the brand, Fernand Costa, where he was encouraged to talk about the brand, more specifically, about their communication activities, campaigns and strategies¹².

Qualitative methods are understood as explicitly ways of describing, analyzing, and interpreting data (Talja, 1999) and are preferable when the goal of the research is to understand a specific process or phenomenon (White, Vanc & Stafford, 2010). Qualitative approaches are considered the broadest and most inclusive methods for these phenomena, allowing the researcher to gather and later analyze and interpret in-depth insights on the studied topic (White, Vanc & Stafford, 2010). Since this paper aims to analyze and understand views and preferences as well as perceptions, a qualitative approach is suitable and appropriate.

This interview consisted of several pre-planned key questions that helped defining the subjects to be explored, but also allowed the interviewer and interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Burnard, et al., 2008) giving the interviewee the chance to elaborate and explain particular issues through the use of open-ended questions (Alsaawi, 2014). Following this logic, a semi structured qualitative interview was helpful when examining and understanding the communication strategies that are put into practice by the studied brand, in order to relate it to Brand Love. The first part of the interview focused on questions regarding a brief description of the brand, from the interviewee's point of view. The following group of questions sought to learn about

¹² See appendix 1 and appendix 2 for the script and guidelines, and the transcription, respectively.

the brand's communication strategies and how they are put into practice, as well as to determine, from the brand's perspective, what are the main priorities when communicating the brand's message and overall identity to its audiences. Then, the following set of questions was regarding the management of the image and reputation of the brand, where the interviewee was asked to what extent do the communication actions influence the image and reputation of the brand. The concept of Brand Love was approached in the next group of questions where the interviewee was asked about his perception on this, i.e. whether or not he was familiarized with the concept of Brand Love, and how the brand manages it throughout its communication strategy and actions. Finally, the factor Country Of Origin, was also taken into consideration, from the perspective of the interviewee, in order to further assess how (if so) this factor is acknowledged and present throughout the brand's communication strategies, as well as to determine if it is considered a valuable asset upon such strategy.

With previously formulated questions aligned with the objectives of the research, in order to ensure more detailed and elaborated responses, the participant was able to talk freely and express his point of view. This interview took place via Zoom on October 27th and had an extension of 30 minutes. It was recorded by audio and later transcribed into a written form to be analyzed and interpreted. The transcripts were compared to the audio in order to assure there were no mistakes, misinterpretations and make it a reliable procedure.

Overall, the goal of the interview was to first understand if the communication professional was aware of this "Brand Love" from the consumers' point of view, to learn more about their communication strategies in order to determine what it is that leads to the development and construction of Brand Love, and finally, to establish whether or not the factor Country Of Origin has any impact in their strategy.

Online survey

This dissertation sought to determine how consumers perceive the brand, aligning this with the concept of Brand Love exposed previously in the literature. In order to do so, the case study encompassed an online survey aimed at answering two main questions regarding both the concept of Brand Love, i.e. assess whether or not the consumers do love the brand, and also, to determine if the country of origin of such brand has any impact on their purchase decision.

Therefore, data collection focused on the consumers' perceptions regarding the brand. Through an online survey, the goal was to understand if the consumers know what is behind the brand, its values and identity, and if this is why they have created this "relationship" towards the brand (assessing the brand's image and reputation as well), understand if this is the only brand they use or buy, with what frequency, why they like the brand and what they like about it, and most importantly, what it is that this brand has that other do not. Finally, the last variable in this study is the Country Of Origin factor, evaluating whether this can influence the consumers' decision.

The present survey (see appendix 3) consisted predominantly of closed and direct questions, allowing a relatively quick answer from the participants. This type of surveys allow uniformity as well as categorization when analyzing the responses.

The survey was divided in 4 parts (see appendix 3). The first part of the survey intends to outline the profile of the respondent, where it was asked where the respondents live, as well as their age and gender. The following section of the survey consists of assessing what are the top of mind boardshort brands for the participants, allowing to identify beforehand whether or not the brand DCK is present in their minds. The third section is focused on the brand DCK, where participants who do know the brand are asked about their purchase tendencies regarding the products. In line with this, the following set of questions are more specific and aimed at understanding how consumers feel about the brand. The first set of these questions are related to the concept of brand loyalty (from question 11 to 14), which address their commitment to the brand as well as their willingness to eventually pay a higher price for the products. These aspects are here considered previous steps to a loved brand and reflect the concepts that were previously addressed in the literature review, related to brand loyalty. Next, the two following questions address one of the other components of brand love: the self identification with the brand (questions 15 and 16). Questions 17 to 23 are more focused on the emotional relation the consumer establishes with the brand, as it is here addresses whether or not the

consumers believe this brand is special as well as if they feel the need or desire to purchase products from DCK, and on a more direct approach, how emotionally connected they feel towards the brand. The last two questions of this segment are related to the factor word-of-mouth, which was previously explained in the literature chapter, where participants are asked if they tend to talk about the brand or recommend it to others, which can be a sign of a positive perception and relationship. Regarding the Country Of Origin effect, the participants were asked if they are aware of the fact that DCK is a Portuguese and “made in Portugal” brand, and if this has any impact on their purchase decisions. Finally, the last two questions of the survey are directed at understanding what are the attributes that consumers most value regarding the brand DCK.

4.5. Sample

Since the researcher does not have the resources nor the time to ascertain and analyze the entire universe of population, in this case, the total number of DCK consumers, there was the need to define, outline and delineate a sample that would be able to represent a slice of the universe. Therefore, the present survey was aimed at DCK’s consumers. What determined the acceptance of the responses were the responses from participants who did not know the brand, that were automatically discarded, as the goal of this survey was to understand how consumers who do know the brand, perceive it. The present survey was online from July 25th until October 6th gathering a total of 322 responses, of which 223 were valid and accepted.

Chapter 5 – Case Study DCK

5.1. DCK Boardshorts

For the purpose of the present dissertation, in order to study the possible influence of the Country Of Origin in a loved brand, DCK was the chosen brand to undertake a case study about.

The brand DCK was born in 2009 when three Portuguese friends, who ended up becoming the creators and owners of the brand, went on a trip to Bali, Indonesia, where they soon realized that the men's boardshorts were quite abundant as well at very appealing prices, whereas, in contrast, in Portugal not so much. The three friends saw in this an incredible opportunity to start their business, so brought these boardshorts to the Portuguese market, printing a logo representing the initials of each other's names – DCK, inaugurating therefore their brand.



Fig. 10 DCK logos

Given the market at the time, where these types of products were either quite expensive or hard to find, lacking quality of the material as well, these boardshorts were an instant success. A few years later, the production and manufacturing of the boardshorts was now totally made in Portugal, where the textile industry is highly valued, improving thus their quality and style. Through word of mouth, the brand quickly became locally famous and notorious. Starting at local markets and pop up sales to flagship stores spread through the finest neighborhoods in Portugal, with a well structured online store available for international shipping to countries such as Spain, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates and Mozambique.



Fig 11. DCK stores

As it shows in the images above, the DCK's stores are designed similarly in consonance with their essence, representing a more casual and "easygoing" environment focused in the "surf" theme.

Regarding the product offer, DCK has more than 300 models of boardshorts available divided in categories according to different styles, so that every customer can find the perfect pair of shorts, aligned with their personality. According to the brand, DCK categorizes the different boardshorts' styles in "surfer, hipsters, nerds or the classic ones". Furthermore, the boardshorts are constantly being renewed, as they are all limited editions, providing then a sense of uniqueness for the consumer when purchasing a pair of boardshorts. As it is mentioned in the brand's website, "All products are limited edition and when they sell out they're never done again". DCK aspires to become the number 1 brand, when it comes to boardshorts. The brand seeks to become the "universe of boardshorts". Their intention is to not become an exclusive brand, rather a totally inclusive brand, where anyone can find their suitable and right pair of boardshorts, as they sell boardshorts from literally one year old's to extra large sizes. In order to enable this, DCK offers a wide range of styles and patterns in their boardshorts: they offer both longer and shorter styles, with more discrete and conservative or more radical and bold patterns, as it shows in the image below.



Fig. 12 DCK boardshorts models

Moreover, the brand has also launched a special edition contemplating “shorts made from Cannabis plants or shorts with biodegradable features”, which they have considered their “special edition”. DCK has been investing significantly in the development of sustainable boardshorts. In line with this mindset, some of the boardshorts models are made with “CICLO technology”. A considerable part of the production, around 20%, is currently made with this patented additive, the CicLO technology, which makes the boardshorts biodegradable. According to their website, “Products made with CicLO® fibers reduce the persistence of plastic microfiber pollution in the oceans and plastic accumulation in landfills”, providing the product with biodegradable fibers. These models are made “from Recycled Plastic Bottles with CICLO Technology, 4-Way Pro Stretch Material for ultra-comfort, Light Weight, Quick Dry and Seamless on the skin materials”, resulting in boardshorts that are 50% recycled polyester and 40% virgin polyester, 10% spandex plus Ciclo finish. More than 60% of its collection is made from recycled material. Furthermore, another positive outcome of this technology relies on the fact that these boardshorts, under the right circumstances, at the end of their lifecycle, they will self decompose, contributing ultimately to the preservation of the planet. The main goal of this collection and initiative is to reduce the impact upon the environment, as well as protecting the ocean from plastic pollution. Below some models made with this CICLO technology.



Fig. 13 DCK CiCLO technology boardshorts

The price range of the boardshort are approximately 45€ normal price, and 30,80€ on sale, which is, in comparison to other brands within the same market context, accessible. In other hand, other popular and similar brands' boardshorts, such as RVCA, Billabong and Quiksilver, present higher prices when compared to DCK boardshorts, going from 30€ up to 75€.

The brand's main goal is to achieve the position of number one boardshorts brand in the world, following three main premises: quality, variety and fair price.

Apart from the boardshorts, DCK has recently launched their first winter jackets collection, made with recycled materials, selling them at 78€ with only 4 models at the moment.

DCK has emerged in a very specific context of the beginning of the “online brands”¹³ – as to that point, the main communication channels were press and television. When DCK was founded, in this context, the creators of the brand did not have any know-how on how to handle and manage this new concept. Therefore, in order to break the stereotype of the classical brands that were popular at the moment, DCK had to fully adjust and learn how to communicate through the digital platforms, becoming one of the first Portuguese brands to start in this digital platforms world. These digital and online brands depend 100% on the digital communication, concluding thus that in the case of DCK, communication was as important, or even more important, than the product itself.

¹³ As one of the CEOs of DCK mentioned in the interview, Fernando Costa: “we emerged in the beginning of that era (...) where the typical thing to do at the time was television, magazines (...). We almost had to (...) enter in another universe that we were not familiarized with (...), the universe of digital communication”.

5.1.1. DCK's external communication

The brand DCK is present in different platforms and uses several strategies that allow communication with its consumers as well as enhances the relationship with them. The communication platforms used and the campaigns developed will be listed throughout this subchapter.

In the case of DCK, the communication of the brand is stronger on the online channels. The internet has become more and more important when defining the communication strategy for brands¹⁴. Consequently, the most important focus of the communication strategy of DCK is social media, where the brand has a strong and consistent presence. This has allowed the brand to reach out to their targeted audiences, determining thus its success. Moreover, DCK has been very consistent when promoting its motto “enjoy life” throughout its various communication channels.

Due to all that was exposed in the previous paragraph, it is correct to assume that the most adequate strategy for this brand to be in the Portuguese market and engage with its target audience, is mostly through online communication. Furthermore, all communication is carried out by the brand itself, rather than resorting to an advertising or marketing agency, which guarantees a better and more consistent control.

DCK considers itself authentic in everything they do and communicate. Throughout their communications, their speech is based on the transmission of their values: positivity, lifestyle and happiness. People easily identify themselves with this philosophy, enabling their consumers and costumers to actually love the brand. The brand seeks to communicate its most important messages. In the first place, communicate their DNA and encourage people to “*enjoy life*”¹⁵. Secondly, DCK's strategy focuses on communicating the brand's strongest features, which are quality, variety and fair prices. And then, recently, as mentioned above, the brand started to invest on the topic of sustainability, thus it has also become a part of their communications.

¹⁴ Through the internet, brands and consumers can interact more easily and frequently, as it is more opened, transparent and accessible (Cavaller et al, 2014). Alongside with this, the growing impact of social media platforms, such as Facebook or Instagram, has shifted the focus of the online communication strategies for brands, since they allow brands and consumers to get to know each other (Cavaller et al, 2014).

¹⁵ During the interview, Fernando illustrated this by stating “we want you to go enjoy life, to go to the beach; what do you need to go to the beach? A swimsuit. DCK happens to be here for you”.

In order to spread, promote and communicate their motto, “enjoy life”, the brand consistently creates and shares a variety of content that illustrate such message, through its various online platforms. These contents are often in a video or photography format, where it is represented the idea of summer, either at the beach or at a more rural site, promoting also a lifestyle. For instance, throughout the website, the brand uses pictures and videos that evoke this type of lifestyle, as well as in their Instagram account. The brand is most present and consistent on the online platform Instagram, sharing content and information regarding the brand’s products, as well as their different campaigns.

Regarding these campaigns, two of their most special campaigns¹⁶ are based on what the brand stands for and causes that the brand believes in. For instance, last year DCK carried out a massive campaign to help women who have breast cancer, where they designed a pair of boardshorts with little breasts drawn in it (see fig. 10). Part of the revenues, more specifically, 30% of the total of sales, was donated to this cause. This goes in line with their philosophy of, not only helping the planet, but also trying to contribute to the society in general. Even though DCK’s target is not women, since this is a cause they strongly believe in, they wanted to developed this big and very successful campaign.



Fig. 14 DCK Breast cancer campaign // Font: Instagram

¹⁶ Highlighted during the course of the interview by Fernando

The other campaign was the Christmas campaign where DCK designed Christmas pattern boardshorts made from recycled materials and built a Christmas tree at the beach, and 100% of profit were reverted to an association called “Bandeira Azul”, focused on helping the environment and enhance sustainability awareness. The intention behind this campaign, which they called “DCK Merry Global Warming” (see fig. 11), was to create awareness for the fact that, if people do not take action when it comes to preserving the planet by reducing the use of single use plastics, we will end up celebrating Christmas at the beach, due to the global warming effects. In their Instagram post regarding this campaign, DCK shared a video and on its description, the brand states “this is not what we want for Christmas”.

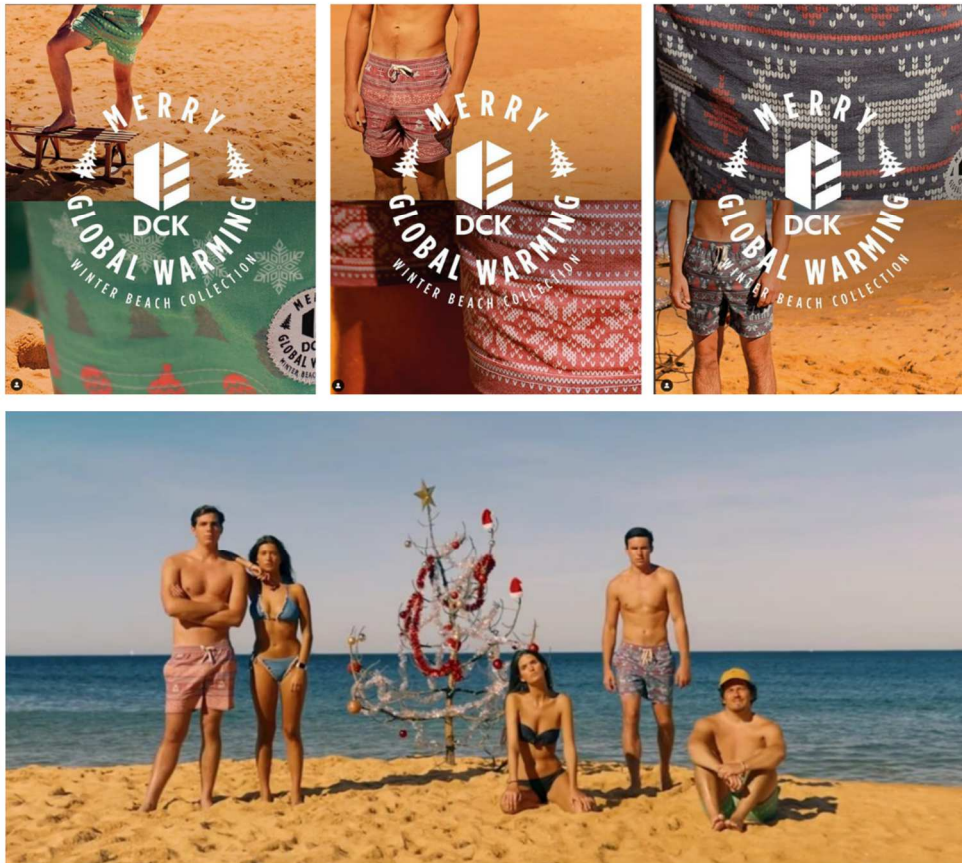


Fig 15. DCK Merry Global Warming

Their latest campaign accompanied the Sporting Club de Portugal's winning of the National Championship of football, establishing a partnership between the football club and the boardshorts brand, which were later called the "champions' boardshorts" (see fig 12). For this campaign, the partnership launched a limited and exclusive edition of the boardshorts. These boardshorts with the co-branding Sporting CP and DCK immediately sold out, becoming bestsellers. Promoted in the official website of the football club, through this partnership, the brand has definitely gain more visibility.



Fig 16. SCP by DCK

The brand has had a communication strategy focused essentially on social media, where most of their advertising actions are present, such as Instagram, and Youtube (see fig 13). However, DCK is also frequently present in summer fleas and markets, which also contributes to enhance the brand’s visibility.

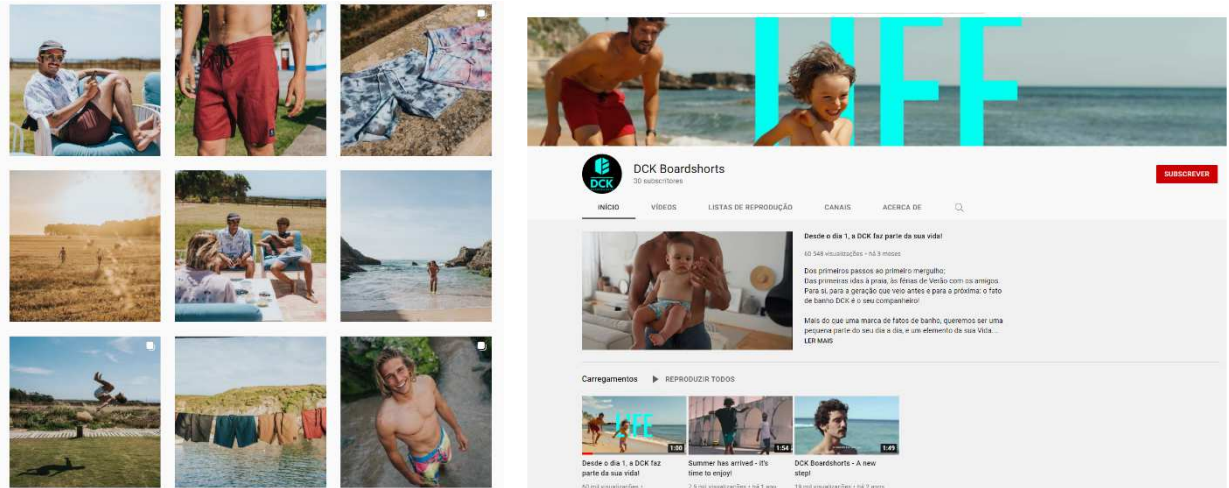


Fig. 17 DCK’s Instagram and Youtube page

DCK has also had its presence among online magazines and newspapers, where their campaigns are promoted, and their products communicated, such as NIT (New In Town), the “Publico” newspaper and “Time Out Lisboa”. Once again, these communication strategies were suitable and appropriate for the brand to reach out to and engage with its main audiences.

It is also worth mention that, when addressed the concept of Brand Love, Fernando stated that the brand does consider itself a loved brand. According to him, DKC is a really likable brand, due to all of its values and its overall identity that consumers easily identify with. Moreover, he further explained that if it was not for the communication they carry out, DCK would not be considered a loved brand¹⁷. Fernando claims that “communication makes a loved brand”, which is why they insist on communication DCK’s DNA and essence. DCK’s campaigns are also an important clincher when it comes to create flourish and develop this feeling of love upon the consumers. Even though there are not concrete and decisive data regarding DCK’s reputation, as they do not consider a priority to assess

¹⁷ To exemplify this, Fernando said: “if we were to communicate merely the warehouse where the boardshorts were made, DCK would not be a loved brand, because people would not feel identified with the brand nor would they consider it appealing or attractive”. See appendix 2.

this¹⁸, the brand takes into consideration their consumers' feedback, which is consistently positive, as well as their returning customer margins which is more than 15% (over a year). Therefore, they can conclude that clients' fidelity is a valid proof of their success, not only in terms of the product itself, but also in terms of their communication.

Finally, regarding the concept of Country Of Origin, Fernando revealed that it was not the focal point of their strategy¹⁹. However, they have realized that the market context does value the fact that this is a Portuguese brand. In response to this, the brand started to communicate more often in Portuguese, mainly in advertising for people who did not know the brand and that could be attracted and influenced by this factor. Fernando further distinguished between people who do not know the brand, to whom communicating the country of origin is indeed important, and people who already know the brand, to whom digital communication on social media focuses, not on its country of origin, rather in its DNA and essence. In line with this, Fernando concluded that, for the people who do not know the brand, communicating the country of origin can be an asset .

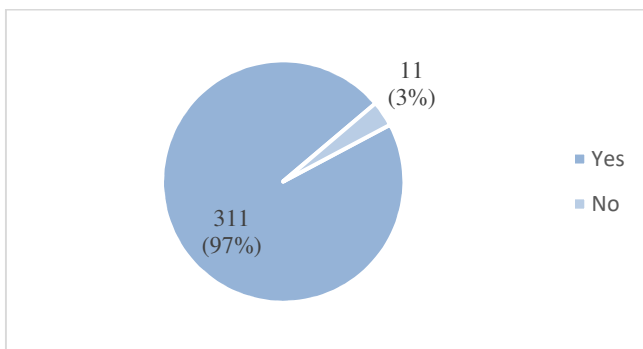
¹⁸ “Despite having been growing a lot, there are certain things that we cannot reach. And this part of the analysis of where we are, how much recognition, how highly regarded we are, we have no way of measuring that. We could do a market study and an analysis in a consultant to measure this, but at the moment this is not in our priorities”. See appendix 2.

¹⁹ “We never really thought about it; we never thought “we are a Portuguese brand, we will sell more because of this””. See appendix 2.

5.2. Description of the survey results

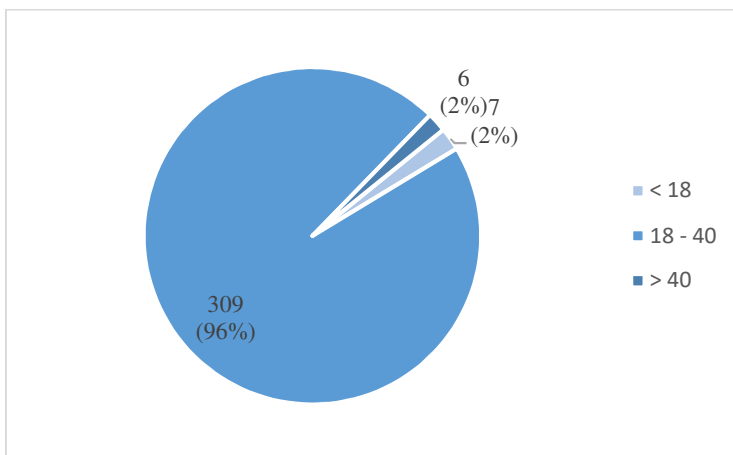
The analysis of the data obtained through a questionnaire survey conducted with the consumers of the brand DCK was carried out, gathering in total 322 responses. This survey was online from July 25th until October 6th. The first part of this survey was dedicated to identifying the participant of the survey in order to delineate a specific profile, resorting to three initial questions, analyzed below.

Graphic 1. Do you live in Portugal presently?



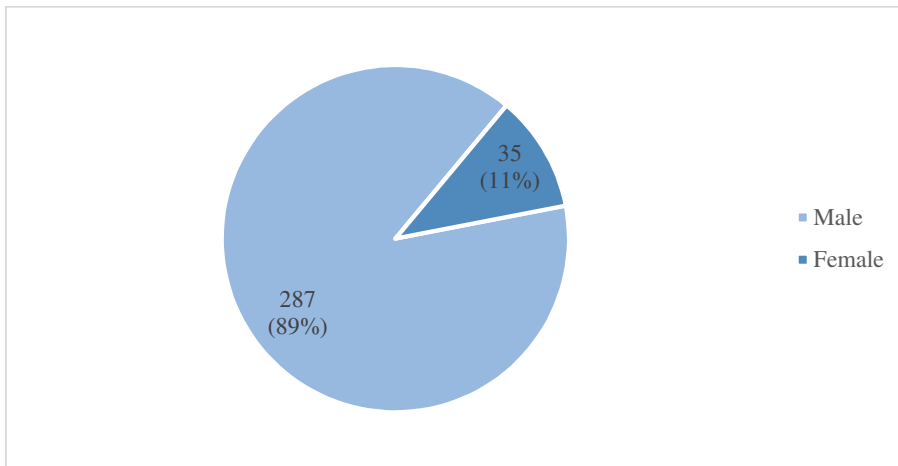
Through the analysis of the data collected, it is possible to verify that the majority of respondents in this study live in Portugal presently corresponding to 96,6% of the answers, while only 3,4% do not.

Graphic 2. How old are you?



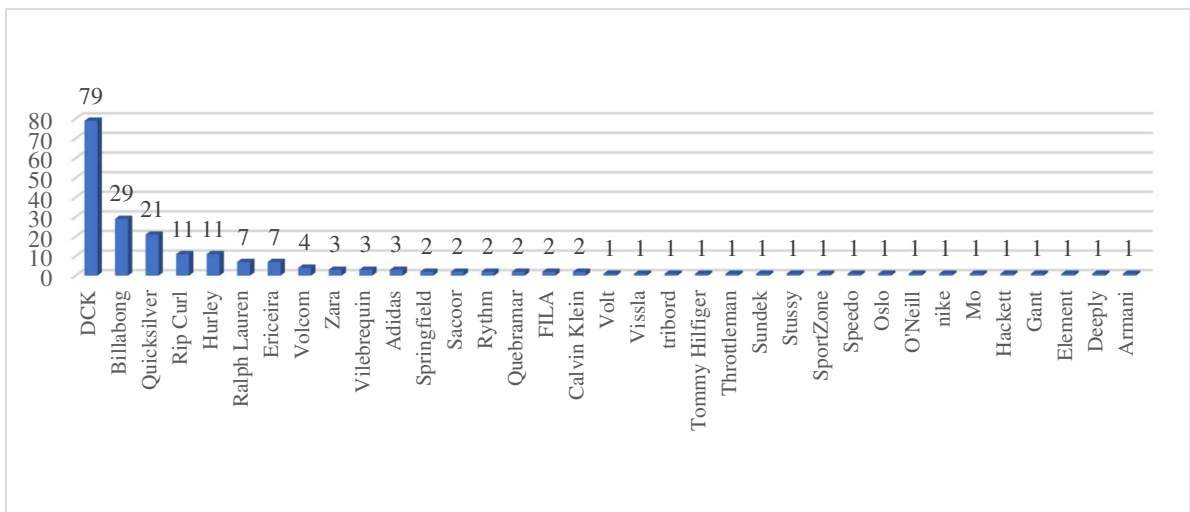
Regarding the average age of the respondents, it is possible to observe in Graphic 2 that most of the participants are between 18 and 40 years old, corresponding to the 96% of the answers. It is also represented in this graphic that 1,9% of the participants are more than 40 years old, and 2,2% are younger than 18 years old.

Graphic 3. Gender of the participants



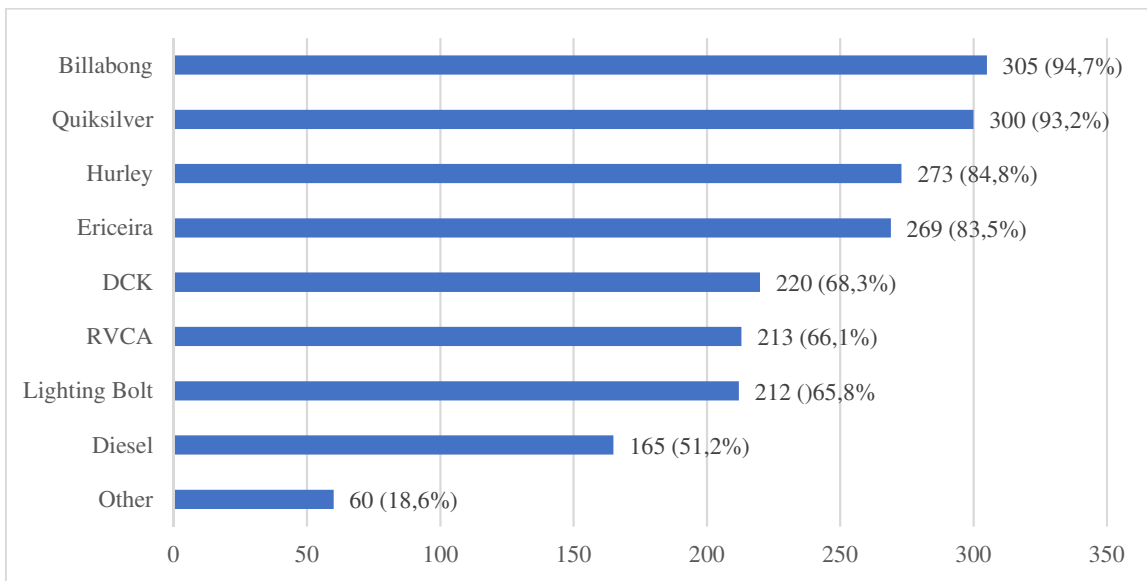
As it is represented in graphic 3, regarding the gender of the participants, 89,1% are male participants, and 10,9% are female. It is worth noting that, even though the main target of this survey was male participants, as they are more likely to be consumers of the brand DCK, this survey also considered female participants that could also be, eventually, third party consumers of the brand, or at least be familiar with the brand.

Graphic 4. What is the first male boardshorts band that comes to your mind?



Followed by the characterization and identification of the participants, the next section of questions seeks to first understand if the brand DCK is present in the mind of the consumers, as they are asked what is the first brand that comes to their minds when asked to name a brand of male boardshorts, without giving any examples or names. As it is represented in graphic 4, DCK was the most named brand, gathering a total of 79 responses, followed by Billabong with 29 and Quiksilver with 21 answers.

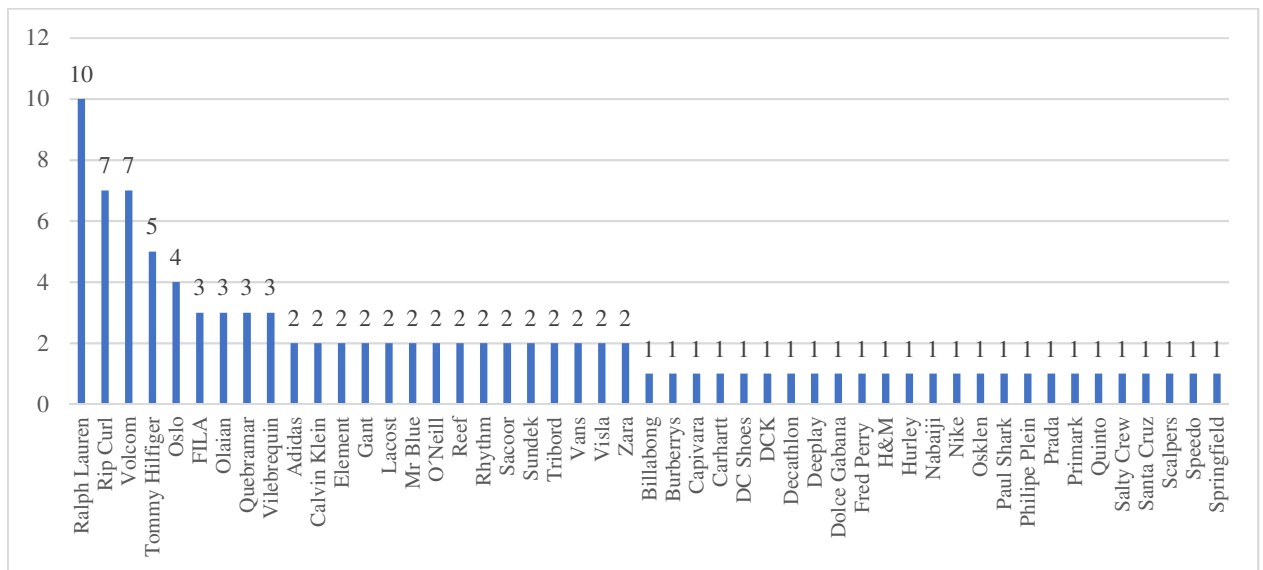
Graphic 5. Which boardshorts brands do you know?



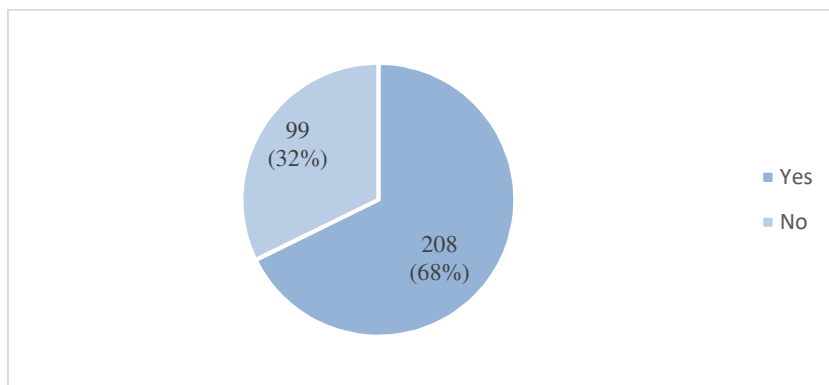
This question was asked in order to understand to what extent the participants are familiar with the market context of, in this case, male boardshorts brands. As for the results, this graphic suggests that the brand that most of the participants are familiar with is the brand Billabong, with 305 answers, corresponding to 94,7% of the total answers. From a total of 322 participants, 220 know the brand DCK.

Participants were also given the possibility to add other male boardshorts brands that they were familiar with. Their answers were as it follows in graphic 6:

Graphic 6. Other male boardshorts brands

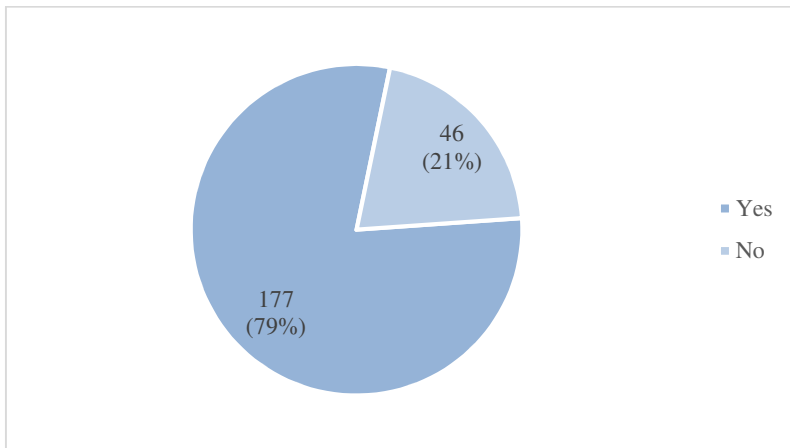


Graphic 7. Do you know the brand DCK?



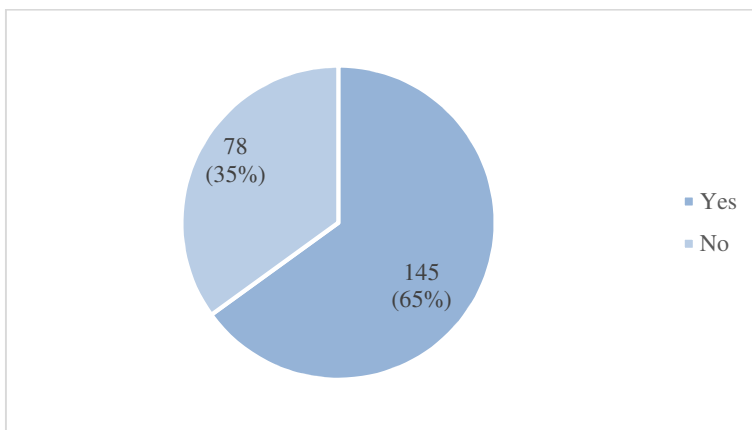
The following section of this survey was now dedicated directly to the brand DCK. Graphic 7 represents the percentage of participants that do know or do not know the brand. In line with this, 68% of the participants of this survey are familiar with the brand, whereas 32% are not. For those who were not familiar with the brand DCK, the survey ended, as this survey sought to focus on people who do know the brand.

Graphic 8. Do you have any DCK product?



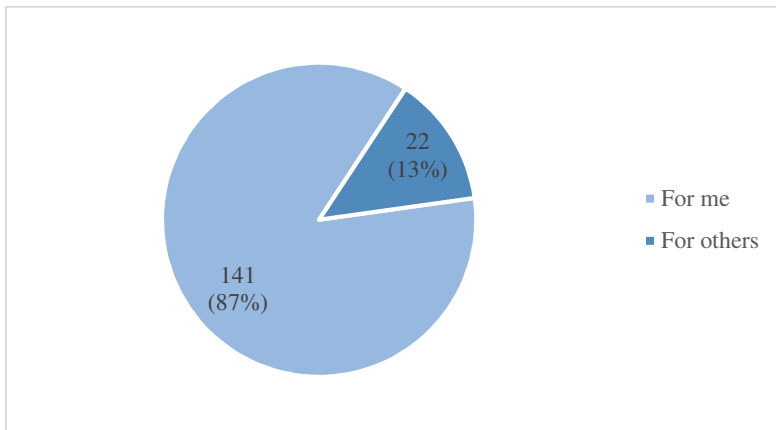
From the total of 223 participants who do know the brand, 177 participants have DCK products, representing 79% of the answers, whereas 46 participants do not have, corresponding to the 21%.

Graphic 9. Do you buy DCK products regularly?



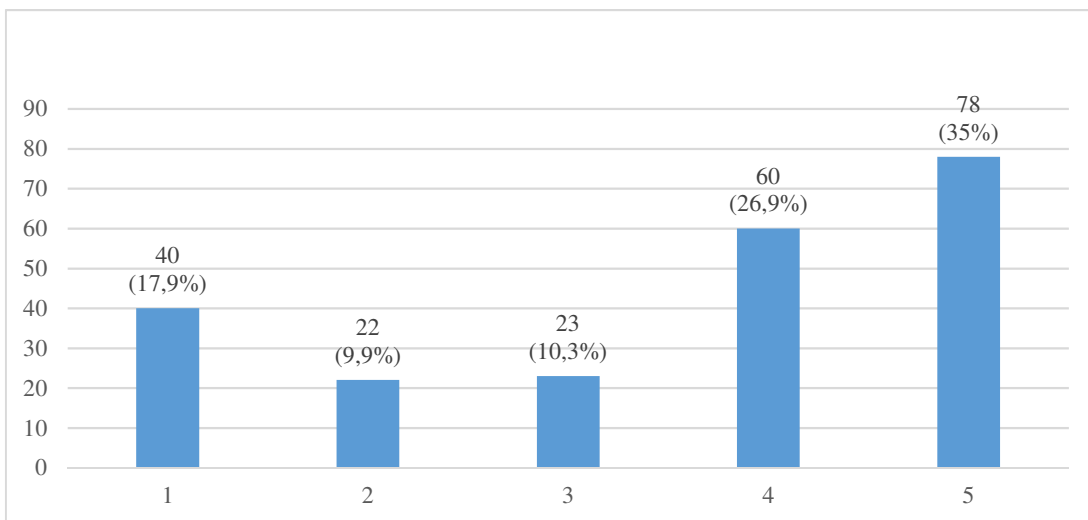
According to the graphic, it is possible to observe that 65% of the participants buy quite frequently products from DCK, and 35% do not.

Graphic 10. To whom do you buy?



In line with the previous question, for those participants who answered “yes”, i.e., participants who buy DCK products regularly, they were asked to whom they buy. Most of the participants buy from themselves, representing 87% of the answers, whereas 13% purchase these products for others.

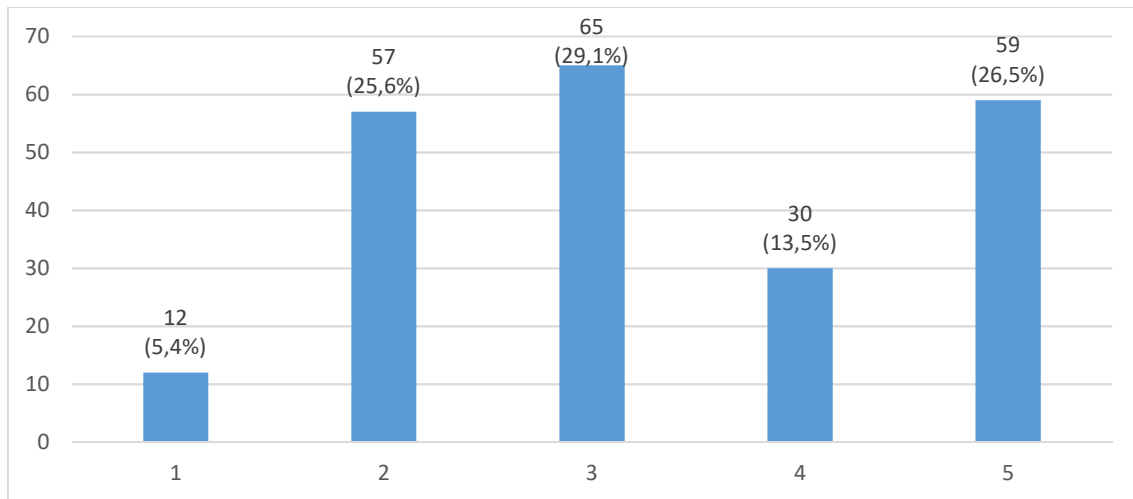
Graphic 11. I consider myself loyal to this brand and have been buying this brand for some time



In order to comprehend to what extent the brand DCK fits in the “brand love” category, the survey included an entire section dedicated to statements regarding the consumers’ perceptions towards this brand, where they were encouraged to answer on a scale from 1 representing total disagreement, to 5 corresponding to total agreement . Graphic 11 represents the answers to the statement regarding the brand: “I consider myself loyal to this brand and have been buying this brand for some time”. As it is here represented, from a total of 223 answers, the majority (78) of the participants attributed a 5, which suggests

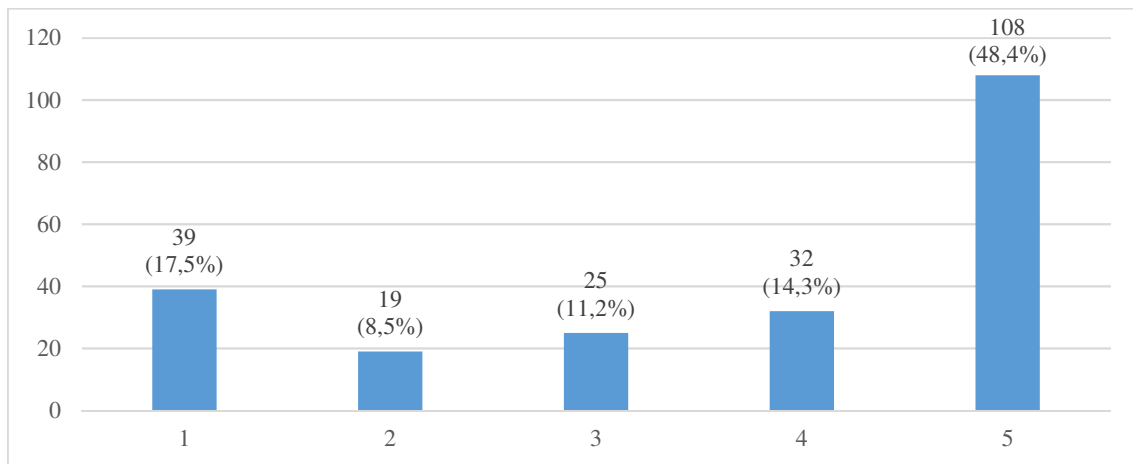
that they do consider loyal to the brand and do purchase its products for some time. Then 60 participants answered a 4, which is also more inclined to the agreement. On the other hand, 40 participants answered with a 1, i.e., they do not agree at all with the statement in question, and 22 attributed a 2. On a more neutral level, 23 participants do not agree or disagree with the statement, as they answered a 3.

Graphic 12. In case the brand is not available, I easily choose another brand



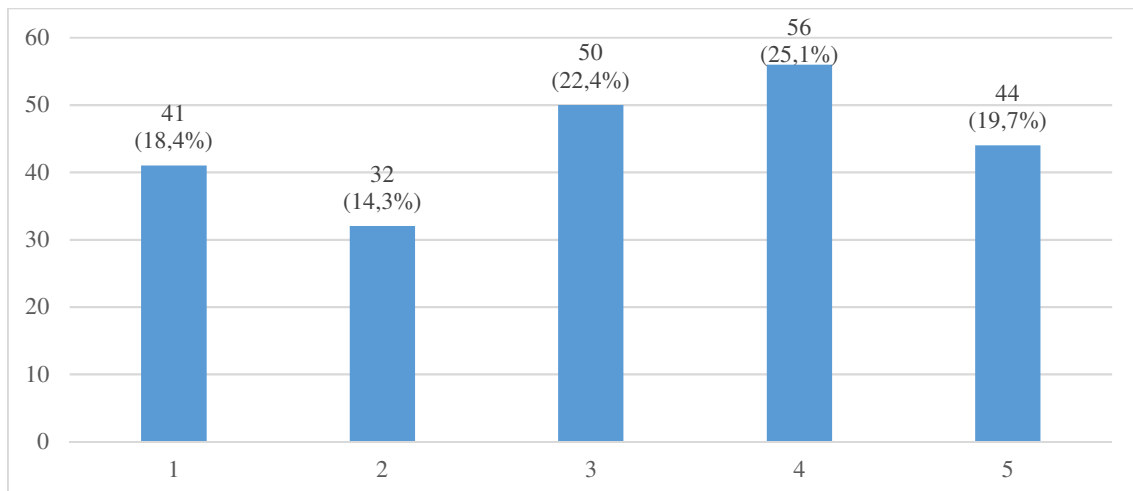
The following statement sought to determine if the participants would choose another brand in case DCK was not available. In line with this, as it shows in graphic 12, most of the participants were neutral, as they answered with a 3 (65 responses). The next most attributed answer was 5, which suggests that 59 participants totally agree that they would easily choose other brand. However, on the other hand, 57 participants answered with a 2, which is more inclined towards the disagreement. Then, 30 answered a 4, and finally, 12 participants answered with a 1, proving they would not purchase another male shorts brand other than DCK.

Graphic 13. I purchase products from this brand whenever I can.



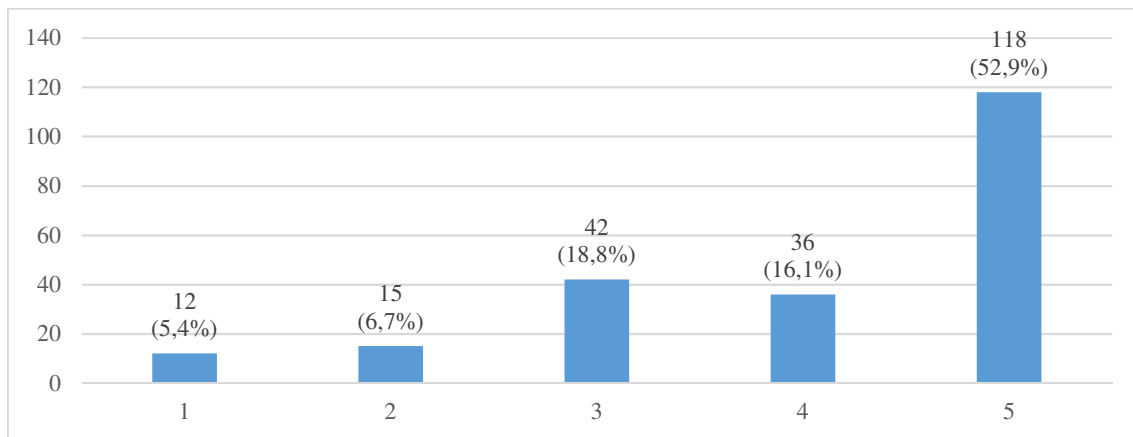
The following graphic represents the consumers purchase behavior when it comes to the brand DCK. As it shows, almost 50% of the participants, a total of 108 responses, recognized they do purchase the brand whenever they can, followed by other 32 participants who answered with a 4. Nevertheless, 58 participants were more reluctant to this statement, as 39 participants claimed they totally disagreed (1), and 19 attributed a 2. On a more neutral level, 25 participants responded with a 3.

Graphic 14. If the prices of DCK products increased, I would continue to purchase it.



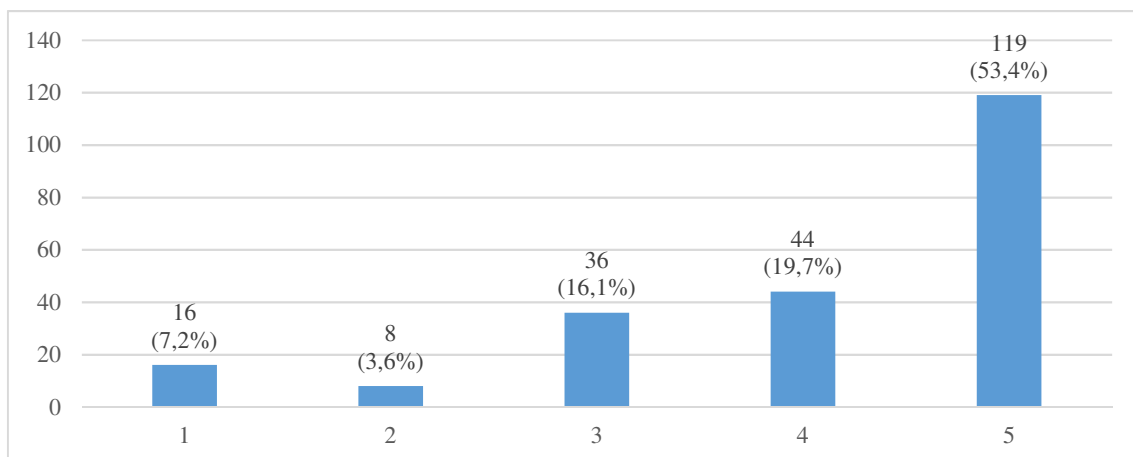
As represented in graphic 14, the most responded number was a 4, with 56 responses. The second most common answer was a 3, with 50 participants remaining neutral, followed by the two ends of the scale, with 44 participants claiming that they totally agree with this statement, i.e., they would continue to purchase DCK products even if they were to increase, whereas 41 participants totally disagreed with it. Finally, 32 answered a 2.

Graphic 15. I identify myself with people who use this brand.



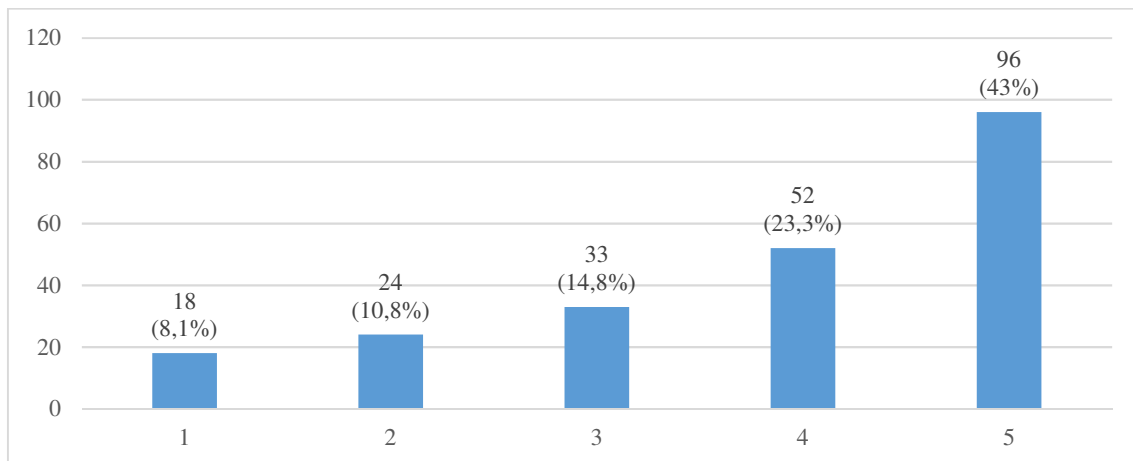
According to graphic 15, more than half of the participants claimed that they totally agree with the statement, i.e., 118 (52,9%) participants identify themselves with people who use this brand, followed by other 36 who also agreed with the statement, just not quite totally, answering with 4. 42 participants remained neutral to the statement, whereas 15 answered with a 2 and 12 with a 1, completely disagreeing with the statement.

Graphic 16. This is a brand used by people like me.



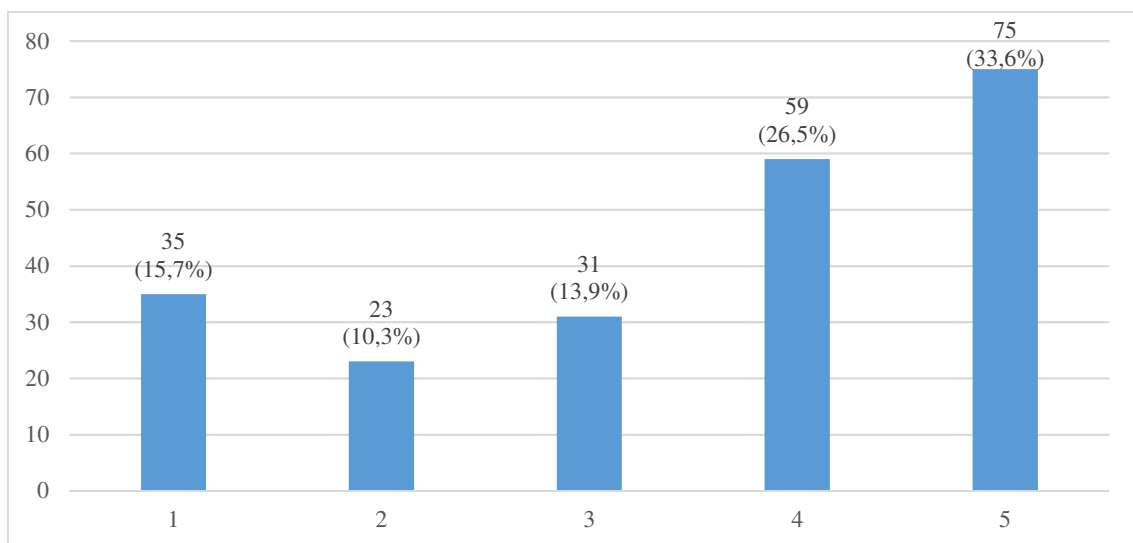
According to this graphic, 119 participants absolutely agree that DCK is a brand used by people like them, representing 53,4% of the total answers. Moreover, 44 participants attributed a 4, therefore still in agreement with the statement, and 36 remain neutral, answering a 3. On the other hand, 16 participants fully disagreed, with a 1 on the scale, and 8 answered with a 2.

Graphic 17. I consider this brand unique and special



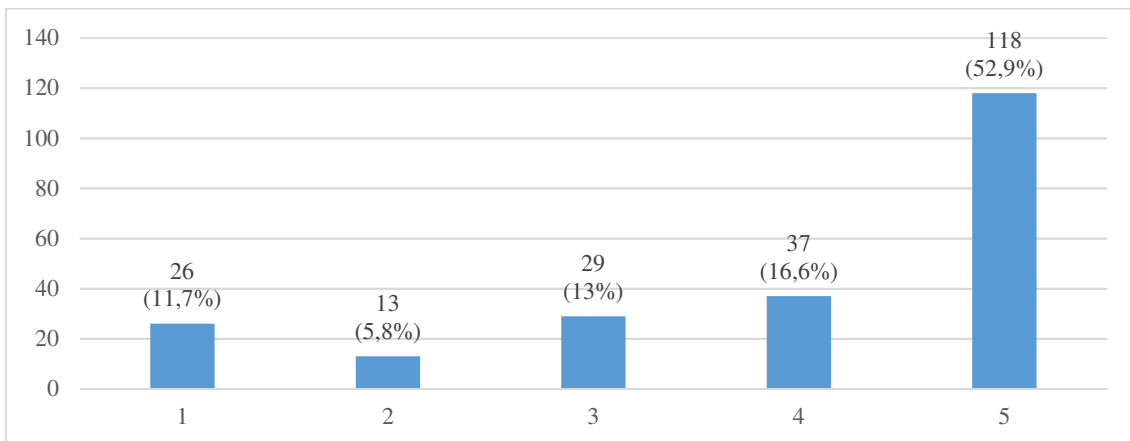
As it is represented in graphic 17, 96 (43%) participants firmly believe that DCK is a unique and special brand, answering with a 5 according to the previously stipulated scale. The second most answered response was 4, with 52 participants, followed by 3, with 33 responses, and finally 2 and 1 with, respectively, 24 and 18 responses.

Graphic 18. I always want and desire to purchase this brand.



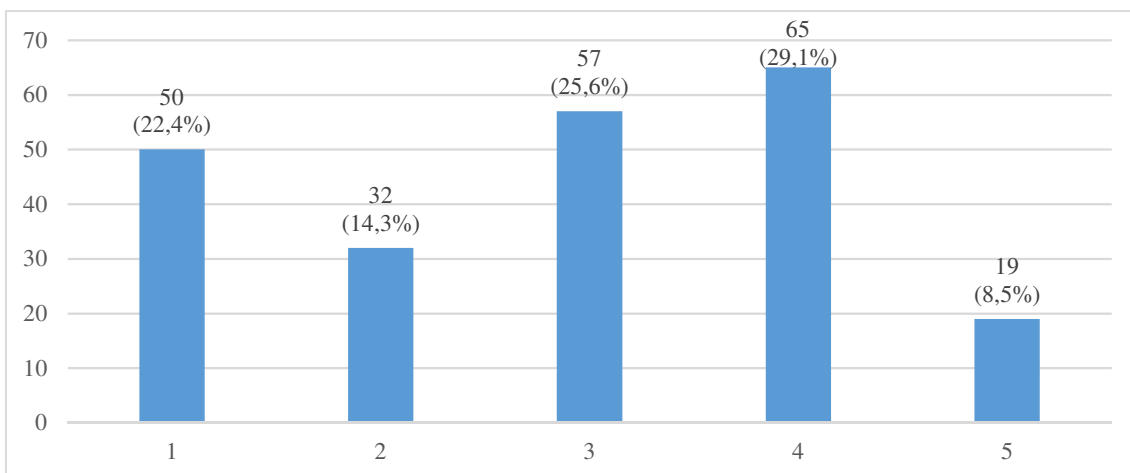
Regarding the consumers' desires, 75 participants acknowledged they totally agree that they seek want to and wish to purchase DCK's products, representing 33,6% of the overall answers, followed by 59 participants who answered with a 4, corresponding to 26,5% of the total answers. On the other hand, 35 participants claimed they totally disagreed with the statement and 23 answered with a 2. 31 participants remained neutral, answering with a 3.

Graphic 19. I feel good when purchasing and using products from this brand.



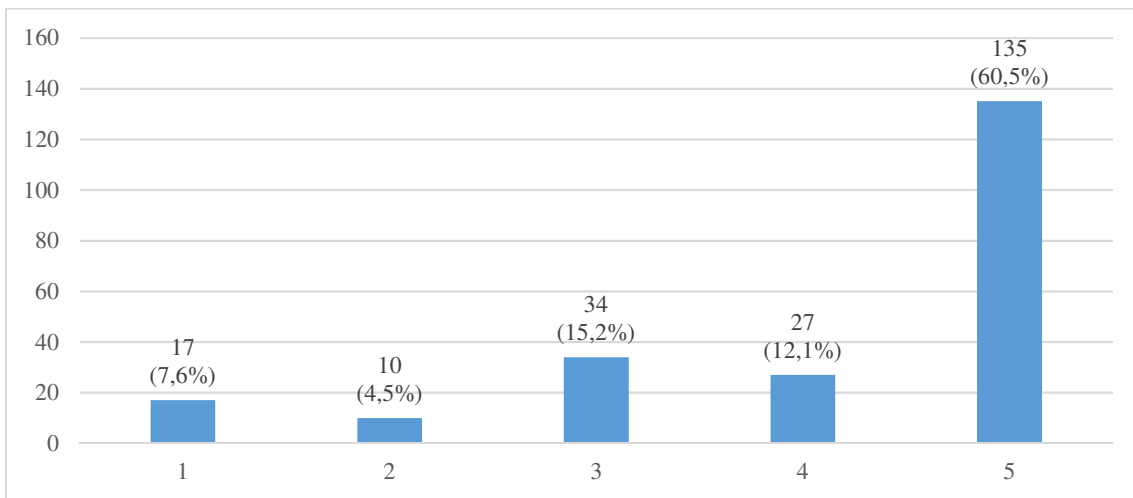
According to the graphic, regarding the statement “I feel good when purchasing and using this brand”, the majority of the participants claimed they are in total agreeance, answering with a 5, followed by 16,6% who answered with a 4. 29 participants answered with a 3, corresponding to 13% of the total answers. On the other edge of this scale, 11,7% totally disagreed with the statement and 5,8% answered with a 2.

Graphic 20. I feel emotionally connected with this brand.



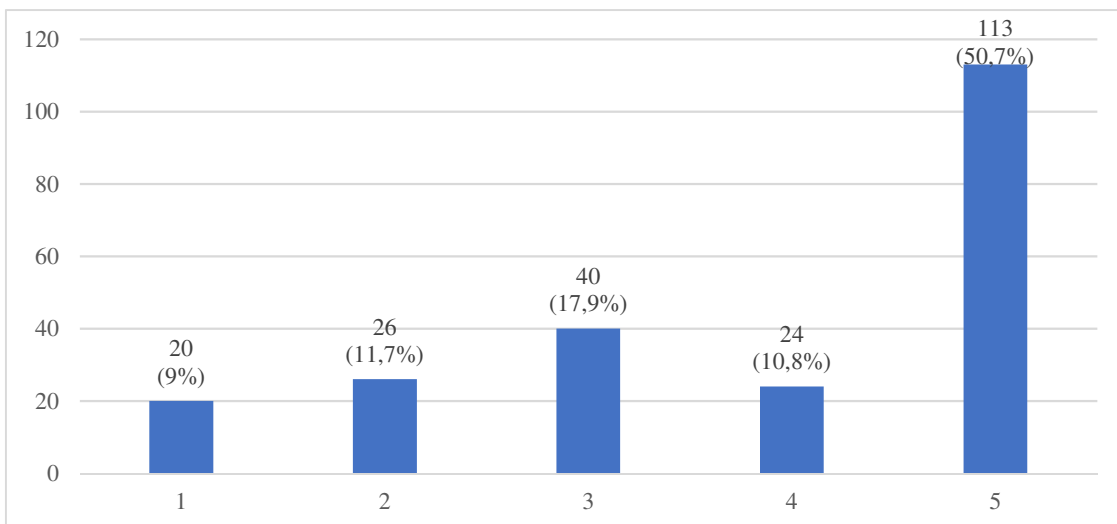
Even though only 8,5% of the participants totally agreed with this statement, answering with a 5, 29,1% answered with a 4. The next most attributed value was a 3, corresponding to 23,6% of the total answers. In line with this, 22,4% totally disagreed with the statement (1) and 14,3% of the participants answered with a 2.

Graphic 21. I was never disappointed with the brand.



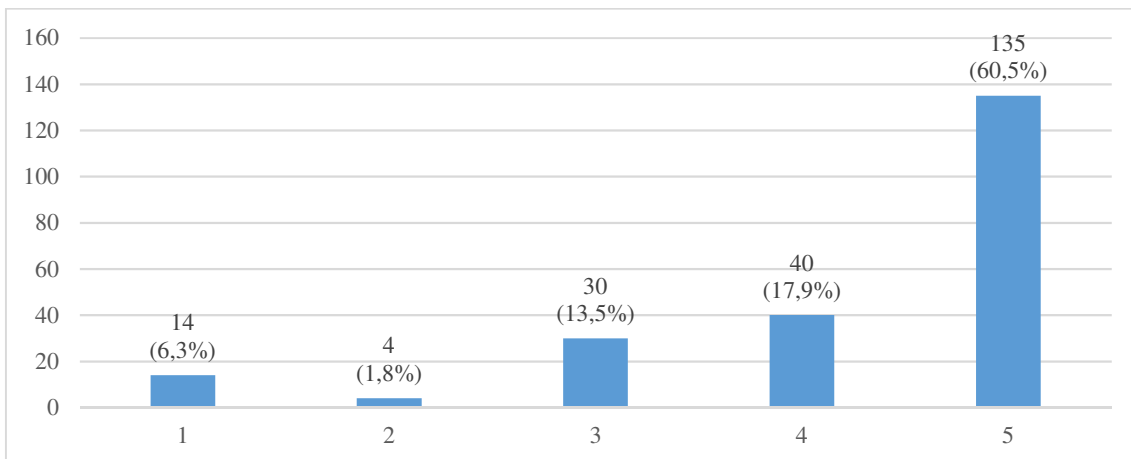
Regarding the statement “I was never disappointed with the brand”, 135 participants answered with a 5, suggesting that 60,5% of participants totally agree with it, and 27 participants answered with a 4. 34 respondents answered with a 3. On the other end of the scale, 17 participants answered with a 1, in total disagreement with the statement, and 10 answered with a 2.

Graphic 22. I often talk about the brand.



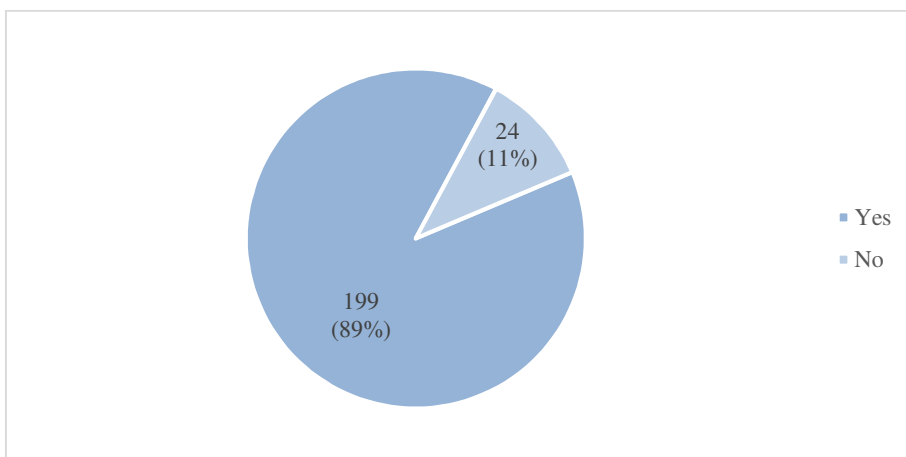
More than half of the population (50,7%) that responded to the survey admitted that they shared their experience with this brand, and less than 10% said they do not discuss the brand with others on a frequent basis. In between, 24 people answered with a 4 on a scale of 1 to 5, 40 participants with a 3. 20 participants (9%) do not agree at all with the statement answering with a 1, and 26 answered 2.

Graphic 23. I recommend the brand.



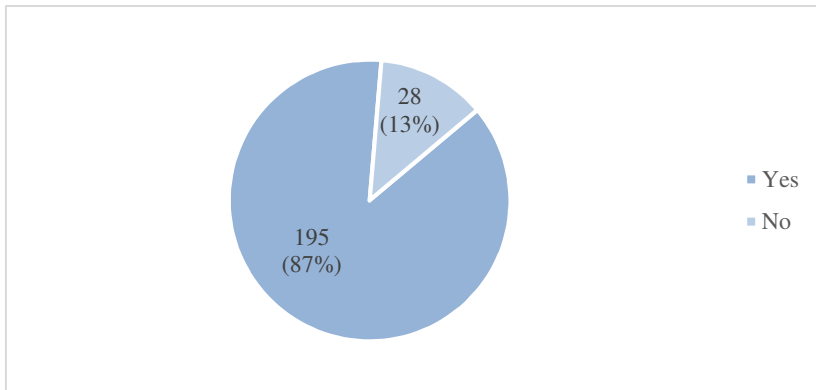
Regarding the statement above, more than 78% would recommend the brand, with an outstanding 60,5% that answered a 5 and 17,9% a 4, followed by 13,5% that responded with a 3 (13,5%), 14 with a 1 (6,3%) and finally 4 participants answered a 2 (1,8%).

Graphic 24. Are you aware that the brand is Portuguese and made in Portugal?



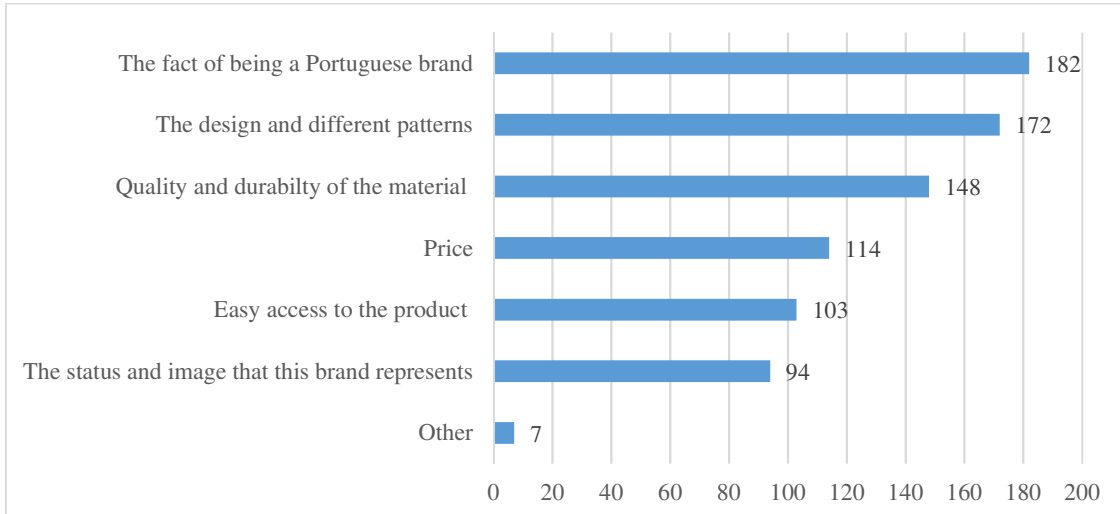
According to graphic 24, 11% of the participants were not aware that the brand DCK is Portuguese and made in Portugal, whereas 89% were.

Graphic 25. Does the fact of being a Portuguese brand have any impact on your purchase decision?



As it is possible to verify in graphic 25 regarding the statement above, 13% of the participants claimed that the fact that this is a Portuguese and made in Portugal brand did not have any impact on their purchase decisions, whereas 87% said otherwise, i.e. that it does influence them when purchasing this brand.

Graphic 26. What would you say are the attributes of the DCK that you value the most?



When asked about the most valued attributes, the most answered response was the fact that it is a Portuguese brand (182). The second most valued attribute recognized by the participants was the brand's design and patterns, with 172 responses, followed by the quality and durability of the material, with 148 responses. The fourth most important aspect of this brand, according to the participants, was the price, with 114 responses. The two least recognized attributes were the access to the product, with 103 answers, and finally the status and image the brand represents, with 94 responses.

5.3. Data interpretation

The present subchapter is dedicated to establishing a connection between what was mentioned throughout the theoretical part of this dissertation, the literature review chapters, and the responses to the online survey. This section seeks to cross the data gathered through the responses in order to validate, or not, the research question – “How does the factor Country Of Origin influence the perception of Brand Love among consumers?”. In order to do so, this subchapter will present two tables, one regarding the concept of brand love, and the second regarding the concept of Country Of Origin. Based on both tables, the following section of this chapter will go through each question, and cross the responses with the data description chapter above, in order to, in the end, determine whether or not DCK is in fact a loved brand among the consumers, on one hand, and on the other, whether or not the Country Of Origin is a determinant and relevant factor for the consumers when purchasing this brand.

The following table seeks to represent the relationship between the online survey questions and the literature review regarding brand love, in order to represent what each question seeks to assess, based on the literature chapters.

It is also worth mention that the table starts with question number 10 because the previous ones are regarding the characterization of the participant, therefore it is not relevant for this analysis.

Question Number	Survey Questions	Brand Love Components (Batra et al., 2012)
10	I consider myself loyal to this brand and have been buying this brand for some time	Long term Relationship
11	In case the brand is not available, I easily choose another brand	Anticipated Separation Distress
12	I purchase products from this brand whenever I can.	Attitude Strength 2: Certainty / confidence
13	If the prices of DCK products increased, I would continue to purchase it.	
14	I identify myself with people who use this brand.	Self brand integration Current self identification
15	This is a brand used by people like me.	
16	I consider this brand unique and special.	Positive Emotional Connection Emotional attachment
17	I always want and desire to purchase this brand.	Passion Driven behaviors Passionate desire to use
18	I feel good when purchasing and using products from this brand.	Positive Emotional Connection Intuitive fit
19	I feel emotionally connected with this brand.	Positive Emotional Connection Emotional attachment
20	I was never disappointed with the brand.	Attitude Strength 2: Certainty / confidence
21	I often talk about the brand.	Self brand integration Attitude Strength 1: Frequent Thoughts
22	I recommend the brand.	Attitude Strength 2: Certainty / confidence

Fig. 18 Link between Brand Love and survey questions

In line with what was previously mentioned throughout the literature review, according to different authors, the concept of Brand Love encompasses several elements and dimensions. The present dissertation had as foundation for the structure of the online survey the model presented by Batra et al. (2012).

One of the concepts that this dissertation sought to assess through the online survey, was the concept of brand loyalty and brand commitment²⁰. Following the table presented above and the order of the questions, one of these dimensions of brand loyalty and brand commitment is the long term relationship with the brand that the consumer establishes when loyal and committed with it. In line with this in question number 10 the

²⁰ Brand loyalty does in fact lead to improved profitability (Dawes et al., 2015) as it can ensure the brand's or organization's existence for a long period of time (Dehdashti et al., 2012). Furthermore, brand loyalty is closely associated with brand commitment. Consumers who are loyal to the brand and develop, thus, a certain commitment with it, flourish a strong connection with the brand (Walsh et al., 2010).

participant is asked to evaluate to what extent he/she agrees with the statement “I consider myself loyal to the brand and have been buying this brand for some time”. Based on the responses exposed in the previous subchapter, where the majority of the participants claimed they totally agreed with it, it is suitable to conclude that consumers of the brand do consider themselves loyal to it, fulfilling also the “long term relationship” aspect of a loved brand.

Several other aspects of brand loyalty and commitment are explored in these first questions of the survey. The following question, number 11, which refers to the statement “In case the brand is not available, I easily choose another brand”, seeks to address to what extent consumers demonstrate “separation distress”, an additional dimension of brand loyalty and brand commitment²¹. This aspect was not so easy nor clear to verify in the context of the brand DCK, as there were some discrepancies amongst the responses, hence it is not possible to reach an evident and solid conclusion regarding this aspect. In this case, brand loyalty and brand commitment are not significantly present, as the participants’ responses did not represent a strong confirmation of the variable here addressed: separation distress. Moreover, assuming the brand love relationship is considered deep and lasting and consumers considered the loved brand irreplaceable (Albert & Merunka, 2013), DCK does not seem to check this requirement for the “loved brand” category.

Brand loyalty and brand commitment imply a pattern of re-purchases and preferred brand constantly (Kumar, 2020). The following statements in questions 12 and 13 undertake the factors “certainty and confidence” towards the brand.

As for the responses to the statement “I purchase products from this brand whenever I can” the consumers of the brand have demonstrated a positive attitude towards it, confirming thus a feeling of loyalty and commitment. Almost 50% of the participants totally agreed with the statement, confirming a feeling of confidence and certainty

²¹ According to Albert & Meronka (2013), the foundation for brand commitment is the perception that, for the consumer, there is not any other brand that can compare to the one he/she is committed to. Consumers who are emotionally committed to the brand are not interested in alternative brands, and are willing to continually purchase the same brand (Erci et al., 2012), culminating in a stronger and more consistent level of loyalty and commitment towards the brand (Fullerton, 2003; Rather, 2017).

towards the brand. According to literature, this type of emotional confidence suggests strong feelings towards a brand over time, which leads to affective certainty that influences, thus, attitude strength as well as the relationship with the brand (Rizvi & Oney, 2018). Following this line of thought, emotions that consumers feel towards a brand can in fact influence their level of confidence towards it (Compte & Postlewaite, 2004), therefore, it is suitable to assume, in line with the responses to the statement presented above, that DCK's consumers do feel confident and certain about the brand, revealing there are emotions and feelings that led to this. This positive attitude towards the brand positively affects and influences the consumers' purchase intentions regarding this specific brand, denying thus other brands in the choice set (Laroche and Brisoux, 1989, in Laroche et al., 1996).

As for the responses to the statement in question 13, "If the prices of DCK products increased, I would continue to purchase it", participants were reluctant demonstrating, once again, some discrepancies when it comes to pay a higher price for the brand – as it will be shown further ahead on this dissertation, one of the most important aspects of this brand, that the consumers highly value and acknowledged, are the accessible prices of the products, standing out from the competition.

These factors go in line with what the literature considers key factors for a loved brand: the intention to repeatedly re-purchase the brand, alongside with willingness to invest resources and pay a higher price for the brand, and the refusal to choose other brands (Oliver, 1999). According to the literature review regarding this aspect, a committed and loyal consumer that values a brand should accept an increase in the price of the products, since the loss of this supposed loved brand would imply a form of distress and anxiety upon the consumer who would not want to seek other alternatives but would in fact seek to continue to benefit from the positive emotions brought by this loved brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013).

Statements in questions 14 and 15, respectively "I identify myself with people who use this brand" and "This is a brand used by people like me" are both undertaking and crossing the concepts of brand identity and self identification. The responses to both of these statements were unanimous, as they demonstrate that DCK's consumers do confirm this feeling of self identification towards the brand. Literature suggests that when consumers love a brand, they tend to perceive it as being aligned with their identity, occupying a central role in their lives (Bairrada et al., 2018). When consumers identify

with their loved brand, they tend to display a stronger resistance to negative news regarding that brand, as well as an increase of positive word of mouth and engagement (Batra et al., 2013). This is an important variable when assessing to what extent DCK is in fact considered a loved brand. Brands are evaluated not only according to functional criteria, but also according to their symbolic aspects (Das, 2015, p. 181) like self-identification with the brand, which is a useful asset when assessing how brand personality affects customer behavior (Prentice et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, another aspect perceived in a loved brand, that results in brand loyalty and commitment, has to do with the positive emotional connection the consumer feels and perceives towards the brand, developing thus an emotional attachment, which ultimately results in loyalty and commitment. This is explored a few questions ahead, more specifically, question 16, “I consider this brand special and unique”, question 18 “I feel good when purchasing and using products from this brand” and 19, “I feel emotionally connected with this brand”.

According to the responses to the first statement, the large majority of the consumers do see the brand as special and unique. On one hand, one of the most essential responsibilities for brand managers is to develop a sense of loyalty amongst consumers, as they are its biggest source of revenue (Dehdashti et al., 2012). On the other hand, brand managers would also benefit from establishing an appropriate and consistent brand identity so that consumers consider it special and unique (Dehdashti et al., 2012). In line with this, and considering the literature that supports that a loved brand benefits from being unique (Albert et al., 2008a), it is correct to conclude that, regarding the “uniqueness factor”, the brand DCK does in fact fulfill and checks the loved brand category.

As mentioned throughout the literature chapters, one of the dimensions of brand love is passion, i.e. passion-driven behaviors consumers feel regarding a certain brand. This is explored in question 17, where participants are asked to what extent they agree with the statement “I always want and desire to purchase this brand”. According to their responses, participants do demonstrate a passionate desire to purchase and use DCK, revealing passion-driven behaviors and attitudes towards the brand. Brand love is the result of a satisfied consumer’s passionate emotional attachment (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), which is consequently a strong indicator of brand loyalty and brand commitment (Bairrada, Coelho & Lizanets, 2019). DCK’s consumers’ responses do indicate a great

and obvious level of passion when it comes to their desire to purchase and use products from this brand, which suggests, in turn, that this is in fact a strong and captivating brand as it is perceived as an object of desire, passion and uniqueness, ultimately occupying a place in the consumer's minds and hearts (Bairrada, Coelho & Lizanets, 2019)

The statement in question 18, "I feel good when purchasing and using products from this brand" it is also present this emotional connection referred in the literature review. In this case, according to the responses, consumers have manifested in an obvious and undeniable way, their satisfaction and thus, emotional connection with the brand, as more than half of the total of the participants totally agreed with the statement, demonstrating a feeling of natural fit and harmony between themselves and DCK (Batra et al., 2012).

The responses to the statement expressed in question 19, "I feel emotionally connected with this brand" suggest once more certain disparities. Even though most participants answered with a 4 (as mentioned in the "data description" previous subchapter), there was not a significant margin between the number of participants who responded with a 4, 3 or 1. Therefore, it is not possible to withdraw clear and precise conclusions, except from the fact that this is not a brand that consumers fully, undoubtedly and definitely feel emotionally connected with.

Finally, responses to the statement in question 20, "I was never disappointed with the brand" show high levels of certainty and confidence from the consumers, as more than half of the participants totally agreed with it. This, together with the responses to the statements in questions 21 and 22, respectively, "I often talk about the brand" and "I recommend the brand", reveal a great level of resistance to negative information regarding the brand, as well as a positive and an effective word of mouth.

The last three questions of this survey were regarding the concept of Country Of Origin, in order to assess to what extent the fact that this is a Portuguese brand has any impact upon their purchase intentions. In line with this, to the statement "Are you aware that the brand is Portuguese and made in Portugal" most participants responded "yes", suggesting thus the brand successfully communicated this to their audiences. The following statement is a more direct and straightforward question that seeks to understand whether consumers feel that this factor influences their purchase decision or not, to which more than half of the participants acknowledged that it does have an impact upon their

choice. This goes in line with the next statement, in question 25, where participants are encouraged to select the aspects they value the most about DCK, since the most responded attribute was the fact that it is a Portuguese brand. Even though the brand does not invest much in communicating its country of origin, when considering these results, it is possible to conclude that the brand could indeed benefit even more if they included and prioritized this throughout their communications strategy.

5.3.1. Data interpretation aligned with research objectives

The present section of the dissertation will cross the data interpretation with the research objectives exposed in the methodology section.

Regarding the first objective exposed, which was to learn about the DCK's communication strategy, the interview has shown that the brand's strategy is very much focused on communicating its motto "enjoy life" promoting a lifestyle, rather than explaining or informing about the product itself²². It is not only about the quality or texture of the fabric but the lifestyle the brand represents. The consumer is not purchasing a top-quality product but stating how he chooses to live his life. The essence of their communication activities and campaigns is always aligned with the brand's identity, which ultimately appeals to the consumer's hearts, as they feel identified with it. This goes in line with the concept of strategic communication explored throughout the literature chapters, asserting that it must be purposefully articulated with the brand's mission, serving as guidelines for its actions in order to achieve the brand's goals. Following this, DCK's strategic communications encompass mostly social media and digital platforms, such as their website for instance. As it was addressed in the interview, the ultimate goal of DCK is to become the number one brand in the universe of male boardshorts. Therefore, its communications are orientated towards this and achieve this desired strategic position.

By cross-referring the topics of Brand Love and Country Of Origin explored in this dissertation with this first research objective, and considering the online survey and interview as the main sources of information, it is suitable to assume that DCK's strategic

²² "We always try, first and foremost, to communicate our DNA, our "enjoy life" message. We want to encourage people to really enjoy life, and if that's with a DCK swimsuit, the better". See appendix 2.

communications, which are essentially focused on social media and digital platforms, promote the brand's motto and overall identity. These instruments are used by the brand because it is the closest way to get to its main target. It not only reaches its main target but touches it in a unique way. Moreover, the brand does not merely communicate, but enables the consumers to feel identified with the brand which ends up attracting them and ultimately turning DCK into a loved brand. Within its communication strategy, there are also present activities that contribute to the creation of this bond with the consumer, such as the campaigns mentioned previously. These campaigns not only allow the brand to promote its values and identity, but they also enable the brand to enhance its visibility and exposure, reflecting ultimately upon the increase of sales.

The second objective that guided this case study was to understand how consumers perceive DCK in order to determine to what extent it could be considered a loved brand. Furthermore, in order to address the brand's self-position regarding whether or not it considers itself a loved brand, an interview took place. Through this interview, the conclusion drawn was that the brand does consider itself a loved brand mostly because people feel identified with what the brand stands for, and its overall identity. On the other hand, the consumers' perceptions on the brand were also taken into consideration in this study in order to assess whether or not DCK fit the loved brand category. This was brought about by the responses to the online survey regarding this topic.

Aligned with the second research objective of this dissertation, the conclusion is that overall, summing up the responses to the online survey, DCK does fit the loved brand category, even though it does not fulfill all of the requirements explored throughout the literature. Even though consumers feel somehow loyal and committed to the brand as they showcase a pattern of re-purchase behavior, reflecting thus a long-term relationship with the brand, they do not check the "anticipated separation distress" requirement present in loved brands, as it was notorious the high number of neutral and negative answers to some of the questions, for instance regarding the statement "In case the brand is not available, I easily choose another brand". Furthermore, the other aspect of Brand Love that is lacking in DCK, according to the consumers, is presented in the responses to the statement "If the prices of DCK products increased, I would continue to purchase it", as consumers were reluctant. Moreover, even though the brand often resorts to online campaigns to appeal to the consumers' emotional side, the responses to the online survey have demonstrated that these were not enough, as it is possible to verify in the responses to the

statement “I feel emotionally connected with this brand”. Despite these three major aspects, the brand does fit the loved brand category, as consumers do feel identified with the brand, consider it to be special and unique, do display a positive emotional connection as well as passion driven behaviors towards it, they feel confident about DCK and often talk and recommend the brand.

Finally, the third objective of this research was to understand the relevance of the factor Country Of Origin when considering this brand a loved brand. Another relevant conclusion drawn from this survey is that, even though the brand’s communication does not focus on its country of origin, consumers not only acknowledge that DCK is a Portuguese brand “made in Portugal”, but they also consider it an important and relevant factor when purchasing the brand’s products. Thus, when answering to the third objective of this dissertation, “understand whether or not the Country Of Origin is a relevant factor and if it influences the consumers’ choice”, the present case study has shown that consumers of DCK do value its Country Of Origin. In fact, the most valuable attribute consumers acknowledge in DCK is the fact that it is Portuguese. This aspect may have an emotional impact upon the consumers, increasing their loyalty and commitment towards the brand, and ultimately affecting their purchase behaviors regarding DCK.

Conclusion

Once exposed and analyzed the results, this section will now present some conclusive lines extracted from the results. Throughout the course of this dissertation, the aim was to study the phenomenon of strategic communication upon the creation of love towards a brand and assess whether or not the Country Of Origin was a relevant aspect in this, through a case study on the Portuguese boardshorts brand DCK. In order to do this, a theoretical framework was developed, starting from broader concepts, such as overall communications within organizations encompassing strategic communication, aligned with corporate identity, mission, values and vision, as well as image as reputation, up to more specific and detailed concepts of Brand Love and Country Of Origin. From this theoretical context, it was possible to establish a guideline for the investigation.

The present dissertation carried out a case study on the Portuguese boardshorts brand DCK in order to answer the research question “How does the factor Country Of Origin influence the perception of Brand Love among consumers?”. In line with this, the case study did identify DCK as a loved brand according to the consumers, and proved that their perception on the fact that it is a Portuguese brand is positive and valued. The literature review was helpful to understand the strength of Brand Love upon the creation and development of an emotional connection that is stronger than a regular relationship with a “non loved brand”. Furthermore, the literature review has also shown the impact that the Country Of Origin may have upon the creation and establishment of brand loyalty, influencing ultimately the consumers’ preferences. Altogether, combining these two concepts, the investigation carried out in this dissertation concluded that consumers do consider DCK a loved brand, as explained in the previous chapter, and one of the reasons for this could be due to the fact that it is a Portuguese and “made in Portugal” brand.

In line with the literature review, creating and developing this brand love was proven to be an important goal for marketing and communication professionals to seek, as it strengthens and builds up the consumers’ loyalty, engagement and overall relationship. Therefore, this present dissertation sought to provide the guidelines for brands to, not achieve this loved brand category, but also to use the country of origin as a possible and potential beneficial asset throughout the communication strategy. First and foremost, these brands should take into consideration the requirements to achieve the

loved brand category that were previously explored in this dissertation. Later, according to that, understand what the brand can use as an asset, and how. Then, if the brand concludes that the country of origin is in fact a valuable aspect, then it should be present throughout its communication strategy, once studied the market context and assessed the consumer behavior. This was clearly demonstrated in the case study carried out in this dissertation, as the consumers of DCK did value the brand, mostly, due to the fact that it is Portuguese and “made in Portugal”. This further suggests that DCK’s Country Of Origin is in fact a relevant and important factor that ultimately contributes to the performance and success of the brand. This is an important fact for marketing and communication professionals to have in mind when defining communication strategies, as they ought to understand how powerful brands who are loved can be, and in this case, use the country of origin as a tool to achieve this.

This dissertation showed some limitations that could eventually open several venues for future research. Throughout the course of this study, one of the main limitations is related to the accuracy of the responses of the survey, as they may not represent the reality as a whole. It is acknowledged that the present study focuses exclusively on a Portuguese brand within the Portuguese market context, limiting the veracity of a possible generalization. In line with the survey, it is also worth mentioning that the number of responses may not have been demonstrative enough, as it should have gathered a higher number of responses. Regarding the interview, it was noted some difficulty in getting in touch with the brand, due to their availability. Regarding the product category, male boardshorts, this study is very specific, meaning that in other product categories this may vary or have different scales of measurement.

In order to answer to these limitations in the future, further research could take a broader approach and study a more international brand in an international context, as these insights may not be directly applicable to other cultural contexts. This could include people from other countries (depending on the brand to be studied). It would also be more accurate to gather a higher number of responses, in order to outline a more authentic and definite conclusion. Furthermore, for future researches, it would be interesting to develop a case study on another brand within the same context as DCK, or even a competitor of DCK, that could also fit the loved brand category, and compare the two of them. Through this comparison it would be possible to either establish what is lacking in one and is

complemented with the other, or understand if there are mutual and similar factors present in both of them.

When studying the role of the Country Of Origin in the communication strategy of a brand, it would have been more interesting to conduct a case study on a brand that in fact acknowledges this as a useful and relevant asset. This was not verified in the case of DCK, as the brand itself does not consider it a priority throughout its strategy. However, it is as interesting and eye-opening the fact that, despite this absence of promoting and communicating its Country Of Origin, DCK's consumers do have that in mind. Another aspect of the brand's overall strategy worth mentioning relies on the lack of communication of the product itself – rather than merely communicating and promoting the brand's mindset. That is, the brand could focus on communicating to the audiences why they should buy DCK. The brand could do this by communicating more consistently the quality and material of the boardshorts, as they are made from recycled materials and are more resistant. The consumer would then perceive the purchase of the product as a positive investment. Furthermore, in order to increase this emotional attachment and connection between the brand and the consumer, DCK could invest in developing more campaigns, more consistently and regularly, remembering the consumer the connection between these campaigns and the brand's philosophy.

It is important to mention that these are interesting and relevant topics for marketing and communication professionals to take into consideration when seeking to make a brand more competitive, specially due to the constant increase and arising of new brands in the market.

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Webography

<https://dckboardshorts.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/dckboardshorts/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr16jEoZiQojp_4G6sKQ7Ng

Appendix 1. Interview script and guidelines

Sobre a marca

1. A marca é considerada uma marca de referência para muitos consumidores, o que a torna tão valiosa ou única? O que dá valor à marca?

Sobre a comunicação da marca

(comunicação estratégica da marca)

2. A quem se destina a comunicação da marca? Qual o público alvo principal?

3. Qual o papel da comunicação de forma a conferir valor ao produto ?

4. Numa perspetiva geral, em que consiste a estratégia de comunicação da marca?

4.1. Em que meios estão presentes?

4.2. Na comunicação da marca, em que pontos se focam? Que mensagens pretendem comunicar?

4.3. De que maneira pretendem transmitir ou comunicar a identidade da marca, assim como os seus valores, missão e visão?

3. Até que ponto considera que esta comunicação é importante para a marca?

(Imagem e reputação)

5. A marca mede e estuda a sua reputação entre os stakeholders?

6. Como é vista a marca pelos consumidores?

7. De que maneira considera que as atividades de comunicação da marca têm impacto na sua reputação e imagem?

(brand love)

8. Está familiarizado com o conceito de brand love?

9. Considera que os consumidores da marca a consideram uma Loved Brand? Porquê?

10. Se sim, considera que as estratégias de comunicação da marca influenciam o desenvolvimento deste amor à marca por parte dos consumidores?

(Country of Origin)

11. Conhece o conceito de Country Of Origin?

12. Considera que este conceito está presente na estratégia de comunicação da marca? Se sim, de que maneira? Ou seja, de que maneira é comunicado o facto de ser uma marca 100% portuguesa, made in Portugal?

13. Usam este fator como um “asset” para a marca? Consideram que dá valor à marca?

14. Considera que o facto de ser uma marca 100% portuguesa tem impacto na escolha do consumidor?

Appendix 2. Interview transcription

Andreia: Olá, o meu nome é Andreia, estou a fazer o Mestrado em comunicação na Universidade Católica. Estou agora a fazer a tese, onde estou a estudar o impacto do país de origem. Estou a fazer um estudo de caso sobre a marca DCK para perceber se os consumidores consideram que o facto de ser uma marca portuguesa, se tem impacto na escolha de compra.

Fernando: Obrigado por te teres lembrado da DCK.

Andreia: Lembrei-me logo por acaso, era mesmo uma marca que queria fazer, uma marca que acho interessante e que já conhecia.

Andreia: Sobre a marca. A marca é considerada uma marca de referência para muitos consumidores. Queria então perguntar-te o que achas que torna a marca tão valiosa, tão especial e tão diferente.

Fernando: Isto são opiniões que depois podem ser diferentes do resto das pessoas. Mas a nossa opinião é que nós somos muito autênticos em tudo. Os sócios da marca somos quatro pessoas, é o meu irmão, eu e dois primos nossos. Somos todos na casa dos trinta anos e nós somos o nosso próprio publico alvo e por isso sabemos o que é que nós, enquanto compradores deste tipo de produto, gostaríamos de ver e coisas com as que nos identificamos e então tentamos passar essa comunicação lá para fora. Ou seja, nós achamos que aquilo que nós gostamos também é o que as outras pessoas gostam e como nós temos vindo a tentar vender aquilo que nós somos e aquilo que nós gostamos, a consequência tem sido que as pessoas também venham a gostar. Não te sei dizer ao certo porque é que as pessoas gostam, mas nós temos vindo a apostar muito numa transmissão de valores e positividade, de boa onda, de *lifestyle*, felicidade sobretudo, e acho que as pessoas se identificam muito com isso. As pessoas gostam de ver coisas boas, as pessoas gostam de ver os outros felizes, as pessoas a quem nós queremos chegar gostam de ver os outros felizes, gostam de ver diversão, gostam de ver felicidade à sua volta, portanto nós, DCK, tentamos representar tudo isso. Tentamos ser uma marca que transmite essa positividade, transmite felicidade, o nosso slogan, a nossa mensagem principal em todas as comunicações é “*enjoy life*”, e queremos que as pessoas aproveitem a vida, que de facto desfrutem de cada dia, e que vivam a vida em vez de estarem paradas. Nós vendemos um produto, que é o fato de banho, que está associado a praia, e praia está associada a boas memórias, a diversão com os amigos, diversão com as pessoas que mais gostamos. Acho que por todas as razões, temos conseguido cair um bocadinho no encanto das pessoas, as pessoas têm gostado de nós porque de facto se identificam connosco e com esta filosofia que nós tentamos transmitir.

Andreia: Disseste ainda que o público-alvo da marca era pessoas como vocês, ou seja, daí terem uma maior noção. Qual é o vosso público alvo mais específico ao qual pretendem mesmo chegar? Isto de um ponto de vista de comunicação estratégica.

Fernando: Quando eu digo que nós somos o nosso próprio público alvo, é um bocadinho relativo porque nós somos uma faixa etária mais reduzida e nós queremos abranger muito mais do que isto. Portanto, tecnicamente, o nosso público alvo é entre os 15 e os 40 anos. Mas na prática, a quem nós tentamos comunicar mais diretamente são as pessoas entre os 25 e 35 anos, porque são pessoas já mais autónomas, mais independentes que sabem o que gostam, sabem o que querem, e já têm a sua própria identidade. E nós achamos que, se nós conseguirmos atingir essas pessoas, por consequência, o público mais novo também acaba por se juntar. Portanto, o nosso público alvo a quem nós tentamos comunicar é entre os 20 e os 35/40 anos. No entanto, nós não queremos ser uma marca de nichos, não queremos ser uma marca exclusiva para ninguém. Queremos ser uma marca totalmente inclusiva, e os nossos fatos de banho vão desde o 1 ano, literalmente, até aos tamanhos bastante grandes, XXXL. Porque nós queremos ser o universo dos fatos de banho. Esta expressão é importante, na tua apresentação podes por esta frase importante. A DCK quer ser o universo dos fatos de banho. Tal como a Hussel, por exemplo, é o universo das gomas. E há muitas marcas assim como uma identidade muito própria. Nós queremos ser o número 1 dos fatos de banho, e quando uma pessoa chega à nossa loja, ou ao nosso site, seja ela qual for, tenha um fato de banho que se identifique para si. Quer seja o “pintarolas” surfista de 20 anos, que encontre o fato de banho certo, com características muito mais típicas de surf. Ou como, se calhar, aquele rapaz mais conservador, que não tem tanto corpo e que gosta de um fato de banho com cintura elástica, com rede interior, nós também temos esses fatos de banho. E nós queremos que, tanto o surfista sinta que a DCK é uma marca para ele, como o nerd dos computadores sinta que é uma marca para ele. Quer o popular da escola, que sinta que é um fato de banho para ele, mas também se calhar, o que não é tão popular, o mais envergonhado também sinta. A DCK é uma marca para todos, não é só uma marca para alguns. Nós temos fatos de banho, desde uns mais compridos a uns mais curtos, com padrões mais discretos, com padrões mais radicais, estilos mais conservadores, estilos mais arrojados, nós queremos abranger todo o tipo de público. Queremos que toda a gente sinta que a DCK é uma marca para ele. Todo o tipo de homem que entre na nossa loja, saia de lá com um fato de banho. Mas a quem nós acabamos por comunicar mais, muito porque achamos que é o público mais *opinion leader*, é entre os 25 e os 40.

Andreia: Agora dentro do registo da comunicação da marca, e marketing da marca, ia perguntar, em traços gerais, qual é que é o papel da comunicação em termos de dar valor à marca ou promover a marca em si.

Fernando: A DCK apareceu numa altura em que havia poucas marcas com este conceito mais jovem empreendedor, e queríamos romper o estereótipo de ripcurl, Billabong... as marcas mais clássicas, mais típicas de fatos de banho de jovens. Nós aparecemos nessa fase de início de empreendedorismo de algumas marcas e o que era típico fazer até essa altura era televisão, revistas, se calhar patrocínios de algumas pessoas e coisas desse estilo. Nós tivemos quase que, não inventamos nada, mas entrar noutra universo que não nos era nada familiar, que nunca tínhamos

conhecido, nem aprendemos na escola sobre ele, que era o universo da comunicação digital. A DCK foi fundada em 2009, nessa altura não havia nada de marcas de internet. Fomos uma das primeiras aqui em Portugal. Entre essas marcas todas de internet dependem 100% da comunicação. Portanto a comunicação, principalmente a comunicação digital, foi tão importante ou mais que o próprio do produto. Ou seja, se não tivesse havido essa comunicação, se não tivéssemos entrado por esse caminho, nós não tínhamos conseguido nascer, muito mais crescer.

Andreia: E quais são os pontos principais da estratégia de comunicação da marca?

Fernando: Nós tentamos sempre, em primeiro lugar, comunicar o nosso ADN, a nossa mensagem “*enjoy life*”. Queremos incentivar a que as pessoas de facto aproveitem a vida, e se isso for feito com um fato de banho da DCK, melhor. Mas é um pormenor. O nosso objetivo é incentivar, a que tu Andreia, tu não que não és o público alvo, mas se calhar tens primos, amigos, irmão... vão aproveitar a vida, vão para a praia. O que é que precisas para ir para a praia? Um fato de banho. Por acaso a DCK está aqui ao teu dispor. Mas nós tentamos sempre comunicar em primeiro lugar “*enjoy life*”, sê feliz, a vida é curta, vamos aproveitá-la. Depois tentamos comunicar os valores mais fortes da marca, que são: a qualidade, a variedade e o preço justo. Neste momento temos vindo a investir muito também no ponto da sustentabilidade, que não é pelo clichê, que não é porque todas as marcas o estão a fazer, é mesmo porque estamos a lutar nesse sentido. Temos vindo a desenvolver e investido muito no desenvolvimento de fatos de banho sustentáveis, mais de 60% da nossa coleção é material reciclado, uma grande parte da produção, cerca de 20%, neste momento é feita com uma patente, um aditivo patenteado que se chama Cyclo tecnologia, que torna os fatos de banho biodegradáveis. O que é que isto quer dizer? Quando nós usamos roupa, está sempre a largar micropartículas para a atmosfera, para o chão, para o mar, o que seja. E essas micropartículas estão se todas a acumular e isto em um ano não tem influência nenhuma, mas em 50, 100, 200 anos vai ter uma influência muito grande no nosso planeta. Para além disso, no fim de vida dos nossos fatos de banho, estes patenteados, eles auto decompõem-se, e entre 3 a 5 anos... Nas condições certas, ou seja, debaixo de terra, ou na água, se for parar ao oceano, ele vai se auto decompor, portanto é menos um problema. Estamos a contribuir positivamente para a preservação do planeta. Portanto nós comunicamos, em primeiro lugar, o nosso ADN, em segundo lugar o nosso produto muito especificamente. E depois vamos tendo campanhas muito esporádicas sobre vários temas diferentes, mas sempre com base naquilo em que nós acreditamos. No ano passado tivemos uma campanha muito grande para ajudar as mulheres que sofrem de cancro da mama em que temos um fato de banho com umas maminhas desenhadas e 30% das vendas desse fato de banho foram para ajudar mulheres com cancro da mama. Fizemos uma grande campanha de aquisição e *awareness* também sobre essa campanha. Nós nem sequer vendemos a senhoras com cancro da mama, foi mesmo para ajudar uma coisa que nós acreditamos de facto. Nós tentamos ser bons, não só para o planeta, com os nossos materiais sustentáveis, mas ser bons para a sociedade no geral. Nós queremos em primeiro lugar que tu te divirtas, que sejas

feliz. Depois queremos... temos aqui o nosso produto à venda, podes usá-lo se quiseres. Depois, para além disso, queremos também contribuir para o bem da sociedade.

Andreia: Portanto, acho que já respondeste à minha pergunta seguinte que é “quais as mensagens que pretendem transmitir com a marca”, mas já percebi. Portanto, acho que consideras que a comunicação é essencial para a marca, como também já foi dito.

Fernando: Exato, é essencial. Nós tentamos focar muito no ponto de não comunicar diretamente o produto. Não dizer “olha, Andreia, tens aqui um fato de banho verde, compra”. Não. É tentar transmitir um *mindset* por trás disso. Às vezes fazemos isso melhores que outras. Nós agora, por exemplo, isto é um pormenor. Nós agora lançamos uns casacos, não sei se já reparaste, e nesta campanha dos casacos... isto foi um bocadinho uma coisa feita sem grande preparação. Infelizmente nós não tivemos muito tempo para preparar esta campanha, e não estamos a conseguir fazer isto tão bem, na ótica de comunicar uma ideia em vez de um produto. Mas nós, tendencialmente, tentamos transmitir a ideia da DCK e que isto, por consequência, faça com que as pessoas comprem os fatos de banho. E não dizer “toma produto a, compra”.

Andreia: Certo. Agora, desde uma ótica mais relacionada com a imagem e reputação da marca, de que maneira é que a marca mede e estuda a sua reputação entre os *stakeholders* ou entre os consumidores, e como é que achas que a marca, nesta ótica, como é que a marca é vista pelos consumidores?

Fernando: Eu acho que num modo geral é vista como uma loved brand, sem dúvida. Porque é fácil. Toda a gente gosta de ver praia, de sonhar, ver uma pessoa a dar um mergulho, claro que sabe sempre bem. Portanto é um produto fácil de comunicar e acho que as pessoas gostam disto que nós tentamos fazer, de tentar comunicar positividade, felicidade. Acho que as pessoas acabam por se identificar connosco. Portanto, quer os nossos clientes, quer os que não são clientes, de um modo geral, se identificam com a DCK. Claro que temos muita gente que, por uma razão ou por outra, não se identificam, ou pelo menos não se identificam ao ponto de comprar o produto, nomeadamente pessoas que, por a DCK ter vindo a crescer tanto, fazem questão de não usar a DCK, porque dizem que não querem usar a marca que o resto das pessoas usa, ou outras pessoas que, por a DCK ser um produto mais barato que a maioria das marcas, acham que é pior ou que eles próprios só se sentem bem a usar coisas mais caras. Há marcas que vendem fatos de banho a 200€ e preferem usar essas marcas, apesar de serem feitas exatamente na mesma fábrica, e a qualidade ser exatamente a mesma. Eu acho que de um modo geral nunca ouvi dizer que alguém não gosta da DCK, acho que a opinião geral é bastante positiva, que é uma marca fácil de se gostar, que é uma marca associada ao bem-estar, positividade. Não sei exatamente se era isto que querias que explicasse, mas se não for diz-me que eu explico melhor.

Andreia: Sim, na ótica dos consumidores sim, era isso mesmo que eu queria perceber. Agora mais da parte da marca, de que maneira é que medem, ou gerem a reputação, se é algo tido em conta em termos estratégicos.

Fernando: Nós somos 4 pessoas na marca, somos 4 sócios, e temos mais três pessoas a trabalhar connosco aqui no escritório. Portanto somos 7 pessoas. Cada uma tem a sua função muito bem definida. E o nosso departamento de marketing neste momento é uma pessoa, sou eu. E é muito difícil para nós aprofundarmos tanto os temas quanto gostaríamos. Nós, apesar de já termos vindo a crescer muito, há certas coisas onde não conseguimos chegar. E esta parte da análise de em que patamar é que estamos, quanto reconhecimento, quão conceituados somos, nós não temos forma de medir isso. Podíamos fazer um estudo de mercado e uma análise numa consultora para medir isso, mas neste momento isso ainda não está nas nossas prioridades. O que eu te disse na pergunta anterior, é aquilo que nós sentimos e o que nós achamos, mas é tudo muito por feeling, nós não temos dados concretos que nos indiquem isso. Temos sim o feedback dos nossos clientes. Temos muitos clientes que voltam a comprar, não só em loja, como online. A nossa taxa de *returning customer* é de mais de 15%, o que é ótimo de um ano para o outro, pessoas que voltam a comprar. E em loja temos muitas mães que compram todos os anos para os seus filhos, temos os próprios dos filhos que eram as mães que compravam e agora já são eles. Portanto a fidelidade comprova nos que temos feito um bom trabalho não só no produto, como também na própria da comunicação e que as pessoas se identifiquem com a marca.

Andreia: Agora passando mais para uma temática do Brand Love, um conceito que já falaste e portanto conheces, e estás familiarizado com o conceito, certo?

Fernando: Eu costumo usar love brand, em vez de brand love.

Andreia. Sim, já vi das duas maneiras também. E também disseste que consideras que a DCK é uma loved brand, certo?

Fernando: Eu acho que sim. Nós achamos mesmo que sim. Acho que algumas marcas em Portugal têm a facilidade de ter o produto fácil de se gostar... e estava a dizer, quem é que não gosta de ver um produto associado à praia, associado ao calor, associado ao mar... é fácil para nós. Mas nós temos tentado não ir à boleia dessa facilidade, mas sim merecê-la. E achamos que nuns momentos melhor, noutros momentos, pior, temos vindo a corresponder às expectativas dos nossos seguidores, das pessoas que nos observam e que definem se somos ou não somos uma loved brand. Mas considero, sim, que a DCK é uma loved brand, e acho que só podemos melhorar ainda mais isso e com ações do género desta que te falei do cancro da mama, e outras que temos vindo a fazer. No Natal, por exemplo, fizemos uma campanha contra o uso daqueles plásticos de single use. Fizemos uma campanha de fatos de banho reciclados só para alertar as pessoas que se não fizermos nada sobre o uso de plásticos, que em breve vamos estar a festejar o Natal de fatos de banho na praia, e fizemos uma campanha que era uma árvore de Natal na praia... Portanto ações como esta têm nos posicionados também numa forma que acompanha esta tal facilidade que nós temos em ser uma loved brand. Ao mesmo tempo temos também bastantes *influencers* que nos ajudam a comunicar a marca, por sorte amigos, primos, família... temos facilidade em chegar a bastantes pessoas com influência que nos ajudam ainda mais a dar este reconhecimento à marca.

Andreia: Falaste agora em *influencers*, isso faz parte da vossa comunicação? Porque a próxima pergunta era se achavas que a comunicação tinha algum impacto nos consumidores para desenvolver este sentimento de uma loved brand. Achas que a comunicação tem influenciado isso?

Fernando: Acho que sim. O produto por si só não pode, não chega, nem pensar. Tens de ir, tens de acompanhar essa facilidade, por sermos um produto que é fácil de gostar, mas nós temos de comunicar isso também. Nós podíamos comunicar só um armazém a fazer fatos de banho e aí já deixava de ser uma loved brand, porque já não interessa a ninguém, ninguém se identifica, não era uma coisa fácil de gostar. E a nossa comunicação tem muito a ver com este *adn* e *lifestyle*, e acho que pronto, a comunicação é absolutamente fundamental. E na minha opinião, a comunicação é que faz uma loved brand. A coca cola, por exemplo, podia ser uma marca detestável e não é porque tem uma comunicação excelente e passa a ser uma loved brand.

Andreia: A minha tese está se a focar em duas partes: uma parte dos consumidores, para ver como é que os consumidores vêem a marca, e o que acham da marca, confirmar se de facto é uma loved brand. E agora perceber a parte da estratégia de comunicação, ou seja, o que é que está por trás desta visão que os consumidores têm da marca, e como é que a marca faz para ser uma loved brand. E outro dos fatores que estou a estudar como um possível antecedente ao brand love, é o Country Of Origin. Ou seja, se o facto de ser portuguesa faz com que os consumidores gostem mais da marca. Portanto este vai ser outro...

Fernando: Olha, então é assim. Nós nunca pensamos muito sobre isso. Nunca pensamos “somos uma marca portuguesa, vamos vender mais por isso”. Não. Acho que é uma questão de ocasião. Estamos em Portugal, somos portugueses, conhecemos muita gente em Portugal, portanto a consequência é que obrigatoriamente vendemos mais em Portugal. O que tem acontecido, sim, desde o início, mas mais há quatro ou cinco anos até agora, é que a comunicação e as pessoas que falam de nós é que insistem nesse ponto. Portanto, nós nunca fizemos questão de vender isso, ou de isso ser um dos nossos ganchos de comunicação, mas quando as revistas nos entrevistam ou quando os clientes falam de nós, mais de metade das vezes, eles dizem “isto é uma marca portuguesa”. Portanto nós é que nos apercebemos, em resposta às reações do mercado, que isso é importante. Se me perguntasses a mim no início disto tudo se o Country Of Origin era importante eu diria que não, acho que não. Mas às vezes enganamo-nos, e acho que nos enganámos nesse aspeto. E acho que muita gente compra por ser uma marca portuguesa, não só portugueses como estrangeiros. Nós temos muita gente na loja que nos pergunta “esta marca é o que? Esta marca é portuguesa?” – nós estamos no Chiado que é uma zona altamente turística – “é”, “ah então pronto vou comprar presentes para os meus filhos ou para os meus sobrinhos ou para quem seja”. E acho que o facto de a marca ser portuguesa tem algum impacto. Não tem um impacto decisivo, não acho que seja um impacto que mude radicalmente os resultados no final do ano – porque no final do ano o que interessa é vender- mas muda em certa parte. E para, principalmente no ponto em

que tocaste, para seres uma loved brand ou para te tornares uma marca que as pessoas se identifiquem, eu acho que tem imenso contributo. Muito mais do que o que eu acreditava.

Andreia: Mas disseste que, ao princípio não era o vosso foco, destacar que era uma marca portuguesa. Mas agora ao verem que as pessoas, as revistas, a imprensa, se foca muito nesse ponto, vocês incluem isso na vossa comunicação? Ou seja, consideram isso agora um *asset*, uma mais valia, para ser promovido?

Fernando: Acho que nem sempre, porque nós temos muita coisa para comunicar. Lá está, a nossa prioridade é comunicar o adn da marca e depois o produto, as características do produto, que é a exclusividade, que quando o produto esgota não há repetido, que não há mais do que 150 fatos de banho de padrões iguais na mesma praia, para evitar que haja muitos fatos de banho iguais na praia, e comunicar os tais temas da sustentabilidade. Portanto, o facto de ser uma marca portuguesa é um ponto que vem na lista a seguir a estes. E muitas vezes sim, comunicamos, porque o mercado assim o pediu, mas não passou à frente de outras prioridades. Quer dizer, passou à frente de muitas, mas não passou à frente das principais. No entanto, algumas coisas foram feitas: passamos a comunicar muito mais em português, do que fazíamos antes, passamos a, nos nossos anúncios, não na comunicação geral, mas na parte mais da publicidade, tocamos muito mais nesse ponto porque a comunicação nas nossas redes é para pessoas que já nos seguem, pessoas que já sabem que é uma marca portuguesa, e a comunicação para pessoas que não nos seguem é que toca muito mais nesse ponto de “esta marca é portuguesa, tu não conheces esta marca, mas esta marca é portuguesa, por isso anda conhecer-nos”. Mas para as pessoas que já nos seguem, tentamos muito mais comunicar o tema *lifestyle*.

Andreia: Certo. Eu estive a fazer toda a tese sobre a DCK, estive a investigar tudo a fundo, vi que por exemplo, no Instagram, muitos dos vossos *posts* agora ultimamente têm sido em Portugal. Isso tem alguma coisa a ver com a vossa estratégia de comunicação para promover isto?

Fernando: Estás a falar de Portugal, as fotografias? O conteúdo feito em Portugal?

Andreia: A localização.

Fernando: Achava que estavas a falar do texto. Não, foi circunstâncias. Foi o COVID. Nós temos sempre uma viagem para fora de Portugal para desenvolver as nossas campanhas. Aconteceu COVID numa altura em que nós tínhamos de criar o nosso conteúdo e pensamos “bem, nós temos um país lindo, vamos é aproveitá-lo”. Mas a razão de nós não criarmos tanto conteúdo em Portugal, não é por nós não querermos. É porque há tantas marcas em Portugal a aparecer todos os anos, e pensamos, “tudo o que formos fazer já foi feito” ou “tudo o que nós formos fazer, daqui a 6 meses, alguém está a fazer igual”. Nós adoramos ser pioneiros e adoramos ser diferentes de toda a gente. Portanto essa é a razão de nós não fazermos mais conteúdo em Portugal, porque tendo em conta a beleza do nosso país, nós tínhamos todas as razões e mais alguma para fazer todo o nosso conteúdo em Portugal. Mas nós sabemos que, ou já foi feito ou alguém nos vai imitar

muito em breve, nós tentamos "fugir" um bocadinho para dar uma exclusividade à coisa. E é essa a razão. E eu estou a ser o mais sincero possível.

Andreia. E agora pegando um bocado no que disseste antes, sobre as pessoas que não conhecem a marca, e aí sim, já fazem questão de dizer ou mencionar que é portuguesa. Achas que isso atrai ou retém mais os consumidores ou os novos consumidores? Se tem alguma influência.

Fernando: Acho que pode dar alguma base de confiança. As pessoas levam com uma carga tão grande de conteúdo nas redes sociais, principalmente, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, até no google quando vão a navegar, têm tanto conteúdo que nós temos de as agarrar em dois ou três segundos. E nós achamos que no meio de todo esse conteúdo, podemos se calhar passar logo para, nesta corrida pela atenção dos clientes, mais à frente, com a credibilidade, garantindo alguma credibilidade da marca aos olhos do cliente. E esse ponto da nacionalidade por ser uma marca portuguesa, passa logo não para primeiro plano, mas muito mais a frente. Por isso sim, é um asset na comunicação para quem não nos conhece.

Appendix 3. Online survey questions

Secção 1 de 11

Questionário

Caro participante,

Este questionário é realizado como parte da minha dissertação de Mestrado em Comunicação, na Universidade Católica, na qual pretendo estudar o potencial efeito do fator "país de origem" numa "loved brand". Neste sentido, o presente questionário destina-se a estudar como os consumidores vêem a marca, assim como a sua relação com a mesma.

Todas as respostas são anónimas e utilizadas apenas para o mero propósito desta dissertação. O preenchimento do questionário não deve demorar mais de 3 minutos.

Muito obrigada pelo tempo dispensado!

Secção 2 de 11

Identificação do participante

Descrição (opcional)

Reside atualmente em Portugal? *

Sim

Não

Qual a sua idade? *

< 18

18 - 40

> 40

Género *

Feminino

Masculino

Marcas de calções de banho



Descrição (opcional)

Qual a primeira marca de calções de banho de homem que lhe vem à cabeça?

Texto de resposta curta

Que marcas de calções de banho conhece? *

- Billabong
- Quiksilver
- Diesel
- RVCA
- Hurley
- Ericeira
- DCK
- Lighting Bolt
- Outra

Caso tenha respondido "outra" na pergunta anterior, indique, por favor, que outra(s) marca(s) de calções de banho conhece.

Texto de resposta curta

Secção 4 de 11

Sobre a marca DCK



Descrição (opcional)

Conhece a marca DCK? *

Sim

Não

Secção 5 de 11

Sobre a marca DCK



Descrição (opcional)

Tem algum produto da marca DCK? *

Sim

Não

Costuma comprar esta marca com regularidade? *

Sim

Não

Secção 6 de 11

Sobre a marca DCK



Descrição (opcional)

Para quem costuma comprar?

Compro para mim

Compro para terceiros

Em que medida concorda com as seguintes informações? ✕ ⋮

Descrição (opcional)

Considero-me leal a esta marca e compro esta marca há algum tempo *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

No caso de a marca não estar disponível, facilmente opto por outra marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Compro esta marca sempre que posso *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Se os preços da marca aumentassem, continuaria a comprar na mesma *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Em que medida concorda com as seguintes afirmações? ✕ ⋮

Descrição (opcional)

Identifico-me com as pessoas que usam esta marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Esta é uma marca utilizada por pessoas como eu *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Em que medida concorda com as seguintes afirmações? ✕ ⋮

Descrição (opcional)

Considero a marca única e especial *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

⋮
Tenho sempre vontade e desejo de comprar esta marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Tenho prazer e sinto-me bem em comprar e usar esta marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Sinto-me emocionalmente ligado a esta marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Nunca fiquei desiludido/a com a marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Costumo falar sobre a marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Recomendo a marca *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo totalmente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo totalmente

Secção 10 de 11

Sobre a marca DCK



Descrição (opcional)

Tem conhecimento de que a marca é portuguesa e made in Portugal? *

- Sim
- Não

O facto de ser uma marca portuguesa, tem algum impacto na sua decisão de compra? *

- Sim
- Não

Sobre a marca DCK



Descrição (opcional)

Quais diria que são os atributos da marca DCK que mais valoriza? *

- O facto de ser uma marca portuguesa
- O design e diferentes padrões
- Qualidade e durabilidade do material
- O status e imagem proporcionados pela marca
- Fácil acessibilidade ao produto
- Preço
- Outro

Caso tenha respondido "outro", na pergunta anterior, indique, por favor, que outros aspetos da marca valoriza.

Texto de resposta curta
