

CATÓLICA  
LISBON  
BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

# Dealing with Firestorms: Brand strategies to manage negative Word of Mouth during Social Media crisis

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Dissertation is written under the supervision of  
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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the MSc in  
Strategic Marketing, at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 07.06.2019.

## **ABSTRACT**

**Title:** Dealing with firestorms: Brand strategies to manage negative Word of Mouth during Social Media crisis.

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The growth of the Internet and social media platforms is changing the way how individuals communicate with each other. Through the fast communication, companies are facing negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) through social media channels. Therefore, it is of high importance to control and manage the spread of negative electronic word-of-mouth (eNWOM) and shouldn't be underestimated by brands. This dissertation explores the differences between four online response strategies, aimed at managing NWOM during a social media crisis. Effects are analyzed over brand attitude and consumers intention to pass on NWOM.

An in-between experimental study design was implemented. It aimed to analyze how participants' brand attitude (BA) and intention to pass on NWOM changed, after being randomly exposed to one of the four response strategies.

The main conclusion obtained shows, that all of the strategy combinations tested, had statistically significant differences among each other. Therefore, they were not equal within their effectiveness on the construct of BA and their intention to pass on NWOM. Thus, all hypotheses of this dissertation were accepted.

The "mortification" and "delay and reducing offensiveness" strategy result to be the most effective strategies managing online firestorms. The "no action" strategy results to be the less effective strategy in managing firestorm situations.

By exploring the field of electronic NWOM brands lack of preparation of how to respond to online firestorms was recognized. Which is why this dissertation will add not only academic but also managerial value within this field of research.

**Keywords:** Brand attitude, Campaign failure, Corrective Action, Delay, No Action, eNWOM, Firestorms, response strategy, social influence theory, Social Media, social media crisis, Mortification, NWOM,

## SUMÁRIO

**Título:** Enfrentar adversidades: estratégias para gerir a propagação de comunicação “ boca a boca” negativa durante Crisis de mídia social.

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O crescimento das plataformas sociais tem vindo a modificar a maneira como nós comunicamos. Através da rápida comunicação entre nós e dentro das plataformas sociais, as empresas estão a enfrentar uma negativa comunicação “boca a boca”. Consequentemente, é necessário controlar e gerir a propagação deste tipo de comunicação.

A presente tese explora a diferença entre quatro estratégias online que têm por objetivo gerir a comunicação “boca a boca” durante crises de mídia social. Os efeitos destas quatro estratégias são analisados de acordo com a atitude perante a marca e a intenção dos consumidores a comunicar negativamente “boca a boca”. Para tal, foi implementado um experimento com o objetivo de avaliar a mudança na atitude dos participantes em relação aos critérios descritos após serem aleatoriamente expostos a uma das quatro estratégias mencionadas.

A principal conclusão do estudo demonstra que as quatro estratégias combinadas são estatisticamente diferentes umas das outras. Consequentemente, as estratégias não são iguais em termos de eficácia em construir uma atitude perante a marca ou em alterar a intenção em comunicar negativamente “boca a boca”. Deste modo, todas as hipóteses testadas são consideradas válidas.

As estratégias de “humilhação” e de “atraso em reduzir a ofensa” demonstraram ser a mais eficientes em gerir crises online.

Através de explorar a comunicação eletrónica de “boca a boca” as marcas demonstram uma falta de preparação na maneira como devem reagir a crisis online. Deste modo, a presente tese irá não só acrescentar valor académico, mas também valor dentro deste campo de pesquisa.

**Palavras-chave:** Brand attitude, Campaign failure, Corrective Action, Delay, No Action, eNWOM, Firestorms, response strategy, social influence theory, Social Media, Mortification, NWOM

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First, I would like to thank my parents, Irene and Andreas, not only for the opportunity to study in one of the most prestigious universities of Europe outside of my home country but also for the constant and extraordinary support and trust throughout these past months.

Additionally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Daniela Langaro, for her advice and time during this entire process.

A special thanks goes to my family and friends but especially to Petra and Hartmut Denn and my sister Claudia who always supported and encouraged me to believe in myself to continue doing my best and reaching my goal through the most stressful moments.

To all my friends, thank you for being there and for motivating me but also thank you for not leaving me alone and for being by my side. A special thanks also goes to my good friends Franziska Stahuber and Johanna Kruschwitz for helping and pushing me during this time.

To Nils, I would like to express my gratitude for listening to all my concerns and for being there through these months, for all the encouragement and patient to deal with the stressful and challenging moments. The development of this dissertation would not be possible without his constant and unconditional support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank and show my appreciation to all the participants of my questionnaire, who spent some of their time to help me.

Thank you all for making this research possible.

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## **GLOSSARY**

BA – Brand Attitude

eNWOM – Electronic Negative Word-of-Mouth

eWOM – Electronic Word-of-Mouth

H – Hypotheses

K-S – Kolmogorov-Smirnov

KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

NWOM – Negative Word-of-Mouth

PWOM – Positive Word-of-Mouth

PCA – Principle Component Analysis

Q – Question

RQ – RQ

S – Strategy

Sig. – Significant

SM – Social Media

Std. – Standard

WOM – Word-of-Mouth

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The rise of the internet and the growing importance of social media has changed the world and opened up new chances and possibilities of communication for brands and its customers. Nowadays, consumers are way more likely to express their thoughts and experiences about brands or products, via various social media channels and thereby have a wider reach, then they had in the past. From rating products on Amazon, to review videos on YouTube, or commenting and engaging with a brand on Facebook pages, the assortment of different channels has grown a lot.

The steady growth of social media has not only changed the way individuals are communicating, it also had an impact on their behavior. Due to the rapid moving of social networks, information can be distributed at a faster pace; then it was possible earlier. Besides such upsides of fast communication, it represents an occurring danger for companies and their brand image since it is more effortless to communicate with a customer base. Through the power of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), a simple message on social media can spread fast and reach a wide range of social media users within a few minutes and therefore harm a company's brand image. E.g., if nowadays a company will post a commercial that can be interpreted as being racist, an interested consumer of that company is likely to know about it in a matter of hours. Therefore, the managing of a brands online activities becomes an in importance evolving issue for companies. Due to that, organizations need to reconsider their social media activities in be aware of the dangerous situation.

### **1.1 Problem statement and relevance**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) has always been from great importance for all kind of companies. From local bakeries to shopping centers, or garages, all of them relied and still rely to a great extent on WOM. The term can be defined as the process of information and opinion sharing between customers about a product, a brand, or a company. It can be seen as one of the most influential resources of information transmission or within the decision-making process (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). The increasing use of social media enhanced individuals to talk about their experiences and thoughts online. This kind of behavior combined with the growing use of tools like customer review or social media sites changed the traditional WOM into eWOM (J. Lee, Park, & Han, 2008). Similar to the conventional term of WOM, eWOM as well describes the positive and negative statements made by individuals towards companies (Yang, Kim, Amblee, & Jeong, 2012). Within this dissertation, the focus of research will be

on negative electronic-word-of-mouth (eNWOM). Due to the evolving usage of social media and the sharing community in recent decades and years, the literature regarding positive eWOM is extensive, whereas the literature for eNWOM is limited.

The development of social media and the arise of new opportunities of communicating, nWOM poses challenges for brands and companies and will have a strong impact on brand evaluation, brand choice, consumers purchase behavior and the brand loyalty (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). The main challenges companies are facing is the risk of negative eWOM. Being under pressure due to nWOM is difficult to control and eventually leads to social media crises for companies which are known as online firestorms (Stich, Golla, & Nanopoulos, 2014). Online firestorms will be defined as "the sudden discharge of large quantities of messages containing negative WOM and complaint behavior against a person, company, or group in social media networks" (Pfeffer, Zorbach, & Carley, 2014). Within this dissertation, the focus of the research will also include firestorm.

By harming the brand awareness and leading to customer losses NWOM in the form of firestorms can cause substantial deviation from the brand positioning and represents a great danger for the company/the brand (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). Companies and marketers may be aware of this dangerous impact of eNWOM in the form of firestorms, but until today, they are not adequately prepared for it. The aim of this dissertation is it to evaluate actions and strategies for companies and brands to manage eNWOM and to provide effective response strategy's within social media crises caused by online firestorms. The suggested strategies are developed based on existing literature, examples, and analyzed experimental data to reduce the harm caused by NWOM. The way, how an organization responds to crises can have an impact on the extent to which the brand can be harmed or saved, but until today there is no consensus among the researchers about a clear response strategy however all the response strategies are placed somewhere between a deny-apology continuum (Dawar & Pillutla, 2003).

Exploring this field of research, the analyzed results will provide a clear idea of how to react in firestorm situations during social media crisis and how to manage NWOM to reduce the harm provided to the company or brand.

## **1.2 Research objectives**

There is limited research regarding business and how they effectively can manage negative consumer-generated online campaigns. Thus, the objects within this dissertation lie in analyzing and testing of possible response strategies. Those strategies should be able to apply by companies to manage NWOM in firestorm situations caused by the compliant behavior of customers regarding campaign communication failures within social media platforms.

Therefore, this dissertation aims to change consumers intention to pass on NWOM online by providing strategies that will change consumers brand attitude (BA) and the spread of NWOM. Focusing on this aspect, the dissertation also aims to provide different combinations of strategies based on the literature and existing firestorm examples which have been positively managed by companies and therefore are relevant for the research within this dissertation.

## **1.3 Research question**

As described above the objective of the dissertation is to analyze which strategies can be used by companies to handle or manage online firestorms caused by campaign communication failures from the companies to its customers. The presented objective, therefore, leads to the research question (RQ) that will be answered within this work.

The RQ intends to analyze which response strategies can change consumers BA, and the intention to pass on NWOM and therefore are effective strategies for organizations to manage online firestorms. Thus, the Research question has been defined as the following:

***RQ:*** *What are effective response strategies companies can apply to manage NWOM?*

## **1.4 Dissertation outline**

The present thesis is divided into five different parts that are going to be presented in the following section. Starting with chapter one, the introduction is displayed. Within this chapter, the background, the problem statement, and the relevance of the thesis will be described. Further first insides about the following content will be exemplified. After that, the second chapter presents the literature review. This section will provide the reader with necessary information about the covered topics to get an understanding of the problem statement in the dissertation and to conceive the research objective. Therefore, this chapter will include the experimental evaluation, presents insights into the field, and focuses on the social influence theory. Furthermore, the turn of traditional WOM into eNWOM, online firestorms that might turn into brand crisis as well as the literature-based data regarding

firestorm strategies are going to be presented. Based on the given information, the second chapter also aims to analyze the strategy combinations that will be used to answer the research question and therefore demonstrate the base for the experiment of the dissertation.

After that, the next chapter displays the methodology used to answer the research question.

In chapter four, the results obtained via the experiment will be expounded, and the meaning of the results will be analyzed and discussed.

The last and final chapter presents the conclusions and limitations of the work and will summarize the main findings. Further recommendation for managerial and academic implications are displayed.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The intent of this chapter is to present a theoretical framework on the topics which are related to the main RQ based on previous studies and empirical evidence from academic journals. Part one of this chapter is focused on the social influence theory followed by the evolution of WOM into eWOM and a brief confrontation of the volume and valences of WOM. Afterward, a comprehensive approach of how eWOM turns into online firestorms, how firestorms evolve, and about campaign failures as a cause of firestorm will be given. Next, existing strategies to manage eWOM based on future research and firestorm examples from the past will be evaluated. To close this chapter, the Hypotheses will be presented and explained.

### **2.1 Social influence theory - Why do individuals get influenced by others?**

The social influence process describes how individuals' thoughts and feelings can be influenced by the presence of others (Cialdini et al., 1998). According to Kelman (1958), social influence determines the changes in attitudes and actions produced by social influences that can occur on different levels. It distinguishes within different processes, which are compliance, identification, and internalization (Kelman, 1958). These social influence factors are responsible for the change in individuals' belief structure and define different ways of accepting the influence (Kelman, 1958).

As a second definition the term of social influence can be defined as the presence of others which neglects a more indirect and group level phenomena. Therefore, three different types of influences are distinguished: the person to person influence where a person is affected by some other influencers, the indirect manipulation of social norms, customs and social or cultural attitudes and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors influenced by others without the person being aware of the manipulation (Ng, 2001).

### **2.2 Why do individuals express themselves online?**

Until today it is not clear why some pieces of online content are more likely to go viral than others. For example, the practical and informative use of Information are reasons why some people like to share their stories, experiences or news, among others. Practical information's are being shared by consumers to help others whereas the share of emotionally charged content aims to explain the sense of their experiences, to reduce dissonance or also to deepen social connections (Wojnicki & Godes, 2008).

A usual trigger to engage in traditional WOM is customer's extreme satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding a brand (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2014) whereas the main motives for customers to participate in electronic WOM are the desire for economic incentives, the concern for others, the passion for social interactions and the potential to enhance self-worth (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

### **2.3 WOM turns into eWOM**

Traditional WOM is the oral non-commercial person-to-person or customer-to-customer conversation about a brand or a topic with the potential to change consumers preferences, purchase behavior or interactions (Arndt, 1967; Libai et al., 2010). WOM has a strong influential effect when it comes to information transmission or decision-making process and represents the most powerful element inside the marketing mix (Feldman & Spencer, 1965). According to Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006), WOM communication has a considerable part in consumer influencing, consumers attitude, and behavior-forming and can also be defined as an opinion- and information sharing process between customers (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

The way and the consequences of how information's have been transmitted changed due to development of technology and due to the emergence of social network sites (Libai et al., 2010; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

The increase of the Internet and SM opened up new ways and possibilities of communication (Pfeffer et al., 2014), which is why WOM has changed and can now be called eWOM. eWOM offers the option to share any positive or negative stories, opinions and evaluations among a group of unknown people on SM platforms as Facebook (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). By engaging in eWOM individuals get the opportunity to gather unbiased information about a product or a brand from other customers and to distribute their consumption-related advice online to a wide range of people (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

#### **2.3.1 Volume and valance of WOM**

Traditional eWOM consists of two important attributes, which are volume and valance of WOM (Mahajan et al., 1984). The total amount of WOM is known as volume whereas the nature of the content of WOM refers to valance and can have an either positive, negative, neutral or mixed influence decision-making process (Yang et al., 2012). Therefore WOM can either encourage or discourage consumers brand choice (Kozinets et al., 2010).

WOM volume delivers information about the popularity of a product and the number of people which experienced or used the brand on the market which is how WOM volume

generates product credibility (Yang et al., 2012). Thus, it can be said that higher WOM volume could lead to higher credibility and awareness on a product or brand (Shao, 2012).

Descriptive information about a product or a service describes neutral WOM whereas positive opinions expressed by consumers or giving recommendations and relating positive experiences are categorized as positive WOM (Yang et al., 2012). Unfavorable evaluations like the spread of negative experiences or complaints, demonstrate negative WOM.

To determine consumers credibility for a brand the adequate amount of information sources is necessary and essential. The lack of information will lead the consumer to depend on WOM valence information, which will influence consumer's behavior (Yang et al., 2012). Online reviews that contain positive information's like pleasant experiences or buying recommendations are beneficial for companies, whereas negative reviews and disappointing experiences are harmful (Cheung et al., 2009).

### **2.3.2 Electronic NWOM**

Richins (1984) defines NWOM as consumer's responses to dissatisfaction and as an interpersonal communication between customers regarding a product or an organization.

Due to today most studies focus on positive WOM which is why the research of negative WOM is limited even though consumer-generated negative WOM is found to be more influential, more credible, more useful and more heavily in judgments than positive WOM (Herr et al., 1991; Bickart et al., 2001). By opening their SM channels companies and organizations also open up the possibility of direct communication and therefore take the risk of negative eWOM which is difficult to control (Stich et al., 2014). According to Henning-Thurau et al. (2010), negative WOM can harm brand awareness and lead to customer losses and therefore cause substantial deviations from the brand positioning. Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) mentioned that all phases of the consumer decision-making process like brand evaluation, brand choice, purchase behavior, as well as brand loyalty, are affected by negative WOM.

### **2.4 eNWOM creates online firestorms that turn into social media crises**

According to Pfeffer et al. (2014), negative generated user content can lead to online firestorms. These are defined as "the sudden discharge of large quantities of messages containing NWOM and complaint behavior against a person, or group in SM networks." Hogueve, Eller, and Firmhofer (2013) define online firestorms as the result of a single complain followed by many other comments from users who also own negative experiences

or thoughts about a company, brand or product. Since the dynamics of firestorms are relatively unclear harmful waves of criticism which appear without any signs or warnings could cause uncontrollable image consequences (Pfeffer et al., 2014).

Firestorms that arise on SM can be seen as a digital form of brand crises and represent SM crises. Differently, than back in the days where crises were mostly spread by analog mass media such as newspapers crises today are being spread through SM (Hansen et al., 2018). Brand crises are the result of firestorms and responsible for the cause of negative short- and long-term effects like the loss in brand sales or the reduction of the effectiveness of marketing instruments (Heerde et al., 2007).

#### **2.4.1 Campaign failures as the cause of eNWOM and online firestorms**

There are specific reasons that have a stronger potential to create crises than others which for example occur due to social or service failures, when a product harms or when a company fails to communicate properly with its customers (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Hoffman et al., 1995; Dutta & Pullig, 2011; Pullig et al., 2006).

Based on the literature, some famous firestorm examples were analyzed to understand which strategies are already being used to manage eNWOM. Firestorm examples from McDonalds, IngBida and Pepsi were analyzed. In all of these examples unclear campaign communication caused online firestorms. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the failed campaign communication as a base for the evaluation of the response strategies.

#### **2.4.2 Response strategies**

As mentioned above, online firestorms are extremely dangerous and can harm a brand and its image, which is why it is essential to analyze how crises can be managed.

Within the literature, "Webcare" was found as a strategy to manage online firestorms. Webcare describes the process of a company engaging in online interactions with the complainers to solve issues and to engender a positive brand reputation by responding to consumers complaints (van Noort & Willemsen, 2012). Pfeffer et al. (2014) mentioned companies that show composure and confidence within online firestorms may have the possibility to strengthen the credibility and the brands image.

The response strategy offers companies the possibility to react to online complaints quickly and has the potential to convert unhappy customers into more loyal customers while being transparent and authentic and while telling its side of the story. Whereas the "delay and reducing offensiveness" or "no action strategy" could cause the opposite and therefore make

the customers think the company is not being authentic and honest. But there are also some significant disadvantages when using webcare as a response strategy which is the level of disagreement with the customers that might occur if there are incorrect information or wrong perceptions among the customers (Donston-Miller 2012).

Davidow (2003) differentiates among six dimensions of responses from organizations which are: Timeliness, Facilitation, Redress, Apology, Credibility, and attentiveness. Whereas Benoit (1997) divides his image repair strategy into five broad categories: deny, evasion of responsibility, reducing the offensiveness of event, corrective action, and mortification. The typology from Benoit (1997) and Davidow (2003) show some overlaps and can both be used as a framework for complaint responses.

Certain strategy combinations can either lessen or strengthen an organizations chance to repair their image. Benoit (1997) rated “Mortification” and “corrective action” as the most effective strategies. The other three strategies were perceived as less effective image restoration strategies (Benoit & Drew, 1997). While examining existing firestorm examples, the "reducing offensiveness" strategy was also analyzed as a frequently used strategy to handle eNWOM, which is conflictive to Benoit’s statement.

This Dissertation will focus on the three main Strategies "mortification," "corrective action" and "reducing offensiveness". All of these strategies will be combined with other strategies that are found to be effective to manage eNWOM:

**Mortification strategy:** The “mortification” strategy occurs when an organization takes over full responsibility for an offensive act, apologize for its behavior and ask for forgiveness. Since individuals tend to forgive someone that shows repentance for its misbehavior, this step can have a positive impact on the brand image.

**Corrective action strategy:** The “Corrective action strategy” is being used by companies to repair the damage that has been caused by an offensive act while feeling responsible for the problem caused. The strategy is promising that the problem will be fixed by either correcting and turning the damage into the previous situation or by taking steps to prevent the act from happening in the future again (Len-Ríos & Benoit, 2004).

**Reducing offensiveness strategy:** Another strategy of Benoit’s (1997) framework is the "reducing offensiveness" strategy which is being used by companies to put the offensive act into a less offensive light by shifting the blame. The strategy aims to remind the customer of positive feelings and the brands qualities (Benoit, 1997).

While searching for existing responses from brands other strategies to manage eNWOM were found within the literature. One of them demonstrates the process of reducing complaint behavior by taking out the firestorm situations from the SM platforms.

**Censorship Strategy:** When using the Censorship strategy, companies delete existing unwanted complaints regarding their campaigns from their SM channels.

Brands and company associate the strategy as the process of brand image protection from SM attacks whereas consumers do associate the strategy with a lack of authority or transparency.

The censorship strategy can aggravate consumers, cause further NWOM and is perceived as aggressive and hostile tactic. Thus, the censorship strategy can be used to gain greater control over the online posted messages by the marketers, but consumers negative perception can continue to exist (Thomas et al., 2012).”

Another strategy that is being used in combination with the censorship strategy, is the “Delay and reducing offensiveness” strategy.

**Delay and reducing offensiveness Strategy:** If a company delays and reduces the offensiveness by responding to any complaints made on SM, the negative generated WOM caused by a campaign communication failure could die down on its own. This process gives the customers time to cool off and the company time to develop the right response as well as to review the complaints in detail (Vogt, 2009). But the “delay and the reducing offensiveness strategy” can also ensure customers believes that a company is unresponsive and unwilling to listen to them (Ramsay, 2010). However, the “no action strategy” is still being used by companies and will, therefore, also be tested within the Dissertation.

**No action/ Ignoring strategy:** When using the “no action strategy” companies are avoiding engaging in negative conversations and therefore are being pictured as not taking on responsibility and as not feeling any repentance for the problem/ for the crisis (Lee, 2004). According to Lee (2004), most organizations use the "No Action strategy” rather than the “reducing offensiveness strategy” since it is less time and effort consuming.

## **2.5 Research model: Proposed Hypotheses**

To answer the RQ within this Dissertation concerning the effectiveness of strategies to manage eNWOM within online firestorms, the precise formulation of Hypotheses is necessary. Therefore, literature and journals were collected and will be used as a valuable source of putting together different strategies.

Out of the tested strategies, each strategy will be compared with another strategy in terms of effectiveness on BA and on consumers intention to pass on NWOM.

As mentioned above the Strategies tested are the following ones: “Mortification; delay and reducing offensiveness; corrective action; censorship and the no action strategy.” These Strategies were combined to evaluate effective response Strategies to manage online firestorms.

**“Mortification & Censorship” vs. “Delay, reducing Offensiveness & Censorship”:** To manage eNWOM, a combination of the Censorship strategy with one of the response strategies mentioned above has been tested. This behavior can be analyzed when studying firestorm situations like the Nivea "white is purity" or the ING-DiBa example where the campaign was taken out from SM. In the instance of the “white is purity” example the brand, Nivea, apologized to its customers for the inappropriate campaign and afterward deleted the campaign. Within the ING-DiBa example the brand the brand first ignored the complaints, then posted a statement reducing the offensiveness by shifting the blame away from their own responsibility after the discussion cooled down and afterward deleted the discussion completely (Pfeffer et al., 2014). Based on the researched information, the “Mortification strategy” was rated as the most effective strategy within Benoit's (1997) Framework.

While analyzing the two mentioned firestorm examples from Nivea and ING-DiBa two strategy combinations, which are the S<sub>1</sub>-“Mortification & censorship” and the S<sub>2</sub>-“Delay, reducing offensiveness & censorship” strategies could be found as effective.

The idea of comparing these two strategies results from the fact that the two strategies somehow are opposed to each other. S<sub>1</sub> demonstrates the company taking over the responsibility and apologizing for its actions. Whereas within S<sub>2</sub> the company does not directly react nor apologize for the failed campaign but later on publishes a statement reducing the offensiveness by shifting the blame on others. However, apologies are what the public most expects and wants to hear as a response to eNWOM (Benoit et al., 1991; Blaney & Benoit, 2001; Len-Rios & Benoit, 2004). Whereas the use of S<sub>2</sub> causes in some cases a less positive reaction. This happens due to the fact of not taking over full responsibility and first ignoring the situation as in the example of Domino's Pizza (Thomas et al., 2012). In this example, the brand decided to use the delay strategy, and later on was accused by the community for reacting too late to the situation (Vogt, 2009). Another example where the “Delay, reducing offensiveness & censorship strategy” was used is related to an ING-DiBa campaign. The bank published an online campaign which was misunderstood by its community and therefore created a firestorm situation. First, the brand did not react to the

complaints but waited for the situation to cool off by itself. After the online user stopped posting negative comments, the brand posted a statement explaining that the customers misunderstood the campaign and therefore shifted the blame on the customers while not taking over responsibility. To end the misapprehension, the brand decided to delete the campaign and its negative comments entirely (Pfeffer et al., 2014).

Since both of the strategies are being used to manage online firestorms but seem to be complementary to each other strong differences are being expected between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ . Based on this information, the first two Hypothesis have been defined as the following:

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference in brand attitude between response strategies focused on “Mortification and Censorship strategy” compared to strategies focused on “Delay, reducing offensiveness and Censorship strategy.”*

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant difference on users’ intention to pass on the NWOM between response strategies focused on “Mortification and Censorship strategy” compared to strategies focused on “Delay, reducing offensiveness and Censorship strategy.”*

#### **“Corrective action” vs. “No action/ Ignoring”:**

The “Corrective action strategy” is another strategy used by companies to lessen the offensive act and to manage the firestorm situation. By using the “corrective action strategy”, companies focus on explaining and solving the problem and showing repentance by answering immediately to the complaints and by admitting their mistakes without deleting the firestorm situation afterward. When using this strategy, companies do explain the intention behind the failed campaign, but they do also offer and promise to implement actions which will be used to solve the problem to prevent it from happening again.

Even though responding to complaints can help to manage NWOM, there are many companies which decide to use the “No Action strategy” instead. Therefore, the companies do neither apologize or explain the situation, nor do they offer any other compensations for the problem caused.

Therefore, the “corrective action strategy” is trying to improve the firestorm situation by responding to the complainers whereas the “no Action strategy” is ignoring the firestorm situation and its complainers. However, Van Noort and Willemsen (2012) stated that companies response to online complaints can lead observers to evaluate the brand positively which is why the corrective action is being expected to have a stronger effect on consumer intention to stop passing on NWOM than the “no action strategy” does.

Based on this statement, the effect of both strategies will be analyzed with the following second Hypothesis:

***H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a significant difference in brand attitude between response strategies focused on "Corrective Action strategy" compared to strategies focused on "No Action/ Ignoring strategy."*

***H<sub>4</sub>:** There is a significant difference in users' intention to pass on NWOM between response strategies focused on "Corrective Action strategy" compared to strategies focused on "No Action/ Ignoring strategy."*

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes how the data within this Dissertation was collected, measured, and analyzed and will present the different methods adopted.

### **3.1 Research Approach**

To answer the RQ and the objectives of this dissertation, both primary and secondary data was collected. Secondary data was mostly collected from top journals, academic papers, and recognized books and will summarize how firestorms evolve and which strategies are already being used to manage existing firestorms. Therefore, the gathered information inside the literature review will contain some relevant insights needed to answer the RQ and to proof the resulting hypotheses. The primary data development was divided into qualitative and quantitative data.

The object of this Dissertation is to analyze which strategies can be used by companies to manage online firestorms. Therefore, the RQ aims to explain which of the strategies developed within the secondary data will be the most effective ones to manage consumers intention to pass on NWOM and impact consumers brand attitude.

### **3.2 Research Design**

For this dissertation, an experiment, testing four strategy groups which are “S<sub>1</sub><sup>1</sup>-Mortification & Censorship,” “S<sub>2</sub>-Delay, reducing Offensiveness & Censorship strategy,” “S<sub>3</sub>-Corrective Action” and “S<sub>4</sub>-No Action/ Ignoring”, was performed.

As a base for the quantitative and qualitative data collection, the above-mentioned manipulative strategy posts were created (Table 1, pp.15). Therefore, a firestorm situation resulting from a campaign communication failure of the brand "Dove" was chosen as the base for the strategies tested. The already existing campaign failure example of the brand "Dove" was selected to make sure the majority of the participants has understood the failed campaign. To test the effectiveness of the manipulated posts and to ensure the manipulated posts represent each strategy, a pre-test was conducted (Appendix 1).

Next, for the online questionnaire, an in-between group study was used where each participant was only exposed to one of the strategies tested. The result of the conducted answers within the experiment will allow to compare differences between the groups and therefore lead to answer the tested hypotheses.

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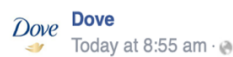
<sup>1</sup> Strategy (S)

## Firestorm Situation



**S<sub>1</sub>: Mortification & Censorship**

**S<sub>2</sub>: Delay, reducing offensiveness & Censorship**



An image we recently posted missed the mark in representing women of color thoughtfully. The Dove Campaign was not meant to be offensive and has been removed. We apologize deeply and sincerely for the offense that it has caused and to not condone any activity or imagery that insults any audience.

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)



Two weeks ago, as a part of a campaign for Dove body wash, a picture of the campaign was posted on the Dove Facebook page that featured two women of different ethnicities. The campaign picture was intended to convey that Dove body wash is for every woman and be a celebration of diversity. Our beauty comes in different shapes, sizes, hair textures, and skin tones. We believe that beauty is diverse and diversity is beautiful. Therefore, our models have not reported any problems and did not feel offended by the campaign but did understand the message Dove is trying to communicate. We will remove the Post and the whole campaign, and we are already reevaluating our internal processes for creating and reviewing content to make sure a Dove campaign is not being misunderstood by its customers ever again.

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)

**S<sub>3</sub>: Corrective Action**

**S<sub>4</sub>: No action/ Ignoring**

**NazThe Mua** You know what I'm not gonna say it... I'm gonna just say grab a black person at your company and ask them their honest opinion on this ad... what's the message here... or look at this from another persons perspective and ask them what does this ad mean... and see what they say...  
Like · Reply · 73 · 4 hours ago

**Dove** Hello NazThe Mua, the content featured was supposed to demonstrate the benefits of our Dove Body Wash for every type of skin, but we clearly missed to communicate this message within the posted campaign. We are committed to representing beauty of all ages, ethnicities, shapes and sizes and to listen to all women's needs to create great products. For future campaigns we will work very closely with our agencies and the involved departments to make sure this does not happen again.  
Like · Reply · 2 · 10 min ago

**Julia Hall** This is racist and this ad needs to be pulled! I won't be using Dove anymore! I am shocked!  
Like · Reply · 46 · 4 hours ago

**Dove** Hello Julia, we are very sorry if our ad did offend you. The idea behind the featured content meant to demonstrate the benefits of our Dove Body wash and was not meant to be offensive. We will make sure something like this will not happen again!  
Like · Reply · 0 · 5 min ago

**Cathy Poss** I can't believe Dove did this! This is so wrong and will hurt so many people...  
Like · Reply · 29 · 4 hours ago

**TJ Mayr** This company is shame and should be shut down!!!!  
Like · Reply · 23 · 4 hours ago

**Sara Martin** I HATE DOVE!  
Like · Reply · 31 · 3 hours ago

**Michael Dorn** Come on @Dove, this is so so racist that I do not even know where to begin... Speechless! In future, please do not refer to colours!!!  
Like · Reply · 53 · 3 hours ago

**Dove** Hello Michael, you are right! We will re-evaluate our internal processes for creating and reviewing content to make sure something like this does not happen again! The campaign picture was intended to convey that Dove body wash is for every woman, but we got it wrong and, as a result, offended many people. We are very sorry for the miscommunication!  
Like · Reply · 1 · 5 min ago

32 shares

**NayThe Mua** You know what I'm not gonna say it... I'm gonna just say grab a black person at your company and ask them their honest opinion on this ad... what's the message here... or look at this from another persons perspective and ask them what does this ad mean... and see what they say...  
Like · Reply · 51 Likes · 5 m

**Julia Hall** This is racist and this ad needs to be pulled! I won't be using Dove anymore! I am shocked!  
Like · Reply · 37 Likes · 5 m

**Cathy Poss** I can't believe Dove did this! This is so wrong and will hurt so many people...  
Like · Reply · 14 Likes · 10 min

**TJ Mayr** This company is shame and should be shut down!!!!  
Like · Reply · 23 Likes · 10 min

**Sara Martin** I HATE DOVE!  
Like · Reply · 11 Likes · 10 min

**Michael Dorn** Come on @Dove, this is so so racist that I do not even know where to begin... Speechless! In future, please do not refer to colours!!!  
Like · Reply · 38 Likes · 15 min

**Scott Bellows** Worst marketing campaign EVER!  
Like · Reply · 25 Likes · 15 min

Write a comment ...

Table 1: Manipulated firestorm Situation and Response Strategies online Posts

### **3.3 Pre-test design and data collection**

Before conducting quantitative data within the online questionnaire, a pre-test among 14 participants was performed to test the manipulated strategies and to ensure that the manipulated posts had intended effects to maximize the result of the conducted data (Lee & Cranage, 2014). Within the pre-test, each participant was asked separately from the other participants to answer the provided "Yes" or "No" questions based on seeing all of the manipulated strategy posts. Therefore, each participant was provided with a printed version of the different strategy scenarios and the "Yes" or "No" questions.

The participants of the pre-test were first asked to rate each strategy post in terms of layout and used language. Next, each participant was asked to answer questions to test the understanding of each manipulated strategy post, and about of the participants does perceive any differences between all of the four manipulated strategy posts.

The pre-test guide, as well as the pre-test answers, can be found in detail within Appendix 1. Analyzing the results, all of the Strategies were perceived as useful in terms of representing the strategy each post stands for. Therefore, each of the manipulated Post could be used for the Experiment. After the participants answered all of the questions and therefore rated all of the manipulated strategies, the pre-test was evaluated.

#### **3.3.1 Pre-test of Stimuli (Qualitative Research)**

For quantitative research, a pre-test with 14 participants aged between 19 and 28 years from different nationalities was conducted. The conducted pre-test aimed to test the four manipulated strategy posts. Two out of the 14 participants did already know the failed "Dove" campaign, but all participants were aware of the existence of online firestorms. The pre-test was divided into four parts. The first part did present the firestorm situation and therefore, also the "No Action/ ignoring" strategy. The following parts within the pre-test each presented one of the four strategies. As described above the participants were first asked questions in terms of layout and language. Next, about the understanding of the context of each strategy and lastly about the perceived differences among all four manipulated strategy posts.

#### **3.3.2 Pre-test Sample characteristics**

The participants within the Pre-test were chosen randomly to acquire accurate data. All of the participants are SM users and aware of the existence of online firestorms. 50% of the

participants were man, and the other 50% were women from different nationalities. Out of the 14 participants, 10 were students, and only 4 participants were full-time employed.

Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Nationality	Use SM	Aware of FS's
1	19	Male	Student	Portuguese	Yes	Yes
2	21	Male	Student	Portuguese	Yes	Yes
3	20	Male	Student	Portuguese	Yes	Yes
4	25	Female	Student	German	Yes	Yes
5	27	Male	Employed	German	Yes	Yes
6	21	Female	Student	German	Yes	Yes
7	21	Female	Student	Portuguese	Yes	Yes
8	24	Female	Student	Italian	Yes	Yes
9	22	Male	Student	Portuguese	Yes	Yes
10	23	Female	Student	German	Yes	Yes
11	24	Female	Employed	Polish	Yes	Yes
12	24	Male	Student	German	Yes	Yes
13	26	Male	Employed	Portuguese	Yes	Yes
14	28	Female	Employed	German	Yes	Yes

Table 2: Pre-test Participants Profile

### 3.3.3 Pre-test Design

**Layout and Understanding of Stimuli's:** First, the participants were asked to rate the manipulated strategy posts in terms of layout and in terms of understanding the language used. Therefore, the participants were asked to read all of the developed strategy posts and to answer the questions from the table below with a "Yes" if the participants agree with the question and with a "No" if they disagree.

Problem	Question	Answer	
		Yes	No
<b>Understanding in terms of Language:</b>	Q1. The Post is understandable in terms of language.	100%	-
<b>Understanding in terms of Layout:</b>	Q2. The post and the comments are readable and look real.	100%	-
<b>Understanding in terms of Context:</b>	Q3. The posts demonstrate a Firestorm situation with different response strategies from the brand Dove.	100%	-

Table 3: Pre-test questions

All of the participants did answer the three questions above with "Yes," which means, that all of the strategy posts were understandable in terms of language, layout, and context.

**Understanding of each the manipulated strategies:** Next, the participants were asked to answer three questions based on the different strategies used. Therefore, the participants were asked to answer the question from the table below after being faced with each strategy.

Problem	Question	Answer	
		Yes	No
<b>Understanding the message of the Strategy:</b>	Q1. Dove apologized for he inappropriate and racist campaign and offending many people.	-	-
	Q2. Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after the brand officially apologized.	-	-
	Q3. Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post to prevent an escalation of the situation.	-	-

Table 4: Pre-test Question

**S<sub>1</sub> - Mortification & censorship strategy:** Both Q1<sup>2</sup> and Q2 regarding the “Mortification & Censorship strategy” were answered by all of the participants with a "Yes." 78,6% of the participants did answer Q3 with a "Yes" and 21,4% with a "No." Since the overall perception of the Strategy did represent the aim of the Strategy, the manipulated Post was able to describe the “Mortification & censorship strategy”.

**S<sub>2</sub> - Delay, reducing offensiveness & censorship:** The majority of the participants, 85,7%, did not perceive the posted statement from the brand as an Apology and answered Q1 with a "No". only 2 people out of 14 did answer Q2 with a "No" which means that the majority believes that "Dove" did disarm the situation by deleting the online firestorm from SM.

**S<sub>3</sub> - Corrective action strategy:** Next, Q1 was answered by all of the participants with a "Yes" when being faced with the “corrective action strategy”. Whereas the second question was answered by 100% of the participants with a "No," which means that the participants did understand the difference of the strategies in terms of the use of the “Censorship strategy”. Q2 was answered by 92,9% with a "Yes." Therefore 92.9% believe that the brand disarmed the situation due to deleting the complaints. Q3 was answered by 100% of the participants with a “Yes,” which means that all of the participants understood that the brand did not react immediately to the campaign failure.

<sup>2</sup> Question (Q)

**S<sub>4</sub> – No Action/ Ignoring strategy:** when being faced with the firestorm situation and the “No action” strategy post at the same time all of the participants answered Q1, Q2, and Q3 with a "No." This means that all of the participants did understand strategy 4.

**Understanding of the differences among the strategies:** Lastly, the participants were asked to answer another question in terms of perceived differences within the manipulated Fb posts (Appendix 1). Only one participant from the pre-test did answered this question with a “No,” which is why it’s been assumed that all the strategies vary from each other.

Based on the collected data within the pre-test, the strategy posts were analyzed as useful in representing the strategies each post stand for and were used within the online questionnaire.

### **3.4 Online questionnaire design and data collection**

The online questionnaire describes an experimental in-between group design in which all participants were equally and randomly allocated to one of the manipulated strategies. To make sure to collect a homogenous set of data in terms of response numbers, the option of the "evenly present elements" was selected. The experimental in-between group design was chosen to test the effect of different strategies on the firestorm situation without being biased by other strategies. Therefore, the participants were asked to answer the same questions based on the seen same firestorm situation, but after the participants were shown different response strategies.

The questionnaire targets English-speaking SM user aged between 16 and 30 years old through the SM platforms Facebook and LinkedIn to reach a wide field of participants who are aware of the use of SM and its activities. To prevent the participants from dropping out while answering the questions, the survey was shortened to the minimum of time needed (Herzog & Bachman, 1981).

The experiment consists of four different strategies participants were randomly assigned to. For the experiment the independent variable, the response strategy of a company, has been manipulated and is being defined as one of the following strategies: “S<sub>1</sub>: Mortification & Censorship strategy”, “S<sub>2</sub>: Delay, reducing Offensiveness & Censorship”, “S<sub>3</sub>: Corrective Action strategy” and “S<sub>4</sub>: No Action/ Ignoring strategy”.

First, all of the participants were shown the firestorm situation and were asked “Yes” or “No” questions regarding their **attitude toward eWOM** (Khare et al., 2011). These questions were asked to get a better understanding of participants online behavior.

Afterward, the participants were randomly allocated to one strategy group and were asked questions based on the constructs, BA, NWOM, and eNWOM.

**Brand Attitude:** The construct of BA was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranged from “1= strongly disagree” to “7= strongly agree” taken from a scale by Steiniger (2016), who in turn adopted the scale from Martensen et al. (2007).

**NWOM and eNWOM:** Both, the construct of NWOM and the construct of eNWOM are used to measure user’s intention to pass on NWOM. The construct of NWOM was chosen to analyze which effect the use of different response strategies will have on user’s intention to spread regular NWOM. Whereas the construct of eNWOM was included into the analyzes of user’s intention to pass on NWOM. This is important because it analyzes if users will only stop spreading NWOM or if they will also change their online NWOM behavior. The objective of the thesis is to find effective response strategies to manage NWOM in social media crisis. Therefore it’s important on the one hand to analyze which response strategies will lead to a decrease in participants NWOM behavior. On the other hand, it’s crucial to know which strategies will change consumers eNWOM behavior the most in order to decrease the escalation.

**NWOM:** To measure NWOM, a 7-point Likert scale ranged from "1= strongly disagree" to "7= strongly agree" adopted from Bruner (2005) was used.

**eNWOM:** The concept of eNWOM was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranged from “1= strongly disagree” to “7= strongly agree” adopted by Chiosa and Anastasiei (2017) who, in turn, adopted the scale from Bougie et al. (2003).

**Response Type:** Lastly the participants were asked four questions regarding the stimulus each strategy represents. The four strategy representing questions are asked to be able to analyze to which degree the stimulus was understood. Each question asked demonstrates one specific stimulus. Q1 represents the “Mortification and & Censorship strategy”, Q2 demonstrates the “Delay, reducing offensiveness & censorship strategy”, Q3 demonstrates the “Corrective action strategy” and Q4 demonstrates the “No action strategy”.

All the response type questions are measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) adapted from Lee & Song, (2010).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Attitude Toward eWOM</b>	<b>Q1:</b> I have used online reviews to help me make a decision about a product or service.	Yes/ No Scale	Khare et al., (2011)
	<b>Q2:</b> In the past, my decisions have been influenced by reviews that I read online.		
	<b>Q3:</b> I like to discuss my product/ service experiences with others online.		
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	<b>Q1:</b> I think Dove is a good brand.	7-point Likert Scale	Steiniger, (2016)
	<b>Q2:</b> I have a positive attitude toward Dove.		
	<b>Q3:</b> I think Dove is a reliable and credible brand.		
<b>NWOM</b>	<b>Q1:</b> I will not recommend the brand to my friends.	7-point Likert Scale	Voorhees, (2009)
	<b>Q2:</b> I will say bad things about Dove to others.		
	<b>Q3:</b> I will encourage friends and relatives to buy other similar products.		
<b>Negative electronic WOM</b>	<b>Q1:</b> I will write negative things about Dove online.	7-point Likert Scale	Bougie et al. (2003)
	<b>Q2:</b> I would discourage people I interact with online from purchasing Dove products.		
	<b>Q3:</b> I would advise against Dove when someone is seeking my advice online.		
<b>Response Type</b>	<b>Q1:</b> The brand apologized for the problem.	7-point Likert Scale	Kim et al., (2006); Lee and Song, (2010)
	<b>Q2:</b> The brand shifted the blame to others.		
	<b>Q3:</b> The brand admitted responsibility for the problem.		
	<b>Q4:</b> The brand ignored the complaining customer.		

Table 5: Construct Measurement Overview

Lastly, each participant was asked the same five demographic questions to gather information about the participants' gender, nationality, age, marital status, and current occupation. The whole questionnaire and the measurement scales can be found in Appendix 3.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed with the help of SPSS (Version 25) to test the hypotheses. Before the variances were analyzed, the demographics and descriptive statistics were defined. Therefore, the constructs were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha for the reliability check. To test if there is a normal distribution, the normality test was performed but since most of the p-values were proven to be lower than the significant level of .05 the parametric normality test could not be used. Therefore, the non-parametric tests were used for all relevant analyzes. After analyzing the validation and comparability of the groups the hypotheses were checked while analyzing the differences using the Kruskal-Wallis test. Lastly the results from, the hypotheses and further important findings are discussed.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to present the collected data and the analysis used. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed and conducted.

### 4.1 Quantitative data analysis preparation

For the quantitative data analysis part, the collected data within the online questionnaire on the online platform Qualtrics was transported as a dataset into the statistical software SPSS.

To ensure the used data is correct, consistent, and useable, the transported dataset needed to be cleaned, and errors within the dataset needed to be either deleted or corrected. Since most of the variables were measured on a multi-item scale, the data had to be re-coded and computed. Next, several outliers were deleted, which reduced the number of valid answers from the participants. A Cronbach`s alpha test was conducted to test the consistent reliability.

### 4.2 Sample Characterization

The questionnaire consists of four different experiments which all test different strategies and was distributed via Facebook and LinkedIn. The survey gathered around 237 answers, but after eliminating the outliers and checking the Cronbach alpha value for reliability, only 205 (N=205) answers could be used for the following analyses. Participants who did not fully complete the questionnaire, as well as responses with a repeated IP address, were eliminated. Strategy 1, 2, and 3 were each equally answered by 25,4% of the participants, whereas strategy 4 was answered by 23,9%.

<b>Number of respondents for each group/ strategy</b>		
<b>Group</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>S1: Mortification &amp; Censorship</b>	52	25,4
<b>S2: Delay, reducing Offensiveness &amp; Censorship</b>	52	25,4
<b>S3: Corrective Action</b>	52	25,4
<b>S4: No action/ Ignoring</b>	49	23,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6: Number of respondents

### 4.3 Demographics

In total, the online questionnaire was completed by 99 man and 106 women and therefore reached a total participants number of 205. It could be analyzed that 60,5% and therefore, the majority of the participants are between 18 and 24 years old. 34,1% of the participants are

aged between 25 and 34 years, whereas only 2% of the participants are between 35 and 45 years old. Analyzing participants nationality, the majority of participants, 49,3%, are from Germany, followed by the second largest group of participants 17,1% who are from Portugal. In terms of participants marital status, it can be seen that the majority and therefore, 84,4% of the participants are single. Only 7,8% of the participants are married but do not have any kids. The majority with 60,5% of participants are students and 19,5%, are either full-time employees or self-employed.

Lastly, the participants were asked about their monthly net income. 48,3% and therefore, 99 participants have a monthly net income between 501€-1000€. 19% selected that they have a monthly net income between 1001€ and 1500€, and 16,1% selected that their monthly net income is less than 500€ (Appendix 4).

#### 4.4 Descriptive Characteristics

The descriptive characteristics were used to analyze the nominal and ordinal data to get insights about consumer's SM behavior (Appendix 5). Therefore, the following table presents participants attitude toward their WOM online behavior and shows participants frequency of using SM platforms. The results indicate that every participant uses SM platforms. The lowest group of participants (2,9%) is using SM platforms rarely. 60,5%, and therefore, the majority of participants use SM platforms on a daily base, whereas 26,8% use SM often and 9,8% at least sometimes.

<b>I ... use Social Media Platforms.</b>				
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid:</b>	<b>Never</b>	0	0	0
	<b>Rarely</b>	6	2,9	2,9
	<b>Sometimes</b>	20	9,8	12,7
	<b>Often</b>	55	26,8	39,5
	<b>Always</b>	124	60,5	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	205	100,0	

Table 7: Participants use of SM Platforms

Looking at the next table, the participants were asked to answer three questions about their attitude toward WOM online. The first question indicates that 93,7% of the participants have already used online reviews at least once to decide on a product or service. Only 6,3% have never used online reviews to make a product or service decision.

The next question within Table 3 indicates that 85,9% of participants decision toward a brand, a product or a service has in the past been influenced by reviews they read online. Just 14,1% indicate that online reviews have never influenced them.

Within the last question, the participants where asked if they like to discuss their brand, product, or service experiences with others online. Therefore, 53,7% answered with no which means they do not want to share and discuss their experiences on online platforms. 46,3% of the participants answered the question with a yes which means they like to discuss and share their experiences online with others.

<b>Participants Attitude toward eWOM</b>					
			<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
I have used online reviews to make a decision about a product or service.	<b>Valid:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	192	93,7	93,7
		<b>No</b>	13	6,3	100,0
		<b>Total</b>	205	100,0	
In the past, my decision has been influenced by reviews that I read online.		<b>Yes</b>	176	85,9	85,9
		<b>No</b>	29	14,1	100,0
		<b>Total</b>	205	100,0	
I like to discuss my product/ service experience with others online.		<b>Yes</b>	95	46,3	46,3
		<b>No</b>	110	53,7	100,0
		<b>Total</b>	205	100,0	

Table 8: Participants Attitude toward eWOM

After the participants were shown the Dove firestorm situation on the online platform Facebook, they were asked to answer if they already knew the failed Dove campaign they were shown within the questionnaire. The majority, 59%, responded that they had never heard of the failed campaign, whereas 41% stated that they did know about the campaign before.

<b>Have you heard about this Dove campaign before?</b>				
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
<b>Valid:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	84	41,0	41,0
	<b>No</b>	121	59,0	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	205	100,0	

Table 9: Participants that heard of the failed campaign

#### 4.5 Validation of Stimuli

Each of the four developed response strategies is represented by a stimulus. S<sub>1</sub> is represented by “apology”, S<sub>2</sub> is represented by “Delay, reducing offensiveness and shifting the blame”, S<sub>3</sub> is represented by “admitting responsibility” and S<sub>4</sub> is represented by “ignoring”. In order to analyze if the stimuli were understood the participants were asked four questions measured on

a 7-point Likert scale<sup>3</sup> within the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire was used as a base to validate the stimuli. Since the participants were randomly allocated to one of the four strategies the stimuli are assumed to be perceived differently when being faced with different strategies. For example, “apologize” is assumed to have a higher effect among the participants faced with S<sub>1</sub> as for the participants faced with S<sub>2</sub>. The aim is to compare the perceived differences of the response strategies among the groups.

Thus, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to assess if the stimuli are being perceived differently within the different strategies. Therefore, the following null hypothesis was assumed: **H<sub>0</sub>**: *The stimuli are equal within all strategies.*

First, the mean rank of the stimuli's are compared with each other. The mean rank of the stimulus “apologize” was perceived the highest within S<sub>1</sub> (**MR<sub>S1</sub>=148.06**, MR<sub>S2</sub>=77.16, MR<sub>S3</sub>=147.53, MR<sub>S4</sub>=35.53). Since the p-value is below .05 the null hypothesis can be rejected. The apology can be perceived as statistically significant different among all strategies.

Next, the mean ranks from the “delay, reduce offensiveness and shifting blame” stimuli were compared. The stimuli had by far the highest mean rank within S<sub>2</sub> (MR<sub>S1</sub>=66.46, **MR<sub>S2</sub>=151.77**, MR<sub>S3</sub>=105.79, MR<sub>S4</sub>=87.06). Again, the data is proven to be statistically significant different among the strategies (p-value=.000<sig.). Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Checking the “responsibility” stimulus it can also be assumed that the stimulus was understood correctly since the mean rank of the stimulus was the highest (MR<sub>S1</sub>=141.39, MR<sub>S2</sub>=81.72, **MR<sub>S3</sub>=147.32**, MR<sub>S4</sub>=37.81) within the representing strategy (S<sub>3</sub>). Resulting from a p-value below .05 statistically significant differences are confirmed.

Lastly, the “no action” stimulus was tested. Since the mean rank of the stimulus is by far the highest (MR<sub>S1</sub>=87.05, MR<sub>S2</sub>=101.42, MR<sub>S3</sub>=58.24, **MR<sub>S4</sub>=169.10**) within the representing strategy (S<sub>4</sub>) the stimulus is also assumed to be proven as understood. The null hypothesis can be rejected, as the stimulus is been perceived as statistically significant different (p-value=.00<.05).

Based on the conducted results all of the stimuli were proven to have their highest effects within the strategies they are representing. Therefore the conclusion can be made that each stimulus is representing the strategy correctly.

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<sup>3</sup> The questions and the used measurement scale are described within 3.2.2 Online questionnaire (p.21)

#### 4.6 Reliability and Validity Test

To ensure the quality and usefulness of the collected data, the validation of the questionnaire is necessary. Therefore, a reliability and validity test for each of the three constructs was conducted. To perform a reliability and validity test, the questions within each construct, BA, NWOM, and eNWOM, needed to be computed for each manipulated strategy. For example, Q1, Q2, and Q3 of the construct BA were put together and afterward tested for reliability and validity. The same step has been done for the other two constructs.

Before running the analyses, the constructs of NWOM and eNWOM were converted from a negative into a positive sense, to be consistent with the construct of BA and to represent the same idea and correlation within all of the constructs.

##### 4.6.1 Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

A reliability study was performed to analyze and evaluate the internal consistency of each used construct. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha statistic was generated and applied. Interpreting the Cronbach's alpha of the three constructs the Cronbach's alpha value needed to be above the threshold of 0.7 to demonstrate good values in terms of internal consistency of the construct (Malhotra, 2010).

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>			
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>alpha</b>
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	BA_total	3	.953
<b>NWOM</b>	nWOM_total	3	.901
<b>eNWOM</b>	eNWOM_total	3	.966

Table 10: Cronbach's Alpha measuring internal consistency

The first construct, BA, presents a Cronbach's alpha value of .953 without deleting any of the questions of the construct, which means that the construct is consistent and reliable.

The Cronbach's alpha value of the second construct, NWOM, was .901, whereas the last construct presents a value of .966. Same as for the construct of BA all the questions within the construct of NWOM and eNWOM together lead to a higher score and therefore no question needed to be deleted. The Cronbach's alpha values of the construct of BA, NWOM, and eNWOM demonstrates a higher value as the threshold value of 0.7, which presents a high reliability and consistency of each construct. Thus, each constructs value indicated is reliable and will show accurate results (Appendix 7).

#### 4.6.2 Validity Test

Next, a Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was used to analyze if and to which degree the constructs measure what they claim to measure. Therefore, the PCA asking for varimax rotation for three constructs was performed. The construct of NWOM did show one question that did fall into two of the components instead of one. Therefore, the second question of the construct of NWOM was deleted to make all of the items fall in three separate dimensions (Appendix 8). Next, another PCA was used without the second question of the construct of NWOM. Different as the expected three factors, only two of the factors present an Eigenvalue greater than 1 and therefore are likely to present real underlying factors. Which means that the two factors with an Eigenvalue greater as 1 explain 82,40% of the total Variance. The first factor explains 68,57% of the variance and the second one 15,45%. After deleting the second question from the construct of NWOM, the constructs did fall into three different component dimensions (Table 11). Checking the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of the sample adequacy the scored value was .875 and therefore indicates that the sample is adequate.

<b>Principal Component Analysis (PCA)</b>				
<b>KMO=0.875</b>				
<b>Question:</b>	<b>Component</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Brand Attitude</b>				
BA1:		.894		
BA2:		.872		
BA3:		.895		
<b>nWOM</b>				
nWOM1:			.827	
nWOM3:			.772	
<b>eNWOM</b>				
eNWOM1:	.884			
eNWOM2:	.897			
eNWOM3:	.896			
<b>% of Variance Explained</b>	<b>68,577%</b>	<b>15,445%</b>	<b>7,365%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 11: PCA table after Item was deleted

Because one item of the construct of NWOM was deleted, the Cronbach's alpha test had to be repeated without including question two for the NWOM construct.

Due to deleting Q<sub>2</sub> of the construct of NWOM, the Cronbach's alpha for NWOM slightly decreased and now presents a value of 0.854. Since the value is still higher than 0.7, the construct of NWOM still shows high reliability and consistency (Appendix 8 and 9).

<b>Cronbach`s Alpha</b>			
<b>Construct</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Alpha</b>
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	BA_Total	3	.953
<b>NWOM</b>	nWOM_Total	2	.854
<b>eNWOM</b>	eNWOM_Total	3	.966

Table 12: New Cronbach`s Alpha table after deleting Q<sub>2</sub> of NWOM

#### 4.7 Test of Normality

To check if there is a normal distribution among the sample, a normality check was carried out for the summated BA, NWOM, and eNWOM constructs. To achieve a normal distribution, the p-value has to have a higher level than the level of significance of .05 (sig.>.05). To test the normality, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) was performed. While checking the obtained data for the construct BA, it can be analyzed that the p-values of all strategies are below the level of significance (p-value<.05). Therefore, a parametric test cannot be used to test the normal distribution of the BA construct.

Checking the p-values for NWOM, it can be analyzed that the p-values for S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>3</sub>, and S<sub>4</sub> are below the level of significance .05 (sig.<.05). Thus, the parametric test of normality can't be used. Since the p-value of the second strategy is slightly higher as the level of significance (.059>sig.) there is a normal distribution for the construct of NWOM of S<sub>2</sub>. Because the p-values of the four strategies within the construct of eNWOM are below the level of significance .05, a normal distribution can't be explained by using parametric tests (Appendix 10).

<b>Normality Test</b>				
<b>Groups:</b>		<b>Kolmogorov-Smirnov one sample test</b>		
		<b>Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	S1 Mortification:	.202	52	.000
	S2 Delay:	.215	52	.000
	S3 Corrective Action:	.203	52	.000
	S4 No Action:	.140	49	.018
<b>NWOM</b>	S1 Mortification:	.177	52	.031
	S2 Delay:	.135	52	.058
	S3 Corrective Action:	.230	52	.002
	S4 No Action:	.211	49	.000
<b>eNWOM</b>	S1 Mortification:	.218	52	.002
	S2 Delay:	.156	52	.036
	S3 Corrective Action:	.160	52	.042
	S4 No Action:	.185	49	.000

Table 13: Normality Test of BA, NWOM, and eWOM

Because in most of the constructs the parametric tests can't be used for any of the strategies to test the constructs for a normal distribution non-parametric tests have to be conducted to analyze the validation and comparability of the different strategies.

#### **4.8 Comparability of groups**

In order to determine whether other factors interfere on the result, the demographic data was tested for comparability and differences. The sample size consists of 205 participants who were randomly allocated to one of the four response strategies (S<sub>1</sub>-Mortification & Censorship, S<sub>2</sub>-Delay, Reducing offensiveness & Censorship, S<sub>3</sub>- Corrective Action and S<sub>4</sub>- No action strategy).

To ensure a homogeneous response number within all four strategies the evenly present elements option was used. This ensured that each strategy will be answered by the same number of participants. Due to eliminating responses with a repeated IP address and due to deleting other outliers the amount of responses for each strategy varies slightly (N<sub>S1</sub>=52; N<sub>S2</sub>=52; N<sub>S3</sub>=52; N<sub>S4</sub>=49). To assure the comparability of the group's demographic variables as gender, age, occupation, nationality, monthly net income, and marital status will be tested.

To compare the differences within the groups a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used. The result of the test shows that most of the demographic variables are identical among all strategies. The variable gender (p-value=.184>sig.), age (p-value=.763>sig.), nationality (p-value=.483>sig.) and occupation (p-value=.166>sig.) are identical and statistically not significant. Whereas the marital status (p-value=.006<sig.) and the monthly net income (p-value=.047<sig.) result to be statistically significantly different among the response strategies. Thus, the four groups cannot be analyzed as being identical in terms of marital status and monthly net income. Since the hypothesis within this work only focus on comparing S<sub>1</sub> with S<sub>2</sub> and S<sub>3</sub> with S<sub>4</sub> the groups were analyzed separately to see if the differences exist within the compared groups. Comparing S<sub>1</sub> with S<sub>2</sub> all variables result to be identical across both strategies since the p-value for all variables is above .05.

When comparing the demographic variables from S<sub>3</sub> with S<sub>4</sub> again all of the variables result to be identical and statistically not significant (p-value>sig.).

Summarizing, it can be said that there are statistically significant differences in terms of marital status and monthly net income when comparing all of the strategies with each other. But when comparing the groups tested within the hypothesis there are no differences recognized. Therefore, it can be said that the distribution of the demographic variables

between the tested strategies within the hypothesis are identical across the two groups. The detailed output tables can be found within Appendix 11.

#### **4.9 Hypotheses testing**

The RQ proposed within this dissertation aims to analyze what are effective response strategies a brand or company can apply to manage eNWOM.

**RQ:** *What are effective response strategies companies can apply to manage eNWOM?*

To answer the RQ, all strategies applied within this dissertation must be compared and tested to recognize differences among them. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used which is the nonparametric alternative ANOVA test. As the normality test failed, the use of nonparametric tests is necessary. The Kruskal-Wallis test enables to recognize differences by analyzing the mean rank of more than two rankings.

Since the thesis wants to compare the different effects of the strategies on user's BA or intention to pass on NWOM the Kruskal-Wallis test is used. To measure user's intention to pass on NWOM the construct of NWOM and eNWOM are used.

For each construct tested a Kruskal-Wallis test was run comparing all of the strategies with each other and inspecting for differences between the pairs. Within each hypothesis a table with the summarized relevant data can be found. The detailed output resulted from the Kruskal-Wallis test can be found within Appendix 12.

To analyze each hypothesis a null hypothesis is needed, assuming that there are no differences on the effect of the construct between two strategies.

#### **Hypothesis 1:**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *There is a significant difference in brand attitude between response strategies focused on "Mortification and Censorship strategy" compared to strategies focused on "Delay, reducing offensiveness and Censorship strategy."*

**H<sub>0</sub>:** *There is no difference in brand attitude between S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>.*

**Brand Attitude:** The first hypothesis measures the differences in BA between S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, a Kruskal-Wallis test was performed which full output can be found within Appendix 12 (Kruskal-Wallis test BA).

Analyzing the output, it can be seen that the mean rank of S<sub>1</sub> (MR<sub>S<sub>1</sub>BA</sub>=65.30) is higher as the mean rank of S<sub>2</sub> (MR<sub>S<sub>2</sub>BA</sub>=39.37). Based on the difference in the mean rank S<sub>1</sub> can be interpreted to have a very strong effect whereas S<sub>2</sub> has a less strong effect on user BA.

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>BA:</b>	S1- Mortification	52	65.63	.000
<b>S1_vs_S2</b>	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	39.37	
	Total	104		

Table 14: Hypotheses 1-BA

To prove if this assumption is correct and if there are significant differences, the level of significance is being checked. Since the p-value is below the level of significance ( $p\text{-value} < .05$ ) statistically significant differences of the effect on BA between the two strategies are analyzed. Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected whereas  $H_1$  will be accepted.

### Hypothesis 2:

**$H_2$ :** *There is a significant difference on users' intention to pass on the NWOM between response strategies focused on "Mortification and Censorship strategy" compared to strategies focused on "Delay, reducing offensiveness and Censorship strategy."*

**$H_0$ :** *There is no difference on user's intention to pass on NWOM between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ .*

### Intention to pass on NWOM (NWOM and eNWOM):

**NWOM:** The aim of the second hypothesis is to analyze if there are significant differences on users' intention to pass on NWOM when being faced with  $S_1$  ( $MR_{S1NWOM}=59.78$ ;  $MR_{S2NWOM}=45.22$ ) or with  $S_2$ . Since there is a difference between the mean rank of  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  significant differences are assumed. To test this assumption the p-value has to be analyzed. Since the p-value is below the significance level ( $p\text{-value}=.013 < .05$ ) the null hypothesis can be rejected, and statistically significant differences are proven. Therefore,  $H_2$  is accepted, stating that the difference on user's intention to pass on NWOM will be different when being faced with  $S_1$  or with  $S_2$ . Because  $S_1$  has the higher mean rank the effect on passing on NWOM measured on the construct of NWOM is expected to be stronger when being faced with  $S_1$  as when being faced with  $S_2$ . The whole output of the construct NWOM can be found within Appendix 12 (Kruskal-Wallis test NWOM).

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>NWOM:</b>	S1- Mortification	52	59.78	.013
<b>S1_vs_S2</b>	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	45.22	
	Total	104		

Table 15: Hypothesis 2-NWOM

**eNWOM:** eNWOM is another construct which is assumed to explain the differences of managing online firestorms using different response strategies. Therefore, the second hypothesis aims to analyze if there are significant differences on users' intention to pass on

NWOM measured on the construct of eNWOM when being faced with S<sub>1</sub> (MR<sub>S1eNWOM</sub>=59.67; MR<sub>S2eNWOM</sub>=45.33) or S<sub>2</sub>. The differences between the two strategies means on their effect is assumed to be rather small. Since the p-value is below the significance level (p-value=.013<.05) the null hypothesis can be rejected, and statistically significant differences are proven. Therefore, H<sub>2</sub> is accepted, stating that the difference on user's intention to pass on NWOM will be different when being faced with S<sub>1</sub> or with S<sub>2</sub>. The "Mortification strategy" was proven to have a strong effect on both constructs, NWOM and eNWOM, and will therefore decrease user's intention to spread NWOM and eNWOM. The whole output of the construct eNWOM can be found within Appendix 12 (Kruskal-Wallis test eNWOM).

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>eNWOM:</b>	S1- Mortification	52	59.67	.013
<b>S1_vs_S2</b>	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	45.33	
	Total	104		

Table 16: Hypotheses 2-eNWOM

### Hypothesis 3:

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant difference in brand attitude between response strategies focused on "Corrective Action strategy" compared to strategies focused on "No Action/ Ignoring strategy."*

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no difference in brand attitude between S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>.*

H<sub>3</sub> aims to evaluate the differences of the effect on BA after participants are faced with S<sub>3</sub> compared to participants being faced with S<sub>4</sub>. The mean rank of S<sub>3</sub> is higher as the mean rank of S<sub>4</sub> (MR<sub>S3BA</sub>= 70.49; MR<sub>S4NWOM</sub>=30.32) which leads to the assumption that S<sub>3</sub> has a stronger effect on BA (Appendix 12). Checking the p-value, the null hypothesis can be rejected since the p-value is below the level of significance (p-value<.05). This means that there is a statistically significant difference on the effect of BA between S<sub>3</sub> and S<sub>4</sub>. Therefore, H<sub>3</sub> can be accepted.

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>BA:</b>	S3- Corrective action	52	70.49	.000
<b>S3_vs_S4</b>	S4- No action	49	30.32	
	Total	101		

Table 17: Hypotheses 3

### Hypothesis 4:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *There is a significant difference in users' intention to pass on NWOM between response strategies focused on "Corrective Action strategy" compared to strategies focused on "No Action/ Ignoring strategy."*

**H<sub>0</sub>:** *There is no difference on user's intention to pass on NWOM between S<sub>3</sub> and S<sub>4</sub>.*

**Intention to pass on NWOM (NWOM and eNWOM):**

**NWOM:** the aim of H<sub>4</sub> is to analyze the differences in user's intention to pass on NWOM when being faced with S<sub>3</sub> or when being faced with S<sub>4</sub>. S<sub>3</sub> has a  $MR_{S_3NWOM}=69.78$  whereas the mean rank of S<sub>4</sub> is considerably lower ( $MR_{S_4NWOM}=31.07$ ). Therefore, there is a large difference between the effect on users' intention to pass on NWOM among the two strategies. S<sub>3</sub> is being expected to have very strong effect whereas the effect of S<sub>4</sub> is expected to be rather very low. Since the p-value is at .00 and therefore below the significance level .05 the hypothesis is accepted which means that there are statistically significant differences between the strategies (Appendix 12).

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>NWOM:</b>	S3- Corrective action	52	69.78	.000
	S4- No action	49	31.07	
<b>S3_vs_S4</b>				
	Total	101		

Table 18: Hypotheses 4-NWOM

**eNWOM:** Lastly the construct of eNWOM was measured. eNWOM is also being used to analyze the differences of the effect on the intention to pass on NWOM. Therefore, the construct is also being analyzed. As the results show, the mean rank of S<sub>3</sub> is higher as the mean rank of S<sub>4</sub> ( $MR_{S_3eNWOM}=67.91$ ;  $MR_{S_4eNWOM}=33.05$ ). Due to that S<sub>3</sub> is being assumed to have a very strong effect on consumers intention to pass on eNWOM. Checking the p-value for the construct of eNWOM within both strategies the p-value is below the level of significance (p-value<sig.) and therefore H<sub>4</sub> can be accepted since statistically significant differences exist.

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>eNWOM:</b>	S3- Corrective action	52	67.91	.000
	S4- No action	49	33.05	
<b>S3_vs_S4</b>				
	Total	101		

Table 19: Hypotheses 4-eNWOM

**4.10 Discussion of results**

Before further differences are analyzed, the results found are briefly summarized.

S1-“Mortification and Censorship strategy” and S2-“Delay, reducing offensiveness and Censorship strategy” were proven to be statistically significant different in terms of their

effect on brand attitude. Hence Hypothesis 1 was accepted, and  $S_1$  was analyzed having a stronger effect on user's BA as  $S_2$ .

The differences on users' intention to pass on NWOM between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  was measured on the construct of NWOM and eNWOM. Both constructs could prove statistically significant differences. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was also accepted.

Comparing the effect of  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  the "Mortification strategy" was analyzed having a stronger effect to decrease user's intention to pass on NWOM as the "Delay and reduce offensiveness strategy".

H3 focuses on testing the differences of the effect on BA comparing  $S_3$  with  $S_4$ . Therefore,  $S_3$  was analyzed having a very strong effect on users BA. The differences between the two strategies were proven to be significant and therefore H<sub>3</sub> can be accepted.

Lastly H<sub>4</sub> was checked for its differences within user's intention to pass on NWOM when being faced with  $S_3$  or  $S_4$  measured on the constructs NWOM and eNWOM. Again, significant differences between the strategies are proven and H<sub>3</sub> was accepted.  $S_3$  measured on both constructs was proved having a strong effect on reducing user's intention to pass on NWOM.

	<b>Null Hypothesis</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>H1:</b>	<b>H<sub>0BA</sub>:</b> There is no difference in user's intention to pass on NWOM between S1-Mortification and S2-Delay, reduce offensiveness.	.000	<b>H<sub>0BA</sub>:</b> Reject null Hypothesis and accept H1
<b>H2:</b>	<b>H<sub>0NWOM</sub>:</b> There is no difference in user's intention to pass on NWOM between S1-Mortification and S2-Delay, reduce offensiveness.	.000	<b>H<sub>0NWOM</sub>:</b> Reject null Hypothesis and accept H2
<b>H3:</b>	<b>H<sub>0BA</sub>:</b> There is no difference in user's intention to pass on NWOM between S1-Mortification and S2-Delay, reduce offensiveness.	.013	<b>H<sub>0BA</sub>:</b> Reject null Hypothesis and accept H3
<b>H4:</b>	<b>H<sub>0NWOM</sub>:</b> There is no difference in user's intention to pass on NWOM between S1-Mortification and S2-Delay, reduce offensiveness.	.013	<b>H<sub>0NWOM</sub>:</b> Reject null Hypothesis and accept H4

Table 20: Result from hypotheses testing

Based on the results all proposed hypotheses cannot be rejected and therefore are accepted.

Thus, it can be said that H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> are accepted since the "Mortification & censorship strategy" has a different effect on BA and the intention to pass on NWOM as the "Delay, reduce offensiveness & censorship strategy".

And it can also be said that H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub> are also accepted due to the fact that the “Corrective action strategy” has a different effect on BA and the intention to pass on NWOM as the “No action/ Ignoring strategy”.

**Checking differences comparing all strategies:**

Performing a statistical test and analyzing the hypotheses, some strategy combinations have been particularly conspicuous. These are observed and interpreted within this section. For this purpose, the previously analyzed Kruskal-Wallis table was used, which shows the differences for all possible strategy combinations. At first the mean ranks have been analyzed then the level of significance.

Foremost all strategies were compared with each other to analyze which of the strategies had the strongest effect managing the online firestorm. When analyzing the mean rank values, it was found that among all strategies S<sub>3</sub> (MR<sub>S3</sub>=149.87) has the highest mean rank value and is therefore assumed to be the most effective strategy. Whereas S<sub>4</sub> was analyzed having a very small mean rank and is therefore assumed to be the less effective strategy. There have been significant differences among all strategies. To assess these differences, each strategy combination was focused at and conspicuities were explained in more detail.

	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Mean Rank (general)</b>
<b>Strategy 1</b>	The effect of all strategies is statistically significant different from each other.	.000	127.67
<b>Strategy 2</b>			91.98
<b>Strategy 3</b>			149.87
<b>Strategy 4</b>			47.27

S1=Mortification & censorship; S2=Delay, reduce offensiveness & censorship; 3=Corrective action; S4=No action

Table 21: Differences between all Strategies

**Checking differences in general comparing strategies pairwise:**

During the analysis’s significant differences among the strategies within the hypotheses could be detected. It was found that any strategy combination shows significant values except the combination of S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub>. When looking at the mean rank values, only a very small difference between the values has been noticeable (MR<sub>S1</sub>=48.64, MR<sub>S3</sub>=56.36) (Table 22). Therefore, no or at most very small differences between the two strategies are assumed. To test this value, the p-value was analyzed, which is above the significant level and therefore confirms that there are no differences between the two strategies. This also means that the effect of strategy 1 and strategy 3 is been perceived as the same for individuals faced with S<sub>1</sub> or S<sub>3</sub> after being exposed to online firestorms (Appendix 13). As previously analyzed within the hypothesis

testing the other strategy combination were analyzed as being significant different in terms of their effect on BA (Appendix 12).

	<b>Strategy Type</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>S1_vs_S2</b>	S1- Mortification	52	63.54	.000
	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	41.46	
	Total	104		
<b>S1_vs_S3</b>	S1- Mortification	52	48.64	.192
	S3- Corrective action	52	56.36	
	Total	104		
<b>S1_vs_S4</b>	S1-Mortification	52	69.84	.000
	S4- No action	49	31.01	
	Total	101		
<b>S2_vs_S4</b>	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	64.43	.000
	S4- No action	49	36.74	
	Total	101		
<b>S2_vs_S3</b>	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	38.78	.000
	S3-Corrective action	52	66.22	
	Total	104		
<b>S3_vs_S4</b>	S3- Corrective action	52	71.31	.000
	S4- No action	49	29.45	
	Total	101		

S1=Mortification & censorship; S2=Delay, reduce offensiveness & censorship; 3=Corrective action; S4=No action

Table 22: Differences between two strategies

### Checking for differences of BA and intention to pass on NWOM comparing strategies pairwise:

During the analyses of the effect on BA and intention to pass on NWOM, repeatedly significant values can be observed for all strategy combination except the combination of S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub>. Therefore, the combination of these two strategies is analyzed further within the following. The whole output of analyzing the differences comparing all strategies pairwise can be found within Appendix 13.

**BA:** Running a Kruskal-Wallis test and checking the mean ranks for BA all strategies prove to have significant differences except of the combination of S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub>. Not only are there no assumed differences comparing the mean rank of S<sub>1</sub> with S<sub>3</sub> ( $MR_{S_1BA}=51.37$ ,  $MR_{S_2BA}=53.63$ ) but also checking the p-value ( $p\text{-value}=.696>.05$ ) it can be proven that the effect on the construct of BA of S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub> is equal.

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>BA:</b> <b>S1_vs_S2</b>	S1- Mortification	52	65.63	.000
	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	39.37	
	Total	104		
<b>BA:</b> <b>S3_vs_S4</b>	S3- Corrective action	52	70.49	.000
	S4- No action	49	30.32	
	Total	101		

Table 23: Differences- BA

**Intention to pass on NWOM (NWOM and eNWOM):** In order to determine whether there are any differences between the two other constructs, NWOM and eNWOM, these are also examined (Appendix 13).

**NWOM:** NWOM, presents repeatedly significant values for all strategy combinations except the combination of S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub> ( $MR_{S1NWOM}=47.00$ ,  $MR_{S3NWOM}=58.00$ ). The p-value is above the significance level (p-value=.696>sig.) and therefore confirms the equality of the strategies S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub>.

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>NWOM:</b> <b>S1_vs_S2</b>	S1- Mortification	52	59.78	.013
	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	45.22	
	Total	104		
<b>NWOM:</b> <b>S3_vs_S4</b>	S3- Corrective action	52	69.78	.000
	S4- No action	49	31.07	
	Total	101		

Table 24: Differences- NWOM

**eNWOM:** For the construct of eNWOM almost equal mean ranks,  $MR_{1eNWOM}=51.37$  and  $MR_{S2eNWOM}=53.63$ , are analyzed. Once again, no significant differences could be found within this construct. The p-value is above the significance level (p-value=.696>sig.) and thus confirms the equality of S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub>.

	Strategy Type	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
<b>eNWOM:</b> <b>S1_vs_S2</b>	S1- Mortification	52	59.67	.013
	S2- Delay, reduce offensiveness	52	45.33	
	Total	104		
<b>eNWOM:</b> <b>S3_vs_S4</b>	S3- Corrective action	52	67.91	.000
	S4- No action	49	33.05	
	Total	101		

Table 25: Differences- eNWOM

In summary, it can be stated that the effects of S<sub>1</sub>-“Mortification & Censorship” and S<sub>3</sub>-“Corrective Action” on all three constructs are the same. This proves that users faced with S<sub>1</sub> or S<sub>3</sub> will both be positive influences in terms of their BA and intention to pass on NWOM online. However, based on the results gathered within this thesis S<sub>3</sub> is being perceived as

slightly stronger as S2. Since the two strategies are assumed to be equal both strategies are effective response strategies.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

The main goal of the dissertation was to analyze the existence of online firestorms and to provide valuable and effective response strategies to manage NWOM within online SM crisis. By using an experiment, the developed strategies have been tested. The summary of the main findings, a final conclusion, the academic relevance of the topic, limitations, and further research will be presented within this chapter.

### **5.1 Main Findings & Conclusions**

As internet usage increases, brands and businesses are confronted with the growing influence of eWOM, which can have either positive or negative effects. It is therefore essential to be aware of the impact of eNWOM and to be able to manage and control online firestorms the moment they occur. The timely detection, prevention, and mitigation process of eNWOM that evolves into online firestorms are of remarkable importance. Therefore, the main objective of this dissertation is to develop response strategies to manage eNWOM. On the one hand it is important to understand the differences between the developed strategies. On the other hand it is crucial to analyze the perceived differences between participants perception after being confronted with  $S_1$ =”Mortification & censorship strategy”/  $S_3$ =”Corrective Action Strategy” compared to the participants that have been faced with  $S_2$ =”Delay, reduce offensiveness & censorship strategy”/  $S_4$ =”No action/ Ignoring strategy”.

To answer the RQ, the existing literature regarding eNWOM and online firestorms, as well as existing firestorm examples, had to be researched. Therefore, four firestorm strategies were developed and tested within an online questionnaire.

To determine whether the use of one of the four strategies improves participants’ intention to pass on NWOM and the BA, the constructs of BA, NWOM and eNWOM were used as an effective measurement scale. The aim was to analyze whether participants BA improved or the intention to pass on NWOM decreased. The decision which of the four strategies were tested against each other was developed based on the literature.

By using the Kruskal-Wallis test the overall statistically significant differences among all strategies could be analyzed. When comparing all of the strategies with each other (e.g.  $S_1$  against  $S_2$ ,  $S_2$  against  $S_3$  and so on) the combination of  $S_1$  with the  $S_3$  could be analyzed as not being statistically different and therefore as having the same effect.

In both cases, comparing the effect on BA or on the intention to pass on NWOM, all strategy combinations except of comparing  $S_1$  with  $S_3$  can be analyzed as being statistically significant different.

Based on the analyses, all proposed hypotheses cannot be rejected and therefore are accepted since there are significant differences between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  as well as between  $S_3$  and  $S_4$  on both constructs measured.

Therefore, it can be said that H1 and H2 are accepted since the “Mortification & censorship strategy” has a different effect on BA and the intention to pass on NWOM as the “Delay, reduce offensiveness & censorship strategy”. Resulting from the analyzes it can also be said that H3 and H4 are also accepted due to the fact that the “Corrective action strategy” has a different effect on BA and the intention to pass on NWOM as the “No action/ Ignoring strategy”.

$S_1$  and  $S_3$  were both analyzed having a strong effect on the participants BA and intention to pass on NWOM. Therefore, it can be assumed that the two strategies, “Mortification & Censorship” and “Corrective action”, will increase participants BA and decrease participants intention to pass on NWOM in a positive way. Since  $S_1$  and  $S_3$  are not statistically different from each other both strategies are assumed to have the same effect when managing NWOM within social media crises.

$S_2$ -“Delay, reduce offensiveness & Censorship” and  $S_4$ -“No action/ Ignoring” were analyzed as being very low in terms of effectiveness on BA and the intention to pass on NWOM and therefore are not recommended to use.

Based on the analyses it can be said that  $S_1$  and  $S_3$  will both positive influence user’s BA and decrease the intention to pass on NWOM online in a positive manner.

Therefore, “ $S_1$ -Mortification & Censorship Strategy” and “ $S_3$ -Corrective Action Strategy” are the two most effective strategies based on the measured constructs, BA NWOM and eNWOM.

## **5.2 Managerial / Academic Implications**

During the research on eWOM, only a few guidelines or clearly defined response strategies could be seen, which are used by brands and companies to get firestorm situation under control. Therefore, the developed strategies consist of a combination of several single small strategies, which have been combined and now represent four clear strategies.

For this reason, the developed and tested strategies represent possible strategies, which can be used effectively to get firestorm situations under control. Due to the lack of clearly defined response strategies and the small selection of smaller strategies, the content of this work can be considered as useful and helpful within the academic research field. The work can be seen

as a guideline or framework when developing strategies to prevent online firestorms or when using the developed strategies within this work.

This work provides an idea of what and how response strategies can be used and therefore increases both the academic and management value in this field of research.

Since managers today still have a limited understanding of how to deal with online firestorm situations, brands or companies are still exposed to the harm of eNWOM. By identifying response actions that can be used as a response strategy, this gap can be closed and used as a source of information for brands and companies facing online firestorms.

### **5.3 Limitation and Further Research**

After analyzing the data within this dissertation and researching the literature for relevant information, a number of limitations regarding this study were identified. The most significant part of the limitation focuses on the target sample used for the analyzes. The experiment was conducted based on four manipulated strategy posts addressing a failed communication campaign post from the brand Dove on the online platform Facebook. There is a high variety of SM platforms as for example, Twitter or Instagram, which were not taken into consideration. Since SM users might react differently among different SM platforms in terms of sharing, engaging, and spreading their WOM, focusing on only one SM platform could lead to inaccuracy.

Another limitation is addressing the fact that the sample did show an asymmetry of the participant's profile in terms of age, occupation, and nationality. 60,5% of the participants are between 18-24 years old, and 49,3% are from Germany. Among all the participants, 60,5% are students. Due to the fact that the sample is very asymmetric, there is a missing diversity among the sample, which is why a larger sample is recommended.

The next limitation also focuses on the sample size answering the online questionnaire. The sample size of this dissertation which could be used for the analyzes were 205 participants. In the case of an experimental survey, this size can be seen as a limitation due to the fact that the participants were randomly allocated, answering one of the four strategies. Therefore, each strategy consisted of 52 participants except of the fourth strategy tested which consisted of 49 participants. The limitation for strategy four consists due to the fact that some responses had to be deleted for the accuracy of the dissertation. Overall a larger sample would lead to more answers within each strategy and could increase the accuracy of the results conducted. The fact that no further strategy could be tested and that therefore, only four strategies were

developed also happens due to the small sample size as well as the limited processing time of the dissertation. Because of this,  $S_2$  could not be tested with strategy  $S_4$  and could, not be proven. Having a larger sample size would be recommended for future research.

There are also some limitations with the focus on the used campaign communication failure by the brand Dove. By using an already existing situation, it was to be assured that the firestorm situation is understood and recognized as such by the participants. However, there are also some limitations that occur due to the use of examples that a large number of participants may already know. For example, some participants may be influenced by their previous experience with the brand or by negative or false information already available and could, therefore, make biased decisions. Therefore, it is recommended to choose a brand which is either unknown, invented, or to choose a brand which is not burdened by negative events.

The next limitation also refers to the selected firestorm situation. Within this work, only the firestorm situation based on the failed campaign communication was considered. However other problems such as firestorm situations based on service failures or based on product failures were not further considered. Therefore, it cannot be confirmed that the strategies developed can also be used effectively when the situation is different. It is recommended to adapt the developed strategies specifically to the initial situation and not to generalize them.

Another limitation is that only a small number of questions on the constructs used to test the differences within the strategies were used. This resulted from trying to keep the questionnaire as short as possible to attract several participants to prevent participants from dropping the questionnaire before completing it. In addition, only a small number of constructs were used to measure the effect and differences, and other constructs were not further considered. By enlarging the sample size, the limitations which were listed regarding the sample size could be removed and therefore lead to a more accurate and generally representative result.

Based on these limitations, future research should not only use a larger sample size within this topic area but should also pay special attention to situation-related constructs that have not been considered within this work. Also, it is recommended to adapt the developed strategies specific to the question and the initial situation. Within this thesis, only the online platform

FB was considered, which is why it is recommended to test the developed strategies in relation to other SM platforms for future research within this topic area since the online behavior of individuals adapts to the SM platform used.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Pre-test

### Strategy 4: Firestorm Situation and Doing Nothing strategy



No. of Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

No. of Participants	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post in order to prevent an escalation of the situation.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

## Strategy 1: Mortification & Censorship Strategy

**Dove Dove**  
Today at 8:55 am · 🌐

An image we recently posted missed the mark in representing women of color thoughtfully. The Dove Campaign was not meant to be offensive and has been removed. We apologize deeply and sincerely for the offense that it has caused and to not condone any activity or imagery that insults any audience.

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)

No. of Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post in order to prevent an escalation of the situation.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

No. of Participants	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post in order to prevent an escalation of the situation.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

## Strategy 2: Delay, reducing Offensiveness & Censorship strategy

**Dove Dove**  
Yesterday at 8:55am · 🌐

Two weeks ago, as a part of a campaign for Dove body wash, a picture of the campaign was posted on the Dove Facebook page that featured two women of different ethnicities. The campaign picture was intended to convey that Dove body wash is for every woman and be a celebration of diversity. Our beauty comes in different shapes, sizes, hair textures, and skin tones. We believe that beauty is diverse and diversity is beautiful. Therefore, our models have not reported any problems and did not feel offended by the campaign but did understand the message Dove is trying to communicate. We will remove the Post and the whole campaign, and we are already reevaluating out internal processes for creating and reviewing content to make sure a Dove campaign is not being misunderstood by its customers ever again.

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)

No. of Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post in order to prevent an escalation of the situation.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

No. of Participants	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post in order to prevent an escalation of the situation.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

### Strategy 3: Corrective Action strategy

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from Dove, dated 'Today at 2:55 am'. The post features four images of women in a shower setting. The text of the post reads: 'Ready for a Dove shower? Sulfate-Free with 100% gentle cleansers, our body wash gets top marks from dermatologists.' Below the images, there are interaction options: 'Like · Comment · Share', '36 people like this.', and '107 shares'.

The comment thread includes the following entries:

- NazThe Mua**: You know what I'm not gonna say it... I'm gonna just say grab a black person at your company and ask them their honest opinion on this ad... what's the message here... or look at this from another persons perspective and ask them what does this ad mean... and see what they say... (73 likes, 4 hours ago)
- Dove**: Hello NazThe Mua, the content featured was supposed to demonstrate the benefits of our Dove Body Wash for every type of skin, but we clearly missed to communicate this message within the posted campaign. We are committed to representing beauty of all ages, ethnicities, shapes and sizes and to listen to all women's needs to create great products. For future campaigns we will work very closely with our agencies and the involved departments to make sure this does not happen again. (2 likes, 10 min ago)
- Julia Hall**: This is racist and this ad needs to be pulled! I won't be using Dove anymore! I am shocked! (46 likes, 4 hours ago)
- Dove**: Hello Julia, we are very sorry if our ad did offend you. The idea behind the featured content meant to demonstrate the benefits of our Dove Body wash and was not meant to be offensive. We will make sure something like this will not happen again! (0 likes, 5 min ago)
- Cathy Poss**: I can't believe Dove did this! This is so wrong and will hurt so many people... (29 likes, 4 hours ago)
- TJ Mayr**: This company is shame and should be shut down!!!! (23 likes, 4 hours ago)
- Sara Martin**: I HATE DOVE! (31 likes, 3 hours ago)
- Michael Dorn**: Come on @Dove, this is so so racist that I do not even know where to begin... Speechless! In future, please do not refer to colors!!! (53 likes, 3 hours ago)
- Dove**: Hello Michael, you are right! We will re-evaluate our internal processes for creating and reviewing content to make sure something like this does not happen again! The campaign picture was intended to convey that Dove body wash is for every woman, but we got it wrong and, as a result, offended many people. We are very sorry for the miscommunication! (1 like, 5 min ago)

No. of Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post in order to prevent an escalation of the situation.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

No. of Participants	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Dove apologized for the inappropriate and racist campaign and for offending may people.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dove disarmed the situation by deleting the failed campaign and the complaint comments after they officially apologized.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dove did react immediately to the complaints below their last campaign post in order to prevent an escalation of the situation.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Perceived differences between the seen Strategies:

No. of Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Are all of the strategies just seen different from each other in terms of response from the brand Dove?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

No. of Participants	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Are all of the strategies just seen different from each other in terms of response from the brand Dove?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Appendix 2: Measurement Scales**

Attitude Toward eWOM	I have used online reviews to help me make a decision about a product or service. In the past, my decisions have been influenced by reviews that I read online. I like to discuss my product/ service experiences with others online.	(Khare et al., 2011)
Brand Attitude	I think Dove is a good brand. I have a positive attitude toward Dove. I think Dove is a reliable and credible brand.	(Steiniger, 2016)
NWOM	I will not recommend the brand to my friends. I will say bad things about Dove to others. I will encourage friends and relatives to buy other similar products.	Voorhees, C. (2009)
Negative electronic WOM	I will write negative things about Dove online. I would discourage people I interact with online from purchasing Dove products. I would advise against Dove when someone is seeking my advice online.	Bougie et al. (2003)
Response Type	The brand apologized for the problem. (Mortification) The brand admitted responsibility for the problem. (Corrective action) The brand shifted the blame to others. (reducing Offensiveness) The brand ignored the complaining customer. (doing nothing/ Ignoring Strategy)	Kim et al. (2006); Y. L. Lee and Song (2010)

### Appendix 3: Online questionnaire

Dear participant,  
 for the purpose of my Master Thesis I developed this survey about **customers online behavior**. All the data collected will be completely confidential and anonymous. Furthermore, there are no right or wrong answers, so please feel free to answer as honest as possible and make sure you are answering all the questions. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at madlen.jaworski@gmail.com.


**Thank you so much for your support! Madlen**

#### Block 1: General question regarding participants online behavior

Q1 I ... use Social Media Platforms.

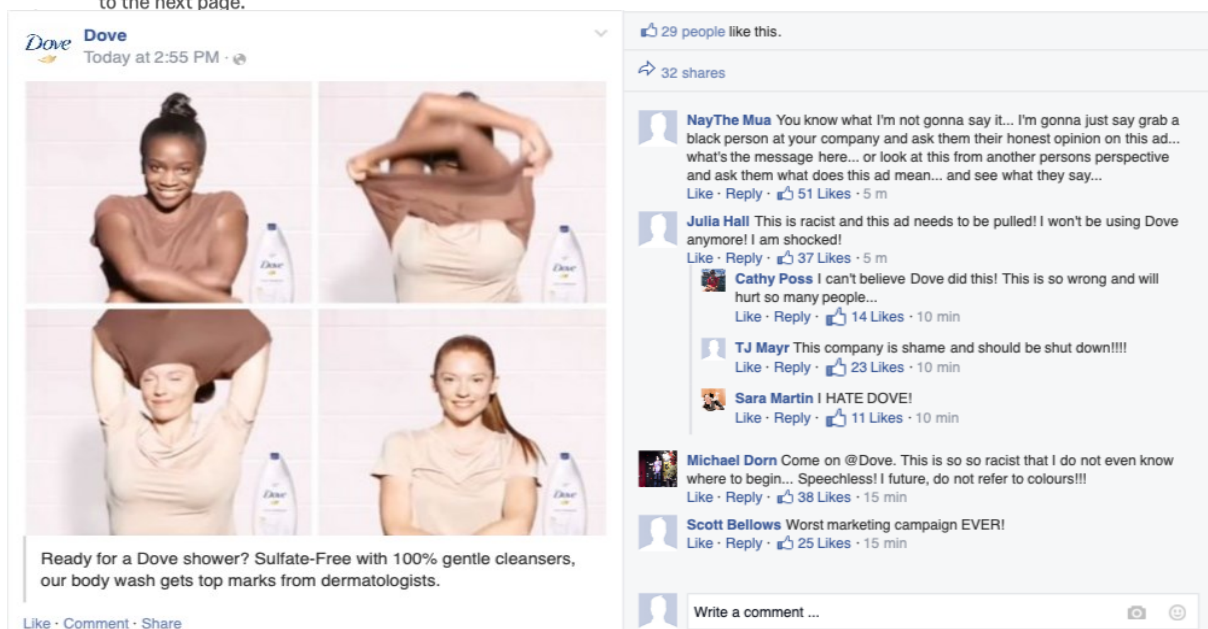
- never
- rarely
- sometimes
- often
- always

Q2 Please read and answer the following questions about your online behavior:

	Yes	No
 I have used online reviews to make a decision about a product or service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the past, my decisions have been influenced by reviews that I read online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to discuss my product/ service experience with others online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Block 2: General firestorm situation

Q3a Imagine that you are surfing on the internet and you are suddenly being faced with the following post on the Dove Facebook Page. Please carefully read the post and its comments below before you move to the next page.



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from Dove, dated 'Today at 2:55 PM'. The post features four images of women of different skin tones (Black, Brown, White, and Redhead) each holding up a piece of skin-toned fabric. Below the images is the text: 'Ready for a Dove shower? Sulfate-Free with 100% gentle cleansers, our body wash gets top marks from dermatologists.' The post has 29 likes and 32 shares. The comments section contains several negative reactions:

- NayThe Mua**: You know what I'm not gonna say it... I'm gonna just say grab a black person at your company and ask them their honest opinion on this ad... what's the message here... or look at this from another persons perspective and ask them what does this ad mean... and see what they say... (51 Likes)
- Julia Hall**: This is racist and this ad needs to be pulled! I won't be using Dove anymore! I am shocked! (37 Likes)
- Cathy Poss**: I can't believe Dove did this! This is so wrong and will hurt so many people... (14 Likes)
- TJ Mayr**: This company is shame and should be shut down!!!! (23 Likes)
- Sara Martin**: I HATE DOVE! (11 Likes)
- Michael Dorn**: Come on @Dove. This is so so racist that I do not even know where to begin... Speechless! I future, do not refer to colours!!! (38 Likes)
- Scott Bellows**: Worst marketing campaign EVER! (25 Likes)

- Q3b Have you heard of this Dove campaign before?
- Yes
- No

### Block 3: Strategy 1: Mortification & Censorship

- Q4 After Dove received many complaints regarding their social media campaign, the company **responded online with an apology** to the whole community:



- Q5 What would be your reaction to this post?

- "Like"
- "Comment"
- "Share"
- I would ignore the post

- Q6 I perceive the response from the brand Dove as ...

Unbelievable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Believable
Negative Impression	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Positive Impression
Unconvincing	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Convincing

- Q7 After reading the response Post from Dove, please answer the following questions:

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
The brand did apologize for the problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand admitted responsibility for the problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand shifted the blame to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand ignored the complaining customers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Q8 Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very likely
I will forgive Dove for the failed campaign.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will not blame Dove for this campaign anymore.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.



	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I think Dove is a good brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive attitude toward Dove.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think Dove is a reliable and credible brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.



	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will <b>not</b> recommend the brand to my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will say <b>bad things</b> about Dove to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will encourage friends and relatives <b>to buy other</b> similar products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.



	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will write negative things about Dove online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>discourage</b> people I interact with online from purchasing Dove products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>advise against</b> Dove when someone is seeking my advice online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 **After reading the response Post from Dove to the complaints, did your perception change positively?**

- Yes
- No

## Block 4: Strategy 2: Delay, reducing Offensiveness & Censorship

Q13 **Two weeks after** Dove received many complaints regarding their social media campaign the company responded with the following statement to explain their **intention behind the campaign**:



Two weeks ago, as a part of a campaign for Dove body wash, a picture of the campaign was posted on the Dove Facebook page that featured two women of different ethnicities. The campaign picture was intended to convey that Dove body wash is for every woman and be a celebration of diversity. Our beauty comes in different shapes, sizes, hair textures, and skin tones. We believe that beauty is diverse and diversity is beautiful. Therefore, our models have not reported any problems and did not feel offended by the campaign but did understand the message Dove is trying to communicate. We will remove the Post and the whole campaign, and we are already reevaluating our internal processes for creating and reviewing content to make sure a Dove campaign is not being misunderstood by its customers ever again.

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)

Q14 What would be your reaction to this post?

- "Like"
- "Comment"
- "Share"
- I would ignore the post

Q15 I perceive the response from the brand Dove as ...

Unbelievable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Believable
Negative Impression	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Positive Impression
Unconvincing	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Convincing

Q16 After reading the response Post from Dove, please answer the following questions:

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
The brand did apologize for the problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand admitted responsibility for the problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand shifted the blame to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand ignored the complaining customers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very likely
I will forgive Dove for the failed campaign.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will not blame Dove for this campaign anymore.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I think Dove is a good brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive attitude toward Dove.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think Dove is a reliable and credible brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19 Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will <b>not</b> recommend the brand to my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will say <b>bad things</b> about Dove to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will encourage friends and relatives to <b>buy other</b> similar products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

Q20



	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will write negative things about Dove online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>discourage</b> people I interact with online from purchasing Dove products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>advise against</b> Dove when someone is seeking my advice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**After reading the response Post from Dove to the complaints, did your perception change positively?**

Q21



Yes

No

### Block 5: Strategy 3: Corrective Action

**Only a few hours after** Dove received many complains regarding their latest social media campaign the brand started to **respond individually** on consumers complaints:

Q22

The screenshot shows a social media post from Dove. The post features four images of women of diverse backgrounds and body types using Dove body wash. The caption reads: "Ready for a Dove shower? Sulfate-Free with 100% gentle cleansers, our body wash gets top marks from dermatologists." Below the post, there are 36 likes and 107 shares. The comment section shows several negative comments from users, including "NazThe Mua" who says "You know what I'm not gonna say it... I'm gonna just say grab a black person at your company and ask them their honest opinion on this ad... what's the message here... or look at this from another persons perspective and ask them what does this ad mean... and see what they say...", "Julia Hall" who says "This is racist and this ad needs to be pulled! I won't be using Dove anymore! I am shocked!", "Cathy Poss" who says "I can't believe Dove did this! This is so wrong and will hurt so many people...", "T.J. Mayr" who says "This company is shame and should be shut down!!!", and "Sara Martin" who says "I HATE DOVE!". There are also two official responses from Dove: one from "Dove" replying to NazThe Mua saying "Hello NayThe Mua, the content featured was supposed to demonstrate the benefits of our Dove Body Wash for every type of skin, but we clearly missed to communicate this message within the posted campaign. We are committed to representing beauty of all ages, ethnicities, shapes and sizes and to listen to all women's needs to create great products. For future campaigns we will work very closely with our agencies and the involved departments to make sure this does not happen again.", and another from "Dove" replying to Michael Dorn saying "Hello Michael, you are right! We will re-evaluate our internal processes for creating and reviewing content to make sure something like this does not happen again! The campaign picture was intended to convey that Dove body wash is for every woman, but we got it wrong and, as a result, offended many people. We are very sorry for the miscommunication!".

What would be your reaction to this post?

Q23



"Like"

"Comment"

"Share"

I would ignore the post

Q24

I perceive the response from the brand Dove as ...

Unbelievable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Believable
Negative Impression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positive Impression
Unconvincing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Convincing

Q25

After reading the response Post from Dove, please answer the following questions:

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
The brand did apologize for the problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand admitted responsibility for the problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand shifted the blame to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand ignored the complaining customers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q26

Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very likely
I will forgive Dove for the failed campaign.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will not blame Dove for this campaign anymore.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q27

Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I think Dove is a good brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive attitude toward Dove.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think Dove is a reliable and credible brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q28

Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will <b>not</b> recommend the brand to my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will say <b>bad things</b> about Dove to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will encourage friends and relatives to <b>buy other</b> similar products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q29

Please read and answer the questions below based on the **response post** you have just seen.

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will write negative things about Dove online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>discourage</b> people I interact with online from purchasing Dove products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>advise against</b> Dove when someone is seeking my advice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q30

After reading the response Post from Dove to the complaints, did your perception **change positively**?

- Yes
- No

**Block 6: Strategy 4: Doing nothing/ Ignoring Strategy**

Q31 After Dove received many complaints regarding their social media campaign the company **did not respond to the comments.**

Q32 What would be your reaction to this post?

- "Like"
- "Comment"
- "Share"
- I would ignore the post

Q33 The fact that Dove did not respond made me perceive the brand as...

Unbelievable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Believable
Negative Impression	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Positive Impression
Unconvincing	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Convincing

Q34 After knowing Dove did not respond to the complaints, please answer the following questions:

	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
The brand did apologize for the problem.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The brand admitted responsibility for the problem.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The brand shifted the blame to others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The brand ignored the complaining customers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q35 After knowing Dove did not respond to the complaints, please answer the following questions:

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very Likely
I will forgive Dove for the failed campaign.	○	○	○	○	○
I will not blame Dove for this campaign anymore.	○	○	○	○	○

Q36

After knowing Dove did not respond to the complaints, please answer the following questions:



	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I think Dove is a good brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive attitude toward Dove.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think Dove is a reliable and credible brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q37

After knowing Dove did not respond to the complaints, please answer the following questions:



	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will <b>not</b> recommend the brand to my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will say <b>bad things</b> about Dove to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will encourage friends and relatives to <b>buy other</b> similar products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q38

After knowing Dove did not respond to the complaints, please answer the following questions:



	Not agree at all	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Completely agree
I will write negative things about Dove online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>discourage</b> people I interact with online from purchasing Dove products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would <b>advise against</b> Dove when someone is seeking my advice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q39

After Dove did not respond to the complaints, did your perception **change positively**?



- Yes
- No

## Block 7: Demographics

- Q40 Please indicate your gender
- Male
  - Female
  - Other
- Q41 Please indicate your nationality
- 
- Q42 What is your age?
- Younger than 18 years old
  - 18 - 24 years old
  - 25 - 34 years old
  - 35 - 45 years old
  - 45 years old and older
- Q43 What is your marital status?
- Single
  - Married without kids
  - Married with kids
  - Separated without kids
  - Separated with kids
- Q44 What is your monthly net income?
- 500€ or less
  - 501€ - 1000€
  - 1001€ - 1500€
  - 1501€ - 2000€
  - More than 2000€
- Q45 What is your current occupation?
- Full-time employee or self-employed
  - Part-time employee
  - Student
  - Housewife
  - Retired
  - Unemployed

## Block: Ending

- Thank you again for participating and for sharing your valuable insights! Please feel free to share this survey while posting the following link:
- [https://ucplbusiness.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_dgQ4hfOHaYhodEh](https://ucplbusiness.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgQ4hfOHaYhodEh)
- If you want to participate to win a **10€ Amazon voucher**, please submit your E-mail address on the next page.

## Appendix 4: Output Demographics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	99	48.3	48.3	48.3
	Female	106	51.7	51.7	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Younger than 18 years old	4	2.0	2.0	2.0
	18 - 24 years old	124	60.5	60.5	62.4
	25 - 34 years old	70	34.1	34.1	96.6
	35 - 45 years old	4	2.0	2.0	98.5
	45 years old and older	3	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Austrian	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Bangladeshi	1	.5	.5	2.0
	Belgian	1	.5	.5	2.4
	Canadian	1	.5	.5	2.9
	Colombian	1	.5	.5	3.4
	Danish	2	1.0	1.0	4.4
	Dutch	4	2.0	2.0	6.3
	French	13	6.3	6.3	12.7
	German	101	49.3	49.3	62.0
	Italian	10	4.9	4.9	66.8
	Mexican	1	.5	.5	67.3
	Polish	15	7.3	7.3	74.6
	Portuguese	35	17.1	17.1	91.7
	Spanish	3	1.5	1.5	93.2
	Swiss	1	.5	.5	93.7
	Thai	6	2.9	2.9	96.6
	UK	1	.5	.5	97.1
USA	6	2.9	2.9	100.0	
Total	205	100.0	100.0		

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	173	84.4	84.4	84.4
	Married without kids	16	7.8	7.8	92.2
	Married with kids	14	6.8	6.8	99.0
	Separated without kids	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	500€ or less	33	16.1	16.1	16.1
	501€ - 1000€	99	48.3	48.3	64.4
	1001€ - 1500€	39	19.0	19.0	83.4
	1501€ - 2000€	21	10.2	10.2	93.7
	More than 2000€	13	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	205	100.0	100.0		

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Full-time employee or self-employed	40	19.5	19.5	19.5
	Part-time employee	37	18.0	18.0	37.6
	Student	124	60.5	60.5	98.0
	Housewife	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

## Appendix 5: Output Descriptive Characteristics

### I ... use Social Media Platforms.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	rarely	6	2.9	2.9	2.9
	sometimes	20	9.8	9.8	12.7
	often	55	26.8	26.8	39.5
	always	124	60.5	60.5	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

### I have used online reviews to make a decision about a product or service.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	192	93.7	93.7	93.7
	No	13	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

**In the past, my decisions have been influenced by reviews that I read online.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	176	85.9	85.9	85.9
	No	29	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

**I like to discuss my product/ service experience with others online.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	95	46.3	46.3	46.3
	No	110	53.7	53.7	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

**Have you heard of this Dove campaign before?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	84	41.0	41.0	41.0
	No	121	59.0	59.0	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

**Appendix 6: Output Validation of Stimuli**

**Descriptives**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
All_Mortification	Strategy 1	52	5.9423	1.30479	.18094	5.5791	6.3056	2.00	7.00
	Strategy 2	52	3.3269	1.39637	.19364	2.9382	3.7157	1.00	6.00
	Strategy 3	52	6.0192	.99981	.13865	5.7409	6.2976	3.00	7.00
	Strategy 4	49	1.5102	1.22683	.17526	1.1578	1.8626	1.00	7.00
	Total	205	4.2390	2.25059	.15719	3.9291	4.5489	1.00	7.00
All_CA	Strategy 1	52	5.5962	1.44520	.20041	5.1938	5.9985	2.00	7.00
	Strategy 2	52	3.5192	1.39313	.19319	3.1314	3.9071	1.00	6.00
	Strategy 3	52	5.8462	1.09158	.15138	5.5423	6.1501	2.00	7.00
	Strategy 4	49	1.6327	1.49574	.21368	1.2030	2.0623	1.00	7.00
	Total	205	4.1854	2.17264	.15174	3.8862	4.4846	1.00	7.00
All_Delay	Strategy 1	52	2.4231	1.30378	.18080	2.0601	2.7861	1.00	6.00
	Strategy 2	52	4.9231	1.51911	.21066	4.5002	5.3460	1.00	7.00
	Strategy 3	52	3.5385	1.56508	.21704	3.1027	3.9742	1.00	6.00
	Strategy 4	49	3.0612	1.37550	.19650	2.6661	3.4563	1.00	5.00
	Total	205	3.4927	1.70817	.11930	3.2575	3.7279	1.00	7.00
All_NA	Strategy 1	52	2.7885	1.78596	.24767	2.2912	3.2857	1.00	7.00
	Strategy 2	52	3.2885	1.73020	.23994	2.8068	3.7702	1.00	7.00
	Strategy 3	52	1.8077	1.35818	.18835	1.4296	2.1858	1.00	6.00
	Strategy 4	49	6.3673	1.56383	.22340	5.9182	6.8165	1.00	7.00
	Total	205	3.5220	2.32964	.16271	3.2011	3.8428	1.00	7.00

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	All_Mortification	All_CA	All_Delay	All_NA
Kruskal-Wallis H	137.823	121.466	60.352	98.355
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000
Monte Carlo Sig. Sig.	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>
99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.000	.000	.000
	Upper Bound	.000	.000	.000

### Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks			
	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
All_Mortification	Strategy 1	52	148.06
	Strategy 2	52	77.16
	Strategy 3	52	147.53
	Strategy 4	49	35.35
	Total	205	
All_CA	Strategy 1	52	141.39
	Strategy 2	52	81.72
	Strategy 3	52	147.32
	Strategy 4	49	37.81
	Total	205	
All_Delay	Strategy 1	52	66.46
	Strategy 2	52	151.77
	Strategy 3	52	105.79
	Strategy 4	49	87.06
	Total	205	
All_NA	Strategy 1	52	87.05
	Strategy 2	52	101.42
	Strategy 3	52	58.24
	Strategy 4	49	169.10
	Total	205	

### Appendix 7: Output Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha BA:

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.953	.953	3

#### Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Brand Attitude 1	Brand Attitude 2	Brand Attitude 3
Brand Attitude 1	1.000	.865	.860
Brand Attitude 2	.865	1.000	.892
Brand Attitude 3	.860	.892	1.000

#### Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Brand Attitude 1	4.97	1.321	205
Brand Attitude 2	4.72	1.431	205
Brand Attitude 3	4.62	1.411	205

#### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Brand Attitude 1	9.34	7.638	.886	.786	.943
Brand Attitude 2	9.60	6.938	.911	.832	.923
Brand Attitude 3	9.69	7.059	.907	.826	.926

Cronbach's alpha of NWOM:

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.901	.902	3

	nWOM 1	nWOM 2	nWOM 3
nWOM 1	1.000	.744	.747
nWOM 2	.744	1.000	.771
nWOM 3	.747	.771	1.000

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
nWOM 1	4.0146	1.50319	205
nWOM 2	4.0341	1.52875	205
nWOM 3	3.9366	1.41105	205

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
nWOM 1	7.9707	7.656	.792	.628	.869
nWOM 2	7.9512	7.419	.810	.659	.854
nWOM 3	8.0488	8.017	.813	.662	.853

Cronbach's alpha of eNWOM:

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.966	.966	3

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
R_eNWOM1	4.6049	1.57024	205
R_eNWOM2	4.4927	1.51340	205
R_eNWOM3	4.4098	1.53326	205

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
R_eNWOM1	8.9024	8.981	.904	.818	.966
R_eNWOM2	9.0146	9.093	.939	.892	.941
R_eNWOM3	9.0976	8.990	.937	.889	.942

## Appendix 8: Output Validity Test

Principal Component Analysis (PCA):

	Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>			Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Brand Attitude 1	.799	.499			.894	
Brand Attitude 2	.845	.444			.872	
Brand Attitude 3	.822	.466			.895	
R_nWOM1	.792		.510			.827
R_nWOM3	.820		.431			.772
R_eNWOM1	.829	-.464		.884		
R_eNWOM2	.858	-.421		.897		
R_eNWOM3	.856	-.422		.896		

## Appendix 9: Output Reliability test after PCA

Cronbach's Alpha of NWOM after deleting one Element because of PCA:

Reliability Statistics			Inter-Item Correlation Matrix		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items	nWOM 1	nWOM 3	
.854	.855	2	nWOM 1	1.000	.747
			nWOM 3	.747	1.000

Item Statistics			Item-Total Statistics					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
nWOM 1	4.0146	1.50319	205	3.9366	1.991	.747	.558	.
nWOM 3	3.9366	1.41105	205	4.0146	2.260	.747	.558	.

## Appendix 10: Output Test of Normality

	Strategy type	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Total BA	Strategy 1- Mortification	.202	52	.000	.897	52	.000
	Strategy 2- Delay	.215	52	.000	.890	52	.000
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	.203	52	.000	.838	52	.000
	Strategy 4- No action	.140	49	.018	.942	49	.018
new Reversed nWOM total	Strategy 1- Mortification	.177	52	.000	.950	52	.031
	Strategy 2- Delay	.135	52	.019	.957	52	.058
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	.230	52	.000	.918	52	.002
	Strategy 4- No action	.211	49	.000	.820	49	.000
new Reversed eNWOM total	Strategy 1- Mortification	.218	52	.000	.917	52	.002
	Strategy 2- Delay	.156	52	.003	.952	52	.036
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	.160	52	.002	.954	52	.042
	Strategy 4- No action	.185	49	.000	.864	49	.000

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings <sup>a</sup>			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.486	68.577	68.577	5.486	68.577	68.577	2.826	35.322	35.322
2	1.236	15.445	84.022	1.236	15.445	84.022	2.773	34.668	69.990
3	.589	7.365	91.387	.589	7.365	91.387	1.712	21.397	91.387
4	.253	3.167	94.554						
5	.153	1.916	96.469						
6	.130	1.620	98.089						
7	.091	1.137	99.226						
8	.062	.774	100.000						

## Appendix 11: Output Comparability of groups

Ranks							
	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank				
Please indicate your gender	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	103.22	What is your marital status?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	116.72
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	115.05		Strategy 2- Delay	52	103.42
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	93.37		Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	90.92
	Strategy 4- No action	49	100.20		Strategy 4- No action	49	100.81
	Total	205			Total	205	
Please indicate your nationality	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	93.57	What is your monthly net income?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	120.06
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	104.07		Strategy 2- Delay	52	103.81
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	110.38		Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	91.00
	Strategy 4- No action	49	104.05		Strategy 4- No action	49	96.78
	Total	205			Total	205	
What is your age?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	109.40	What is your current occupation?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	95.57
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	99.70		Strategy 2- Delay	52	98.46
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	100.71		Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	116.59
	Strategy 4- No action	49	102.13		Strategy 4- No action	49	101.29
	Total	205			Total	205	

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	Please indicate your gender	Please indicate your nationality	What is your age?	What is your marital status?	What is your monthly net income?	What is your current occupation?
Kruskal-Wallis H	4.840	2.459	1.157	12.573	7.973	5.081
df	3	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.184	.483	.763	.006	.047	.166

Kruskal-Wallis Test S1 vs. S2:

Ranks				
	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Please indicate your gender	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	49.50	2574.00
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	55.50	2886.00
	Total	104		
What is your age?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	54.86	2852.50
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	50.14	2607.50
	Total	104		
What is your marital status?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	55.73	2898.00
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	49.27	2562.00
	Total	104		
What is your monthly net income?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	56.54	2940.00
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	48.46	2520.00
	Total	104		
What is your current occupation?	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	51.58	2682.00
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	53.42	2778.00
	Total	104		
Please indicate your nationality	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	49.89	2594.50
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	55.11	2865.50
	Total	104		

### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	Please indicate your gender	What is your age?	What is your marital status?	What is your monthly net income?	What is your current occupation?	Please indicate your nationality
Mann-Whitney U	1196.000	1229.500	1184.000	1142.000	1304.000	1216.500
Wilcoxon W	2574.000	2607.500	2562.000	2520.000	2682.000	2594.500
Z	-1.185	-.910	-1.507	-1.456	-.346	-.948
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.236	.363	.132	.145	.730	.343

## Kruskal-Wallis Test S3 vs. S4:

	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Please indicate your gender	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	49.37	2567.00
	Strategy 4- No action	49	52.73	2584.00
	Total	101		
What is your age?	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	50.65	2634.00
	Strategy 4- No action	49	51.37	2517.00
	Total	101		
What is your marital status?	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	48.49	2521.50
	Strategy 4- No action	49	53.66	2629.50
	Total	101		
What is your monthly net income?	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	49.70	2584.50
	Strategy 4- No action	49	52.38	2566.50
	Total	101		
What is your current occupation?	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	54.62	2840.00
	Strategy 4- No action	49	47.16	2311.00
	Total	101		
Please indicate your nationality	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	52.60	2735.00
	Strategy 4- No action	49	49.31	2416.00
	Total	101		

### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	Please indicate your gender	What is your age?	What is your marital status?	What is your monthly net income?	What is your current occupation?	Please indicate your nationality
Mann-Whitney U	1189.000	1256.000	1143.500	1206.500	1086.000	1191.000
Wilcoxon W	2567.000	2634.000	2521.500	2584.500	2311.000	2416.000
Z	-.670	-.145	-1.796	-.493	-1.527	-.600
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.503	.884	.073	.622	.127	.549

## Appendix 12: Output Hypotheses testing

### Kruskal-Wallis Test

#### Ranks

	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
Sum_all	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	127.67
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	92.98
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	140.87
	Strategy 4- No action	49	47.27
	Total	205	

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	Sum_all
Kruskal-Wallis H	74.952
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

### Ranks

	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S2_total	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	63.54
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	41.46
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S3_total	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	48.64
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	56.36
S1_vs_S4_total	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	69.84
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	31.01
S2_vs_S4_total	Strategy 2- Delay	52	64.43
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	36.74
S2_vs_S3_total	Strategy 2- Delay	52	38.78
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	66.22
S3_vs_S4_total	Total	101	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	71.31
	Strategy 4- No action	49	29.45

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	S1_vs_S2_tot al	S1_vs_S3_tot al	S1_vs_S4_tot al	S2_vs_S4_tot al	S2_vs_S3_tot al	S3_vs_S4_tot al
Kruskal-Wallis H	13.944	1.704	44.356	22.564	21.556	51.562
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.192	.000	.000	.000	.000

## BA: Hypothesis H1 and H3

### Ranks

	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S3_total_BA	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	52.12
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	52.88
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S4_total_BA	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	69.50
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	31.37
S2_vs_S3_total_BA	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	67.70
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	37.30
BA_S1_vs_S2	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	65.63
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	39.37
BA_S3_vs_S4	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	70.49
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	30.32
BA_S2_vs_S4	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	37.40
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	63.82

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	S1_vs_S3_tot al_BA	S1_vs_S4_tot al_BA	S2_vs_S3_tot al_BA	BA_S1_vs_S2	BA_S3_vs_S4	BA_S2_vs_S4
Kruskal-Wallis H	.018	43.236	27.168	20.189	48.218	20.750
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.894	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

## NWOM: Hypothesis H2 and H4

### Ranks

	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S2_total_NWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	59.78
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	45.22
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S3_total_NWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	47.00
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	58.00
S1_vs_S4_total_NWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	65.71
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	35.39
S2_vs_S3_total_NWOM	Strategy 2- Delay	52	39.83
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	65.17
S2_vs_S4_total_NWOM	Strategy 2- Delay	52	61.41
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	39.95
S3_vs_S4_total_NWOM	Total	101	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	69.78
	Strategy 4- No action	49	31.07

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	S1_vs_S2_tot al_NWOM	S1_vs_S3_tot al_NWOM	S1_vs_S4_tot al_NWOM	S2_vs_S3_tot al_NWOM	S2_vs_S4_tot al_NWOM	S3_vs_S4_tot al_NWOM
Kruskal-Wallis H	6.106	3.509	27.422	18.526	13.772	44.524
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.013	.061	.000	.000	.000	.000

## eNWOM: Hypothesis H2 and H4

### Ranks

	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S3_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	51.37
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	53.63
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S2_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	59.67
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	45.33
S1_vs_S4_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	66.30
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	34.77
S2_vs_S3_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	43.80
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	61.20
S2_vs_S4_tota_eNWOM	Total	101	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	62.36
	Strategy 4- No action	49	38.95
S3_vs_S4_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	67.91
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	33.05

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	S1_vs_S3_tot a_eNWOM	S1_vs_S2_tot a_eNWOM	S1_vs_S4_tot a_eNWOM	S2_vs_S3_tot a_eNWOM	S2_vs_S4_tot a_eNWOM	S3_vs_S4_tot a_eNWOM
Kruskal-Wallis H	.153	6.108	29.746	8.923	16.375	36.174
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.696	.013	.000	.003	.000	.000

## Appendix 13: Output Discussion of results

### Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks			
	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
Sum_all	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	127.67
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	92.98
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	140.87
	Strategy 4- No action	49	47.27
	Total	205	

#### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	Sum_all
Kruskal-Wallis H	74.952
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Kruskal-Wallis test for general differences of strategies:

Ranks			
	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S2_total	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	63.54
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	41.46
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S3_total	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	48.64
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	56.36
S1_vs_S4_total	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	69.84
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	31.01
S2_vs_S4_total	Strategy 2- Delay	52	64.43
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	36.74
S2_vs_S3_total	Strategy 2- Delay	52	38.78
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	66.22
S3_vs_S4_total	Total	101	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	71.31
	Strategy 4- No action	49	29.45

#### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	S1_vs_S2_tot al	S1_vs_S3_tot al	S1_vs_S4_tot al	S2_vs_S4_tot al	S2_vs_S3_tot al	S3_vs_S4_tot al
Kruskal-Wallis H	13.944	1.704	44.356	22.564	21.556	51.562
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.192	.000	.000	.000	.000

## BA: Hypothesis H1 and H3

Ranks			
	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S3_total_BA	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	52.12
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	52.88
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S4_total_BA	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	69.50
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	31.37
S2_vs_S3_total_BA	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	67.70
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	37.30
BA_S1_vs_S2	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	65.63
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	39.37
BA_S3_vs_S4	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	70.49
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	30.32
BA_S2_vs_S4	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	37.40
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	63.82

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>						
	S1_vs_S3_tot al_BA	S1_vs_S4_tot al_BA	S2_vs_S3_tot al_BA	BA_S1_vs_S2	BA_S3_vs_S4	BA_S2_vs_S4
Kruskal-Wallis H	.018	43.236	27.168	20.189	48.218	20.750
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.894	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

## NWOM: Hypothesis H2 and H4

Ranks			
	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S2_total_NWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	59.78
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	45.22
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S3_total_NWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	47.00
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	58.00
S1_vs_S4_total_NWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	65.71
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	35.39
S2_vs_S3_total_NWOM	Strategy 2- Delay	52	39.83
	Total	104	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	65.17
S2_vs_S4_total_NWOM	Strategy 2- Delay	52	61.41
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	39.95
S3_vs_S4_total_NWOM	Total	101	
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	69.78
	Strategy 4- No action	49	31.07

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>						
	S1_vs_S2_tot al_NWOM	S1_vs_S3_tot al_NWOM	S1_vs_S4_tot al_NWOM	S2_vs_S3_tot al_NWOM	S2_vs_S4_tot al_NWOM	S3_vs_S4_tot al_NWOM
Kruskal-Wallis H	6.106	3.509	27.422	18.526	13.772	44.524
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.013	.061	.000	.000	.000	.000

## eNWOM: Hypothesis H2 and H4

### Ranks

	Strategy type	N	Mean Rank
S1_vs_S3_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	51.37
	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	53.63
	Total	104	
S1_vs_S2_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	59.67
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	45.33
S1_vs_S4_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 1- Mortification	52	66.30
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	34.77
S2_vs_S3_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	43.80
	Total	104	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	61.20
S2_vs_S4_tota_eNWOM	Total	101	
	Strategy 2- Delay	52	62.36
	Strategy 4- No action	49	38.95
S3_vs_S4_tota_eNWOM	Strategy 3- Corrective action	52	67.91
	Total	101	
	Strategy 4- No action	49	33.05

### Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>

	S1_vs_S3_tot a_eNWOM	S1_vs_S2_tot a_eNWOM	S1_vs_S4_tot a_eNWOM	S2_vs_S3_tot a_eNWOM	S2_vs_S4_tot a_eNWOM	S3_vs_S4_tot a_eNWOM
Kruskal-Wallis H	.153	6.108	29.746	8.923	16.375	36.174
df	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.696	.013	.000	.003	.000	.000