



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

# Brand Creative Courage:

## Its importance in brand communication

Maria Inês Valente Guedes Ferreira Luís

Católica Porto Business School

April, 2023





UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

# Brand Creative Courage: Its importance in brand communication

Final work in Organisational Context presented to Universidade Católica  
Portuguesa in order to obtain the master's degree in Marketing

by

Maria Inês Valente Guedes Ferreira Luís

under the guidance of

Professor Alberto João Coraceiro de Castro

Católica Porto Business School

April, 2023



# Acknowledgements

In this final master's thesis I could not forget to express my gratitude to those who supported me along this path.

Initially I would like to thank my family for always supporting me throughout this journey and for believing in me. In highlight, a special thanks to my mother, brothers and boyfriend for always believing in my abilities, for motivating me and for being my safe harbour. In special, I would like to thank my father for teaching me the meaning of the words strength and resilience and for always teaching me to fight for my goals and strive to achieve them. I have him as an example to follow and as a reference in every achievement of mine.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my friends, who are always present in every moment of my life, for all the encouraging conversations. To my friends at Católica Porto Business School, a thank you for making this path more exciting and for the endless hours of study that made this whole journey lighter and happier.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my master's advisor who supported and guided me throughout the process, making possible the realization of this final master's thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank Mojobrands, the agency where I interned for the last six months, for believing in me and for teaching me so much in such a short time. A special thank you to the colleagues that I can now call friends for having supported me throughout all these months.



# Resumo

Na era atual das redes sociais, os utilizadores são inundados com excesso de informação, fazendo com que estes se sintam sobrecarregados. Deste modo, as marcas devem adaptar-se e estabelecer métodos diferenciados e corajosos para se distinguirem da concorrência. Assim, a criatividade tornou-se num componente com cada vez mais destaque no marketing, ajudando as empresas a construir uma personalidade distinta e a relacionarem-se eficazmente com os clientes. No entanto, nem todas as marcas estão dispostas a suportar os riscos associados à criatividade. Apesar de já existirem pesquisas que abordam o impacto que a coragem criativa na comunicação de uma marca tem nos clientes, não existe literatura suficiente sobre a sua influência nas marcas. O objetivo desta investigação é perceber o impacto que uma comunicação corajosa e criativa tem na capacidade de uma marca se diferenciar no mercado e determinar os fatores-chave que contribuem para a eficácia de tal estratégia de comunicação. Foram elaborados dois casos de estudo para alcançar este objetivo, tendo sido também desenvolvido um novo modelo de avaliação da criatividade na comunicação de marca. Os resultados sugerem que uma comunicação ousada e criativa pode originar resultados bastante positivos para uma marca, mas o sucesso não é garantido, e há riscos envolvidos. Um novo modelo destaca critérios essenciais para o sucesso de uma comunicação criativa e corajosa. O novo modelo desenvolvido permite também que as empresas avaliem a criatividade da comunicação da sua marca, identificando áreas de melhoria e evitando erros no futuro.

**Palavras-chave:** Estratégia de comunicação de marca, Criatividade das marcas, Coragem das marcas, Coragem criativa das marcas, Gestão do risco.

**Número de Palavras:** 9943



# Abstract

In the current social media age, customers are inundated with excessive information and content, which can make them feel overwhelmed. Due to that, brands must adapt and establish distinctive and brave methods to differentiate themselves from competition. As a result, creativity has become an even more important component in marketing, helping firms to build a distinctive personality and effectively engage with consumers. However, not all brands are willing to take the associated risks involved in creativity. While previous research has studied the influence of creative courage on brand communication from the perspective of customers, there is insufficient literature on its impact on brands. This research aims to investigate the impact that brave and creative communication has on a brand's ability to differentiate itself in the market and to determine the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of such brand communication strategy. Two case studies were conducted for this goal, as well as the development of a new model for assessing creativity in brand communication. The findings suggest that bold and creative communication can lead to highly positive outcomes for a brand, but success is not guaranteed, and risks are involved. A new model highlights essential criteria for the success of creative and brave brand communication. The new model developed for assessing creativity makes it also possible for companies to evaluate the creativity of their brand communication and identify areas for improvement, avoiding future mistakes.

**Keywords:** Brand communication strategy, Brand creativity, Brand courage, Brand creative courage, Risk management.

**Number of words:** 9943



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Resumo.....	vii
Abstract.....	ix
Table of Figures.....	xiv
Introduction.....	16
Chapter 1 Literature Review.....	18
1.1.    Brand Definition.....	18
1.2.    Brand Creation Process.....	19
1.3.    Brand-Consumer Relationship.....	22
1.4.    Brand Creativity.....	24
1.5.    Brand Courage.....	27
1.6.    Brand Creative Courage.....	29
Chapter 2 Methodology.....	30
2.1.    Research Approach.....	30
2.2.    Data Collection.....	31
2.3.    Data Analysis.....	32
Chapter 3 Model for measuring creativity in brand communication.....	34
3.1.    Scales Developed to Measure Creativity in Brand Communications ...	34
3.1.1    Leo Burnett 7+ GPC Scale.....	35
3.1.2    Heineken's Creative Ladder.....	36
3.1.3    The Contagious Standard.....	37
3.2.    Reasons for the development of a new model.....	38

3.3	New model for measuring creativity in brand communication .....	39
3.4	Description of the new model for measuring creativity in brand communication.....	40
Chapter 4 Case Studies .....		43
4.1	Case of Nike – “Dream Crazy” Campaign.....	43
4.1.1	History of the Brand.....	43
4.1.2	Description of the Campaign.....	44
4.1.3	Results of the Campaign.....	46
4.1.4	Evaluation of the Campaign's Creativity .....	47
4.2.	Case of Pepsi – “Live for Now” Campaign.....	48
4.2.1	History of the Brand.....	48
4.2.2	Description of the Campaign.....	49
4.2.3	Results of the Campaign.....	50
4.2.4	Evaluation of the Campaign's Creativity .....	53
Chapter 5 Discussion of Results and Conclusion .....		55
5.1.	Discussion of Results.....	55
5.2.	Conclusion .....	57
References .....		60



# Table of Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b> Barriers in building brands.....	20
<b>Figure 2.</b> Brand development model for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.....	21
<b>Figure 3.</b> Leo Burnett 7+ GPC Scale .....	36
<b>Figure 4.</b> Heineken's Creative Ladder .....	37
<b>Figure 5.</b> The Contagious Standard .....	38
<b>Figure 6.</b> Nike "Dream Crazy" Campaign.....	45
<b>Figure 7.</b> Pepsi "Live for Now" Campaign.....	50
<b>Figure 8.</b> Bernice King's post regarding Pepsi's "Live for Now" campaign.....	51
<b>Figure 9.</b> Pepsi Press Release .....	53



# Introduction

Currently, through the immediatism of social networks, we are facing a high flow of information and new content, which makes customers feel constantly overloaded (Abdulkarim, 2018). This change is consequently reflected in brands that find it more and more difficult to capture and keep customers' attention. Therefore, the constant effort of brands to stand out and relate with customers has resulted in an increasingly competitive market (Aaker, 2012). In this sense, it is necessary for brands to adapt to the constant changes in the market and distinguish themselves from the competition by being fearless, unique and innovative (Grant, 2011; Hegarty, 2014).

Creativity has been established definitively as a key element in marketing. Such capability helps brands to distinguish from competing ones in the same market (Kemp Robertson & Barth, 2018), facilitating the development of a brand identity that consumers can easily recognize and connect with (Rosengren et al., 2020). In fact, some companies are already starting to switch focus from cost-cutting strategies to emphasizing on revenue growth through investments in innovation and creativity to acquire major competitive advantages (Titus, 2007).

While creativity can be a powerful tool for brands to stand out, it also comes with an inherent risk that not all brands are willing to take (Kemp Robertson & Barth, 2018). However, the courage to innovate creatively can result in a strong competitive advantage and proven success for companies that choose to take this direction (Kemp Robertson & Barth, 2018). As the Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, once said "to dare is to lose one's footing momentarily. Not to dare is to lose oneself".

The impact of creative courage on brand communication from the customers' perspective is a subject already researched in the literature. However, there is

limited literature that thoroughly explores the impact this type of communication has on a brand.

As a result, the following research questions arise: (Q1) how does the combination of creativity and courage impact a brand's ability to differentiate itself in the market? and (Q2) what are the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of brand communication that is both creative and brave?

This research aims to address the research questions mentioned above by conducting two case studies along with the development of a new model for measuring creativity in brand communication.

This thesis is structured into six chapters. In chapter one, the literature review is presented, providing a contextualisation of the subjects addressed in this study. Concepts such as courage and creativity are further explored as they remain insufficiently developed in current literature. Chapter two outlines the applied methodology used in this study, including the research approach, data collection methods and data analysis techniques. In the third chapter, an examination is conducted on established metrics for measuring creativity in brand communication. Building upon them, a novel model is constructed for this specific purpose. Later, in chapter four, two case studies are presented concerning the brand communication of the companies Nike and Pepsi. The aim is to analyse the results that each brand has attained and evaluate the brand's level of creativity by utilizing the new creativity measurement model developed. Chapter five encompasses a comparative analysis of the two case studies presented, providing an in-depth discussion of the results obtained and presents the final conclusions of the research.

# Chapter 1

## Literature Review

### 1.1. Brand Definition

The concept of “brand” is a widely discussed topic among experts in the field. The challenge for the authors lies in obtaining a universal definition that encompasses the several aspects that a brand represents in order to achieve an unambiguous definition. This gap in the literature has been investigated by several authors who sought to achieve a more precise definition.

According to the American Marketing Association (2023), a brand is “a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller’s goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers”.

In Portugal, the juridical concept of brand is "a sign used to identify and distinguish the products or services of a company from the products or services of other companies" (Justiça.gov.pt, 2020).

In a more consumer-oriented approach, Keller (1998) believes that “a brand is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service”.

Further into the literature, Sammut-Bonnici, T. (2014) defines brand as “a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity, and to build the reputation”.

More recently, the definition of brand was studied by Avis, M., & Henderson, I. L. (2022). In the paper “A solution to the problem of brand definition”, after an analysis of 730 journal papers, the authors define the concept of brand as “(...) a

trade name/logo that identifies a product or firm, usage of which may be limited by legal structures and practice”.

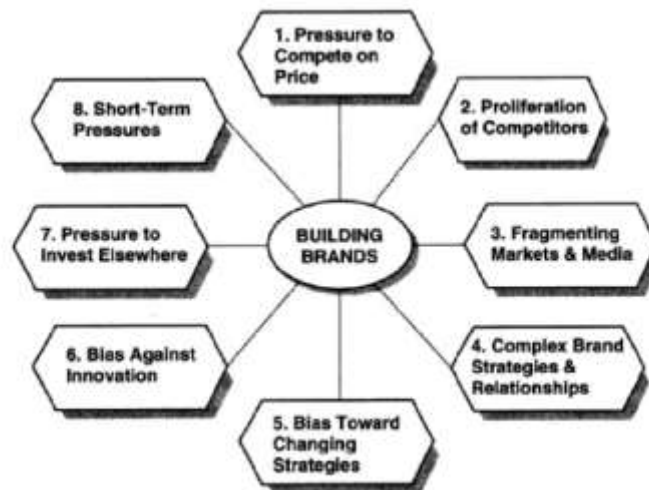
A brand represents first and foremost an important asset of an organisation. The power of a brand is highlighted by Juha-Pekka Ropo (2009), arguing that when a brand fails to be managed, the failure affects the whole company, affecting stakeholders and consumer's minds.

## 1.2. Brand Creation Process

In researching the process of creating a strong brand, Aaker (2012) argued that the main factors to be taken into consideration for the creation of a strong brand are:

- the ability to manage the four components of brand equity "awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association"(Aaker, 2012);
- the capacity to define and develop a brand identity, outlining the brand values;
- the power to manage internal forces and external pressures;
- value the alliance between advertising and a product/service with quality that will add value to the consumer.

Additionally, regarding the brand development process, it is of utmost importance to understand which barriers brands face to be able to overcome them (Aaker, 2012). The author considers that in an increasingly competitive market there are growing barriers (Figure 1) to create successful brands, making it a challenge to stand out in the market.



**Figure 1.** Barriers in building brands

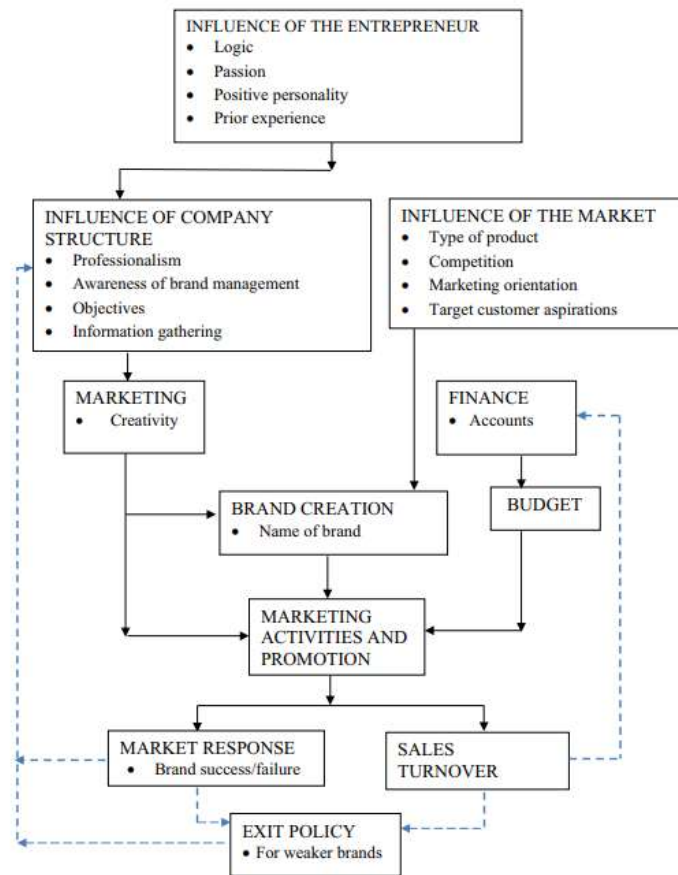
Source: Aaker, D. A. (2012). *Building Strong Brands*. Simon and Schuster.

Among all the barriers exposed, the author holds that the failure to develop a brand is most often due to the lack of internal forces, controlled by the organisation itself.

Tewary, A. K., & Mehta, R. (2021), based on Krake’s (2005) study, developed a brand development process model for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (Figure 2) and also provided an updated list of steps to follow in the process of creating a strong SME brand in the market:

- Focus on creating one or two strong brands;
- Use a creative marketing program to develop one or two key brand associations that could aid in building ‘brand equity’;
- Use an integrated mix of brand elements to reinforce brand awareness and brand image;
- The brand related policies should be thoughtfully planned out, and communications should be consistent;
- Grow passion for the brand within the company;
- There should be a link between the brand and the aspirations of the targeted consumer;

- There should be a process of revival, and an exit policy in case of weaker brands.



**Figure 2.** Brand development model for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

Source: Tewary, A. K., & Mehta, R. (2021). Brand development and entrepreneur's role in small businesses. *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, 23(1), 162–162.

The creation of a brand encompasses the whole process from the innovation of a product or service to its communication (Kapferer, 2012). According to Grant (2011), the generation and innovation of ideas is carried out at an early stage and only afterwards is brand communication and promotion considered. The author also highlights the growing need for this process to be joint and combined.

In the process of developing a brand strategy, branding takes a prominent position. Branding is the process of building and managing a brand in a manner

that create distinguishing characteristics that enable the brand to be strategically positioned in the minds of consumers (Keller, 2003). According to Arthur Rooney (1995), branding is an extremely important strategic tool to build the brand's image, allowing to increase the consumer's perception of a brand's value. In a highly competitive environment, it is through branding that a brand is positioned in the minds of consumers, differentiating itself from its competitors and removing substitutes from the market (Sammut-Bonnici, T., 2014). This proximity to consumers is achieved through marketing communications, which connects the brand with its target audience, giving rise to “brand awareness, associations, recognitions and attitudes” (Sammut-Bonnici, T, 2014). Therefore, after an analysis of the costs and benefits for the company, this differentiating<sup>1</sup> positioning can make it possible for a brand to obtain financial value (Kapferer, 2012).

### 1.3. Brand-Consumer Relationship

Considering the evolution of the brand concept over the years, a perspective defended by several authors is the relevance of consumers' relationship with brands and the emotional link between both for their success.

Consumer behaviour is influenced by their emotional connection with a brand as well as by what the brand makes them feel (Sniehotta et al., 2014). In fact, according to Öberseder et al. (2014), consumers are increasingly seeking brands that align with their values and demonstrate corporate social

---

<sup>1</sup> Differentiation can be horizontal (products within the same market that have non-price attributes, such as design or branding, that distinguish them from each other) or vertical (products that have differences in quality or functionality within the same market). Branding often creates horizontal differentiation, but it can also lead to vertical differentiation if the brand is perceived to be associated with high quality or status.

responsibility. In this way, consumers develop brand associations (Grace et al., 2018) by starting to perceive brands as a way of expressing themselves and revealing their personalities through them (Joshi & Garg, 2021).

Brands also raise in consumers an expectation of the experience and value they will receive, leading to needs arising through brand's communication (Świtała et al., 2018). This emotional link reveals itself to be a key asset for a brand as it allows to achieve “(...) lifetime loyalty, lower costs and a high amount of profitability” (Vel et al., 2011). According to Gestalten (2021), “the consumer’s interpretation of how the product makes their life better is when their relationship with the brand really begins”.

From the consumer’s perspective, a brand represents a crucial factor in facilitating the identification of products or services and reducing perceived risks while selecting a competing offer (Świtała et al., 2018). It serves as a signal of quality, indicating a level of trustworthiness that consumers rely on when making purchasing decisions (Keller, 2003), consequently reducing the asymmetry of information for consumers. To accomplish this, any brand needs to create value for consumers by defining a unique value proposition, highlighting its differentiating factors in consumers' minds (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015). In the past, brands differentiated themselves from their competitors by using strategies such as image advertising and by associating itself with a personality to create a connection with consumers (Grant, 2011).

For this reason, the role of a brand manager becomes more and more relevant. According to Krake (2005) “A company/establishment that has embedded brand management within its organization recognizes that the implementation of a brand strategy and the management of a brand are not once-only exercises, but a daily recurring aspect of its marketing policy”. They act to ensure that the relationship between consumers and brands is maintained and strengthened (Joshi & Garg, 2022) through an effort in communication and brand presence in

the marketplace (Joshi & Garg, 2021). Their role is highly significant once consumer's experience with a brand is based on all the interactions and in each communication through which the brand manifests itself (Clifton & Simmons, 2009).

Regarding small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the investment in a brand manager is particularly challenging. Although the concept of brand management in SMEs is not widely explored in the literature, the topic is of great importance since "at least 95 percent of all businesses belong to the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME)" (Krake, 2005). In these companies, the brand manager role is mostly performed by the owner of the company due to lack of resources to invest in a brand manager (Krake, 2005). It is then crucial that the owner receives appropriate training, as the absence of such preparation may give rise to mistakes that have the potential to endanger the future of the company.

## 1.4. Brand Creativity<sup>2</sup>

The concept of creativity is defined as the ability to create something unique and valuable (Gaut, 2010).

According to Jenkins (2022), the importance of creative arts was emphasized in the pandemic global situation experienced in recent times. Creativity was considered as a method of expression, allowing people to connect and as a tool to help dealing with obstacles in times of crisis (Jenkins, 2022).

Creativity is an increasingly valued skill in the workplace, allowing for a capacity of innovation that is essential for the evolution of business. Jenkins

---

<sup>2</sup> The literature review presented in this Final Master's Thesis is academic by nature. The subsequent chapter of the dissertation will include the presentation of creativity measurement methodologies.

(2022) highlighted that “the World Economic Forum has named creativity one of the top 10 skills expected to be vital in the world of work by 2025”.

In a world with more and more offers and choices available to the consumer, innovation plays a key role in differentiating a brand (Grant, 2011). For this reason, creative innovation becomes a significant element in the development of a brand. As mentioned by Brodherson et al., (2017), “creativity is at the heart of business innovation, and innovation is the engine of growth”. The authors also state that companies that invested in creativity, when compared to their competitors, are shown to have achieved better financial results, particularly regarding organic revenue growth, total shareholder return and net enterprise value. In fact, Kemp Robertson & Barth (2018), in their book, mention a study, that analysed 1.000 case studies, called 'The Link Between Creativity and Effectiveness.' This study concluded that "creative ads resulted in a 2.34 per cent growth in market share versus a 0.2 per cent growth for non-creative ads."

According to Brodherson et al. (2017), to be distinctive, a brand must not only have interesting ideas, but also provide a great and innovative customer experience. Such constant innovation should be a key feature of any brand, focusing on having initiatives and ideas aimed at improving the consumer experience while positioning the brand in their minds (Grant, 2011).

According to Neumeier (2005) “whenever there’s a rift between strategy and creativity (...) there’s a brand gap”. The author believes that the combination of these two components of a brand, strategy and creativity, may therefore become an asset for the company, as it creates more effective communication with consumers.

When considering the significance of creativity in advertising, Smith & Yang (2004) argued that it has a positive impact on the efficiency of an advertisement. This standpoint was previously emphasized by Kover et al. (1995), arguing that

creativity is positively related to the efficiency<sup>3</sup> of an ad, facilitating communication with the target audience.

Creativity became an increasingly influential element in ad creation since "creative ads impair recall and attitudes toward other ads" (Jin et al., 2022). The reason for this is that creativity allows an ad to become more eye-catching and more memorable (Jenkins, 2022).

Smith & Yang (2004) explore the concept of creativity and its efficiency<sup>4</sup> in advertisements through the following categories: "divergent", "relevant" and "efficiency". According to the author, a creative idea must be "something new, imaginative, different, or unique" and it should be employed to strategically position the brand's image to effectively communicate its values. Furthermore, the author asserts that for a creative idea to add value to a target audience, it must either provide a solution to a problem or hold a degree of relevance to their interests and needs. In line with this, Pricken (2002) suggests that "the only ideas that increase the opportunities for really original solutions are the 'wild', 'silly' or 'leftfield' ones".

When referring to advertisements, different types of creativity are involved in the creative process (Smith & Yang, 2004). Specifically, according to the authors, this encompasses the creativity of the creative team, the target market's perception of the advertisement's creativity, and the target audience's responsiveness when exposed to the advertisement. The author highlights the importance of these three concepts being aligned for a successful advertising.

Creativity is not only relevant in the communication of a brand, but it is also seen as an essential element in several moments of its development (Ameen et

---

<sup>3</sup> The author employs the term "efficiency" in their work, yet its validity is questionable. The appropriate term to use in this situation would be "efficacy", as the author is referring to the attainment of desired results.

<sup>4</sup> See note 3

al., 2022). For that reason, Ameen et al. (2022) argue that, besides advertising, “firms should identify the areas (touchpoints) in the customer journey that most require creativity”.

The role of creativity is even more prominent for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that possess limited resources. This is because creativity might enable them to achieve positive outcomes with fewer resources and differentiate themselves from their competitors in the market. Overall, leveraging creativity can enable SMEs to find novel solutions to challenges and succeed in highly competitive marketplaces.

## 1.5. Brand Courage

According to Serrat (2017) “courage is the ability to confront danger, fear, intimidation, pain, or uncertainty”.

In the context of this Master Thesis, the term "courage" denotes not only the bravery<sup>5</sup> required in the process of brand creation but also the courage necessary for effective communication and advertising.

In the analysis of courage in the context of branding, Jain et al. (2021) believe that a “brand can be perceived as brave if it is seen as altruistic, bold, courageous, determined, enduring, fearless or gritty”.

According to Kemp Robertson & Barth (2018), "there's a thin line between bravery and foolishness," and therefore, it is necessary to "create the right ecosystem for intelligent bravery". To attain a brand that is both brave and willing to take risks wisely, it is essential to first establish a strong foundation based on its vision and values, as outlined by Jain et al. (2021). To this end, the

---

<sup>5</sup> The term "brave" is referred to as a synonym of "courageous."

authors believe that organizations need to assess their internal capacity to discuss risk in a universal language, seek different viewpoints to gain diverse perspectives and foster a culture of bravery across all branches of the organization.

The decision to invest in bold and innovative communication involves significant risks. According to Wang et al. (2013), apart from the financial risk associated with a brave brand, the risks range from the possibility of alienating the target audience to negatively harming the brand's reputation. To minimize risks and maximize benefits, it requires careful preparation, study, and implementation, which enable knowledge-based decision making (Abrahams, 2016).

Effective risk management involves “balancing risk and opportunity” which allows to improve “both human and financial performance”(Abrahams, 2016). In line with this, a company must possess a strong ability to evaluate risk (Jain et al., 2021), since “the question is not whether a risk exists, but whether or not it is acceptable”(Abrahams, 2016). In this sense, as underlined by Abrahams (2016), companies must examine the practicality of a new brand concept, analyse the uncertainty involved with pursuing a daring communication strategy, and comprehend the possible positive and negative outcomes.

From a consumer perspective, a brand is perceived as brave when is risk-taking, embraces challenges and goes beyond what has currently been done (Jain et al., 2021). Taking risks in brand’s communications is essential to differentiate itself in the industry in which it operates (Abdulkarim,2018), allowing to achieve an emotional connection with consumers that makes them more resilient to unfavourable feedback towards the brand, leading to a positive word of mouth (Jain et al., 2021).

## 1.6. Brand Creative Courage

As mentioned above, when developing a communication strategy for a brand it is worth noting that customers are reached out by lots of brands every day, being of crucial importance the usage of courageous and creative communication as a differentiating factor (Abdulkarim, 2018). However, according to El-Murad & West (2003) “since creativity involves ‘newness’ and newness suggests uncertainty of outcomes, then creativity itself involves risk”.

The importance of the concept of brand courage to achieve a creative communication is highlighted by El-Murad & West (2003) when mentioning that “risk-taking is linked to higher levels of creativity”.

As a result, Kemp Robertson & Barth (2018) believe that organizations must foster a culture in which creativity and bravery are valued since “budget cutters, short-termism and our own fears and biases threaten the one thing proven to deliver effective marketing: creativity”.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> It is crucial to emphasize that to avoid exposing the organization to excessive risk it is essential to evaluate rigorously the feasibility of a creative proposal. Stretch but not break is a good lemma.

# Chapter 2

## Methodology

### 2.1. Research Approach

The main objective of this master's thesis is to address the research questions: (Q1) how does the combination of creativity and courage impact a brand's ability to differentiate itself in the market? and (Q2) what are the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of a brand communication that is both creative and brave?

To answer these research questions, a qualitative research will be conducted. According to Bryman (2012), a "qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that predominantly emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research". Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on everyday situations and real-life experiences of individuals, groups and organisations, allowing the collection of data in close proximity to the real-world (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The literature on brand communication has referenced the importance of creativity in the perception of consumers. However, few studies have focused on the benefits that brand communication creativity can bring to the brand itself, and even fewer have provided methods for measuring creativity in this context. To address this gap, a new creativity measurement model will be developed. This model will be adapted to existing ones, aiming to enable better assessment of creativity in brand communication.

The current research consists of a multiple-case study based on the brand communication of two companies. According to Yin (2009), "a case study is an

empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”

A descriptive and explanatory research will be conducted with the aim of elucidating the impact of creative courage in brand communication, as well as testing that impact through the implementation of a comparative design. According to Bryman (2012), a comparative design “implies that we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations”.

To better understand the influence of creativity on brand communication, two campaigns from globally recognized companies were chosen for the two case studies: Nike's "Dream Crazy" campaign and Pepsi's "Live for Now" campaign. These case studies provide a real example of a campaign that achieved extremely positive effects, in the case of Nike's campaign, and a campaign that obtained bad results, as was the case with Pepsi's campaign. Additionally, these two campaigns were chosen for their common approach in addressing a highly impactful societal issue, namely police brutality during protests in America.

## 2.2. Data Collection

According to Barrett & Twycross (2018), a “qualitative research requires data which are holistic, rich and nuanced, allowing themes and findings to emerge through careful analysis”. Although there are various techniques available for data collection, this research will employ document analysis and direct observation to collect data.

Secondary data, which refers to "data that have already been collected for purposes other than the problem at hand" (Bryman, 2012), will serve as the main

source of information in this study. This data will be collected from various sources, including e-resources, books, articles, case studies, reports, newspapers and broadcast media. Furthermore, information from the companies featured in the case studies, such as press releases, mission and vision statements, website pages and annual reports will also be collected as a source of secondary data. Given the worldwide recognition of Pepsi and Nike as brands, a significant amount of secondary data from credible sources is available. Therefore, multiple sources will be mentioned throughout the case studies, and quotes from these sources will be cited to support the analysis. Additionally, some of the data was obtained through a direct observation of the campaigns presented in the case studies.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

According to Yin (2009), “analysing case study evidence is especially difficult because the techniques still have not been well defined”.

The data analysis in this research will follow a top-down approach as the concepts used for analysis are derived from the literature and from the new model developed for measuring creativity in brand communication. It is therefore possible, through the comparison of the two case studies mentioned above, to draw meaningful conclusions that provide answers to the research questions.

According to Miles & Huberman, (1994), data analysis consists in “three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification”. Therefore, initially data is acquired from diverse sources, followed by a thorough review of the material to identify the most relevant information through critical analysis. Subsequently, the information is organized

and aggregated based on the conceptual topics addressed. Finally, the organized data can be interpreted to identify connections across the information.

# Chapter 3

## Model for measuring creativity in brand communication

### 3.1. Scales Developed to Measure Creativity in Brand Communications

The concept of creativity has been increasingly explored by several researchers, generating the need for a method of creativity measurement that allows its analysis and comparison (Simonton, 2012).

According to Womersley (2020), “evaluating creative work is hard. Often, people simply don’t have the right words to articulate why they feel a piece of creative work is either good or bad”. Undoubtedly, developing a creativity measure is highly challenging since it refers to a concept rather “personal, subjective and ambiguous”(Womersley, 2020). However, it is necessary to integrate the analysis of creativity into the strategy and creative process of brands.

To ensure the development of a metric that can be used across multiple companies, it is essential to adhere to rigorous and universal evaluation criteria. In addition, it must also be as practical and realistic as possible.

Scales for measuring the creativity of campaigns have been already developed by some entities, specifically by the advertising agency Leo Burnett (Leo Burnett's 7+ GPC Scale), the company Heineken (Heineken's Creative Ladder) and by the multi-platform Contagious (The Contagious Standard). In the cases of Leo Burnett and Heineken, both companies have established an internal creativity spectrum to serve as an internal evaluation of the work developed by their marketing personnel. The objective of these scales was to elevate the

creativity of their campaigns to a higher level and to track the creativity of campaigns over time.

Furthermore, Contagious, a digital platform for creative and strategic intelligence, has developed a standard scale of creativity measurement known as "The Contagious Standard". The purpose of this scale is to assist agencies and brands in crafting more creative marketing strategies.

While the two organizations described above, Leo Burnett and Heineken, created personalized scales for their own usage to support their brand's internal strategy, Contagious developed a standardized scale as a supplement to the service it offers on its platform.

### 3.1.1 Leo Burnett 7+ GPC Scale

The advertising agency Leo Burnett<sup>7</sup> has established a creativity assessment mechanism referred to as the 7+ GPC Scale (Figure 3). Its purpose is to conduct an internal analysis of the agency's creative performance and ensure that all its creative campaigns achieve a score of 7 or higher within a scale ranging from 0 (destructive creativity) to 10 (creativity that changes the world).

---

<sup>7</sup> Leo Burnett is a globally recognized advertising agency that was established by Leo Burnett in 1935. Headquartered in Chicago, the agency operates across 85 countries, demonstrating its strong international presence. The core philosophy of Leo Burnett is based on the belief that the relationship between people and brands is of utmost importance and serves as the driving force behind the agency's operations.



**Figure 3.** Leo Burnett 7+ GPC Scale

Source: *Leo Burnett System of a Creativity: 7+ HumanKind GPC Scale.* (2023).

### 3.1.2 Heineken's Creative Ladder

In the case of Heineken<sup>8</sup>, it felt the need to develop a creativity evaluator named Creative Ladder (Figure 4). On such scale, creativity is assessed on a range from 0 (destructive creativity) to 10 (legendary creativity). In the process, Heineken has established an internal metric in collaboration with its marketing personnel, which allows for the evaluation of its campaigns and communication actions. The brand's goal is to achieve a score of 5 or higher on the scale with its campaigns.

---

<sup>8</sup> Heineken was established by Gerard Adriaan Heineken in 1863, in Amsterdam, and has since expanded its operations to over 190 countries. It is a Dutch brewery of significant international reach.



**Figure 4.** Heineken's Creative Ladder

Source: Jack, L. (2015). How Cannes' Marketer Of The Year Codifies Creativity. *Fast Company*.

### 3.1.3 The Contagious Standard

Since its establishment by Paul Kemp Robertson in 2004, Contagious has served as a multi-platform marketing resource, having worked with numerous brands to enhance their creativity. Its focus is on providing the necessary support for these entities to develop and implement effective marketing strategies. During an interview with Forbes, the founder of Contagious stated that the primary goal of the platform is to furnish “agencies, media owners and marketers with strategic insights, creative inspiration and advice on innovation”.

Contagious facilitates the development of creative skills by analysing the best and most innovative marketing ideas from around the world. In fact, it has

supported companies like Heineken, mentioned previously, in developing their own creativity scale.

Contagious developed a standard creativity measurement scale called “The Contagious Standard” (Figure 5). This scale, ranging from 0 (Forgettable) to 5 (Fame-worthy), enables the concept of creativity to become more tangible and accessible, allowing all agencies and brands to have access to an assessment of creativity in a quantitative and detailed manner.



**Figure 5.** The Contagious Standard

Source: Contagious Communications. (2023). *The Creative Accelerator*.

<https://www.contagious.com/creative-accelerator>

### 3.2. Reasons for the development of a new model

After reviewing the various scales discussed previously, I felt the need to develop a new measurement model for creativity in brand communication. This need has arisen since the scale developed by Contagious, “The Contagious

Standard", despite being a universal scale by which brands can be oriented, lacks, in my opinion, certain crucial criteria for assessing creativity.

In the Contagious scale, the lowest level (forgettable) is associated with an unremarkable and unoriginal advertising campaign. However, more detrimental than an uninspiring advertising campaign is one that can become destructive to the brand (perhaps even to the company). For that reason, I attempted to create a new model for measuring creativity in brand communication, built upon 'The Contagious Standard' model but including additional criteria, namely the destructive criterion that can negatively impact how consumers perceive a brand. Additionally, relevant information gathered from the literature review will also be taken into consideration to enable each level of this new creativity assessment model to be elaborated.

### 3.3 New model for measuring creativity in brand communication

According to the literature review presented earlier, this new model will be based on five factors, which were highlighted as crucial by Smith & Yang (2004):

- originality of the content;
- coherence with the brand image and values;
- relevance to the target audience;
- impact of brand's communication on the target audience;
- virality of the brand communication.

This new model is a seven-point scale developed to evaluate creativity in brand communication, ranging from zero to six. This new model will later be used as a reference for analysing the communication of brands in the case studies of this master's thesis.

The following section will present the seven levels of this new model based on 'The Contagious Standard', highlighting some insights obtained through the literature review.

### 3.4 Description of the new model for measuring creativity in brand communication

#### ❖ **Destructive, Level 0**

Kemp Robertson & Barth (2018) suggest that for a brand to set itself apart through creative courage, it is of utmost importance to discern when it is being courageous versus when it is being imprudent<sup>9</sup>. The first level of this model encompasses campaigns that have had a negative impact on the target audience. In particular, it can refer to campaigns that are considered original but lack relevance and coherence with the brand and its values. In fact, this type of brand communication can become destructive for the brand itself. Since consumer behaviour is influenced by how the brand makes them feel (Sniehotta et al., 2014), this type of communication can damage the relationship with consumers and negatively affect how they perceive the brand.

#### ❖ **Forgettable, Level 1**

This level describes campaigns that are perceived as unremarkable and uninspiring. As stated by Gaut (2010), creativity aims to generate something that would be memorable to consumers. However, in this level, campaigns are quickly forgettable as they are overly focused on the brand without adding any value to the audience. Furthermore, although they are consistent with the brand's values, they lack innovation, originality, and/or relevance, making them

---

<sup>9</sup> Worth noting that careful analysis of the financial risks associated with a brave strategy is crucial to ensure that a brand does not compromise its survival. In this chapter, it is assumed that this requirement has been fulfilled, with imprudence being referred in the context of the brand's communication with its target audience.

unremarkable. These campaigns resemble countless others that consumers encounter daily, failing to capture their attention.

❖ **Flawed, Level 2**

This level regards situations where brand communication aims to differentiate and stand out but still does not achieve its intended outcomes. As mentioned by Neumeier (2005), it is of utmost importance that creativity is supported by a well-designed strategy. In this sense, the campaign may have a solid idea as its foundation but being poorly executed, leading to disinterest from the target audience. In such instances, the message was not successfully conveyed to the audience, resulting in a lack of clarity and insufficient impact.

❖ **Interesting, Level 3**

As stated by Smith & Yang (2004), a creative idea should be consistent with the values of the brand to match the overall brand image. This is critical for retaining brand recognition and developing a strong brand identity. At this level, the brand delivers compelling and creative content that captures the attention of its target audience. Such brand communication stands out from the rest and has the potential to engage customers. However, despite its relevance and creative nature, it may not be strategically aligned with the brand's positioning and values resulting in a weak association with the brand and insufficient brand recognition.

❖ **Smart, Level 4**

In terms of the Contagious Standard, this is a communication that is undeniably innovative and creative. Such communication is relevant, attention-grabbing, and memorable for the target audience. It can transform passive interest into active engagement and may even lead to informal communication such as word of mouth. According to Brodherson et al. (2017), to achieve brand differentiation through communication, it is not enough to have interesting ideas. Rather, it is imperative to generate a memorable moment that arouses consumer

interest. This strategic communication is highly focused on meeting the needs of customers, and is well-planned to showcase the brand's values, although it may not necessarily make the brand famous or (immediately) widely recognized.

❖ **Fame-worthy, Level 5**

A brand communication that positions itself at level 5 has a significant impact on consumers. This means that it makes customers want to share and talk about it. It highlights the brand's boldness and creativity and promotes cultural discussions by inspiring customers, leading them to, according to Sniehotta et al. (2014), create an emotional bond with the brand. Such communications are long-lasting and demonstrate the value of creativity, driving the brand forward in the market and making it increasingly stronger and recognized.

❖ **Pioneering, Level 6**

This level is attributed to a brand communication that creates a remarkable moment, not only for the brand but for society, creating a movement. As outlined by Öberseder et al. (2014), the notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is gaining prominence among consumers, given that they hold a preference for brands that espouse similar values to their own. This level includes pioneering, disruptive, and courageous ideas that generate dialogue and promote changes in behaviour. These campaigns have a lasting impact and establish a new standard, making the brand famous and greatly recognized.

# Chapter 4

## Case Studies

### 4.1 Case of Nike – “Dream Crazy” Campaign

#### 4.1.1 History of the Brand

Nike, previously known as Blue Ribbon Sports, was founded in January 1964 by Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman and is headquartered in Oregon, United States of America. It is one of the world's most valuable sportswear brands, offering a variety of products and services, including clothes, equipment, and accessories. In addition to its own brand, Nike has also established subsidiary brands such as Jordan and Converse.

Moreover, Nike has provided training clothes and equipment for prominent sports leagues like the National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA). Its affiliation with well-known athletes in the sports world has been a significant factor contributing to the brand's growth and notoriety, strengthening its position as a leading sportswear brand worldwide.

Nike has become a prominent and effective brand not just in the world of sports, but also in society, thanks to its inspiring and motivating messages that address social and environmental concerns.

Regarding the brand's communication, Nike is notable for its emotive, genuine, innovative, and storytelling approach. This strategy has been critical in establishing the brand as a leader in the sportswear industry, as well as in creating a strong and devoted consumer base. Nike uses its brand communication to motivate people to strive for excellence, push themselves, and believe in their skills - their classic slogan "Just Do It" is, perhaps, the best example

of such approach. This slogan has gained global recognition, transforming Nike into a powerful voice in society.

#### 4.1.2 Description of the Campaign

Nike launched the "Dream Crazy" campaign in September 2018 to mark the 30th anniversary of the iconic "Just Do It" slogan. The commercial developed by the ad agency Wieden & Kennedy featured various of well-known athletes, including Serena Williams, LeBron James, and Colin Kaepernick.

The campaign portrays people struggling to achieve their goals, highlighting the challenges and obstacles they encountered in the process. An inspirational campaign that, through the inclusion of stories from 16 athletes, emphasises the meaning of perseverance and the importance of people believing in themselves.

The voice of this campaign was Colin Kaepernick, the American football player from the San Francisco 49ers National Football League team. He received international attention in 2016 for his protest against racial inequality and police brutality in the United States. His decision to kneel during the national anthem before games generated a national debate about social justice, having encouraged other players to follow suit. However, his initiative faced opposition from members of the American public who considered kneeling as a disrespect to the country's service members and the American flag. According to The Guardian, a British daily newspaper, even the President of the United States, Donald Trump, took a stance condemning the athlete's attitude. Despite his success on the field, following his protest, Kaepernick was unable to secure a new contract, which led him to sue NFL team owners, alleging conspiracy to keep him out of the league.

This became an internationally recognized case, with coverage in respected news outlets such as The Guardian, Forbes, and The New York Times, among

others. Hence, in addition to being an inspiring and motivating commercial, Nike aimed to take a stand on this debate. As a result, this athlete, who compromised his professional career to defend and express his beliefs and convictions, was the voice of the "Dream Crazy" advertising, sending a strong message to the audience: "Believe in something even if it means sacrificing everything" (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Nike "Dream Crazy" Campaign

Source: Ingle, S. (2019). Nike's "Dream Crazy" advert starring Colin Kaepernick wins Emmy. *The Guardian*.

Nike received instant criticism for endorsing the controversial figure of Kaepernick in their commercial, with some considering the brand's stand was inappropriate.

### 4.1.3 Results of the Campaign

This was undoubtedly a campaign that provoked significant controversy and debate, being extensively covered by renowned media outlets, as previously mentioned.

Given the controversial nature of this campaign, public opinions have become divided with regards to the brand's association with the athlete. However, according to Rucker (2018), this campaign was consistent with Nike's values, which once again demonstrated the brand's commitment to amplifying stance against social injustices.

Colin Kaepernick posted a statement on the social media Twitter, in support of Nike's 'Dream Crazy' campaign immediately after its release. According to Contagious Communications (2018) the post generated almost 900,000 interactions in less than 20 hours. Consequently, "shares in Nike fell 2% immediately after the Kaepernick post" having recovered within less than a week (Contagious Communications, 2018).

Despite this initial setback, the 'Dream Crazy' campaign proved to be incredibly successful for Nike. After one day of the campaign's launch, "Nike had been mentioned 2.7 million times on social media, and more than 5.2 million times within 72 hours" (Eyada, 2020). In addition, Nike earned 170,000 Instagram followers in the first week following the campaign's launch (Eyada, 2020), increasing mentions to their iconic slogan "Just Do It" (Contagious Communications, 2018).

After a short period of time, the campaign led to a 31% increase in online sales of the brand (Ladd, 2018) and a growth in the company's value by more than 6 billion dollars in two weeks (Draper & Creswell, 2019). In fact, "the buzz created from the campaign was worth \$163.5m to Nike" (Contagious Communications, 2018).

This campaign's success was recognized in its winning of an Emmy, a highly prestigious award, in 2019, as the winner of the Outstanding Commercial at the Creative Arts Emmys category.

#### 4.1.4 Evaluation of the Campaign's Creativity

According to the new model of creativity measurement developed in this master's thesis, the 'Dream Crazy' campaign can be classified as “pioneering”, attaining level six. This level is characterized by “pioneering, disruptive, and courageous ideas that generate dialogue and promote changes in behaviour”.

Apart from being unquestionably distinctive and creative, the 'Dream Crazy' campaign provided highly relevant content by showcasing authentic examples of 16 athletes who proved the importance of persistence and determination in reaching their goals.

This campaign made a significant impact on Nike's target audience, as well as on society in general, by presenting an inspiring and motivating message that generated debate and encouraged individuals to stand up for their beliefs.

The ad quickly went viral, not just because of the message that expressed, but also due to the brand's brave decision to use Colin Kaepernick as the campaign's face. The ad received a lot of attention, generated a worldwide debate and became a global viral campaign.

As aforementioned, the move sparked criticism against the brand, with some people protesting Nike's stand on this controversial topic. Despite such unfavourable reactions, the 'Dream Crazy' campaign enabled Nike to reinforce its alignment with its values of social justice, displaying once again its dedication to supporting athletes who take courageous stands as an example of citizenship.

## 4.2. Case of Pepsi – “Live for Now” Campaign

### 4.2.1 History of the Brand

Pepsi-Cola, originally known as Brad's Drink, was invented in 1893 in North Carolina, USA by a pharmacist named Caleb Bradham. It is a widely recognized carbonated soft drink brand with a global presence in over 75 countries.

In 1965, the current PepsiCo Inc. was founded as a result of a merger between the companies Pepsi-Cola and Frito-Lay, a snack food firm. PepsiCo has grown into an international corporation with a diverse product portfolio that includes a wide variety of food and beverage brands. Its products are sold in over 200 countries.

PepsiCo mentions, on its official website, that the aim of the brand is to become "Faster, Stronger, and Better" by focusing more on its consumers' needs and preferences, expanding its investments, keeping up with emerging technologies, and acting with social and environmental responsibility to inspire “positive change for planet and people”.

Over the years, Pepsi has always focused on developing advertising campaigns that have a significant impact on customers while employing a youthful and enthusiastic tone of voice. Pepsi has established a strong brand reputation by collaborating with major events such as the Super Bowl and the UEFA Champions League, as well as through its presence and visibility on digital channels, which has allowed the company to establish a more effective connection with its target audience.

## 4.2.2 Description of the Campaign

In April 2017, Pepsi launched its "Live for Now" advertising campaign, which was directed by Pepsi's in-house creative agency, Creators League Studio. The campaign featured the participation of model and entrepreneur Kendall Jenner, a well-known television personality in the United States. Kendall Jenner was selected for being, according to the brand, a "modern day icon that perfectly fits the brand's principles"(Skari, 2021).

This campaign's purpose was to "to celebrate the unique moments in life that make people feel alive"(Skari, 2021). The brand's target audience in this advertising was the millennial generation, with the goal of demonstrating that it is an activist brand aware of the current issues facing society (Dozé, 2018).

The campaign shows a group protesting in the street in a relaxed and fun atmosphere, with young people holding up signs with peace symbols and messages such as "Join the Conversation".

At the start of the ad, Kendall Jenner appears in a photo shoot, referring to her modelling career. The moment the model becomes aware of the demonstration, she interrupts the photo shoot, removes her make-up, changes her clothing and promptly decides to actively join the protest.

At the end of the commercial, a barrier of police officers with serious and dissatisfied expressions approaches the crowd. As a solution to the problem, the model takes a can of Pepsi and offers it to a police officer with a smile (Figure 7). After the policeman tastes the drink, he smiles at his colleagues and the whole crowd starts celebrating with the police officers giving the impression that the situation has been resolved. The ad ends with the statements "Live Bolder", "Live Louder" and the campaign slogan "Live for Now".



**Figure 7.** Pepsi "Live for Now" Campaign

Source: Victor, D. (2017). Pepsi Pulls Ad Accused of Trivializing Black Lives Matter. *The New York Times*.

### 4.2.3 Results of the Campaign

The "Live for Now" Pepsi campaign was subject to significant criticism by the public, having become very controversial. Upon its launch, the campaign immediately received numerous critiques, sparking discussions across social media, and gaining coverage by reputable sources of information, such as The New York Times, Forbes, and The Guardian.

The social media backlash against the "Live for Now" campaign was a result of the public's perception that Pepsi had portrayed the protests in an unrealistic and superficial manner, trivializing the situation and suggesting that a can of Pepsi could resolve any issues (Patel, 2017). As a result, the ad sparked indignation among activists for failing to correctly reflect the realities of police violence in American protests as well as the risks protestors confront when protesting (Victor, 2017).

Many people considered the brand to be insensitive and disrespectful, as it was accused by critics of attempting to downplay the significance of the Black

Lives Matter movement and of exploiting the current political climate solely for the purpose of profiting from the sale of its products (Skari, 2021).

Immediately after the launch of the campaign, Pepsi experienced a 7,300% increase in social media mentions (Lee, 2020). Most of these mentions consisted of criticisms and "savage memes" directed towards the brand's attitude (Hobbs, 2017). According to Hobbs (2017) "on YouTube, meanwhile, the ad has more than 15,000 thumbs down compared to just 3,000 likes".

One of the most viral posts on Twitter regarding the campaign was shared by Bernice King, the daughter of activist Martin Luther King Jr. She posted a photo of the protests that her father was actively involved in, along with the caption "If only Daddy would have known about the power of #Pepsi" (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Bernice King's post regarding Pepsi's "Live for Now" campaign

Source: Official Twitter account of Bernice King

As a result, “the sentiment towards the brand dropped drastically, with almost 60% of mentions labelled as negative two days after the ad’s release” (González Grandía, 2022).

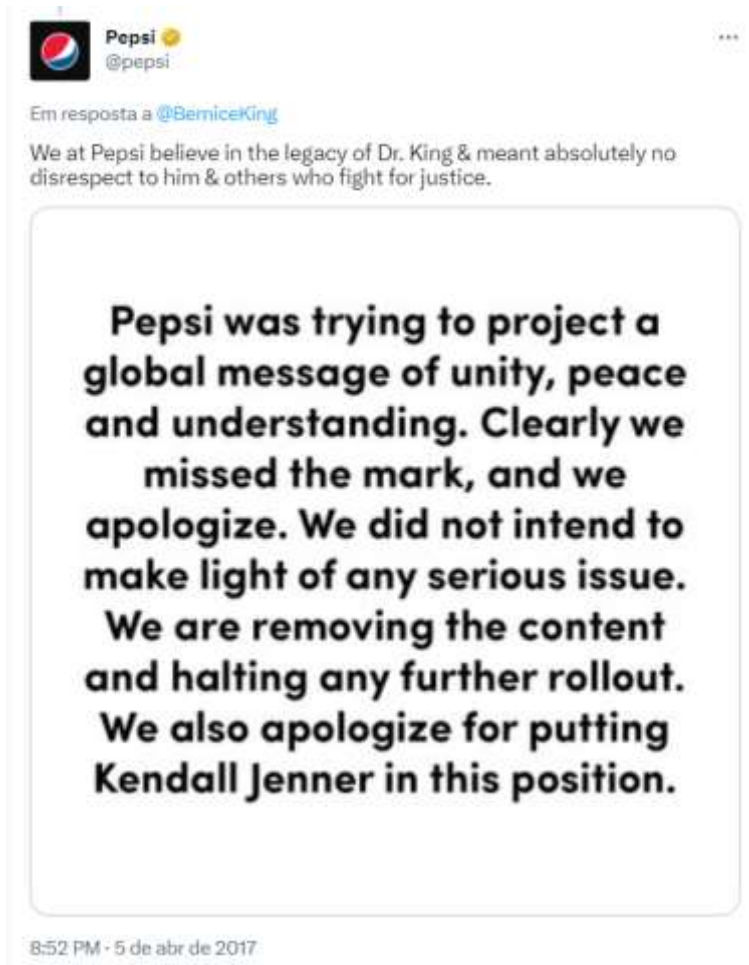
YouGov, an international leading market research company, conducted an analysis<sup>10</sup> on the impact of the "Live for Now" campaign on the audiences of the United States and the United Kingdom. The analysis revealed that since the launch of the campaign, Pepsi's Buzz score, referring to whether individuals had heard positive or negative information about the brand in the last two weeks, had dropped by 12 points, reaching negative values (Shakespeare, 2017).

Additionally, in the same YouGov study, Pepsi's Impression score, which measures whether someone has a favourable impression of the brand, also decreased considerably in the United States and the United Kingdom (Shakespeare, 2017). This study made it possible to understand the negative effect that the "Live for Now" campaign had on the brand, considerably affecting consumers' perception of it.

Due to the widespread criticism generated by the launch of the "Live for Now" campaign, the brand decided to withdraw the advertisement a day later and issued a press release apologizing for the controversy surrounding the ad and clarifying its intentions (Skari, 2021) (Figure 9).

---

<sup>10</sup> According to YouGov “metric scores can range from 100 to -100 and are compiled by subtracting negative feedback from positive. A zero score means equal positive and negative feedback.”



**Figure 9.** Pepsi Press Release on Twitter

Source: Official Twitter account of Pepsi

Therefore, as stated by González Grandía (2022) “even though the consequences did not affect PepsiCo’s profits directly, we can appreciate how the reputational loss is still ongoing. Add to the fact that Pepsi is a reference every time there is a police brutality incident”.

#### 4.2.4 Evaluation of the Campaign's Creativity

According to the new model of creativity measurement developed in this master’s thesis, the “Live for Now” campaign can be classified as a destructive campaign, belonging to level zero.

This level refers to campaigns that had a negative effect on the target audience, subsequently damaging consumers' perception of the brand. In this case, Pepsi's campaign had an extremely negative impact on consumers, leading them to rebel against the brand by criticising and ridiculing its campaign.

Additionally, this level describes campaigns that lack relevance and coherence with the brand's values. In this case, the brand, which claims to act with social responsibility, attempted to address a highly relevant and current topic in the United States of America, such as the conflicts between authorities and protesters, to inspire its consumers. However, despite the good intentions of the brand, the outcome was precisely the opposite. As previously mentioned, consumers felt that the brand addressed an extremely important issue in an irresponsible and insensitive manner, considering that this campaign did not align with the values that the brand claims to have.

Thus, the "Live for Now" campaign became highly damaging to the brand, leaving a negative impact on consumers, and becoming a viral topic that continues to haunt Pepsi's brand image. That said, the question remains as to how Pepsi, as an international brand with ample resources and skilled teams, failed to comprehend the emotional context and significance of the protests in American society.

# Chapter 5

## Discussion of Results and Conclusion

### 5.1. Discussion of Results

In this chapter, a correlation will be established among the literature review, the newly developed model, and the afore presented case studies, with the purpose of addressing the following research questions: (Q1) how does the combination of creativity and courage impact a brand's ability to differentiate itself in the market? and (Q2) what are the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of brand communication that is both creative and brave?

The importance of creativity and courage in a brand communication will be analysed and illustrated through the examples of the case studies of the brands Nike and Pepsi, explaining also which factors contribute to a successful creative and courageous brand communication.

The effect of creative and bold communication on consumers is a topic already well explored and verified. However, the question remains of what impact such communication strategy has on brands.

Nike's case is evidence that creative and bold communication can bring very positive benefits to a brand. This case study allowed supporting the argument, defended by several authors mentioned in the literature review, that creativity can positively impact on a brand's communication performance (Smith & Yang, 2004), making it more memorable and impactful for consumers (Jenkins, 2022), resulting in an increase in brand awareness and brand loyalty (Hegarty, 2014). Additionally, in regards to brand courage, it is also possible to demonstrate that despite having associated risks, it can allow the achievement of a differentiating position in the market since it is related to higher levels of creativity (El-Murad

& West, 2003), allowing the creation of emotional connections with consumers (Jain et al., 2021).

Thus, this case study confirms that through a creative and courageous communication, it is possible to achieve very positive results not only for the brand, allowing to capture public's attention and substantially increasing the number of followers and brand mentions on social networks, but also to the company, resulting in better financial results (Brodherson et al., 2017). In this sense, Nike's "Dream Crazy" campaign allowed the brand to position itself in the market by combining the creativity of an inspiring advertisement with the courageous stance of defending the athlete Colin Kaepernick.

However, the case study of Pepsi's "Live for Now" campaign highlights that it is not enough to be courageous and creative to achieve a successful brand communication. Through this campaign, it was possible to understand the importance of having a well-designed strategy that meets the brand values and presents relevance to the target audience.

As mentioned by several authors and exposed previously in the new model developed, in addition to creativity and courage it is also essential to consider other key factors that contribute to the success of a brand communication. Therefore, in response to the second research question, it is necessary not only to conduct prior preparation and research to make an informed decision (Abrahams, 2016), but also to take into account factors, outlined in the new creativity measurement model presented, such as the originality and relevance of the content, the coherence with the brand image and values, and the thorough analysis of the target audience to develop a well-designed strategy behind the campaign. Only then is it possible to develop a brand communication that really impacts the consumers and differentiates itself in the market.

## 5.2. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine how a brand can distinguish itself in the market through creative and bold communication, as well as to identify the factors that contribute to the success of a brand communication strategy that follows such approach.

Valuable insights were gained by combining information from relevant literature and examining case studies using the new creativity measurement model, proposed on this study. Thus, the main conclusions of this study, which helped address the proposed research questions, will be presented next.

Firstly, it was concluded that a bold and creative brand communication strategy can be valuable for a brand, offering various advantages, when properly designed and implemented. Through such brand communication strategy is possible to establish an emotional connection with customers, creating a lasting impression, allowing to increase brand recognition and loyalty. This emotional connection can prove to be an asset for a brand, as it can help to differentiate itself from its competitors. Moreover, a creative and brave brand communication strategy, if well-executed, can also lead to better financial results for the company, namely regarding revenue growth and net enterprise value, being especially important in today's highly competitive business landscape.

Secondly, the new model for measuring creativity, combined with insights from the literature, has revealed key criteria that contribute to the success of a creative and brave brand communication. First and foremost, conducting prior preparation and research is necessary to make informed decisions. This involves gathering and analysing data to gain a thorough understanding of the target audience and to develop a well-designed strategy. Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure the originality and relevance of the content, as a successful campaign requires impactful content that distinguishes the brand from its competitors.

Additionally, maintaining coherence with the brand image and values is of utmost importance to build trust with the audience. Overall, by considering these key factors, a brand can develop an effective communication strategy that is both creative and brave, with the potential to have a significant impact on its target audience and even in the society.

The present research has made significant theoretical contributions, particularly regarding the concepts of brand creativity and brand courage, which have not been extensively explored in the existing literature. This study has refined the definitions of these concepts and provided a better understanding of their implications for brands, thus establishing a solid foundation for future research in this area.

This research also provides companies with valuable expertise into developing an effective brand communication strategy. Such knowledge can generate competitive advantages, enabling them to distinguish themselves in the market. In line with this, the new model for assessing creativity allows brands to retrospectively evaluate their communication efforts, identifying areas of failure and gaining knowledge to avoid mistakes in the future.

In addition, it also underscores the significance of managing risk, thereby enabling companies to be courageous and thinking out of the box, but, as the lemma suggests, to stretch without breaking.

This research presents certain limitations that warrant consideration. One of the primary constraints pertains to the available literature concerning the importance of creative courage in brand communication. Although references were discovered regarding the impact of these attributes on consumers, only a few studies elucidated the benefits and obstacles that brands face when implementing this strategy in their communication.

Another limitation is the fact that this study is based on only two case studies making it a limited and non-representative sample, thereby restricting the generalization of results to different brand communication contexts. As a result, positive and negative outcomes acquired by the analysed brands, Nike and Pepsi, may not be reflected in the same manner in other businesses that followed a similar approach.

For future research, it would certainly be worth analysing a larger number of cases to detect regularities that would allow for generalized conclusions. In this sense, it would be interesting to analyse cases of small and medium-sized enterprises, since if they were able to apply a creativity evaluation tool in their brand communication they could be able to learn from past mistakes, helping them to improve their brand communication strategies and ultimately improve their brand reputation. It would also be interesting to explore the possibility of using the newly developed model as a guide for action and not just as an evaluation of existing campaigns.

# References

- Aaker, D. A. (2012). *Building Strong Brands*. Simon and Schuster.
- Abdulkarim, J. (2018). Creativity, bravery and the need for agencies to adapt to the challenge of technology. *Journal of Communication Management*, 22(4), 490–493. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-06-2018-0053>
- Abrahams, D. (2016). *Brand Risk: Adding Risk Literacy to Brand Management*. Routledge.
- Ameen, N., Sharma, G. D., Tarba, S., Rao, A., & Chopra, R. (2022). Toward advancing theory on creativity in marketing and artificial intelligence. *Psychology & Marketing*, 39(9), 1802–1825. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21699>
- American Marketing Association. (2023). *American Marketing Association*. <https://www.ama.org/topics/branding/>
- Aripova, M. S., & Negmatovich, N.-Z. B. (2022). The Concept of Branding and Its Role in the Promotion of the Product on the Market. *European Journal of Innovation in Nonformal Education*, 2(4), 231–235.
- Arthur Rooney, J. (1995). Branding: a trend for today and tomorrow. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 4(4), 48–55. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610429510097690>
- Avis, M., & Henderson, I. L. (2022). A solution to the problem of brand definition. *European Journal of Marketing*, 56(2), 351–374. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-09-2020-0700>
- Barrett, D., & Twycross, A. (2018). Data collection in qualitative research. *Evidence Based Nursing*, 21(3), 63–64. <https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2018-102939>
- Brodherson, M., Heller, J., Perrey, J., & Remley, D. (2017, June 16). Creativity's bottom line: How winning companies turn creativity into business value and growth. *McKinsey Digital*.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Clifton, R., & Simmons, J. (2009). Brand Communications. In *Brands and Branding* (Vol. 8, pp. 127–142).
- Contagious Communications. (2018, September 4). *Dream crazy - Nike*. Contagious. <https://www.contagious.com/iq/article/taking-a-stand>

- Contagious Communications. (2023). *The Creative Accelerator*.  
<https://www.contagious.com/creative-accelerator>
- Darley, W. K., & Lim, J.-S. (2022). Advertising creativity and its effects: a meta-analysis of the moderating role of modality. *Marketing Letters*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-022-09627-6>
- Dozé, M. (2018). *Misreading the Rhetorical Situation: An Analysis of the Kendall Jenner Pepsi Commercial*. Emory University.
- Draper, K., & Creswell, J. (2019). Colin Kaepernick 'Dream Crazy' Ad Wins Nike an Emmy. *The New York Times*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/16/sports/football/colin-kaepernick-nike-emmy.html>
- Duncan, T., & Moriarty, S. E. (1998). A Communication-Based Marketing Model for Managing Relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 62(2), 1.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1252157>
- El-Murad, J., & West, D. C. (2003). Risk and Creativity in Advertising. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 19(5–6), 657–673.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2003.9728230>
- Eyada, B. (2020). Brand Activism, the Relation and Impact on Consumer Perception: A Case Study on Nike Advertising. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 12(4), 30. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijms.v12n4p30>
- Gaut, B. (2010). The Philosophy of Creativity. *Philosophy Compass*, 5(12), 1034–1046. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2010.00351.x>
- gestalten. (2021). *BRAND NEW BRAND: Restarting your business in a time of crisis and transformation* (gestalten, Ed.).
- González Grandía, P. (2022). *Political correctness, cancel culture and corporate communication online*. Universidad Pontificia Comillas.
- Grace, D., Ross, M., & King, C. (2018). Brand fidelity: a relationship maintenance perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 25(6), 577–590.  
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-018-0127-z>
- Grant, J. (2011). *The Brand Innovation Manifesto: How to Build Brands, Redefine Markets and Defy Conventions*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hegarty, J. (2014). *Hegarty on Creativity: There Are No Rules* (Thames & Hudson, Ed.).

- Hobbs, T. (2017, April 5). 'Pepsi's tone-deaf Kendall Jenner ad deserves to be criticised.' *Marketing Week*. <https://www.marketingweek.com/why-pepsi-kendall-jenner-got-it-wrong/>
- Ingle, S. (2019). Nike's "Dream Crazy" advert starring Colin Kaepernick wins Emmy. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/sep/16/nikes-dream-crazy-advert-starring-colin-kaepernick-wins-emma>
- Jack, L. (2015). How Cannes' Marketer Of The Year Codifies Creativity. *Fast Company*. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3047609/how-cannes-marketer-of-the-year-codifies-creativity>
- Jain, K., Jajodia, I., Sharma, P., & Singh, G. (2021). Brand bravery: conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 30(8), 1212–1228. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IPBM-04-2020-2879>
- Jenkins, A. (2022). *The Most Contagious Report 2022*. [https://1725887.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/1725887/Most%20Contagious%20Report%202022%20\(6\).pdf](https://1725887.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/1725887/Most%20Contagious%20Report%202022%20(6).pdf)
- Jin, H. S., Kerr, G., Suh, J., Kim, H. J., & Sheehan, B. (2022). The power of creative advertising: creative ads impair recall and attitudes toward other ads. *International Journal of Advertising*, 41(8), 1521–1540. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2022.2045817>
- Joshi, R., & Garg, P. (2021). Role of brand experience in shaping brand love. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(2), 259–272. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12618>
- Joshi, R., & Garg, P. (2022). Assessing brand love, brand sacredness and brand fidelity towards halal brands. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 13(4), 807–823. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-04-2020-0104>
- Juha-Pekka Ropo. (2009). *Brands and Branding Creating a Brand Strategy*.
- Justiça.gov.pt. (2020, October 14). *O que é uma marca*. <https://justica.gov.pt/Registos/Propriedade-Industrial/Marca/O-que-e-uma-marca>
- Kapferer, J.-N. (2012). *The New Strategic Brand Management: Advanced Insights and Strategic Thinking* (5th ed.). KoganPage.
- Keller, K. L., Heckler, S. E., & Houston, M. J. (1998). The Effects of Brand Name Suggestiveness on Advertising Recall. *Journal of Marketing*, 62(1), 48–58.

- Keller, K. L. (2003). Understanding brands, branding and brand equity. *Interactive Marketing*, 5(1), 7–20. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.im.4340213>
- Kemp Robertson, P., & Barth, C. (2018). *The Contagious Commandments: Ten Steps to Brand Bravery* (Penguin, Ed.). Penguin UK.
- Kover, A. J., Goldberg, S. M., & James, W. L. (1995). Creativity vs. effectiveness? An integrating classification for advertising. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 35(6), 29–41.
- Krake, F. B. G. J. M. (2005). Successful brand management in SMEs: a new theory and practical hints. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14(4), 228–238. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420510609230>
- Leo Burnett System of a Creativity: 7+ HumanKind GPC Scale. (2023). <https://leoburnett.az/thinking/our-philosophy-humankind/>
- Ladd, B. (2018, September 11). Nike And Kaepernick: Business 101. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brittainladd/2018/09/11/what-should-colin-kaepernick-do-next-become-a-police-officer-and-nike-should-design-the-uniform/?sh=30fe513128d8>
- Lee, S. Y. (2020). Stealing thunder as a crisis communication strategy in the digital age. *Business Horizons*, 63(6), 801–810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2020.07.006>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. SAGE Publications.
- Neumeier, M. (2005). *The Brand Gap: Revised Edition*. Peachpit Press.
- Öberseder, M., Schlegelmilch, B. B., Murphy, P. E., & Gruber, V. (2014). Consumers' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 124(1), 101–115. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1787-y>
- Patel, D. (2017, April 6). Influencer Marketing Gone Wrong: Why Pepsi's Ad Featuring Kendall Jenner Missed The Mark. *Forbes*.
- Platon, O. E. (2020). Brand Communication during the COVID-19 Crisis. *Global Economic Observer*, 114–118.
- Pricken, M. (2002). *Creative Advertising: Ideas and Techniques from the world's best campaigns* (Thames & Hudson, Ed.).
- Ropo, J.-P. (2009). *Brand Management and Branding: Creating a Brand Strategy for ADcode*.

- Rosengren, S., Eisend, M., Koslow, S., & Dahlen, M. (2020). A Meta-Analysis of When and How Advertising Creativity Works. *Journal of Marketing*, 84(6), 39–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242920929288>
- Rucker, D. (2018, September 6). Nike - Dream Crazy - A Rich Opportunity To Learn About Brand Management In The Digital Age. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/derekrucker/2018/09/06/nike-dream-crazy-a-rich-opportunity-to-learn-about-brand-management-in-the-digital-age/?sh=7a5943413c4b>
- Sammut-Bonnici, T. (2015). Brand and Branding. In *Wiley Encyclopedia of Management* (pp. 1–3). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118785317.weom120161>
- Serrat, O. (2017). Moral Courage in Organizations. In *Knowledge Solutions* (pp. 489–497). Springer Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9\\_55](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9_55)
- Shakespeare, S. (2017). *Misjudged ad loses Pepsi some of its fizz*. <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/04/12/misjudged-ad-loses-pepsi-some-its-fizz>
- Simonton, D. K. (2012). Quantifying creativity: can measures span the spectrum? *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, 14(1), 100–104. <https://doi.org/10.31887/DCNS.2012.14.1/dsimonton>
- Skari, K. (2021). *Online news media framing of corporate crises: The case of the Live for Now'' Pepsi advertisement in the USA*. Erasmus University Rotterdam .
- Smith, R. E., & Yang, X. (2004). Toward a General Theory of Creativity in Advertising: Examining the Role of Divergence. *Marketing Theory*, 4(1–2), 31–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593104044086>
- Sniehotta, F. F., Presseau, J., & Araújo-Soares, V. (2014). Time to retire the theory of planned behaviour. *Health Psychology Review*, 8(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2013.869710>
- Świtała, M., Gamrot, W., Reformat, B., & Bilińska-Reformat, K. (2018). The influence of brand awareness and brand image brand equity – an empirical study of logistics service providers. *Journal of Economics and Management*, 33, 96–119. <https://doi.org/10.22367/jem.2018.33.06>
- Tewary, A. K., & Mehta, R. (2021). Brand development and entrepreneur's role in small businesses. *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, 23(1), 162–162. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRME-06-2020-0074>

- Titus, P. A. (2007). Applied Creativity: The Creative Marketing Breakthrough Model. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 29(3), 262–272.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475307307600>
- Vel, P., Suhail, L., Satyanarayan, R., & Easo, S. (2011). Conception, Nurturing, Leveraging and Sustenance of a Successful Brand. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 25, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.523>
- Victor, D. (2017). Pepsi Pulls Ad Accused of Trivializing Black Lives Matter. *The New York Times*.
- Wang, G., Dou, W., Li, H., & Zhou, N. (2013). Advertiser Risk Taking, Campaign Originality, and Campaign Performance. *Journal of Advertising*, 42(1), 42–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2012.749078>
- Womersley, J. (2020, April 9). Creative empire building: Consistency tips from ancient Rome . *Contagious*.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed., Vol. 5). SAGE Publications.