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Does Brand Criticism Impact Consumer Perception and Intention? A Study on McDonald's Brand

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ABSTRACT

Title: Does Brand Criticism impact consumer Perception and Intention? A Study on McDonald's Brand.

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Keywords: Brand Criticism, Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Perceived Value, Household Life Cycle, McDonald's, Critics, Deforestation, Job Exploitation, Health Issues.

This Dissertation found an interest in investigating the dynamics of Brand Criticism and its effects on individuals' perceptions and intentions. It aims to uncover the factors that have allowed the multinational McDonald's to maintain its prominent position despite its challenges. By exploring the reasons behind its resilience and the ways in which it has successfully managed its Brand Image and conveyed an excellent Value Perception, this research aims to provide insights into McDonald's sustained dominance (Opait G., 2019) despite criticism.

The research will also examine the moderating role of the Household Life Cycle in shaping the impact of Brand Criticism on Brand Image. It will investigate how individuals consider and weigh critics based on factors such as age and family circumstances, and how these factors influence their Purchase Intention.

Qualitative research made of a survey with stimuli manipulation has been conducted to uncover the research questions and to confirm or reject the hypothesis.

The results indicate a very small positive effect of Brand Criticism on Brand Image and a very slight positive non-significant relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention.

Also, findings indicate that Brand Image does not act as a mediator or enhance the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention.

Moreover, we can say that the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image is moderated by individuals' Household Life Cycles.

These insights shed light on the complex interplay between Brand Criticism, Brand Image, and Consumer Behavior, providing valuable implications for brand management strategies.

SUMÁRIO

Título: A Crítica de Marca influencia a Percepção e Intenção do Consumidor? Um Estudo sobre a Marca McDonald's.

Autor: Saverio Marzano

Palavras-chave: Crítica de Marca, Imagem de Marca, Intenção de Compra, Valor Percebido, Ciclo de Vida Familiar, McDonald's, Críticas, Desmatamento, Exploração de Trabalho, Questões de Saúde.

Esta dissertação encontrou um interesse em investigar a dinâmica da Crítica de Marca e seus efeitos nas percepções e intenções individuais. Tem como objetivo descobrir os fatores que permitiram à multinacional McDonald's manter sua posição proeminente apesar dos desafios enfrentados. Ao explorar as razões por trás de sua resiliência e as formas como gerenciou com sucesso sua imagem de marca e transmitiu uma excelente Percepção de Valor, esta pesquisa pretende fornecer insights sobre a dominação sustentada do McDonald's (Opait G., 2019) apesar da crítica.

A pesquisa também examinará o papel moderador do ciclo de vida familiar na moldagem do impacto dos críticos na Imagem de Marca. Investigará como os indivíduos consideram e ponderam as críticas com base em fatores como idade e circunstâncias familiares, e como esses fatores influenciam suas intenções de compra.

Pesquisa qualitativa, composta por uma pesquisa com manipulação de estímulos, foi realizada para descobrir as questões de pesquisa e confirmar ou rejeitar a hipótese.

Os resultados indicam um efeito positivo muito pequeno da Crítica de Marca na Imagem de Marca e uma relação positiva muito leve, porém não significativa, entre a Crítica de Marca e as Intenções de Compra.

Além disso, os achados indicam que a imagem de marca não atua como mediadora nem melhora a relação entre a crítica de marca e as intenções de compra.

Além disso, podemos dizer que a relação entre a Crítica de Marca e a Imagem de Marca é moderada pelos Ciclos de Vida Familiares dos indivíduos.

Esses insights lançam luz sobre a complexa interação entre crítica de marca, imagem de marca e comportamento do consumidor, fornecendo implicações valiosas para estratégias de gestão de marcas.

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Personally, this Dissertation represents more than a research study. It signifies the culmination of an important chapter in my life that began many years ago, starting with learning the alphabet and concluding with the transition into adulthood.

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GLOSSARY

IV: Independent Variable

DV: Dependent Variable

M: Mediator

BI: Brand Image

PV: Perceived Value

PI: Purchase Intention

HH: Household Life Cycle

RQ: Research Question

LR: Literature Review

H1(a, b): First Hypothesis

H2: Second Hypothesis

H3: Third Hypothesis

CI: Confidence Interval

p: p-value

b: Unstandardized Coefficient of the Regression Model

se: Standard Error

Bca. CI: Bootstrapping Confidence Interval

Bse: Bootstrapping Standard Error

PR: Public Relation

PRP: Public Relation Perception

CBBE: Consumer-Based Brand Equity

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Dissertation aims to provide an explanation of the reason why a colossus like McDonald's is still the unquestioned leader in the fast-food market (Opait G., 2019), although years of harsh criticism moved against it, but which, apparently, didn't disrupt its Brand Image. The reason why this topic has been selected for this study comes from the willingness to investigate how the consumers' perception of a brand can('t) be influenced by what happens around it, in this case by issues moved by several, relevant sides.

The study also aims to investigate the relationship between the conceptual mediation model's variables, more accurately, the effect of one independent variable, and two mediators on a dependent variable, as well as the effect of a moderator on the IV-DV relationship.

It will be measured how Brand Criticism negatively affects Perceived Value, Brand Image, and Purchase Intention; how Brand Image mediates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention; the way Perceived Value mediates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention; how Brand Image positively affects Value Perception.

Finally, the study will also focus on investigating how the Household Life Cycle can moderate the way critics affect the Brand Image. In other words, how people weigh critics is based, for example, on their family status and how their Purchase Intention is driven by those factors. Indeed, in the specific case of McDonald's, are often children to drive their parents to visit a McDonald's restaurant.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

The problem individuated is that the independent variable "Brand Criticism" should influence the dependent variable "Brand Image". In the case of McDonald's, this seems to be not working, since the Brand has been growing or maintaining more or less the same annual revenue during the last decades (Opait G., 2019). The idea is that people, even if they have complaints against McDonald's, they put them apart when it is the moment to eat a Big Mac. This gave origin to the study's first research question:

- **RQ1:** What are the effects of Brand Criticism on an individual's perceptions and intentions?

Furthermore, the stage of the Household Life Cycle is significant. As a parent, your perspective on McDonald's may be negative, but your priority is your child's happiness, leading you to visit the restaurant despite conflicting beliefs. Hence, the research poses a second question:

- **RQ2:** Does the Household Life Cycle changes the effects on an individual's perceptions and intentions?

1.3 Relevance

Academically, the research is relevant to uncover how Brand Perception is subject to challenges coming from the external environment and how successful brands are able to overcome it or even turn the tide and benefit from it. As we'll see in the next chapter, this research made use of previous investigations, particularly to study the conceptual model's variables and to present a further empirical deepening about the above-mentioned variables. One in particular, criticism, doesn't actually enjoy many studies related to it, but this research, owing to the experiment conducted, could serve as a solid foundation for future research in this field.

1.4 Research Methods

The collected data for this study come from secondary data, primarily journal articles and similar research. Moreover, so as to accurately answer the research questions, has been conducted marketing research to assess the actual Brand perception of McDonald's and how it is affected by the issues moved against it. The marketing research will use quantitative modalities and a focus group will be used to create the stimuli. The sample will be extracted among McDonald's consumers with a specific characteristic, that is McDonald's brand-aware subjects.

Stimuli will be used to gather the information needed, specifically regarding criticism. To achieve that, a focus group of 8 subjects helped to manipulate the stimuli, which have been confirmed in a pre-survey by 32 subjects. Later on, a main questionnaire was used to gather 295 answers with the objective of solving the research questions.

1.5 Thesis outlines

The Dissertation consists of 5 chapters. The first one is the introduction, where is provided a brief background about the thesis conceptual model and the main research's objectives. It's also described what's the problem identified and why it was decided to do a study about it. The relevance of the study and an overview of the methods employed are also outlined in this first part. It follows the Literature Review, which is the second chapter of this article, which is made up of an introduction that explains the structure of the same chapter then are discussed the independent variables and the dependent variable, with the respective key articles, and then is detailed the relationship between dependent and independent variables mentioning the related previous research about the topic. In particular, the independent variable "Brand Criticism" deserved a paragraph apart, since is the main Dissertation topic, and many articles from previous research have been mentioned. Chapter three, known as the Methodology, outlines the techniques and approaches utilized to collect the required data in order to address the research inquiries. The following chapter is chapter number four, which is the findings and discussion part, where the outcome of the experiment is analyzed and statistically interpreted. The conclusions and limitations chapter closes the Dissertation, summarizing the whole content of the study, and focusing on the findings uncovered, as well as the limitations of the research suggesting to the reader how to eventually make use of the data gathered.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The Literature Review's structure is organized as follows: it consists of an introduction, where the main purpose and the study's relevance are defined. It follows by discussing the conceptual model used, the Mediation Model, where variables and their interactions are explained, then key articles from past research are examined, together with their links with the Dissertation. In particular, the main body begins by providing definitions of the model's variables, proceeding by going in-depth with the links and interconnections between them. A section apart is dedicated to the hypothesis: it has been explained following the conceptual model, and it's developed according to previous findings. Finally, an overview of the model's mediator (Household Life Cycle) will close this chapter.

This Dissertation wouldn't have been possible without the contribution of previous studies about the topics related to the research problem. Indeed, the understanding regarding how Brand Criticism on individual perceptions and intentions, as well as the moderator effect of Brand Criticism from outside and Household Life Cycle on the individual's perceptions and intentions, comes from relevant articles and research, with their empirical evidence, made in the last few decades, and accurately selected in the base of their relevance and consistency with the research problem.

The main purpose of this research is to show how criticism moved to a company like McDonald, which as a market leader, incorporates all the criticisms moved to the whole fast-food industry as well, hasn't influenced the Purchase Intention of the brand's consumers. In other words, the customers still buy from the colossus, and its revenues and market share haven't significantly diminished during the last decades, except few decline periods (Opait G., 2019).

This research is relevant since it provides a further, practically tested examination of the relations between Brand Image, Perceived Value, and Purchase Intention, and to these, Brand Criticism is added. It is significant to see what's the customer perceptions of critics and to what extent it does have an effect on their ideas of the brand, perception of the brand quality, and finally, on their final purchase behavior. The research can represent a good starting point for future studies about Brand Criticism and a further deepening of the other mentioned variables and their relations.

2.2 Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

The Dissertation's conceptual mediation model has Purchase Intention as the only dependent variable in the model. Usually, this is a quite popular dependent variable, since it attempts to describe how people actually purchase, in other words, this discipline investigates how individuals make a conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand (Spears & Singh, 2004). This definition is similar to how Bagozzi et al. (1979) previously attempted to depict it: "Purchase Intentions are personal action tendencies relating to the brand". Eagly & Chaiken, (1993) made an important distinction between intention and attitude. They described the attitude as summary evaluations, while intentions represent "the person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behavior".

Donghun et al. (2013) have conducted research on which psychological and social factors drive people to purchase Athletic Teams Merchandise. In their study, two items were also used to develop this study's dependent variable survey part. The original items are the following: "In the future, I am likely to purchase more team-licensed merchandise from the same brand" and "In the future, I intend to purchase more of the same brand team-licensed merchandise". Their findings are that the variable "satisfaction" referred to past purchase experiences with the brand, it's one of the main drivers leading to the final purchase from a brand.

Purchase intention has been deeply studied since it concerns the action of the purchase and a sale from the other side. Indeed, as we will see forward, many studies usually put it in the position of the dependent variable as well, and they analyze the impact of various variables, whether positive or negative, on the phenomenon under investigation.

2.3 Mediators

Brand Image and Perceived Value are the mediators of this thesis's conceptual model, and in order to find out their effect on this model was essential to analyze the previous findings about the topic and relate the outcomes with the Dissertation's hypothesis.

Zeithaml V. (1988) defines Perceived Value as "the consumers' overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given". In other

words, how consumers perceive the desirability of the product or service, especially compared with the competitors. The study carried out by Patma et al. (2019) inquires into the relationship between the quality and experience effect on Brand Loyalty, with the mediating role of Perceived Value, and, for the purpose of this Dissertation, which core is the brand McDonald's, the attention has been focused on the quality-price ratio. Indeed, this element has been used in this thesis questionnaire as an item for the collection of insights about McDonald's Perceived Value. Focusing on the findings of the research in the discussion, they found that among the items of which the variable "customer Perceived Value" is made, the item of our interest, price-quality, has a rating of 3.8 on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, against an average of the items of the variable of 3.78. The referred questions are the following: "The product price is compatible with the product quality"; "The product price offered is inexpensive and affordable". Their studies confirm the hypothesis that the relationship between experience and quality, and Brand Loyalty, is mediated by customer Perceived Value.

Moving to the second Mediator, it's important to understand what Brand Image is. A useful paper about it is provided by Dobni & Zikhan (1990), which tried to identify the essential elements of the Brand Image and how this has changed during the last 70 years. This helps this study to start with a brief introduction to the topic broadly. They didn't provide an actual definition, but they tried to re-organize all previous research's formulations of Brand Image into a few keywords, such as "attitude", "understanding", "mental constructs," and "feelings", all addressed to a Brand.

Schivinski & Dabrowski (2014) have conducted a study on CBBE (Consumer-Based Brand Equity), which is conceptualized as a four-dimensional model consisting of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty; a blend between exploratory analysis and confirmatory factor analysis has been used. The results of the research confirm the hypothesized four-factor CBBE model. The variable analyzed for the purpose of this Dissertation was "Brand Association," from which the relative questions have been taken in examination and adapted to this study's survey. The items are: "I have good memories of brand X"; "I have good associations with brand X"; "I associate good feelings with brand X"

2.3.1 Mediators and Dependent Variable's Interactions

A relevant investigation regarding the link between Brand Image and Purchase Intention has been provided by Şebnem Ensari (2015), analyzing it from the perspective of "trust" as a

mediator. In other words, they assume that trust has an effect on consumers' Purchase Intention. Indeed, the authors state that Brand Image is nothing more than the consumer confidence about the honesty of the seller in the production, functionality, information given, and the success of the product/service provided; that's why they strongly consider trust as a relevant variable that mediates the relationship Brand Image-Purchase Intention. The paper's authors, validated their hypotheses by conducting an experiment on 13 Islamic universities in east Java (386 subjects), where 47 (Likert-scaled) questions were oriented to test the relationship between the 3 variables of their model. The main findings are that the Brand Image (with the mediating role of Trust) affects Purchase Behavior. From this study has also emerged an additional perspective, that Brand Image has an effect on the final purchase action that is stronger than Islamic values, considering that the study has been conducted in an Islamic school in an Islamic-majority country. The fact that the study generalizes but is conducted with a sample extracted entirely from Islamic schools represents a limitation of the research (Şebnem Ensari, 2015).

On the opposite, Trust is not relevant regarding the Purchase Intention topic, according to the research made by Lien et al. (2015). This paper analyses the effect of some variables, such as Brand Image, perceived price, trust, and Perceived Value, on consumers' booking intentions since it studies the variables in the accommodation's ambit. This study confirms the previous findings. On the other hand, this investigation confirms that Brand Image has a powerful effect on Purchase Intention, as well as Value Perception. Additionally, Brand Image seems to have a positive, direct effect also on sales, according to the findings made by Ataman & Ülengin (2003), who have achieved these findings by collecting consecutive surveys on monthly bases. Both studies provide relevant support to the Dissertation's hypothesis.

Eggert & Ulaga (2002) tested and described two models: the first model suggests a direct impact of Perceived Value on Purchasing Intentions, while the second Satisfaction mediates Perceived Value. Their objective was to clarify the interrelationship between customer satisfaction and customer value. Their findings turned out that customer Satisfaction and customer Value are two separate concepts. The first model is a further relevant input for the Dissertation since it examines the relationship between two variables of our conceptual models: the effect of Perceived Value on Purchase Intention, and their findings are in line with the research's hypothesis of the first having a direct effect on the second.

The article written by Wang & Yang (2010) gives another major input to the research. They found out that Brand Image plays a moderating role in the relationship between credibility and Purchase Intentions, more accurately on how the first affects the second in emerging economies and, in their case, in the automobile industry in China, providing an additional foundation to this research's hypothesis.

2.4 Brand Criticism as Independent Variable

The independent variable of this research's conceptual model is Brand Criticism.

McDonald's, since its foundation till actuality, has seen a massive amount of critics move against it. The research will focus on critics regarding corporate practices like health issues of its products, work framework, and environmental concerns. A useful source for the last two issues is the article written by Hong (2012) regarding these three aspects and how McDonald's attempted to recontextualize its social practices by promoting its socially responsible business practices. Herrick (2009) explains in her paper how and why firms are focusing on health in the food and beverage industry, becoming a Corporate Social Responsibility that can't be ignored anymore.

It's fundamental to understand how McDonald's ethical and non-ethical behaviors are seen by the consumers and the impact of these on purchase behavior. Indeed, there are who don't really care about the ethicality of the business from where they purchase, but there are also who do care about this aspect, as they're willing to punish the non-ethical business in some ways. A precious aid to better understand where the majority of people stay is provided by the research conducted by Creyer & Ross (1997), where the ethical actions of firms are studied, focusing on how it directly impacts the customers' purchase behaviors. They have conducted research involving the parents of young scholars, investigating the following: the importance of the ethicality of a business; the willingness to reward a firm that pursues an ethical strategy by purchasing from them, the willingness to punish an unethical firm with purchasing behavior and expectations regarding the ethicality of firm's behavior in today's society. The findings suggest that ethics in firms do have an effect on consumers' purchase attitudes and behaviors, indeed people adjust their actions accordingly.

Imagine your company is being harshly criticized. You basically have two ways to turn off the fire: by actions and by public relations. Actions are probably the most effective way to calm the situation down, but they usually require time. Public relations, thus, have a relevant effect on the situation by showing your opinion, using it as defense, and, eventually, taking a

commitment to the solution. The fact that public relations have an impact on consumers' minds has been explored by Hsieh & Li (2008). They hypothesize that public relations have a direct effect on customer loyalty, and they also assume the mediating role of Brand Image. The results of their research show that consumers' perception of a company's PR practice is an antecedent of loyalty. The impact of public relations perception (PRP) on customer loyalty is stronger and more significant when the Brand Image is favorable. If it is unfavorable, the effect of PRP on customer loyalty is negligible. This article has been taken into examination for the Dissertation since tons of critics have been moved during decades against McDonald's, and the company didn't let them disrupt its empire and clearly has been trying to clean its image as much as possible by making effective declarations in their public relations.

Probably the most relevant and serious criticism moved against McDonald's is about the health issues connected with the extensive consumption of the Brand's products. It is not a secret that almost all the food sold contains excessive quantities of salt, sugars, saturated fats, and many other substances that contribute to a high level of calories per meal. This subnormal quantity of calories, apart from creating a certain level of addiction, can foster the occurrence of various kinds of illnesses and pathology, of which the most frequent is obesity, especially in children and adolescents (Davis & Carpenter, 2009; Grier et al., 2018) This Dissertation wants to study what are the people ideas about the healthiness of the company's products, and better, if it contributes to negatively affect the image of the brand, the perceived quality of the products and the purchase behavior regarding the same products.

Livesey (2016) wrote an article about the agreement between McDonald's and the Environmental Defence Fund to better manage the corporate environmental practices of the firm since the impact of the company and its supply chain on the environment has been an object of criticism, especially for contributing in the Amazon deforestation. Royle (2005) focuses on the Company Social Responsibility of Western fast-food chains, claiming that job exploitation also happens in the West, where employees are underpaid, and sometimes the work conditions aren't as the media states. This paper critically examines this assumption by providing an international qualitative analysis of the employment practices of McDonald's and represents a critical paper for the research since this is a critic moved against the company that has been frequently mentioned by media, and it's also a stimulus that has been manipulated for this research questionnaire.

2.5 Household Life Cycle as Moderator

A study about this topic that has been taken into consideration for this investigation has been conducted by Elda & Kerpčarová (2019), and it's about the influence of children on parents' purchase behavior. They found out that aggressive, persuasive, rational, and knowledge strategies are positively affecting parents buying behavior. Among the findings, the item "persuasive strategies" stands out since it is the most influential among the mentioned ones. From this, one question has been selected and adapted to this dissertation's survey. 4 items were selected from the section "Dependent Variable", that is, parents' buying behaviors. Also, from the sections "aggressive strategies and rational strategies," one item has been extracted and then properly adapted to the thesis structure. In total, this study has provided to this study 7 inputs for building the survey, providing an essential contribution to investigating the variable of the Household Life Cycle and its moderator role in the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention.

"Does the Household Life Cycle change the effects on an individual's perceptions and intentions?" There is other relevant research related to this RQ, and they have been made by Brown & Venkatesh (2005) and Trinh & Write (2011), whose studies are useful for understanding the behaviors and key purchase drivers among people in different stages of their Household Life Cycle. In particular, the second-mentioned study investigates the concept of loyalty in the different stages of the Household Life Cycle, evidencing how loyalty toward a brand decline from the pre-purchase stage to the young family stage. These findings will be used in this research to determine how this factor moderates how the critics affect Brand Image, in other words, how people weigh the various critics moved against McDonald's according to their position in the family Life Cycle. Thanks to these studies, it will also be possible to determine if the Household Life Cycle frameworks have a direct impact on Purchase Intentions in the case of McDonald's. Isin & Alkibay (2011), has conducted an experiment collecting 256 answers among households in Ankara, with the aim to uncover the categories of products where children have an influence on Parent's consumer behaviors. The findings are that for products that are labeled as high-risk, in the sense of items that requires a quite high amount of capital invested and that is expected to last for years, such as a child bed, there is a very low influence of the child into the purchase behavior, while for low-risk purchases, so, in our case, could be a McDonald's "Happy Meal", their involvement is significantly higher. In other words, a child can actually push their parents to bring them to

a McDonald's restaurant, making them do a purchase action that otherwise they wouldn't probably have done.

2.6 Hypothesis and Conceptual Model

The foundations of this study are built upon 4 hypotheses, some of which are articulated in more sub-categories. The first hypothesis regards how Brand Criticism negatively affects respectively 3 different areas: Brand Image, Perceived Value, and Purchase Intention. Indeed, critics represent a threat to the firms, and they affect these three touchpoints between the customer and the company. The second hypothesis includes two sub-categories and is about the two mediators of this research's conceptual model: the first assumes that Brand Image mediates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention, while the second suggests that Perceived Value mediates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. These hypotheses have been conceived because the image that the customer has about a brand and how it perceives the quality of its products or services comes first in the final purchase act, and the general ideas of the first two concepts mentioned impressed into the consumer's mind should influence his/her final decision. The two mediators, in their turn, are interconnected. Indeed, the model's third hypothesis is that Brand Image positively affects Perceived Value. In other words, it suggests that if our general ideas and beliefs of a company are positive, our vision of the value offered by the company, for example, the quality of its products, is perceived more favorably compared with the opposite scenario. The last hypothesis involves the moderator "Household Life Cycle" and assumes that Individuals' Household Life Cycle will moderate the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image. It considers that some people purchase from a brand just because a family member pushed the subject to the final decision. In this case, we are referring to young parents who visit a McDonald's restaurant because of their child's request.

Mediation Model

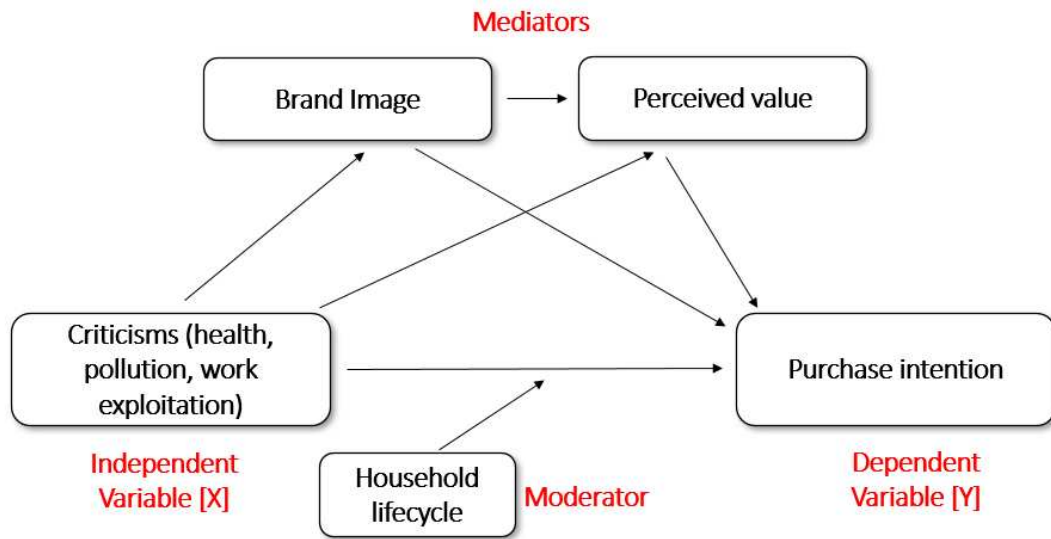


Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework. It investigates the relationship between Brand Criticism (IV) and Purchase Intention (DV) through the mediator effect of Brand Image (M) and Perceived Value (M), including also the moderator effect of Household Life Cycle.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research is conceived with the goal of uncovering the research problem of how criticism impacts consumers' Brand perception and Purchase Intention. Throughout the empirical evidence, this methodology will describe which steps have been taken in order to answer the following questions: "What are the effects of Brand Criticism on an individual's perceptions and intentions?"; and also: "Does the Household Life Cycle changes the effects on individual's perceptions and intentions?"

In order to understand the relationship between the mentioned variables, previous studies, and findings have been essential, as the Literature Review explained. But in order for this research to have validity and also to serve as a basis for future studies, it has been necessary to elaborate the information by primary data. Firstly, is essential to identify which are the constructs and which is our stimulus: Purchase Intention, Brand Image, Perceived Value, and Household Life Cycle will be our constructs, while Criticism, will be our stimulus. The methodology is also finalized to confirm or reject the truthfulness of our hypotheses. The hypotheses of the Dissertation are finalized to assume an answer to the research questions mentioned above. In this study, the first hypothesis is that Brand Criticism negatively affects the individual's perceptions, such as Perceived Value, and Brand Image, and actions, like Purchase Intention. The second hypothesis is that Brand Image and Perceived Value mediate the relation between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. The third hypothesis is that Brand Image positively affects Perceived Value. The fourth hypothesis is that the Household Life Cycle does have an effect on the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention, moderating their link, meaning that a child can have an effect on the parent's ideas about a Brand and how this affects their purchase behavior.

3.2 Research Approach:

The research has used a quantitative approach and also a focus group for the stimuli manipulation. The first consists of a questionnaire, created by the software "Qualtrics". It is the same questionnaire for all the participants and only one questionnaire has been conceived.

The stimuli creation happened with the researcher guiding a focus group made of 8 subjects, who have been brainstorming for about 1 h and a half to create a good input to be confirmed in a pre-survey later on. Indeed, the pre-survey, made up of 4 topics and 9 questions in total, was tested by 32 randomly-selected subjects before being plugged into the main questionnaire.

The stimuli are made up of 3 critics and 1 control (no criticism).

Stimuli will be randomly offered to the participants in order to get their feedback and be sure that the research will go in the right direction. In order to gather better insights and to reduce the biases, stimuli have been randomized in a way that each person will be displayed with only a stimulus among the four, and stimuli have been presented through images plus texts.

The first stimulus is related to an image containing the average hourly-paid salary in McDonald's jobs positions, regarding different roles, also specifying which is the US average salary instead. The second stimulus contains an image of deforestation. The third image is a usual McDonald's meal. The fourth represents a guerrilla marketing campaign creatively carried out by McDonald's, so it is the no criticism (control) group.

According to the insights gathered from the stimuli creation questionnaire, the main questionnaire has been adjusted by plugging in the pre-survey made by the focus group. The questionnaire measured the relationship between our variables, according to the conceptual model. More deeply, it has investigated the impact of the stimuli on the constructs. In other words, how criticism affects Brand Image, Perceived Value, and Purchase Intention, as well as the moderator effect of the Household Life Cycle on the relationship Criticism-Brand Image.

The target audience was McDonald's brand-aware population, obtained by a skim question about the awareness of the existence of the brand. The population set of individuals with at least one common characteristic (McDonald's Brand awareness), while the sample will be randomly selected among them, trying to moderate eventual biases related to nationality, age, gender, etc.

Regarding focus groups, live interviews have been selected as a preferred qualitative research method. The reason for the election is that it's the best way to brainstorm with people and convey a common solution. Indeed, this method allowed the researcher to ask as many questions as necessary without particular limitations, and with the possibility to write, delete, draft, and re-write, almost unlimitedly. The sample frame from which the subjects were

selected was on a random base, just briefly skimmed with the same skim question of the main questionnaire (McDonald's brand-aware).

3.3 Data Collection

i) Quantitative Research

The survey consisted of 26 total questions, 19 of which are shown as an itemized (multi-item) rating scale, where the Likert scale goes from 1 to 7 (Agree-Disagree), 7 are multiple-choice. Among the 26 questions, 5 of them are demographics.

Before making the survey available to be answered by the participants, a pilot test with 10 subjects was conducted in order to check that the survey was ready to be published.

The aim was to conduct the survey with 50 people per stimuli, which is four so the total of participants was expected to be 200. It has been conducted online, through the Qualtrics platform, and it has been available from the 28th of April 2023 (10 A.M. o'clock) to the 6th of May 2023 (11.59 P.M.) Participants were given unlimited time to answer the questions in order not to feel any time pressure and the information that on average, it should take around 5 minutes has been displayed on their screens. The questionnaire was filled out anonymously by the participants, which were explicitly warned about that and also regarding the fact that there is not a correct or incorrect answer to the question. The participants were also informed about the purpose of the research and have also been properly shown gratitude for the time dedicated to the study. The seriousness of the study was underlined by a kind solicitation to conduct the survey with as much honesty as possible in order to actually provide aid to the research.

ii) Focus group

Regarding the focus group, the average duration of the interview was 1 hour and a half. The participants were made to accommodate and to relax, especially thanks to an informal

atmosphere and to an introductory ice-breaking presentation of the study. The designed number of subjects was 8, who gathered on the 28th of March 2023, at about 5 p.m. on and offline, for about 1h and a half. The people brainstormed with the researcher about how to manipulate the stimulus of critics, by creating 4 sub-stimuli and then creating a short survey made of an image with text and 3 questions per sub-stimulus. The insights have been handwritten by the researcher. The short-pre survey collected 32 answers and the results suggested that the stimuli have been confirmed. Thus, it was plugged into the main survey.

3.4 Data analysis

Starting with the quantitative research, before analyzing the dataset, it was inspected for missing answers and outliers, in order to proceed just with valid questionnaires and to reduce the biases. The Mahalanobis Distance was utilized to identify outliers; however, no outliers were detected as none of the p-values for the Mahalanobis probability variable were below .001. The following step was the data coding: data have been codified and adapted to SPSS, the software used for the analysis. Also, new variables have been created, labeled as “Criticism”, “PI” (Purchase Intention), “BI” (Brand Image), “PV” (Perceived Value), representing the mean of the items’ scores, and “Construct” which identifies the stimuli.

In order to execute the manipulation check, the aggregated score did not follow a normal distribution (p-values < .05 for Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests), violating the assumption of the parametric test. Thus, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare the four stimuli.

Simple regression analysis is performed to analyze the relationship between Brand Criticism and, respectively, Brand Image and Purchase Intention.

To examine the indirect effect of Brand Image on the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intentions, we employ a Hayes process model 4, which is also the most adapted when it comes to investigating the direct and indirect effect of a mediator variable.

In our study, we specifically examine the respondents with children aged 14 years and above and investigate how their Household Life Cycle moderates the relationship between Brand

Criticism and Brand Image. To analyze this moderation effect, we employ Hayes process model 1.

Moving to the focus group, the material has served to be converted into a short pre-survey. Indeed, the answer gathered by the questionnaire were analyzed according to the quantitative approach method and used to develop the stimuli in the main survey.

3.5 Motivations and Limitations of the Methodological Approach

This methodological process has used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods for the purpose of answering the research questions and hypothesis in a manner that ambitiously aims to be as much truthful and complete as possible. Choosing one of the two directions, and trading off the other probably wouldn't have represented the most proper way to uncover the problem.

During the qualitative approach, there were many ideas that then converged into a unique sub-stimulus to be presented in the questionnaire. A limitation could be that, as just explained, we had to come up with only one sub-stimulus per criticism, despite the 8 subjects having gone in quite different directions. Nevertheless, the final outcome was a combination of the main popular ideas and all people agreed on the final outcome, and the manipulation check resulted to be successful.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the survey results are presented and analyzed. The initial part provides an overview of the sample and describes the reliability and validity analyses conducted. Additionally, it outlines the variables utilized in the hypotheses testing. The second section presents and discusses the outcomes of the hypotheses testing.

4.1 Results

In this section, we provide an overview of the sample, discuss the reliability and validity analyses, present the descriptive statistics, and share the findings of the hypotheses testing.

4.1.1 Sample characterization

From the number of 295, which represents the survey's total number of gathered answers, 8 were excluded because they didn't pass the filtering question about "having ever heard about the brand McDonald's". Additionally, 167 respondents were kept out since they didn't understand the stimuli, which it was required that the subject should have recognized the critic among the 3 questions by flagging a value from 5 to 7 (on a Likert scale of 1-7), on the same time, should have acknowledged the other 2 questions as "Not a critic" by answering a value from 1 to 3.

The Mahalanobis Distance has been used for the questions outliers' identification, but no outlier has been found since there wasn't any p-value minor than .001 on the Mahalanobis probability variable. The same process was repeated for the questions shown only to those with a child and for the demographics, confirming the absence of outliers.

The following table reports the demographic characteristics of a final sample of 122 respondents:

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percent
Respondents	Total	122	100
Nationality	Portuguese	11	9
	Italian	25	20,5
	German	10	8,2
	Spanish	17	13,9
	French	6	4,9
	Other	53	43,4
Age range	<18	3	2,5
	19-29	46	37,7
	29-39	35	28,7
	39-49	21	17,2
	49-59	11	9
	60+	6	4,9
Gender	Male	64	52,5
	Female	55	45,1
	Non-binary	3	2,5
Marital Status	Single	36	29,5
	Married	59	48,4
	Divorced	4	3,3
	Widower	1	0,8
	relationship (living together)	9	7,4
	relationship (not living together)	11	9
	Prefer not to say	2	1,6
Occupation	Student	21	17,2
	Worker	85	69,7
	Unemployed	11	9
	Retired	4	3,3
	Other	1	0,8

Table 1 - Sample's demographic characteristics.

4.1.2 Quality and Reliability Analysis

Despite all constructs are originated from past researchers' proven literature reviews, a Cronbach's Alpha test has been conducted to measure the internal consistency in order to guarantee the study's reliability as well as to assess its quality. The constructs' internal consistency reliability is considered satisfactory when the Cronbach alpha coefficient is $> 0,6$, good when $> 0,8$, and excellent when $> 0,9$ (Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Malhotra & Birks, 2003)

Variables	# of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Image	3	.71
Purchase Intention	2	.75
Perceived Value	2	.26
Household Lifecycle	7	.74

Table 2 - Reliability Analysis – Cronbach's Alpha for all the constructs are considered satisfactory except for Perceived Value, which has been excluded from the study.

Having a look at Cronbach's Alpha values, three variables seem to have a fair validity, since they place themselves above .70.

However, among the four variables, Perceived Value scored really low on the validity test, indeed its Cronbach Alpha is a poor .26. This is quite surprising since the items making this variable up are taken from proven constructs with a validity of .73. This can be due to different factors, and the most influent is probably the low number of items used to define the variable, that is just 2.

For this reason, the variable Perceived Value has been necessarily cut off from the study, leaving Brand Image as the only mediator in the model, as the following correction suggests:

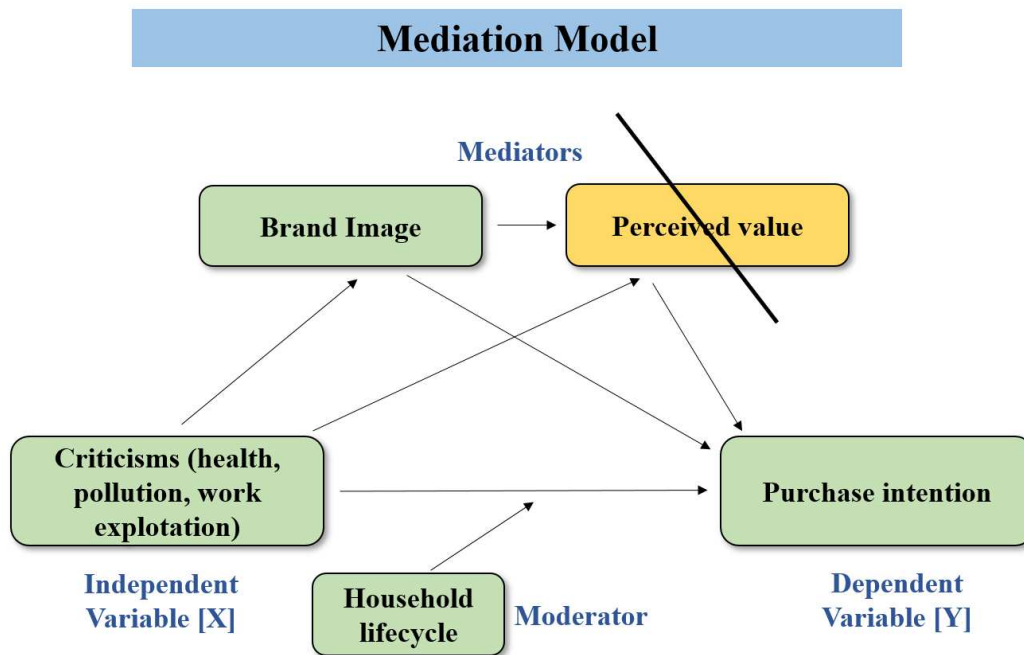


Figure 2 - New conceptual framework cutting Perceived Value off.

4.1.3 Descriptive statistics

The following table reports and summarizes the main descriptive statistics about the variables. The skewness presented 7 positive values against 11 negatives. We can consider the first 5 skewness values as significantly skewed since their statistical value is above their standard error. Regarding the Kurtosis, all statistical values are minor than their corresponding standard error, meaning that all statistical values of Kurtosis are smaller than their corresponding standard error value, suggesting that the distribution of the variable is likely mesokurtic, or similar to a normal distribution. This means that the distribution is not excessively peaked or flat compared to a normal distribution, and has a thickness of tails similar to that of a normal distribution.

Variables interaction	Variable Description	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Criticism on Purchase Intention	Likelihood to purchase	1	7	3,19	1,84	0,51	-0,71
	Intention to repurchase	1	7	3,68	1,97	0,27	-1,15
Criticism on Brand Image	associations	1	7	3,47	2	0,44	-0,98
	memories	1	7	3,65	2,04	0,19	-1,24
	feelings	1	7	3,9	2,12	0,07	-1,35
Criticism Irrelevance	irrelevance	1	7	4,03	2,16	-0,07	-1,4
Brand Image on Purchase Intention	-	1	7	4,29	2,16	-0,29	-1,33
Criticism on Household Lifecycle	Frequency	1	7	4,2	2,27	-0,14	-1,39
	Child's decision power	1	7	5,42	1,92	-1,23	0,38
	Child's desires importance	1	7	4,83	2,04	-0,55	-0,89
	Child's opinion importance	1	7	5,05	2,08	-0,66	-0,9
	Begs to persuade	1	7	4,85	1,91	-0,44	-1,02
	Deals to persuade	1	7	4,24	1,96	-0,32	-1,06
	Threats to persuade	1	7	2,85	2,29	0,72	-1,09

Table 3 - Sample Characterization

The table below provides an overview of the main variables of interest in the data split by the four stimuli:

Stimuli	Variable	Mean	Standard dev.
Q4 N=30	Brand Image	3.71	1.66
	Purchase Intention	3.57	1.77
	Household Life Cycle	4.86	1.12
	Brand Criticism	2.93	.161
Q6 N=30	Brand Image	3.68	1.82
	Purchase Intention	3.43	1.71
	Household Life Cycle	4.24	.90
	Brand Criticism	3.07	.414
Q8 N=31	Brand Image	3.59	1.47
	Purchase Intention	3.32	1.75
	Household Life Cycle	4.69	1.64
	Brand Criticism	3.12	.36
Q10 N=31	Brand Image	3.71	1.69
	Purchase Intention	3.42	1.67
	Household Life Cycle	4.14	1.26
	Brand Criticism	1.20	.47

Table 4 - Variables overview per stimulus

4.1.4 Manipulation check

A manipulation check is conducted to verify that the image text significantly influenced the criticism towards McDonald's compared to no criticism. An aggregate score of the 12 questions is obtained by calculating the mean score of the three questions in each of the four stimuli. The obtained aggregated score does not assume a normal distribution (Kolmogorov-Smirnov & Shapiro-Wilk $<.05$). Hence, we use a non-parametric test, Kruskal- Wallis test, to check whether one of the four stimuli was significantly different from the others. The results indicate that there was a significant difference in the mean ranks for the stimulus, Q10 (MR = 16.27), and the other three, Q4 (MR=69.65), Q6(MR=77.83), Q8(MR=83.03);

$K-W(3) = 91.39, p = 0.000$. These results indicate that the manipulation was successful and that the respondents did recognize the critics based on the image and text. The manipulation is summarized in the diagram below.

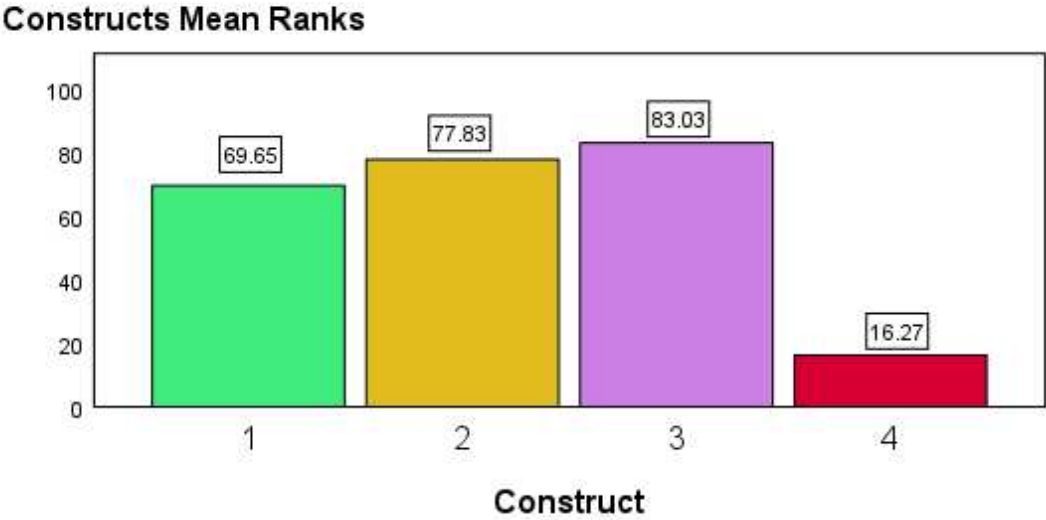


Figure 3 - Constructs' Mean Ranks comparison

4.1.5 Hypothesis testing

H1

We explore the relationship between Brand Criticism, Brand Image, and Purchase Intention. The three items are converted to metric variables by obtaining an aggregated score for each one of them. A simple regression analysis is conducted. Regression analysis is appropriate in this case since it will reveal how the variables affect one another. Scatter plots are used to summarize the results.

H1a: Brand Criticism negatively affects Brand Image

The results indicate a very small positive effect of Brand Criticism on Brand Image ($b = .001$, $s.e = .17$, $p = .991$).

The regression coefficient (b) of 0.001 suggests that for every one-unit increase in Brand Criticism, there is an estimated increase of 0.001 units in Brand Image.

The standard error ($s.e$) of 0.17 indicates the variability or uncertainty associated with the estimate of the regression coefficient.

The p -value of 0.991 suggests that the observed relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image is not statistically significant. In other words, the small effect size is likely due to random variation and not a meaningful relationship between the variables.

Criterion validation involves assessing the practical significance and real-world implications of a regression equation. In this case, the criterion validation suggests that the observed effect size may not have meaningful practical implications or predictive value in the context of the study

The results indicate that the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image is very small and positive. However, the effect size is practically negligible.

H1a: REJECTED. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image. The null hypothesis assumes that any observed effect or relationship between the variables is due to chance or random variation. In this case, the null hypothesis would state that the effect size of Brand Criticism on Brand Image is zero or negligible. The result of a very small positive effect ($b = .001$) that is statistically non-significant ($p = .991$) would support the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is no meaningful relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image.

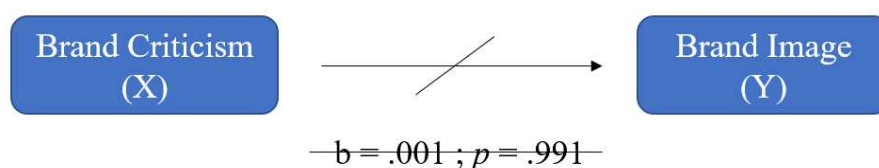


Figure 4 - Brand Criticism's null effect on Brand Image

The scatter plot below provides a visualization of these relationships:

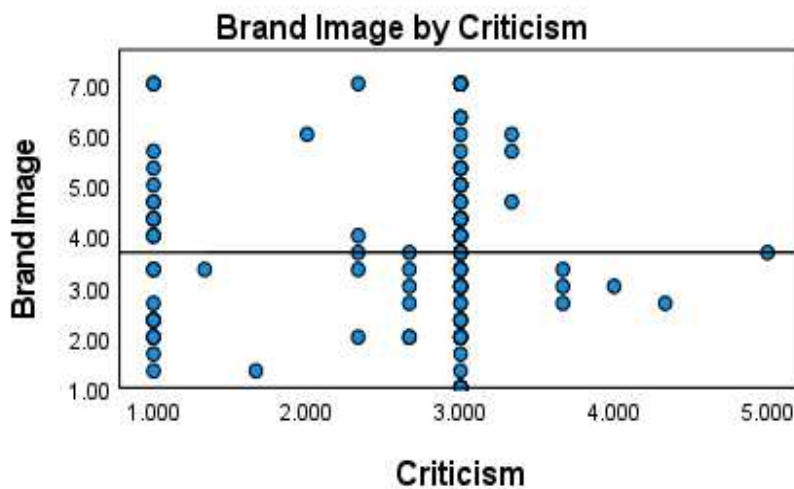


Figure 5 - Scatter Plot of the relationship between Brand Image and Brand Criticism

H1b: Brand Criticism negatively affects Purchase Intention

Moreover, a very slight positive non-significant relationship exists between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention ($b = .02$, $s.e = .18$, $p = .92$).

The results indicate that there is a very slight positive relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. However, this relationship is not statistically significant.

The regression coefficient (b) of 0.02 suggests that for every one-unit increase in Brand Criticism, there is an estimated increase of 0.02 units in Purchase Intention.

The standard error ($s.e$) of 0.18 indicates the variability or uncertainty associated with the estimate of the regression coefficient.

The p -value of 0.92 suggests that the observed relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention is not statistically significant. This means that the small effect size observed could likely be due to random variation and not a true relationship between the variables.

H1b: REJECTED. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. The null hypothesis states that the effect size of Brand Criticism on Purchase Intention is zero or negligible. The result of a very slight positive effect ($b = .02$) that is statistically non-significant ($p = .92$) would support the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is no meaningful relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention.

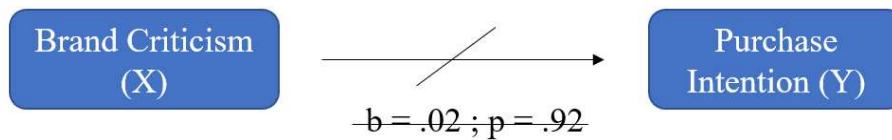


Figure 6 - Brand Criticism's null effect on Purchase Intention

The scatter plot presented below offers a visual representation of these associations:

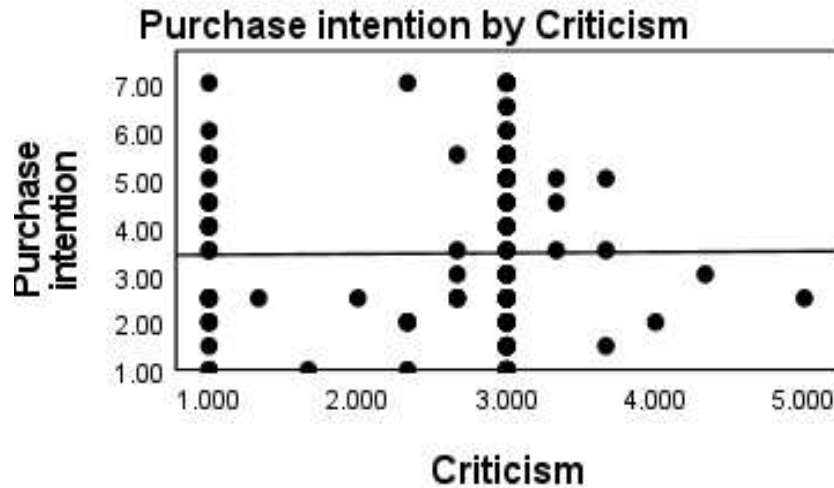


Figure 7 - Scatter plot of the relationship Purchase Intention-Brand Criticism

H2: Brand Image mediates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention

A Hayes process model 4 is applied to investigate the indirect effect of Brand Image on the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. Mediation analysis is appropriate to establish whether there is an indirect effect, where the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable is mediated through the mediator variable. We first assess the direct relationship between the IV; Brand Criticism, and the mediator; Brand Image. The results indicate that Brand Criticism does not significantly predict Brand Image ($b = .00$, $s.e = .17$, $p = 1.00$, 95% CI [-.33, .33]).

The null hypothesis here is that there is no significant relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image. It assumes that the effect size of Brand Criticism on Brand Image is zero or negligible. The result of a non-significant predictor coefficient ($b = .00$, $p = 1.00$) supports the null hypothesis, indicating that Brand Criticism does not significantly predict Brand Image.

However, Brand Image significantly predicts the DV, Purchase Intention ($b = .64$, $s.e = .07$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.50, .80]).

Also, the null hypothesis regarding the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention, is that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. The result of a significant predictor coefficient ($b = .64$, $p = .000$) rejects the null hypothesis, suggesting that Brand Image does significantly predict Purchase Intention.

Moreover, Brand Criticism has a non-significant direct effect on Purchase Intention ($b = .02$, $s.e = .14$, $p = .89$, 95% CI [-.26, .29]).

The null hypothesis is that there is no significant direct effect of Brand Criticism on Purchase Intention. It assumes that the effect size of Brand Criticism on Purchase Intention is zero or negligible. The result of a non-significant predictor coefficient ($b = .02$, $p = .89$) supports the null hypothesis, indicating that Brand Criticism does not have a significant direct effect on Purchase Intention

In mediation analysis, the focus is on the indirect effect, which quantifies the extent to which the independent variable affects the dependent variable through the mediator variable. Even if the direct effect is not significant, it does not preclude the possibility of an indirect effect being present. However, Brand Criticism had a non-significant indirect effect on Purchase Intention through Brand Image ($b = .00$, $s.e = .10$, 95% Bca CI [-.19, .21]).

The null hypothesis assumes that the effect size of Brand Criticism on Purchase Intention, mediated by Brand Image, is zero or negligible. The result of a non-significant indirect effect ($b = .00$) and a confidence interval that includes zero (95% Bca CI [-.19, .21]) would support the null hypothesis. This suggests that Brand Criticism does not have a significant indirect effect on Purchase Intention through its influence on Brand Image.

H2: REJECTED. These results suggest that the Brand Image has no mediating effect and does not improve the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention.

The diagram below summarizes the results:

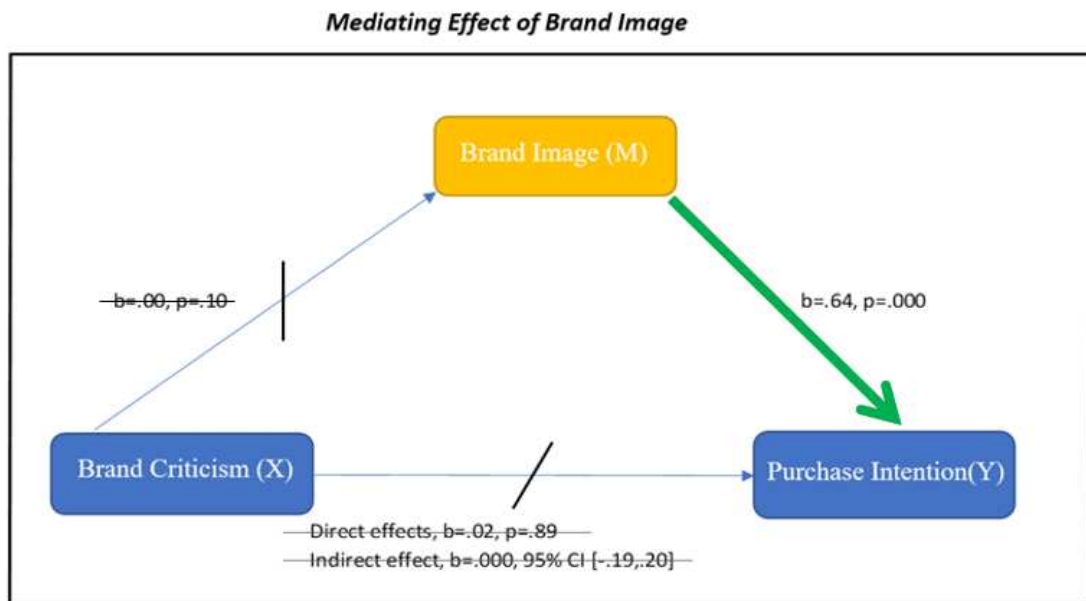


Figure 8 - The Mediating Effect of Brand Image, evidencing the statistically significant impact of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

H3: Moderation Effects of Individuals' Household Life Cycle on the Relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image

We focus on the respondents who indicated they have a child aged 14 years and above and study how their Household Life Cycle moderates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image. We apply Hayes process model 1 for a simple moderation. The results indicate a significant interaction effect ($b = -.46$, $se = .17$, $p = .01$, 95% CI $[-.79, -.12]$). These results imply that the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image is moderated by Household Life Cycle. We transform the predictor using the grand mean centering. Centering transforms a variable into deviations around a fixed point. Centering is important when we have an interaction term as it makes the "bs" for lower-order effects interpretable. The results indicate that when an individual's Household Life Cycle is low, there is a significant positive relationship between Brand Image and Brand Criticism ($b = .74$, $se = .28$, $p = .01$, 95% CI $[.18, 1.31]$). At the mean value of individuals' Household Life Cycle, there is a non-significant positive relationship between Brand Image and Brand Criticism ($b = .15$, $se = .19$, $p = .44$, 95% CI $[-.24, .55]$). When an individual's Household Life Cycle is high, a non-significant negative

relationship exists between Brand Image and Brand Criticism ($b=-.44$, $se = .30$, $p = .15$, 95% CI [-1.04, .17]).

H3: ACCEPTED. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant effect of the variable Household Life Cycle on the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. It assumes that the effect size of the interaction term is zero or negligible. The result of a significant interaction effect ($p = .01$) and a confidence interval that does not include zero (95% CI [-.79, -.12]) rejects the null hypothesis and confirms the moderator effect of the Household Life Cycle.

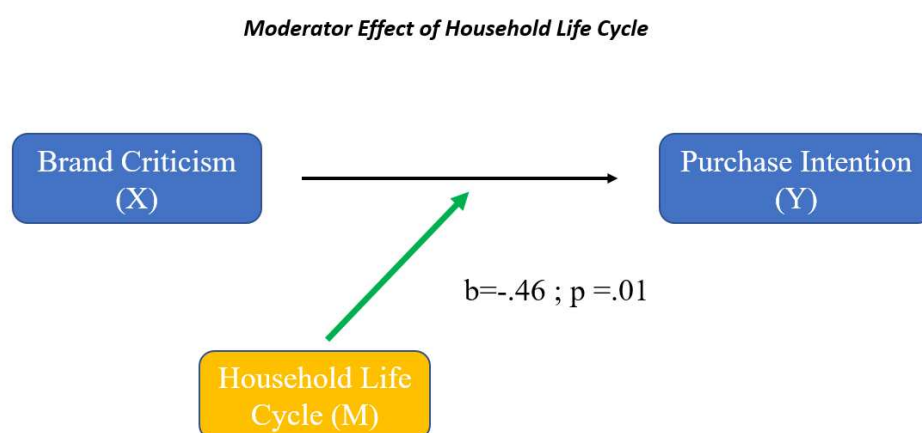


Figure 9 - Moderator Effect of Household Life Cycle on the relationship Brand Criticism-Purchase Intention

Hypothesis testing results

The table below summarizes the results of the hypothesis testing:

Null Hypothesis	Description	Results
H1a	Brand Criticism negatively affects Brand Image	Rejected
H1b	Brand Criticism negatively affects the Purchase Intention.	Rejected
H2	Brand Image mediates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase intention.	Rejected
H3	Individuals' Household Life Cycle will moderate the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image.	Accepted

Table 5 - Hypothesis status

4.2 Discussion

H1: REJECTED

H1.a

One significant finding from the study is the minimal positive effect of Brand Criticism on Brand Image. The statistical analysis revealed a small positive coefficient ($b = .001$, $s.e = .17$, $p = .991$), suggesting that Brand Criticism has a limited impact on shaping an individual's perception of a brand. While the effect is statistically significant, the magnitude of the relationship is quite small, indicating that Brand Criticism alone is unlikely to substantially alter an individual's overall perception of a brand.

H1.b

Another noteworthy finding is the slight positive non-significant relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. The regression analysis yielded a negligible positive coefficient ($b = .02$, $s.e = .18$, $p = .92$), indicating that Brand Criticism has a negligible effect on an individual's Intention to purchase. Although the relationship was not statistically significant, the small positive coefficient suggests that Brand Criticism may have some influence on Purchase Intention, albeit to a minimal extent.

The data collected and analyzed may not provide enough compelling evidence to support the hypothesis. The statistical analysis may have failed to show a significant effect or a relationship between variables probably due to the restricted sample size, suggesting that the observed results could have occurred by chance rather than a true reason.

H2: REJECTED

These findings suggest that Brand Image does not mediate the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention. The negative coefficient value indicates a tendency for lower Purchase Intention with increasing Brand Criticism, but this relationship is not statistically significant.

In other words, even though there is a significant relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention, Brand Image does not improve or enhance the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention.

This surprising outcome could be a symptom of the scarce quantity of subjects studied in this sample. When the sample size is too small, it may not accurately represent the population, leading to unreliable results. Probably, in a sample 10 times bigger, the results could have been different.

H3: ACCEPTED

Looking at the results, we can say that the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image is moderated by individuals' Household Life Cycle, confirming the 4th hypothesis. The specific relationship between Brand Image and Brand Criticism varies depending on the level of the Household Life Cycle. When the Household Life Cycle is low or at the mean value, the relationship is non-significant. However, when the Household Life Cycle is high, a significant negative relationship exists between Brand Image and Brand Criticism.

A high Household Life Cycle refers to a stage or phase in the life cycle of a household where the members of the household are typically in a higher age range and may have advanced in their careers, achieving financial stability, and have a higher level of disposable income. The high Household Life Cycle is characterized by a different set of needs, preferences, and consumption patterns compared to other stages of the Household Life Cycle. Indeed, this stage is often associated with the presence of a child who can significantly affect parents' purchase decision areas and intentions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The subsequent portion presents the primary discoveries, managerial and academic implications, as well as the limitations and recommendations for future investigations.

5.1 Main Findings and Conclusions

This study has been conceived with the objective of offering an elucidation for why McDonald's, despite enduring years of intense criticism that seemingly did not impact its Brand Image, continues to maintain an undisputed leadership position in the fast-food market (Opait G., 2019)

In light of the research problem, the study developed and sought to address two research questions (RQs).

5.1.1 RQ1

RQ1: What are the effects of Brand Criticism on an individual's perceptions and intentions?

The results of the study conducted highlighted a minimal positive effect of Brand Criticism on Brand Image while indicating an insignificant and negligible positive relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention.

The minimal positive effect of Brand Criticism on Brand Image suggests that, to some extent, Brand Criticism can influence how individuals perceive a brand. However, the magnitude of this effect is quite small, meaning that Brand Criticism alone is unlikely to have a significant impact on shaping the overall Brand Image.

On the other hand, the insignificant and negligible positive relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention suggests that the first has little influence on an individual's intention to purchase. This means that even though individuals may have negative perceptions

or critics of a brand, it does not necessarily translate into a substantial decrease in their likelihood to purchase products or services from that brand.

There could be several reasons for these findings. First, individuals might differentiate between their perception of a brand's image and their Purchase Intention. They might recognize that while they have criticisms about a brand, it does not necessarily deter them from buying products or services if they still perceive value in them.

Second, individuals may consider multiple factors when making purchase decisions, such as price, quality, convenience, or personal preferences, which can override the influence of Brand Criticism. In other words, other aspects of the product or service may outweigh the negative perceptions associated with Brand Criticism.

Additionally, individuals might have different levels of sensitivity to Brand Criticism. Some consumers may be more influenced by negative perceptions, while others may be more resilient and less affected by Brand Criticism.

It's important to note that these findings are specific to the study conducted and the particular context in which it was carried out. The complex nature of consumer behavior and the multitude of factors that influence Brand Perception and Purchase Intention necessitate further research to fully understand the dynamics between Brand Criticism and consumer responses.

5.1.2 RQ2

RQ2: Does the Household Life Cycle change the effects on an individual's perceptions and intentions?

By acknowledging the moderating effect of the Household Life Cycle on the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image, it highlights the importance of considering individuals' life stages when studying consumer responses to Brand Criticism.

Considering the results, it is evident that the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image is influenced or moderated by individuals' Household Life Cycles. This suggests that the impact of Brand Criticism on Brand Image may vary depending on the stage or phase of the Household Life Cycle that individuals are in.

Different stages of the Household Life Cycle come with varying priorities and needs. For instance, individuals in the early stages of their Household Life Cycle, such as young adults or families with children, may be more concerned with affordability, convenience, and family-oriented aspects of a brand. In contrast, individuals in later stages, such as retirees, may prioritize quality, personal preferences, and experiences. These differing priorities can influence how Brand Criticism affects their perception of the Brand Image.

5.2 Managerial and Academic Implications

The following section presents the practical and theoretical consequences derived from the study's findings.

5.2.1 Managerial Implications

Firstly, this study successfully showed that individuals' Household Life Cycle moderates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image. In other words, the way criticism is weighted by people, and consequently, their tendency to purchase, depends on the phase of the Household Life Cycle the subject is passing through. Specifically, this study has uncovered that parents' put asides critics when it comes to taking their children to McDonald's. This can be relevant in a managerial decision-making process in a business where children are involved, meaning that getting the child's loyalty is a very strong advantage since they play an important role in the parents' Purchase Intention and process. Therefore, different strategies may be required to manage brand perception and mitigate the influence of criticism based on the varying priorities and experiences of individuals at different stages of their Household Life Cycle.

Despite the others hypothesis are not confirmed, the study provides insights for brand managers and marketers. While Brand Criticism may have a minimal impact on Brand Image, it is crucial for companies to address consumer grievances and engage in effective brand

management strategies. Proactive measures such as responding to criticism, addressing concerns, and implementing improvements can help mitigate the negative effects of Brand Criticism and preserve a positive Brand Image.

5.2.2 Academic Implications

The available research hasn't explored the variable of Brand Criticism properly, especially included in a framework where also Brand Image and Purchase Intention are included.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings contribute to the existing literature by shedding light on the nuanced effects of Brand Criticism on individual perceptions and intentions. It highlights the limited impact of Brand Criticism on Brand Image and Purchase Intention, emphasizing the complex nature of consumer responses to criticism.

From this research, is not possible to state that Criticism has a significant effect on Brand Image and Purchase Intention, since the results suggest that the effect of the independent variable exists, but this is not significant. But the fact that a slight effect has been found, may leave a glimmer, meaning that if more studies will be carried out, the outcome could finally confirm the relationship among these variables.

The findings about individuals' Household Life Cycle that moderates the relationship between Brand Criticism and Brand Image is a new result, which inserts in a context of poor research. Indeed, this could represent a good basis for future explorations in this area and in other stages of the Household Life Cycle.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

The sample used in this research, which includes 122 answers, meets the minimum size requirements, that is 30 valid answers per stimulus. Despite this, the sample size is still small, and it could be the major limitation of the research. Indeed, 3 hypotheses out of 4 are supposed to have been rejected due to a limited number of valid answers. If future studies will be conducted in this area, is encouraged the use of a bigger sample size, at least 10 times the size of the used sample.

Another factor that represents a research's limitation is that, when demographic questions are asked, education level is missing. The rationale behind its exclusion was that the education level of a subject doesn't interfere with the Brand Image and perception of the brand, with the decision of making a purchase as well as with the Household Life Cycle stage. A participant provided an important input, that is, that the education level could at least be significant when talking about critics, since at a different level of education it should correspond a different understanding, perception, and weight of topics such as climate change, job exploitation practiced by some big companies, and health issues connected to the fast-food's consumption.

For the next studies, is also recommended to use as a mediator also the variable "Perceived Value". Originally, it was present in this research, but it has been excluded for a non-sufficient score on the validity test. The reason was probably explained by the scarce number of items used to evaluate this variable. Thus, the advice is to include this variable, associated with Brand Image as a mediator but also as the only mediator of the relationship between Brand Criticism and Purchase Intention; but make sure that the items used to asses this variable are a minimum of 3.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Have you ever heard about the Brand "McDonald's"?

Yes

No

McDonald's is a company that provides hundreds of thousands of job positions worldwide. The employees usually work in a clean and safe space, they have the right to paid holidays, paid sick leave, and a decent possibility of career advancement. At the same time, the employees are required to work at a high intensity, and many times they have to be available for extra working time. Moreover, McDonald's has received several criticisms regarding the average wage. In the image below you're provided with the average hourly-paid salary in a McDonald's restaurant, in the US, taking into account different roles. Be aware that in the US, the general average wage is 29.81 \$ per hour (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023).

Crew Member \$12.41 per hour	Manager \$14.62 per hour
HVAC Technician \$17.68 per hour	General Manager \$19.33 per hour
Shift Manager \$14.05 per hour	Assistant Manager \$15.22 per hour

In the picture below you can see a usual meal from a fast food restaurant, in this case from McDonald's. For a long time, it has been labeled as "junk food", and the company has been harshly criticized for it, although, in the last years, the company has been doing progress to enhance the quality of the products provided.



Many reporters have been talking about the pollution caused by companies like McDonald's for years. Environmental NGOs usually carry out protests against McDonald's, especially regarding the deforestation process going on in Amazon. The company has always been trying to defend and address the business in a green way. Indeed, in the last years, the company has been taking action in order to favor deforestation-free suppliers. Moreover, the giant has apparently cut plastic from its packaging, starting to use compostable items.



McDonald's is not only a leader in the fast food sector in terms of revenues, but it also stands out for its creative marketing campaigns. Below you're provided with an example extrapolated from one of the main Brand's campaigns. After having a look at it, please answer the questions.



Please answer to the following questions:

	1 (completely disagree)	2	3	4 (neither agree nor disagree)	5	6	7 (completely agree)
I think that this is a criticism of McDonald's job exploitation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that this is s criticism of McDonald's deforestation process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think this is a criticism of the healthiness of McDonald's products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	1 (completely disagree)	2	3	4 (neither agree nor disagree)	5	6	7 (completely agree)
Criticism about McDonald's makes me less likely to purchase from a McDonald's restaurant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The critics that I heard about McDonald's changed my intention to buy again from this Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	1 (completely disagree)	2	3	4 (neither agree nor disagree)	5	6	7 (completely agree)
Criticism about McDonald's affects my overall perception of McDonald's value, such as quality-price ratio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criticism about McDonald's makes me judge the Brand products' price as less affordable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	1 (completely disagree)	2	3	4 (neither agree nor disagree)	5	6	7 (completely agree)
Criticism about McDonald's affects my associations with the Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criticism about McDonald's affects my memories associated with the Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criticism about McDonald's affects my feelings toward the Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	1 (completely disagree)	2	3	4 (neither agree nor disagree)	5	6	7 (completely agree)
Critics against McDonald's are irrelevant to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	1 (completely disagree)	2	3	4 (neither agree nor disagree)	5	6	7 (completely agree)
The Brand Image of McDonald's in my mind in terms of feelings, associations, and memories, makes me more likely to purchase and consume their products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My overall perception of McDonald's value, such as the quality-price ratio, leads me to be more likely to purchase and consume their products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Brand Image of McDonald's in my mind in terms of feelings, associations, and memories affects my perception of the overall value of the Brand, such as the quality-price ratio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have (at least) a child who is currently less than 14 years old?

Yes

No

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	1 (completely disagree)	2	3	4 (neither agree nor disagree)	5	6	7 (completely agree)
I often go to McDonald's with my child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child can decide what he/she wants when going to McDonald'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Usually, when I go to McDonald's, I talk about it with my child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When purchasing from McDonald's, my child's opinion is important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child begs me to take him/her to McDonald's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child offers me deals (for example: cleaning the room) to persuade me to agree to take him/her to McDonald's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child uses threats, or intimidation to persuade me to purchase from McDonald's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 2

Frequency Table

What's your nationality? - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Portuguese	11	9,0	9,0	9,0
	Italian	25	20,5	20,5	29,5
	German	10	8,2	8,2	37,7
	Spanish	17	13,9	13,9	51,6
	French	6	4,9	4,9	56,6
	Other - please specify	53	43,4	43,4	100,0
	Total	122	100,0	100,0	

What's your age range?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<18	3	2,5	2,5	2,5
	18-29	46	37,7	37,7	40,2
	29-39	35	28,7	28,7	68,9
	39-49	21	17,2	17,2	86,1
	49-59	11	9,0	9,0	95,1
	60+	6	4,9	4,9	100,0
	Total	122	100,0	100,0	

Please select your gender - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	64	52,5	52,5	52,5
	Female	55	45,1	45,1	97,5
	Non-binary / third gender	3	2,5	2,5	100,0
	Total	122	100,0	100,0	

Please select your marital status - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	36	29,5	29,5	29,5
	Married	59	48,4	48,4	77,9
	Divorced	4	3,3	3,3	81,1
	Widower	1	,8	,8	82,0
	Relationship (living together)	9	7,4	7,4	89,3
	Relationship (not living together)	11	9,0	9,0	98,4
	Prefer not to say	2	1,6	1,6	100,0
	Total	122	100,0	100,0	

What's your main current occupation? - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	21	17,2	17,2	17,2
	Worker	85	69,7	69,7	86,9
	Unemployed	11	9,0	9,0	95,9
	Retired	4	3,3	3,3	99,2
	Other - please specify	1	,8	,8	100,0
	Total	122	100,0	100,0	

Appendix 3

Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics							
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's makes me less likely to purchase from a McDonald's restaurant	122	1	7	3,19	1,842	,508	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - The critics that I heard about McDonald's changed my intention to buy again from this Brand	122	1	7	3,68	1,972	,226	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my overall perception of McDonald's value, such as quality-price ratio	122	1	7	3,40	1,969	,294	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's makes me judge the Brand products' price as less affordable	122	1	7	3,46	2,105	,428	,219

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my associations with the Brand	122	1	7	3,47	2,001	,436	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my memories associated with the Brand	122	1	7	3,65	2,045	,194	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my feelings toward the Brand	122	1	7	3,90	2,126	,073	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: - Critics against McDonald's are irrelevant to me	122	1	7	4,03	2,163	-,073	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - The Brand Image of McDonald's in my mind in terms of feelings, associations, and memories, makes me more likely to purchase and consume their products	122	1	7	4,29	2,161	-,283	,219

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My overall perception of McDonald's value, such as the quality-price ratio, leads me to be more likely to purchase and consume their products	122	1	7	4,77	1,867	-,504	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - The Brand Image of McDonald's in my mind in terms of feelings, associations, and memories affects my perception of the overall value of the Brand, such as the quality-price ratio	122	1	7	4,59	2,036	-,407	,219
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - I often go to McDonald's with my child	59	1	7	4,20	2,273	-,142	,311
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child can decide what he/she wants when going to McDonald'	59	1	7	5,42	1,923	-,1235	,311
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Usually, when I go to McDonald's, I talk about it with my child	59	1	7	4,83	2,044	-,553	,311

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - When purchasing from McDonald's, my child's opinion is important to me	59	1	7	5,05	2,080	-,665	,311
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child begs me to take him/her to McDonald's	59	1	7	4,85	1,919	-,442	,311
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child offers me deals (for example: cleaning the room) to persuade me to agree to take him/her to McDonald's	59	1	7	4,24	1,959	-,316	,311
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child uses threats, or intimidation to persuade me to purchase from McDonald's	59	1	7	2,85	2,288	,721	,311
Valid N (listwise)	59						

Appendix 4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,715	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my associations with the Brand	7,55	13,208	,485	,683
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my memories associated with the Brand	7,37	12,301	,543	,614
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my feelings toward the Brand	7,11	11,458	,576	,572

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,261	2

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's affects my overall perception of McDonald's value, such as quality-price ratio	3,46	4,432	,151	.
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's makes me judge the Brand products' price as less affordable	3,40	3,879	,151	.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,752	2

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Criticism about McDonald's makes me less likely to purchase from a McDonald's restaurant	3,68	3,889	,604	.
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - The critics that I heard about McDonald's changed my intention to buy again from this Brand	3,19	3,394	,604	.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,737	7

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - I often go to McDonald's with my child	27,24	60,943	,439	,709

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child can decide what he/she wants when going to McDonald'	26,02	63,189	,485	,698
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Usually, when I go to McDonald's, I talk about it with my child	26,61	59,380	,576	,676
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - When purchasing from McDonald's, my child's opinion is important to me	26,39	58,001	,612	,666
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child begs me to take him/her to McDonald's	26,59	62,763	,502	,695
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child offers me deals (for example: cleaning the room) to persuade me to agree to take him/her to McDonald's	27,20	67,372	,326	,732
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My child uses threats, or intimidation to persuade me to purchase from McDonald's	28,59	66,970	,254	,754

Appendix 5

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Criticism	.365	122	<.001	.725	122	<.001

^a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Appendix 6

NPar Tests

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks

	Construct	N	Mean Rank
Criticism	Q4	30	69,65
	Q6	30	77,83
	Q8	31	83,03
	Q10	31	16,27
	Total	122	

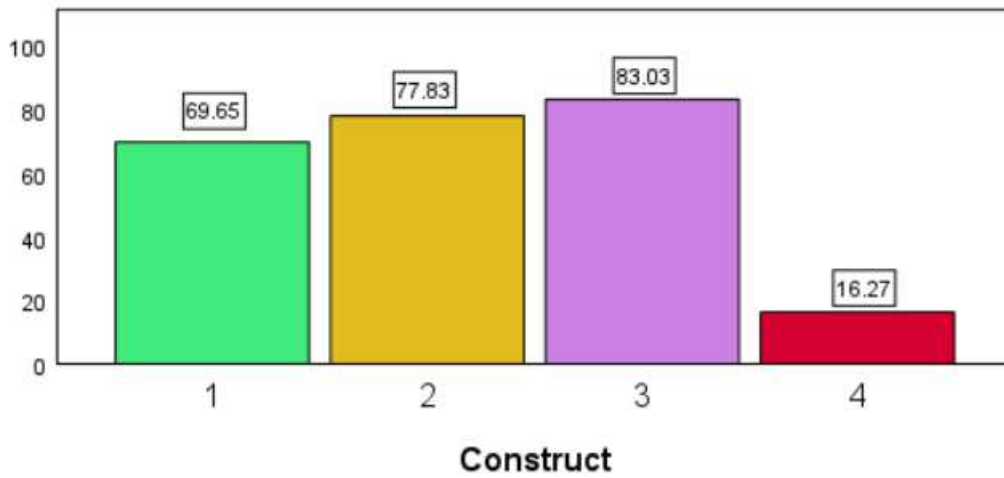
Test Statistics^{a,b}

Criticism	
Kruskal-Wallis H	91,388
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	<.001

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable:
Construct

Constructs Mean Ranks



NPar Tests

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks

	all_critics	N	Mean Rank
Criticism	1,00	30	38,78
	2,00	30	46,92
	3,00	31	52,10
	Total	91	

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Criticism
Kruskal-Wallis H	8,500
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,014

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable:
all_critics

Appendix 7

Regression

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Criticism ^b	.	Enter

^a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

^b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.000 ^a	.000	-.008	1.64878

^a. Predictors: (Constant), Criticism

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.000	1	.000	.000	.997 ^b
	Residual	326.219	120	2.718		
	Total	326.219	121			

^a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

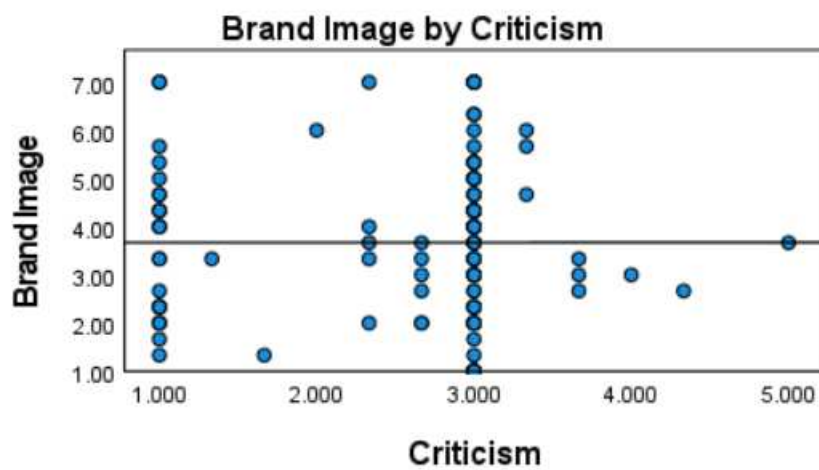
^b. Predictors: (Constant), Criticism

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.670	.461		7.964	<.001
	Criticism	.001	.169	.000	.004	.997

^a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

GGraph



Appendix 8

Regression

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Criticism ^b	.	Enter

^a Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

^b All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.010 ^a	.000	-.008	1.71499

^a Predictors: (Constant), Criticism

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.033	1	.033	.011	.916 ^b
	Residual	352.943	120	2.941		
	Total	352.975	121			

^a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

^b. Predictors: (Constant), Criticism

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.387	.479		7.065	<.001
	Criticism	.019	.176	.010	.105	.916

^a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

GGraph



Appendix 9

Bootstrap

Bootstrap Specifications

Sampling Method	Simple
Number of Samples	1000
Confidence Interval Level	95.0%
Confidence Interval Type	Percentile

Correlations

Appendix 10

Bootstrap

Bootstrap Specifications

Sampling Method	Simple
Number of Samples	1000
Confidence Interval Level	95.0%
Confidence Interval Type	Percentile

Nonparametric Correlations