

Brand Cynicism: start to develop a scale

Diana Balhote Rodrigues

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of
Master in Marketing

Supervisor:
Prof. Doutora Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro, Associate Professor with habilitation,
ISCTE Business School, Marketing Department, Operations and Management
Department (IBS)

September 2019

Acknowledge

To my supervisor, Professor Sandra Loureiro, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for all of your kindness, patience, and support during the process. I have been extremely lucky to have a supervisor who was always ready to help and willing to respond to my questions and queries so promptly.

To my family and closest friends, I am truly grateful for your unconditional love and support.

To my closest colleagues from the master's degree, thank you for your friendship, for being my partners in many moments of the writing of my thesis and most importantly, for sharing this journey with me.

Finally, I would like to thank all the participants that gave a contribution to this project. Your effort helped me to accomplish my results.

Abstract

We are living in an era of great cynicism. It is everywhere and brands aren't immune. In fact, they may be more vulnerable to cynicism since their presence and value is completely dependent on how they are perceived by consumers. However, despite its growing relevance, this is a very under-researched phenomenon and many aspects remain unclear. Therefore, this paper attempts to conceptualize and measure Brand Cynicism through the development of a first scale that aims to be extremely valuable for managers who want to understand and manage such phenomena in their industries. Firstly, the relevant literature for the proposed theme is presented. Then, a qualitative exploratory analysis is performed in order to obtain the items that will belong to the future scale. Upon completion of this analysis, quantitative analysis takes place and the generated items are subjected to analysis. A two-dimension scale is identified: detachment and doubtfulness. Furthermore, the relationship of the scale with important variables is assessed: Consumer cynicism, Consumer Embarrassment, Consumer Rebellion and Brand Equity. The findings reveal that brand cynicism is positively influenced by Consumer embarrassment, Consumer Cynicism and consumer Rebellion but there is no statistical evidence that Brand Cynicism influences Brand Equity. This dissertation concludes with a brief discussion about the results, achievements and implications of the study, and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Marketing, Brand, Cynicism, Scale Development

JEL classification

M310 - Marketing

M370 - Advertising

Resumo

Vivemos numa época de grande cinismo. A sua presença está em todo o lado e as marcas não estão imunes. Na verdade, estas podem ser mais vulneráveis ao cinismo visto que a sua presença e valor está dependente da forma como estas são percebidas pelos consumidores. No entanto, apesar da sua crescente relevância, este é um conceito bastante recente e muito aspetos permanecem por explorar. Por conseguinte, com esta dissertação pretende-se conceptualizar e medir *Brand Cynicism* (o sentimento de cinismo face às marcas) através do desenvolvimento de uma primeira escala que poderá ser extremamente valiosa para gestores/marketeers que pretendem perceber e lidar com este fenómeno. Primeiramente, a revisão literária relevante para o tema proposto é apresentada e de seguida é feita uma análise exploratória qualitativa de forma a obter os itens que irão fazer parte da futura escala. Após a conclusão desta análise, segue-se a fase quantitativa onde estes itens serão submetidos a análise e onde é identificada uma escala com duas dimensões: *detachment* (desapego) e *doubtfulness* (dúvida). Seguidamente, a relação da escala com variáveis de interesse é testada: *Consumer cynicism*, *Consumer embarrassment*, *Consumer rebellion* e *Brand equity*. Os resultados mostram que *Brand Cynicism* é positivamente influenciado pelas três primeiras. No entanto, não há evidência estatística que esta influencie *Brand equity*. Conclui-se esta dissertação com uma breve discussão sobre os resultados obtidos, implicações para a área do Marketing e algumas sugestões para pesquisas futuras.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research context

Consumers are becoming increasingly more cynical about brands and advertising. Many consumers believe that brands, while advertising, lie and manipulate to make profit (Burgum, 2015). There is also a constant feeling of disappointment with unfulfilled promises in the politic or economic realm that entails a massive distrust of any altruistic discourses specially because “virtually all citizens seem to recognize this tendency of ad language to distort, advertising seems to turn us into a community of cynics, and we doubt advertisers, the media and authority in all its forms” (Odou & de Pechpeyrou, 2011: 1799).

On the one hand, brands and companies are perceived as arrogant and selfish. Therefore consumers are not willing to trust until they have real proof that promises were kept (Odou & Pechpeyrou, 2011). On the other hand, marketers are considered highly skilled cultural engineers that beneficiate from information asymmetries and unbalanced market influence at the expense of consumer protection and well-being (Holt, 2002). Consequently, consumers try to protect themselves by adjusting their own market choices (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015). They are choosing brands in a more careful way, rejecting the misguided ones and disesteem deceptive marketing practices (Helm, 2004).

This type of behavior is mostly happening because customers are interacting with brands more often, providing more opportunities to build brand loyalty but also more dissatisfied consumers (Morgan, 2017). Especially new generations have a natural distrust for brands, media and advertising (Quintal, Phau, Sims, & Cheah, 2016). According to a recent research conducted by the British newspaper, Trinity Mirror, 42% of consumers distrust brands and 69% distrust advertising (Roderick, 2017). In addition, about 84% of millennials don't trust traditional advertising, meaning that there are thousands of messages that they see each day and ignore (Gordon, 2017).

1.2 Research Problem

Cynicism in the marketplace is an under-researched phenomenon in consumer behavior and there are still many significant research opportunities to explore this thematic and to better describe and understand its impact in the market. Moreover, the existing research is mostly focused on consumer's distrust to the general marketplace or marketing practices and very little focused on the cynicism specifically related to brands.

With the increasing sophistication in the market, brands must know how to compete by understanding what is changing consumer behavior and react to it (Quintal et al., 2016). Questions concerning-brand identification have become more relevant for brand management (Podnar, 2013), especially because some negative behavior may have direct impact on the firm. For instance, the increase of cynicism in consumers may result in more frequent behaviors such as lower purchase intentions, spreading negative word of mouth and disparaging a firm's reputation. (Chylinski & Chu, 2010).

Consequently, in times of great cynicism, managers should carefully understand what might be generating mistrust and how they can manage this phenomenon. Understanding factors underlying new generation's consumer behavior is becoming more important, not only because they are more affected by this phenomenon but also due to their significant consumption potential (Kim & Jang, 2014).

As we will see later in the course of this dissertation, previous literature can identify and explore some of the sources of cynicism in the marketplace and provide some examples of consumer behaviors associated with this phenomenon. However, a conceptualization of brand cynicism appears to be lacking. Several measurement scales have been developed in recent years and many constructs have emerged in the branding literature such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand personality etc. They are useful to attribute scores in some numerical dimension to phenomena that cannot be measured directly (Morgado, Meireles, Neves, Amaral, & Ferreira, 2017).

The presence of cynicism in society is getting stronger and if it is not properly managed, it might bring several consequences for companies and brands. More attention should be given to this topic in branding literature.

1.3 Structure

The aim of this study is to develop a first scale to measure brand cynicism which will be validated based on an exploratory qualitative inquiry and quantitative assessment. In order to achieve that, this research is divided into three main sections: theoretical background, scale development and conclusions.

On the first section, the theoretical background is explored in order to understand what has been done earlier and identify the main discussions around the theme.

On the second section, the construct in study is defined as “Brand Cynicism” and an exploratory qualitative inquiry and quantitative assessment are applied in order to develop the initial scale. The first part of the scale development process consists in the generation of the item pool that is drew from comments and opinions taken from consumer’s own words in the focus group, as well as items based on the literature. Four focus group sessions are organized with the goal to understand what the definition of a cynical brands in consumer’s eyes is and what are the main feelings and thoughts that arise with this topic.

Based on the information that was gathered during this qualitative assessment and considering the main findings that were taken from the literature review, 28 hypothetical brand cynicism items are generated, with the goal of eventually reducing the scale to half or fewer.

After that, a survey applied is put into practice. This questionnaire also encompasses the various constructs that were previously addressed in the literary review and seem to be related with our main construct. The items are analyzed using SPSS for data processing, and the main conclusions are drawn regarding the validity of the framework and the way the constructs interrelate.

During the scale development process, the initial 28-item pool is going to be purified by eliminating items with unacceptable and not so good performance. In the last chapter, the main managerial implications will be outlined, also the limitations of the study and some suggestions for further research.

2. Literature review

In 2006, Keyes made us think about the current society with the following question: “Can you read the newspapers, watch television and generally try to keep informed about what is going on in the world without becoming cynical?” (Keyes, 2006: 9).

Nowadays, many consumers believe that marketing strategies, especially advertising tactics, are designed to be inherently misleading. The average consumer, who has probably grown up in a mediated environment exposed to hundreds of commercial messages a day, has learned that product claims are often distorted and that business practice self-interest with guile. (Graham Austin, Plouffe, & Peters, 2005) New generations are more affected by this phenomenon due to their early and wider exposure to brands (Kim & Jang, 2014). Consequently, they are more likely to display chronic boredom and mistrust of the media, and being cynical about companies (Quintal et al., 2016).

Consumer scams, fraud, deceptive practices and consumer litigation remain prevalent parts of the global landscape. Consequently, all consumers become cynical, mistrust of the motives of firms and believe that firms will disparage or manipulate information for reasons of self-interest (Chylinski & Chu, 2010), and show characteristics of suspicion, hostility and pessimism (Balaji, Jha, Sengupta, & Krishnan, 2018).

2.1 Brand concept and consumer-brand bond

The concept of branding has always been fulfilled in the area of marketing and is significantly relevant these days due to the evolution of the market that has transformed the brand's role in the consumer's mind.

No one “would deny that brands, now more than ever, are owned by consumers; they shape them, they use them, and they even market and promote them. Consumers have become the storytellers, and the individual power of each unique story is part of the brand’s equity” (Riley et al., 2016: 44)

A brand can be a name or a symbol that helps to create a positive image on consumers and being different from rival products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Keller

(1993) states that the power of a brand rests in consumers' minds; on what they have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand through time.

Since the very beginning, there has been a big preoccupation in understanding, conceptualizing and measuring the strength of the bonds that unite consumers and brands. These days, a fundamental challenge facing companies is understanding why consumers are attracted to certain brands more than others. However, this is a very complex process since consumers tend to form parasocial relationships with brands and the nature and strength of those relationships depends on several factors that are difficult to measure (Mitchell Harding & Humphreys, 2015).

Over time, conceptualizations of brand relationship have evolved from general and well explored predispositions, such as loyalty and commitment, to more refined notions that qualify and explain the relationship bond. Central is the construct of brand attachment, which is the strength of the connection between a brand and a consumer's self-concept (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016).

2.1.1 Brand personality and consumer brand identification

Brands can influence the construction of an individual's identity. Consumers tend to form connections to brands that become meaningful in association to their own self and/or consistent with a group of reference such as family, friends, sports, celebrities, or brand communities. (Loureiro, 2015) Consequently, brand personality has significant relevance while studying consumer behavior and understanding customer's relationships with brands/firms.

Brand personality can be defined as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Consumers often imbue brands with human personality traits and think about a brand as a person and as they relate to one's self (Aaker, 1997).

The greater the congruity between the human characteristics that describe an individual's actual or ideal self, and the characteristics that describe a brand, the more attractive the brand is the greater will be the consumer's preference for it. Brand values play a major role in influencing consumer behavior, especially if they are congruent with the values of the consumer target group. Furthermore, consumers who identify with a brand are more likely to generate positive word of mouth and brand commitment (Podnar, 2013).

Consumers can also humanize brands in a self-focused perspective. They may perceive a brand as being "like me" or as being "close to me" as a person. A congruity

between the brands and the self in terms of personalities, user, gender, reference group identification and/or cultural identification can be perceived by a consumer (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Additionally, consumers are more likely to become attached to brands that enrich the self by helping them to develop, maintain and promote a desired identity and a coherent sense of self (Park, Eisingerich, & Park, 2013)

Brand-self connections are stronger for brands that are central to one's identity, reference group membership and status (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). On the other hand, Brands linked to outgroups/dissociative reference groups will be perceived as more distance from the consumer. Consumer might experience aversion to brands that reflect dissociative reference groups with whom they do not want to be associated with (White & Dahl, 2007). Brand aversion can also appear when a brand to which consumers are attached violates their trust (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017).

2.2.2 Brand as a person with intentions

Brands may be humanized and assume role as an “active” and “personalized” participant in the relationship with the consumer. (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012) This humanization process of brands is part of what can be called as anthropomorphism of a brand (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007).

When a brand is anthropomorphized, it is described as having human-like features (e.g. gender, physical characteristics, human-like personality traits (e.g. fun, friendly, classy) and/or human-like intentions (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). By anthropomorphizing a brand, consumers draw inferences about the brand's unobserved personality. It is assumed to have feelings, motivations and goals and that will and power to act according to those (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012).

The more a brand is perceived as having a mind of its own and be compared to a person, the more consumers can make inferences about brand's trustworthiness, fairness, or blameworthiness. By being trustworthy, a brand is expected to understand the consumer, acts morally and with goodwill, and will use its free will in ways that benefit the consumer.

There is evidence that the perception of the extent to which the brand likes the consumer affects the level of attraction of a consumer to the brand. In other words, consumers feel more attracted and closer to brands that exhibit cues of linking for them, either through friendly actions or self-brand similarity (Harding & Humphreys, 2015). On the other hand, the more the brand is perceived to having a mind of its own, the more

consumers will judge if brand actions level of fairness on brand's actions. For instance, considering the increase of price as unfair or the decrease as fair. Finally, because consumers view brands as having intentions, they can attribute blame or credit to the brands in an easier way on their consumption experiences (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017).

Another negative feeling that can emerge is brand betrayal, which might emerge in case a brand violates the fundamental norms that guide the brand relationship. This feeling can be so negative that consumers can take revenge against the brand (Johnson, Matear, & Thomson, 2011) and is more accurate in brands that consumers see as anthropomorphized which they expect to act with intentionality. In these cases, consumers might infer that the brand has intentionally misled or exploited them, behaved in an unethical way or has shown disloyalty (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017).

2.2.3 Cynicism Definition

The term cynicism refers to a generalized belief that others' actions are deceitful. Is associated with unrealistic expectations, a sense of being let down, feelings of betrayal and negative affect (Hochwarter et al., 2004) A critical element common to all conceptualizations of cynicism is the notion of empty promises (Helm, 2004).

It is commonly related to terms like suspicion, mistrust, skepticism, and distrust of agent's motives, as well as reactions of dissatisfaction, alienation, and resistance or even hostility towards the agent (e.g. sales people, brand, firm) (Chylinski & Chu, 2010). Cynicism also incorporates a feeling of manipulation or ethical violation, exploiting others for one's own interest (Helm, 2004).

The pretense of unselfishness to mask selfish goals lies at the heart of the cynicism concept and cause many criticisms about advertising and marketing communications. Only recently, with its increased relevance, has this concept has been studied in the consumer behavior context (Balaji et al., 2018).

In a consumer behavior context, cynicism is often seen as defensive psychological tool against persuasion attempts through constant suspicion toward messages, but also, and more specifically, toward the intentions of brands or retailers. It is considered as a defensive mental devices against marketing stimuli which manifests in cognitive reactions such as fear of being deceived, doubt, distrust and suspicion of techniques such as : telephone selling, direct selling or toward advertising in general (Odou & de Pechpeyrou, 2011).

2.3 Consumer cynicism

Research in some areas of consumer behavior suggests that consumers can be cynical showing attitudes of distrust toward businesses and a constant feeling of being manipulated (Helm, 2004). In fact, many practitioners believe cynicism is rising and the cynical consumer movement seems to be getting more organized (Helm, Moulard, & Richins, 2015).

An individual “consumer’s stable, learned attitude towards the marketplace characterized by the perception that pervasive opportunism among firms exists and that this opportunism creates a harmful consumer marketplace.” (Helm et al., 2015: 515). Certain practices that once were considered legitimate are now seen as detrimental do consumers’ health, community spheres and human or natural resources. (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015).

Consumers believe that marketers have shrewdly managed the population to create demand and earn profits and, as a consequence, doubt companies’ true intentions and show skepticism to brand communication (Graham Austin et al., 2005),

Marketers are considered highly skilled cultural engineers that benefit from information asymmetries and unbalanced market influence at the expense of consumer protection and well-being (Holt, 2002). For instance, selling harmful products such as fast food or alcohol and tobacco, who affects vulnerable consumers that are unable to resist (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015), or perpetuating unrealistic, overdrawn notions of human appearance and social relations as natural, inevitable and desirable for consumers (Gurrieri, Previte, & Brace-Govan, 2013).

2.3.1 Consumer Cynicism Antecedents

According to Chylinski & Chu (2010), incongruence is a crucial determinant of consumer cynicism, more specifically goal incongruence and value incongruence. Consumers who interpret firm’s actions as incongruent with their goals or/and values, reflect on the firm’s motives for these actions and adopt a range of behaviors in response.

On one hand, many performance-related consumer behaviors tend to be goal directed. When consuming goods and services, consumers expect to achieve desired ends. By comparing the final comparison of the outcome achieved and the standard or reference value that the consumer has established before the consumption, consumers will understand if it resulted in goal attainment or failure (Chylinski & Chu, 2010).

On the other hand, values provide the broad motivation for choosing a marketing agent (product, brand, or firm) with certain attributes, with the aim to relate its attributes to the concept of self (Davvetas & Diamantopoulos, 2017). For instance, consumers who believe they should act in a socially and environmentally responsible manner are more likely to take into account the social and environmental consequences of their purchases and choose an agent that shows those kind of attributes (Collins, Steg, & Koning, 2007).

Repeated observations of incongruence between a consumer's desired states and the actions of the marketing agent leads to suspicion of an agent, and thus, repeated dissatisfaction leads to a dominant belief that the agent has ulterior self-serving, creating distrust, and skepticism about what marketing agent's claim and its ability to provide the stated outcomes (Chylinski & Chu, 2010).

2.3.2 Consumer cynicism as a defensive and offensive tool

Consumers, by observing they have been taken advantage of, learn how to become defensive over time to prevent further dissatisfaction (Darke & Ritchie, 2007). For instance, cynical consumers may unfavorably evaluate service recovery efforts, indicating that cynicism negatively moderates the effect of perceived justice on satisfaction. (Balaji et al., 2018) The more cynical the customer is, the less satisfied he will with service recovery. Consumer's participation in service recovery may reduce negative outcome and increase satisfaction among cynical customers. By observing service aspects that are typically not visible to them, consumers will see the service recovery much more transparent and trustworthy (Guo, Lotz, Tang, & Gruen).

In addition, consumer cynicism is a key antecedent of perceived deception, meaning that cynical consumers tend to be more suspicious of product information that might be questionable, such as product sizing. In this case, consumers attribute discrepant size labeling to intentionally deceptive retailer motives and tend to form negative impressions of the product and retailer. Additionally, this effect is amplified when they have prior knowledge of deceptive size labeling, leading to lower responses to the product and the retailer (Ketrion, 2016).

A study conducted by Odou & de Pechpeyrou (2011) has offered a new perspective about consumer cynicism. Many authors see consumer cynicism as a defensive psychological tool against persuasion attempts through constant suspicions and distrust toward messages and the intentions of brands. Although, if marketers can put aside their moral principles to attain their performance objectives, so do consumers.

Consumers can develop offensive and opportunistic strategies and using manipulative devices when dealing with sellers, exploiting the system or even other consumers (Kretz, 2010). Consumers adapt the classical principal of minimizing costs and maximizing profits on their own consumption, by diverting all marketing resources such as free product, promotions or cash refund to get their consumption free and consequently achieving their one's own consumption objectives.

While defensive cynicism is associated with a global mistrust of every persuasion attempt, doubting brands and sellers, in offensive cynicism, emancipation and critical deconstruction are used for self-interested purpose (Odou & de Pechpeyrou, 2011).

2.4 Consumer rebellion

There is a growing interest in understanding anti-consumption attitudes and why certain levels of discontent feelings can lead to rebellion actions against advertisements and brands (Helm, 2004).

These feelings arise mostly because of the increasingly concern with the negative impact of capitalism and marketing on global economics, politics, cultures and environment. Many consumers see marketing policies and tactics as the root cause and start to engage in some sort of “consumer rebellion” taking active steps and powerful social movements to rebel against the marketplace (Graham Austin et al., 2005).

Conflicts between marketing and consumers exist when firms attend to their internal interests rather than seek to meet consumer wants and needs (Holt, 2002).

Consumers have learned not to blindly trust marketers' promises but to evaluate such practices through a critical filter (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015). They believe that many marketing practices are sleazy, purposely designed to subtly deceive consumers and that marketers are constructing a deceitful ‘plot’ and using trickery to trap individuals into a consumption-oriented lifestyle (Dobscha & College, 1998).

A counter-culture is forming around the idea that “ consumer goods companies have spawned a societally destructive consumer culture” (Holt, 2002: 70).

Anti-commercial consumer rebels believe that consumer's mental and physical selves have been influenced and shaped by marketing and market forces. It's a system in which consumer's thoughts, feelings and behavior are manipulated with less-than-ethical marketing with the objective of generating sales.

Additionally, brands are accused of causing trouble because they allow companies to dodge civic obligations and “postmodern branding is perceived as deceitful because the ideals woven into brands seem so disconnected from, and often contrary to, the material actions of the companies that own them” (Holt, 2002: 88). In recent years we see that consumers have started supporting and giving more voice to fair trade-labeled brand or join forces change some companies’ actions. For instance, consumers have been complaining about the fact that companies need to reduce or even ban the use of plastic in their materials (Moraes, Shaw, & Carrigan, 2011).

Consumer rebellion can manifest itself in avoidance behaviors. Consumers intentionally withdraw from doing business with companies they considered “unethical” in order to take a stand and preserve what they see as intrinsically valuable (Graham Austin et al., 2005). If critical consumers spot corporate transgressions of legitimate practice, they tend to no longer mobilize local peers for local boycotts with limited consequences, but rather run global social media campaigns that can severely damage brand's reputation (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015).

All the innovation in communication technology makes it possible for consumers to assess more easily to marketing practices and to respond more directly and influentially, giving them more capability to emphasize the use of unwanted practices to other consumers (Abela & Murphy, 2008). If consumers spot corporate transgressions of legitimate practice, they can easily spread it around the globe in a matter of hours and result in serious consequences for a brand/company reputation (Carducci, 2006).

Nowadays, brands are really trying that consumer experience the magic of the brand at every corporate touchpoint, but this is no longer enough. With consumers becoming more cynical over time and this promotional logic is not the way that brands will connect with most of the consumers who had more trouble to identify themselves with the brands. There is anti-branding movement that is forcing companies to build ways that link brand and company, because consumers are more interested in the way in which companies treat people when they are not consumers (Holt, 2002).

2.5 Consumer Embarrassment

When consumers doubt that a brand will be able to deliver the desired outcome, and this leads to a feelings of fear about what others might think, negative emotions such as embarrassment might arise (Takahashi, Grant, Walsh, Hofacker, & Albrecht, 2015).

All objects including brands, products and packaging have conceptual (implicit) associations and consequently a conceptual profile that influences our attitudes, affective reactions and behavior towards it. (Thomson & Crocker, 2014) Product attributes, such as appearance, color, texture or interface, are likely to trigger specific emotional responses associated with product use, thereby affecting users' product-use pattern, affecting consumer satisfaction, product usability, and even consumer's willingness to purchase. These responses are not always positive, it is inevitable that consumers often experience negative emotions, such as embarrassment, in the process of using a certain product (Tsao & Chan, 2011).

Embarrassment is a powerful emotion of self-consciousness that occurs in social context, driven by concerns about what others think (Thomson & Crocker, 2014). It is an awkward feeling or short-lived negative emotional response aroused as a result of an individual's behavior, witness by others, that fails to meet some social convention (real or imagined) (Tsao & Chan, 2011) and threatens the person's desired social identity (Takahashi, Grant, Walsh, Hofacker, & Albrecht, 2015). Consequently, the emotion results from fear of negative judgments by others or the belief that others have reason to question the focal person's judgment (Sabini, Siepmann, & Stein, 2001).

Since our possessions are symbolic and communicate information about the self, purchasing a product that contradicts the consumer's desired public identity can result in embarrassment when the purchase is observable by others (Blair & Roese, 2013). For instance, consumers may feel embarrassed to purchase condoms or adult magazines in public if they believe others will infer they are promiscuous.

Even though embarrassment might be associated with shame and guilt, these three self-conscious emotions are considered distinct psychological phenomena (Haidt, Davidson, Goldsmith, & Scherer, 2003). Unlike the others, embarrassment is a uniquely public emotion. If individuals experience this emotion in private, it means they are imagining what others might think of them.

Embarrassment can arise in a variety of consumer situations, including purchase, usage, and disposition situations (Lau-Gesk & Drolet, 2008). Products such as condoms, douches or adult magazines are some examples related to consumer embarrassment (Takahashi et al., 2015).

In order to avoid discomfort, people try to avoid social situations in which they think embarrassment may occur (Lau-Gesk & Drolet, 2008). Additionally, if they can't avoid the threat of embarrassment, they try to minimize or explain away the embarrassing behavior. For instance, consumers may shop in stores that are less crowded in order to reduce the chance of causing an undesired impression, or avoid, or mask embarrassing purchases by buying additional non-embarrassing product asking (Blair & Roesse, 2013)

Brands help establish consumers' sense of identity, status, and self-esteem (Takahashi et al., 2015). A consumer who perceives that a brand is associated with an incompatible or undesired sense of identity or beliefs, rejects the brand (Mihalcea & Cătoi, 2008) and posits that buying it will bring about embarrassment. (Takahashi et al., 2015). Furthermore, individuals can define their self through contrasting their tastes with those of others or gaining distinction through the dislike of something which others like (Hogg & Banister, 2004)

In this vein, peer groups have been shown to play an important role in the socialized adoption and consumption of brands since consumers construct self-concepts in part by wondering how peers will react to their consumption choices (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2006). This shared emotional connections, influence consumers to consider the risks associated with purchasing or consuming a particular branded product or service. Therefore, acceptance or rejection of brand choices depends on a shared appreciation of symbolic attributes and the evaluation of the likely consequences that might inhibit group acceptance (Tangney et al., 2006).

Embarrassment is not just related with cheap or low-status brands. For instance, green consumers might feel embarrassed by consuming certain types of products that aren't environmentally friendly. (Haidt et al., 2003)

2.6 Brand avoidance and Brand equity

A common topic that relates all the themes that were previously discussed is brand avoidance. A gap between customer expectations related and brand performance, meaning product/service quality or brand actions might generate cynicism but also brand avoidance. Secondly, issues that relate to the “self” perspective, such as undesired self, brand associated with negative reference group, or brands that lead to a loss of individuality, as previously discussed in consumer embarrassment topic, also drive consumers to avoid brands in order to avoid undesired outcomes. Finally, related to consumer rebellion, ideological incompatibility and a critical view about marketing actions and impact in society are also predictors of brand avoidance. Very cynical show rebellion by rejecting the free market principles of unlimited multinational power and adopting brand avoidance as a moral imperative against brands. (Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2009). Brand avoidance has consequences for the brand, such as the reduced or negative impact on brand equity (Keller, 1993).

Brand equity can be defined as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1991: 15). It relates to customer’s subjective and intangible assessment of the brand, above and beyond its objectively-perceived value. Additionally, “... brand equity can reflect the consumers' thinking, feelings and actions toward the brand, and can even help to increase the value, market share and benefits of a firm” (Lin, 2015: 2).

A strong brand equity is achieved if consumers recognize brands, have favorable brand identification and brand loyalty and vice-versa. (Keller, 1993). In today’s marketplace, where there is an extremely competitive environment, brands must strive to have a better and stronger image in the market (Bacile, Wolter, Allen, & Xu, 2018).

3. Overview of the scale development process

Measurement scales have been developed and used by managers to help them understand attitudes and acquire knowledge about people, events and processes. In other words, measurement scales are useful to attribute scores in some numerical dimension to phenomena that cannot be measured directly (Morgado et al., 2017).

The process of constructing a scale involves four main issues: conceptual definition, dimensionality, reliability and validity (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). These four steps are inserted in one of the two parts of our methodology: Qualitative and Quantitative.

The qualitative research includes the starting point for creating a summated scale, conceptual definition, which is specifying the type and character of items that are candidates for inclusion in the scale. Focus groups session were used to understand how consumers might look at cynical brands or describe feelings when dealing with them (session 4.2.1). This procedure has resulted in a several of statements all clustered on a “pool items” (session 4.3), and others based on the literature review previously down (session 2).

On the second part of the methodology, quantitative research, the items generated are analyzed with a survey of a sample of 403 consumers (session 5.1). In this part the scale’s dimensionality and reliability are checked in three different moments. Since after the first analysis the initial item of pool is reduced two times with elimination of items that do not represent so well the construct of interest.

Finally, after ensuring its conceptual definition, dimensionality and reliability the scale can be validated, by understanding its relationship with other variables/constructs of interest (chapter 5.3.). Achievements are posteriorly explained on the conclusions (chapter 6.1).

4. Qualitative Research

First, the scale must confirm to its conceptual definition, meaning that it must show content validity. In other words, this corresponds to the assessment of the correspondence of the variables to be included in a summated scale and its conceptual definition.

4.1 Conceptualizing de construct

The development of the scale starts with the conceptualization of the construct of brand cynicism and specify the domains that are associated with it (Churchill, 1979). A construct can be defined as a conceptual term used to describe a phenomenon of theoretical interest (Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000).

The first step is called “item generation”. The research provides theoretical support for the initial item pool. In this phase, the main concern is to guarantee content validity which relates to the level of adequacy with which a measure assesses the domains of interest, ensuring that the initial item pool reflects the desired construct. This phase is important since it is the first step in construct validation of a new measure and, additionally, the consequence inferences will be made based on the final scale items that were generated (Churchill, 1979).

Content validity can be assessed through the development of items, using two methods different approaches: deductive and inductive (Morgado et al., 2017). In this paper a combination of the two is going to be used. While the deductive method involves item generation based on literature review, item generation with inductive methods is developed based on qualitative information regarding a construct obtained from opinions that were gathered from the population in study.

In order to conceptualize the construct, the process is to generate items that capture the domain of interest, which is going to be developed based on a literature review and focus group sessions. By using diverse sources for item generation, the research is including items with slightly different shades of meaning and, consequently, providing a better foundation for the eventual measure (Churchill, 1979).

4.2 Interviewing

The main advantage of interviewing people is the ability of going deep on a certain topic/problem. By asking questions, the research gives interviewees the freedom to provide detailed responses and encourages reflection and considerations. Also, since the interview is done between two or more people, the change of ideas and insights is created with a certain flow that could not be created if the same questions were done in a survey. The act of interviewing can be a one-to-one interview or can be a focus group session which involves more than two people (Lazar, Feng, & Hochheiser, 2010). The second one is going to be used.

4.2.1 Focus group

Focus group have advantages when compared with one-to-one interviews due to its capacity of allowing to have a broad range of viewpoints and insights. Diversity in opinions stimulate a better discussion because they might perspectives and raise issues that others were not considering in one-to-one interviews. Furthermore, the conversation that arise in a focus group promotes interactivity, encouraging each other to speak up either to agree or go against earlier statements. (Lazar, Feng & Hochheiser, 2010).

The focus group were composed by five participants, a small group in order to stimulate in-depth conversation. Also, since one single group could be unresponsive or unrepresentative, the same study was done with 4 different focus groups.

All the participants showed interest in the topic and were willing to participate constructively. The ideal number of sessions should be from 4 to 6 groups because it gets to a point where we start getting the same information and little new information is added (Lazar, Feng & Hochheiser, 2010). According to this suggesting, five focus group sessions were conducted. Additionally, when there are many people involved, it can be very difficult to manage an active group discussion. To avoid that, each group was composed by a moderate number of 4 participants.

In order to acquire different perspectives and opinions, segmentation was used to create different groups and to create diversity within each group.

Since this paper aims that its findings to have general application, people with different ages and different study areas were chosen. The first group was composed by 4 marketing students with ages between 22 and 25, the second was composed by students from different areas (architecture, pharmacy, medicine and communication) and the ages between 20 and 25. The third one was composed by tourism students with less than 20 years and the last group was composed of people with different types of jobs and the main focus was to range people from older generations, with more than 35 years.

Additionally, participants in the same sessions knew each other as friends or colleagues.

4.2.1.1. Focus Groups Sessions

In order to keep the information and analyze it later, the sound of the focus group was recorded. The focus group session was carried out informally and was little structured in order to allow participants to create their own discussion flow, make the process more natural and to avoid missing any relevant topic. The session was developed around 5 questions, presented in table 1.

Table 1 – Focus group questions

1	What characteristics in a brand make you feel cynical about it?
2	Give me some examples of brands that make you feel cynical. Why do you think they are not sincere?
3	Do you think people are getting more attention to this topic these days? Why?
4	Do you feel less connected with brands that make you feel cynical?
5	Do you mind being associated with this type of brands?

Source: Own elaboration

The main objective was to understand what defines a cynical brand and how do participants describe their relationship with these types of brands.

4.2.1.2. Focus Groups Results

To begin, it was ensured that all the participants knew what the definition of cynical is. After that, the first goal was to understand what brand's characteristics generate cynicism feelings in a consumer. For the participants, a brand that "doesn't live up to what they promise" or "doesn't live up to a narrative they create around the brand image" cannot be trusted. Brands nowadays "vocalize their political sense by promoting and supporting certain movements in front of consumers but on the back, they don't play by these rules". It was said that, for instance, "there are many companies claiming to be environment friendly, but then they have factories which are polluting rivers, or they are not using sustainable resources". In other words, "they pretend to be something that they are not".

Then, they were asked to give examples of brands to which they feel cynical about and some names came out, such as H&M. Recently, this famous fashion brand has launched a special collection which is supposed to be sustainable, but the truth is that "they are constantly producing clothes at a very cheap price and I am pretty sure that its workers are not being well paid and don't have good work conditions". At the end, "we are still contributing to the profit of a company that doesn't have this mind set on their daily operations". Zara was another example given for the same reasons, a company that is known for being one of the most profitable companies in the fashion world, but that still uses poor labor conditions to save costs. Facebook was also considered a brands that is very associated with cynicism because "it claims that our data is protected and that is safe to use the application" but then we understand that "the economical interests are bigger than consumer privacy and our data is used for profit". But once again, even though people know they cannot trust Facebook, they won't stop using it.

When they were asked if society is paying more attention to this topic, participants agreed that they feel that people care more these days, especially because information can easily be spread out. It was said that "we live in a time where people question everything". Especially "if it's a big multinational brand, it is not ok to don't say anything or not taking any position regarding a certain topic that is affecting society". Furthermore, "consumers are becoming more demanding" and this makes brands to "think twice before acting." Participants also feel that nowadays people have this constant feeling that brands "only want to sell and profit from consumers and they will do anything to profit from consumers, even lying or hiding things".

After that, participants were asked about the reasons behind brands' intentions with the consumer. If it is true that brands lie or pretend to be something, what are the main reasons for doing this. The most mentioned word during the sessions was "manipulate". Brands "try to manipulate consumers by constructing an ideal profile to create a good opinion and make them purchase more and more products."

Additionally, someone compared a brand to a person by describing some similarities in relationships feelings "when you know someone you trust, you want to spend more time and share more things with them. When you trust a brand, you want to purchase more, and you become loyal and say good things about the brand to other consumers."

Then, the aim was to understand how consumers perceive their relationship with brands that they don't trust. Hence, it was asked if they feel less connected or if they minded being associated with this kind of brands. Most of the participants have agreed that feeling that a brand is not trustworthy make them feel less connected and some negative feelings may arise sometimes. Others, surprisingly, agreed that even though they don't trust brands, they still like them. The main point is that "they don't love the brand but they like the product" but the products and their benefits are good enough. Some of the participants have used the word "emotional" to describe the lack of feeling they have for brands. They don't have feelings for the brands, they are not emotionally attached/connected.

The feeling of being associated with this type of brands is also not very relevant and most of participants agree that even though everyone is aware of brand actions, there are few consumers that are willing to change their purchase behavior. Consumers don't really mind because "nowadays all brands are like that". The feeling of "being pointed out for using a certain product is embarrassing in the moment because it is bad to be associated with brands are causing a bad impact on society". But then, "in the long term it won't influence the way people see me because people are very forgetful and don't really mind about this topic". In fact, "everybody knows and is aware of brands actions, but no one really cares to the point of stopping consuming". And even if "a brand creates something good on top of something they did wrong, people will forgive and forget". For instance, Volkswagen scandal has shown us the type of society we have. Because "even though the brand has lied to everyone and been accused for causing a terrible impact to the environment and society, people didn't stop buying cars from the company".

4.3 Item Generation, Content Validation

The main ideas discussed during the focus group sessions were analyzed and transformed into a list of items that could be possible candidates to be included in our first scale of brand cynicism. The constructions of this list of scale items had in count both the main results from the qualitative inquiry (focus group sessions) and a potential range of other brand characteristics, captured on the literature review, which were not mentioned during our sessions but are believed to be a good fit for our construct development process.

Each statement was developed and reviewed bearing in mind that everyone who reads it would find it clear and precise, avoiding any potential misunderstanding and ambiguity on responses. Consequently, it was ensured the assessment of the correspondence of the variables to be included in a summated scale and its conceptual definition. In other words, there is content validity. This process has resulted in the list 28 items for brand cynicism definition, presented in table 2.

Literature review and qualitative research have also suggested that the brand cynicism might relate to other variables. The hypothetical relation between our construct of interest and these variables is going to be tested since this is the only way to guarantee scale validation (section 5.3), the final part of scale development. They are presented on the table 3.

The brand cynicism's item pool and the other related variables will be tested and analyzed on the next step, quantitative research, through a questionnaire.

Table 2 – Items Pool

1	I have always a pessimistic view toward brands
2	I always look at the brands with doubt
3	I can't see brands as being "good"
4	Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me
5	I am always trying to avoid brands
6	I have a side in me that constantly blames brands
7	I am fed up of seeing brands constantly
8	I always look at the brands with criticism
9	Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else
10	I am against the big tendency for consuming brands
11	Brands are worthless for me
12	I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands
13	I don't care about brands
14	Using brands does not change anything in my life
15	Using or preferring certain brands doesn't make sense and cannot be a rule
16	I believe that the brands make people worthless
17	Brands cause people to forget human values
18	Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality
19	I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves
20	I think that brands destroy the life styles and worldviews of the people
21	Brands are not necessary for the consumption
22	There is no sense in striving for the use or owning brands
23	I do not understand why people like brands that much
24	I do not understand the people being so fond of brands
25	I think that using brands increases the reputation of the person
26	I do believe that the brands alienate people from wisdom and stimulate irrational and inconsistent behaviors
27	Brands are the illusions to trigger the consumption
28	The brands do not make a human a good person

Source: own elaboration

Table 3 – Other variables resulted from qualitative research

Most companies do not mind breaking the law; they just see fines and lawsuits as a cost of doing business	Consumer Cynicism Helm et al. (2015)
Most businesses are more interested in making profits than in serving consumers	
Companies see consumers as puppets to be manipulated	
Manufacturers do not care what happens to me once I have bought the product	
If I want to get my money's value, I cannot believe what a company tells me.	
Most companies will sacrifice anything to make a profit	
Most businesses will cut any corner they can to improve profit margins	
To make a profit, companies are willing to do whatever they can get away with	
I do not want my friends and acquaintances to see that I buy products from discount retailers	
I do not want my friends and acquaintances to see that I buy products from discount retailers	
Sometimes I feel embarrassed because of the brands I wear and use	
I avoid using unbranded products in the presence of friends and acquaintances	
I find buying unbranded clothes embarrassing	
Shopping at discount retailers makes me feel uncomfortable	
I feel embarrassed when I believe that others think worse of me because of the brands I use and wear	
Using unbranded products in the presence of friends and acquaintances is embarrassing to me	
I avoid wearing unbranded clothes in public	Consumer Rebellion Graham Austin, Plouffe, & Peters (2005)
I think that marketers are sneaky	
Marketing has made me cynical	
Marketing has a positive effect on society	
Sometimes I question the whole notion of marketing	
I am suspicious of marketing	Brand Equity Yoo & Donthu (2001)
I am proud of use products from this fashion brand	
Even if another fashion brand has the same features as this, I would prefer this brand	
If there is another fashion brand as good as mine, I prefer mine	
If there is a brand like my fashion brand it would be smart not to change	

Source: own elaboration

5. Quantitative Research

At this point, it has already been ensured that the scale conforms to its conceptual definition and has content validity in the previous chapter. Now, in order to assess scale validity there are two things that still need to be checked: if the scale is unidimensional and if it meets the necessary levels of reliability (Churchill, 1979).

For creating a summated scale, items should be unidimensional. In other words, they should be strongly associated with each other and represent a single concept. For this, factor analysis/confirmatory factor analysis will be used in order to assess the dimensionality of a set of items by determining the number of factors and the loadings of each variable on the factor. In case a summated scale is proposed to have multiple dimensions, then each dimension should be reflected by a separate factor with items loading highly (Hair et. al, 2010).

Secondly, reliability must be tested. A very commonly used measure of reliability is internal consistency. As suggested by the name, there must be an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable, meaning that the individual items or indicators of the scale should all be measuring the same construct (Hair et. al, 2010). Cronbach's alpha measure is going to be used for that purpose.

Finally, the final assessment: scale validity. Validity is the extent to which a scale accurately represents the concept of interest, brand cynicism, and can be measured by the correlation between theoretically defined sets of variables. From the different forms of validity, it was decided that nomological validity was the best one to perform the analysis. The relations between the construct of interest and the variables that are believed to be related with it, are going to be analyzed through Pearson Correlations and through multiple and simple linear regressions.

5.1. Scale refinement and purification

In this chapter, the items developed in the section 3.3 are going to be used in a questionnaire. The aim is to look for refinement and purification of the scale. For that, SPSS 25.0 software is going to be used for statistical treatment.

5.1.1 Sample and survey characterization

A survey online was created using not only the item pool previously generated on the qualitative assessment with the brand cynicism items, but also existent scales that reflect the other four constructs of interest included in our nomological model, which will be useful to make associations and explain brand cynicism (see annex 1).

For that purpose, a 5-point Likert scale anchored from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” was used for consumers to indicate the degree to which they agree with the several statements. The sample items included sentences such as “I always look at the brands with doubt” or “Marketing has made me cynical”. To avoid an order effect, the sequence of items was random.

Even though that millennials and younger generations might be more affected with this phenomenon because they have been exposed since very soon to the brand’s world, older generations are also getting more conscious and more interested in this topic. Hence, since the aim was to obtain more generalized findings, it was decided that the population of this survey should very balanced and diverse in demographic terms. Table 4 shows a characterization of the sample.

Table 4 – Sample characterization

Gender					
Male	Female				
42%	58%				
Age					
<18	18-24	25-34	35-44	44<	
1%	38%	24%	11%	26%	
Income per month					
<800€	800€ - 1200€	1200€ - 1600€	1600€ - 2000€	>2000€	
17%	24%	17%	10%	6%	
Occupation					
Student	Employed	Unemployed	Retired	Other	
26%	65%	2%	3%	4%	
Education					
Bachelor’s degree	Master’s Degree	Professional Degree	Doctorate degree	High School Graduate	Other
45%	21%	5%	2%	25%	2%

Source: own elaboration

Moreover, the survey had a qualitative component. People were asked (not mandatory) to give an example of a cynical brand on the fashion industry and to explain the reasons behind their choice. More than half of the inquire (229 out of 403) gave an answer and a justification.

The most mentioned brand was the world know fashion brand “Zara” with almost 12% of the total responses, followed by Nike and Primark. All the brands were chosen at least 3 times are presented in table 5. In annex 1 it’s possible to see all the answers given by participants.

Table 5 – Frequency of answer for the question” Please tell us the name of the brand?”

	Frequency	Percent
Valid	229	57.1
Zara	47	11.7
Nike	36	9.0
Primark	17	4.2
H&M	8	2.0
Benetton	6	1.5
Hugo Boss	3	.7
MEO	3	.7
Merrell	3	.7
Hugo Boss	3	.7
Adidas	3	.7
Apple	3	.7
Total	401	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

Regarding the reasons behind the cynicism, the most common answers were: cheap labor, bad working conditions and child slavery. Other answers include racism and discrimination, lack of data privacy, lack of quality on products, lack of corporate responsibility (e.g. non sustainable production processes) and consumer manipulation (e.g. new product with same characteristics but more expensive).

The survey was sent via email and social media to several people living across Portugal and posted on the university's Facebook page. The response rates to the online survey were satisfactory, counting with 403 answers, which were carefully checked for

completeness and posteriorly retained for the quantitative assessment of the scale. This is a large and appropriately representative sample for this study.

Posteriorly, SPSS 25.00 software was used for statistical treatment of data and finally, the purification of the initial scale.

5.1.2 Item analysis; exploratory factor analysis; internal consistency

According to Churchill (1979), if all the items in a measure are drawn from the domain of a single construct, then responses to those items should be highly intercorrelated. Consequently, low inter item correlations indicate that some items are not drawn from the appropriate domain and might be producing error and unreliability for the measure.

To begin, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is going to be used to examine the appropriateness of factor analysis (see table 6). The result of this test, with a value of 0.917 (>0.5 and <1.0) indicates that the factor analysis is appropriate (Hair et. al, 2014).

Additionally, the Bartlett Test of Sphericity provided the statistically significant of .000 (sig. <0.05) indicating that there are enough correlations among the variable that allows us to proceed and begin the factor analysis.

Table 6 – KMO and Bartlett's Test (28 items)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.917
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5300.575
	Df	378
	Sig.	.000

Source: Output from SPSS

After that, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to identify which items were correlated with the main measure, how many dimensions could be extracted from the scale and which items should be included in each one. For this step, Principal Component factor analysis was used and followed by a Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization. From the analysis conducted, a six-factor model of Brand cynicism was estimated with the 28 items (see annex 2). The solution was also satisfactory because it

accounted for 61.9 % of the total variance, exceeding the minimum value (50%) suggested by Hair et. al (2010).

After the exploratory factor analysis is performed, the next step is to determine the reliability of a measure testing its internal consistency. Coefficient alpha measure was used for that purpose by measuring the internal consistency of the items of each dimension previously obtained. A low coefficient alpha indicates that the sample of items performs poorly in capturing the construct and vice-versa. In this case, since the construct has 6 identifiable dimensions, coefficient alpha was calculated for each dimension too.

The Cronbach's Alpha has a value of 0.908, showing that the 28 items of the scale are highly correlated. The coefficient alpha of each dimension also exceeds a value of 0.50, thus suggesting a reasonable degree of internal consistency (Hair et. al, 2010).

5.2.1 First Item reduction

In order to reduce items and to purify the measure, there were several criteria that were taken into consideration and lead to item elimination:

- a) Items considered to be vague or unclear by respondents (Churchill, 1979)
- b) Items that reduced internal reliability. In other words, items that if deleted would increase Cronbach's alpha value. (Churchill, 1979)
- c) Items with item to total correlation bellow 0.5. An item with a low correlation means that it fails to correlate strongly with all the other items and is reducing internal consistency (Hair et. al, 2010).
- d) Items with low communalities are also for deletion. Communality can be described has the amount of variance shared with all the other variables considered in the item pool. The more a certain variable is correlated with the other, the highest is the value of the communality. Only items that are modestly correlated, with more than 0.40 in a principal component analysis, with the others should be kept in the model (Hair et. al, 2010).

From the 28 items, 9 items were eliminated, and the other 19 were kept for further analysis.

Table 7– Item pool after first elimination

1	I have always a pessimistic view toward brands
2	I always look at the brands with doubt
3	I can't see brands as being "good"
4	Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me
5	I am always trying to avoid brands
6	I am fed up of seeing brands constantly
7	Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else
8	I am against the big tendency for consuming brands
9	Brands are worthless for me
10	I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands
11	I don't care about brands
12	Using brands does not change anything in my life
13	Using or preferring certain brands doesn't make sense and cannot be a rule
14	I believe that the brands make people worthless
15	Brands cause people to forget human values
16	Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality
17	I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves
18	Brands are not necessary for the consumption.
19	There is no sense in striving for the use or owning brands.

Source – Own elaboration

5.2. Scale refined – After item elimination

5.2.1 Item analysis; exploratory factor analysis; internal consistency

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was used to analyze the appropriateness of factor analysis (see table 8). The result of this test, with a value of 0.928 (>0.5 and <1.0) indicates that the factor analysis is appropriate (Hair et. al, 2010).

Additionally, the Bartlett Test of Sphericity provides the statistically significant of 0.000 (sig. <0.05) indicating that there are enough correlations among the variable that allows us to proceed.

Table 8 – KMO and Bartlett's Test (19 items)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.928
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3998,484
	Df-	190
	Sig.	,000

Source: Output from SPSS

Then, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to identify which items were correlated with the main measure, how many dimensions could be extracted from the scale and which items should be included in each one. For this step, Principal Component factor analysis was used and followed by a Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization. From the analysis conducted, a three-factor model of Brand cynicism was estimated with 19 items. The solution is also satisfactory (see table 9) because it accounts for 56.490% of the total variance, exceeding the minimum value suggested (50%) by Hair et. al (2010).

Table 9 – Variance Explained (19 items)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.386	41.929	41.929	4.213	21.063	21.063
2	1.860	9.302	51.231	4.003	20.013	41.076
3	1.052	5.259	56.490	3.083	15.414	56.490
4	.994	4.972	61.462			
5	.859	4.296	65.758			
6						

Source – Output from SPSS

After the exploratory factor analysis is performed, the next step consisted in determining the reliability of a measure testing its internal consistency (see table 10). Coefficient alpha is going to be used for that purpose by measure the internal consistency of the items of each dimension previously obtained. In this case, since the construct has 3 identifiable dimensions, coefficient alpha is calculated for each dimension.

The Cronbach's Alpha has a value of 0.923 (see annex 3), showing that the 19 items of the scale are highly correlated. The coefficient alpha of each dimension also exceeds a value of 0.60, thus suggesting a reasonable degree of internal consistency (Hair et. al, 2010). Therefore, a three-factor model was estimated with the 19 items to measure the three dimensions of Brand cynicism.

Once again, with the aim to reduce items and to purify the measure, the same criteria was checked. In this case, there isn't any item that is reducing internal reliability and all the items have item to total correlations above 0.5 (see table 10). Although, there are some items that are with Communalities under 0.40. Hence, two items were excluded from the item pool and 17 remained.

Table 10 – Item statistics (19 items)

		Cronbach's Alpha (0.923)	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Communalities
D1	Using brands does not change anything in my life	0.860	.514	.922	.592
	Brands are worthless for me		.560	.921	.646
	I am against the big tendency for consuming brands		.674	.918	.683
	I am against the “brands civilization” organized by the bands		.658	.918	.623
	Using or preferring certain brands doesn't make sense and cannot be a rule		.567	.920	.414
	I don't care about brands		.673	.918	.646
	Brands are not necessary for the consumption.		.505	.922	.350
D2	Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	0.876	.656	.918	.674
	I can't see brands as being “good”		.632	.919	.704
	I am always trying to avoid brands		.706	.917	.608
	I always look at the brands with doubt		.636	.919	.660
	Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else		.588	.920	.459
	I have always a pessimistic view toward brands		.670	.918	.680
D3	I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	0.803	.582	.920	.513
	Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality		.642	.919	.755
	Brands cause people to forget human values.		.583	.920	.718
	There is no sense in striving for the use or owning brands.		.529	.921	.451
	I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves		.559	.920	.465
	I believe that the brands make people worthless.		.501	.922	.322

Source – Output from SPSS

5.2.1.1 Second item reduction

After eliminating items with bad performance, 20 persons that consider themselves as extremely cynical served as judges for content and face validity of the remain items. Each participant was asked to choose, from the 17 items, the ten best representatives of the overall construct. After looking at the results, it was decided that the items that counted will less than 7 points should be excluded due to their poor performance. From the 17 items, 14 remained for further analysis and for the scale validation.

Table 11 – Ranking of the 17 items by 20 cynical consumers

	Frequency	Percent
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	20	10%
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	19	9.5%
I always look at the brands with doubt	18	9%
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	17	8.5%
I can't see brands as being "good"	17	8.5%
I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands	17	8.5%
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	16	8%
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	13	6.5%
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	12	6%
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	12	6%
I am always trying to avoid brands	10	5%
Brands cause people to forget human values.	9	4.5%
Brands are worthless for me	9	4.5%
I don't care about brands	7	3.5%
Using brands does not change anything in my life	2	1%
There is no sense in striving for the use or owning brands.	2	1%
Using or preferring certain brands doesn't make sense and cannot be a rule	0	0%
	200	100.0

Source – Own elaboration

5.3 Scale Validation

5.3.1 Item analysis; exploratory factor analysis, internal consistency

For the third time, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure examines the appropriateness of factor analysis and the results show that it is appropriate with a value of 0.911 (>0.5), and the Bartlett Test of Sphericity provides the statistically significant of 0.000 (sig. <0.05) indicating that there are enough correlations among the variable (see table 12).

From the exploratory factor analysis conducted, a final two-factor model of Brand cynicism was estimated with 14 items as it can be seen (see table 13). The total variance explained is 58.456, exceeding the minimum of 50%.

The Cronbach's Alpha has a value of 0.913, showing that the 14 items of the scale are highly correlated (see table 14). The coefficient alpha of each dimension exceeds a value of 0.64, thus suggesting also reasonable degree of internal consistency (Hair et. al, 2010).

Table 12 – KMO and Bartlett's Test (14 items)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.911
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2971.226
	Df	91
	Sig.	.000

Source – Output from SPSS

Table 13 – Variance Explained (14 items)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.692	47.797	47.797	4.985	35.607	35.607
2	1.492	10.659	58.456	3.199	22.849	58.456
3	.977	6.975	65.431			
4						

Source – Output from SPSS

Table 14 – Item statistics (14 items)

		Cronbach's Alpha (0.913)	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Communalities
Detachment	Brands are worthless for me	0.850	.505	.912	.648
	I am against the big tendency for consuming brands		.647	.906	.777
	I am against the “brands civilization” organized by the bands		.631	.907	.695
	I don't care about brands		.620	.907	.643
Doubtfulness	Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	0,90	.671	.906	.548
	I can't see brands as being “good”		.650	.906	.539
	I am always trying to avoid brands		.714	.904	.598
	Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality		.650	.906	.597
	Brands cause people to forget human values.		.594	.909	.527
	I always look at the brands with doubt		.660	.906	.605
	Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else		.583	.909	.484
	I have always a pessimistic view toward brands		.704	.905	.636
	I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves		.559	.910	.401
	I am fed up of seeing brands constantly		.607	.908	.487

Source – Output from SPSS

Checking also the criteria for item elimination:

- All items are considered to represent well the construct;
- None of items would reduce the internal reliability if deleted;
- All variable items have at least 0.50 of item to total to correlation;

- All items show have communalities below 0.40

From the initial 28 items, only half of the items were retained during the analysis conducted. For our final scale, a two-factor model of Brand cynicism was estimated with 14 items.

The two empirically-derived factors make sense, look suitable for brand cynicism and were labelled as: Detachment and Doubtfulness. Hence, scale validation process will continue with these final items.

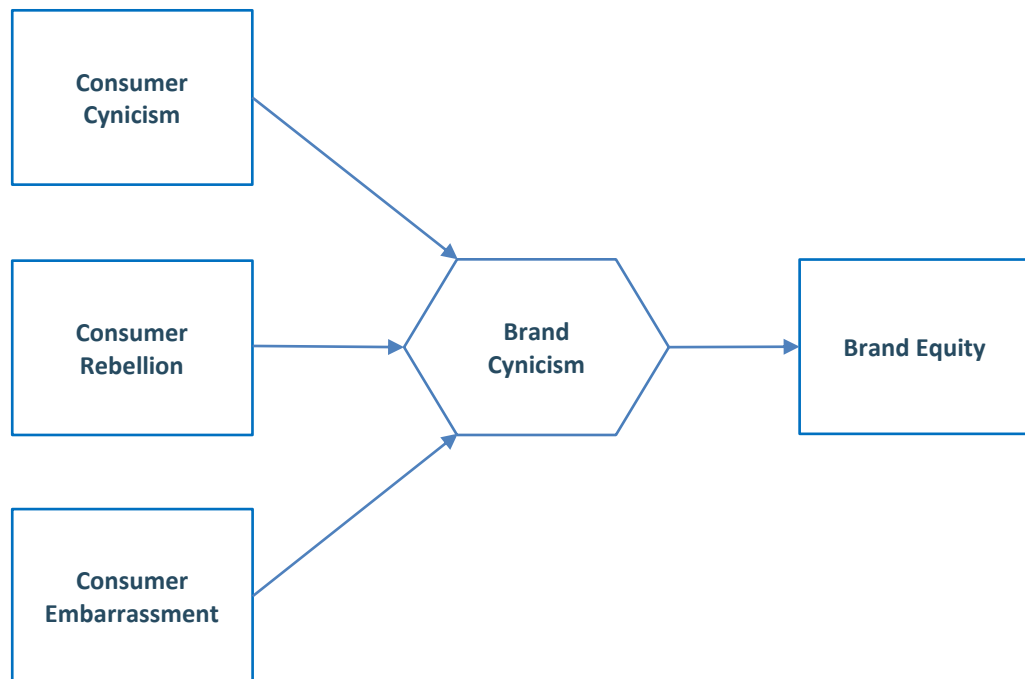
5.3.2 Nomological validity

After having ensured that the scale conforms to its conceptual definition and meets the necessary levels of reliability, it is time to make the final assessment: scale validity. Validity can be defined as the extent to which a scale accurately the concept of interest. Content validity has been assessed during the item generation. Scale or construct validity is going to be empirically measured by the correlation between theoretically defined set of variables. For this purpose, nomological validity, which is one of the three most widely accepted forms of validity, is going to be used to test and confirm hypothesized relations between the constructs and provide validity of the new measure (Hair et. al, 2010).

Nomological validity refers to the degree that the summated scale makes accurate predictions of other concepts in a theoretically based model (Hair et. al, 2010). In other words, it is going to be used to measure how a construct of interest behaves within a system of related constructs. The aim is to establish evidence and validity about the interrelationships among them. It contains the theoretical framework that we are trying to measure, an empirical framework of how we intend to do it and finally, the specifications of linkages among and between these two.

A nomological network is proposed (see figure 1). According to the literature review, it is expected that Consumer Embarrassment, Consumer Rebellion and Consumer Cynicism to be positively correlated with Brand cynicism and Brand Cynicism to be negatively correlated with Brand Equity.

Figure 1– Nomological model



Source: Own elaboration

To prove that there is nomological validity in our model, as expected in theory (Churchill, 1979) and to check if the correlation between the measure and the other related constructs is significant, Pearson's correlation measure is used. This correlation matrix provides a useful start in the effort to the extent that the constructs are expected to relate to one another (Hair et. al, 2010) Table 15 summarizes the results of all the correlations.

- **Doubtfulness** had the most strong and consistent correlations overall, it is positively significant correlation with all the score variables: Consumer Embarrassment (0.268), Consumer Rebellion (0.586) and Consumer Cynicism (0.605).
- **Detachment** shows a moderate positive linear association with each of two independent Consumer Rebellion (0.341) and Consumer Cynicism (0.421) score variables. However, for Consumer Embarrassment the correlation is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), though showing that there is not a significant correlation between this score variables.

- On the other hand, unexpectedly, there is not enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant linear relationship ($P > 0.05$) between the two constructs and **Brand Equity** (see table 16).

Table 15 - Pearson Correlation (Brand Cynicism)

		Doubtfulness	Detachment
Consumer Rebellion	Pearson Correlation	.586	.341
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
Consumer Embarrassment	Pearson Correlation	.268	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.999
Consumer Cynicism	Pearson Correlation	.605	.421
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000

Source – Output from SPSS

Table 16 - Pearson Correlation (Brand Equity)

		Brand Cynicism
Doubtfulness	Pearson Correlation	-.049
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.529
Detachment	Pearson Correlation	-.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.068

Source – Output from SPSS

5.3.3 Constructs Relationships

The relationship between the variable of the nomological framework is going to be analyzed through regression analysis. This is a general statistical technique and a powerful analytical tool used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and one or more independent variables. In this case, the first goal is to understand

how each dependent variable relates with a single independent and then how can a dependent variable can be simultaneously predicted by several independent variables. This are called simple and multiple regression analysis (Hair et. al, 2010).

5.3.2.1. Simple linear regressions

Multiple regressions were performed in order to test if Brand Embarrassment, Consumer Cynicism and Consumer Rebellion positively affect Brand Cynicism and if Brand Cynicism, by its turn, negatively affects Brand Equity. Both table 16 and 17 show the results obtained through the multiple linear regression models.

Detachment: Both Consumer Cynicism and Rebellion explanatory variables are useful to explain this dimension. A unit increase in Consumer Rebellion leads to an increase of 0.249 in Detachment, while a unit increase in Consumer Cynicism leads to an increase of 0.361. However, for Consumer Embarrassment, the null hypothesis is not rejected ($\text{sig} > 0.05$) and conclude there is no statistical evidence that this variable influences Detachment.

Doubtfulness: Since $\text{sig} < 0.05$ for the three variables, we reject the null hypotheses and concluded that they are all useful and should be kept in the model because they help to explain Doubtfulness. The variation of this dimension is explained by the explanatory variables: Consumer Cynicism (0.732), Consumer Embarrassment (0.331) and Consumer Rebellion (1.267).

Consumer Cynicism, Consumer Rebellion and Consumer Embarrassment are significant explanatory variables in the model. Except for Detachment that is not significantly influenced by Consumer Embarrassment, the unstandardized B coefficient is significant for all the others, thus suggesting that consumers who show signs of embarrassment, cynicism and rebellion towards brands, have higher levels of brand cynicism than those who don't.

Table 17 – Simple linear between constructs - Detachment

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta		Beta		
Consumer Cynicism	.249	.027	.421	9.267	.000
Consumer Rebellion	.361	.050	.341	7.237	.000
Consumer Embarrassment	-4.349E-5	.030	.000	-.001	.999

Dependent Variable: Detachment

Source – Output from SPSS

Table 18 – Simple linear between constructs - Doubtfulness

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta		Beta		
Consumer Cynicism	.732	.048	.605	15.187	.000
Consumer Rebellion	1.267	.088	.586	14.429	.000
Consumer Embarrassment	.331	.060	.268	5.553	.000

Dependent Variable: Doubtfulness

Source – Output from SPSS

Another simple linear regression was put into practice to understand if Brand Cynicism negatively affects Brand Equity. The null hypothesis is not rejected since there is not statistical evidence (sig >0.05) that Brand Cynicism significantly influences Brand Equity.

Finally, two final simple linear regressions were performed, this time for each of the two dimensions of Brand Cynicism (see table 20). Even though the results show that Doubtfulness seems to have more relevance on explaining Brand Equity, since there is no statistical evidence (sig>0.05) for both cases, we conclude that neither Detachment nor Doubtfulness significantly influence Brand Equity.

Table 19 – Simple linear Regression (Brand Equity)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta		Beta		
Brand Cynicism	-.021	.019	-.086	-1.120	.264

Dependent Variable: Brand Equity

Source – Output from SPSS

Table 20 – Simple linear Regression (Brand Equity)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta		Beta		
Doubtfulness	-.016	.025	-.049	-.631	.529
Detachment	-.096	.052	-.140	-1.839	.068

Dependent Variable: Brand Equity

Source – Output from SPSS

5.3.2.2 Multiple linear regressions

A multiple linear regression model was performed to predict if the dependent variable, Brand Cynicism, is simultaneously influenced by Consumer Embarrassment, Consumer Rebellion and Consumer Cynicism.

The R Square value shows that 42.1% of our dependent variable is explained by Consumer Cynicism, Consumer Rebellion and Consumer Embarrassment (see table 21). Since $\text{sig} < 0.05$ for the three variables, we reject the null hypotheses and concluded that they are all useful and should be kept in the model because they help to explain Brand Cynicism (see table 22).

The Standardized value allow us to compare the magnitude of the effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable. In this case, Consumer Cynicism is the most important variable to explain Brand Cynicism.

The sign of the Beta Coefficients is positive for the three independent variables meaning that they have a positive impact on the dependent variable. A unit increase in the Consumer Assuming that the other variables are constant, cynicism score leads to an increase of 0.720 in the Brand Cynicism Score, while in Consumer Rebellion leads to an increase of 0.689 and Consumer embarrassment 0.206.

Table 21 – Multiple linear Regression (Brand Cynicism)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
.649	.421	.417	8.52286	2.027

Predictors: (Constant), Consumer Embarrassment, Consumer Cynicism, Consumer Rebellion

Dependent Variable: Brand Cynicism

Source – Output from SPSS

Table 22 – Multiple linear Regression (Brand Cynicism)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.108	2.046		2.985	.003
Consumer Cynicism	.720	.084	.441	8.536	.000
Consumer Rebellion	.689	.156	.236	4.431	.000
Consumer Embarrassment	.206	.067	.123	3.085	.002

Predictors: (Constant), Consumer Embarrassment, Consumer Cynicism, Consumer Rebellion
 Dependent Variable: Brand Cynicism

Source – Output from SPSS

6. Conclusions, Implications, Limitations, and Further Research

6.1 Conclusions

This dissertation describes the development of a scale to measure Brand Cynicism. This research tries to address what has been discussed in previous research and to give an additional contribution by providing a conceptualization of Brand Cynicism, and its associations with other constructs (consumer cynicism, consumer rebellion, consumer embarrassment and brand equity). By emerging a potential construct in branding literature, it is possible to better understand the relationship between the brand and the consumer.

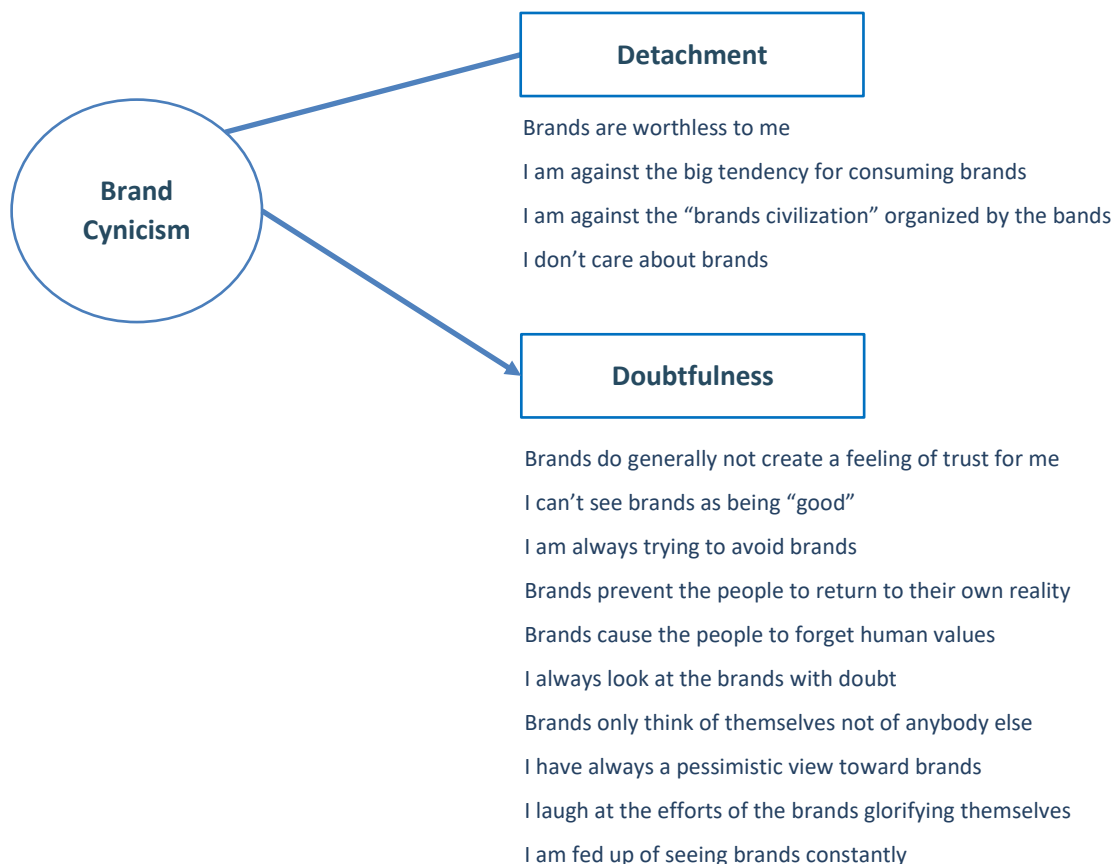
The proposed two-dimensional scale (Detachment and doubtfulness) was stable, and useful to measure brand cynicism. Consequently, a potential construct has emerged in branding literature with the intention to better understand the relationship between the brand and the consumer.

The development of the scale relied on appropriate scale development procedures and was supported by information from both qualitative inquiry and quantitative analysis. More specifically, internal consistency analysis, item analysis, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis supported the content validity and unidimensionality of the 2 dimensions of Brand Cynicism.

Additionally, this scale demonstrated further some evidence of nomological validity. Brand cynicism was positively and significantly correlated with consumer embarrassment, consumer rebellion and consumer cynicism, as hypothesized on the qualitative inquiry. On the other hand, according to literature review it was expected that brand cynicism would negatively affect brand equity, but surprisingly, there is no statistical significance that Brand cynicism has a negative impact on Brand Equity. In other words, Brand Cynicism is not a good negative predictor of Brand Equity.

Nevertheless, considering also the important qualitative research, the concept of cool brands is well characterized in this 2-dimensional scale.

Figure 2– Brand cynicism scale



Looking at the first dimension, detachment, like the name suggests, it seems that brand cynicism can be described a position against the brand presence in the market. There is a big determination of not accepting the power and the influence of brands, and to prefer to just cut off relationships by saying that brands are worthless to society.

On the other hand, doubtless is more about a feeling of doubt and precaution. Consumers believe that brands are not good, have a pessimistic view toward they, and know that brands have a bad influence by manipulating people to buy and consume.

Overall, Brand cynicism construct is described by a feeling of distrust of brand intentions and actions, a notion that they have an excessive presence and a belief that brands cause a bad influence on society characterized by consumers being constantly manipulated and deceived by brands.

This conceptualization of brand cynicism brings not only theoretical, by adding more value to marketing with another construct, but also practical contribution for researches, managers and marketing specialists to use on their actions.

Overall, the scale provides marketing researchers a tool that could help to examine Brand Cynicism among consumers by capturing the consumers' feelings of cynicism towards brands, and consequently providing a better understanding of the phenomenon. This proposed scale is well suited to gathering benchmark data regarding the current levels of Brand Cynicism.

Furthermore, there is a certain flexibility that allows its items to be easily adjusted to a specific brand. This scale can also allow brand managers and retailers to identify brand cynicism-prone consumers and use the scale scores for market segmentation.

As confirmed by the literary review, brand cynicism seems to affect consumption decisions and brand relationships, damaging firm profits and reputation. This is a phenomenon that should be managed in the best possible way by companies. Understanding customers is fundamental to successful business strategies of organizations. For this reason, by allowing to better understand their consumers, this scale could help organizations to build successful business strategies by understanding the impact and the consequences of brand cynicism for the business.

In conclusion, the empirical results reported in this report suggest that future testing and developing in other empirical contexts could help to ensure the construct's validity and reliability. Due to its increasingly relevance, this study's scale provides managers with a first scale to assess brand cynicism in consumers.

6.2 Limitations

Some limitations of this study should be addressed. First, item generation, refine and scale validation was done by Portuguese consumers. Therefore, this cannot be generalized to other cultural contexts.

Another limitation is the length of the questionnaire. Scales with too many items can create problems related with respondent fatigue or response biases which can result in answers that are not completely honest. Additionally, even though the sample size is satisfactory, it might be another potential limitation of the study.

Finally, since there was no statistical evidence on Brand Cynicism predicting Brand Equity, the scale was not possible to be validated and further research needs to be done.

Despite the pointed limitations, this paper contributes for future empirical work to understand if and why consumers see brands as cynical.

6.3 Future Research

This first scale could be developed and tested on population where it would be expected to have scores on its extremes, such as groups of activists, so different interests could be considered during the scale testing. This could be achieved by observing extremely skeptical consumers spread negative words and start boycotts.

Additionally, this scale could be tested cross-culturally, and this way we could find interesting differences on consumer's perception in a cultural matter.

Furthermore, future research should deep dive about what might contribute to brand cynicism among consumers. Literature review has suggested that three variables could influence brand cynicism but several more that better explain the phenomenon could be explained. The scope of this research should be expanded by measuring additional constructs and test their relationship with Brand Cynicism. Additionally, future research should better explore and determinate variables that are influenced by brand cynicism and guarantee the validity of this scale.

This study shows that brand cynicism does not affect brand equity in a significant way. Consumers still purchase and consume from brands they find extremely cynical. Future research should also analyze this type of relationship.

To conclude, the results presented in this paper seem promising and suggest that future research, since there is a significant convergent between the findings and the literature review. Consequently, due to the increasing importance of this topic, testing and application could help to develop and improve this scale ensuring the construct's validity and reliability.

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8. Annexes

A1. Questionnaire

The following survey was developed in the scope of a Marketing Master's dissertation and aims to collect important data about how trustworthy brands are seen through consumer's eyes. This survey is an important step to the final work's goal: to develop a first scale that enables managers to measure brand cynicism.

This survey is anonymous, and your information will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Brands (or those behind the name and logo) like people can have negative attitudes, which could develop in consumers' mind suspicion, mistrust, skepticism or dissatisfaction. Please think about fashion brands (for clothes, shoe or accessories) that you know that had a bad or incorrect attitude in the past (with you or other consume, online or offline or through advertising), but you still buy the products of the brand and answer the following questions:

1. Please tell us the name of the brand?

2. One a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), rate each of the sentence:

	1	2	3	4	5
I am proud of use products from this fashion brand					
Even if another fashion brand has the same features as this, I would prefer this brand					
If there is another fashion brand as good as mine, I prefer mine.					
If there is a brand like my fashion brand it would be smart not to change					

3. One a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), rate each of the sentence:

	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that brands make people worthless					
I do not understand how someone can be so attached to brands.					
I do believe that brands alienate people from wisdom					
Brands are the illusions to trigger the consumption					
I am having difficulty to understand why people are so fond of brands					
Brands do not make us good persons					
Using brands does not change anything in my life					
I think that using brands increases a person's reputation					
Brands are worthless for me					
I am against the brands ideology in consumption					
I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands					
Using or preferring certain brands cannot be a rule. I am against it.					
Using brands is a social class suppression in principle.					
Brands make people unhappy					
I don't care about brands.					
It is really hard to understand how someone can be passionately bound to brands					
Brands are not necessary for the consumption					
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me					
I can't see brands as being "good"					
There is always a part of me who wants to avoid brands.					
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly.					
Brands prevent people to return to their own reality.					
Brands cause people to forget human values.					
I always look at the brands with doubt.					
Brands only think about themselves					
I always look at brands with criticism.					
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands					
I think that brands destroy people's life styles and worldviews					
There is no sense to striving for the use or owning brands					
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves					
I don't care whether brands are present or not					

BRAND CYNICISM: START TO DEVELOP A SCALE

	1	2	3	4	5
Most companies do not mind breaking the law; they just see fines and lawsuits as a cost of doing business					
Most businesses are more interested in making profits than in serving consumers					
Companies see consumers as puppets to be manipulated.					
Manufacturers do not care what happens to me once I have bought the product.					
If I want to get my money's value, I cannot believe what a company tells me.					
Most companies will sacrifice anything to make a profit.					
Most businesses will cut any corner they can to improve profit margins.					
To make a profit, companies are willing to do whatever they can get away with.					
Marketing has made me cynical					
I think that marketers are sneaky					
Marketing has a positive effect on society					
Sometimes I question the whole notion of marketing					
I am suspicious of marketing					
I do not want my friends and acquaintances to see that I buy products from discount retailers.					
Sometimes I feel embarrassed because of the brands I wear and use.					
Friends and acquaintances sometimes comment on the brands I wear, which makes me feel uncomfortable					
I avoid using unbranded products in the presence of friends and acquaintances					
I find buying unbranded clothes embarrassing					
Shopping at discount retailers makes me feel uncomfortable					
I feel embarrassed when I believe that others think worse of me because of the brands I use and wear					
Using unbranded products in the presence of friends and acquaintances is embarrassing to me					
I avoid wearing unbranded clothes in public					

	Name of the brand			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	229	57.1	57.1	57.1
Adidas	3	.7	.7	57.9
Apple	3	.7	.7	58.6
Ariel	1	.2	.2	58.9
ASUS	1	.2	.2	59.1
Becel com óleo de linhaça	1	.2	.2	59.4
Benetton	6	1.5	1.5	60.8
Bershka	1	.2	.2	61.1
Breill	1	.2	.2	61.3
C&A	1	.2	.2	61.6
Carolina Herrera	1	.2	.2	61.8
Element	1	.2	.2	62.1
Facebook	2	.5	.5	62.6
Forever 21	2	.5	.5	63.1
Gant	1	.2	.2	63.3
GAP	1	.2	.2	63.6
Grupo Sonae	1	.2	.2	63.8
Guess	1	.2	.2	64.1
H&M	8	2.0	2.0	66.1
Hugo Boss	3	.7	.7	66.8
Iqos	1	.2	.2	67.1
Lacoste	1	.2	.2	67.3
Levi's	2	.5	.5	67.8
MAC	2	.5	.2	68.3
MEO	3	.7	.7	69.1
Merrell	3	.7	.7	69.8
Mike Davis	1	.2	.2	70.1
Multioticas	1	.2	.2	70.3
Nike	36	9.0	9.0	79.3
Nivea	1	.2	.2	79.6
Nutella	1	.2	.2	79.8
Parfois	1	.2	.2	80.0
Parmalat	1	.2	.2	80.3
Pepe Jeans	1	.2	.2	80.5
Pepsi	1	.2	.2	80.8
Pingo Doce	1	.2	.2	81.0
Primark	17	4.2	4.2	85.3
Ray Ban	1	.2	.2	85.5
Seaside	2	.5	.5	86.0
Stone by Stone	1	.2	.2	86.3
Timberland	2	.5	.5	86.8
Tommy Hilfiger	2	.5	.5	87.3
Victoria's secret	2	.5	.5	87.7
Volkswagen	3	.7	.7	88.3
Zara	47	11.7	11.7	100.0
Total	401	100.0	100.0	

A2. SPSS output of first pool item

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.917
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5300.575
	df	378
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.378	33.492	33.492	9.378	33.492	33.492
2	2.516	8.986	42.478	2.516	8.986	42.478
3	2.238	7.995	50.473	2.238	7.995	50.473
4	1.105	3.947	54.420	1.105	3.947	54.420
5	1.084	3.871	58.291	1.084	3.871	58.291
6	1.009	3.605	61.896	1.009	3.605	61.896
7	.900	3.213	65.110			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.908	.910	28

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do not understand why people like brands that much.	-.029	.077	-.038	-.123	.865	.022
The brands do not make a human a good person	-.158	.418	.281	.584	-.032	.223
Using brands does not change anything in my life	.005	.676	.156	.243	-.015	.395
I think that using brands increases reputation of the person.	-.109	-.148	.072	.352	-.350	-.499
Brands are worthless for me	.099	.766	.113	.142	.017	.027
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	.326	.769	.060	.159	.040	-.064
I am against the “brands civilization” organized by the bands	.305	.710	.102	.239	.057	-.078
Using or preferring certain brands doesn’t make sense and cannot be a rule	.215	.580	.367	-.162	-.020	-.032
I believe that the brands make the people worthless	.351	.408	.270	.022	.048	-.471
I don’t care about brands	.282	.707	.198	.005	.214	.137
Brands are the illusions to trigger the consumption	.189	.233	.112	.724	-.093	.075
Brands are not necessary for the consumption.	.284	.393	.131	.218	-.033	.404
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	.720	.308	.074	.126	.094	.056
I can’t see brands as being “good”	.715	.269	.125	-.003	.038	.203
I am always trying to avoid brands	.649	.407	.263	-.046	-.027	-.027
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	.533	.225	.388	.023	-.012	-.106
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	.427	.150	.660	.203	-.017	-.061
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	.346	.110	.709	.176	-.017	-.024
There is no sense to striving for the use or owning brands.	.152	.389	.443	.140	-.033	.277
I always look at the brands with doubt	.736	.154	.239	.069	-.103	.193
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	.455	.145	.424	.223	-.067	.349
I always look at the brands with criticism	.594	.015	.089	.347	-.101	-.062
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	.760	.169	.268	.132	.115	.040
I think that brands destroy the life styles and worldviews of the people	.134	.156	.474	.471	-.046	-.004
I have a side in me that constantly blames brands	.646	.040	.277	.029	.003	-.190
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	.288	.248	.640	-.020	.032	-.002
I do not understand the people being so fond of brands	.019	.033	.014	-.131	.855	.012
I do believe that the brands alienate the people from wisdom and stimulate irrational and inconsistent behaviors	.197	.040	.014	.737	-.207	-.119

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Using brands does not change anything in my life	1.000	.696
Brands are worthless for me	1.000	.631
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	1.000	.733
I am against the “brands civilization” organized by the bands	1.000	.674
Using or preferring certain brands doesn’t make sense and cannot be a rule	1.000	.546
I don’t care about brands	1.000	.683
Brands are not necessary for the consumption.	1.000	.464
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	1.000	.646
I can’t see brands as being “good”	1.000	.641
I am always trying to avoid brands	1.000	.659
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	1.000	.498
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	1.000	.685
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	1.000	.667
There is no sense to striving for the use or owning brands.	1.000	.468
I always look at the brands with doubt	1.000	.675
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	1.000	.584
I always look at the brands with criticism	1.000	.495
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	1.000	.710
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	1.000	.555
I believe that the brands make the people worthless.	1.000	.587
I do not understand the people being so fond of brands	1.000	.749
I believe that the brands alienate the people from wisdom and stimulate irrational and inconscient behaviors	1.000	.641
Brands are the illusions to trigger the consumption	1.000	.642
I do not understand why people like brands that much.	1.000	.772
The brands do not make a human a good person	1.000	.671
I think that using brands increases reputation of the person.	1.000	.535
I have a side in me that constantly blames brands	1.000	.533
I think that brands destroy the life styles and worldviews of the people	1.000	.491

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I do not understand the people being so fond of brands	81.23	307.362	.008	.398	.913
I do believe that the brands alienate the people from wisdom and stimulate irrational and inconscient behaviors	80.19	296.899	.297	.416	.908
Brands are the illusions to trigger the consumption	79.94	292.026	.468	.463	.905
I do not understand why people like brands that much.	81.38	308.615	-.020	.413	.913
The brands do not make a human a good person	79.68	290.867	.420	.509	.906
Using brands does not change anything in my life	80.25	285.590	.508	.570	.904
I think that using brands increases reputation of the person.	81.35	311.378	-.085	.301	.916
Brands are worthless for me	80.81	283.837	.555	.515	.903
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	80.78	281.755	.663	.671	.902
I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands	80.67	281.878	.661	.635	.902
Using or preferring certain brands doesn't make sense and cannot be a rule	81.47	284.254	.535	.400	.904
I believe that the brands make the people worthless.	81.75	287.888	.501	.363	.905
I don't care about brands	81.09	280.090	.644	.605	.902
Brands are not necessary for the consumption.	80.49	285.520	.500	.356	.905
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	81.52	284.510	.649	.583	.902
I can't see brands as being "good"	81.62	286.141	.609	.570	.903
I am always trying to avoid brands	81.48	282.835	.680	.605	.902
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	81.39	284.323	.575	.482	.903
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	81.07	280.277	.657	.649	.902
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	80.99	282.257	.592	.585	.903
There is no sense to striving for the use or owning brands.	80.70	285.704	.524	.361	.904
I always look at the brands with doubt	81.60	286.040	.626	.570	.903
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	80.98	284.287	.599	.496	.903
I always look at the brands with criticism	81.17	290.103	.449	.399	.905
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	81.58	283.859	.685	.640	.902
I think that brands destroy the life styles and worldviews of the people	80.26	290.393	.475	.348	.905
I have a side in me that constantly blames brands	82.11	291.688	.487	.415	.905
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	81.27	285.732	.560	.410	.903

A3. SPSS output of scale for 19 items

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component		
	1	2	3
Using brands does not change anything in my life	.755	.047	.115
Brands are worthless for me	.780	.088	.133
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	.753	.301	.147
I am against the “brands civilization” organized by the bands	.707	.289	.186
Using or preferring certain brands doesn’t make sense and cannot be a rule	.539	.183	.326
I don’t care about brands	.737	.255	.198
Brands are not necessary for the consumption.	.492	.296	.138
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	.327	.709	.166
I can’t see brands as being “good”	.285	.737	.143
I am always trying to avoid brands	.359	.594	.356
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	.176	.425	.544
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	.155	.322	.788
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	.126	.245	.799
There is no sense to striving for the use or owning brands.	.467	.079	.463
I always look at the brands with doubt	.185	.730	.285
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	.242	.502	.373
I always look at the brands with criticism	.012	.637	.200
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	.192	.749	.330
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	.250	.252	.590
I believe that the brands make the people worthless.	.305	.256	.412

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Using brands does not change anything in my life	1.000	.592
Brands are worthless for me	1.000	.646
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	1.000	.683
I am against the “brands civilization” organized by the bands	1.000	.623
Using or preferring certain brands doesn’t make sense and cannot be a rule	1.000	.414
I don’t care about brands	1.000	.646
Brands are not necessary for the consumption.	1.000	.350
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	1.000	.674
I can’t see brands as being “good”	1.000	.704
I am always trying to avoid brands	1.000	.608
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	1.000	.513
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	1.000	.755
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	1.000	.718
There is no sense to striving for the use or owning brands.	1.000	.451
I always look at the brands with doubt	1.000	.660
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	1.000	.459
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	1.000	.680
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	1.000	.465
I believe that the brands make the people worthless.	1.000	.322

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Reliability Statistics – Brand cynicism

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.923	.925	19

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Using brands does not change anything in my life	51.29	194.253	.514	.458	.922
Brands are worthless for me	51.85	192.846	.560	.496	.921
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	51.82	191.026	.674	.667	.918
I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands	51.71	191.538	.658	.625	.918
Using or preferring certain brands doesn't make sense and cannot be a rule	52.51	192.266	.567	.382	.920
I don't care about brands	52.13	188.996	.673	.563	.918
Brands are not necessary for the consumption.	51.53	194.205	.505	.328	.922
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	52.56	193.447	.656	.566	.918
I can't see brands as being "good"	52.66	194.340	.632	.555	.919
I am always trying to avoid brands	52.52	191.520	.706	.585	.917
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	52.43	193.225	.582	.472	.920
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	52.11	190.610	.642	.630	.919
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	52.03	192.022	.583	.566	.920
There is no sense to striving for the use or owning brands.	51.74	194.376	.529	.340	.921
I always look at the brands with doubt	52.64	194.631	.636	.550	.919
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	52.02	193.742	.588	.476	.920
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	52.62	193.530	.670	.581	.918
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	52.31	194.649	.559	.381	.920
I believe that the brands make the people worthless.	52.79	196.381	.501	.330	.922

Reliability Statistics – Dimension 1

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.860	.862	7

Reliability Statistics – Dimension 2

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.876	.877	6

Reliability Statistics – Dimension 3

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.803	.802	6

A4. SPSS output of scale for 14 items, final scale

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	1.000	.777
I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands	1.000	.695
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	1.000	.597
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	1.000	.527
Brands are worthless for me	1.000	.648
I don't care about brands	1.000	.643
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	1.000	.548
I can't see brands as being "good"	1.000	.539
I am always trying to avoid brands	1.000	.598
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	1.000	.487
I always look at the brands with doubt	1.000	.605
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	1.000	.484
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	1.000	.636
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	1.000	.401

Rotated Component Matrix

	1	2
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	.263	.841
I am against the “brands civilization” organized by the bands	.287	.783
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	.758	.147
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	.716	.118
Brands are worthless for me	.127	.795
I don’t care about brands	.303	.742
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	.642	.369
I can’t see brands as being “good”	.670	.300
I am always trying to avoid brands	.647	.424
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	.658	.232
I always look at the brands with doubt	.752	.197
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	.674	.172
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	.753	.263
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	.581	.251

- a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.
- b. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
- c. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Reliability Statistics – Detachment

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.850	.852	4

Reliability Statistics – Doubtfulness

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.900	.902	10

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Brands are worthless for me	36.36	109.545	.505	.445	.912
I am against the big tendency for consuming brands	36.33	107.491	.647	.663	.906
I am against the "brands civilization" organized by the bands	36.22	107.885	.631	.614	.907
I don't care about brands	36.64	106.616	.620	.503	.907
Brands do generally not create a feeling of trust for me	37.07	108.392	.671	.537	.906
I can't see brands as being "good"	37.17	109.008	.650	.549	.906
I am always trying to avoid brands	37.03	107.124	.714	.568	.904
Brands prevent the people to return to their own reality	36.62	106.355	.650	.620	.906
Brands cause the people to forget human values.	36.54	107.289	.594	.561	.909
I always look at the brands with doubt	37.15	109.124	.660	.543	.906
Brands only think of themselves not of anybody else	36.53	109.005	.583	.447	.909
I have always a pessimistic view toward brands	37.13	108.112	.704	.571	.905
I laugh at the efforts of the brands glorifying themselves	36.82	109.543	.559	.350	.910
I am fed up of seeing brands constantly	36.94	107.909	.607	.461	.908