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“Yes, I forgive you, but...”: Exploring the Individual’s Willingness to Forgive a Human Brand when a Transgression occurs

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November, 2022



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Marketing, Operations and General Management Department

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*To my grandmother Josefa Sanches.  
For Professor João Guerreiro for his guidance.  
For my family, Cristília, Paulo and Madalena,  
for the motivation and love.  
To Francisco Veloso for the patience.*



## **Abstract**

With the increased usage of social media platforms, performing transgressions by individuals are more likely to occur, and human brands are no exception. The present study aims to understand an individual's willingness to forgive a human brand when the human brand performs a transgression and, therefore, fulfil the literature gaps.

With this, the conceptual framework aims to analyse if Affection, Passion, Connection and Authenticity influence Commitment; Relatedness and Competence influences Resilience to Negative Information; Attractiveness, Expertise and Trustworthiness impact Brand Trust. Moreover, to understand these relationships towards Brand Forgiveness and its impact on Brand Switching, Fighting, and Reengage, which are related to consumer coping behaviours and the outcome of Brand Forgiveness.

A questionnaire was developed to collect data. With a total of 332 answers, the collected data were analysed using the partial squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The study focuses on U.S. residents and addresses the most followed social media influencers, Kylie Jenner and Selena Gomez, on Instagram and Charli D'Amelio on TikTok. Moreover, a scenario of an incongruity transgression was introduced to understand the respondent's willingness to forgive.

Results demonstrate that Commitment, Resilience to Negative Information, and Brand Loyalty positively influences Brand Forgiveness. Moreover, individuals do forgive human brands when a transgression occurs. However, they may switch or say negative things about it to others.

Keywords: Human Brand, Commitment, Resilience To Negative Information, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, Brand Forgiveness, Coping Behaviours

JEL: M31: Marketing

JEL: M39: Marketing and Advertising: Other





## Resumo

Com a crescente utilização de redes sociais, torna-se mais provável que ocorram transgressões por parte das pessoas e as marcas pessoais não são a exceção. Este estudo visa compreender a capacidade de uma pessoa perdoar quando uma marca pessoal executa uma transgressão e, portanto, pretende preencher as lacunas existentes na literatura.

Com isto, o modelo conceptual visa analisar se o Afeto, Paixão, Conexão e Autenticidade influenciam o Compromisso; se a Relação e a Competência influenciam a Resiliência à Informação Negativa; se a Atratividade, Perícia e Confiança têm impacto na Confiança. Além disso, compreender as relações entre o Perdão e o seu impacto na Mudança, Combate e Reconexão em relação à marca pessoal, que estão relacionadas com os comportamentos adotados pelas pessoas quando perdoam.

Foi desenvolvido um questionário para recolher os dados. Com um total de 332 respostas, os dados recolhidos foram analisados utilizando *partial squares structural equation modelling* (PLS-SEM). O estudo centra-se nos residentes dos EUA e aborda os mais seguidos influenciadores das redes sociais, Kylie Jenner e Selena Gomez, no Instagram e Charli D'Amelio no TikTok. Além disso, foi introduzido um cenário de uma transgressão incongruente para compreender a vontade de perdoar do inquirido.

Os resultados demonstram que o Compromisso, a Resiliência à Informação Negativa e a Lealdade influenciam positivamente o Perdão. Além disso, os indivíduos perdoam as marcas pessoais quando ocorre uma transgressão. No entanto, podem na mesma mudar ou dizer coisas negativas sobre as mesmas a outros.

Palavras-chave: Marca Pessoal, Compromisso, Resiliência à Informação Negativa, Confiança, Lealdade, Perdão, Comportamentos de Cópia

JEL: M31: Marketing

JEL: M39: Marketing and Advertising: Other



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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

The internet made society increasingly digital, mainly due to the adherence to social media platforms. It has become easier and more accessible for people to engage and interact through social media platforms (Peltier, 2020). Social media platforms allow direct contact with celebrities, such as actors, musicians, athletes, models, comedians, and others (Al-Emadi & Yahia, 2020). Moreover, social media networks enabled the appearance of social media influencers which can be any person involved in communication efforts (Ki et al., 2020).

According to research conducted by "We Are Social" and "Hootsuite" (Kemp, 2022), there are 4.74 billion active social media users worldwide, representing 59.3% of the worldwide population. One of the reasons for using social media platforms is following celebrities or influencers, with 20.9%, respectively. The types of social media accounts followed worldwide are mainly human brands: actors, comedians or other performers with 28.2%; bands, singers or other musicians with 26.7%; influencers or other experts with 21.9%; sports people and teams with 21.6%; beauty experts with 17%; fitness experts or organisations with 16.9%; and, finally, gaming experts or gaming studios with 16%.

Celebrities and social media influencers can be associated with the concept of human brands (Thomson, 2006; Ki et al., 2020). Human brands are any person, already well-known or arising, impacted by communication efforts (Osorio et al., 2020). As it will be explained, there are constructs necessary to be considered a human brand, such as emotional attachment, attachment strength, brand trust and brand image.

The branding literature has shifted to include negative brand relationships (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). Social media platforms made it easier to share misleading content or to perform a transgression that can be directly or indirectly associated with human brands. Thus, the literature suggests an opportunity to understand if the relationship between individuals and human brands impacts their willingness to forgive when a transgression occurs.

There is a lack of literature concerning brand forgiveness, especially regarding the link between human brand theory and brand forgiveness. Recent studies regarding forgiveness in the Marketing field have focused on service failure and post-recovery actions (Lin & Chou, 2022; Rasouli et al., 2022; Honora et al., 2022), online shopping service recovery (Wei et al., 2022), celebrity endorsement (Saldanha et al., 2022; Aw & Labrecque, 2022; Rifon et al., 2022), and image repair theory through public apology (Choi & Mitchell, 2022). Therefore, the aim is to fill the literature gaps and analyse the relationship between human brand theory and brand forgiveness when a transgression occurs.

Furthermore, this study will analyse for the first time the relationship between commitment, resilience to negative information and brand loyalty with brand forgiveness. Also, this study is

a pioneer in analysing the relationship between authenticity as a predictor of emotional attachment and commitment.

The study considers only United States residents as the target. In the U.S., 75% of the total population are active social media users. Moreover, in comparison with the worldwide percentage of following influencers on social media platforms, which corresponds to 21.9%, in the U.S., 19.6% of internet users say that following influencers is the main reason for using social media platforms. According to Statista (2021), the main reasons social media users in the U.S. unfollow an influencer or public figure are the shifting of personal interests and lack of trust in the social media influencer's content, with 24.5% and 23.9%, respectively.

With this in mind, this study aims to understand individuals' willingness to forgive a human brand when facing an incongruity transgression, meaning that the individual's self-image and the human brand become distinct (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). Moreover, to understand an individual's coping behaviours since they may switch to a competitive human brand, talk negative things to others about the human brand, or reengage.

Therefore, the main objectives of the present study are: to comprehend what human brands' characteristics are necessary to accomplish an individual's willingness to forgive and, to understand if individuals forgive a human brand when they perform a transgression. More specifically, if the emotional attachment, the attachment strength, the brand trust, and the brand image between individuals and human brands influence brand forgiveness and customer coping strategies, which can be brand switching, fighting or reengage. With this, the following research questions were developed:

1. What aspects should human brands consider to increase an individual's willingness to forgive?
2. Are individuals willing to forgive a human brand when a transgression occurs?

Regarding the dissertation structure, it is divided into six chapters. The introduction corresponds to the first chapter, which explains the topic's relevance and the research questions and objectives. The literature review is the second chapter, enhancing the main concepts of the research, which are Human Brand, Emotional Attachment, Attachment Strength, Brand Trust, Brand Image, Brand Forgiveness and Consumer Coping Strategies. In chapter three, both the conceptual framework and respective hypotheses are developed. The fourth chapter corresponds to the methodology alongside the description of the study. Chapter five analyses the data collected during the study, and the results are discussed. Finally, chapter six corresponds to the conclusions and recommendations of the research. Also, its theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations and further research recommendations are presented in the final chapter.



## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

### **2.1 Human Brand**

The human brand concept appears as an extension of the branding theory from products to people to overcome the uncertainty due to different concepts referred to the individual branding, such as celebrity brands and human brands (Osorio et al., 2020). Thomson (2006) defined the first concept of the human brand as "any well-known persona who is the subject of marketing communications efforts" (Thomson, 2006, p. 104). Further research appears to expand the definition of a human brand to anyone, being already well-known or arising, influenced by communication actions (Osorio et al., 2020). So, a human brand is a strategic procedure of creating and sustaining a human that is, in fact, a brand.

As mentioned, there are different terms for branding individuals. The concept of the human brand includes celebrity brands because they can be managed professionally and have similar brand features (Thomson, 2006). Also, social media influencers can be human brands since they provide a sense of attachment to their followers and have favourable marketing outcomes by fulfilling followers' needs (Ki et al., 2020). However, there are criteria to define social media influencers as human brands. According to Ki et al. (2020), the first criteria rely on differentiation. A social media influencer must be unique and distinguished by their name, personality, skills, or other qualities from others. On the other hand, the second criterion proposes the creation of a strong relationship between social media influencers and their followers and earning loyalty by fulfilling their needs for ideality, relatedness and competence.

Authenticity is the most significant attribute of a human brand (Osorio et al., 2020). According to Thomson (2006), authenticity is crucial since consumers can more readily embrace human brands and signal an enduring relationship by avoiding perceived economic opportunism, which may make individuals feel the human brand lacks credibility. Authenticity is a personal evaluation of realism explained to a brand by individuals and "the perception that a celebrity behaves according to his or her true self" (Kucharska et al., 2020, p. 817). Moreover, previous research conducted by Fritz et al. (2017) suggests that brand authenticity influences relationship quality, meaning that brand authenticity enhances emotional bonds between the consumer and the brand, enhancing consumer loyalty and willingness to forgive mistakes. Authenticity is the first step to creating an emotional bond between individuals and a human brand. Brand authenticity leads to outcomes such as trust, brand attachment, and brand love. Moreover, it significantly influences brand awareness, image, quality, and loyalty. The human brand's authenticity has become increasingly essential in a digital world dominated by fake news and impressions (Kucharska et al., 2020).

Another main attribute of a human brand is self-congruity (Osorio et al., 2020). The self-congruity theory states that consumers select products or brands that represent an image that

is similar to their desired image for themselves or similar to their self-image. Self-congruity is the matching level between an individual's self-image and the brand image (Liu et al., 2020). There are four dimensions of self-congruity. The actual self-congruity refers to the way individuals perceive themselves. The ideal self-congruity is how individuals would like to see themselves. Social self-congruity is how individuals believe to be seen by others. Finally, the ideal social self-congruity is how individuals want to be seen by others. With this in mind, it is crucial to introduce the concept of brand image. Brand image is the brand's perception in individuals' memory (Peltier et al., 2020), which enables individuals to meet their needs by identification with a brand (Liu et al., 2020). Brand image is essential to achieve brand loyalty by positively influencing it. Moreover, the brand loyalty concept is defined as the individual's commitment to continue buying a select brand in the future.

So, human brands can be any person, celebrity or social media influencer affected by marketing communication efforts. Individuals select brands similar to their self-image or desired self-image, meaning that brand image is essential for human brands. Moreover, brand image influences an individual's loyalty towards the brand. The perceived authenticity of a human brand is necessary to create an emotional bond. Therefore, emotional attachments are going to be comprehended.

## **2.2 Emotional Attachment**

"An attachment is an emotion-laden target-specific bond between a person and a specific object" (Thomson et al., 2005, p. 78). These attachments vary in strength, and creating strong emotional attachments is a fundamental human need. Based on this, it is possible to affirm that people can form emotional attachments to several objects, including human brands, celebrities, and social media influencers. So, the attachment theory is appropriate for understanding the relationship between individuals and human brands (Kowalczyk & Ponders, 2016).

Emotional attachments predict commitment to a relationship between an individual and a brand. Commitment is the level of individuals willing to maintain a relationship no matter what and has perspectives that the relationship will last (Thomson et al., 2005). The higher the individual's commitment, the greater their engagement with a brand (Peltier et al., 2020). Commitment is a measure of marketing effectiveness. Furthermore, commitment is a relationship strength indicator when a transgression occurs (Aaker et al., 2004). The investment made to a brand is associated with the strength of emotional attachment. It can be described as the willingness of a consumer to abstain from their self-interest to promote a relationship with a human brand (Thomson et al., 2005).

According to the attachment theory, a continuing psychological connection between individuals is suggested based on the concept of close relationships resulting from emotions such as passion, love, and delight (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016). According to the researchers Thomson et al. (2005), there are a set of emotional items to indicate attachments. These emotional items are affection, passion, and connection. Affection reflects the warm feelings of consumers towards a brand, including affection, love, friendship, and peace. Passion reflects positive feelings toward a brand, including passion, delight, and appeal. Finally, connection describes a consumer's jointness with the brand, including the items connected, bonded, and attached.

Considering the emotional items that contribute to creating strong emotional attachments to brands, it is crucial to consider the concept of brand love. Brand love corresponds to the level of passion regarding individuals' emotional attachment concerning a brand (Peltier et al., 2020). For human brands, the importance of brand love includes resistance to negative information, increased willingness to purchase, and induces positive word-of-mouth (Peltier et al., 2020). Moreover, brand transgression's impact decreases due to brand love's existence (Kennedy & Guzmán, 2021).

Social media platforms can enhance the feeling of attachment to human brands, making individuals feel closer and more engaged when interacting with them (Peltier et al., 2020). As individuals interact with the human brand's private self, it enhances the perceived closeness and authenticity, creating a strong emotional relationship. Furthermore, according to a study by Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016), authenticity is positively related to emotional attachment, meaning that emotional attachment is enhanced when individuals perceive a human brand's authenticity.

Therefore, strong emotional attachments between individuals and human brands, with the transmission of feelings of affection, passion and connection. Moreover, perceived authenticity enhances emotional attachment. With the information on how emotional attachments occur, it is essential to understand how to strengthen these attachments.

### **2.3 Attachment Strength**

Bowlby (1977), the first attachment theorist, defined attachment as a strong connectedness between a person and any target object (Hemsley-Brown, 2022), and further research extended this concept to human brands by defining the strength of attachment as "the intensity of a person's target-specific emotional bond with a human brand" (Thomson, 2006, p. 105).

Attachment strength is an indicator of relationship quality since feelings associated with attachments are fundamental to forming strong brand relationships (Fournier, 1998; Thomson,

2006). Intense attachments have several positive consequences for marketers, such as the prevention of consumer abandonment, the increase in forgiveness when adverse information is faced, and the prediction of brand loyalty and willingness to pay. Furthermore, if the information shared by the brand is perceived as authentic, positive word-of-mouth, defending the brand and resisting negative information, and forgiveness may occur in case of brand transgression (Shimul, 2022). According to research by Japutra et al. (2018), strong brand attachment leads to greater resilience towards negative information, meaning that an individual's forgiveness increases when brands make mistakes or violations. Understanding what determines the strength of an attachment is a way to achieve a more enduring relationship with consumers and their forgiveness.

Firstly, the individual must be minimally attracted for an attachment to be created, whether socially or in another manner, such as perceptions of shared experiences or social appeal (Thomson, 2006). Second, repeated and consistent interaction between individuals and human brands is essential because it reduces uncertainty and develops an attachment. Direct interaction is crucial since it enables consumers to perceive the human brand as accessible and improves the interaction' quality.

The principal purpose of attachments is to provide emotional security to individuals by fulfilling their needs. Strong relationships will develop when an individual finds the needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence fulfilled (La Guardia et al., 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Firstly, autonomy refers to the feeling that the activities performed are chosen and approved by the individuals themselves (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The perception of freedom to behave and express in a certain way is associated with fulfilling the autonomy need. The second fundamental human need is relatedness, which refers to closeness and intimacy with others (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Moreover, it is related to the desire to belong socially (Thomson, 2006). When the relatedness need is satisfied, the person is more likely to feel connected and cared for by another (Thomson, 2006). Finally, the individual's disposition to feel adequate, accomplished and challenged in their actions refers to the need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The fulfilment of the need for competence can report feelings of curiosity and skill in a person.

Responsiveness is related to fulfilling the basic human needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Satisfying these needs means more powerful feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence can positively predict attachment security. Thomson (2006) suggests that human brands that make individuals feel valued, empowered and comprehended thrive in developing feelings of autonomy. Feelings of relatedness occur when a human brand encourages approval, honesty, and belonging. Regarding the need for

competence, individuals can create attachments to human brands lacking appreciable skills. However, attachments will likely decrease or will not be formed if human brands make individuals feel incompetent.

Regarding the importance of social media platforms, it is possible to propose that social media followers can develop an intense attachment to social media influencers if they can fulfil their needs of ideality, relatedness, and competence (Ki et al., 2020). Therefore, an emotional bond will emerge. The stronger the emotional bond, the more influential the social media influencers are towards their followers (Ki et al., 2020). The need for ideality is satisfied when the social media influencer is perceived to have an inspiring personality. The need for relatedness when their personality is enjoyable and similar to their followers and, finally, the need for competence is satisfied when their content is perceived to be informative.

Strong brand attachments develop over time, depending on immediate events affecting consumers (Davis & Dacin, 2022). The motivation to maintain an attachment could be affected by brand transgressions, mainly if the misconduct is perceived. However, individuals with strong attachments may be highly willing to forgive and may be more protective of the brand.

In general, human brands can strengthen individuals' attachment by fulfilling their needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Regarding social media platforms, social media influencers create strong attachments with followers by fulfilling their needs for ideality, relatedness and competence. This being said, it is crucial to understand the perceived credibility of individuals towards human brands.

## **2.4 Brand Trust**

The perceived credibility of individuals towards a human brand happens when the human brand is trustworthy, honest, and unbiased in what they say and does (Chetioui et al., 2020). Creating trust with customers is essential for successful marketing. Accordingly, a trustworthy human brand has more chances to impact the individual's mindsets, choices, and buying intentions. According to Erdogan (1999), the source-credibility model informs and reflects the Social Influence Theory, which consists of various characteristics of a perceived communication source that may influence message receptivity. Three requirements are crucial for a human brand to be credible (Weismueller et al., 2020; Erdogan, 1999). These requirements are attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, which correspond to the source-credibility model. This source-credibility model helps explain the message's efficacy.

Attractiveness is the physical attractiveness of an individual and the human brand's attractive personality, which means that positive communication published by an attractive human brand is more persuasive than by an unattractive one (Weismueller et al., 2020; AI-

Emadi & Yahia, 2020). In a social media context, a positive attitude toward a social media influencer leads to a positive evaluation of the message's content.

Expertise is the source's degree of knowledge, and the human brand is perceived as skilled, knowledgeable, and qualified (Weismueller et al., 2020). A human brand is more persuasive when exhibiting expertise than those that do not demonstrate it (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020). It is possible to affirm that consumers trust more statements from an expert human brand. A human brand has perceived expertise increases trust and affects individuals' attitudes toward them (Chetioui et al., 2020). According to research by (Al-Emadi & Yahia, 2020), in a social media context, followers perceive social media influencers as experts regarding their experiences. Moreover, expertise can compensate for weaknesses regarding trust.

Trustworthiness refers to a human brand's perceived reliability, dependability, and honesty (Weismueller et al., 2020). Moreover, highly trustworthy sources are more likely to influence individuals (Al-Emadi & Yahia, 2020).

According to Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2020), the requirements of the source-credibility model can positively affect brand trust. However, this research conducted by Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2020) states that expertise is not significant and does not affect brand trust. Brand trust is the individuals' willingness to depend on the capability of the brand to perform its function (Peltier et al., 2020, p. 252). Online consumer engagement leads to brand trust when there is perceived interaction quality, effort and goodwill, including whether social media influencers can be trusted to transmit valuable and valid information (Weismueller et al., 2020).

The impact of trust on loyalty is more substantial in deep relationships than in superficial relationships. Moreover, trust is established through continuous interactions, and trust in social media influencers is an assurance that their relationship will positively affect followers (Kim & Kim, 2021). So, followers seek to maintain the relationship and become loyal to them.

In the case of a transgression, trust also predicts forgiveness. In a close relationship, the victim is more likely to forgive despite the offender's action because of the perceived trust towards them (Strelan et al., 2017). With this, transgression and brand forgiveness concepts are introduced.

## **2.5 Brand Forgiveness and Consumer Coping Behaviours**

The branding literature has shifted to include negative brand relationships. "The question is not if, but when the brand crisis or transgressions will happen" (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018, p. 1). Regarding celebrities, the consumer's perceived closeness allows the individual to be the victim towards any celebrity's transgression, even if not directly associated with it (Finsterwalder et al., 2017). The definition of transgression relies on the violation of the implicit or explicit rules which forms a relationship. There are three brand transgressions: performance-related, image-related, and value-related (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018).

Performance-related transgression involves the provision of defective products or services. It refers to negative past experiences between consumers and a brand, which suggests that the experience and expectation must match (Oliver, 1980).

The image-related transgression, or incongruence, refers to the distinction between the brand's and an individual's self-image (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). The concept of the self can include the brand itself because the connections between them can be powerful (Park & Macinnis, 2018). So, when the brand image transgresses, individuals no longer want to be associated with the brand. In this case, the individual's willingness to forgive the brand may decrease.

Finally, the value-related crisis, corporate wrongdoing, as an illegal, asocial, immoral, or unethical act, leads to negative feelings for the brand from the consumer's perspective. Consequently, the consumer is less likely to forgive (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018).

Brand failures usually take consumers by surprise and are considered violations of implicit or explicit brand performance expectations, both standard or unavoidable and serve as an opportunity for the consumer to re-evaluate the brand (Hassey, 2019). However, not all failures are the same and have the same impact on consumer brand re-evaluation. Transgressions that violate the norm of the relationship are viewed more negatively. Moreover, according to a study conducted by Hassey (2019), the consumer willingness to forgive and re-evaluate the brand is impacted by brand personality, which is a set of human characteristics of a brand (Aaker, 1997), and the type of transgression committed.

Forgiveness is crucial to restoring relationships (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). Forgiveness has the potential to reduce, neutralise, or replace tension with positive emotions, which demonstrates the importance of forgiveness in the context of brand relationships (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2011). Forgiveness is a complex concept because it is difficult to determine why a person chooses to forgive and the mechanisms associated with their feelings and thoughts, which differ from person to person. Moreover, it must be achieved through the brand's trustworthy behaviour (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). Regarding forgiveness, there are three types: forgiveness of the self, others, and situations.

Furthermore, according to Fetscherin and Sampedro (2018), when a brand transgression occurs, there are three types of consumer coping strategies: take a flight or brand switching, fighting and reengage. The consumer coping strategies or behaviours refer to the action that the consumer opts for after the brand performs a transgression.

The coping behaviour "take a flight" is associated with brand avoidance and brand switching, which is related to the action and desire to distance oneself from the brand with protective intent and switch to competing brands (Lee et al., 2009). On the other hand, "fighting" can be differentiated between direct and indirect behaviour. Directly, it is associated with brand revenge which refers to the consumer's need to penalise and cause harm to brands for the damage caused. Indirectly, it can be related to negative word-of-mouth (NWOM), in which consumers say negative things about the brand to their family, friends, or the general public (Sinha & Lu, 2016). Finally, "reengage" is related to continuing to buy from the brand that performed a transgression and, in this way, forgiving it. Moreover, a study by Tsarenko and Tojib (2015) shows a significant relationship between forgiveness and repurchase intention. Therefore, consumers' repurchase intentions will likely increase if forgiveness is obtained.



**Chapter 3 - Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development**

The conceptual framework and research hypotheses were formulated (See Figure 3.1) based on previous literature review to achieve the research results and conclusions. The purpose of the present study is to analyse the individual's willingness to forgive a human brand when a transgression occurs.

The methodology presented in Chapter 4 will test the following hypotheses. Therefore, this research will demonstrate the relationship between human brands, brand forgiveness and consumer coping behaviours.

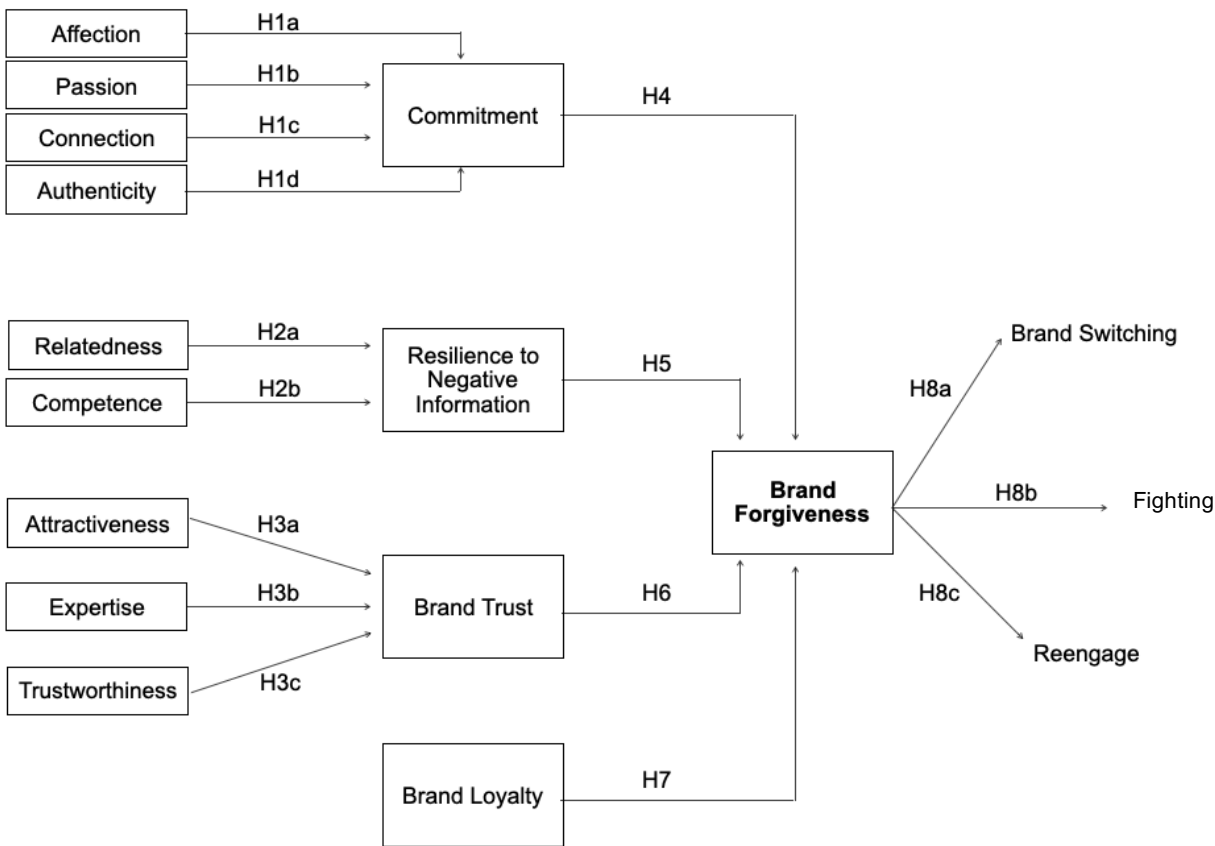


Figure 3. 1 Proposed Conceptual Framework

**Commitment as the dependent variable**

According to the previous literature review, an emotional attachment must exist between consumers and human brands for an individual to be considered a human brand. As mentioned, people can form emotional attachments with human brands and creating strong emotional attachments is a basic human need. According to Thomson et al. (2005), affection, passion and connection are the emotional items associated with strong attachments. Affection

represents warm feelings, such as friendship, love, and peace, between consumers and a human brand. Passion reflects the passionate and intense feelings of consumers towards a human brand, which includes feelings of passion and delight. Connection is the feeling of jointness with the human brand, including the items connected, bonded, and attached.

Authenticity is one of the most significant attributes of a human brand (Kucharska et al., 2020). According to Peltier et al. (2020), when the human brand is perceived as authentic, strong emotional attachments to human brands are expected. Furthermore, authenticity is the first step to creating an emotional bond between individuals and a human brand (Kucharska et al., 2020). With this, the literature suggests an opportunity to include authenticity in emotional attachment theory.

Emotional attachment predicts commitment. Commitment is associated with the aim of an enduring relationship between an individual and a human brand and to maintain the relationship no matter what happens (Thomson et al., 2005). Higher individual commitment to a brand leads to more significant engagement (Peltier et al., 2020). Moreover, commitment is a measure of marketing effectiveness, and it should predict individuals' brand commitment, in this case, towards a human brand. Regarding the literature review, it proposes a chance to understand if emotional attachment influences commitment. In other words, to understand if the human brands that transmit feelings of affection, passion, and connection and that are perceived as authentic, influence the individual's commitment towards a human brand. So, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1a: Affection positively influences Commitment.

H1b: Passion positively influences Commitment.

H1c: Connection positively influences Commitment.

H1d: Authenticity positively influences Commitment.

### **Resilience to Negative Information as the dependent variable**

Attachments are fundamental to forming strong brand relationships between individuals and human brands. According to Thomson (2006), fulfilling the need for autonomy, relatedness, and competence can result in intense attachments. Regarding the role of social media platforms, social media influencers are considered human brands. Therefore, social media followers can develop an intense attachment to these social media influencers if they can fulfil their needs of ideality, relatedness, and competence (Ki et al., 2020).

For the present study, the author will only consider the relatedness and competence needs of the social media influencer as a human brand. The reason for considering only these two needs is that recent studies have shown a more recent theory in which autonomy is substituted by the ideality need (Ki et al., 2020). The need for ideality is the perceived inspiration of social media influencers. Research conducted by Ki et al. (2020) shows that the social media influencer's inspiring personality fulfils the need for ideality. As it is going to be mentioned in the brand trust as a dependent variable, attractiveness refers to a human brand's physical and personality attractiveness (Weismueller et al., 2020; Al-Emadi & Yahia, 2020). Therefore, the analysis of the ideality need is excluded from the study. This decision relies on the fact that both concepts are theoretically similar.

Regarding the remaining needs, the need for relatedness is fulfilled when the enjoyability and similarity between social media influencers and their followers are perceived. Moreover, the need for competence is fulfilled when there is perceived informativeness of social media influencers' content on social media platforms (Ki et al., 2020). According to Japutra et al. (2018), resilience to negative information is an outcome of strong attachments. With this in mind, the author aims to understand the impact of both relatedness and competence needs, which comprise attachment strength, on the resilience to negative information. This opportunity is suggested by the previous literature review, in which the relationship between attachment strength, meaning relatedness and competence, and resilience to negative information needs to be studied. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H2a: Relatedness positively influences Resilience to Negative Information.

H2b: Competence positively influences Resilience to Negative Information.

### **Brand Trust as the dependent variable**

The perceived credibility of an individual towards a human brand is when the human brand is trustworthy, honest, and unbiased (Chetioui et al., 2020). Moreover, a highly trustworthy human brand is more likely to influence the individual's mindsets, choices, and buying intentions. Regarding social media influencers, this includes whether they can be trusted to communicate valuable and accurate information (Weismueller et al., 2020). In other words, human brands would not be trustworthy without credibility, and individuals would not believe them.

The source-credibility model includes three requirements for the human brand's credibility (Weismueller et al., 2020). The first requirement is attractiveness, which refers to a person's physical and personality attractiveness (Weismueller et al., 2020; Al-Emadi & Yahia, 2020).

Expertise is a human brand perceived as experienced, knowledgeable, and qualified. Moreover, trustworthiness concerns a human brand with perceived reliability, dependability, and honesty.

The requirements of the source-credibility model (i.e. attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness) can positively affect brand trust (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020). However, Wiedmann and von Mettenheim's (2020) research states that expertise does not affect brand trust.

This research will still address the relationship between expertise and brand trust. The aim is to understand if, regarding human brands, their expertise positively influences individuals' trust towards them. If results show evidence of the opposite, a theoretical confirmation will be added to the previous literature review.

Brand trust is the willingness to trust the brand's capability to perform its function (Peltier et al., 2020). Online consumer engagement achieves brand trust when the human brand reflects perceived interaction quality and goodwill (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020). Therefore, this study will analyze the influence of the source-credibility model of a human brand on brand trust. With this, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H3a: Attractiveness positively influences Brand Trust.

H3b: Expertise positively influences Brand Trust.

H3c: Trustworthiness positively influences Brand Trust.

### **Brand Forgiveness as the dependent variable**

“The question is not if, but when a brand crisis or transgressions will happen” (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018, p. 1). This study aims to analyze the forgiveness of a human brand when a transgression occurs. Based on the previous literature review, forgiveness is a crucial process for restoring relationships (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). So, regarding the present study, brand forgiveness is mandatory and considered to understand the individual's forgiveness towards the human brand.

First, to properly conduct the study, it is necessary to understand the link between commitment and brand forgiveness. According to Aaker et al. (2004), commitment is a relationship strength indicator when a transgression occurs. Therefore, commitment will be considered since there are gaps in the previous literature to understand its impact on brand forgiveness. So, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Commitment positively influences Brand Forgiveness.

According to Shimul (2022), resistance to negative information and forgiveness when a brand transgression occurs are positive consequences of strong relationships with brands. Stronger brand attachments lead to higher resilience toward negative information, meaning that individuals are more willing to forgive human brands that performed a mistake or violation (Japutra et al., 2018). Moreover, consumers with strong attachments may present high levels of forgiveness and may be more protective of the brand. The motivation to maintain an attachment towards a brand, in this case, a human brand, would be affected by brand transgressions, mainly if consumers perceive the misconduct to affect their feeling of belongingness, identification and affiliation with the brand (Davis & Dacin, 2022).

Therefore, due to the lack of literature concerning the relationship between attachment strength and brand forgiveness, resilience to negative information is going to be considered to understand its impact on brand forgiveness. So, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H5: Resilience to Negative Information positively influences Brand Forgiveness.

Regarding the previous literature review, the concept of brand trust includes the trustworthiness of a social media influencer to communicate valuable and accurate information (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020).

Moreover, customer forgiveness must be earned through trustworthy behaviour by the brand (Fetcherin & Sampedro, 2018). Trust is established through continuous interactions, and trust in social media influencers is an assurance that the relationship will affect followers positively (Kim & Kim, 2021). In the case of a transgression, trust predicts forgiveness, meaning that in a close relationship, the victim is more likely to forgive despite the offender's action because of the perceived trust towards them (Strelan et al., 2017). So, when a transgression occurs, the trust between individuals and a human brand and its effects on brand forgiveness will be analyzed.

Therefore, the literature suggests an opportunity to connect the concept of brand trust and trust since brand trust includes the trustworthiness of a human brand and to understand the impact of brand trust on brand forgiveness. With this in mind, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H6: Brand Trust positively influences Brand Forgiveness.

Brand image is associated with the self-congruity theory (Osorio et al., 2020). When the brand image transgressed so that consumers no longer wanted to be associated with the human brand, the brand image and the consumer's self-image became distinct. So, a lower willingness to forgive the human brand may occur (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). Moreover, brand image is essential to predict brand loyalty (Liu et al., 2020). The brand loyalty concept is defined as the consumer commitment to continue buying a preferred brand in the future. So, theory suggests an opportunity to understand the influence of brand loyalty towards brand forgiveness. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H7: Brand Loyalty positively influences Brand Forgiveness.

### **Coping Behaviour as the outcome**

According to the previous literature review, when a brand transgression occurs, there are three types of consumer coping behaviours: "take a flight" or brand switching; fighting, that is attacking the brand by complaining about it, which is related to the concept of negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) or taking revenge, which is associated with the customer's need to punish and cause damage to brands for the harms caused; and reengage with the brand, meaning that consumers are willing to continue buying the brand (Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018). The following study will only address the consumer coping strategies that are significantly more relevant to the research. Brand switching, meaning that the customer changed for another similar human brand to follow on social media platforms or/and decided to abandon the human brand that did a transgression. Fighting will consider the concept of negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) from the follower to others, personally or through social media. Finally, the reengage feature means the customer forgives the human brand's transgression and aims to remain following the human brand on social media platforms. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H8a: Brand Forgiveness negatively influences Brand Switching.

H8b: Brand Forgiveness negatively influences Fighting.

H8c: Brand Forgiveness positively influences Reengage.

## **Chapter 4 - Methodology**

As mentioned previously, the present study aims to understand the relationship between individuals and human brands and their willingness to forgive when a transgression occurs. This chapter will explore the research methods to test the previously formulated hypotheses (See Chapter 3).

For this study, the target was the United States of America residents and the quantitative research method used was the questionnaire.

### **4.1 Construct Measurement**

From a diversity of articles regarding the literature review, each construct and individual item was adapted from the original measurement scales for this study.

The questionnaire relies on seventeen constructs which are represented in the conceptual framework: Affection, Passion, Connection, Authenticity, Commitment, Relatedness, Competence, Resilience to Negative Information, Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, Brand Forgiveness, Brand Switching, Fighting, and Reengage.

The Affection, Passion and Connection constructs were all adapted from the scales developed by Thomson et al. (2005). Authenticity was adapted from the scale developed by Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016). The Commitment construct was adapted from the scales developed by Aaker et al. (2004). Commitment, which comprises five items, is predicted by Affection, Passion and Connection, which comprises one item each, and by Authenticity, which comprises three items.

The constructs of Relatedness and Competence were adapted from the scales by Ki et al. (2020). The Resistance to Negative Information construct was adapted from the scales of Japutra et al. (2018). Resistance to Negative Information, which contains three items, is predicted by Relatedness, with two items, and Competence, which comprises three items.

Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness and Brand Trust were all adapted from the scales developed by Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020). Brand Trust, which comprises two items, is predicted by Attractiveness, Expertise and Trustworthiness, which all contain five items each.

The Brand Loyalty construct was adapted from scales developed by Liu et al. (2020) and comprised three items.

The Brand Forgiveness construct was measured through the developed scales by Fetscherin and Sampetro (2018), which comprises three items. Commitment, Resistance to Negative Information, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty predict Brand Forgiveness. Moreover,

the outcomes of Brand Forgiveness are Brand Switching, Fighting and Reengage. The Brand Switching and Fight constructs were adapted from scales developed by Fetscherin and Sampedro (2018) and comprised three items each. The Reengage construct was adapted from scales developed by Tsarenko and Tojib (2015) with two items.

The constructs of Affection, Passion, Connection, Authenticity, Commitment, Relatedness, Competence, Resilience to Negative Information, Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty were measured in the questionnaire using a 7-point Likert Scale in which respondents answered from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (7) for the variables under analysis. The remaining constructs of Brand Forgiveness, Brand Switching, Fighting and Reengage were measured using a 5-point Likert Scale in which participants answered from (1) Extremely unlikely to (5) Extremely likely.

Table 4.1 summarizes all the constructs and respective measurement scales mentioned before. Moreover, Annex A demonstrates all the questions adapted, the source, their respective measurement scales and the number of items.

*Table 4. 1 Measurment scales and number of items*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Type of Likert-Scale</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>N° of items</b>
<b>Affection</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Thomson et al., 2005	1
<b>Passion</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Thomson et al., 2005	1
<b>Connection</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Thomson et al., 2005	1
<b>Authenticity</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016	3
<b>Commitment</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Aaker et al., 2004	5
<b>Relatedness</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Ki et al., 2020	2
<b>Competence</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Ki et al., 2020	3



<b>Resilience to Negative Information</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Japutra et al., 2018	3
<b>Attractiveness</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020	5
<b>Expertise</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020	5
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020	5
<b>Brand Trust</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020	2
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	7-Point Likert scale of agreement (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))	Liu et al., 2020	3
<b>Brand Forgiveness</b>	5-Point Likert scale of likelihood (Extremely unlikely (1) to Extremely likely (5))	Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018	3
<b>Brand Switching</b>	5-Point Likert scale of likelihood (Extremely unlikely (1) to Extremely likely (5))	Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018	3
<b>Fighting</b>	5-Point Likert scale of likelihood (Extremely unlikely (1) to Extremely likely (5))	Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018	3
<b>Reengage</b>	5-Point Likert scale of likelihood (Extremely unlikely (1) to Extremely likely (5))	Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015;	2

## 4.2 Research Design

Based on the literature review and with the measurement items adapted, the questionnaire was created (Annex A). The online platform used was Qualtrics (Qualtrics.com), which enables several benefits for researchers: questions and answers are endless, logic and open questions are possible, and it is possible to use different Likert-type scales. Moreover, it is possible to create a unique code for each participant at the end of the survey since it allows sharing of the questionnaire and collecting data with Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Regarding the research design, respondents were introduced with an explanation of the study's purpose. Then, a social media influencer is presented with a brief description of who she is, the number of followers on her social media account, and her field of expertise. The author chose the top two Instagram accounts of 2021, Kylie Jenner and Selena Gomez,

respectively, and the top two Tik Tok accounts, Charli D'Amelio, in the United States of America, according to a study conducted by HypeAuditor (State of Influencer Marketing, 2022). With this, three surveys were developed with the same structure and questions but with distinct social media influencers associated.

With the social media influencer in mind, the second section of the questionnaire corresponds to the analysis of the seventeen constructs measured using matrix table question type. Exposed as statements, all items that constitute each first thirteen constructs were answered by respondents to indicate their extent of agreement from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (7). For questions of the survey concerning the constructs of Brand Forgiveness, Brand Switching, Fight, and Reengage, a scenario of an incongruity transgression was presented with the following general statement "imagine that this social media influencer decides to share misleading content on her social media account. This transgression performed by the social media influencer does not correspond to her values expressed as a social media influencer". Notice that this statement was adapted concerning the corresponding social media influencer and social media platform. This scenario aims for respondents to answer according to this statement. The purpose is to evaluate the respondents' answers towards an occurred transgression, in this case, an incongruity transgression, and to allow the researcher to analyze their willingness to forgive regarding this scenario. The items that constitute the Brand Forgiveness, Brand Switching, Fight and Reengage constructs were exposed as a statement. Respondents answered according to their likelihood from Extremely unlikely (1) to Extremely likely (5).

Finally, the last questions of the questionnaire corresponds to demographic questions, such as gender, age and education, to develop the sample description.

#### **4.3 Pre-test**

A pre-test was conducted to understand if the questionnaire needed to be reanalysed. The purpose was to evaluate if the storytelling of the questions and the scenarios given were clear and understandable or if there were doubts or suggestions for improvements. English was the selected language to reach a broader audience because the target of the study is in the U.S. Furthermore, the pre-test was launched to ensure the questionnaire' perceptiveness.

The pre-test had the participation of 10 individuals. Through SmartPLS4, a software that enables researchers to analyze data, the proposed scales were analyzed and were all confirmed since Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.70, meaning that there are good levels of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2010). So, there was no need for modifications in the questionnaire.

#### **4.4 Data Collection and Procedures**

For the present study, the surveys were shared to collect answers using Amazon Mechanical Turk, a valuable and trustworthy platform for collecting data. This online platform allows the researcher to apply filters to obtain a more targeted sample, such as the location filter that was applied since the target of the study is United States of America residents. The respondents' answers are anonymous and voluntary. The eligible workers can participate in the study to be paid by the researcher when submitting the questionnaire.

As mentioned previously, three surveys were conducted. From a total of 359 answers, only 27 were excluded, which means that the collected data corresponds to 332 answers to the questionnaire.

#### **4.5 Sample Profile**

Demographic data were collected through the questionnaire to describe the profile of the collected sample (See Table 4.2). The present research focuses on United States of America residents. Of the 332 respondents, 108 are women and 224 are men, with 32.5% and 67.5%, respectively. Most respondents are between 25 and 34 years old, representing 58.7% of the sample. Moreover, regarding the education level, the majority of the respondents are college graduates, of which 238 have a Bachelor's degree (71.7%), 76 have a Master's degree (22.9%), and 1 has a PhD or higher (0.3%).

In general, the sample profile consists of respondents that are men aged between 25 and 34 years old and have a Bachelor's degree.

Table 4. 2 Sample's Profile

<b>N = 332</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	224	67.5
Female	108	32.5
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 24	19	5.7
25 - 34	195	58.7
35 - 44	49	14.8
45 - 54	44	13.3
+ 55	25	7.5
<b>Education Level</b>		
Some Highschool	2	0.6
Highschool	15	4.5
Bachelor's Degree	238	71.7
Master's Degree	76	22.9
PhD or Higher	1	0.3

## **Chapter 5 - Results and Discussion**

The results and findings of the research are introduced in this chapter. An analysis of the collected data is explained and discussed.

The purpose of this chapter is to connect the theoretical knowledge with the study's results and develop conclusions about the study, which consists of analyzing the relationship between individuals and human brands and how it impacts their willingness to forgive when human brands perform a transgression.

The evaluation of research model is assessed through the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model) (Henseler et al., 2016). To analyze the collected data and to test the conceptual model, a partial least square equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 was used to analyze the results. Moreover, a bootstrapping re-sampling with 5,000 samples was used to test the hypotheses.

### **5.1 Assessment of Measurement Model**

Convergent validity, internal consistency reliability and discriminant validity are considered to evaluate the measurement model.

The Affection, Passion and Connection constructs are not considered for these evaluations because it has only 1 item associated. Despite that, all the outer loadings are above 0.70, considered adequate and reliable (Hair et al., 2010). However, the author eliminated one item from the Brand Switching construct with an outer loading lower than 0.70.

The composite reliability of the remaining constructs is above the recommended level of 0.70, varying from 0.833 and 0.935 (Hair et al., 2010). Regarding Cronbach's alpha, all constructs are above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). The construct of Relatedness (RE), Brand Trust (BT), Brand Switching (CB\_BS), and Reengage (CB\_R) are not considered only to evaluate Cronbach's alpha because these constructs only present two items. With this, all the criteria are met, meaning that the model is internally reliable (Hair et al., 2010).

Regarding convergent validity, all constructs have an average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.50, which is consistent with the criterion that the values should be at least 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5.1 shows the results obtained regarding the measurement model.

Table 5. 1 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Authenticity</b>	AUT_1	0.895	0.827	0.897	0.744
	AUT_2	0.811			
	AUT_3	0.979			
<b>Commitment</b>	COM_1	0.876	0.913	0.935	0.741
	COM_2	0.852			
	COM_3	0.862			
	COM_4	0.851			
	COM_5	0.865			
<b>Relatedness</b>	RE_1	0.917	-	0.918	0.849
	RE_2	0.926			
<b>Competence</b>	COMP_1	0.904	0.878	0.925	0.804
	COMP_2	0.882			
	COMP_3	0.903			
<b>Resilience to Negative Information</b>	RTNI_1	0.842	0.819	0.892	0.734
	RTNI_2	0.866			
	RTNI_3	0.862			
<b>Attractiveness</b>	ATT_1	0.763	0.841	0.886	0.609
	ATT_2	0.796			
	ATT_3	0.773			
	ATT_4	0.765			
	ATT_5	0.805			
<b>Expertise</b>	EXP_1	0.850	0.832	0.881	0.597
	EXP_2	0.772			
	EXP_3	0.755			
	EXP_4	0.764			
	EXP_5	0.716			
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	TRU_1	0.736	0.867	0.904	0.653
	TRU_2	0.828			
	TRU_3	0.807			
	TRU_4	0.814			
	TRU_5	0.852			
<b>Brand Trust</b>	BT_1	0.929	-	0.919	0.850
	BT_2	0.915			

<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	BL_1	0.895			
	BL_2	0.895	0.878	0.925	0.804
	BL_3	0.899			
<b>Brand Forgiveness</b>	BF_1	0.872			
	BF_2	0.806	0.793	0.878	0.707
	BF_3	0.842			
<b>Brand Switching</b>	CB_BS_1	0.835			
	CB_BS_2	0.525	-	0.833	0.714
	CB_BS_3	0.828			
<b>Fighting</b>	CB_F_1	0.830			
	CB_F_2	0.835	0.755	0.857	0.666
	CB_F_3	0.783			
<b>Reengage</b>	CB_R_1	0.903			
	CB_R_2	0.918	-	0.906	0.829

According to the Fornell-Larker criterion, which corresponds to the discriminant validity, all of the constructs' square root of average variance extracted (AVE) must be above its greatest correlation with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As it is possible to verify (See Table 5.2), the square root of the AVE of all constructs is greater than the correlation with the other constructs, meaning that the criterion is successfully met.

Table 5. 2 Fornell-Larcker Criterion Analyzis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
<b>Affection (1)</b>	<b>1.000</b>																
<b>Attractiveness (2)</b>	0.622	<b>0.781</b>															
<b>Authenticity (3)</b>	0.654	0.637	<b>0.862</b>														
<b>Brand Forgiveness (4)</b>	0.678	0.489	0.550	<b>0.841</b>													
<b>Brand Loyalty (5)</b>	0.738	0.655	0.635	0.745	<b>0.896</b>												
<b>Brand Trust (6)</b>	0.769	0.685	0.708	0.689	0.820	<b>0.922</b>											
<b>Brand Switching (7)</b>	0.378	0.367	0.245	0.377	0.316	0.303	<b>0.845</b>										
<b>Fighting (8)</b>	0.210	0.222	0.230	0.342	0.340	0.297	0.535	<b>0.816</b>									
<b>Reengage (9)</b>	0.634	0.469	0.559	0.766	0.762	0.686	0.386	0.408	<b>0.910</b>								
<b>Connection (10)</b>	0.683	0.536	0.674	0.682	0.762	0.704	0.284	0.305	0.659	<b>1.000</b>							
<b>Competence (11)</b>	0.698	0.626	0.737	0.673	0.769	0.719	0.374	0.311	0.651	0.718	<b>0.896</b>						
<b>Commitment (12)</b>	0.739	0.609	0.756	0.749	0.838	0.796	0.362	0.391	0.769	0.755	0.823	<b>0.861</b>					
<b>Expertise (13)</b>	0.504	0.768	0.683	0.405	0.514	0.614	0.257	0.143	0.352	0.457	0.576	0.490	<b>0.773</b>				
<b>Passion (14)</b>	0.646	0.609	0.628	0.579	0.732	0.731	0.291	0.274	0.603	0.671	0.693	0.697	0.513	<b>1.000</b>			
<b>Relatedness (15)</b>	0.687	0.593	0.678	0.798	0.822	0.748	0.298	0.386	0.701	0.711	0.774	0.850	0.484	0.706	<b>0.921</b>		
<b>Resilience to Negative Information (16)</b>	0.627	0.578	0.689	0.728	0.766	0.707	0.342	0.333	0.686	0.660	0.799	0.802	0.574	0.631	0.768	<b>0.857</b>	
<b>Trustworthiness (17)</b>	0.700	0.731	0.773	0.670	0.792	0.849	0.227	0.227	0.642	0.739	0.722	0.784	0.741	0.712	0.702	0.708	<b>0.808</b>



The variance inflation factor (VIF) aims to identify the multicollinearity in the indicators. Hair et al. (2010) state that a variance inflation factor (VIF) values smaller than ten is considered acceptable and more conservative if less than five. In this model, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values are below five ranging from 1 to 2.859, indicating an absence of concern for potential multicollinearity (See Annex C).

## 5.2 Assessment of Structural Model

The structural model (inner model) results from the PLS algorithm calculation. It enables the analysis of path coefficients that indicate the strength of the relationships between the latent variables and presents the results of the hypotheses tests. So, to evaluate the significance of the paths, non-parametric bootstrapping is used.

Firstly, the structural model analysis reveals that the proposed model fits the data (SRMR = 0.081) (Henseler et al., 2016). The model fit is measured through the standardized root mean residual (SRMR), and to be considered a good fit, the SRMR should correspond to a value lower than 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In this case, the value of the SRMR is highly close to 0.08. Therefore, it is considered to be a good fit.

Then, the assessment of the structural model examines the path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), which should be positive and greater than 0.1 and p-values lower than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2010). Regarding this, not all hypotheses are supported and statistically significant. Hypotheses H3b, H6, H8a, and H8b are not statistically significant and, therefore, are not supported.

Firstly, the analysis of the hypotheses that are not supported is going to be made. H3b hypothesizes that Expertise positively influences Brand Trust, and results ( $\beta = -0.136$ ; p-value = 0.062) has shown that this hypothesis is not supported, therefore, not significant for p-value lower than 0.05 and has a negative effect on Brand Trust. The second is regarding the hypothesis that Brand Trust positively influences Brand Forgiveness (H6), with results ( $\beta = 0.094$ ; p-value = 0.193) proposing that this path failed to meet this significance. The results of hypothesis H8a, in which Brand Forgiveness negatively influences Brand Switching ( $\beta = 0.377$ ; p-value = 0.000), are considered statistically significant. However, the expected was that  $\beta$  is negative, which does not correspond to the results' analyses, which is the same for hypothesis H8b regarding the negative influence of Brand Forgiveness towards Fighting ( $\beta = 0.342$ ; p-value = 0.000).

Now, an analysis of the remaining hypotheses is conducted. H1a hypothesizes that Affection positively influences Commitment ( $\beta = 0.243$ ; p-value = 0.000), H1b that Passion positively influences Commitment ( $\beta = 0.165$ ; p-value = 0.000), H1c hypothesizes that Connection positively influences Commitment ( $\beta = 0.246$ ; p-value = 0.000), and H1d that

Authenticity positively influences Commitment ( $\beta = 0.315$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ). Results show evidence of the statistical significance of all hypotheses mentioned. Furthermore, it means that the more emotional feelings of Affection that include feelings such as friendship, love, peace, Passion, such as delight, Connection and perceived Authenticity of the human brand, the greater the commitment towards that human brand.

Regarding the construct of Resilience to Negative Information, H2a hypothesizes that Relatedness positively influences Resilience to Negative Information ( $\beta = 0.373$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) and H2b that Competence positively influences Resilience to Negative Information ( $\beta = 0.510$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ), results show the statistical significance of both. With this, when the needs of relatedness and competence are fulfilled, individuals are more resilient to negative information regarding the human brand. Regarding hypotheses H3a and H3c, the constructs of Attractiveness and Trustworthiness are statistically significant for the Brand Trust construct, as shown in the results with  $\beta = 0.204$  and  $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ , and  $\beta = 0.800$  and  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ , respectively.

Concerning Brand Forgiveness, the hypotheses Commitment positively influences Brand Forgiveness (H4) with results of  $\beta = 0.241$  and  $p\text{-value} = 0.027$ , Resilience to Negative Information positively influences Brand Forgiveness (H5) with results of  $\beta = 0.270$  and  $p\text{-value} = 0.016$ , and Brand Loyalty positively influences Brand Forgiveness (H7) with results of  $\beta = 0.259$  and  $p\text{-value} = 0.003$ , are all statistically significant. Regarding hypothesis H4, this means that the greater the commitment between individuals and human brands, the greater their willingness to forgive. Concerning hypothesis H5, this means that higher resilience toward negative information leads to higher brand forgiveness. Furthermore, H7 means that the more individuals are loyal to a human brand, their willingness to forgive increases.

Regarding the outcomes that rely on the coping behaviours, H8c hypothesizes that Brand Forgiveness positively influences Reengage ( $\beta = 0.766$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) and is statistically significant.

The effect size ( $f^2$ ) considers small if it is higher or equal to 0.02, medium if it is larger or equal to 0.15, and large if it is higher or equal to 0.35 (Cohen, 1988). It is relevant to notice that the effect size ( $f^2$ ) of Brand Forgiveness towards Reengage suggests a large effect ( $f^2 = 1.419$ ), as well as Trustworthiness towards Brand Trust ( $f^2 = 0.938$ ). However, the effect size ( $f^2$ ) of Brand Trust on Brand Forgiveness suggests the weakest effect ( $f^2 = 0.007$ ), which is lower than 0.02.

The R square ( $R^2$ ) is a statistical measure that explains the endogenous variable's variance explained by the exogenous variable(s) and indicates the model's predictive accuracy. The values might range between 0 and 1, and higher values mean higher predictive

accuracy than lower values. The Q square ( $Q^2$ ) is related to the predictive relevance of the structural model, and when results are above 0, there is proof of relevance (Hair et al., 2011).

As stated in Figure 5.1, it is possible to verify that Affection, Passion, Connection, and Authenticity explain 63.4% ( $R^2 = 0.634$ ) of the variance in Commitment and are relevant for predicting this construct ( $Q^2 = 0.591$ ). Relatedness and Competence explain 69.4% ( $R^2 = 0.694$ ) of the variance in Resilience to Negative Information and are relevant for predicting this construct ( $Q^2 = 0.690$ ). Brand Trust is explained by Attractiveness, Expertise, and Trustworthiness with 73.6% ( $R^2 = 0.736$ ) and is relevant for the prediction of this construct ( $Q^2 = 0.727$ ). Commitment, Resilience to Negative Information, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty explain 63.4% ( $R^2 = 0.634$ ) of the variance in Brand Forgiveness and are relevant for its prediction ( $Q^2 = 0.591$ ). Brand Forgiveness explains 14.2% ( $R^2 = 0.142$ ) of the variance in Brand Switching and is relevant for the prediction of this construct ( $Q^2 = 0.108$ ). Moreover, Brand Forgiveness explains 11.7% ( $R^2 = 0.117$ ) of the variance in Fighting and is relevant for its prediction ( $Q^2 = 0.100$ ). Finally, Reengage is explained by Brand Forgiveness by 58.7% ( $R^2 = 0.587$ ), which is relevant for the prediction of this construct ( $Q^2 = 0.541$ ).

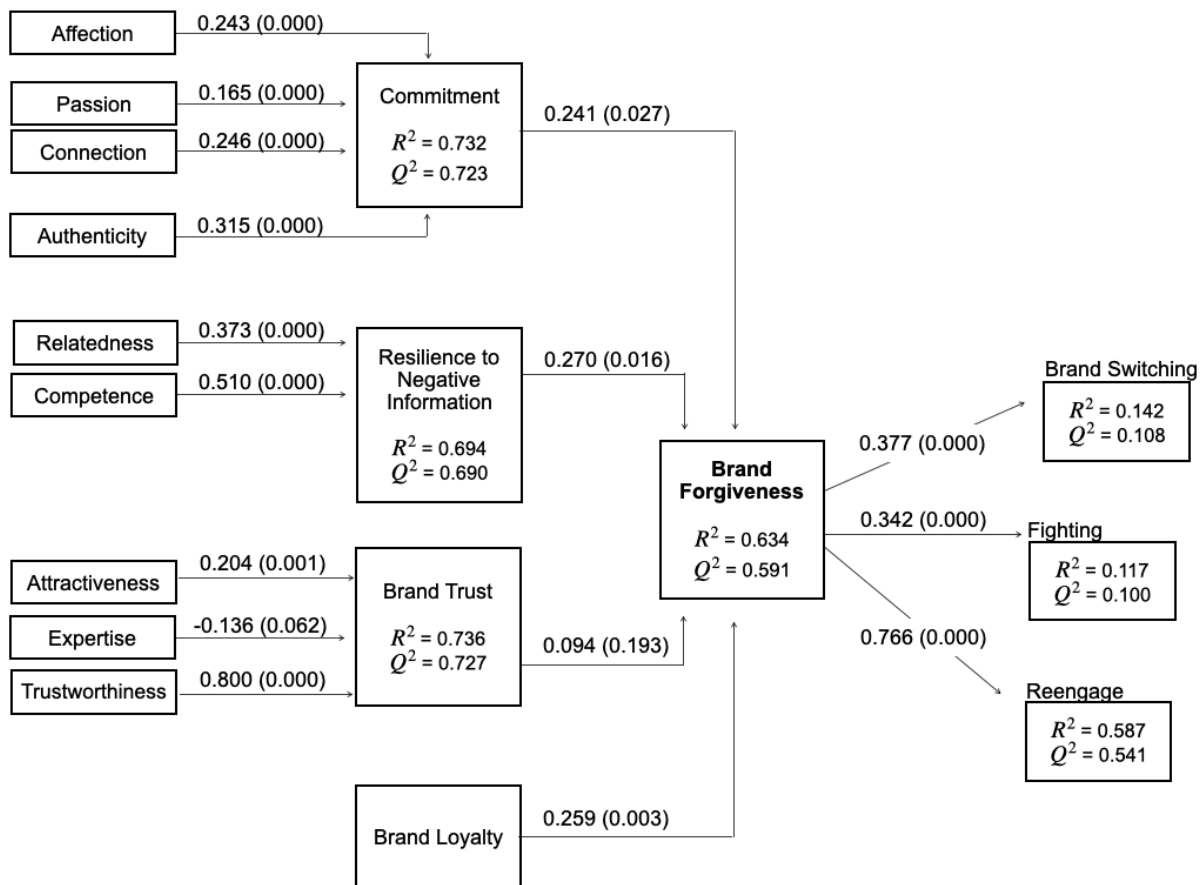


Figure 5. 1 Structural Model Results

Table 5.3 shows all the results mentioned previously.

Table 5. 3 Structural Model Results

Relationship	Proposed effect	Path Coefficient (β)	p-value <sup>1</sup>	Confidence Level		Effect size ( $f^2$ )	Results
				LL <sup>2</sup>	UL <sup>3</sup>		
<b>Affection - Commitment</b>	Positive	0.243	0.000	0.108	0.375	0.094	<b>H1a:</b> Supported
<b>Passion - Commitment</b>	Positive	0.165	0.000	0.080	0.248	0.047	<b>H1b:</b> Supported
<b>Connection - Commitment</b>	Positive	0.246	0.000	0.163	0.364	0.102	<b>H1c:</b> Supported
<b>Authenticity - Commitment</b>	Positive	0.315	0.000	0.206	0.438	0.168	<b>H1d:</b> Supported
<b>Commitment – Brand Forgiveness</b>	Positive	0.241	0.027	0.032	0.454	0.034	<b>H4:</b> Supported
<b>Relatedness – Resilience to Negative Information</b>	Positive	0.373	0.000	0.279	0.464	0.182	<b>H2a:</b> Supported
<b>Competence – Resilience to Negative Information</b>	Positive	0.510	0.000	0.411	0.603	0.342	<b>H2b:</b> Supported
<b>Resilience to Negative Information – Brand Forgiveness</b>	Positive	0.270	0.016	0.060	0.484	0.065	<b>H5:</b> Supported
<b>Attractiveness – Brand Trust</b>	Positive	0.204	0.001	0.096	0.340	0.056	<b>H3a:</b> Supported
<b>Expertise – Brand Trust</b>	Positive	-0.136	0.062	-0.274	0.012	0.024	<b>H3b:</b> Not supported
<b>Trustworthiness – Brand Trust</b>	Positive	0.800	0.000	0.688	0.889	0.938	<b>H3c:</b> Supported
<b>Brand Trust – Brand Forgiveness</b>	Positive	0.094	0.193	-0.048	0.235	0.007	<b>H6:</b> Not supported
<b>Brand Loyalty – Brand Forgiveness</b>	Positive	0.259	0.003	0.084	0.432	0.04	<b>H7:</b> Supported
<b>Brand Forgiveness – Brand Switching</b>	Negative	0.377	0.000	0.230	0.523	0.166	<b>H8a:</b> Not supported

<sup>1</sup> P-value < 0.05

<sup>2</sup> LL = Lower Limit

<sup>3</sup> UL = Upper Limit

<b>Brand Forgiveness - Fighting</b>	Negative	0.342	0.000	0.219	0.475	0.132	<b>H8b:</b> Not supported
<b>Brand Forgiveness - Reengage</b>	Positive	0.766	0.000	0.681	0.831	0.419	<b>H8c:</b> Supported

### 5.3 Discussion

The present study aims to understand the relationships between individuals and human brands and their willingness to forgive when a transgression occurs. In other words, to determine if the emotional attachment (including affection, passion, connection and authenticity), commitment, attachment strength (regarding relatedness and competence), resilience to negative information, the brand trust (which includes attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness), and brand loyalty are relevant constructs to develop relationships between individuals and human brands. Moreover, it aims to determine its influence on brand forgiveness and the coping behaviours (i.e. brand switching, fighting or reengage) when a transgression performed by a human brand occurs.

Through the assessment of both measurement and structural model, not all the hypotheses developed are supported by the model, which are the hypotheses related to the positive influence of Expertise on Brand Trust (H3b), the positive influence of Brand Trust towards Brand Forgiveness (H6), the negative influence of Brand Forgiveness on Brand Switching (H8a), and the negative influence of Brand Forgiveness towards Fighting (H8b). Further detail and explanation of the variable's relationship will be presented.

Emotional attachment must exist for an individual to be considered a human brand, and developing strong emotional attachments is a basic human need (Thomson et al., 2005). The determinants suggested by the author and analysed in this research are Affection, Passion, and Connection. According to Kucharska et al. (2020), Authenticity is one of the most significant attributes of a human brand, and it is the first step to creating an emotional bond between individuals and a human brand. Therefore, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the need for literature regarding the influence of Authenticity on attachment strength suggested an opportunity to analyse the impact of Authenticity on emotional attachment. The research by Thomson et al. (2005) suggests that emotional attachment predicts commitment, defined as the long-term perspective and willingness to remain in a relationship even when there are difficulties. The aim was to understand that if a human brand is perceived to transmit Affection, such as friendship and love, Passion, such as delight, and Connection, such as the feeling of jointness, and perceived as authentic (Authenticity), the Commitment towards a human brand

becomes greater. According to the results, it is possible to conclude that there is a positive relationship between the determinants, Affection ( $\beta = 0.243$ ), Passion ( $\beta = 0.165$ ), Connection ( $\beta = 0.246$ ), and Authenticity ( $\beta = 0.315$ ), and Commitment. Therefore, hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c are supported and consistent with Thomson et al. (2005) study results. The present study proves that Authenticity is a predictor of Commitment because hypothesis H1d is supported and consistent with the theoretical research of both Thomson et al. (2005) and Kucharska et al. (2020). The present study evidences the proof that Authenticity is a predictor of Commitment, meaning that the more the perceived human brand' authenticity, the greater their commitment towards the human brand. It is crucial to note that this represents a theoretical contribution because authenticity was analysed for the first time as a predictor of emotional attachment. Moreover, the relationship between emotional attachment and commitment was never analysed, and this study shows evidence of a positive relationship.

There needed to be more literature regarding the impacts of Commitment on Brand Forgiveness. Hypothesis H4 aims to understand if Commitment positively influences Brand Forgiveness. According to Aaker et al. (2004), commitment is a relationship strength indicator when a transgression occurs. This study is a pioneer regarding this relationship since the results demonstrate a positive relationship between Commitment ( $\beta = 0.241$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.027) and Brand Forgiveness, meaning that another theoretical contribution was made. The more the individual is committed to a human brand, the higher their willingness to forgive it. In other words, the greater the individual's willingness to maintain the relationship with a human brand, the higher their willingness to forgive when the human brand performs a transgression.

According to Thomson's (2006) research, attachments are essential to forming strong brand relationships and define their strength as the intensity of the emotional bond between individuals and human brands. Moreover, attachment strength indicates relationship quality (Fournier, 1998). The fulfilment of Relatedness and Competence needs results in strong attachments (Thomson, 2006). As mentioned before, social media influencers are considered human brands. Research by Ki et al. (2020) suggests that social media followers can develop an intense attachment to social media influencers if they can fulfil their needs of relatedness and competence.

Moreover, the study conducted by Japutra et al. (2018) states that resilience to negative information is an outcome of brand attachment. With this, the aim is to understand if the higher an individual feels similar and informed towards the human brand and their content on social media platforms, the greater the Resilience To Negative Information towards the human brand. The results conclude that positive relationships between the determinants occur, meaning that Relatedness ( $\beta = 0.373$ ) and Competence ( $\beta = 0.510$ ) positively influence Resilience To Negative Information. Therefore, both hypotheses H2a and H2b are supported. This study

contributes to the theoretical literature by enhancing that, as per research by Ki et al., 2020, Relatedness and Competence positively influence attachment strength, and research by Japutra et al. (2018), in which attachment strength influences Resilience Towards Negative Information, there is a positive relationship between Relatedness and Competence towards Resilience to Negative Information.

The theory suggested an opportunity to understand the impact of Resilience To Negative Information on Brand Forgiveness because, according to Japutra et al. (2018), stronger brand attachments lead to higher resilience toward negative information, which means that consumers are more willing to forgive human brands. However, the relationship between Resilience To Negative Information and Brand Forgiveness has never been studied. Therefore, hypothesis H5 was formulated. Results show a positive relationship between Resilience to Negative Information ( $\beta = 0.270$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.016), meaning that the more resilient individuals are regarding negative information about a human brand, the higher their willingness to forgive.

According to research by Weismueller et al. (2020), the source-credibility model includes three requirements for the human brand's credibility: Attractiveness, Expertise, and Trustworthiness. Moreover, Wiedmann and von Mettenheim's (2020) research suggests that the source-credibility model's requirements can positively affect Brand Trust. Brand trust is the willingness to depend on the capacity of the brand to perform its part (Peltier et al., 2020). Therefore, hypotheses H3a, H3b, and H3c were conducted, in which Attractiveness positively influences Brand Trust (H3a), Expertise positively influences Brand Trust (H3b), and Trustworthiness positively influences Brand Trust (H3c). The study shows a positive relationship between Attractiveness ( $\beta = 0.204$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.001) and Trustworthiness ( $\beta = 0.800$ ), which is the strongest and most significant on Brand Trust. Therefore, both hypotheses H3a and H3c are supported. The results mean that the more a human brand is physically and personally attractive and perceived by individuals as reliable and honest, the more their willingness to rely on the ability of the human brand to perform its function. However, a negative relationship between Expertise ( $\beta = -0.136$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.062) and Brand Trust is revealed through results, meaning that H3b is not supported. These results match the research conducted by Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2020), which states that both Attractiveness and Trustworthiness significantly influence Brand Trust, but Expertise does not affect Brand Trust.

Due to the lack of literature regarding the influence of Brand Trust on Brand Forgiveness, hypothesis H6 was formulated to understand if Brand Trust positively influences Brand Forgiveness. The study results show that hypothesis H6 is not supported in which Brand Trust ( $\beta = 0.094$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.193) does not influence Brand Forgiveness. Meaning that the

individual's willingness to forgive is not influenced by their trust towards a human brand, which is the opposite of the literature suggested in the previous research conducted by both Fetcherin and Sampedro (2018) and Strelan et al. (2017). According to Fetcherin and Sampedro (2018), an individual's forgiveness must be earned through trustworthy behaviour by the brand. Moreover, research by Strelan et al. (2017) states that trust predicts forgiveness in the case of a transgression. It is an interesting insight because this suggests that the human brand does not have to be trustworthy, for individuals forgive the human brand when they perform a transgression.

The brand image concept is associated with the self-congruity theory (Osorio et al., 2020). The self-congruity theory states that consumers select brands that represent a similar image to their desired image for themselves or similar to their self-image. Brand image and an individual's self-image become distinct when a brand image performs a transgression, and individuals do not want to be associated with the brand anymore (Fetcherin & Sampedro, 2018). With this, a lower willingness to forgive the human brand may occur. According to the research by Liu et al. (2020), brand image positively influences brand loyalty, defined as the individual's commitment to continue buying a preferred brand in the future. So, theory suggests an opportunity to understand the influence of brand loyalty towards brand forgiveness. The conducted analysis concludes that positive relationships between the determinants occur, meaning that Brand Loyalty ( $\beta = 0.259$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0.003$ ) positively influences Brand Forgiveness. Therefore, hypothesis H7 is supported, which means that the higher the individuals are loyal to a human brand, the greater their willingness to forgive.

Regarding Brand Forgiveness, there are three coping behaviours that individuals may opt for when a transgression occurs: Brand Switching, Fighting, and Reengage. It is important to note that this study focuses on the three most followed social media influencers in the U.S.: Kylie Jenner, Selena Gomez, and Charlie D'Amelio. The transgression selected to analyse respondents' willingness to forgive was the incongruity transgression in which the human brand's transgression does not correspond to their expressed personal values.

Hypotheses H8a is related to the negative influence of Brand Forgiveness on Brand Switching, H8b states that Brand Forgiveness negatively influences Fighting and H8c that Brand Forgiveness positively influences Reengage. Surprisingly, the results show a positive relationship between Brand Forgiveness, both Brand Switching ( $\beta = 0.767$ ) and Fighting ( $\beta = 0.342$ ). Since the expected results for both determinants were negative, hypotheses H8a and H8b are not supported. These results are not in accordance with research by Fetcherin and Sampedro (2018). These results suggest that, although individuals forgive a human brand when performing a transgression, they will still change for another similar human brand or decide to leave the human brand. Moreover, individuals will still say negative things about the



human brand to others, personally or through social media platforms, even when forgiveness towards the human brand's transgression occurs.

Finally, results show a positive relationship between Brand Forgiveness and Reengage ( $\beta = 0.766$ ), the strongest and most significant outcome of Brand Forgiveness. The result presented is consistent with Fetscherin and Sampedro (2018) and Tsarenko and Tojib (2015), which means that the higher the level of individuals' willingness to forgive, the greater their intention to continue following a human brand that performed a transgression and, therefore, reengage with the human brand.

To conclude, it is possible to affirm that committed, loyal and resilient towards negative information individuals are more willing to forgive human brands when a transgression is performed. However, human brand trustworthiness does not influence individuals' willingness to forgive. Moreover, when consumers forgive a human brand, it increases their intention to continue following the human brand on social media platforms. Nevertheless, although forgiving the transgression performed by the human brand, individuals are conducive to switching to a similar human brand or stopping following them on social media platforms, and still to talk negative things regarding the human brand to others, personally or through social media platforms.



## **Chapter 6 - Conclusions and Recommendations**

To conclude, the proposed research questions are answered, and objectives are accomplished through the development of the present study.

Results from the questionnaire show that individuals are willing to forgive human brands when a transgression occurs but can still switch or unfollow and say negative things about the human brand.

For individuals to forgive a human brand, they must be committed, loyal and resilient to negative information regarding the human brand. The more the perceived feelings of affection, passion, connection, and authenticity, the more committed individuals are. The more related and competent the individual feels the more resilient the individual is towards negative information about the human brand.

Finally, the human brand's perceived trustworthiness does not influence an individual's willingness to forgive.

### **6.1 Theoretical Contributions**

There is a need for research discussing brand forgiveness regarding human brands within the Marketing field. Therefore, the present study brings several theoretical contributions to consider.

The first theoretical contribution is regarding the possibility that authenticity can be included in the emotional attachment theory, as mentioned in research by Kucharska et al. (2020). Moreover, research by Thomson et al. (2005) suggests that emotional attachment predicts commitment. The relationship between authenticity and emotional attachment, and therefore, commitment, has never been tested. So, the present study proves that the theoretical assumptions by both Kucharska et al. (2020) and Thomson et al. (2005) are supported and statistically evident, meaning that the more authentic a human brand is, the more their commitment towards the human brand. Furthermore, affection, passion and connection also positively influence commitment since results have been shown to support these relationships that have never been studied. The more a human brand transmits feelings of affection, passion and connection and is perceived as authentic, the higher the individual's commitment towards a human brand.

Results show the positiveness and statistical support of the relationship between commitment and brand forgiveness, enhancing a second theoretical contribution. Furthermore, it is the first time that commitment has been studied as an antecedent of brand forgiveness regarding human brands, meaning that the more an individual is committed to a human brand, the more their willingness to forgive a human brand when a transgression occurs.

The third theoretical contribution is related to the resilience to negative information. The theory suggested by Japutra et al. (2018) states that resilience towards negative information is impacted by brand attachment. Moreover, research by Ki et al. (2020) states that social media followers can develop an intense attachment to social media influencers if they can fulfil their needs of relatedness and competence. The present study supports the theoretical suggestion by Japutra et al. (2018), which means that the higher an individual feels similar and informed towards the human brand and their content on social media platforms, the greater the individual's resilience to negative information regarding the human brand. The theory suggested by Japutra et al. (2018) states that strong brand attachments lead to higher resilience to negative information, which means that individuals are more willing to forgive. The fourth theoretical contribution is shown in this study which verifies that the more resilient individuals are regarding negative information about a human brand, the higher their willingness to forgive them.

Another interesting theoretical contribution is regarding the influence of brand trust on brand forgiveness. Previous literature conducted by Fetcherin and Sampedro (2018) and Strelan et al. (2017) suggested that an individual's forgiveness must be earned through trustworthy behaviour and trust predicts forgiveness in the case of a transgression. However, results show that the individual's willingness to forgive is not influenced by their trust towards a human brand, which is the opposite of the literature suggested by Fetcherin and Sampedro (2018) and Strelan et al. (2017). The human brand does not have to be trustworthy, for individuals forgive the human brand when they perform a transgression.

A theoretical contribution concerning brand loyalty and its impact on brand forgiveness is demonstrated. According to research by Fetcherin and Sampedro (2018), brand image and an individual's self-image become distinct when a brand image performs a transgression, which means that a lower willingness to forgive the human brand may occur. Moreover, according to the research by Liu et al. (2020), brand image positively influences brand loyalty. Due to the need for more literature to understand the influence of brand loyalty towards brand forgiveness, this study analysed the relationship between both concepts. It is concluded that, in fact, the higher the individuals' loyalty to a human brand, the greater their willingness to forgive.

Finally, the analysis of the influence of brand forgiveness on brand switching, fighting, and reengage (i.e. coping behaviours) reveals surprising results that contribute to the theory. Contrary to the research by Fetcherin and Sampedro (2018), brand forgiveness positively influences brand switching and fighting. Although individuals forgive a human brand when performing an incongruity transgression, they will still change for another similar human brand or decide to abandon the human brand. Furthermore, even when individuals forgive, they will

still talk negatively about the human brand to others, personally or through social media platforms. These results suggest an opportunity for future research to investigate what is, indeed, to forgive.

All the remaining relationships in this study can be considered an additional confirmation of the previous literature review.

## **6.2 Managerial Implications**

Social media platforms made interaction between individuals more straightforward and accessible (Peltier, 2020). Moreover, social media platforms made possible direct contact with human brands. Regarding this, it is a question of when a human brand performs a transgression due to the explosion of the internet and society's increasing digital. Therefore several practical implications regarding this study allow human brands to understand what it takes to make individuals forgive them when performing a transgression.

All the aspects mentioned further can be accomplished through social media platforms in which human brand's shared content should be posted carefully and in line with those aspects.

First, human brands should transmit feelings of affection, such as friendship; passion, such as delight; and connection, such as belongingness, between them and individuals to increase their commitment towards them. A crucial aspect for human brands to consider is authenticity because it increases an individual's commitment to them when perceived as authentic. Commitment is fundamental for human brands to increase individuals' willingness to forgive them if they transgress. Human brands are also known as content creators, and what they say and do should be authentic and transmit positive and warm feelings.

Second, human brands should be perceived as similar to individuals and informative through their content on social media platforms to increase individuals' resilience to negative information about the human brand. The informativeness of their content on social media platforms is the most critical aspect to consider to increase an individual's resilience to negative information. To achieve forgiveness by individuals, human brands should focus on consolidating their resilience to negative information through the aspects mentioned above. This means that human brands should understand, know and empathize with their target audience on social media platforms to understand better how to relate with them.

Third, highly loyal individuals increase their willingness to forgive a human brand when a transgression occurs. To achieve an individual's loyalty, their image should match the actual or ideal self of the individual. Understanding the target audience and carefully posting content corresponding to them is crucial.

Finally, human brands need to understand that, although the previously mentioned aspects are necessary for individuals to forgive them when they perform a transgression, not all individuals reengage with them. Meaning that not all individuals will remain following the human brand on social media platforms. Individuals may forgive human brands but can switch to another or unfollow them on social media platforms. Moreover, individuals can still say negative things about human brands to others, such as on social media platforms, although the decision was to forgive them. For this, human brands should understand what drives their audience and what they expect from himself/herself. An apology or acknowledgement of the mistake in social media platforms could make followers reengage and continue following the human brand.

Moreover, it is interesting for human brands to understand that their expertise, such as experience, qualification and knowledge, negatively impacts the individual's trust in them. So, trust does not influence their followers' willingness to forgive them when a transgression occurs.

### **6.3 Limitations and Further Research Suggestions**

The present study reached conclusions, theoretical contributions and managerial implications. Therefore, the limitations and further research recommendations should be considered.

Firstly, the lack of literature regarding brand forgiveness towards human brands created difficulties in supporting the theoretical foundations of the present study. However, interesting insights were possible to conclude regarding human brands and forgiveness.

Second, a longitudinal study was not conducted, and the author recommends that the study of the relationship between individuals and human brands should be done from the beginning. It could be interesting to understand how individuals consider a celebrity or social media influencer as a human brand from the start, meaning to understand how they create relationships towards human brands until they decide not to be related to them anymore. Moreover, it could be interesting to understand what happens to these relationships when a human brand performs a transgression and the individual reengages with the human brand.

Finally, further research suggests understanding forgiveness and what it means for an individual to forgive a human brand. The present study concluded that individuals forgive human brands when a transgression occurs but can still change for another, abandon the human brand and say negative things about them.

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## Annexes

### Annex A – Summary of adopted questions and measurement scales, sources and number of items

Construct	Adapted Item	Type of Likert-Scale	Source	Number of Items
<b>Affection Passion Connecion</b>	Please indicate the extent of your agreement about your feelings towards the (HB).	7-point Likert Scale that range from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	Thomson et al., 2005	1
				1
				1
<b>Authenticity</b>	(HB) is genuine		Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016	3
	(HB) seems real to me			
	(HB) is authentic			
<b>Commitment</b>	I am very loyal to (HB)		Aaker et al., 2004	5
	I am willing to make small sacrifices in order to keep following (HB)			
	I would stick with (HB) even if she let me down once or twice			
	I am so happy with (HB) that I no longer need to follow other influencers on social media networks.			
	I am likely to follow (HB) one year from now			
<b>Relatedness</b>	(HB) makes me feel very close to her	Ki et al., 2020	2	
	(HB) gives me a sense of intimacy			
<b>Competence</b>	(HB) makes me feel competent	3		
	(HB) makes me feel adequate			
	(HB) makes me feel capable and effective			
<b>Resilience to Negative Information</b>	I forgive (HB) when she makes mistakes	Japutra et al., 2018	3	
	I will forgive (HB) for specific negative information			
	I would think favorably of (HB) upon hearing specific negative information			
<b>Attractiveness</b>	(HB) is attractive	Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020	5	
	(HB) is charismatic			
	(HB) is good-looking			
	The physical makeup of (HB) is admirable			

	(HB) is beautiful			
<b>Expertise</b>	(HB) has a good understanding of beauty and fashion			5
	(HB) is an expert in beauty and fashion			
	(HB) is knowledgeable in beauty and fashion			
	(HB) is qualified in beauty and fashion			
	(HB) has experience in beauty and fashion			
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	(HB) is dependable			5
	(HB) is honest			
	(HB) is reliable			
	(HB) is sincere			
	(HB) is trustworthy			
<b>Brand Trust</b>	I would trust (HB) very much			2
	I would rely very much on (HB)			
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	I will consider viewing (HB) as my first choice		Liu et al., 2020	3
	Compared to other social media influencers, I prefer (HB)			
	I would continue to support (HB) , even the cost increase			
<b>Brand Switching</b>	I would follow (HB) less frequently than before		5-point Likert Scale from a scale of "extremely unlikely" (1) to "extremely likely" (5)	3
	I would stop following (HB) and will not follow her anymore			
	I would switched to a competing social media influencer			
<b>Fighting</b>	I would discourage friends and relatives to follow (HB)		Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018	3
	I would say negative things about (HB) to others			
	I would recommend not to follow (HB) to someone who seeks my advice			
<b>Reengage</b>	I intend to follow this social media influencer		Tsarenko & Tojib (2015)	2
	I will follow this social media influencer next time I see her post			
<b>Brand Forgiveness</b>	I would think favorably of (HB)		Fetscherin & Sampedro, 2018	3
	Given (HB) response, I would forgive it			
	I would feel sympathetic toward (HB)			

## Annex B - Questionnaire

The present questionnaire aims to understand the impact of social media influencers on consumers' decision-making. This study belongs to the Marketing master's thesis of ISCTE business school and is part of non-profit academic research.

It takes 7 minutes to be completed.

All the answers are anonymous and confidential. The collected data will be treated as a whole for academic purposes only.

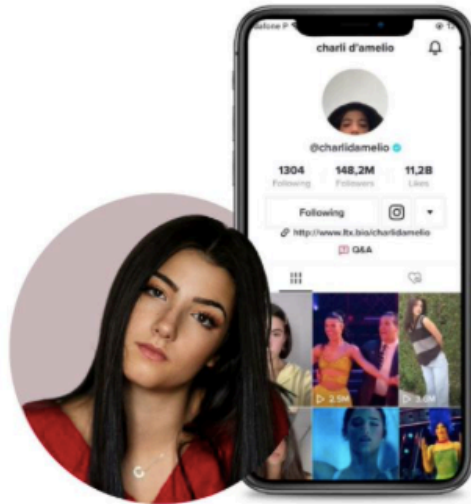
Thank you so much for your cooperation in this project.



From a famous television reality show to a businesswoman, Kylie Jenner is one of the most relevant social media influencers in the United States of America and the most followed one, with 371 million followers on Instagram. She is an expert in the categories of beauty and makeup sector due to her company, Kylie Cosmetics, which made her the youngest billionaire of all time.



From a dancer to a TikTok star, Charli D'Amelio is an American social media personality that became the most followed content creator on the platform which has now 148.2 million followers. She is an expert in dancing and creating content on social media platforms.



Actress, singer, songwriter, and producer, Selena Gomez is one of the most relevant social media influencers in the United States of America and one of the most followed, with 352 million followers on Instagram. She is an expert in the music and beauty sector categories due to her career as a worldwide known singer, and the foundation of Rare Beauty which sells makeup to break down unrealistic standards of perfection.



While answering this survey, please recall the referred social media influencer, Kylie Jenner, presented previously.



Please indicate the extent of your agreement about your feelings towards the social media influencer.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. Affection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Passion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Connection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
1. Kylie Jenner is genuine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Kylie Jenner seems real to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Kylie Jenner is authentic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I am very loyal to Kylie Jenner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am willing to make small sacrifices in order to keep following Kylie Jenner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I would stick with Kylie Jenner even if she let me down once or twice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I am so happy with Kylie Jenner that I no longer need to follow other influencers on social media networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I am likely to follow Kylie Jenner one year from now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statements. Kylie Jenner...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. ...makes me feel like a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. ...makes me feel close to what is important to me in life with her statements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. ...makes me feel like the kind of person I would like to be with her statements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. ...makes me feel controlled and pressured to be certain ways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. ...makes me feel free to be who I am	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. ...makes me feel very close to her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. ...gives me a sense of intimacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. ...makes me feel competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. ...makes me feel adequate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. ...makes me feel capable and effective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. I forgive Kylie Jenner when she makes mistakes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I will forgive Kylie Jenner for specific negative information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I would think favorably of Kylie Jenner upon hearing specific negative information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer considering the physical attractiveness of the social media influencer Kylie Jenner.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. Attractive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Charismatic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Good-looking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Admirable physical makeup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Beautiful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer considering the expertise of the social media influencer Kylie Jenner.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. Kylie Jenner has a good understanding of beauty and makeup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Kylie Jenner is an expert in beauty and makeup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Kylie Jenner is knowledgeable in beauty and makeup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Kylie Jenner is qualified in beauty and makeup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Kylie Jenner has experience in beauty and makeup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer considering the trustworthiness of the social media influencer Kylie Jenner.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. Dependable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. I would trust Kylie Jenner very much	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I would rely very much on Kylie Jenner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. I will consider viewing Kylie Jenner as my first choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Compared to other social media influencers, I prefer Kylie Jenner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I would continue to support Kylie Jenner, even the cost increase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Imagine that this social media influencer, Kylie Jenner, decides to share misleading content on her Instagram account. This transgression performed by Kylie Jenner does not correspond to her values expressed as a social media influencer.



Regarding the previous scenario, please indicate the extent of your likelihood with the statements below.

	Extremely unlikely (1)	Somewhat unlikely (2)	Neither likely nor unlikely (3)	Somewhat likely (4)	Extremely likely (5)
1. I would think favorably of Kylie Jenner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Given Kylie Jenner response, I would forgive it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I would feel sympathetic toward Kylie Jenner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding the previous scenario, please indicate the extent of your likelihood with the statements below.

	Extremely unlikely (1)	Somewhat unlikely (2)	Neither likely nor unlikely (3)	Somewhat likely (4)	Extremely likely (5)
1. I would follow Kylie Jenner less frequently than before	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I would stop following Kylie Jenner and will not follow her anymore	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I would switched to a competing social media influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I would discourage friends and relatives to follow Kylie Jenner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I would say negative things about Kylie Jenner to others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I would recommend not to follow Kylie Jenner to someone who seeks my advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I intend to follow this social media influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I will follow this social media influencer next time I see her post	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Gender

Female

Male

Prefer not to answer

Other

Age

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

+ 55

Education

Some high school

Highschool

Bachelor Degree

Master's Degree

Ph.D. or higher

Prefer not to answer

Other

Thank you for your participation. Your validation code for mTurk is  $\$(e://Field/random)$

Please press the "NEXT" button in order to receive your payment.

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.  
Your response has been recorded.

**Annex C – Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)**

	<b>VIF</b>
AF	1.000
PA	1.000
CO	1.000
AUT_1	2.200
AUT_2	1.630
AUT_3	2.098
RE_1	1.947
RE_2	1.947
COMP_1	2.514
COMP_2	2.212
COMP_3	2.561
ATT_1	1.729
ATT_2	1.599
ATT_3	1.873
ATT_4	1.722
ATT_5	1.905
EXP_1	2.012
EXP_2	1.555
EXP_3	1.675
EXP_4	1.667
EXP_5	1.580
TRU_1	1.595
TRU_2	1.970
TRU_3	2.081
TRU_4	2.072
TRU_5	2.393
COM_1	2.859
COM_2	2.420
COM_3	2.595
COM_4	2.402
COM_5	2.641
RTNI_1	1.753
RTNI_2	1.933
RTNI_3	1.810

BT_1	1.968
BT_2	1.968
BL_1	2.381
BL_2	2.417
BL_3	2.404
BF_1	1.826
BF_2	1.585
BF_3	1.674
CB_BS_1	1.224
CB_BS_3	1.224
CB_F_1	1.660
CB_F_2	1.384
CB_F_3	1.614
CB_R_1	1.762
CB_R_2	1.762