YOUNG PEOPLE AND BOYCOTTING IN THREE COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

In recent years, the amount of critical and negative content shared on social media has increased. This has given rise to a phenomenon known as the 'Cancel culture', which can be seen as a sudden outburst of negative communication against a person, company, or group. Previous research on this topic has focused on Cancel Culture as a phenomenon, so this study focused on people's motivation to participate in cancelling and also boycotting.

The aim of the study was to explore the factors that influence people's willingness to engage in boycotting or cancelling. The aim was to examine the past behaviour of respondents and see if they would be willing to act differently in the future. The study also aimed to compare the effects of three main variables, age, gender, and country of residence, on respondents' behaviour.

The data used in the study was collected using a quantitative questionnaire, which included one open-ended question in addition to the predefined response options. A total of 667 university students from Finland, Germany, and the United States responded to the questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using correlation analysis, cross tabulation, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

The results of the study show that consumers today are aware and have certain expectations of companies and brands. Respondents have been and are willing to continue to be active in cancellation and boycott activities as long as they are not too inconvenient, too visible or public. The exception was social media professionals, who were more willing than others to be public when sharing, for example, negative content. When comparing country of residence, age, and gender, it was found that country of residence had the greatest impact on respondents' cancelling and boycotting behaviour.

Key words

Cancel Culture, boycotts, social media

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Tiivistelmä

Viime vuosina sosiaalisessa mediassa jaettava kritisoiva ja negatiivinen sisältö ovat lisääntyneet. Tämän ympärille on syntynyt Cancel-kulttuuriksi kutsuttu ilmiö, jota voidaan pitää äkillisenä negatiivisen viestinnän purkauksena henkilöä, yritystä tai ryhmää kohtaan. Aiempi tutkimus aiheesta on keskittynyt Cancel-kulttuuriin ilmiönä, joten tässä tutkimuksessa keskityttiin ihmisten motivaatioon cancelointiin osallistumiseen.

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli tutkia tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat ihmisten halukkuuteen aloittaa boikotointi tai cancelointi. Pyrkimyksenä oli tutkia vastaajien aiempaa käyttäytymistä ja selvittää, olisivatko he valmiita toimimaan tulevaisuudessa eri tavalla. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli myös vertailla kolmen päämuuttujan, iän, sukupuolen ja asuinmaan, vaikutuksia vastaajien käyttäytymiseen.

Tutkimuksessa käytetty aineisto kerättiin hyödyntäen kvantitatiivista kyselylomaketta, joka sisälsi valmiiden vastausvaihtoehtojen lisäksi yhden avokysymyksen. Kyselyyn vastasi yhteensä 667 yliopisto-opiskelijaa Suomesta, Saksasta ja Yhdysvalloista. Kerätty data analysoitiin hyödyntämällä korrelaatioanalyysiä, ristiintaulukointia sekä yksisuuntaista varianssianalyysiä ANOVAa.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että kuluttajat ovat nykyään hyvin tietoisia ja heillä on tiettyjä odotuksia yrityksille ja brändeille. Vastaajat ovat olleet ja ovat jatkossa valmiita olemaan aktiivisia cancelointi- ja boikotointitoimissa, jos ne eivät aiheuta liikaa vaivaa tai toimet eivät ole liian näkyviä tai julkisia. Poikkeuksena olivat sosiaalista mediaa työkseen tekevät henkilöt, jotka olivat muita valmiimpia olemaan julkisia jakaessaan esimerkiksi negatiivista sisältöä. Asuinmaata, ikää ja sukupuolta vertailtaessa havaittiin, että asuinmaalla oli suurin vaikutus vastaamaan cancelointi- ja boikotointikäyttäytymiseen.

Asiasanat
Cancel-kulttuuri, boikotointi, sosiaalinen media
Säilytyspaikka
Jyväskylän yliopiston kirjasto

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social media is playing an increasingly important role in the way organisations communicate (Peters, Chen, Kaplan Ognibeni & Pauwels, 2013). Social media offers opportunities for organisations to improve their marketing, customer service and public relations (Baccarella, Wagner, Kietzmann & McCarthy, 2018). In recent years, there has also been an increase in various social media criticisms of brands and a new phenomenon of cancelling has emerged. 'Cancelling' is a socially formed phenomenon (D. Clark, 2020) and it has generated much debate about its pros and cons, as well as its acceptability (Norris, 2021). Cancel Culture has shown how effectively social problems can be addressed, but on the other hand, it highlights the lack of debate and consideration. (Ng, 2020.) For instance, so-called online firestorms can be seen as one element of cancellation. Pfeffer et al. (2014) define online firestorms as "sudden discharge of large quantities of messages containing negative WOM and complaint behaviour against a person, company, or group in social media networks".

One example of cancelling and boycotting in recent years, is the war in Ukraine, during which boycotts have occurred against companies and individual countries. Such boycotts have included the cancellation of Teboil and the exclusion of Russia from the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest. Such behaviour can be explained by the fact that people may change their consumption behaviour for political reasons, or because of their own values, among others (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017). The war in Ukraine, as a political event, has had an impact on Russian organisations, products, and individuals for example in the case of Teboil and the Eurovision Song Contest, both by consumers and organisations (Niskasaari, 2022). The organisations' motives for cancelling and boycotting are said to be, for example, the will of customers, (Niskasaari, 2022) corporate values, and avoiding negative effects on reputation (Mankkinen, 2022).

Cancellation has previously been studied in the strategic context of organisations (Valentini & Lievonen, 2020), and why it is seen as a significant

phenomenon (Duque, Rivera & LeBlanc, 2021), but little research has been done on individual factors as drivers of action to cancel. Previous research also calls for a comparison of cross-national differences in cancellation (Norris, 2021), and in our study we examine the factors driving cancellation among students in three different countries, Finland, the United States, and Germany. Cancel culture can also be considered a relatively recent social media phenomenon and an enabler of power for individuals (Sailofsky, 2022), and is therefore important to study. Besides that, social media as a platform is an ever-growing forum where information spreads rapidly and viral campaigns emerge on any topic (Pfeffer, Zorbach & Carley, 2014), so it is interesting to study cancellation in this environment.

This thesis examines the factors affecting cancellation towards something or someone. In this study, the targets of cancellation can be, for example: brands, organisations, social media influencers, musicians, actors or actresses, political persons, athletes, events, or countries. The research problem is to investigate the reasons why people consider or start cancelling or boycotting something or someone. In addition, this thesis focuses on the possible differences between factors of age, gender, and country of residence to investigate their significance. Therefore, the research questions are:

RQ1: What factors make people cancel or boycott something or someone?

RQ2: Does the idea of one's own readiness to act (cancel or boycott) correspond to self-reported action?

In this thesis, a quantitative research approach is used, and the study is based on a survey conducted in Webropol. The respondents of the survey represent mainly three countries, Finland, Germany, and the USA, and they describe their previous behaviour and thoughts of cancelling and boycotting by answering predefined questions. This thesis has not utilised AI-based large language models.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Introduction is followed by chapters 2-4, which provide theoretical background and the key concepts of boycotts and cancellations. Then, chapter 5 focuses on the data and the methods used in the study and outlines the research questions. Chapter 6 presents and summarises the results and analysis of the study, and finally in chapter 7, conclusions and recommendations for further research are presented.

2 ACTIVISM

Activism can be defined to be a social phenomenon that includes collective action of the publics, problem solving through communication, solidarity, and taking a stand on controversial issues (Chon & Park, 2020). It is often citizen-oriented action (Norris, 2004) where publics stands up to authorities (Tarrow, 2011; Chon & Park, 2020). Here 'publics' refers to a group of people with a range of experiences. The size and composition of the group varies from problem to problem and is motivated to create an activity associated with the problem. (Kim, Gruing & Ni, 2010.) People thus identify a common problem and, as a result of this social process, form a 'public' (Kim, Gruing & Ni, 2010; Blumer, 1946; Dewey, 1927).

Activism is often linked to the fields of politics, public relations, and sociology; such events as elections, cultural conflicts, and actions toward organisational change (Chon & Park, 2020). Activism has occurred in the history as unofficial strikes, occupation of buildings, petitions, and acts of violence. More modernly, however, activism takes the form of boycotts and demonstrations, for example. (Norris, 2004.) In our thesis, we address activism in the context of social media, as citizens are engaged in controversial issues on social media and are also increasingly active on social media (Chon & Park, 2020).

2.1 Social media activism

With the increasing use of social media, consumers are even more aware of social and socio-political issues as they are exposed to them, sometimes even without wanting to be (Chon & Park, 2020). Coverage on social media platforms is bolder than before, and many events and campaigns are now surrounded by hashtags that allow information to spread even faster than before. Such

campaigns perceived as activism include for example Black Lives Matter (Chon & Park, 2020), #MeToo (Xiong, Cho & Boatwright, 2019), and LGBTQIA+ rights (Vredenburg, Kapitan, Spry & Kemper, 2020). Social media provides like-minded people with an excellent platform to work together to advocate for their cause. It is also an easy place for people to come across controversial issues because we live in such a networked society. It is therefore important for organisations to understand what drives people to social media activism, so that they can respond to it properly. (Chon & Park, 2020.)

Activism can be seen as defining and measuring success in business, as it is defined as the process by which citizens put pressure on businesses and other institutions to change their practices in the direction the citizens want (Smith, 2005; Chon & Park, 2020). Activism is also seen as a social activity that includes collective action, contestation, solidarity, and problem solving through communication (Chon & Park, 2020). Social media plays a key role in activism in contemporary society, due to the sophistication of communication and information sharing on media platforms, and the low financial and timely costs (Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl, 2005; Chon & Park, 2020). In addition, social media allows people to express their opinions more easily (Chon & Park, 2020), either anonymously or under their own name.

Businesses also engage in online activism to express their views on socio-political issues (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017; Hong & Li, 2020). Chon and Park (2020) claim that this can be seen as either a risk or an opportunity, but either way it is seen as a strategic activity. Some brands or organisations have even been found to feel really comfortable engaging with an issue they are talking about. However, in such situations, brands and organisations alike will be under observation as the underlying motivations for engaging in social activism are scrutinised more closely. Reliability and authenticity of a company's reasons for engaging in activism is therefore vital. (Vredenburg, Kapitan, Spry & Kemper, 2020.)

As already mentioned, business involvement in activism can be successful, or it can go wrong from the consumer's point of view. On the positive side, consumers generally value the very views that organisations hold, and well-built relationships will always last longer than quick anger reactions (Warren, 2021). When organisations are able to connect their message, values, and purpose to their activist efforts, consumers also perceive the causes of activism as authentic and successful (Vredenburg, Kapitan, Spry & Kemper, 2020). On the other hand, no matter how authentic the purpose of the message, there will always be those who perceive the action as a bad thing (Warren, 2021), and this in turn harms the business (Vredenburg, Kapitan, Spry & Kemper, 2020). It should also not be forgotten that hate messages about organisations published on social media will always attract more attention and spread more easily than positive opinions (Warren, 2021). Activism cannot be avoided altogether, so it must be taken into account in corporate strategy, in terms of what is to be achieved at what time and what types of issues are worth taking a stand on.

2.2 Social media & Influencers

Social media is playing an important role in organisations' communication with public (Peters, Chen, Kaplan Ognibeni & Pauwels, 2013). Opportunities arise for organisations on social media to improve their marketing, customer service and public relations (Baccarella, Wagner, Kietzmann & McCarthy, 2018). It is also a useful environment for word-of-mouth (WOM) and for this reason social media marketing has become a main part of marketing communication of organisations (Pfeffer, Zorbach & Carley, 2014). Peters et al. (2013) claim social media differs from the other media: it is more interactive, dynamic, and interrelated. In addition, organisations cannot control social media and it requires a special approach for managing it (Peters et al., 2013).

However, the rapid growth of social media has challenged traditional perceptions of media relations (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019). Baccarella et al. (2018) note that social media has both good and bad sides. Recently, companies and personal brands, e.g., celebrities and influencers, have faced more and more of negative online WOM and negative behaviour (Pfeffer et al., 2014). Also, it has been noted that although social media has benefits, it causes negative consequences as well. For instance, in the workplace there have been work-life conflicts and interruptions. (Baccarella et al., 2018.)

As social media has expanded, individual content creators have started to talk about their lives and express their opinions publicly (Reinikainen, Munnukka, Maity & Luoma-aho, 2020). Social media influencers refer to individuals who have become famous by showing their personality on social media and building a strong personal brand (S Venus, Aziz & Ryu, 2019). Influencers can be anyone, for example fashion lovers, musicians, fitness trainers or high school students (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019). Influencers have gathered a community committed to the content they produce, among whom they generate discussion and sell products aimed at them (Childers et al., 2019). Influencers can also effectively spread information about new products, initiate and popularise trends, and increase sales (S Venus et al., 2019).

The digital environment and innovative technologies have created new opportunities for consumers to interact with content created by influencers (Shan, Chen & Lin, 2020). The content produced and the identification with the influencers make followers think that they know the influencers more personally. This can also lead them to emulate the influencers they admire (S Venus et al., 2019.) Since influencers can engage followers (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019) and attract a large audience, influencers can also act as effective marketers (Reinikainen et al., 2020) and on the other hand spread negative messages, as well. By utilising influencers as marketers, it offers brands the opportunity to market their products in an authentic way and can achieve connection and engagement between consumers and brands (Childers et al., 2019.) At the same

time, brands and influencers can be negatively associated with each other if some unfavourable information emerges from either of the two (Norris, 2021).

2.3 Online WOM

Social media is a beneficial environment for sharing information about products, but also for word-of-mouth (WOM). However, online WOM can also be negative, and it has increased complaint behaviour. (Pfeffer, Zorbach & Carley, 2014.) Raassens and Haans (2017) defines online WOM as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet". Since social networks have developed, business managers are giving more attention to online WOM (Gong, Wang & Li, 2019). Compared to traditional offline WOM, which is limited to a local social network, online WOM can reach people outside from the community. Online WOM is also faster and is available for a longer period of time. (Raassens & Haans, 2017.) Gong et al. (2019) claims that online WOM enhances the effect of WOM, since online WOM is freed from restrictions of space and time.

WOM can have a major impact on the image of the product from the public's point of view (Raassens & Haans, 2017). Chark, Fong and Tang (2019) claim that in the case of hospitality products, online WOM is a relevant part of the consumer's decision-making process. Companies have decided to utilise online WOM as their marketing strategy, since its higher sense of credibility, low costs, speed, and interactivity (Raassens & Haans, 2017). It can be claimed that online WOM has become one of the most important marketing communication tools (Gong, Wang & Li, 2019) and more prevalent in recent years (Raassens & Haans, 2017).

3   BOYCOTTS

3.1   Hirschman's 'exit and voice' theory and boycotts

Although the basic institutions and organisations of society are well designed, failures cannot always be avoided. Businesses are expected to behave in a certain way, and when they do not, they are vulnerable to action from consumers. Such action to put pressure on companies could be the 'exit and voice' measures that Hirschman (1970) suggests. Hirschman's (1970) 'exit and voice' theory explains how individuals and organisations react to a deterioration in the quality of products, services, or performance of organisations.

According to this conceptual framework (Hirschman, 1970), there are two ways in which citizens can respond to quality degradation or the organisation's failings, exit and voice. Exit refers to stopping to buy products or leaving an organisation or market, when there is dissatisfaction with its performance. Voice, on the other hand, refers to expressing dissatisfaction and seeking to improve the situation through active participation, general protests, and feedback. (Hirschman, 1970.)

Voice option can be considered as a more moderate option than exit, as it is intended to bring about further change, rather than engaging in a total block on a company. Besides that, when customers are convinced about the effectiveness of their voice, they may postpone their exit. However, even voice can be a very intense activity when it takes the form of violent protest and can be more detrimental to organisations than conducive to change for the better. (Hirschman, 1970.)

The choice between the two options depends on the readiness of citizens, customers, and stakeholders, and the availability of the exit option, for example in the case of a monopoly situation or the variety of goods available. This is why voice is often the only option in developing countries, as there may not be enough

alternatives between products and services. Then again, in more developed countries, exit may even be the easier option, as it can be done quietly without causing a fuss. However, when making this choice, it should be borne in mind that once the exit has been made, the voice no longer has the same power, but the other way round, once the voice has been used, the possibility of exit still remains. (Hirschman, 1970.)

In addition to exit and voice, the theory (Hirschman, 1970) introduces a third concept to explain them, loyalty. The more loyal a consumer is to an organisation, the more likely they are to be active in using their voice, rather than participating in the exit process. When things are going poorly for a brand or organisation, a loyal consumer can live in the expectation that someone else will act to improve things or that something will be done to improve things, and thus do nothing themselves. However, businesses should be aware that even the most loyal customer can exit. (Hirschman, 1970.)

When Hirschman's (1970) theory is considered in the context of boycotting, both exit and voice can be seen as boycotting. A boycott can be seen as a combination of these because the aim of a boycott is to change the policies of an organisation, as with a voice, but also to exit (Hirschman, 1970). Also, boycott behaviour can be seen as a form of exit, where consumers decide to leave or withdraw their support from an organisation, brand, or product in response to dissatisfaction or disagreement with its actions, policies, values, or other misconduct (Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020). The connection between boycotts and voice, on the other hand, is that consumers may choose to voice their concerns and demand change (Hirschman, 1970) through public statements, social media campaigns, or other forms of activism (Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020). Both, exit and voice, are seen to have an equal importance as political and economic instruments in society (Hirschman, 1970).

3.2 Boycotting

In recent years, people have a lot of options to choose when it comes to brands, companies, services, and products even to a point where it's difficult to decide between all the different options (Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020). The internet is widely used to share opinions and to criticise the actions of others, and therefore even to have a viral effect on a certain issue (Albrecht, Campbell, Heinrich & Lammel, 2013). This kind of online activity can lead to boycotting behaviour, and a change in consumers' purchasing behaviour (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017).

Boycotting means participating in actions against consumption and influencing consumers' choices and purchasing behaviour (Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020). A consumer boycott also refers to an attempt to reach certain goals by persuading consumers to avoid buying selected products or services in the

markets. This attempt may have originated by one or more parties. (Friedman, 1985; Klein, Smith & John, 2004.) Yuksel, Thai & Lee (2020) also points out in their study that boycotting aims to assure consumers not to buy products or services from a certain brand or organisation. In other words, consumers will abandon their relationship with an organisation or brand that they do not approve of because of some perceived misconduct, or for no reason at all. (Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020.) Boycotting can be completely stopping the consumption of something, or just avoiding, complaining, or reducing the use of a product or a brand (Friedman, 1999; Yuksel & Mryteza, 2009; Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020). However, even if the consumer has boycotted for even a long time, the situation can still change. Boycotting is not always permanent and final, but rebuilding the relationship is possible if certain important things from the consumer's point of view have changed for the better in an organisation or regarding a brand (Hirschman, 1970; Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020).

There are many different reasons for boycotting. Social media activity, political awareness, ideological or cultural reasons, values, and environmental or ethical reasons are some common reasons related to participating in a boycott (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017). In addition to these, brands, political parties, countries, products, organisations, services, and particular behaviours are something that can be boycotted (Albrecht, Campbell, Heinrich & Lammel, 2013). Klein, Smith, and John (2004) still continue this list, as they mention a few more aspects that could influence the consumer's intention to boycott; the desire to bring about change and the opportunity for self-improvement. So, it can be seen that the list of things to be boycotted is long and thus very possible for an organisation to face a boycott at some point. Therefore, it would be important for organisations to be prepared to face any possible boycotts directed at them. Widespread boycotts can directly affect an organisation's personnel and policies, attitudes of the public, and can have financial backlash (Kam & Deichert, 2016). Therefore, understanding boycotts is vital for organisations.

It can be noticed, while reading the above listing, that the surrounding world affects people's consumer behaviour and boycotts. Currently, with the war in Ukraine, the war and political views are some of the important talking points and thus on people's minds. Politics is often strongly associated with boycotting (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017) as boycotting is a form of political consumerism (Neilson, 2010). In other words, politics is talked about in connection with boycotting as political consumption or political consumer behaviour (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017). Political consumerism in turn means consumption that is publicly encouraged (Neilson, 2010) and involves avoidance of buying products for ethical, social, or political reasons (Kam & Deichert, 2016). It is not targeted to governments but organisations. This is because consumers feel like it is their responsibility to put pressure on companies to make change happen (Micheletti, 2003; Kam & Deichert, 2016). Despite this sense of responsibility, it is important to remember that external factors also influence boycotts and political consumption (Tuominen, Rantala, Tolvanen, Luoma-aho & Wilska, 2022).

3.3   Boycotting and social media

Social media has a big role in spreading information and opinions. It is easy and quick to make accusations about organisations and share information virally in online platforms. (Pfeffer, Zorbach & Carley, 2014.) This also includes the spread of negative information about organisations and their activities for example in the light of an online boycotting campaign. That's why social media can affect very negatively on organisations even widely. (Kam & Deichert, 2016.) People learn a lot of new things online and there is an endless amount of information, whether the information is true or not. Consumers are using online sources to seek information and that can further the dissemination of disinformation and misinformation. (Hameleers, Brosius & de Vreese, 2022.)

Social media is used as a platform to share all this information, as well as to share things about one's own life and interests. In addition to their own interests, people also share their opinions in a negative form on social media. Social online platforms may even facilitate and increase information sharing on an individual level. In social media, both positive and negative information about companies, brands, products, and services can be transmitted virally and urge others to act in a certain way, such as by participating in a boycott. (Kam & Deichert, 2016.) People may also encourage or urge other people to start avoiding certain brands and influence their buying behaviour by sharing negative information about brands and organisations. People are also asked by other people to engage in different kinds of protests. (Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020.)

Boycotts often aim to gain media attention in order to have greater effectiveness (Neilson, 2010). Today, the media, including social media, is an important source of information for people. A lot is heard and learned about things related to boycotts through various media. A consumer who acts on a political basis, might get the feeling to be a part of something bigger and effective if they believe that other consumers also will boycott the same organisation or brand. (Neilson, 2010.) Thus, political events such as war or elections can have a large impact on the initiation of boycotts or their scope. Information can spread quickly with the help of social media and affect people's lives and the operations of companies worldwide. At this time, it is important to understand why, when and how, for example, political, environmental, or ethical considerations influence consumer decisions. (Kam & Deichert, 2016.) In addition, the participation of young people in political activities, such as activism or boycotts, in particular, has been shown to be easier and more inclusive in a social media environment (Belotti, Donato, Bussoletti & Comunello, 2022). Thus, age could be an influential factor in boycotting and cancelling. From this we form our first hypothesis:

H1. The younger a person is, the more active they are in boycotting and cancelling on social media.

3.4 Boycotts and buycotts

Boycotts also take another form, buycotts. Boycotting refers to negative behaviour, such as punishing organisations or aiming to change the behaviour of the target of a boycott, while buycotting refers to positive behaviour, such as rewarding or encouraging a particular behaviour in favour of the target of a buycott (Friedman, 1999; Kam & Deichert, 2016). Differences can also be observed between boycotters and buycotters, with Neilson (2010) noting in her study that women and trusting people are more likely to be buycotters than boycotters, that is, they are more likely to reward organisations for favourable behaviour than to penalise them for unfavourable behaviour. Other differences between these terms are that buycotts aim to target several targets at the same time, while boycotts target individual organisations (Neilson, 2010). In addition to these, negative information is a much stronger incentive to boycott than positive information is to buycott (Kam & Deichert, 2016), but at the same time, boycotts also fade away faster than buycotts (Warren, 2021). Understanding the differences could help to identify what action should be taken at the given time to make the best out of each situation and distinguishing between definitions can therefore help to build more effective business strategies (Neilson, 2010).

When considering what the difference is between buying and buycotting, it can be seen that buycotting is the search for consumption for political reasons (Liaukonytė, Tuchman & Zhu, 2023), while buying and the decision to buy can be simply related to the consumer's habits, price, and loyalty (Huang & Lin, 2022). Buying behaviour is related to advertising produced by brands and companies (Huang & Lin, 2022), while buycotting is triggered by current issues or, for example, good corporate behaviour (Neilson, 2010), and thus often originates from other consumers or the actions organisation has taken.

The terms boycott and buycott can be associated with many different contexts. They are recognised, beyond their definitions, as corporate activism (Warren, 2021), critical consumption (Yates, 2012), and political consumerism (Kam & Deichert, 2016). This shows that the terms are indeed related to many different aspects of consumption and social action, which may explain the importance of understanding boycotts and buycotts in organisations. Consumption is said to be critical when the consumer considers the effects of the purchase or considers the political or ethical implications of the products or services production (Yates, 2012). Consumers can also be seen to have power to shape the market (Neilson, 2010), as boycotts and buycotts allow consumers to choose alternative products or services (Yates, 2012). So, businesses must adapt to listen to what influences these consumption decisions.

Boycotting is seen as a negative aspect in organisations when products and services are not bought as much, or the reputation of the organisation is damaged by negative messages (Yuksel, Thai & Lee, 2020). Buycotting is harder to see from an organisational perspective, as it is not necessarily so clear what is driving the

increased purchase of products and services. Boycotting and buycotting also tend to occur at the same time, and in these cases, boycotts usually get more attention than buycotts (Liaukonytė, Tuchman & Zhu, 2023). Buycotts are therefore difficult to identify in organisations. However, buycott can be seen as a short-lived and rapid spike in company sales. It is also possible to identify buycotting if it can be linked to a current event, or if the company has taken a stand on a political issue, for example, just before or during a sales spike. (Liaukonytė, Tuchman & Zhu, 2023.)

Table 1. Characteristics of boycotts and buycotts

Table 1 shows the definitions of the concepts boycott and buycott from different fields of science. Besides that, from table 1 can be seen what kind of characteristics are linked to the terms in each source.

Concept and field of science	Definition	Characteristics of boycotts	Characteristics of buycotts
Boycott & Buycott Political Consumerism	"In his social history of boycotts and buycotts, Friedman (1999) argues that boycotting is oriented towards punishing corporations for past transgressions (possibly to coerce a change in the corporation's behavior), and that buycotting is oriented towards rewarding corporations for virtuous deeds (possibly to encourage continuation of that behavior)." (Friedman, 1999; Kam & Deichert, 2016, p. 4)	Tends to punish	Tends to reward
		Tends to change organisation's behaviour	Encourages to continue good behaviour
		Intentional action	Intentional action
		Political action	Political action
		Act of avoidance based on negative information	Act of approach based on positive information
		Lower threshold for participation than in buycott	Higher threshold for participation than in boycott
		Social networks have an impact on action	Social networks have an impact on action
Boycott & Buycott Marketing	"Happy customers will try to reward the company, while angry customers might take action to punish it." (Warren, 2021, p. 33)	Tends to punish	Tends to reward
		A more rapidly fading phenomenon than buycott	A more slowly fading phenomenon than boycott
		Customers are dissatisfied	Customers are satisfied
		Action takes place on social media	Action takes place on social media

		Act of corporate social activism	Act of corporate social activism
		Attracts more attention than buycotts	Attracts less attention than boycotts
		Takes less time to die down than buycott	Takes longer to die down than boycott
Boycott & Buycott Consumer Behaviour	"Such publicly motivated consumption is referred to as political consumerism, which includes the related acts of boycotting (punishing businesses for unfavorable behavior) and buycotting (supporting businesses that exhibit desirable behavior)." (Neilson, 2010, p. 214)	Tends to punish for unfavourable behaviour	Tends to support for desirable behaviour
		Form of political consumerism	Form of political consumerism
		Favoured by activist groups	Not favoured by any certain group of people
		Used as a strategy to protest	Used as a strategy to reward
		Single businesses are the target	Several businesses are the target / multitargeted
		People have lower trust in institutions	People have higher trust in institutions
		No gender differences	Women are more likely to buycott than men
Boycott & Buycott Consumption & Society	"Boycotting refers to abstaining from buying, whereas buycotting refers to intentionally purchasing a product on the grounds of political, ethical or environmental motivations." (Yates, 2012, p. 192)	Refraining from buying	Purchasing intentionally
		Motives are related to political, ethical, or environmental issues	Motives are related to political, ethical, or environmental issues
		Form of critical consumption	Form of critical consumption
		More dependent on socio-political contexts than personal resources	More dependent on personal resources than socio-political contexts
		A way of dissociating oneself from actions, policies, systems, or socio-political measures that are considered objectionable	A way of expressing political, ethical, or environmental identity
		Lower financial impact for the consumer	Higher financial impact for the consumer

In each source the main definition of boycott is that it tends to punish the organisation by refraining from buying their products or services. The main definition of buycott seems to be also in each source similar meaning some sort of rewarding towards an organisation for right behaviour. Kam and Deichert (2016) and Yates (2012) notes that the action of boycotting and buycotting is always intentional based on the consumer's motivations and received information about the organisation. Another similarity between the sources shown in the table 1 is that social networks such as some social group (Neilson, 2010), friends and family (Kam & Deichert, 2016), or social media platforms (Warren, 2021) have an impact on at least boycotting and sometimes also on buycotting.

When it comes to differences between the concepts in the sources given in table 1, it can be seen that there are in fact not so many differences, but different things are mentioned and discussed in the sources in relation to the concepts of boycott and buycott. Kam and Deichert (2016) discuss on their article that buycotts have higher threshold for participation than boycotts due to different motivations and because doing something takes more effort than not doing something. Warren (2021), for their part, takes the view that boycotts will fade faster than buycotts. This is because consumers prefer relationships with organisations that share their values and beliefs to those whose behaviour they dislike. Good relationships last longer than relationships based on anger. (Warren, 2021.) Neilson (2010), on the other hand, discusses how boycotting and buycotting are used as a strategic tool in business. In addition to this, Neilson (2010) mentions that activist groups can be seen to favour boycotting while buycotters cannot be categorised into any social group but are said to be more often women than men. Lastly, Yates (2012) discusses more motivational issues in their article than others. Boycotting is said to be more dependent on socio-political aspects than on issues related to personal resources, and in the case of buycotting it is the other way round. In addition, buycotting is more about expressing one's values, while boycotting is about avoiding for example certain political or ethical actions. (Yates, 2012.) However as mentioned, each of the sources are dealing with a bit different field of science which could explain that the concepts have been viewed from different angles and thus various issues have been considered.

3.5 Managing boycotts

We have already discussed in the text that there are many reasons for boycotts and thus it can be hard for companies to deal with them. Also, the growth of internet usage and the dialogue between consumers and companies

enabled by social media, has caused challenges for companies in managing boycotts (McGriff, 2012). To overcome the challenges, attention must be paid to how boycotts could be controlled or how to prepare for them.

Communication is considered an important way to build positive and strong relationships between organisations and their audiences in public relations and relationship management theory. Relationships should be managed with long-term goals, so that they can benefit both the organisation and the consumers. (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019.) To achieve the benefits, it would be important to take care of relationships and stakeholders' expectations through communication. Actually, managing stakeholder expectations should be made a priority in organisations (Valentini & Lievonen, 2020).

Organisations can protect themselves from potential reputational damage caused by boycotts, for example through relationship management (Hoejmose, Roehrich & Grosvold, 2014). Relationship management can be done with good planning and strategies. Such strategies may include e.g., positiveness, networking, openness, access, allocating tasks and security (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019). Indeed, in most cases, organisations are ready to handle a wide range of different crises related to the organisation and their products and services through their crisis communication plans and strategies (McGriff, 2012). In addition to this, four different profiles of boycotters have been identified that could help organisations with their planning of strategies. These profiles are 'likely to be influenced', 'moderately likely to be influenced', 'unlikely to be influenced', and 'influenced by personal things'. (Tuominen, Rantala, Tolvanen, Luoma-aho & Wilska, 2022.) Organisations can use different boycott profiles like this to plan and prepare for possible future boycotts or problems with consumers (Tuominen et al., 2022). Boycotting can therefore be linked to the concept of relationship management, because by understanding and identifying certain boycotting behaviours, it is also possible to manage the relationship between consumers and organisations. However, the actual conditions for maintaining good relations require the participation of both the organisation and the public, and cooperation in solving problems (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019).

Behavioural intentions and purchasing decisions are shaped by information (Bolsen 2013; Kam & Deichert, 2016) and as stated, the widespread use of social media has increased people's access to information, for example in the form of WOM (Pfeffer, Zorbach & Carley, 2014) and this in turn has caused difficulties for company management in terms of boycotts (McGriff, 2012). When looking more closely at the consumer purchasing behaviour, it can be noticed that the reasons for not to buy something aren't the same reasons why people buy something (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012; Kam & Deichert, 2016). For organisations, it can be hard but important to understand consumer purchasing behaviour to be able to be prepared to face any boycotts. The complexity of knowing what drives consumers to boycott is a real challenge for company management. In these days, many organisations are taking a stand on current socio-political issues which could be thought to go hand in hand with corporate social responsibility (CSR)

that helps companies to improve reputation, but this is not the case. Companies talking publicly about socio-political topics may lead either to a boycott or a public support, or even to both of them. (Hong & Li, 2020.) This illustrates the nature of the difficulty faced by management when talking about boycotts.

Because our markets are so globalised, consumer choices can have a wide impact on organisations and brands. However, boycotts and purchasing behaviour can still cause positive results for organisations, even though boycotts are often talked about in a negative tone. Boycotts and purchasing behaviour can affect the company's politics in many ways, such as increasing the transparency of production, improving control of the supply chain, and improving intervention in ethical working conditions. (Mosley, 2010; Kam & Deichert, 2016.) Sometimes the perceived threat of a possible boycott towards an organisation can contribute to improving corporate policy much better than major political actions (Kam & Deichert, 2016). It is therefore good for management to also be aware of the benefits brought by boycotts and threats.

4 CULTURE

This chapter introduces the concept of 'culture' and considers the impact of country of origin on people's boycotting behaviour. We also present the cancel culture and its subculture, the woke phenomenon.

4.1 Culture and society

'Culture' can be seen as a broad concept that encompasses many different areas. Culture is a way of life adopted within a community or social class and as a way of perceiving and making sense of the world (Alasuutari, 2011). Heyes (2020) says 'culture' is used to refer to three aspects. First aspect is behaviour or knowledge acquired through social learning. The second aspect refers to socially learned behaviours that the members of a group share. Lastly, the third includes socially learned behaviours as well, but also the behaviours which have improved over successive periods of time of social learning. (Heyes, 2020.) In addition, culture relates to the different levels of inclusion. Usually, culture can be seen appearing in relation to state boundaries, but it can also be spread to wider areas. (Narayan, 2017.)
Culture can change and it can manifest itself differently in people's behaviour depending, for example, on their age group or gender. Culture changes from generation to generation and in general, it is seen that old people carry the local cultural knowledge (Narayan, 2017). It develops over time as a result of social processes (O'Connor, 2021). Culture is also spatial and it varies by gender and ethnicity. The areas, which represent a more oriented rhythm of life can be seen more saturated in culture. In addition, women contribute to cultural continuity by working more at home, and since they do not take as much influence from elsewhere through varied work tasks. (Narayan, 2017.)

O'Connor (2021) notes that culture should not be seen as an outside force that has an impact on individuals. Instead, the focus should be on the social processes, which create behaviours that the members of society share. This also helps to gain better cultural understanding. (O'Connor, 2021.) Since the social processes are continuous, culture changes and adapts over the time. On the one hand, there is a notion of disappearing culture, but on the other hand, another view is that culture is adaptable and adopts new ways of being. In addition, culture can be lost completely and it can be recreated, as well. Culture is vulnerable to disappear, but it can sometimes be consciously restored. (Narayan, 2017.)

4.1.1 Country of Origin

There are many factors that can influence people's boycott behaviour, one of which is country of origin. Country of origin is defined as an important structure that can influence consumers' perceptions of a brand or organisation in global markets (Septiano, Japutra, Sung & Seo, 2022; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Kumar & Steenkamp, 2013). Country of origin can also be seen as strongly linked to the concept of culture when talking about cultural distance, which refers to how a country is evaluated by consumers. This evaluation is based on a country's culture and how people of a certain country behave. (Septiano, Japutra, Sung & Seo, 2022.)

Country of origin can influence people's boycotting for many reasons. One of them is that people may have a certain image of a country or a product, or they may associate certain stereotypes with a country. These images, in turn, can lead to particular behaviours towards products, brands, or organisations from that country. Country image includes general mental assessments of the inhabitants of a country, as well as the country itself. Product image refers to the images and appeals associated with a product. Of these two factors, however, country image is seen as a stronger driver of boycotts, as consumers focus on broader and more abstract international perspectives. (Septiano et al., 2022.) Boycotts occur when these images are negative, while positive images can have beneficial effects, such as increasing purchasing power and strengthening brand credibility (Septiano et al., 2022).

Consumer attitudes towards the country of origin can lead to boycotts of international companies. The attitudes that lead to boycotts are often linked to hatred. (Kim, Yan, Kim, Terasaki & Furukawa, 2022.) It can therefore be said that it is animosity or other highly expressive attitudes that influence the boycott of a country. Other factors affecting attitudes may include, for example, offensive behaviour towards consumers or their country of residence (Cuadras-Morató & Raya, 2016).

The decision to boycott products, brands, or organisations based on country of origin can also be influenced by other factors, such as political, cultural, religious, and economic conflicts. Indeed, it is often political conflicts

that lead to boycotts of companies (Cuadras-Morató & Raya, 2016) as consumers pay more and more attention to political consumerism (Kim et al., 2022). At the moment, the war between Russia and Ukraine is an example of such a conflict. In particular, political and economic conflicts occur more often between neighbouring countries than between other countries (Kim et al., 2022), and this is also evident in the case of the war in question. Conflicts are also more likely to occur in areas with current or historical political rivalries, or in regions that are economically integrated, such as Europe (Cuadras-Morató & Raya, 2016). From this we can draw the following hypothesis:

H2. Europeans are more active in boycotting and cancelling.

The global economy allows consumers to be exposed to these above mentioned factors, and thus conflicts can affect people's perceptions of countries and create feelings of hatred towards a country (Kim et al., 2022). As noted, anger and other strong expressions can act as a trigger for boycotts in addition to political tension, and overall, the connection between country of origin and boycotting depends on a range of factors, and can vary depending on the specific context in which the boycott is taking place.

4.2   Cancel Culture

Suspicion and mistrust in organisations have increased in recent years (Valentini & Lievonen, 2020). It has become more common to judge brands and draw attention to social problems. Some consumers are also willing to take a stand on social media and highlight the issues of brands. (Albrecht, Campbell, Heinrich & Lammel, 2013.) The transparency and authenticity of the information is questioned, although public information about organisations is available through a variety of channels (Valentini & Lievonen, 2020). Consumers expect brands to act ethically and be environmentally responsible. It puts pressure on brands to act in a certain way, and also increases the risk of becoming a target of negative publicity. (Albrecht et al., 2013.)

In recent years, the concept of cancel culture has emerged. Norris (2021) defines 'cancel culture' as "collective strategies by activists using social pressures to achieve cultural ostracism of targets (someone or something) accused of offensive words or deeds". 'Cancelling' is a socially formed phenomenon and it is having origins in queer communities of colour (D. Clark, 2020). For a long time, minorities and other people who do not support certain interests have been silenced or 'cancelled' (Sailofsky, 2022). Cancelling is an attempt to create social pressure for those who are violating ethical standards or being morally offensive and to divert attention from them (Norris, 2021). In many sources, cancelling refers to actions directed at individuals, but it can also be thought of as directed

at organisations and businesses if the negative attention they receive is similar and equally sudden.

Since the world is more connected nowadays, only a few consumers can start a viral campaign and inspire others to join and support their cause (Albrecht et al., 2013). Recent social causes which have gone viral on social media are for example #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter campaigns (Norris, 2021). Cancel Culture is described as a dynamic and shapeshifting phenomenon, which is based on 'Online Shaming' and boycotting. Initially cancelling was targeted at celebrities, but later it has become a means of controlling opinions more broadly (Duque, Rivera & LeBlanc, 2021). D. Clark (2020) claims that demands of capitalism and social media enable the realisation of a Cancel Culture. The aim of cancelling is to displace someone for violating social norms (Sailofsky, 2022) and it is a choice to withdraw attention from people who are representing offensive values or actions (D. Clark, 2020). In Cancel Culture people transform themselves from being passive audiences or consumers to active choice makers, who become aware of their support socially and financially (Lee & Abidin, 2021). In summary, cancel culture focuses not only on the object of negative attention, but also on the people and groups that spread the information.

Cancelling is seen as a withdrawal of any kind of support. For example, consumers can control their social media follows, purchases and viewerships and thereby demonstrate their own opinion of something or someone. (Ng, 2020.) Also, Sailofsky (2022) notes that the act of cancelling is not a new phenomenon, but recently it has become a tool for the ones who were powerless before.

Cancel culture is based on the idea of people taking a stand on a particular issue (Pfeffer, Zorbach & Carley, 2014). People encounter fun and enjoyment on social media, but also lots of outrageous content, which encourages them to take action quickly. Content might cause a sense of belonging to a group and therefore get one to cancel something or someone. (Bouvier, 2020.) Pfeffer et al. (2014) describe the process in the following way: first a person receives the information about an opinion, then takes up a positive or negative stance on an opinion and either accepts or declines it. Eventually he or she talks about their decision and influences other people (Pfeffer et al., 2014).

An important part of Cancel Culture is the opportunity it gives to minority voices. At the same time, it constrains conservative opinions and supports free speech (Duque et al., 2021.) On the other hand, being cancelled can be described as a moral panic, which can also cause actual harm and includes the fear for people of becoming silenced (D. Clark, 2020). People tend to connect with similar people to themselves: they have similar interests, socioeconomic status and they might be the same gender and age. In addition, a message on social media is suggested more often if your friends have interacted with it before (Pfeffer et al., 2014). For instance, #MeToo movement gathered together women, who were sexually harassed and assaulted by men (Duque et al., 2021).

4.2.1 Challenges and negative aspects of Cancel Culture

There have been discussions about cancelling and its effects. Norris (2021) reflects in her article if campaigns of public shaming and social exclusion can be considered as an appropriate way to improve social causes. Cancel Culture has shown how effectively social problems can be addressed and traditionally marginalised groups empowered. On the other hand, Cancel Culture highlights the lack of debate and consideration. (Ng, 2020.) For instance, some celebrities have suffered for the reputational loss without having been formally found guilty after being the subject of a cancellation (Sailofsky, 2022). Also, when a brand becomes cancelled, it can damage the image and reputation of the organisation (Valentini & Lievonen, 2020). Ng (2020) claims that Cancel Culture itself is becoming cancelled since its negative effects. However, some have argued that the negative effects of cancelling have been overstated (Ng, 2020).

Cancel Culture has been criticised for being crowd management, where people make hasty decisions. It has been claimed that it reduces free speech and open debate. (Sailofsky, 2022.) In addition, Cancel Culture has in some cases led decision-makers to make hasty decisions and impose unjustified penalties instead of considered changes (D. Clark, 2020). Cancel Culture is usually connected to historically silenced groups, which seek to undermine the power of the traditionally privileged (Ng, 2020). However, Sailofsky (2022) notes that Cancel Culture is used to protect the privileged, as well. They use the phenomenon to belittle their own previous actions and deflect attention from marginalised groups (Sailofsky, 2022).

4.3 Woke Culture

The Cancel Culture is also often associated with the woke culture and it can be argued that Cancel Culture has resulted in it (Sailofsky, 2022). Woke culture refers to an awareness of latent inequalities and racism. The term dates back to the 1930s in the United States, but it became better known later in the 1990s. (Haidt, 2013.) 'Woke' also refers to the consideration given by brands to minorities (Kanai & Gill, 2020) for example by using woke advertising. Brands can create potential for social change if they are matching the activist messaging, purpose and values (Vredenburg, Kapitan, Spry & Kemper, 2020). In woke advertising organisations are strategically deploying images of minoritized groups and the aim is to 'take diversity into account' (Kanai & Gill, 2020). Sobande (2019) claims woke advertising is global and it is impacted by social capital attached to individuals and institutions appearing to be 'woke'.

Woke culture is usually considered to be a positive phenomenon and has a good purpose. However, there are some problems related to it. Referring to Haidt (2013), the privileged majority population may sacrifice themselves on behalf of

minorities. Discussion related to woke culture and opinions might increase by support from the media and neutral debate can be hard to achieve (Haidt, 2013).

Also, from a brand perspective there are some issues related to woke culture. Some brands might market themselves as being concerned with social issues (Vredenburg et al., 2020.) When being 'woke' and creating potential for social change, brands must be careful not to exploit it for their own benefit (Valentini & Lievonen, 2020). In contrast with authentic brand activism, in some cases there may occur inauthentic brand activism. It is called "woke washing " and it refers to misleading consumers with the brand's claims. Some brands may decouple messaging from brand purpose and values when engaging in social movements, which can lead to woke washing. (Vredenburg et al., 2020.) Also, Sailofsky (2022) uses the term 'woke capitalism' in his article to describe the situation, where brands take a stand on a social issue without making any significant changes to the system.

4.4 The impact of phenomena on businesses and organisations

Social media activism, boycotts, cancel culture and also the woke phenomenon can be seen to have an impact on businesses and organisations and these are factors that companies need to note in their operations. It has become more common to judge companies and draw attention to social problems on social media (Albrecht et al., 2013). Social media provides a platform for people to advocate their cause and sometimes these phenomena may emerge in which companies may also be associated. It is important for companies to be prepared for them, so that they can respond to it properly. (Chon & Park, 2020.) For instance, people might pay attention and put pressure on businesses to change their practices on social media (Smith, 2005; Chon & Park, 2020), which includes features of cancel culture.

Not only can companies be targets of social media activism, but they can also be activists themselves by expressing their views (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017; Hong & Li, 2020). However, it should be borne in mind that companies' motives are usually carefully monitored. It is therefore important that the motives for taking a stand are clear and genuine, so that being an activist does not turn against the company. (Vredenburg et al., 2020.) Even as companies appear as 'woke', it is important for them to pay attention to the fact that it is not only about developing their own brand image (Valentini & Lievonen, 2020). Companies can therefore come under negative attention if their motives for engaging in woke activities seem questionable.

5   DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we will introduce the research questions and the data collection. We also present the methods that were used to process the data.

5.1   Research questions

This thesis examines the factors affecting cancellation towards something or someone on social media platforms. The research problem is to investigate what are the reasons why people consider or start cancelling or boycotting something or someone. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of students' cancelling and boycotting specially in the social media environment. The research questions of this thesis are:

RQ1: What factors make people cancel or boycott something or someone?

RQ2: Does the idea of one's own readiness to act (cancel or boycott) correspond to self-reported action?

The purpose of the first research question is to clarify which are the factors that encourage people to start cancelling or boycotting in a general way. The aim is to find the main reasons and motives for action. The second question focuses on the responses between the previous actions of respondents and their thoughts of actions they would be willing to take in future. The purpose of this question is to compare whether the results are similar, or whether there are differences between them. We also hope to use the questions to create profiles of respondents based on their thoughts and actions.

5.2   Quantitative research

Business researchers often use quantitative research as a research method (Hair & Page, 2015). Quantitative analysis uses numbers and systematic, statistical relationships between them to make an argument. In other words, the data are tabulated, and values are assigned to the units of analysis using different variables (Alasuutari, 2011). The purpose of quantitative research is to qualify problems or research questions and create mechanisms to identify the effect of variables on each other (Taheri et al., 2015). Since statistical analysis is based on explaining differences between survey units by other variables, the variables must be separable (Alasuutari, 2011).

Quantitative research methods have some main characteristics. They follow a logic path, produce numerical results, test hypotheses, and falsify or confirm a previous hypothesis. (Taheri et al., 2015.) The aim is to look for correlations and differences in the results, and to look for statistical regularities in the way the values of the variables are related to each other (Alasuutari, 2011). Quantitative data enables speed of data collection and broad comparison of the respondents (Taheri et al., 2015).

Research questions have a major impact on the data collected (Taheri et al., 2015). The research design must take into account that what is being studied can be operationalised, i.e., transformed into a measurable form. This means moving from the theoretical to the empirical level, for example by using a questionnaire (Vilkka, 2015). To collect primary data from people, it is necessary to utilise structured questionnaires or observation guides (Hair & Page, 2015). Survey research refers to the fact that the questionnaire is standardised. This means that all respondents are asked the same questions in exactly the same way. (Vilkka, 2015.) Taheri et al. (2015) notes that there are many definitions for the terms 'questionnaires' and 'surveys', but in simplicity they mean written or oral questioning to collect data information. One of the main advantages of utilising questionnaires is that they can include large samples and allow for a numerical assessment of the data (Taheri et al., 2015). Hair and Page (2015) note that to create descriptive research data, it is necessary to collect a large amount of quantitative data.

Structured questionnaires consist of previously formulated questions designed to answer the research question (Hair & Page, 2015). There are three different types of questions: multiple choice questions, open-ended questions or mixed questions. Multiple choice includes standardised answer options and the open-ended give a chance to express spontaneous opinions. The challenge in qualitative or open-ended questions is that they are more limited (Taheri et al., 2015). Open-ended questions can be treated numerically by categorising them into groups (Vilkka, 2015). Mixed format is used when it is not possible to ensure that all answer options are known. (Vilkka, 2015.) When using quantitative methods, it is easier to utilise closed ended questions instead of open ended

questions, since the open ended should later be categorised as well. (Taheri et al., 2015).

One of the most important parts of a questionnaire is to create clear and easily understandable questions. The aim of the questionnaire is to provide a platform for finding the answers for research questions. (Taheri et al., 2015.) The structure of the questionnaire should be consistent, and it should follow some kind of plot. One question should focus on one issue, rather than trying to find out more than one issue at a time. (Vilkka, 2015.)

5.3 Data

This thesis is part of the #Agents research project (https://www.jyu.fi/jsbe/fi/tutkimus/hankkeet/agents-1) and the data was collected in collaboration with other researchers. The survey questionnaire was developed in collaboration with researchers from Finland, Germany and USA.

Since there was a need to collect data in several countries and to make it easily accessible, we decided to create a questionnaire to be completed online. Webropol was used as our questionnaire software and the survey was conducted in electronic format. We created a QR-code to facilitate access to the survey and sent it to other researchers. The survey is considered short in duration and lasts approximately five to seven minutes to answer.

It is important to consider the target population for the research, since they have the information we are interested in (Hair & Page, 2015). Since cancel culture is a relatively recent phenomenon, we decided to focus on young people around 20–30 years old as our target population. The questionnaire was sent to university students in Finland, Germany, and the USA via other researchers. The language of the survey is English so that responses can be interpreted as equal.

In the questionnaire we used mostly closed ended questions and formulated predefined answer options. The questionnaire consists of predefined matrices from which the respondent chooses the most appropriate option. In addition, there are questions from which the respondent can choose more than one item. Since there might be limitations with the depth of the answer (Taheri et al., 2015), we added the possibility to define the answer yourself in some questions as well.

The final questionnaire form (appendix 1) consists of a total of 11 questions. The first three questions ask about the respondent's demographic information. Basic information, e.g. gender and age, allows for subsequent comparisons between respondents. This information also helps to understand the age and gender distribution of respondents. The rest of the questions focus on cancelling and boycotting. The first of these questions explore respondents' activity on social media and their habits of expressing their opinions publicly. Finally, the questionnaire focuses more specifically on the targets of the boycott, the

respondent's intentions, and past activities. Except for one question, the respondent is given a set of predefined answer options to simplify the response and make it easier to process the data. Although boycotts and buycotts are strongly linked and often occur simultaneously (Liaukonytė, Tuchman & Zhu, 2023), the survey did not ask about buycotts. One reason for this was that buycotts are difficult to identify in relation to boycotts, as boycotts attract more attention (Liaukonytė, Tuchman & Zhu, 2023).

The questionnaire should be tested so that a few people critically evaluate the questionnaire and give comments on it (Vilkka, 2015). For our questionnaire, we made several versions before we arrived at the final form. We held a number of Zoom meetings with other researchers and tried to select the most relevant questions and formulate them clearly.

5.4 Research ethics

Ethical dilemmas and considerations are likely to arise throughout the research project and thus professional code of conduct should be followed to avoid taking unethical actions (Hair & Page, 2015). One example of such guidance includes The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA, 2017), which we followed in our study. According to the guidelines (ALLEA, 2017), good and ethical research is based on integrity, respect, honesty, and responsibility.

To ensure the ethicality of the survey we took the following into account. First at the beginning of the questionnaire, the respondent received a message to read, which included declaration of voluntary participation and reminded it was possible to discontinue the research at any time. In addition, all of the respondents remained anonymous throughout the survey. The demographic information collected was common and it is not possible to distinguish an individual respondent from a group of other respondents. Maintaining data protection, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of participants' personal data is important to ensure that the research meets ethical requirements (Adams, Khan & Raeside, 2014).

One thing to remember throughout the research is that a researcher's personal values and ideologies should not be noticed when conducting research and collecting data (Hair & Page, 2015). Although we provided a set of predefined response options in our questionnaire, the respondent had the opportunity to complete and bring up aspects that we had not listed beforehand. This way, our own ideas did not overwhelm the questionnaire, as the respondent had the opportunity to add new answer options to each question. Another ethical problem we encountered in our research was that of truthfulness (ALLEA, 2017). We have no control over whether respondents answer honestly to our questionnaire or not. We had to consider this dilemma ethically (Hair & Page,

2015), and concluded that we had to rely on the honesty of the respondents as there is nothing we could do about it.

5.5   Method

In this section we introduce the analysing methods of the data. The collected quantitative data was processed using SPSS software. First, we examined the distribution of responses using frequencies and percentages and used cross tabulation to compare results. Second, we utilised correlation analysis to find relationships between variables. The aim was to investigate correlation between responses and compare the differences of people's previous actions of cancellation and boycotting to their thoughts of their future actions. We also wanted to find out whether an individual's social media activity has an impact on the amount of social media cancelling they do. In addition, we focused on finding differences between countries, age and gender in the boycotting targets and reasons by using cross tabulation.

To gain an even deeper understanding of the topic, we utilised cluster analysis to form groups of the respondents. The aim was to create boycott or cancel profiles by looking at respondents' age, willingness to boycott and boycott targets. By dividing respondents into groups, we could compare their characteristics and behaviour.

5.6   Scales used in the data

In our data there were two different types of scales used. In nominal scale the labels are identified by numbers. They classify objects, individuals, or events. (Hair & Page, 2015.) The purpose of the numerical values is that they name the attributes uniquely. Nominal scales are usually used to describe demographic attributes, for example gender, forms of behaviour or discrete actions (Taheri et al., 2015). Nominal variables cannot be averaged and categories are equal (Vilkka, 2015). In the data of this thesis nominal variables were gender, country of residence and all questions with single response options, e.g. targets for boycotts.

The second scale used in our data was ordinal scale. In the ordinal scale the attributes are rank-ordered (Taheri et al., 2015). The objects are placed in predetermined categories that represent ordered criteria (Hair & Page, 2015). Examples of ordinal scale are age, education level (Taheri et al., 2015) and importance, for example (Hair & Page, 2015). Ordinal variables in this thesis consisted of age, and questions where the respondent specifies, for example, the frequency of their activity of boycotting.

5.7   Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is a typical way of looking at quantitative data. The purpose of the correlation analysis is to outline the linear relationship between two different variables and to quantify the strength of it. This analysis is also referred to as Pearson correlation. (Taheri et al., 2015.) Pearson correlation (r) measures the degree of association between two variables by taking a value between -1 and 1. The closer a value r is to 1, the stronger positive correlation is. (Adams et al., 2014.)

Dependent and independent variables of the data can be identified from the research questions. Dependent variables are the ones that the researcher considers to be affected by another variable. These are called independent variables since they affect the dependent variables. (Taheri et al., 2015.) The aim of regression is to find a relationship between variables and to form a model (Adams et al., 2014). It is important to find the relevant dependent variables, since the usefulness of research depends on it (Taheri et al., 2015).

In this thesis we utilised the correlation analysis in a few areas. We looked at respondents' thoughts on the actions they would be prepared to take to boycott or cancel something and compared it to their previous actions. The aim was to see if there is a correlation between the variables and how strong the correlation would be. We also investigated whether social media activity has an impact on the respondent's previous boycott or cancellation.

5.8   Statistical significance and reliability

In quantitative research it is important to consider the reliability of the data and results. The research should also be reproducible regardless of the researcher. Reliability of a research means the accuracy of the results. It is the ability of the measurement to produce non-random results and verifiability of the measurement results. (Vilkka, 2015.)

Statistically significant means that the result is unlikely to be an accident. It is usually measured by P-value. Usually, results that get P-value less than 0.05 in statistical tests are considered to be statistically significant. (Taheri et al., 2015.) In this thesis we measured the P-value when analysing the results to ensure the reliability of the results.

5.9   Cross tabulation

We used SPSS to examine the relationships and dependencies between the different variables using cross tabulation. In cross tabulation variables, e.g. age and boycott targets, can be compared. They form a table from which the distribution of the variables can be viewed.

Cross tabulation allowed us to examine the relationship of categorical variables on the variable to be explained (Mamia, 2005). The categorical variables used were age, country of residence, and gender.

5.10 Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Analysis of variance, also known as ANOVA, is a method of analysis that has become more and more common (Rutherford 2011). Analysis of variance is a parametric test that compares the means of the observations obtained. It is used to examine whether the means of two or more groups are statistically significantly different from each other. (Valli, 2015.) ANOVA and regression provide an opportunity to see if and how variables are related. It allows conclusions to be drawn about possible differences between groups (Rutherford 2011.)

In this thesis, ANOVA was used to compare, if there were differences between our main variables: age groups, gender, or countries. The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the factors affecting people's actions in boycotting and cancelling and examine if some factors cause more dispersion than others.

6 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. First, we examine demographic factors and general characteristics of the data. We then move on to examine activity on social media and its connection to boycotting and cancelling. After that, we will look at past boycotts and cancellations and discuss the targets, actions, causes, and factors involved. The links between the different variables will also be analysed and presented.

6.1 Background information

In total, 667 respondents answered the survey. The respondents were initially asked to provide demographic background information on their country of residence, gender, and age. Of the respondents, 255 (38.2%) live in Finland, 221 (33.1%) in Germany, 173 (26.0%) in the United States, and 18 (2.7%) elsewhere. The other countries included Belgium, Italy, South Korea, Ukraine, France, China, Dominican Republic, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Brazil, and Croatia. Because the other countries are spread around the world and there are quite a lot of them, we do not compare these other countries with our three main countries very closely in our results. In terms of gender, 278 (41.7%) of the respondents were male, 368 (55.2%) were female and 21 (3.1%) answered that they belong to another gender group or did not want to specify their gender. In addition, respondents were asked to give their age. The youngest respondent was 18 years old and the oldest 62 years old. The average age of the respondents is 26 and the median age is 23, so a large proportion of respondents were young, 23 or under. We created new age classifications based on the age of the respondents so that the categories are: group 1 = <20, group 2 = 21-25, group 3 = 26-30, group 4 = 31-35, and group 5 = 36<. 22,2% of respondents belong to group 1, 46,5% belong to group 2, 15,0% to group 3, 6,0% to group 4, and 10,2% to group 5. The new age

categories will make it easier for us to examine the impact of age on boycotting or cancelling activities and the interpretation of the results will also become clearer. From now on we will refer to age groups as group 1 etc.

These contextual factors allow us to determine whether there are differences in cancelling/boycotting between countries, and to use them to construct boycott profiles. With this information, we are also able to see whether age, a country of residence, or gender has an impact on cancelling or boycotting activities such as what people are boycotting or cancelling, why they are boycotting or cancelling, and who or what influences their boycotting or cancelling.

6.2   Activity on social media

In addition to background information, we wanted to investigate the activity of respondents on social media and asked 'how often do you do the following activities on social media?'. This gives us more information about the respondents and tells us what they use social media for. We can also explore the connection between social media activity and boycotting or cancelling behaviour. In this section, we present the main categories for each question and focus on where the answers are concentrated. The scale in every question includes answer options 'never', 'annually', 'monthly', 'weekly' and 'daily'.

The first questions focused on communication and looking for information. 78,7% of the respondents said they use social media for messaging and chatting daily and 11,5% weekly. Only 2,3% of the respondents said that they never use social media for messaging or chatting. 79,8% said that they browse social media daily and 11,5% weekly. Again, the smallest respondent groups were never (1,1%) and annually (1,6%).

Respondents seem to utilise social media for seeking information and looking for products to buy as well. 67,0% of respondents said they seek information on social media daily and 23,7% weekly. Looking for products or services to buy was a little less common: the two biggest groups were weekly (43,6%) and monthly (32,4%). In all of the first four questions, the smallest groups were never and annually, which means that most of the respondents use social media in some way. These activities were also the most common among respondents.

We asked respondents about sharing and producing social media content by themselves. 28,2% said they share content (e.g. pictures or videos) weekly, 26,2% monthly and 21,9% daily. This means sharing content that someone else has produced. On the other hand, respondents were not active content producers themselves. 44,5% said they never produce content, 14,3% do it annually, 18,3% monthly and 15,7% weekly. Only 7,2% said they produce content daily. Also, 75,1% said they never do marketing or other paid collaborations on social media.

7,2% said they do marketing monthly and 6,9% weekly. This suggests that there are also people who earn money from social media among the respondents.

Lastly, we wanted to investigate whether respondents comment and take a stand on social media. We decided to divide this question into two: 'Comment and take a stand with my own name' and 'comment and take a stand anonymously'. This provides an opportunity to see if anonymity has an impact on the willingness to take a stand.

33,6% of the respondents said they never comment and take a stand with their own name on social media. 23,1% said they do it annually and 21,1% monthly. The two smallest groups were weekly (14,2%) and daily (8,0%). When the same question was asked but including the aspect of staying anonymous, 38,8% said they never comment and take a stand. 21,3% said they do it annually, 17,7% monthly, 14,5% weekly and 7,7% daily. Responses suggest that it is more common to give an opinion under one's own name than anonymously.

6.3   Taking a public stand on social media

To gain an even deeper understanding of respondents' willingness to take a public stand on social media, we asked the following question: 'Which of the following best describes you? I take a public stand or express my opinion openly on social media…'. The answer options were the same as in the previous question 'never', 'annually', 'monthly', 'weekly' and 'daily'.

33% of the respondents answered that they never take a public stand or express their opinions openly on social media. 26% considered themselves doing it annually, 18% monthly and 14% weekly. The smallest group was daily with 9% of respondents. Responses to this question thus followed much the same pattern as the previous question on commenting, with 'never' being the largest group and 'daily' the smallest.

6.4   Targets of cancelling and boycotting

Our research aims to find out what factors make people cancel or boycott, but it is also interesting to know what is being cancelled and boycotted. In the questionnaire we had listed current boycott targets. These include brand, organisation, social media influencer, musician, actor/actress, political person, athlete, event, and country. In addition to this, respondents were given the option to select 'other' and specify in the text box the target of the boycott. Respondents' 'other' answers included the following: art, restaurant, food, antifeminist or racist people, movie, author, social media platform, app, zoo, comedian, trend, and nothing. There were 17 respondents saying they have not boycotted anything.

Most boycotted thing was brand, with 457 (68,5%) respondents. This was followed by social media influencer with 357 (53,5%) respondents, political person with 301 (45,1%) respondents, and organisation with 287 (43,0%) respondents. Other targets listed were chosen by less than 30% of respondents, and the least boycotted thing was an athlete, with 65 (9,7%) respondents boycotting.

6.4.1   The role of age in boycott targets

First, we look if age explains what is boycotted, and can there be seen dependencies between these variables. Total number of respondents was 667, but regarding this category, 666 answers were valid. As already mentioned, we categorised respondents' ages into 5 age groups with group 1 being the youngest respondents and group 5 the oldest respondents, and will refer to them by using the group number.

Cross tabulation was conducted to see if there are statistically significant variables. The Pearson chi-square test showed that brand (P-value <0,001), social media influencer (P-value = 0,006), athlete (P-value = 0,002), and country (P-value = 0,013) are significant variables when age was taken into account. Therefore, it can be said that relationships and dependencies between age and boycotting the above variables exist, and the rest listed boycott targets can be said to be insignificant in this category.

From the data, we can notice that brand has the highest percentage of boycotters in all age groups. In group 2 (ages between 21-25), 74,2% said they had boycotted a brand, and this is the category with the most responses. Other groups range between 73,0% - 50,0% with group 5 (the oldest, ages over 36) being the lowest. Other findings show that there can be seen some differences between age groups when looking at social media influencers. Respondents in group 1 (the youngest, ages under 20) had boycotted influencers the most (64,2%), with respondents in the remaining groups boycotting influencers between 40,0% and 54,5%.

For musicians and actors/actresses, the number of respondents was relatively small (13,0%-26,5%), and in the case of politicians, younger age groups can be seen to boycott politicians by a higher percentage than in group 5, which in our study included all respondents aged over 36. While politicians were boycotted by younger respondents, athletes were boycotted by older respondents. Around 20% of respondents in groups 4 (ages between 31-35) and 5 (the oldest) had boycotted an athlete, while only less than 8,1% of respondents in the remaining groups had boycotted them. When country was the boycott target, the largest boycotting group in percentage terms was the youngest respondents, group 1 (33,1%) and the smallest group was the oldest respondents, group 5 (16,2%). The remaining groups fell in between.

6.4.2 The role of country of residence in boycott targets

Next, we look at whether the country of residence explains what is boycotted and can there be seen dependencies between these variables. Total number of respondents was 667 and in this category all answers were valid.

There were found some statistically significant boycott targets when country of residence was taken into account in the Pearson chi-square test. These targets were brand (P-value <0,001), social media influencer (P-value <0,001), athlete (P-value <0,001), event (P-value = 0,006), country (P-value <0,001), and the option 'other, specify' (P-value = 0,004). This means that the country of residence is irrelevant when boycotting an organisation, a musician, an actor/actress, or a political person.

The most boycotted target was brand with the most respondents living in Germany (78,3%), then in Finland (71,8%), thirdly in the other countries (61,1%), and lastly in the United States (52,0%). On the contrary, the least boycotted target was an athlete, if the option "other, specify" is not taken into account, with the most respondents living in the other countries (22,2%), then in the United States (17,9%), thirdly in Finland (8,6%), and lastly in Germany (3,6%).

Many times, the other countries were either the most boycotting or the second most boycotting group. The results of the other countries group may be explained by its small size, and the results cannot be considered as reliable due to the size of the group. However, if we look at our three main country categories, respondents living in Finland are the most likely to boycott an organisation, social media influencer, political person, and a country in comparison to respondents living in Germany or the United States. On the other hand, respondents living in the United States are the most likely to boycott a musician, an actor/actress, and an athlete. And when it comes to respondents living in Germany, they are the most likely to boycott a brand, an event, or some other separately specified target.

6.4.3 The role of gender in boycott targets

Lastly, we look at whether gender explains what is boycotted, and can there be seen dependencies between these variables. Total number of respondents was 667 and in this category all answers were valid.

Within this cross tabulation there can be also found significant statistical results. These significant targets of boycotts that can be said to depend on gender were brand (P-value <0,001), social media influencer (P-value <0,001), actor/actress (P-value = 0,007), and political person (P-value = 0,043). Other options were not shown as significant variables to what gender could explain.

When male and female are compared, we can see that females were more likely to boycott each of the given target options than males, except the last option 'other, specify', where males were slightly more likely to boycott than female.

However, regarding for example boycotting a brand, organisation, event, or a country, the third group 'other or I don't want to define' was the group of respondents that were the most likely boycotters. The biggest differences of males and females previous boycotting actions can be seen with brand (female 76,6% and male 55,4%), social media influencer (female 59,8% and male 45,0%), political person (female 49,5% and male 39,6%), and actor/actress (female 23,4% and male 13,7%) while the remaining were quite even. The most boycotted target was again a brand and the least boycotted an athlete.

Table 2. Pearson chi-square test (age, country of residence, and gender and boycott targets)

Variable	P-value		
	Age	Country of residence	Gender
Brand	<0,001***	<0,001***	<0,001***
Organisation	0,166	0,106	0,058
Social media influencer	0,006**	<0,001***	<0,001***
Musician	0,710	0,294	0,170
Actor/actress	0,431	0,463	0,007**
Political person	0,340	0,744	0,043*
Athlete	0,002**	<0,001***	0,956
Event	0,069	0,006**	0,516
Country	0,013*	<0,001***	0,490
Other, specify	0,392	0,004**	0,194

P<0,05*
P<0,01**
P<0,001***

6.5 Previous actions of boycotting and cancelling

One of the main parts of this research was to investigate what actions respondents have already taken when boycotting or cancelling something or someone. We created a questionnaire matrix, which includes different boycotting or cancelling actions and gives the respondents ready-made answer options for assessing the recurrent nature of the activity. The question is as follows: 'I HAVE DONE following actions when boycotting something or someone (e.g. brand, organisation, influencer, politician)'. We wanted to emphasise with the question the fact that the respondent has already done the action in the past. The answer options of this question were 'daily', 'weekly', 'monthly', 'annually', and 'never'.

First, we asked the respondent about their willingness to unfollow or unsubscribe on social media when boycotting or cancelling. The biggest groups were monthly (25,9%) and annually (35,5%), and the smallest daily (7,2%) and weekly (14,0%). 17,4% have never unfollowed or unsubscribed when boycotting or cancelling. When asked about commenting negatively on social media posts the answers were as follows: daily 4,6%, weekly 6,9%, monthly 10,5%, annually 12%, and never 66%. These results of negative commenting follow the same pattern with previous questions according to taking a public stand on social media. Finally, the breakdown of responses to 'Sharing content on one's own social media channel when boycotting or cancelling' was as follows: 6,2% have done it daily, 14,2% weekly, 13,3% monthly, 16,8% annually, and 49,5% have never done it.

Since discussing negatively can also be associated with cancelling, we wanted to ask about it from the respondents. We divided the question into two: 'discuss negatively with my friends or family' and 'discuss negatively in public online'. It was more common to discuss negatively with the local community than discuss online. 4,8% said they have discussed negatively with friends or family daily and 34,9% they have done it weekly. 33,6% have discussed negatively in public monthly and 17,4% have done it annually. 54,6% have never discussed negatively in public.

The previous actions focused more on cancelling, so we also wanted to investigate boycotting in a more specific way. 23,7% of the respondents have avoided buying products or services from a company daily, 25,3% weekly and 26,4% monthly. Only 6,9% said they have never avoided buying products or services. When the respondents were asked about total block, which means never buying products or services from a company, the answers were as follows: daily 20,1%, weekly 15,7%, monthly 18,9%, annually 24,9%, and never 20,4%. In this question the responses were therefore very evenly spread.

Lastly in this part, we asked about suffering either financial or time loss. 4,4% have suffered from financial loss or inconvenience daily, 9,4% weekly, 12,0% monthly, and 17,7% annually. 56,5% of the respondents have never suffered financial loss or inconvenience. When asked about time loss, remaining

respondents were distributed as follows: 5,9% have invested time or suffered time loss daily, 11,1% weekly, 15,4% monthly, and 22,9% annually. Again, 44,7% have never invested time or suffered time loss.

As the results of our survey showed that country of residence explained most of the factors behind boycotting and cancelling, we decided to look more closely at the differences between countries in terms of boycotting and cancelling actions taken. The chart below shows the distribution of countries and their activity in relation to different boycotting and cancelling activities. Only the three main countries are included in the comparison, as the 'other countries' group was much smaller in terms of the number of respondents.
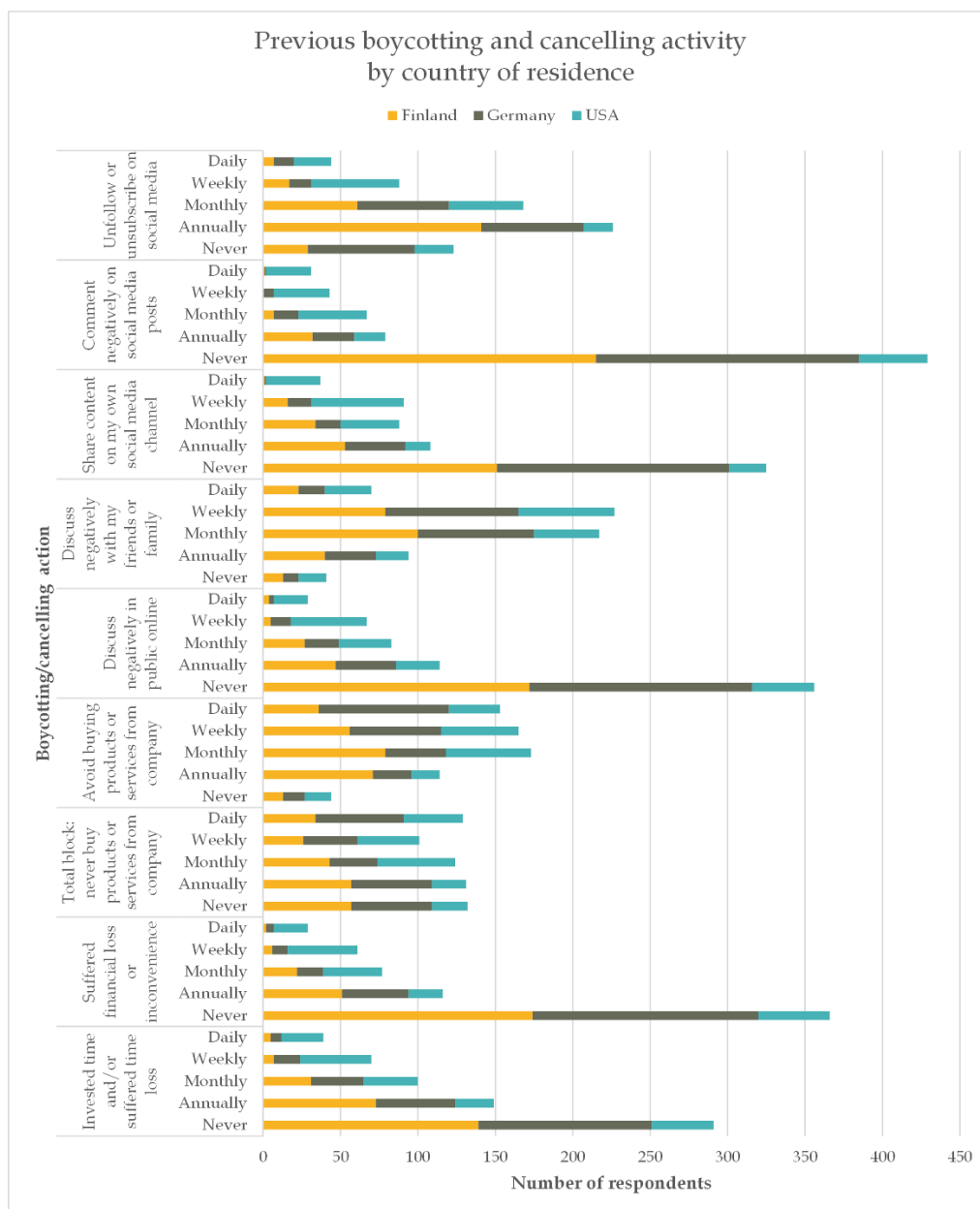

Chart 1. Previous boycotting and cancelling activity by country of residence

Chart 1 shows that the activity levels of US residents are fairly evenly distributed across different activity levels. For those living in Finland and Germany, on the other hand, it is clear that the 'never' option received the highest number of responses in several cases. 'Total block', was clearly the boycott and cancellation activity for which responses were most evenly distributed across activity levels for each country of residence. The chart also shows that in many cases US residents have been the largest group in terms of daily boycott and cancellation activity.

6.5.1 Correlation between activity on social media and previous actions

Since we gathered information on respondents' social media behaviour, we decided to investigate if there is a relationship between respondents' activity on social media and their previous boycotting and cancelling actions. For looking at the relationship, we utilised Pearson correlation. In this chapter we will only present the most significant correlations. That means that the Pearson correlation value is >0,5. All the correlations considered are tested and statistically significant (P-value <0,01).

First, we will focus on producing content (e.g. videos or blog). We found out that if the respondent produces content, they might comment negatively more on social media posts. The correlation between producing content and negative commenting was 0,519, so there is at least some kind of relationship. Also, if the respondent produces content, they are more likely to share boycotting or cancelling content on their own social media channels. The correlation between these factors was 0,560.

Most relationships were found if the respondent does marketing or other paid collaborations. Then one is more likely to comment negatively on social media posts (Pearson correlation value 0,650), share boycotting or cancelling content on their own social media channels (Pearson correlation value 0,582) and discuss negatively in public online (Pearson correlation value 0,512). Also, the ones who are doing marketing or paid collaborations have suffered more financial and time loss. The correlation value between marketing and suffering financial loss or inconvenience was 0,572 and the correlation between marketing and investing time or suffering time loss was 0,538.

Lastly, the respondents who have commented and taken a stand with their own name have shared more boycotting or cancelling content on their social media channels and also commented negatively on social media posts when boycotting or cancelling. The correlation value between taking a stand and sharing content was 0,557 and the value between taking a stand and commenting negatively was 0,510.

6.5.2   ANOVA and previous actions of boycotting and cancelling

Age

We used one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) to analyse previous actions of the respondents. The post hoc test of ANOVA provides homogenous subsets and based on them we grouped respondents by the age groups. In this chapter, we briefly present the main results.

The activities of unfollowing, discussing negatively with friends and family, avoiding buying products or services and total block provided only one group. This means that no significant differences between age groups were found for these measures. On the other hand, the rest of the activities provided three or even four different groups. Sharing content, discussing negatively on public online, suffering financial loss or suffering time loss all followed the same pattern: The age groups were evenly divided into categories, with the youngest being the least active and the oldest being the most active. In addition, commenting negatively on social media posts followed the same order, but provided four groups.

Country of residence

We repeated the above grouping of homogenous subsets also for the country variable to see if there is any difference between country of residence. In this chapter we present the distribution of the countries.

One of the actions 'Discuss negatively with friends and family' provided only one group. This means that there is no significant difference between countries in this activity and the respondents are consistently active in discussing negatively in their local community. The other two activities with consistent responses were avoiding buying products and services and total block. These two activities created two groups, but there were no major differences. In avoiding buying Germany was the most active and in total block the USA. In both activities Finland was the least active.

The division of countries into two groups was the most typical of all. Unfollowing and sharing content divided the countries as follows: Finland and Germany were in the group 1, which is less active and the USA and other countries belonged to the group 2. When asked about the financial and time loss, the USA was the only country representing the more active group 2. In summary, the USA was in the more active group on each question and on the other hand, Finland and Germany were the least active in all activities.

Lastly, the questions with three groups were commenting negatively on social media posts and discussing negatively publicly online. In both activities, the distribution was as follows: the first group consisted of Finland and Germany, the second of other countries and the last of the USA.

Gender

Lastly, we wanted to investigate if gender has any impact on previous actions and look at the gender distribution. Six of the activities provided only one group. They were unfollowing, sharing content on social media, discussing publicly online, total block, suffering financial loss and suffering time loss. In these activities, the gender of the respondent did not matter.

The rest of the questions provided two groups. In commenting negatively on social media posts the genders 'other' and 'female' were in the group 1 and male in the more active group 2. The answers of discussing negatively with friends or family were evenly distributed, but the order from the least to most active was female, male and other. Finally, when asked about avoiding buying male and female respondents formed group 1 and other group 2. In summary, the female respondents belonged to the least active group in every activity.

6.6   Thoughts of actions of future boycotting and cancelling

In addition to respondents' previous boycotting and cancelling actions, we were interested to know what actions they would be ready to take in the future. We decided to utilise the same question form as in the previous question so that we can compare them with each other. This allows us to find out whether respondents' intentions correspond to previous actions. The question was as follows: 'What actions I would be READY TO TAKE when boycotting something or someone (e.g. brand, organisation, influencer, politician)?'. The answer options were defined as 'daily', 'weekly', 'monthly', 'annually', and 'never'.

In future, 46,8% would be ready to unfollow or unsubscribe on social media daily, when boycotting or cancelling something or someone. 23,1% would be ready to do it weekly and 14,7% monthly. Percentages were significantly higher compared to previous actions of respondents, so people would be willing to be more active in this action. On the other hand, commenting negatively on social media posts and sharing content on one's own social media channels follow the same pattern as in the previous actions. Only 6,0% would comment negatively daily, and 17,8% would do it annually. 47,4% would never comment negatively. 21,7% would be ready to share content on their social media channels annually, and 33,3% said they would never do it.

As in the previous paragraph of boycotting and cancelling actions, respondents were more likely to discuss negatively with their friends and family compared to discussing publicly online. 35,5% would discuss negatively in their local community daily and 32,1% weekly. 19,5% would be ready to discuss negatively publicly online monthly, and 18,0% annually. On the other hand, 37,2% would never discuss negatively publicly online.

When asked about avoiding or totally refusing from buying products or services from a company, most of the respondents were willing to do these actions either daily or weekly. 48,9% were ready to avoid buying products daily and 20,5% weekly. Only 4,1% would never avoid buying products or services from the boycotting target. The percentages in total block were also high: 40,6% would refuse from buying daily and 19,0% weekly. 8,3% would never have a total block when boycotting or cancelling.

Lastly, we asked about suffering financial or time loss. Results were evenly distributed on both questions. 'Never' was the most common answer in both questions: 29,1% would never suffer financial loss or inconvenience and 24,7% would never invest time or suffer time loss when boycotting or cancelling. The remaining answers of financial loss were as follows: 9,2% daily, 13,3% weekly, 24,0% monthly, and 24,4% annually. For investing time or suffering from time loss, 11,1% would be ready for it daily, 17,3% weekly, 24,1% monthly, and 22,8% annually.

Once again, as country of residence explained most of the factors behind boycotting and cancelling, we decided to look more closely at the differences between countries in terms of boycotting and cancelling actions that the respondent would be willing to take. The chart below shows the distribution of countries and their readiness for future activity in relation to different boycotting and cancelling activities. Also here, only the three main countries are included in the comparison, as the 'other countries' group was much smaller in terms of the number of respondents.
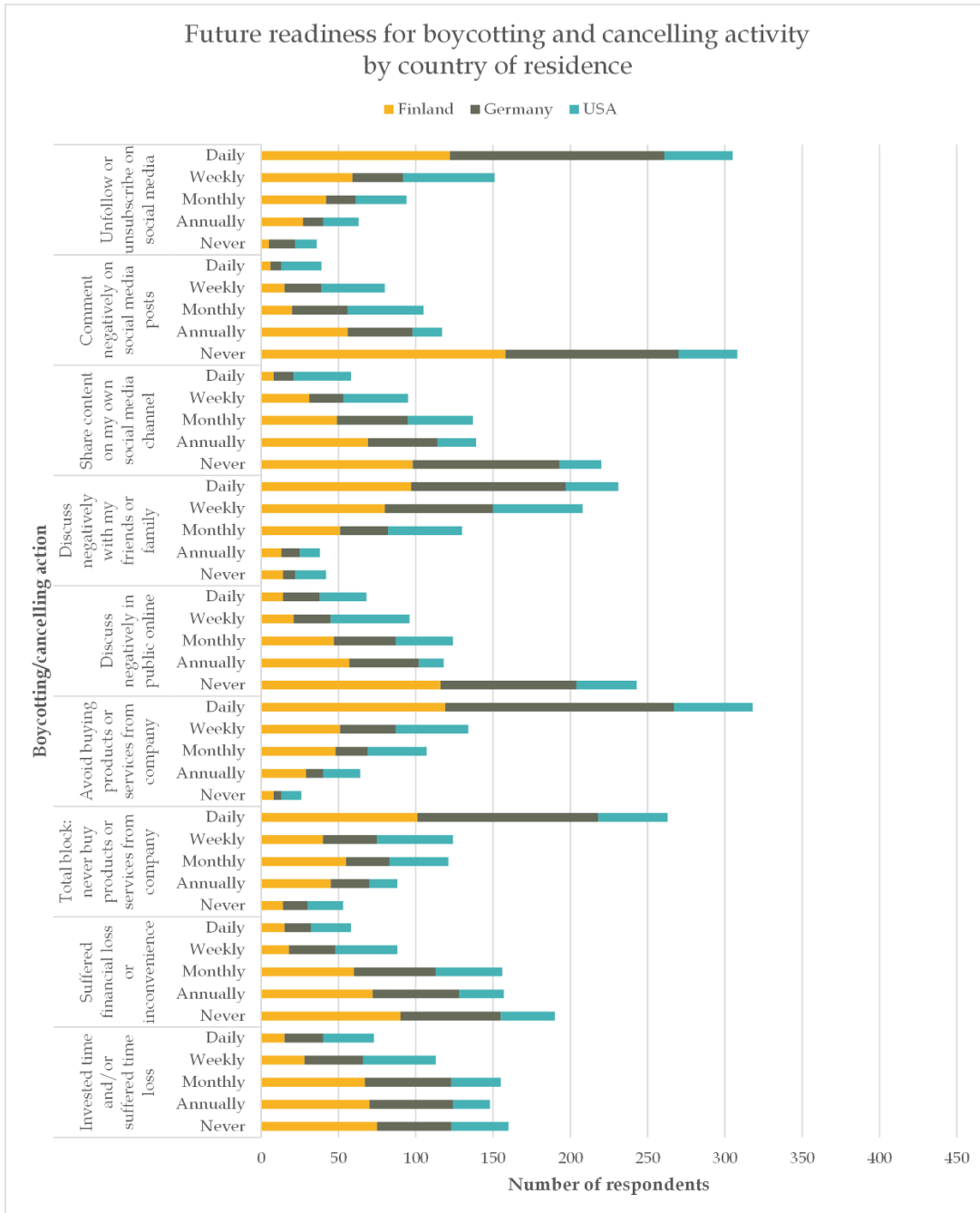
Chart 2. Future readiness for boycotting and cancelling activity by country of residence

Chart 2 shows that for future readiness, respondents' activity is more evenly spread than for the previous boycotting and cancelling actions (chart 1). The chart also shows that 'never' is no longer the option with the highest number of responses, but 'daily' has also received a significant number of responses. Respondents have therefore self-reported their willingness to be more active in boycotting and cancelling in the future. However, this does not say whether this will actually happen.

6.6.1 Correlation between previous boycotting and thoughts of future actions

One of the main issues we aimed to investigate was the relationship between respondents' previous boycotting or cancelling actions and their thoughts of the actions they would be ready to take. It is interesting to see if there is a relationship between the responses and whether the ideas differ from the actual activities. These questions were answered using identical questionnaires, so they are comparable as such. In this section, we discuss the correspondences of all questions using the Pearson correlation value. All correlations examined are statistically significant (P-value < 0.01).

The highest level of divergence between responses was found in the first question, which was about unfollowing and unsubscribing on social media as a boycotting or cancelling method. The correlation value was 0,297, which shows that the positive correlation is relatively weak. The results suggest that respondents would be prepared to be more active when unfollowing or unsubscribing, but their actions do not correspond to intentions.

Responses to commenting negatively on social media posts and sharing boycotting or cancelling content on own social media channels corresponded relatively well to each other. The correlation value for negative commenting was 0,686 and the correlation value for sharing content 0,688. These values show that most of the previous actions and thoughts of actions follow the same line.

There were slight differences when the respondents were asked about discussing negatively. The correlation value of discussing negatively with friends or family was 0,598. When looking at the results, they show that the respondents would be ready to discuss negatively more with their local community than they are doing now. On the other hand, the correlation of discussing negatively in public online was stronger. The correlation value was 0,728, so there is a relatively strong correlation in this question. That means that the current actions match well to their willingness to act in future, so the respondents are not prepared to make any major changes to their actions.

The questions that focused more on boycotting showed some correlation when comparing previous actions and thoughts of future actions. The correlation between avoiding buying products or services from a company was 0,563. The results show that the respondents would be ready to avoid buying more often than they are currently doing. The same way, when asked about total block which means never buying the respondents would be more willing to be more active. The correlation of the total block was 0,545.

Lastly, we asked the respondents about their willingness to suffer financial or time loss. The correlation value between both questions was relatively high. The value of suffering financial loss or inconvenience was 0,618 and the value of investing time or suffering time loss 0,632. From this it can be concluded that the respondents are unlikely to be willing to change their behaviour much, since previous actions and willingness to act in future correspond to each other.

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6.6.2   ANOVA and thoughts of future actions

Since the country of residence of respondents showed the most differences in previous actions of boycotting and cancelling, we found it interesting to look at its importance also in the thoughts of future actions. In this chapter we briefly present the main results of grouping done with ANOVA and homogenous subsets.

When we looked at the impact of country of residence on the total block, we found no differences between respondents. Responses were therefore evenly distributed and not affected by country of residence.

The most common was that countries were divided into two groups. However, the results did not always follow the same pattern. When asked about unfollowing and also discussing negatively with friends and family, the USA and other countries were equal and Finland and Germany formed the second, more active group. On the other hand, when asked about sharing negative content Finland and Germany were the least active and the USA and other countries were more active.

In the question of avoiding buying products or services, Germany was the most active and stood out from other countries. Finally, in the questions of financial and time loss, both of the questions provided the same results: the USA was more willing to suffer financial and time loss than the rest of the countries. Finally, when asked about commenting negatively on social media posts and discussing publicly on social media, the order was as follows: Finland and Germany were the least active, then other countries and finally, the USA was the most active.

6.7   Reasons for cancelling and boycotting

As we intend to find out what factors make people cancel or boycott something or someone, the reasons for people's previous boycotting were asked in our questionnaire. There were some reasons listed in the questionnaire, and also an option to specify other reasons was given. The listed reasons included war or geopolitical crisis, environmentally harmful actions, ethical reasons (for instance animal or human rights), racism, inappropriate behaviour (for instance sexual harassment), bad management of company or organisation, bad customer service, bad product quality, political opinions, religious opinions, and nationality. As well as in the question regarding targets of cancelling and boycotting, respondents were given the option to select 'other' and specify in the text box the reason for the boycott. Reasons specified were bad taste of food, economic reasons, misinformation, environmental extremists, antiwhite attitudes, Covid-19 antivaxxers, health risks, discrimination against minorities, copying other brands, too much social media content, and personal preferences.

Besides that, there were 11 respondents saying they haven't cancelled or boycotted anything.

The most chosen reason for previous cancelling or boycotting was ethical reasons with 427 (64,0%) respondents. This was followed by environmentally harmful actions with 393 (58,9%) respondents, war or geopolitical crisis with 369 (55,3%) respondents, racism with 341 (51,1%) respondents, and inappropriate behaviour with 340 (51,0%) respondents. The rest of the reasons were chosen by 291 (43,6%) to 29 (4,3%) respondents with nationality being the least cancelled or boycotted reason.

6.7.1 The role of age in the reasons for boycotts

Looking more closely at the results of the questionnaire, we can state that age explains some of the reasons for boycotts. In this category, 666 answers were valid.

In terms of age, statistically significant variables were war or geopolitical crisis (P-value = 0,044), environmentally harmful actions (P-value = 0,009), ethical reasons (P-value <0,001), racism (P-value = 0,018), inappropriate behaviour (P-value <0,001), and bad management of company or organisation (P-value <0,001). Thus based on the Pearson chi-square test, other variables were not shown as statistically significant variables that age could explain.

Looking at the respondents' previous reasons for boycotting, it can be seen that respondents in age group 5 (the oldest, ages over 36) often had the lowest percentage of boycotters regarding each variable compared to the other age groups. If the oldest did not have the fewest respondents, it was really even with the other groups. Moreover, the age groups were mostly very evenly distributed in terms of the reasons for boycotting.

However, an examination of the data reveals some slightly larger differences between age groups in the reasons for boycotting. In age group 1 (the youngest, ages under 20), up to 58,1% of respondents cited inappropriate behaviour as the reason for their boycotting, while in group 5 (the oldest, ages over 36) it was reason for boycotting for 35,3% of respondents (the remaining age groups fall in between). Then in age group 2 (ages between 21-25), up to 69,0% of the respondents answered ethical reasons to be a reason for their boycotting while in group 5 (the oldest, ages over 36) it was a reason for 41,2% of respondents. Age group 3 (ages between 26-30) was again the largest group (35,0%) when bad management of a company or organisation was cited as the reason for boycotting, with group 1 (the youngest, ages under 20) being the smallest (12,2%) in this respect. Still to be mentioned, age group 4 (ages between 31-35) was the largest group (65,0%) when environmentally harmful actions were given as a reason, with group 5 (the oldest, ages over 36) again being the smallest (39,7%). Other slightly larger differences could be seen with war or geopolitical crisis, racism, and political opinions.

6.7.2 The role of country of residence in the reasons for boycotts

The reasons for the previous boycott were also examined in the light of the country of residence. All respondents' answers were valid. We conducted a cross tabulation in this category as well, which showed that all the other reasons listed, except religious opinions, were statistically significant. The country of residence can therefore explain a lot of the reasons for boycotts.

For those living in Finland, the most frequently cited reason for the boycott was war or geopolitical crisis with 65,5% of the respondents, and the least frequently cited reason was nationality with 7,1% of the respondents. For those living in Germany, the most frequently cited reason for the boycott was ethical reasons with 81,0% of the respondents, and the least frequently cited reason was nationality with 1,4% of the respondents. Then again, for respondents who live in the USA, the most common reason given was environmentally harmful actions (45,7%) and the least common was nationality (4,6%). When it comes to the respondents living in other countries, the most frequently cited reason for the boycott was environmentally harmful actions (72,2%) and the least frequently cited reason was once again nationality with no answers (0,0%). The option "other, specify" was not taken into account in the above-mentioned. For this response option, those living in Germany had selected it the most often (9,0%) and those living in the USA the least often (1,2%).

Table 3. Country of residence and reasons for boycotts

Table 3 shows the percentages of respondents by reason for boycott and country of residence. In the table, the highest percentage for that reason is always bolded. The variable "religious opinions" has been removed from the table because it was not statistically significant, and "other, specify" because it contained many different answers. In addition, only the results for the three main countries are included in the table, as the 'other countries' group was much smaller and therefore not necessarily fully comparable with those living in Finland, Germany and the USA.

Variable	Country of residence		
	Finland	Germany	USA
War or geopolitical crisis	**65,5%**	58,8%	37,0%
Environmentally harmful actions	56,5%	**71,0%**	45,7%
Ethical reasons	65,1%	**81,0%**	41,6%
Racism	54,1%	**56,1%**	39,3%

Inappropriate behaviour	**57,6%**	55,7%	35,8%
Bad management of company or organisation	**27,8%**	14,9%	27,2%
Bad customer service	**50,2%**	19,9%	34,1%
Bad product quality	**56,9%**	30,8%	27,7%
Political opinions	43,1%	**51,1%**	34,7%
Nationality	**7,1%**	1,4%	4,6%

As can be seen from table 3, there were some issues that stood out from the data when looking at the country of residence in the reasons for boycotts. Respondents living in Finland had previously boycotted for reasons such as war or geopolitical crisis, inappropriate behaviour, bad management of company or organisation, bad customer service, bad product quality, and nationality, at a higher percentage than others. Then again respondents living in Germany had previously boycotted for reasons such as environmentally harmful actions, ethical reasons, racism, and political opinions, at a higher percentage than others. Residents of the US were not the largest group of respondents for any of the reasons listed for the boycotts. Here in the comparison were the three main countries.

6.7.3 The role of gender in the reasons for boycotts

Finally, as regards the reasons for boycotting, we wanted to see if gender could be seen to play a role in the reasons for boycotting and can there be seen dependencies between the variables. All respondents' answers were valid.

With gender as the independent variable, again some statistically significant dependent variables were found. These were environmentally harmful actions (P-value <0,001), ethical reasons (P-value <0,001), racism (P-value <0,001), inappropriate behaviour (P-value <0,001), nationality (P-value = 0,024), and the option "other, specify" (P-value = 0,047).

When comparing male and female, we can notice that males chose the following reasons more often than females: religious opinions, nationality, and 'other, specify'. That said, women therefore chose all other of the listed options in the questionnaire more often than men. The biggest differences of males and females previous boycotting reasons can be seen with environmentally harmful actions (female 69,3% and male 44,2%), ethical reasons (female 73,9% and male 49,3%), racism (female 61,1% and male 37,4%), and inappropriate behaviour (female 61,4% and male 36,3%). To mention, the gender group 'other or I don't

want to define' was the biggest group regarding political opinions, bad management of a company or organisation, inappropriate behaviour, ethical reasons, and environmentally harmful actions as a reason for respondents' previous boycotting.

Table 4. Pearson chi-square test (age, country of residence, and gender and boycott reasons)

Variable	P-value		
	Age	Country of residence	Gender
War or geopolitical crisis	0,044*	<0,001***	0,109
Environmentally harmful actions	0,009**	<0,001***	<0,001***
Ethical reasons	<0,001***	<0,001***	<0,001***
Racism	0,018*	0,004**	<0,001***
Inappropriate behaviour	<0,001***	<0,001***	<0,001***
Bad management of company or organisation	<0,001***	0,002**	0,502
Bad customer service	0,699	<0,001***	0,060
Bad product quality	0,163	<0,001***	0,622
Political opinions	0,064	0,013*	0,711
Religious opinions	0,827	0,066	0,687
Nationality	0,347	0,018*	0,024*
Other, specify	0,884	0,002**	0,047*

P<0,05*
P<0,01**
P<0,001***

6.8 The number one reason for boycotting or cancelling

To gain even more information of the reasons for boycotting or cancelling, we added one open question to our questionnaire. The question was as follows: 'What's the number one reason you would start boycotting or cancelling something or someone?'. Since the response options were equal in the previous question, we wanted to give the respondents a chance to name the one factor that matters most.

Responses were spread in many different directions and many reasons were cited as the main reason for boycotting or cancelling. Responses were coded based on question 9 and assigned values. In addition to the list in question 9, a few new reasons emerged from the answers to this question, as some of the reasons mentioned were repeated very often. These reasons were morally wrong conduct, harmful actions towards other people, and values do not match. It should be mentioned that not all answers could be categorised under any value, as not all answers were relevant or usable when the question had not been answered.

When the responses were examined, the most frequently cited reason was found to be ethical reasons with 180 (27,0%) respondents. Other frequently mentioned reasons were inappropriate behaviour with 69 (10,3%) respondents, racism with 65 (9,7%) respondents, environmentally harmful actions with 53 (7,9%) respondents, and morally wrong conduct with 41 (6,1%) respondents.

Table 5. The number one reason for boycotting or cancelling something or someone

Number one reason	Frequency	Percent
Ethical reasons	180	27,0
Inappropriate behaviour	69	10,3
Racism	65	9,7
Environmentally harmful actions	53	7,9
Morally wrong conduct	41	6,1
War or geopolitical crisis	34	5,1
Harmful actions towards other people	32	4,8
Political opinions	31	4,6
Bad customer service	24	3,6
Bad product quality	22	3,3

Values do not match	17	2,5
Nationality	8	1,2
Bad management of company or organisation	4	0,6
Religious opinions	3	0,4

6.9   Who or what makes people cancel or boycott

We have already discussed what people have cancelled and boycotted, which are the targets of cancellation and boycotts, what people are willing to do in the light of cancelling and boycotting, and what are the main reasons behind people's behaviour. Now, we still want to investigate who or what makes people cancel or boycott as we intend to find what factors are behind people's actions.

There were seven factors listed in our questionnaire regarding the question who or what influences respondents' boycotting or cancelling. These factors were the following: the example of a person I admire (influencer etc.), my friends' opinions, my family's opinions, alarming information on social media, desire to make a change, feeling of guilt, and other, specify. The last option 'other, specify' included the following answers: personal morals and values, not wanting to see something or support something, personal opinions, beliefs, and ethics, research, statistics, and facts, information in the news or public media, and nothing or no one. 7 respondents have stated that no one or nothing has influenced their cancellation or boycotting.

The most chosen factor was desire to make a change with 390 (58,5%) respondents. This was followed by alarming information on social media with 330 (49,5%) respondents, my friends' opinions with 312 (46,8%) respondents, and my family's opinions with 271 (40,6%) respondents. Next factor was feeling of guilt with 210 (31,5%) respondents, then following the example of a person I admire with 178 (26,7%) respondents, and lastly the option other, specify with 81 (12,1%) respondents.

6.9.1   The role of age in who or what makes people cancel or boycott

In this section, we examine whether age can influence who or what makes people cancel or boycott. As with the other sections on age, there were 666 valid responses.

Once again, some statistically significant variables were found: alarming information on social media (P-value <0,001), desire to make a change (P-value =

0,004), and the open option 'other, specify' (P-value = 0,022). The remaining variables cannot be considered plausible, as their P-value is above 0,05.

When looking more closely at the statistically significant variables, we can see that in both of the pre-set response options, age group 1 (the youngest, ages under 20) was the largest respondent group (alarming information on social media = 68,2% and desire to make a change = 62,2%) and age group 5 (the oldest, ages over 36) the smallest (alarming information on social media = 32,4% and desire to make a change = 36,8%). For the open response option other, specify, age group 2 (ages between 21-25) was the largest (15,8%), while age group 4 (ages between 31-35) was the smallest (5,0%). For the remaining variables, the variation in the number of respondents in different age groups remained reasonably moderate, around 10%.

6.9.2 The role of country of residence in who or what makes people cancel or boycott

Next, we look at whether the country of residence explains who or what makes people cancel or boycott and can there be seen dependencies between the variables. In this category all 667 answers were valid.

As we ran the Pearson chi-square test, we found that all the other factors listed, except my friends' opinions, were statistically significant as the P-values stayed under 0,05. In this case, too, we can see that the country of residence can explain a lot of the factors causing the activity of cancelling or boycotting.

People living in Finland seemed to be most influenced by receiving alarming information on social media (62,4%) and by the desire to make a change (61,2%), and the least by the feeling of guilt (33,7%). Then again people living in Germany seemed to be most influenced by the desire to make a change (70,6%) and the least by following the example of a person they admire (16,7%). People living in the US seemed to be most influenced by their friends' (53,8%) and family's opinions (47,4%), and the least by the feeling of guilt (22,0%). Lastly, people living in the other countries seemed to be most influenced by the desire to make a change (50,0%) and the least by following the example of a person they admire (22,2%), by their family's opinions (22,2%), and by the feeling of guilt (22,2%). The open answer option 'other, specify' was not taken into account in the above-mentioned. For this option, those living in Germany had selected it the most often (24,9%) and those living in the USA the least often (2,3%).

From the data, we can also see that respondents living in Finland were the biggest group percentage wise when choosing the answers 'following the example of a person I admire' and 'alarming information on social media'. Then, respondents living in Germany were the biggest group when choosing 'desire to make a change', 'feeling of guilt', and 'other, specify'. And finally, respondents living in the USA were the biggest respondent group when choosing 'my family's opinions' and 'my friends' opinions'.

6.9.3 The role of gender in who or what makes people cancel or boycott

Having already discussed the significance of age and country of residence for the issues leading to cancellation and boycotts, it remains to look at gender. All responses were valid, and thus can be examined.

As in all the other categories, statistically significant variables were found. These variables were alarming information on social media (P-value <0,001), desire to make a change (P-value <0,001) and feeling of guilt (P-value = 0,004). The rest of the variables were not considered significant.

Here, we compared male and female, and found that males choose only the variable 'other, specify' more often than females. Though, the response rates were very even for all non-significant options. The biggest differences between the genders could be seen in alarming information on social media (female 56,8% and male 37,8%), desire to make a change (female 64,9% and male 49,3%) and feeling of guilt (female 36,4% and male 24,5%). However, the gender group 'other or I don't want to define' was the biggest group when choosing my friends' opinions, alarming information on social media, desire to make a change, feeling of guilt, and other, specify, as a factor affecting the respondents' cancelling and boycotting behaviour.

Table 6. Pearson chi-square test (age, country of residence, and gender and who or what makes people cancel or boycott)

Variable	P-value		
	Age	Country of residence	Gender
Following the example of a person I admire	0,487	<0,001***	0,867
My friends' opinions	0,592	0,158	0,425
My family's opinions	0,196	0,035*	0,589
Alarming information on social media	<0,001***	<0,001***	<0,001***
Desire to make a change	0,004**	<0,001***	<0,001***
Feeling of guilt	0,499	0,008**	0,004**
Other, specify	0,022*	<0,001***	0,673

P<0,05*
P<0,01**
P<0,001***

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Responding to research questions

The survey looked at respondents' boycott and cancellation from different perspectives. It focused not only on respondents' behaviour, but also on differences in demographic information. However, our primary objective was to use the data to find answers to our research questions. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What factors make people cancel or boycott something or someone?

RQ2: Does the idea of one's own readiness to act (cancel or boycott) correspond to self-reported action?

The purpose of our survey questions was to examine respondents' boycotting and cancelling behaviour in general terms, but as broadly as possible. Questions focus on the reasons for the boycott and cancellation, but also the actions taken and intentions for future action.

The first research question of our study was 'What factors make people cancel or boycott something or someone?' As seen in Table 5, many factors were found to affect people's cancelling and boycotting behaviour. In addition to the reasons shown in the table, not wanting to see something or support something, personal opinions, beliefs, and ethics, research, statistics, and facts, information in the news or public media, and nothing or no one influenced people's actions. However, only some of the factors could be found to be statistically significant for our categorical variables. The most important of the significant causes is alarming information on social media, which achieved the highest level of statistical significance of all independent variables. In addition to the factors that

influence people's behaviour, our research helped us to find out people's reasons for boycotting in the past. The survey therefore answered the first research question quite well.

When considering the second research question 'Does the idea of one's own readiness to act (cancel or boycott) correspond to self-reported action?', the data answered this question well. However, the results of this question were mixed depending on the activities of boycotting or cancelling. On the one hand, respondents said they could be more active in unfollowing, avoiding buying products and total block. They therefore felt more prepared to take a more active role if necessary. On the other hand, respondents were not prepared to suffer more financial or time inconvenience or to be public when commenting on social media. Overall, we found that the responses are quite similar, but that respondents would be more active in their intentions, at least for some actions.

7.2   Responding to hypotheses

In this thesis, we had two main hypotheses:

H1. The younger a person is, the more active they are in boycotting and cancelling on social media.

H2. Europeans are more active in boycotting and cancelling than people living in other countries.

Looking at the first hypothesis, we can see that age did not play a major role in the respondent's activity, even though we assumed so in the hypothesis. Age groups were very evenly matched in terms of activity, but country of residence turned out to be the most significant factor. However, age had some influence on what or why people boycotted or cancelled something or someone. Younger respondents boycotted more influencers and brands than older respondents, and younger respondents more often boycotted for reasons related to war or ethics than older respondents. The differences between age groups are discussed in more detail in chapter 7.6.1.

Considering the second hypothesis, the responses show that European residents are more likely to boycott a country or nationality than US residents, and for Europeans in particular, war or geopolitical crisis emerged as a major reason for boycotting. In addition, for Europeans, the desire to make a change was a more important reason for action than for Americans. However, when looking at almost any activity, Americans were often the most active in boycotting and cancelling and were also more willing than Europeans to be public about their actions. So what we can draw from this is that generally

speaking, Americans are more active in boycotting or cancelling, but when it comes to war, nationalism, or change, Europeans are more willing to be active.

7.3   Targets of boycotts and cancellation

Looking at respondents' past boycotting behaviour, it can be seen that a brand was clearly more boycotted than other targets. This could be explained by the increasing condemnation of brands and attachment of consumers to social problems (Albrecht et al., 2013). Besides that, if a brand's message, purpose, and values do not match, it may become the target of a boycott. This creates a bad brand image for the consumer as the brand misleads the consumer with its false claims. (Vredenburg et al., 2020.) Brand emerged as a highly statistically significant dependent variable for each of the independent variables, so these can be seen to be related to each other, meaning that a person's age, country of residence, and gender influence and explain whether a brand is boycotted.

In addition to the brand, the social media influencer was a much boycotted target. Certainly, these two things often go hand in hand as they can be associated negatively with one another (Norris, 2021), which may explain the results. An influencer can generate negative talk about a brand, but on the other hand, marketing a disliked brand can put the influencer in a negative light. It can also be the case that an influencer who is in a bad light, when promoting a brand, also creates a negative image for that brand.

For a large number of respondents, a political person has also been the target of a boycott. Indeed, politics is often associated with boycotts (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017), so this result makes sense. Politicians are also very visible in the media, and through them ordinary people can influence society and decision-making. It is worth remembering that political boycotts can be equally conservative or liberal.

7.4   Reasons for cancellation and boycotting

Our research found that the main reasons for cancelling, and boycotting were war and geopolitical crisis, environmentally harmful activities, ethical reasons, racism, inappropriate behaviour, and morally wrong conduct. Indeed, Enders and Panagopoulos (2017) have identified political consciousness, cultural reasons, ideological reasons, environmental reasons, and ethical reasons as common reasons for boycotts. We can therefore see that various reasons related to responsibility are common among our respondents, so it can be said that consumers today are very aware and have certain expectations of companies. For example, brands are expected to be responsible, both ethically and

environmentally (Albrecht et al., 2013). Also, personal values are respected, and personal morality can be seen as the basis for people's action.

When we look at the reasons that received the fewest responses, we see that nationality, bad customer service, and bad management of the company or organisation were among them. Boycotting is a form of activism, and the reasons given by respondents for boycotting suggest that they are more likely to take a stand on these controversial issues such as war, the environment, or ethics, which are perceived as activism (Chon & Park, 2020), than on other issues such as nationality or bad customer service.

The division of reasons can also be explained by the fact that boycotts are linked to political consumerism. It can be considered to include the avoidance of buying products or services for ethical, social, or political reasons (Kam & Deichert, 2016). The results of our survey shows, that almost all respondents have boycotted something at some point in their lives, and since the main reasons given by respondents were variables related to ethical, social or political reasons, boycotting can be seen as a political consumption and, on the other hand, the concept of political consumption can be seen as explaining the reasons for boycotting well. However, when it comes to consumption, it is good to remember that the reasons for buying something are not necessarily always the same as the reasons not to buy something (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012; Kam & Deichert, 2016).

7.5 Who or what makes people cancel or boycott

One of the purposes of our research was to find out what factors make people cancel or boycott something or someone. One of the main reasons that emerged from our survey was the desire to make a change, and this is indeed considered to be one of the most important factors leading to boycotts according to previous research (Klein, Smith & John, 2004). On the contrary, feeling of guilt received considerably fewer responses. These answers suggest that the desire to do something (good) is a greater factor than feeling guilty for doing or not doing something. Personal values are therefore respected, and in the open response option, factors related to personal opinions, morals, values and ethics were often specifically mentioned. Besides that, the desire to promote change can also be explained by the fact that it can be perceived as an opportunity to improve oneself (Klein, Smith & John, 2004).

Social media is an accessible platform for people to come across and discuss controversial issues (Chon & Park, 2020), and even to criticise others' actions (Albrecht et al., 2013). In our survey we noticed that alarming information on social media was a plausible factor and highly statistically significant in every category, but following the example of a person they admire (influencer etc.) was among the least selected factors. In addition to this, the opinions of friends, and the opinions of family also received a lot of responses. From this we can conclude

that within social media, different things affect people's cancelling and boycotting behaviour at different levels, and relying on information to drive your own actions is much more important than listening to someone else's opinion who is not close to you. On the other hand, there is an endless amount of information available on the internet, which is used to learn new things and can be searched for on each topic itself (Hameleers, Brosius & de Vreese, 2022), whereas an influencer, for example, would have to be followed separately and trusted on their word on a topic of their choice. However, the opinions of those close to you influence people's behaviour more than following the example of a public figure.

7.6   Independent variables

The aim of the cross tabulation was to examine the relationship between the categorical variables and the variables to be explained. The survey found that the independent variables have dependencies and relationships with some of the variables under study.

7.6.1   Age

Age can be said to explain many variables. Younger age groups were seen to boycott the most brands, influencers, or countries when compared to older age groups. The reasons or driving factors for young people were more likely war or geopolitical crisis, environmentally harmful actions, ethical reasons, racism, and inappropriate behaviour compared to older age groups. These issues can be caused by many things and can be explained by many reasons. When talking about a brand, a more likely boycott by young people can be explained by their awareness and responsibility. They experience product quality as important, which can speak of responsibility towards the environment, for example. This conclusion is also supported by the results of our research, which found that actions harmful to the environment, ethical reasons, inappropriate behaviour, and racism are often the reasons why younger generations boycott, making sustainability and responsibility important to young people. Young consumers therefore expect and demand responsibility and quality from brands. Sustainability themes are being addressed more and more, and maybe are not so familiar to older age groups as sustainability has only recently started to become a more prominent topic.

When we look at the younger generations boycotting influencers, this can be explained by the fact that young people are a very active group on social media. They also have a lot to offer in terms of influencers. Influencers, however, were generally boycotted at a high level, as they have recently faced more negativity

online (Pfeffer et al., 2014). Our survey also found that the younger the age group, the more likely it is that alarming information on social media will be a factor in their boycott or cancellation. Social media has contributed to people's awareness and consciousness (Chon & Park, 2020), and young people are a large group of social media users, so it is natural for them to absorb information from social media platforms.

Other things that can be seen as influencing young people's boycott behaviour were war and geopolitical crises. Young people were also seen to boycott a country more probably than older ones. This could be explained by the current world situation and the awareness of young people. One of the current topics in the media is the war in Ukraine, and there has been a lot of discussion about it on social media. Political events are a much discussed topic on social media, where the information can spread promptly, and thus can initiate boycotts towards different targets (Kam & Deichert, 2016).

If we next look at the other side of the age variable, we can notice that older age groups were more likely to boycott athletes than younger ones. This may be influenced by the cultural habits of different generations and the way they follow sports. In general, celebrities have faced cancellation and thus suffered reputational damage, even if they are not necessarily officially guilty of the alleged acts (Sailofsky, 2022). Further for older respondents, bad management of the company or organisation was also more likely to be a reason for boycotting than for younger respondents. Perhaps older age groups have more experience of working life and different management styles than young people who are just starting out in their working lives.

Young people in general were often the largest group in terms of the reasons for boycotting, so they are more likely to have more reasons for boycotting than older people. In addition, young people may be more likely to boycott than older people in general. However, what united the age groups was that in almost all age groups the main factor behind the boycott was a desire to make a change. Perhaps around some larger issue, people unite to act on it, and everyone feels a desire to be involved in driving change. To conclude, the younger people are, the more external factors such as social media affect their boycotting and cancelling behaviour. Meanwhile, older age groups care about their working atmosphere. People are influenced by the interests they share with other people, and this is often influenced by socio-economic status or age (Pfeffer et al., 2014), as our research showed.

7.6.2 Country of residence

Country of residence seems to be a statistically significant categorical variable to explain respondents' choices in many more cases than age or gender. There could be many explanations for this, but one of them is the location, based on our research. Those living in Finland were significantly more likely to boycott a country or nationality than those living in the US. In addition, for those living

in Finland and Germany, war or geopolitical crisis was a major reason for boycotting. This can be explained by the fact that people may have formed certain ideas about a particular country, and this in turn influences their evaluation of that country's products, brands, or organisations (Septiano et al., 2022). The war between Ukraine and Russia is certainly a tangible and immediate issue in Europe at the moment, and it has allowed Europeans to form or reinforce certain images of certain countries. In addition, the boycott behaviour of people living in Finland towards a country can be explained by the fact that conflicts between neighbouring countries are often more likely than conflicts between other countries (Kim et al., 2022). The responses also showed that those living in Finland and Germany were more likely to boycott a brand than those living in the US. This may also be influenced by location, and war may play a role in brand boycotts. Of course, our study does not give details of what or which brands were boycotted, so no precise conclusions can be drawn.

Another explanation for why country of residence emerged as an influential factor in the responses is cultural differences. Culture varies according to ethnicity, and this in turn affects lifestyles and behaviour (Narayan, 2017). The responses showed that, for example, people living in the USA are more likely to boycott athletes than those living in other countries, and in the US, the biggest factor influencing boycotts was the opinions of one's friends. So people living in different countries have learned a certain pattern of social behaviour (Heyes, 2020), and this may explain the different boycotting behaviour of people living in different countries and on different continents.

When looking at which countries are boycotting which most, some differences can be found. In Finland, the main factor behind boycotts was alarming information on social media, in Germany the desire to make a change, and in the US the opinions of friends. In the other countries, the desire to make a change also emerged as the biggest influencing factor, and in Finland it was the second most cited reason. Since the desire to make a change was so often the reason behind the action, it could suggest that the desire to do something (good) is a greater influencing factor than feeling guilty about doing or not doing something.

Other notable differences could be seen in ethical reasons, which was a major reason for boycotting for those living in Germany, and racism, which was a much less cited reason in the US than in other countries. Perhaps, therefore, Europeans are more concerned about equality and justice matters than others, since in Europe equality is promoted widely through legislation and equality policies (European Commission, 2023). However, the themes of responsibility emerged in the responses in general, and this may indicate that consumers are now very aware and have certain expectations of organisations and brands. For example, brands are expected to be responsible both ethically and environmentally (Albrecht et al., 2013). It is also noteworthy to draw attention to the decline in quality attributed to boycotts (Hirschman, 1970), when people living in Finland could be seen to value the quality and durability of products

more than people living in other countries, with poor product quality being chosen as the reason for boycotting much more often in Finland than in the other countries in our survey.

7.6.2.1 Country of residence and boycott and cancellation action

Grouping respondents according to their country of residence and their previous boycott and cancellation activities, it was found that the country has a strong influence. In all actions, people from the USA had been the most active. The difference was particularly pronounced for those activities that require some form of public presence, such as negative comments on social media, sharing content on their own channels or public negative debate. Therefore, it can be concluded that Europeans do not voice their opinions as publicly as Americans and they stick to less conspicuous activities when boycotting or cancelling.

Also in intentions, the country was used to create different groups and almost all activities generated profiles. However, these groups differed slightly from previous actions of boycotting and cancelling. Finland and Germany would be willing to be even more active, for example in unfollowing and discussing negatively with family and friends, but the US would be more active in more visible actions. In summary, these results highlighted the fact that Finns and Germans want to continue with more invisible activities and do not want to increase public activities in contrast to the USA.

7.6.3 Gender

There are also gender differences in boycotting and cancel culture. Women in general boycotted more than men, and the other genders in fairly similar numbers to women. This could be explained by cultural reasons, as especially women are said to be contributing to cultural contiguity and carrying local cultural knowledge (Narayan, 2017). Perhaps women and the other genders form closer communities in the cultural environment and share their thoughts more when it comes to boycotts.

The data showed that women also have more reasons for boycotting and cancelling than men. These reasons included environmental concerns, ethical reasons, racism, and inappropriate behaviour. Women can therefore be seen to be more passionate and vocal in society as they are more responsive to different issues than men. The causes that are important to women can also be seen to focus more on controversial issues such as racism or inappropriate behaviour, rather than other issues such as bad customer service.

When the other genders are taken into account, it can be noted that especially alarming information on social media is a strong factor which affects their boycotting behaviour. More than half of women also chose this as a reason. In addition, the results of our study showed that for these gender groups, the desire to make a change was also a big reason, while for men it was somewhat

less so. History can explain this, because the historically silenced groups have been the ones that have been associated with cancel culture in the first place (Ng, 2020). The only reason where men stand out as the largest respondent group was nationality. This option was not selected by any respondent of the other gender group.

Gender differences can therefore be seen in boycotting when it comes to the different reasons, although some previous literature has argued otherwise. For example, Neilson (2010) says there is no apparent gender difference in boycotts, which contradicts our findings. According to our survey, respondents from other gender groups are more active in boycotting than men and at least as active as women. This leads us to the conclusion that boycotting and cancelling can be seen as a way for other genders and women to make their voices heard.

However, when looking at respondents' previous boycotting and cancelling activities by gender, it was found that there were no major differences. Women were in the least active group for each activity and men represented a slightly more active group. Therefore, it can be concluded that women have been more cautious and restrained in their past actions than the other sexes. This also shows that women are much more likely to find reasons to boycott and cancel, but when the time comes to act, they don't necessarily do anything. Whereas men have less strong reasons for boycotting, but stand behind them more probably when the time comes to take action.

7.7 Activity of respondents on social media and its effects to boycotting and cancelling actions

The feature of social media is that it provides a platform for like-minded people to work together to advocate their cause (Chon & Park, 2020). The responses of our survey show that respondents use social media mainly to communicate and browse content created by others, but are less active in producing it themselves. Social media is also used to find information about products or services, for example. Almost all respondents actively use social media in at least some way. It can therefore be concluded that respondents use this feature of social media, but prefer to do so with their local community.

As regards commenting and taking a stand on social media, respondents were mainly reluctant to do so. Social media allows people to express their opinions easily (Chon & Park, 2020) and people share their opinions in a negative way according to their interests (Kam & Deichert, 2016). However, the respondents seem to be very cautious when acting publicly on social media. Nor does the anonymity of comments or opinions have an impact on the willingness of respondents to be anonymous. Therefore, it can be concluded that a large proportion of respondents are "Observers". They monitor the activities and comments of others, share content created by others and engage in social media

conversations with those around them. A large proportion are not ready or willing to take a stand under their own name or to be active content creators.

Respondents of the survey included only a small proportion of people who were willing to be active and engage publicly on social media. Examining the correlation between social media activity and boycotting or cancelling activities, it was found that if respondents post content on social media, they are more likely to comment negatively on social media posts. In addition, they are also more likely to share boycott or cancel content on their own social media channels. This could be explained by the fact that they have already put themselves out there, which lowers the threshold for taking a stand.

According to our research, the biggest impact is when a respondent engages in commercial collaborations or marketing on their channels. In this case, they are more likely to comment negatively on posts, share boycott and cancel content on their own channels and discuss negatively publicly online. Commercial collaborations suggest that the respondent either partially or fully uses social media for work or to make money and they might be influencers. Since influencers can engage followers (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019) and attract a large audience, influencers can also act as effective marketers (Reinikainen et al., 2020) and spread negative messages. In this case, they are acting as a professional and are also expected to take a stand on important issues, which may also come more naturally to them. Professionals also tend to talk a lot about themselves in public (Reinikainen et al., 2020), so expressing their own opinions is more natural than for the private people.

Since organisations and influencers have faced more negative online behaviour (Pfeffer et al., 2014), it may on the other hand make it easier for influencers to give negative feedback, as well. Influencers can encourage people to avoid buying products from a certain company or spread negative messages (Yuksel et al., 2020). On the other hand, influencers can be associated with a company being boycotted (Norris, 2021) and therefore influencers and others who work on social media need to be judicious and "awake" when choosing brands for collaborations.

Previously found that respondents were less willing to engage publicly on social media. Even if a large proportion of respondents do not spread negative content themselves, they can contribute to supporting the issue, for example through an influencer they admire. They may like content shared or produced by the influencer or show their support in other ways. In this case, they can contribute indirectly and might feel they are making a difference. This could explain why respondents do not produce much content on social media themselves, since they can participate in an easier way.

7.8 Relationship between previous actions and future intentions

The survey found that unfollowing on social media is common. The respondents have unfollowed boycotting or cancelling targets in the past and they are willing to continue doing it. Unfollowing can be thought of as a low-threshold activity that does not require a lot of effort or public activity. This supports the earlier theory that the majority of respondents are not prepared to engage publicly, but are happy to participate in more invisible ways. In the same way, taking a stand with or without one's own name followed the same pattern. Those who are prepared to take a stand are also prepared to do so under their own name.

As previously stated, social media can be seen as a useful environment for word-of-mouth (Pfeffer et al., 2014). The responses revealed that a large proportion of respondents have had negative conversations with their friends or family on an active monthly or weekly basis, but they have avoided public discussion. The advantage of online WOM is that it reaches people from a wider area and is not limited to the local community as the traditional offline WOM is (Raassens & Haans, 2017). However, the respondents have not used online WOM much. This could be related to the point made earlier about respondents' reluctance to act publicly. It is therefore more typical to talk negatively with one's own community, where the action is not public and may feel safer.

Boycotting refers to actions against consumption and influencing purchasing behaviour and to the situation where consumers abandon their relationship with an organisation (Yuksel et al., 2020). Boycotting can be both avoiding and reducing consumption of a certain product, but also completely stopping consumption (Friedman 1999). Our research found that boycotting and avoiding buying is common and most of the respondents do so. On the other hand, the total block split the responses more evenly and the responses suggest that respondents' previous boycotts have not been very unconditional. In addition, a large proportion of respondents had not suffered any time or financial disadvantage as a result of boycotting. This suggests that boycotts have happened when they are effortless enough and do not cause too much inconvenience, financial or time loss or suffering. In other words, boycotting and cancelling happens more often when it is not too much trouble.

When looking at respondents' thoughts on future activity, unfollowing differed most from past activity. There may be two reasons for this: Either the perception of their own action does not correspond to real or self-reported action or respondents would be more willing to act, but there have not been as many reasons to boycott. The second scenario could well be possible because, as stated earlier, unfollowing is an easy action that many are willing to do. Another point that caused a disconnect between previous actions and intentions is the total block for buying, since the capacity for total block on a daily basis was significantly higher. This suggests that respondents would also be ready for a

total block if necessary, but so far there has not been so much reason for a total block.

On the other hand, thoughts of commenting negatively and suffering from time or financial loss followed the same pattern with the previous actions. As regards commenting negatively, this shows that respondents are not willing to change their behaviour. Yet, they are willing to act as they have in the past. Respondents prefer to discuss negative issues safely with their friends and family and have no intention of doing so more publicly in the future. In the same way, respondents were not willing to experience any more inconvenience in terms of time or money than they do now. This shows that boycotts are more common when they are not too inconvenient or do not require too much time or financial resources. However, Bimber et al. (2020) note that social media offers a platform for communication and sharing information with low financial and timely costs. Therefore, social media provides an easy and effortless way to boycott, as it requires little in the way of time or financial resources. This could explain why respondents are not willing to suffer in terms of time or money, as boycotting is possible on social media without them.

7.9   Impact of the findings on businesses and organisations

It can be difficult for organisations to avoid boycotts and cancellations completely, but some considerations we have found in our thesis, can certainly help and clarify how to minimize the exposure to boycotts.

The results of the survey found that people would, if necessary, be slightly more aggressive in their boycott and cancellation policies. For instance, total block would be more popular if the company gave a reason for it and people would be willing to suffer timely or financial loss if necessary. Companies must therefore take care not to give consumers such reasons to act in a more radical way and note and respond to any negative attention they may receive. Responses suggest that the United States in particular is more sensitive to the need to increase the severity and unconditionality of measures.

The answers also revealed that brands are boycotted a lot. It would therefore be particularly important for companies to ensure that their communications and actions are transparent regarding their brands. Since social media influencers are much boycotted in addition to brands, companies should pay even more attention to that the selected influencers, for example in terms of commercial collaborations, are certainly suitable for their brand. In addition to this, alarming information on social media was the most important factor which makes people cancel or boycott. This suggests that it would be important for companies to stay up to date with information circulating in social media and traditional media. In this way, it would perhaps be possible to react to current

issues before the larger negative effects that boycotts could cause for companies would occur.

Since several of the reasons behind boycotts were related to ethical issues, such as the environment, racism, equality, or morally unacceptable actions, it is increasingly important for organisations to pay attention to the themes of responsibility. The desire to make a change was also a big reason behind boycotts. Companies could take advantage of this information by being trendsetters themselves in promoting positive change, for example in the area of responsibility.

Based on the results of our research, it would also be good for organisations to be aware of the influence of the country of residence in becoming the target of a boycott. This said, it would be good for companies to understand what the important things in terms of their country of operation are, because different things seem to be important to people living in different countries.

As already said before, it is not necessarily possible for organisations to completely avoid boycotts, because boycotts are not always even caused by any significant reason that could be prepared for. However, by being aware of the biggest risks, companies could be better prepared for possible boycotts and perhaps also succeed in finding out about them more quickly if they became the target of one. However, it is important for businesses to remember that actions taken to avoid boycotts cannot be assumed to increase sales or success, as the reasons for buying and not buying may not always mirror each other (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012; Kam & Deichert, 2016). In this thesis, the focus was on identifying exactly these negative effects on the organisations, and not what would put the organisations in a better position financially.

7.10 Limitations of the current study

Although the study was able to explain the phenomena of boycotting and cancelling in a given context and it answered the research questions, it still has some limitations.

The quantitative questionnaire does not provide many response options in addition to the predefined ones, so we cannot know how accurate the results are. Although some of the questions gave the option to the respondents to add their own answers, it is still easier for the respondent to choose from the options already available and thus may not necessarily tell us all their thoughts. In addition, the data was quite large, so it was not possible to ask very in-depth and specific questions to the respondents. Much more information would therefore be available on the subject, and our research cannot provide absolute truth.

The questionnaire was only distributed at universities, meaning that limitations could be identified when only a certain group of people responded to the questionnaire (Adams et al., 2014). Finally, the survey was also conducted in

only a handful of countries, so comparisons between countries are only superficial. Although country of residence was found to have an impact on the factors influencing boycotting, it is still not possible to say how much each factor contributed. So more research on the subject is needed.

7.11 Proposals for further research

Since this survey was conducted quantitatively on a large number of people and the response options were given, it might be useful to explore the topic in more specific terms. For instance, conducting a qualitative interview study with a smaller group would provide an even deeper insight into, for example, motives for boycotting or cancelling. The aim of quantitative research is to falsify or confirm previous hypotheses (Taheri et al., 2015) and therefore it does not provide new information. Similarly, qualitative research not only confirms previous knowledge, but can also provide new knowledge (Alasuutari, 2011).

On the basis of the data, we found that the country of residence was a significant factor in the respondent's thoughts and actions. In this survey, however, we did not delve into why this was such an important factor. It could be interesting to look further into the underlying causes and differences between countries, for example, by looking at a country's communications or its location in relation to other countries. This could be used to examine the effects of the environment on respondents' behaviour.

Finally, the reasons for boycotting and cancelling could be examined by looking at whether the reasons carry different weight. The aim would be to investigate whether one factor is more likely to cause boycotting or cancelling than another. This would help to identify what is considered important and which factors are less important than others.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Webropol questionnaire

Cancel Culture and Boycotting

> ⬚ Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Welcome to this 7 minute international survey on cancel culture and boycotting. We are highly interested in your experiences and opinions, as this survey focuses on different kinds of boycotts. This survey is part of Academy of Finland funded research project #AGENTS - young people's agency in social media, and is completely anonymous. We collect data in Finland, Germany and the USA and the survey is altogether 4 pages.

Participating in this research is voluntary and it is possible to discontinue the research at any point. The collected material will be handled according to highest academic research standards, and we follow the regulations of data protection law, storing research data in secure files.

By replying to the questionnaire, I declare that I have understood the information I have received and wish to participate in the study. After the questionnaire it is possible to leave your e-mail address if you would like to continue with the study in the next stages.

More information:

#AGENTS research at Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics
Professor Vilma Luoma-aho, Corporate Communication, University of Jyväskylä
Project website: https://www.jyu.fi/jsbe/fi/tutkimus/hankkeet/agents-1

For questions, please contact research assistants: jjtuomxy@student.jyu.fi and ekeaxs@student.jyu.fi

1. Country of residence *

○ Finland
○ Germany
○ USA
○ Other
_____

2. Gender *

○ Male
○ Female
○ Other or I don't want to define

3. Age *

_____
2 characters left

4. How often do you do the following activities on social media? *

	Never	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Messaging or chatting	○	○	○	○	○
Browse social media	○	○	○	○	○
Seek for information	○	○	○	○	○
Look for products or services to buy	○	○	○	○	○
Share content (e.g. pictures or videos)	○	○	○	○	○
Produce content (e.g. videos or blog)	○	○	○	○	○
Do marketing or other paid collaborations	○	○	○	○	○
Comment and take a stand with my own name	○	○	○	○	○
Comment and take a stand anonymously	○	○	○	○	○

5. Which of the following best describes you?

I take a public stand or express my opinion openly on social media... *

○ Never
○ Annually
○ Monthly
○ Weekly
○ Daily

6. I have boycotted... *

☐ Brand
☐ Organization

- ☐ Social media influencer
- ☐ Musician
- ☐ Actor / actress
- ☐ Political person
- ☐ Athlete
- ☐ Event
- ☐ Country
- ☐ Other, specify: _____

7. I HAVE DONE following actions when boycotting something or someone (e.g. brand, organization, influencer, politician)? *

	Never	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Unfollow or unsubscribe on social media	○	○	○	○	○
Comment negatively on social media posts	○	○	○	○	○
Share content on my own social media channel	○	○	○	○	○
Discuss negatively with my friends or family	○	○	○	○	○
Discuss negatively in public online	○	○	○	○	○
Avoid buying products or services from company	○	○	○	○	○
Total block: never buy products or services from company	○	○	○	○	○
Suffered financial loss or inconvenience	○	○	○	○	○
Invested time and/or suffered time loss	○	○	○	○	○

8. What actions I would be READY TO TAKE when boycotting something or someone (e.g. brand, organization, influencer, politician)? *

	Never	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Unfollow or unsubscribe on social media	○	○	○	○	○

	Never	Annually	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Comment negatively on social media posts	○	○	○	○	○
Share content on my own social media channel	○	○	○	○	○
Discuss negatively with my friends or family	○	○	○	○	○
Discuss negatively in public online	○	○	○	○	○
Avoid buying products or services from brand	○	○	○	○	○
Total block: never buy products or services from company	○	○	○	○	○
Suffered financial loss or inconvenience	○	○	○	○	○
Invested time and/or suffered time loss	○	○	○	○	○

9. Reasons for my previous boycotting *

- ☐ War or geopolitical crisis
- ☐ Environmentally harmful actions
- ☐ Ethical reasons (for instance animal or human rights)
- ☐ Racism
- ☐ Inappropriate behavior (for instance sexual harassment)
- ☐ Bad management of company or organization
- ☐ Bad customer service
- ☐ Bad product quality
- ☐ Political opinions
- ☐ Religious opinions
- ☐ Nationality
- ☐ Other, specify: _____

10. What's the number one reason you would start boycotting or cancelling something or someone? *

_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

11. Who or what influences my boycotting or cancelling? *

☐ Following the example of a person I admire (influencer etc.)

☐ My friends' opinions

☐ My family's opinions

☐ Alarming information on social media

☐ Desire to make a change

☐ Feeling of guilt

☐ Other, specify: _____